



# THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

*Preserving American Jewish History*

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series A: Writings and Addresses. 1947-1991

Box 2, Folder 15, "The Future of Organized Religion: A Jewish View", 6-8 October 1969.

THE FUTURE OF ORGANIZED RELIGION: A JEWISH VIEW  
by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum  
National Director of Interreligious Affairs  
American Jewish Committee  
New York, N.Y.  
-----

Paper delivered at  
The George D. Dayton Foundation Conference  
Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 6-8, 1969  
-----

Kenneth Boulding speaks of our age as one of "the organizational revolution," (1) that is, an age of large-scale organizations and centralized agencies in various spheres of life. American Jewry (including American Judaism, a distinction about which I will comment later on), along with American Protestantism and Catholicism, is deeply involved in this elaboration of organizational apparatuses, and is continuously aware that "the virtues of religion can seldom be as well organized as its vices."

American Jewry and undoubtedly every Jewish community structured according to the models of Western Jewish institutional life - faces virtually the identical issues raised by Robert Lee in his essay on "The Organizational Dilemma in American Protestantism." (2)

That "organizational dilemma," briefly stated, is this: on the one hand, if the church and synagogue are to take seriously their obligations as prophetic and witnessing movements, they must maintain some semblance of continuity, stability, and persistence; they must work through organizational and institutional forms. On the other hand, the very institutional structures necessary for the survival of the church and synagogue may threaten, obscure, distort, or deflect from the purposes for which the institutions were originally founded. Thus it is hardly enough to say that the task of the church and synagogue is to be obedient, or faithful, if obedience and faithfulness are detached from the question of institutional self-maintenance.

In a very fundamental sense, the critical problem of the church and synagogue is the problem of community. And community always involves



the rational organizational of human resources, as well as more or less defined patterns of group interaction governing the life of its members. We may speak heuristically (not literally) of the church-and-synagogue and community problem by referring to the familiar aphorism cited by Lee: "After the doxology, comes the theology, then the sociology." In other words, after the initial religious experience or the original creative impulse (doxology), soon the need to define and formulate a systematic body of teachings sets in, to codify and articulate a corpus of doctrine (theology); then follows the necessity to preserve and perpetuate the original experience through the organization of a community (sociology)."

After the charismatic prophets of Israel, came the Pharasaic rabbis. This development is often seen, generally by theologically-oriented historians, as a decline in Jewish history, as the beginning of the end for "Old Israel." In reality, as numerous scholars have observed, the Pharasaic rabbis were impelled by the same ideals, broadly speaking, as the prophets; the big difference between them, omitting the question of comparative literary distinction, is that the prophets failed and the rabbis succeeded. Inspiring and appealing as they were, prophetic exhortations probably met with popular rebuff for the most part. The rabbis, on the other hand, molded a people by incorporating prophetic ideals in institutions and halachic law. Ezra is, in Jewish tradition, the last of the prophets and the first of the Scribes, and it was he who set the tone of the entire Second Commonwealth period, which, by its very faithfulness to Torah as the discipline of law bound the people more firmly to God than ever before.

Normative, post-Biblical, Rabbinic Judaism--the Judaism by which believing Jews live today--embodies the twin elements of prophecy and halacha (religious law). The prophetic tradition has given Judaism its passion, its preoccupation with human affairs, its criticism of social evils and abuses. The halacha--mistranslated by the Septuagint as nomos, which connotes rigid and external legalism, made the value concepts of Rabbinic Judaism concrete; i.e., holiness, community, justice, righteousness, into a dynamic pattern of personal and corporate behavior, thus endowing commonplace acts or events with spiritual significance. Through the mitzvah, the performance of the moral, ethical, or religious deed, the Rabbis disciplined Jews to express their relationship to God and love of neighbor in daily behavior, to assert the primacy of compassion and ethical responsibility in every act.

In the prologue to the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19:3-6), the Israelites are enjoined to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (people)."



Martin Buber pointed out that this call applied not only to the behavior of individual members of the Jewish people, but also the nation's--or the whole people's--dedication to God, "with all its substance and all its functions, with legal forms and institutions, with the organization of its internal and external relationships." (3) In other words, the organized Jewish community has religious significance in Jewish theology.

The halachic process, which is distinctive to Rabbinic Judaism as a method of impregnating every aspect of private and corporate life with meaning and value, is an expression of Max Weber's well-known concept of the "routinization of charisma" after the passage of the charismatic leader. The holy must necessarily be related to the profane. As Mircea Eliade observes, in his Patterns of Comparative Religion: "There are no purely religious phenomena... Because religion is human, it must for that reason be something social, something linguistic, something economic--you cannot think of man apart from language and society." (4) There must necessarily be a manifestation of the essence of the church and synagogue. The persistent risk, however, is that in the very process, the instrumental purposes of organizations become exalted as ends.

