

apace. On another, American Jewry may well have passed the peak of its influence in the general community and may find its interests increasingly at odds with those of the non-Jewish majority, a prospect that promises to test American Jews as never before. Even when the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, organization alone cannot solve those problems.

### Notes

1. This section is based on the theory and analysis more fully described in Daniel J. Elazar and Stuart A. Cohen, *The Jewish Polity* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984).
2. See Shlomo Dov Goitin, "Political Conflict and the Use of Power," in Daniel J. Elazar, ed., *Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and Its Contemporary Uses* (Ramat Gan and Philadelphia: Turtledove Publishing, 1981), pp. 169-181.

## Chapter 2

### THE FEDERATIONS STEP FORWARD

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Although its history as a Jewish community extends back to 1654, Jewish America was to all intents and purposes a colony of European Jewry until the nineteenth century, and was a dependency even longer. The combination of events and self-organization transformed it to be the *dominant* Jewish community for much of the twentieth century and the dominant diaspora community still. The federation movement became the keystone to that self-organization early, before it was recognized as such.

Among the early efforts of American Jewry were the usual Jewish efforts to "take care of their own," to provide for their religious, communal, social, and educational needs. For the first 150 years of American Jewry, from the time of the founding of Shearith Israel in New York in 1654 until the establishment of Rodeph Shalom in Philadelphia in 1795, the first city to have more than one congregation, the number of American Jews was minuscule and single congregations in every colonial city where Jews settled encompassed all of those needs.<sup>1</sup>

The next century was the fissiparous stage of American Jewish life as an increasing number of Jews poured into the United States and established synagogues to maintain their own familiar customs. At the same time, non-synagogal functions were hived off into separate organizations and institutions. Yet,

alongside fissiparousness were repeated efforts to reestablish Jewish unity along lines suitable to a voluntary community, whether socially in connection with B'nai B'rith in 1844, politically, in connection with the Board of Deputies of the American Israelites in 1859, philanthropically in the case of the many local bodies bearing some version of the name United Hebrew Charities that sprang up from the 1860s through the 1890s, or even religiously with the foundation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1873. Some of these efforts enjoyed partial success; most failed, either sooner or later, so that by 1882 when the mass immigration from Eastern Europe began, even though American Jews were primarily of Central European stock and were well organized for the times, the American Jewish community had no overall, integrated framework or structure, even locally.<sup>2</sup>

Ironically, it would be the coming of the millions of Eastern European Jews, so different from their Sephardic and Central European predecessors, that made possible movement toward a more systematic structure which became characteristic of twentieth century American Jewry. The beginnings of that movement lay in the efforts of the more established Jews in the United States to meet the needs of the new immigrants, combined with the self-help efforts of the new immigrants themselves. Central to their effort was the federation movement whose first example was founded in Boston in 1895 as the Federation of Jewish Charities to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of fundraising for those Jewish purposes that were not satisfied within the individual congregations, by conducting a combined fundraising campaign, what later became known as "federated giving," followed by the fair allocation of the monies raised, among the functional agencies that became members of the federation.

The Boston idea spread quickly and by the time of U.S. entry into World War I, twenty-two years later, there were twenty-three federations functioning in the United States (Table 2.1), including one in New York City, founded in 1917, after it became apparent that the New York Kehilla was foundering. The Kehilla movement was the major rival effort to achieve a more integrated and structured Jewish community, though it failed in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago. The effort to establish a

Kehilla in the United States represented an attempt to adapt a European Jewish idea to the American scene.<sup>3</sup>

