RELATIONSHIP OF FEDERATION TO ITS AGENCIES AND THE SPECIFIC RE-

SPONSIBILITIES OF EACH

by ARTHUR ROSICHAN

Federation of Jewish Community Services, Montreal, Canada

CINCE the term "relationship" is an Dimportant one in my title, I have looked up the definition of "relationship" in Webster's Dictionary. The synonym for "relationship" is "affinity" and under "affinity" one finds the following definitions: "kinship, relationship, conformity, connection." All of these words provide possible clues, but I became much more interested in the biological definition for "affinity." This definition is "a relationship between species or higher groups dependent on resemblance in the whole plan of structure and indicating community of origin."

I think that the defintion of "affinity," and particularly the biological definition, provides the basic approach to what I want to say, because this definition specifically mentions a relationship between higher groups dependent on resemblance in the whole plan of structure and indicating community of origin. In what we are doing in the Jewish field today there is a definite community of origin because more and more. I think, we are, both laymen and professionals alike, inclined to think in terms of the totality of Jewish life and the indisputable relationship of every segment to every other segment.

In examining the question of relation-

ship or affinity, the first thing that has to be done is to try to determine the components going into the relationships in which we are all interested. At the risk of oversimplification, I find three things that require basic examination. (1) The principles on which, or by which, Federation was formed; (2) the milieu in which it was formed and in which it exists today, and (3) the people responsible for maintaining the principles of relationship which exist.

I submit that in the discussion of any relationship these three factors are the crux, and any analysis of problem areas requires analytic consideration of the three basic components.

The idea of Federation started with the somewhat platitudinous assumptions (1) that in unity there is strength, and (2) that somewhere in our variegated patterns of community structures there needed to be an organization, call it what you will, which could look at the totality of our needs, how they should be met and should be related to each other, instead of a series of independent structures which operated each on its own and the devil take the hindmost.

I am sure that our founding fathers did not articulate the second part of that philosophy. I think that what they probably did was simply to determine that it would be easier to support many agencies out of one pocket which appealed to more people for support than to continue with a lot of independent appeals, none of which were getting the money they needed, and all of which, to some extent, were duplicating services. In "Pioneers of Progress," the story of the Boston Federation, this point is very clearly made.

As time went on, with changing needs and increasing complexity of living conditions, our founding fathers began to realize that financing alone was not enough because it did not cure all of the evils. It simply perpetuated some and gave some agencies more money to continue doing what they had done before. So they got together and decided that financing and planning were indivisible and that there should be some attempt at central planning to meet the basic needs which were developing because the agencies they were financing had the same aim of serving people in trouble. although they used different methods and different approaches and in many cases served different groups.

There were those who objected to socalled central planning because (1) they felt that authority would be taken away from them and (2) because they had vested interests, and there are those in today's communities who still feel that central planning implies control and the authoritarian approach. They were willing to gamble, however, having found out that more money was raised this way. Out of these negative circumstances came a positive approach to planning for the community as a whole rather than for all of its parts individually and unrelatedly. Interestingly, this is analogous to the way in which the United States of America was formed and to the process of Confederation which took place in Canada.

As time went on, those who opposed the validity of central financing and planning became less vociferous because they saw a type of completeness in serving the community and in meeting new needs which benefited the whole community. There are still, however, a number of people who are giving lip service to the principle of Federation but who feel that their agencies would do better on their own.

Central financing and its concomitant. central planning, began to spotlight still another facet of the relationship, and that is the facet of co-ordination. Here again, I refer to the dictionary definition, because co-ordinate means "equal to and not subordinate." The definition of coordination is "the state of being co-ordinate by creation of harmonious adjustment or function." Here, too, I think that there has been a great deal of confusion, because most people think of co-ordination as being a limiting device instead of being an equaling device. To me, Federation stands for equality of all agencies, whether large or small. I do not mean equality in budget, because needs differ and therefore budgetary allotments have to differ, but I do mean equality of representation and equality of consideration.

To me, functional agencies are not subordinate to each other, nor do I see them as subordinate to Federation, because they are Federation's life blood. It is because of their services that Federation exists. I am not going into a discussion of the functional Federation at this point because, basically, it has no agencies-it has only services-but I am talking about the Federations which have a variety of agencies, large or small. Federation, to me, is not only a financing body and a planning body, but it is a co-ordinating body which has the responsibility not only of equating the agencies but of bringing them also into harmonious adjustment. There are other implications in co-ordination, which are pragmatic and realistic—such as seeing that there is no duplication and seeing that the Jewish community, in so far as it has a total voice, does voice its opinion about community needs, in order to bring about adjustment of agencies to each other and to Federation itself.