"The results are paradoxical," Paul Harrison states, "since the goals which the organization was created to achieve tend to be displaced by the goal of organizational self-perpetuation." (4) Organizational imperatives drive institutions to satisfy their own self-generated needs before the group can pursue the goals for which these institutions were established.

The search for that "theoretical point" which will allow the religious institution to remain true to its purposes and yet operate through viable institutional forms that will preserve its positive gains and extend its constructive influence must be an ongoing, never-ending quest. Although there can be no simple resolution of this dilemma, it may become easily obscured, or perhaps, misunderstood, so that equally truncated views are adopted--views which interpret the church or synagogue only as an organization, or as "a spiritual entity" devoid of organization.

Obligations stemming from organizational needs cannot in all cases be perfectly compatible with the obligations of the religious vocation and commitment. What we can hope for is that the tension which is implicit in the organizational dilemma be kept alive.

Techniques for sustaining such creative tension and bringing about changes in our religious (and other major social, cultural and political institutions), are suggested by Richard Shaull in his essay



Containment and Change.

He proposes "the formation of small groups and movements which, whether based inside or outside an institution, force it to accelerate its own renewal. By means of many limited attacks at various points, a small group of people may be able to liberate large institutions for more effective service. This can be accomplished by a variety of techniques: the concentration of effort on limited objectives for a short period; flexibility and freedom of operation, which make it possible to advance to new fronts whenever blocked; the maintenance of initiative and the element of surprise; and the attempt to bring about those relatively small changes that will set a much wider process in motion. Institutions which, as a whole, are unable to act in new ways, can support movements which do have the freedom to do so. One small team, with a certain amount of autonomy and freedom, can transform a large organization; while the renewal of one institution in the center of society can affect others related to it."

Shaul's strategy is based on his assumption that moving out of the "Establishment" and attacking it head-on will accomplish very little. "To attempt to develop new institutions to replace those now existing in each major area of society - a new church or university system, a new labor movement, new political parties - would be an impossible task. Even if such an undertaking were to succeed, there is no guarantee that it would produce institutions any less rigid or more open to the future than those that now exist."

Shaul adds: "Those who are accustomed to a more traditional pattern of institutional loyalty will probably look upon this strategy with deep suspicion. But for those committed to revolution, it may be the one ground for hope that powerful interdependent institutions of a technological society can be changed. In fact, we may eventually discover that in this way a dynamic process can be set in motion that will bring about more fundamental transformations than have occurred as a result of previous forms of revolution."

The real danger of large organizational development of churches and synagogues does not inhere in the organizational structures per se, but rather first, in the need of statesmen, of leaders who lead; and second, in the ethos that often undergirds mass organizations. The absence of "spirituality among spiritual leaders," of models of ethical integrity and religious humanism, contribute to undermining the credibility in any special quality of religious institutional life.



Religious groups not merely conform, but frequently overconform to the worst features of America's commercial, business ethos. Examples abound: one religious body has adopted the symbols of status of a corporation hierarchy to the extent that there are four different shapes and sizes of desks, each of which is assigned to denote a particular status in the hierarchy of the organization. In another agency there is an unusually great social distance between those on the executive and secretarial staff, so that it would be unthinkable for executives who bring their lunch to eat in the same room with the secretaries who bring theirs. The terms used to designate leaders of most religious structures are adopted from the business world: executive secretary, executive vice-president, treasurer, board of directors, board of managers, etc. The seeds of the organizational dilemma are contained in the very institutional structure of the churches and synagogues as they interact with culture. (6)

There is always the risk that the church or synagogue as employer, money raiser, and investor may obscure their role as "the household of faith."

It is tempting for most clergymen to sneer at "the bureaucracy" in their denominational or national headquarters, without discerning it in their own local situation. For wherever a clergyman has a secretary or janitor there is a bureaucracy. One of the most talked about issues among clergymen for some time has been the problem of multiple roles of the modern minister and the increased demands made upon his time merely to keep the organizational machinery running smoothly.

Clergymen have yet to learn how to work together in a team relationship for they bring a strong individualistic bent to their leadership of their churches and synagogues. The case of the assistant pastor, priest, or rabbi who is often relegated to the role of an errand boy, the need for an adequate grievance machinery are part of the ethos problem of the religious institutions. The social distance between pastor and parishioner, as administration superseded ministrations. The organizational dilemma in the local parish or congregation is a serious one involving the increasing gap between the man in the pulpit and the man in the pew, between leaders and rank and file members.