Table 2.1

## U.S. FEDERATIONS IN 1917

1895	Boston, Mass. (reorg. 1961)
1896	Cincinnati, Ohio (reorg. 1967)
1899	Detroit, Mich. (reorg. 1926)
1900	Chicago, Ill.: Federation (merged with Welfare Fund as Jewish United Fund in 1968)
1901	Philadelphia, Pa. (reorg. 1956)
	St. Louis, Mo.
1903	Cleveland, Ohio
	Buffalo, N.Y.
	Omaha, Neb.
1905	Atlanta, Ga. (reorg. 1967)
	Indianapolis, Ind.
1906	Lawrence, Mass.
1907	Toledo, Ohio (reorg. 1960)
1910	San Francisco, Marin Co., and peninsula, Calif. (reorg. 1955)
1911	Dallas, Tex.
	Little Rock, Ark.
1912	Los Angeles, Calif.
	Pittsburgh, Pa. (reorg. 1955)
1913	New Orleans, La. (reorg. 1967)
	Manchester, N.H.
1914	Des Moines, Ia.
1915	Saint Joseph, Mo.
1917	New York (including N.Y.C., Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester cos.): Federation (merged with New York UJA in 1973)

Although its founders succeeded in mobilizing the leadership of the American Jewish Committee, then the closest thing to a central address that American Jewry had (or ever has), because of the influence of its members, to back them, the fact that to survive the Kehilla had to be able to use at least limited coercive powers to bring Jews within its purview, for example, granting *kashrut* certificates only to those who would pay it an appropriate fee, meant that it ran afoul of the spirit of American volunteerism and freedom, in this case in the form of the anti-trust laws. Unable to secure the authority or the financing needed to maintain its position, the Kehilla was doomed and by World War I was already giving way to the federations who capitalized on their linkage with the spirit of American volunteerism in the form of voluntary philanthropy which sustained them.

The Kehilla went the way of earlier and even less probable efforts to establish chief rabbinates in American Jewish communities. World War I brought another effort, the convening of an American Jewish Congress, to bring together Jewish organizations and individual Jews of all ideological persuasions to present a common front on Jewish issues. Once again, the Congress was defeated by the American environment and the federations were there to pick up the pieces. Thus, by the early 1920s, the federation movement with its voluntaristic and philanthropic base, its organizational thrust in the spirit of the Progressive movement, and its modest goals to serve a few functional agencies in the social welfare and sometimes the educational spheres, had a clear field.

These federations linked existing Jewish social service and philanthropic institutions, primarily for the purpose of joint fundraising. Their roots went back to the 1860s, when, following the first wave of Jewish charitable efforts outside the congregational framework, there had been a period of unification of what had become a multitude of small operations into larger, more formally organized and staffed bodies. At least one Jewish community, Memphis, still traces the organization of its central social welfare agency, the Jewish Service Agency of Memphis, back to 1864 (although it should be noted that its Jewish Welfare Fund was founded in 1934). In many cases these bodies formed

the nuclei of the expanded Jewish federations that emerged in the following generation.<sup>4</sup>

The difference in nomenclature between the united charities of the 1860s and the federations of the next generation was significant. The former were indeed unions and represented the unification of diverse groups under a single governing body, even if the individual entities maintained some separate identity. The federation movement, on the other hand, was explicitly federal, providing an additional dimension of governance without eliminating or changing the governing bodies of their constituents. They were much influenced by the Progressive movement at its peak in the United States of the time, firmly believing in the Progressive goals of efficiency and economy, of professional administration of policies set by volunteer civic leaders, the value of professional social workers, and raising and expending funds on businesslike principles. To this day, the federation movement is much influenced by the search for the Progressive synthesis between professional and Jewish communal goals, which the first federations began before World War I. Indeed, if anything, it was only in the 1980s that the Progressive synthesis began to unravel as new times undermined some of its fundamentals.

The federations originated as a very pragmatic — one is moved to say typically American — response to a set of needs. Yet the form of the response was fully consonant with Jewish political culture as well as the American environment. Perhaps it was that combination that led to the development of a “federation perspective,” a justification of the federation approach that was something less than a coherent ideology but had certain articulated theoretical premises of its own, which emphasized the necessity to seek Jewish unity, communal responsibility, federated giving, organizational efficiency, and comprehensive community planning within the context of the inevitably loose matrix of organized Jewish life.