In my own personal concept of Federation's principles of operation, I see it as having another function which, basically, should be a part of planning, and that is the responsibility to make sure that the community's agencies operate by the highest conceivable standards, not only because standards are important, but because the people whom we serve are entitled to the best type of service, for only the best type is desirable in today's world.

In discussing Federation's relationship to its agencies, the second factor after determining the principles upon which Federation was developed, is an examination of the circumstances in which Federation was created, including the milieu within which it has operated and is operating. These still differ from city to city and, here, such factors as the historical background of the community, community tradition, the type and background of individuals who founded the Federation, the kinds of services needed, the agencies and set up, their policy statements, the relationship of the Jewish Community to the community-at-large. the relationship of Federation to the Community Chest and to the United Fund, etc.; all play a part. In many Federations, one agency has played a dominant role, not only in the creation of Federation but in its development, and that agency might have a disproportionate share both in the total community's budget and in the community's policy making.

In some communities, community chests have taken over the prerogative of line by line budgeting, dealing directly with the agencies from the standpoint of standards, financing and policy mak-

ing. I cannot help but feel, personally, that this development has vitiated the effectiveness of Federation from a planning standpoint, and has vitiated as well the principle of an organic central agency with equal parts. This, too, is a matter on which there are different points of view and the existence of this differentiated relationship lends credence to the proposition that the milieu within which a Federation exists has a definite effect upon the relationship between Federation and its agencies.

Sometimes the attitude of the general community and its geographical location have had an effect upon the development of a central body. Some communities approach their problems conservatively and always have. Some are willing to experiment because the community has a tradition of experimentation and developing new things. Some communities have grown so fast that Federation is still emerging and its character has not completely developed.

And now let us come to an examination of the third component in relationships, and to my mind the most important one, the human factor. It has been said that peace treaties are mere scraps of paper without the willingness of the nations signing the treaties to abide by the words written on them. In our time we have seen how valid this statement is with armistice agreements in the Near East. Principles of relationship can be carefully worked out, most carefully worded and carefully written down, after a tremendous amount of argument and discussion, and can be made completely ineffective immediately thereafter by the human beings responsible for the maintenance of those relationships.

When we talk about Federation agency relationships there are two groups of human beings who constitute the human factor. One group is the executives and the other the Board members.

From my observations over the years

that I have been in this profession, in any community where the Executive Director of the Federation and the Executives of the agencies get along well, both from a professional and a personal standpoint, there is little or no problem of relationship between Federation and its agencies. There may be dissatisfactions, but these exist not only in Federation and agency relationships but in every facet of life. However, where either the Executive of the Federation agency or the Executives of functional agencies are authoritarian in approach, conflict must eventually result.

Where there is a jealous guardianship of rights and prerogatives, and a vested interest approach on the part of one or the other, there can be no mutuality of interest, because mutuality of interest implies an understanding of the total problem. It implies also harmonious equality and a willingness to compromise for the best interests of the people who are being served.

Very frequently one of the problems that complicate our lives as Executives of Federations is that we sometimes forget that we, in our positions, have not only to do a good administrative job, but have to see that the people in our communities who require our help get the best kind of service from the agencies that it is possible to give. The acceptance of that philosophy must be prior and paramount in the maintenance of good executive relationships. Executives are human just like other human beings, even though from some of the remarks I have occasionally heard regarding the virtues and vices we are supposed to possess. I wonder whether the conception of an Executive as a human being is always true. The stresses and strains of our jobs are undoubtedly sufficient to create maladjustment, some very interesting forms of schizophrenia and, at times, even delusions of persecution. With all of these the Executive has to be

his own caseworker. When I say that an Executive has to be his own caseworker, I do not wholly mean in order to treat his own particular form of paranoia or schizophrenia, but also so that he may be able to use a casework approach in his dealings with the Executives of the functional agencies.

I would not even try to enumerate all of the qualities which a successful community organization Executive should possess, but I am sure you will find them listed in Dale Carnegie's "How to Win Friends and Influence People." He needs insight, tact, understanding, sensitivity, and he needs those qualities in the kind of generous doses which make it possible for him to work with the many types of laymen with whom he comes in contact. There is one approach which he must avoid like the proverbial plague—and that is the authoritarian approach, because in the nature of our Jewish community there could be no such approach by a professional, a laymen or an organization which could serve the best interests of the community.

We are prone to talk about the influence of our Boards, and I must ask how, in the name of common sense, can it be possible for our Boards to exercise a constructive role in the maintenance of good Federation agency relationships, if co-operation among professionals is lacking? If the Federation Executive is authoritative and imbues his Board with the idea that there can be no crossing the authority of the Federation; or if he is secretive and unwilling to share his problems with the functional agency Executives; or if he is impatient, unwilling to listen to the problems of his agency Directors so that he might try to understand objectively the different situations with which they have to deal, how can there be any constructive relationship? If, on the other hand, the Executive of a functional agency guards the rights and prerogatives of his agency as if it were

some sacred relic from the long distant past, not to be viewed or touched by the high and mighty from Federation, how can the kind of co-operative complementary relationship that is so essential be developed?