This dilemma is nowhere more evident than in the large urban, metropolitan, and suburban synagogue and church. These large congregations tend to make conventional members who are increasingly becoming spectator worshippers. The large urban and suburban synagogues and churches are

symptomatic of the shift from a communal to an associational pattern, in which face-to-face primary group relationships are weakened. Segmental participation or partial involvement in many special interest associations take the place of a community-centered focus.

As churches and synagogues increase their size beyond a certain point they become exceedingly difficult to maintain adequate communications between leaders and members and an adequate sense of community among their own members. Since membership size is a symbol of success in our culture, it appears that the large urban-suburban churches and synagogues are victims of their own success. Thus the consequence of the organizational revolution for the churches and synagogues call into question the very meaning of religious membership.

These contradictions have become the basis of one of the most serious crises in the American Jewish community's relationships with its young people.

Jewish youth is rapidly creating its own "counter-culture," equipped with its own community rabbinic seminary (Havurat Shalom - Fellowship for Peace) - Community Seminary Cambridge, Massachusetts, for example, its own Jewish social action bodies (Fellowship for Action, Naaseh - "We Will Act"); a Jewish radical group (Jewish Liberation Project); and its own publications (Response).<sup>7</sup> The mood and rhetoric of their statements and articles express alienation and resentment toward the "Jewish establishment."

"Institutions must be understood only as means and not as ends, as vehicles for the realization of the ideas they serve," one Jewish student leader writes.

In Response, another youth spokesman asserts in an article extolling the virtues of the Havurat Shalom Community Seminary; "The occasions are rare when one feels that he has become part of an institution to which he can faithfully dedicate himself, for what he wishes to accomplish is what the institution stands for." (8)

And again criticizing Jewish educational institutions and their programs, a Jewish collegiate spokesman writes: "Jewish youth is in a crisis that our leadership is unaware of. Legions of our young people are rejecting organized religion not because they have abandoned their souls, but precisely because they seek their souls."



And he adds: "Students perceive a frightening purposelessness in the lives of people and society. They value honesty and individuality in a society they recognize as overrun with conformity and hypocrisy. They seek a prophetic element in our culture, a reminder to be uncomfortable in our comfort," concluding that "organized religion has distorted its role and traded its gods."

The generation gap, in my judgment, is the most serious internal problem of the organized Jewish community. Eighty per cent of Jewish college age youth are enrolled in our major colleges and universities. Rabbis and Hillel directors on college campuses estimate that some 50 per cent of the activist campus youth, both radical and "new left," are Jews. Membership of the Peace Corps, comprised mainly of post-college young people, is 40 per cent Jewish. It seems increasingly clear that there is a widespread belief among Jewish young people today that the values of the academic community and a high level of Jewish commitment are antithetical. The student ethic is anti-middle class, and the Jewish community organizations are heavily middle class. The Jewish community organizations and synagogue institutions appear to Jewish young people to be structured mainly around ritual and money-raising and silent on most issues of interest and concern to students.

To the extent that these institutions do speak or act, they do not appear to demonstrate any significant advantage over secular organizations with similar concerns. Among Jewish youth, the price of being Jewish has risen. The organized Jewish community is faced not so much with rebellion as with apathy.

To maintain that organizations and human institutions are inherently corrupt or constitutionally incapable of serving human purposes in any significant way would be untenable both from the standpoint of theology and sociology. For rational forms of procedure may, indeed, enhance and facilitate the performance of purpose and function; this is certainly their intention. And to focus exclusively on the dysfunctions of large-scale organizations surely neglects the ways in which such organizations help toward the realization of good purposes in the modern world. Large-scale organizations provide new possibilities for creativity and, at the same time, new institutional vulnerabilities and hazards.



community

Recent experience of the Jewish/engagement illustrates this point. In June 1968, the American Jewish Committee, which is seen by some Jewish young people as the "Jewish establishment" incarnate, met with several Catholic priests and Protestant relief representatives who had been serving in Nigeria and Biafra. The story of starvation and death afflicting millions of black people in this tragic situation had a profound impact on the consciences of the American Jewish Committee's lay and professional people who met with the Catholic Relief Services and Church World Service spokesmen. Literally, within 48 hours, AJC convened the senior executive leadership of 23 major national Jewish community organizations--rabbinic, synagogue, community, human relations, social welfare, philanthropic, education - in fact, the entire Jewish establishment. With unprecedented unanimity, these organizations established the "American Jewish Emergency Relief Effort for Nigeria-Biafra." Employing the entire institutional apparatus of Jewish life--fundraising and communications systems, appeals from synagogue pulpits, chapter meetings, and so on--the organized Jewish community raised, within a few months, approximately \$350,000 in cash, and some 500 tons of food, clothing, and medicines. (Unprecedented, too, was the fact that these resources were turned over to the Catholic Relief Services and Church World Service to be distributed through their very effective channels in Nigeria and Biafra.)