The intervening principle here was not simply voluntarism, but voluntarism for philanthropic and progressive ends. The Boston Federation was born at that moment when Populism had begun to give way to Progressivism as the principal reform movement in the United States. The Populists, primarily rural and located principally in the West and the South where there

were few Jews to begin with and where even those Jews who had settled in small towns in those parts of the country were moving into big cities for economic advantage and Jewish comforts, were particularly interested in "raising hell," in the words of Kansas Congressman "Sockless" Jerry Simpson, against the Northeastern "colonialists," and had little appeal for Jews. The Progressive movement, on the other hand, fit in nicely with the middle-class, philanthropic and reformist orientations of the Jews, primarily those of Central European background, already established in the United States, and they rapidly adapted Progressive aspirations for the Jewish community aborning.<sup>5</sup>

Those were the years when Eastern European Jewry was led primarily by those who represented the ideologies of the Old World, often socialist, at times religious, but in any case not in the spirit of the New.

Those early federations were the principal products of this Jewish-Progressive synthesis. Indeed, the Jewish community took to the Progressive ideals of voluntary leadership for policy-making and trained professionals for administration, federated fundraising (rather than "every man for himself") and rational allocation decisions for the funds raised, as well if not better than any group in the United States. The federations became wedded to the Jewish-Progressive synthesis and have remained wedded to it.

Cleveland's Federation of Jewish Charities, organized in 1903, was typical. It was founded by the established leadership of the community to develop a joint fundraising effort in behalf of its eight charter member agencies. They included the Hebrew Relief Society (founded 1875), the Jewish Orphan Asylum (founded by B'nai B'rith in 1868), the Keshet Shel Barvel Montefiore Home for the Aged (1881), the Cleveland Section of the Council of Jewish Women (1894), and the Council Educational Alliance Settlement House (1898). In the Federation's first campaign 1,217 donors contributed \$41,350. In Cleveland, as elsewhere, the early federations by and large remained the province of the German Jews (even though many of the services they provided were directed toward assisting the East European immigrants). As a result, the East Europeans began to create their own institutions, often duplicating those under the Federation. In Cleveland the Jewish Relief Society (founded in 1895),

the Jewish Orthodox Home for the Aged (1906), and the Orthodox Orphan Home were all created at the same time that the Federation was coming into existence. There was even an attempt to federate some forty-five immigrant-sponsored societies and organizations during the early 1900s under Orthodox auspices.<sup>6</sup>

The original federations rarely embraced Jewish institutions outside the social-welfare sphere. In exceptional communities, like Detroit, the Talmud Torah system (there the United Hebrew Schools) was included in the federation family from the first. It was not until the 1930s that the first tentative links between the federations and the synagogues were forged, and those were rare indeed.

Major Jewish communities that had not established at least rudimentary federations before World War I did so in the 1920s. Thirty-one federations were established between 1918 and 1932, culminating with the organization of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds (CJFWF) in 1932, the country-wide umbrella organization for the local federations. While hit hard by the Great Depression like other institutions in the United States, the federations survived and even gained power as federated fundraising seemed to be even more necessary with the limited funds available.

It was not until the mid-1930s and the rise of Nazism that the federation movement became nearly universal, reaching into the Jewish communities small and large. More federations were formed in 1938, for example, than in either of the two previous periods. Between 1933 and 1942, 118 federations were established.

The rise of Hitler led the federations to begin to take the lead in the efforts to combat the impact of Nazism. Among those were efforts to rationalize and increase fundraising for the Zionist Yishuv in Palestine. Zionist fundraising, initially organized by the Zionist movement through Keren Hayesod worldwide, and the United Palestine Appeal (UPA), its U.S. arm, had never been particularly successful. Now with the need greatly increased along with new needs for overseas relief, the CJFWF leadership took the lead in bringing together the Joint Distribution Committee, the first countrywide effort at federated disbursement of

philanthropy founded in 1914, and the UPA to form the United Jewish Appeal as their common fundraising arm.