I would like to reiterate again, and emphasize as best I know how, that if there is a single factor which has a subtle and important bearing on the relationships between Federations and its agencies, it is the relationship between the Executive of Federation and the Executives of its agencies. I know that not all Federation Directors possess the so-called ideal characteristics, and it is probably true that functional agency directors may be lacking in a few of the essential attributes, but this is one area in which a certain amount of selflessness is required, and we have to work toward it as openly as we can. I have emphasized this because unless there is complete empathy between ourselves as professionals, the relationships between Federation and its agencies, regardless of written principles, communal conditions, or the best intentions of the people on our Boards, cannot help but founder.

And now to some discussion of our Boards. Interestingly enough, although there are unquestionable areas of conflict between Board members of Federation agencies and Board members of functional agencies, I do not regard them as insurmountable.

We all have Board members who have certain fascistic leanings or Napoleonic complexes. We all know about long-standing personal feuds and jealously guarded vested interests of Board people, but I have found over the years that the conflicts between Boards can always be worked out with the aid of the wiser, calmer, stabler Board members who understand human relationships. I have also found out that the guidance of a professional Executive, who is looking for peace and unity rather than con-

flict and authority, can be extremely helpful in settling these problems. I have watched compromises being made, and have seen one step backward being taken so that two steps forward can be taken. If we who are professionals can control our emotions, and can guide the men who actively set the policies of our agencies, in order to avoid open conflict, compromises and settlements are not hard to come by. I do not know whether this ideal state of affairs about which I am talking exists in any community, human beings being what they are, but I would hope that all of us who are Executives, whether of Federations or of functional agencies, might work toward this kind of understanding.

I know that sometimes a budget cut rankles and that sometimes the inability to get a program through when one of the sister agencies has gotten a new program causes real heartaches. I would hope, however, that the things we are doing are important enough to make us work for tomorrow when we may have that new program and the restoration of that budget cut. As long as compromise is the law of life, so must compromise be one of the laws of our lives in an attempt to achieve the type of planned equality and harmony so essential to community understanding. To strengthen my point further, one has to look at the developments that took place in 1947 and 1948 and that have had lasting effects. In all of our communities, the Zionists and non-Zionists, Federation Executives and agency Executives, recognized the existence of a real emergency created by the development of the State of Israel. We all got together and we worked to do something of which we can all be very proud. We learned then that what happens overseas is important to us and that what happens to us has importance for the solution of our overseas problems.

I have been talking about one Federa-

tion Director's point of view and I have been emphasizing, possibly too much, what I see as the professional's role and the factors which affect the relationship of Federation and its agency. I have not talked about line-by-line budgeting, that continual source of irritation between agency and Federation, but I submit that even that source of irritation is blunted by compromise and by understanding.

Let us consider briefly the responsibility of the functional agencies. It seems to me that the job of a functional agency is to perform its service with the highest possible level of standards, to set the policies for agency operation. to avoid duplicating the same job if done by another agency, and here I should interject that I have seen agencies arrive at mutual understanding through both professional discussion and committee discussion without fireworks. Beyond this, I think that every agency has a basic responsibility for planning not only to meet unmet needs but in planning to do its job better and more thoroughly for the total community.

In consonance with what I have stated previously, and the acceptance of the theory and definition of co-ordination, I do not think that any plan can be completely unilateral, whether it is projected by a functional agency or projected by Federation. It is not important where the planning originates but it is important that, if the planning originates in the agency, then the agency has the responsibility to the community it serves to consult with Federation, if there is a Federation. If Federation initiates the plan, then it has a basic responsibility, which I would hope all Federations would recognize, to consult with the agencies involved in this function, in order to develop the most practical and feasible plan for serving the community.

Again from my own standpoint, I

would recommend that every functional agency should have its own planning committee, because I think it is good for the agency to look into the future. I think it is good for the agency, too, to study its own operations frequently, maybe jointly with Federation, so that the mistakes of the present can be corrected in inspection of the needs of the future.

