

ordinate all differences in order to function effectively.

In studying a scientific problem it is often helpful to turn to another science for perspective. And it seems that social policy may often find a cue in biology. Community of purpose in time of crisis is part of a biological mechanism which preserves an organism from extinction. An animal under attack develops a "fight and flight" reaction which has been well described by Professor Walter B. Cannon. Only a few days ago in response to the award of a medal of the National Institute of Social Sciences in recognition of his services to humanity, he said:

"I suppose that the studies in physiology that are most closely related to the interest of the student of society are those concerned with emotions and with bodily stabilization. The researches on the effects of emotional excitement have indicated how these basic factors of human behavior—the primitive emotions of fear and rage, with their attendant impulses to flee or attack, may dominate our actions.

"These emotions, of course, are fundamental to the displays of mob psychology which at times send whole populations into violent action, with most cruel and unjust consequences. There is a chance that the more we learn of the ways in which these primitive impulses control behavior and in turn the ways in which they may be controlled or sublimated, or given new direction, the more humane our civilization will become.

"I have faith that there are general principles of organization, and that in the search for a better order of society much might be learned from an examination of the ways in which the body has solved the problems of avoiding great and distressing oscillations of state."

Let us apply this analogy to our problem.

In times of crisis the biological organism does not waver. There is no conflict of opinion. There is positive, decisive and unified action. And such must be the policy of American Jewry in the crucial situation today. For throughout history, life has been one long and continuing crisis for the Jews. The nations refuse to let them live in peace and won't even let them die. Therefore internal unity becomes a necessity for Jewry. To achieve this community of action does not

necessarily require, what is termed by the Soviets, a monolithic policy or by the Nazis a *Gleichschaltung* of opinion. A unified front does not necessarily mean uniformity of thought. There might be genuine value in diversity of principle. On certain essentials there can always be unified action, as in relief of want. There can be no difference of opinion about the need of saving Jewish children. However, as the field broadens out the possibility for united action diminishes. What is needed is not uniformity of thinking but a least-common-denominator of action. And such least-common-denominator becomes smaller and smaller as the arena becomes wider. How can there be unity of action on a question of the Jews as an international political unit where there are trenchant differences of opinion. Under such conditions unity means at first suppression and later oppression of minority opinion. Yet it should be possible to avoid the chaos which now pervades Jewish life. Diversity is not synonymous with disorganization. Differences of opinion do not necessarily conflict with unified procedure on essential questions. Various types of strategy may be proposed but eventually a united policy should be sought.

The world wide depression and the recent grave crisis in Jewry have created new conditions and conjured forth new problems. The total of large contributions has diminished as a result of the depression, but owing to greater interest in Jewish affairs as the result of the crisis, the number of contributors to Jewish causes has increased. The common danger is creating a homogeneity in Jewish life. It is accelerating a process which undoubtedly would have taken a much longer time under conditions of peace and prosperity. In the attempt to organize the Jewish community for the preservation of its physical life and its spiritual values it should be possible to have a representation of all the elements that subscribe to these aims. The technique is a problem that should challenge the best thinking. The goal of an organized Jewish community may yet be realized to accomplish the purpose that all Jewish parties seek, whatever be their method. That vision is not merely the cessation of the persecution of Jewry and the attainment of tolerance for a minority, but also freedom to live a full life among the nations who may thus be exalted in righteousness.

## Oligarchy, Fascism and Jewish Unity

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**W**HENEVER a Jew gets into trouble, cries arise for Jewish unity. The demand for unity is a function of crisis. To those who are sensitive to crisis in Jewish affairs, unity seems desirable at any price and under any condition. The crises in the recent history of the Jews have been acute phases of a chronic crisis which is identical with "emancipation."

To a great degree, "emancipation" is coincident with that flight from Judaism in which the modern history of Jewry consists, and the flight from Judaism is the impossible endeavor of the Jews to escape from the disabilities of being Jews in a Christian world. This world establishes the least common denominator for all Jews as Jews. In the last resort, not the Jews, but the Christians determine what is Jewish and what is not. You may be no Jew in the eyes of your Jewish competitor, but if you are a Jew in the eyes of your Christian neighbor, you are a Jew and subject to the invidious consequences of being one. Your Christian neighbor associates you with other Jews into the Jewish group. And no matter how you dislike or resist it, you are forced into a state of union with other Jews. So long as Christian teaching is part of the cultural inheritance of the Western world and the Jew continues to hold the status assigned to him in the Christian scheme of salvation, there will be Jewish unity, imposed by non-Jewish social pressure. This is as true of Russia as of Austria, of England and the United States as of Germany.