The UJA was designed to work through the local federations in most communities to raise funds. Only in the very largest cities was there to be a separate UJA campaign. The UJA was in place by 1937 and had spread throughout the country by 1938, in effect, putting the federations in the driver's seat in American Jewish fundraising, although for the most part they still escaped the notice of the bulk of the by now Americanizing Jews because they had no obvious ideology to push. (The ideological dimensions of Progressivism were still far too subtle for most American Jews, raised upon husky and noisily-presented socialist and communist ideologies, to understand.)

### **The Rhythm of Federation Movement Growth**

There has been a rather clear growth rhythm in the federation movement. Table 2.2 charts the growth spurts. The first period lasted from 1895 to 1917 and the U.S. entry into World War I; the second, from 1918 until the founding of the Council of Jewish Federations in 1932. The first two periods were dominated by the founding of discrete local federations of Jewish agencies at an accelerated pace, culminating in the establishment of the countrywide organization.

The third period of approximately a decade, from the rise of Nazism to the American entry into World War II, involved the rapid expansion of the number of local federations, the consolidation of the CJFWF, and the founding of the UJA at CJF's initiative. The number of federations tripled and a countrywide network linking them was put into place. The first spurt lasted slightly more than twenty years; the second, fifteen; and the third, ten. After that, the pace continued to pick up.

With the founding of CJFWF, the federation movement began to move ahead at five-year intervals. In a certain sense, what emerged was the intertwining of two separate rhythms, each with peaks about ten years apart; one involving domestic activities and the other, overseas. Thus, from 1937 to 1939, CJF was busy forming and solidifying the UJA. Ten years later the federations were involved in providing massive support for the

establishment of the Jewish state. At the end of the 1950s, federations began to be concerned about Israeli accountability for the funds they raised. It took them ten years until after the Six-Day War in 1967 to gain the reconstitution of the Jewish Agency and the establishment of a serious system of accountability. Then at the end of the 1970s, the Caesarea Process strengthened the federation movement's involvement in the Jewish Agency. A decade later came the release of the Jews of the Soviet Union and the beginning of the mass aliya from that part of the globe.

On the domestic front, following up on its great initiative to systematize fundraising for overseas needs, CJFWF tried to intervene in the United States to impose some order on the community relations field. Its first great initiative was the MacIver Report in 1943. A decade later, local federations that had remained separate from fundraising for overseas needs began to merge the two functions. A decade after that, the federation movement responded to the 1960s student revolts by becoming more "Jewish" in character, and in the mid-1970s, the CJF Review Committee provided for restructuring of the countrywide system. By the next decade, the discreditation of Israel among many American Jews led to a new emphasis on the part of the federations on local communities and fundraising for local community needs, while a decade later, the results of the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey led to a new level of federation involvement in issues of Jewish continuity.

With these two rhythms intertwined approximately every five years, the federation movement confronted a new challenge to concern and occupy its leadership and activists, as shown in Table 2.2.

World War II slowed the pace of expansion of the federation movement as the country's attention was devoted to winning the war. Still, CJFWF was bold enough to try to replicate its success in the overseas sphere by undertaking a major effort to bring some kind of order to the community relations-defense sphere where the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and such lesser lights as the Jewish Labor Committee and the Jewish War Veterans were regularly competing over the same turf. CJF was responsible for commissioning the MacIver Report

Table 2.2

## "GROWTH SPURTS" OF THE FEDERATION MOVEMENT

1895	Founding of first Federation in Boston
1917	U.S. entry into World War I; NY Federation replaces Kehilla
1932	Founding of CJF
1937	Founding of UJA
1943	MacIver Report
1948	Establishment of the State of Israel
Mid-1950s	Federation-local UJA mergers
Early 1960s	Federations embrace community planning, demand Israeli accountability, and organize suburban frontier
1967-68	Federation movement responds to Six-Day War and student revolt
Mid-1970s	CJF Review Committee
1982	Discreditation of Israel leads to new emphasis on local community needs
1990	National Jewish Population Survey; period of reorganization and restructuring begins

which, while it failed to be implemented, did lead to the establishment of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council as an arm of the federation movement, the beginning of the linkage of local community relations councils into an effective countrywide organization, and the harnessing of those councils to their respective federations. That effort also led to some basic agreements between the major "national" community relations organizations to at least divide principal responsibility for different parts of their common turf so that duplication would be reduced.