I cannot complete this paper without a few words on a delicate matter, and that is the subject of autonomy—that word which occurs and reoccurs, usually to the accompaniment of a good deal of flag waving and finger pointing. I looked that up in the dictionary too-it means "right of self-government; a self-governing state": The word "autonomous" means "Independent in government; self-government; without outside control." If we accept the philosophy that we live in a society in which the interdependence of man has been pretty well established, and I think that that belief has been well accepted, then there can be no such thing as complete autonomy under the terms of the dictionary definition. I am only saying what the sociologists and the political scientists and our religious and spiritual leaders have said, that in today's society no man can be a law unto himself. Just as this is true in the case of individuals, so is it true in the case of organizations and agencies in our society and in our Jewish Federations. We are all interdependent. Federation is founded upon the services our agencies give and it lives by these services. It is founded upon the desire of the community to be able to have a voice in what goes on and to determine the essential tasks for people who need service. Our own existence as social workers is based upon the interdependence of man.

In family life we sacrifice autonomy as individuals in order to have a better family; in community life we give up part of our autonomy in order to build a better community: and so on up the scale in trying to build a better world. I always like to use the analogy made by Joseph Goldstein, a member of the Board of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, who once pointed out that, although the individual states in the United States all have a measure of self-government, they are not completely autonomous since they helped form a federal government in order to achieve the maximum good for the maximum number of people. In Canada, Confederation of the provinces was established, developing a federal government for the same reason. It took a certain amount of autonomy away from the provinces but it bettered the lot of Canada as a whole. In both these countries the tremendous social welfare measures which are developing would not be possible if the states and provinces had complete autonomy. The development of our Federations to meet the newer and emerging needs would have been limited if every one adhered to the literal meaning of autonomy.

I feel that all of us should stop using that word as we have been using it and that we should think of ourselves as partners in a cooperative enterprise which, for want of a better term, is called Federation. We will all sacrifice a certain amount of independence for the common good, but none of us will lose the right to develop the basic policies for the services which must be carried on.

We cannot expect everybody to think alike, to look alike and to act alike,

although our college campuses are beginning to indicate that there is a trend in that direction. Similarly, our agencies, because they are administered by human beings and governed by Boards which consist of human beings, will always have differences of opinion with Federation, but I have yet to find in any community a difference of opinion which cannot be resolved by conference, by consultation and by compromise.

Our agencies must be free to recruit people and to encourage interest and activity in their particular function, hecause participation is the life blood of communal enterprise. The old "Kehilla" concept which failed in the United States because of our resentment of the authoritative approach cannot be applied in our communal services. Whether it be called Federation, Welfare Fund or Community Council, our central community organization should represent the sum total of community activities, but should represent them in a spirit of equality and in a spirit of partnership in which many join for the common good. All of us, administrators and practitioners alike, have a stake in common with the layman in building a better community. We like to think of ourselves as being in partnership with other professions, but I believe we have to think first, as professionals and as directors, whether it be Federation or agency, of creating a better partnership of our own. In this task we, as professionals, have a major role to play and we can play it well, only if we understand that relationships, like life, are with people.

COMMENT

by MILTON GOLDMAN

Jewish Family and Children's Bureau, Baltimore, Md.

R. ROSICHAN'S paper is full of on a rich experience in social work. His concept of the totality of Jewish life and the interrelatedness of its segments is soundly developed and pertinent to today's discussion. Also the brief historical sketch on the development of the Federation with central financing, planning and coordination is excellent. I could not find a single thing to question about his paper until I came to page four, and read "Federation stands for equality of all agencies whether large or small, equality of representation and equality of consideration." This is a fine principle and one that I would subscribe to in theory, but I believe that the facts of life and the realities of community organization are somewhat different.

In this age of specialization there are differences in agencies, differences in size, in the kind of services offered, in the nature of the responsibilities carried, etc... Our own agency, with Federation approval, has an open-end relief budget, that is, we are not restricted as to the number of relief clients we can help, and we have an open-end foster care budget for homeless children. On the other hand we are strictly limited regarding other aspects of our services where we cannot exceed our budget. Expressed in this is a recognition by our Federation that certain services take

priority over others, and by the same token, in the network of functional agencies certain agencies by virtue of their particular function command from the Federation more consideration of their needs.

It has been my experience that when conflicts between agencies develop over questions, for example, of who should offer certain services, power politics enter as a factor to be reckoned with, and other things being equal, the agency with a Board weighted with men and women of influence and distinction is more apt to achieve its purpose than other agencies less fortunately situated. Circumstances may alter cases, but I think the general rule holds. I do not mean to imply that issues are not decided on the merits of the case, but it is generally helpful to have on a Board forceful, eloquent speakers whose words carry weight in higher Federation councils.

Mr. Rosichan has also suggested that functional agencies are not subordinate to Federation, but are, presumably, on the same level. I wonder whether he really believes that. In fact, I see no practical purpose in trying to persuade anyone that functional agencies are not subordinate to Federation. If Federation is to carry out its functions of central planning, of avoiding duplication of services and eliminating out-moded services, it must, and should, have powers that functional agencies do not possess.