There are, of course, also internal conditions of unity, which cooperate more or less with the external ones. First and foremost there is the residual homogeneity of the Jewish way of life which "emancipation" has broken up, has diversified, and is dissolving. Then there are the self-conscious efforts at unification of which we are aware. Each is an aspect of the ruling passion of large Jewish communities and each in turn develops and subsides as a sort of anti-body against the Jewish flight from Judaism.

We observe a succession of forms, each arising in a different sociological stratum of 19th century history—the B'nai B'rith, the Alliance Israelite and its subdivision; the Zionist movement and its sub-divisions; the American Jewish Committee; the American Jewish Congress.

In the field of charity and social service, we are

familiar with the Federation movements, welfare funds and the present mobilization enterprise of the National Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. Among the Judaistic and Socialistic sects there are still other movements, each claiming the subordination of all the others to its supremacy. The total picture is of demands for unity which serve only to multiply and intensify the diversity of Jewish organizations and programs.

The reason for this lies in the character and incidence of these demands. There are two methods of unity. One is coercion and the other is consent.

The conditions of a unity based on consent are present, but not operating. Such unity can be obtained by a voluntary coming together; by a confederation of all existing groups and associations of Jews. In point of fact, such confederations of minority size already exist. The American Jewish Committee, which is a philanthropy and not a movement, claims to be such a confederation. The American Jewish Congress is such a confederation. But such a type of confederation is not enough for effective unity. For effective unity, what is needful is the free participation either directly, or through his directed elected representatives, of each and every individual Jew. This is the kind of unity that the American Jewish Congress proposes and seeks to establish in American Jewish life. Such a unity is determined from beneath by consent and not from above by coercion. Because it is lacking, we are confronted by the current anarchy in Jewish affairs and Jewish policy toward the non-Jewish world.

This anarchy consists in the fact that individuals and groups manifest themselves here and there as leaders and spokesmen of the whole of American Jewry. But except in the case of the American Jewish Congress, they have neither sought nor received a mandate to speak for anybody but themselves, and have no title to speak. Everybody knows how Jewish public opinion has condemned the Old-German Jewish *shā shā* policy of the American Jewish Committee regarding the crisis caused by the seizing of the German government by the Hitler sadistocracy.

The B'nai B'rith, with its 57,000 members more or less, claim priority in the field and demands that everybody else should get off its preserves in protection of Jewish civil rights and the good name of Israel. And

that Robin Hood of Jewish life, Mr. Samuel Untermyer, comes with his megaphone of predatory righteousness, to dispute the primacy with all the others in the field. And most recently, Mr. B. Charney Vladeck comes as a captain of industry among Jewish labor organizations to organize Jewish labor as such with respect to Jewish problems.

To date, both at home and abroad, not only the Jewish masses, but public opinion generally, acknowledge the American Jewish Congress, with its 1,000,000 members and upwards as holding an authentic mandate to speak for the will, the needs and the wishes of a moiety of American Jews. Yet the American Jewish Congress, democratic as are its methods and purposes, represents only a plurality of the total number of organized Jews.

Now we cannot well glorify democracy outside of Jewish life and oppose it inside. A little courage, a realistic approach to the problem of unity, could easily put an end to this irony and abolish the farcical situation of the Jewish minority group in the great democratic American nation, meeting its own Jewish problems not democratically, but in the main through oligarchic and fascist instruments.

Unification is a much simpler matter than timid leaders and timider lieutenants imagine. It has been affected before, in 1918, and can be repeated again. It requires merely that the different parties get together, issue a call for democratic elections, organize such elections and create by this means a single body in which will be proportionately represented each and

every one of the various groups which compose the Jewish community. If the leaders dare, they can have this unity. But do they dare? Most questions involving Jews are solved by their leaders not through decisive action, but by default. They move with a caution which paralyzes when they need a courage which animates understanding to decisive action.

The issue is in no small degree up to you social workers. You are both the servants and the advisors of the Jewish masters in relation to the Jewish masses. As their servants, you dispense their charity; soothe their consciences and ease the universal and endemic tensions which constantly shake the structure of Jewish life. As their advisors, you ostensibly set before them in terms of "scientific charity" and "social science" the dynamic realities of the Jewish community situation. As their advisors, you are in the position of doctors reporting on their patients. Perhaps you will be scientific enough to see that the cause of Jewish disunity is the absence of democracy and that the cure for Jewish disunity is to set up this democracy by the obvious means of a nation-wide election through which every Jew will have a share in determining by whom and how the issues affecting him shall be solved. Will you do it? Only democracy can create unity. Dare you choose democracy?