Thus CJF won a significant victory in demonstrating once again that it could have a major impact on the overall American Jewish community, this time not in its primary field of fundraising but in influencing who would be doing what in the community. That influence, of course, came from the CJF's fundraising

capacities which used the best of its ability at the time to exert its influence. Unfortunately, there were still too many of the very largest local donors who had commitments to the national community relations organizations which they would not relinquish.

The next push forward for the federation movement came in the wake of the discovery of the extent of the Holocaust of European Jewry and the need to provide massive relief and resettlement of survivors, and the special place of Palestine in the resettlement configuration. The federation leadership, most of whom had been reluctant supporters or even neutral or opposed to a Jewish state in the Land of Israel, now rallied around the Zionist effort so as to find a safe haven for resettling the surviving Jews of Europe. American efforts to assist survivors had begun through the Joint even during the war and the Joint was by then well within the orbit of the federation movement.

Once the war was over, a new alliance was formed between the federation leadership (not necessarily through the federations themselves; indeed, usually separately) and the Palestinian Zionist leadership to raise the (for the time) massive funds needed to supply the Jewish Yishuv with the support it needed, and most especially with the money it needed to carry on its struggle to open the doors of Palestine in the face of British opposition, including the armed struggle for a Jewish state. David Ben-Gurion himself took the decision. While the Zionist movement would have seemed to have been the Yishuv's natural allies and indeed did continue to wage the political struggle in the United States, the money in the American Jewish community was elsewhere and that was the principal pool of money available to the Yishuv. Thus, Ben-Gurion effectively abandoned the American Zionist movement to cultivate a by-then successful and wealthy group of American Jews, many of whom had been much enriched by the war effort and who felt the responsibility for their brethren overseas, perhaps even guilt.<sup>7</sup>

In the years from 1946 until the early 1950s, formally through the UJA and informally through hundreds of private gatherings around the U.S., money was raised for purposes of resettlement and struggle until the Jewish state was established, and then to bring in the hundreds of thousands of Jews, first from war-torn

Europe and then from North Africa and western Asia, to the new state to give it a population base that would make it more secure and give those Jews security as well. In all of this the federation movement played a central, indeed a stellar, role. By the time the mass exodus to Israel had come to an end in 1951, nearly a million Jews had been brought to the country and were in the process of being absorbed.

The alliance between the leadership of the new Jewish state and the federation movement had become the rock upon which organized Israel-diaspora relations would be built for the next forty years and more. More than that, as the political struggle for the establishment of the state ended in success, the American Zionists were left without employment. Since most of them were General Zionists while Ben-Gurion was a Labor Zionist, he was not interested in encouraging them to be any more powerful in case they should threaten Labor's hegemony in Israel itself. The apolitical and indeed politically uninterested federation leadership were much more to his taste. They simply wanted to do good for their fellow Jews and had no aspirations to rule or to encourage others of their persuasion to rule in Israel.

The next great step forward for the federation movement came in the mid-1950s as the separate local UJA organizations merged with the existing federations in city after city where they existed. By the end of this movement, separate UJA organizations survived only in New York and in Washington. They did not merge until the 1970s. With the agreement on unification of the New York Jewish Federation and UJA in 1973 on the heels of the Yom Kippur War and its full implementation in 1986, it is possible to say that this task has been accomplished. Once again, the federations had consolidated their positions even further.

The substantive quality and the recurring nature of the federations' tasks also served to strengthen their hands in other ways. They attracted leadership, both voluntary and professional, of the highest caliber available to the Jewish community. In time that leadership, because of the nature of the tasks which confronted it, came to regard Jewish communal problems as interconnected. Federation leaders thus began to concern themselves with the broad range of Jewish needs, not simply with overseas relief or with the welfare functions that had been traditional to the federations in the period before World War II.<sup>8</sup>

By the early 1960s, the federations had taken a new turn. They had begun to become seriously involved in community planning as well as fundraising and allocation. The needs and the sums raised had simply gotten too big for the old style of allocations and the federation leadership, now including a group of first-rate professionals, many of whom had won their spurs in American Jewry's rescue efforts in Europe after the war, began to make concerted efforts to develop a system of community planning that would let their funds be better targeted to needs.

By 1960 most of the major Jewish federations were engaged in community planning of some sort, were supporting Jewish educational and cultural programs as well as welfare, defense, and overseas services, and were beginning to think of themselves as the central bodies for Jewish communal endeavor within their respective areas of jurisdiction. After 1960 federations increasingly began to define the range of their interests as embracing virtually the total Jewish community, excluding only the synagogues. At the same time, on the countrywide plane the CJF began to strengthen its position, often providing the impetus for local federations to become involved in areas that had previously been considered outside their purview. This was entirely consistent with the Progressive spirit, hence it fit easily into the federations' agenda.

There was another modest spurt in the establishment of new federations, primarily in response to the Jewish migrations of the metropolitan frontier. Forty-three new federations were organized between 1946 and 1975, either in areas of new or greatly expanded Jewish settlement where there had been no need for such institutions before or where changing of suburbanization led to reorganization of older urban federations merging into new suburban-oriented structures. Half were established just beyond older concentrations of Jewish settlements, particularly in Connecticut, upstate New York, and New Jersey, and also in such places as Ann Arbor, Michigan, which Jewish population expanded.

While community planning was emerging as the next step on the federation movement's domestic agenda, a new overseas agenda was being developed to establish oversight over funds sent to Israel through the UJA. Utilizing the United Israel Appeal as its vehicle, the federation movement established a

limited system of oversight within the Jewish Agency — the Israeli recipient of the funds and the UIA's agent for their use — as the Jewish Agency Inc., that at least established the principle that American Jewry had both the right and obligation to keep those who expended its funds accountable. Both of these very important steps were essentially internal to the federations and the CJFWF, and at the time attracted relatively little notice.<sup>9</sup>

The next big step did. It began in 1968, partly as a response to the upheavals among Jewish youth in the 1960s and partly as a response to the reawakened Jewish consciousness brought about by the Six-Day War. The Six-Day War gave the federation movement a new sense of pride in the Zionist achievement, a new sense of Jewish peoplehood that transcended political boundaries, and a new sense of the historical role that it played. Their leaders, who before had looked upon their work essentially as philanthropy, suddenly had a sense that it was more than that and that they were part of Jewish history.

In the context of these new or reawakened perceptions, when a group of radical Jewish youth stormed the General Assembly, fortuitously held in Boston, the heart of American academic life, in 1968, to seek a greater commitment to the substance of Judaism and Jewishness on the part of the "fundraisers," they found a receptive ear. The result was a transformed sense of purpose in the federation movement. What until that time had been the secular fundraising arm of American Jewry turned to a recognition of the place of Jewish tradition in their movement and its activities. Basic Jewish rituals — *Birkat Hamazon* after meals, religious services on Shabbat — and a modicum of Jewish study — *divrei Torah* to open federation board meetings, Shabbat programming at the GA — came to be expected. New programs were launched to strengthen Judaism and Jewishness on the campus. An Institute of Jewish Life was established to stimulate and support Jewish programming in the federation movement in the early 1970s. While there was more talk than result and more promise than performance in much of this, there clearly was a change in the movement's commitments.

This was followed in the mid-1970s by the CJF Review Committee which restructured the Council of Jewish Federations in recognition of the new community framing role of the federation movement. Coming just after the reconstitution of

the Jewish Agency, which itself was a product of the new spirit after the Six-Day War, this was an effort to provide the reorganization necessary to make the countrywide arm of the federation movement better able to respond to the new demands of the times. First of all, the name was shortened to its present form to reflect the new Kehilla-like status of the federations and their continental council. The new CJF flexed its muscles and quietly asserted greater control over the United Jewish Appeal through a revived United Israel Appeal, made more responsive to the federation movement. A new generation of professionals took over leadership in the federations and CJF. The Judaization of the late 1960s was institutionalized. By the end of the decade the federations had established themselves as the powerful framing institutions of the American Jewish community.