Freedom, my friends, cannot be waited for. We make freedom. We take freedom. I urge you in behalf of American Israel to take freedom to democratize and thus to unify Jewish life.

## The Need of Re-Organizing Jewish Communal Life

### From the Federation Point of View

By GEORGE W. RABINOFF

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**A**N ATTEMPT to gauge the potentialities of the Jewish Federation for organizing the Jewish group to meet the changing conditions of social life today requires an historic perspective on the Federation movement. We use the term "Jewish community" although in this country we have never known the community as a legal entity.

In America, the Federation has been a voluntary agency, assuming certain limited philanthropic functions on behalf of the Jews resident in a community. It never presumed to carry activities of a primary character, which fell within the purview of the government. It never attempted to speak or to act for all Jews. Even within its limited scope, concern for the

philanthropic and in some degree for the cultural needs of the Jews, Federation had not succeeded in enlisting the full support of all classes of Jews, either in finances or in leadership. However, it had established its place; it had demonstrated that divergent groups could come together on a working platform without violence to their individual viewpoints; it had aspired to effective utilization of Jewish communal resources to meet communal problems through a centralization of financial and policy-making interest and responsibility.

Although Federation traces its origins to European traditions, it started here as a co-operative financial device, created by the leaders of existing social agencies to simplify their fund-raising process, to avoid competitive and expensive solicitations and to assure stability through a wider base of support. By joining together, they were enabled to enlist in their membership larger numbers of contributors, and to approximate, in concept at least, a service in the interests of all the Jews in their community. Thus was attained a community status, voluntary it is true, but nevertheless representative of all elements which accepted Federation leadership.

With this background in mind, the forces behind the present shifting emphasis in the movement become more intelligible. Since there was no fixed Federation pattern, each community built up its organization according to its own traditions, its available leaders, and a host of accidental determinants. The Conference was an important influence, but not decisive, because of the lack of continuing consultative service. As a result, there developed a number of types of Federation.

Generally speaking, the past five years have seen a searching of the soul in Federation seeking adjustments to modern conditions.

Among the factors which have broken the mould of the Federation pattern are the following:

#### 1. Economic and social conditions—

a. The newer immigrant groups had become stabilized, financially and socially; they had become articulate. If Federation were to continue to have community-wide status these units had to find, or be given, a place in the framework, involving fundamental changes in program, to recognize the attitudes and interests of the labor, the conservative, the orthodox and the nationalist elements in the community.

b. Old dynasties of financial and leadership strength have fallen, new figures have appeared, not as powerful and not as interested socially. Because they are indigenous, and better equipped, they are in a peculiarly favorable position to work out current problems.

c. Increasing taxation for welfare and other purposes cut substantially into funds available for voluntary giving and necessitated a further spreading of the base of support.

#### 2. Conditions within social work—

a. The Community Chest movement has implications not yet understood nor evaluated. To what extent is the active participation of Jews important in Jewish social work? Can such participation continue unless Jews retain direct responsibility for financing and policy-making? Even more fundamental is the possibility that the Community Chest studies now under way, may result, under pressure of dwindling resources and objective tests of performance, in the merging of certain Jewish philanthropic activities into non-sectarian agencies. Can Jewish clients be cared for adequately under non-Jewish private agency auspices, or do the clients and the Jews as a whole, both need the Jewish agency as an expression of their kinship?

b. The public welfare services are being rapidly extended, the government taking over a constantly increasing proportion of areas formerly considered the prerogative and the special province of private social work. The volume of work of Jewish agencies in general has not fallen below the 1929 level, but they are no longer responsible for the bulk of Jewish relief clientele.

#### 3. Conditions in the Jewish group—

a. The "Jewish question," in all its aspects, has been brought forcibly to the attention of Jews in this country, as never before, by the post-war and more recent events in the Jewish communities of Europe, by the reflection of these events here, and by the sharpening of issues incidental to the depression. The problems of occupational discrimination and the economic re-adjustment of dislocated industrial and middle-class Jews are not, strictly speaking, within the ordinary concept of social work, but they are matters of communal concern. Similarly, and some insist primarily, attention is being directed communally to the so-called "positive" aspects of Jewish life, the programs for educating the youth in appreciation of Jewish culture and traditions, the activities directed to the upbuilding of Palestine, the agencies financing international relief and reconstruction and organizing Jewish opinion on behalf of one or another platform for the safeguarding of Jewish interests.

The National Council of Jewish Federation and Welfare Funds was organized in the Fall of 1932, to provide a channel for the analysis of these social forces and the exchange of experiences. Forms and general