It was precisely then, as the federations reached their peak, that they ran into new difficulties. The final spurt of federation growth, like the earlier ones, was much enhanced by the federations' role as the American Jewish counterpart for the Israeli partners as Israel was transformed into the loadstone of American Jewish life by the victory of the Six-Day War, reenforced by the threat and victory of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. So did the beginning of Israel's fall from grace in the 1980s affect the federations in the other direction.

As Israel became less mythic and more problematic, American Jews were at the same time becoming more interested in targeted and "hands on" giving; that is to say, directing their philanthropic dollars to issues and projects that interested them as individuals and, in particular, the projects of interest to the new post-1968 America. Federated giving became increasingly less acceptable. The campaigns became flat with absolute increases not keeping pace with inflation. Federations turned to emphasizing local needs rather than Israel as Israel became increasingly problematic in many American Jewish eyes.

The situation was further exacerbated by the new acceptance of Jews in every facet of American life. Increasingly, wealthy Jews could choose between contributing to Jewish causes or to civic and cultural causes of the general community. Many were preferring the latter, out of interest or because of the recognition it brought them.



By the early 1990s, the federation movement perceived itself to be in sufficient trouble to require some drastic surgery. First the CJF undertook another internal reorganization to change its system of governance. This essentially involved changes in governance structure and hardly addressed the real problems of the movement or American Jewry.

Meanwhile, the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, showing extremely high rates of intermarriage and other negative phenomena in American Jewish life, frightened the movement's leadership into a new concern with "Jewish continuity."<sup>10</sup> Commissions were set up countrywide and in many local federations, particularly the larger ones, to look into programs that would enhance Jewish continuity. These long-term efforts are hard to assess this soon after they have been begun.

In a third step, in 1994, the CJF and UJA together established a Commission on National Restructuring. While in theory, mandated to look at CJF, UJA, and all of their affiliates, in fact it seemed to be responding to UJA's interest in eliminating UJA from the constellation of American Jewish organizations on the grounds that it was redundant. This was like using a cannon to shoot a mouse and it unleashed far more than intended as the federation movement entered its second century.

The development of the federations can be seen as passing through three stages, and, in some cases, has entered a fourth. In the first stage the federations were *leagues* of individual operating agencies for joint fundraising. The allocation of funds collected was essentially based on balancing the sources of contributions so that every agency received more or less the same proportion of funds that it might have received through independent fundraising, but the amount was larger. In the second stage the federation structures were tightened; they became *confederations* of their operating agencies and began to assume a role in allocating funds based on some overall planning, as well as balancing the sources of contributions. In the third stage, they became *federations* with important community-planning functions entrusted to them, so that their power stems from a combination of fundraising *and* planning. Their new powers include anticipatory planning and the generation of new functions and agencies on the basis of their planning work. Allocations, while continuing to follow historical patterns, are

increasingly subject to at least significant incremental changes based upon decisions made by the federation leadership.

Some federations, originally the smaller ones but since 1980 some of the larger ones as well, have entered what may be considered a fourth stage, whereby the federations themselves assume direct control over their agencies. In smaller communities where this happened much earlier, these were called *integrated federations*. The agencies were essentially governed by committees of the integrated federation. In most of these cases, if the communities grew larger, the federations began to hive off those functions to separate agencies which they themselves established, still closely affiliated with the federation but no longer managed on an integrated basis.

The same pattern is now found in some larger communities as well, usually with even less independence granted to what would have been an agency in its first form. The first was simply an extension of the idea of efficiency and economy in a smaller community with limited resources. In the second, it is just as clearly a move toward centralization, and as such has very different implications.

Thus we have seen that the demands placed upon the American Jewish community beginning in the late 1930s led to a growing recognition of the need to reconstitute the community's organizational structure at least to the extent of rationalizing the major interinstitutional relationships and generally tightening the matrix. These efforts at reconstitution received added impetus from the changes in American society as a whole (and the Jews' place in it after 1945). They signaled the abandonment of earlier efforts to develop a more conventional organizational pyramid in imitation of foreign patterns, which would have been quite out of place, given the character of American society as a whole.

Pioneering in "single-drive" fundraising in the style of the United Fund (the most important reason for their founding), the federations became the motivating force behind an unprecedented voluntary effort. The exciting tasks of raising funds for postwar relief and for the rebuilding of Israel, which captured the imaginations of American Jews, stimulated a phenomenal increase in the amount of money contributed for all Jewish communal purposes. The impetus provided by fundraising for

Israel redounded to the benefit of domestic Jewish needs as well, since the larger sums forthcoming from the coordinated drives were so allocated as to increase their resources too.

Between 1939 (the first full year of operation of UJA) and 1974, the local Jewish federations in the United States raised approximately \$5.7 billion, approximately \$2.6 billion of which was raised since the Six-Day War. Well over half this amount was transmitted to UJA, primarily for use in Israel, although during the Nazi era and immediately following, a large share went to the relief of Jewry in Europe.

Yet federation fundraising is but the tip of the iceberg. Since the Six-Day War, Jewish communal services linked to the federation have received four times as much support from other sources than from the federation campaigns themselves, virtually all of which comes from user fees (of which hospitals provide the lion's share). Together the federations and their constituent agencies controlled about 75 percent of the public expenditure of the American Jewish community. Another 20 percent — roughly the equivalent of what the federations raise minus the Israel Emergency Fund — was raised primarily by synagogues for their operating expenses. (Unfortunately, the synagogues do not publish budgetary reports, so that we can only estimate the amounts involved.) Perhaps 5 percent is raised independently by various organizations.

After 1982, these percentages began to change. Now it seems that the federations' share is down to closer to 50 percent and perhaps even less. After two decades of "flat" campaigns (except for certain emergencies), other fundraising for Israel is up considerably, and synagogues raise as much as federations do for domestic purposes. Interest in home grown American Jewish "causes" has increased. Large new private foundations, most established by very wealthy Jews who had been leaders in "federation" or UJA, began to represent serious sources of funding in their own right. Despite efforts to prevent them, many new single-cause solicitations for Israel were institutionalized as the bodies benefiting from them established offices in the United States and organized annual campaigns. Moreover, as more and more North American Jews became personally familiar with Israel, they often found greater satisfaction in supporting those single causes than in federated giving. Others

found Israeli causes that reflected the American agenda, such as those associated with women's problems or feminism, to be more appealing. Thus in the function that had made them powerful to begin with, the federations and their ancillary institutions were on the decline.

### Notes

1. Jacob Rader Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776-1985* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989); and *Early American Jewry* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1953).
2. See the five-volume work edited by Henry L. Feingold, issued by the American Jewish Historical Society, *The Jewish People in America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); and Henry L. Feingold, *Zion in America: The Jewish Experience from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1981).
3. Arthur A. Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment 1908-1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).
4. Daniel J. Elazar, *Community and Polity: The Organizational Dynamics of American Jewry* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1980).
5. On Populism and Progressivism, see Russel B. Nye, *Midwestern Progressive Politics* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951); Walter T. Nugent, *The Tolerant Populists* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).
6. Sidney Vincent, *Personal and Professional: Memoirs of a Life in Community Service* (Cleveland, OH: Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, 1982).
7. See, for example, Leonard Slater, *The Pledge* (New York: Pocket Books, 1971).
8. For a history of the federation movement from its inception to 1960 written by an insider, see Harry L. Lurie, *A Heritage Affirmed* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1961). Lurie was the long-time executive director of the CJF through its formative years. Carrying the story further are Charles Miller, *An Introduction to Jewish Federation* (New York: Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, 1976); Philip Bernstein, *To Dwell in Unity: The Jewish Federation Movement in America since 1960* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1983); Sidney Z. Vincent,