In addition to this relief undertaking, the Jewish community took the initiative, along with Catholic and Protestant leadership, in sending a series of delegations to the State Department in order to press for greater innovative responses in our government's policies and actions to bring about a cease-fire or truce in Nigeria. Unless cessation of hostilities is brought about, and soon, all of us will have poured our relief supplies into a cemetery.

The salient message in this ecumenical, interreligious action thus far, it seems to me, has been lost on the nation, and certainly on our youth. However one may feel about the ideological and political problems involved in Nigeria, the fact that millions of people were dying or being massacred before the eyes of the world confronted peoples and governments with a heartrending moral and humanitarian challenge. The plain truth is that except for the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish "establishments" which concerned themselves without letup, with this problem, no constituency in this nation has pressed the case for relief and human rights in behalf of the innocent victims of this tragic struggle. I shudder to think how much greater the human carnage might have been if no Christian and Jewish institutions, employing their organizational structures and systems, had listened to the cries of need.



(It is not my intention to overlook the important contributions of the International Committee of the Red Cross, UNICEF or other bodies. But it is a matter of record that the work of the international and national Catholic and Protestant relief bodies, with help from the Jewish community, has been the most sustained on the relief front, and unique on the human rights front.)

In his stimulating study, Landmarks of Tomorrow, Peter Drucker observed that "at some unmarked point during the last twenty years we imperceptibly moved out of the Modern Age and into a new, as yet nameless, era."9 This new "post-modern" phenomenon still lacks definition, expression and tools, but it effectively controls our actions and their effect. In this age, the new and central institution is the large organization. Organization created energy and performance vastly superior to what any individual, no matter how skillful or how experienced, could have produced. The new organization, with the new capacity to organize men of knowledge and high skill for joint effort and performance through the exercise of responsible judgment, has emerged as a central institution everywhere, under free enterprise and under Communism, in developed countries and in underdeveloped ones.

Youthful idealists who uphold the ideal of a new social order based on mutual interdependence, of a new society in which the worth and dignity of the individual person is affirmed, need to reckon with the fundamental truth that spiritual freedom is impossible without man's liberation from bondage to material destitution. Material things must be put in their proper subordinate place as a means to a higher end, but the first moral and human obligation is to help the poor and the deprived. Both America and the underdeveloped nations must reach a level of material subsistence where men are no longer controlled by starvation, no longer at the mercy of every cloudburst, hailstorm and drought. The name of the game of realizing material independence for individual and society alike is economic development. In socialist terms, this is what is meant by the emergence to freedom from "The kingdom of necessity."

There is adequate evidence to affirm that men, both here and abroad, can improve their economic lot through systematic, purposeful and directed effort, employing the available organizational and technological tools. Economic development requires an intricate distribution system; a financial system to make possible the distribution of goods; and a marketing system that integrates wants, needs and purchasing of the consumer with capacity and resources of production.

There are indeed serious moral and ethical questions raised by the new centrality of organization. The issues are more realistically



formulated and yield potential for constructive resolution in the terms of Peter Drucker:

"The organization has to have power over people. Yet in a free society it must never be allowed to become an end in itself for which the individual is just a means. It must never be allowed any power over individuals other than what is absolutely necessary for its function in, and contribution to, society. It must never be permitted the dangerous delusion that it has a claim to the loyalty or allegiance of the individual - other than what it can earn by enabling him to be productive and responsible...

"Every organization serves but a partial function in society and satisfies but one of many human needs....It must never substitute its partial interest for the common weal. It must never, for instance, demand or expect of a man that he do his job at the expense of his responsibility as a husband and father, a citizen, a church member or a member of a profession." (10)

Despite "the verbal ferocity" and "the Spirit of Overkill" - Benjamin De Mott's terms - that characterize some of the radical and militant protest, the persisting issues beneath the rhetoric are fundamental and pressing, namely, the crisis of identity, of selfhood in a society dominated by massive institutions-- a system in which advancement is a sign of success and is frequently bought at the expense of personal fulfillment. The issue touches social ethics and social mores, but in its deepest reaches it is profoundly theological. Neither Jews nor Christians, as far as I know, have even begun to deal with this challenge in terms adequate to its size and importance.

One of the few theologians struggling with this aspect of the theological identity crisis is Professor Herbert Richardson, whose book, Towards An American Theology, deserves much wider attention than it has received.

"The intellectus (the matrix of meaning) of modern Christian individualism is established on the principle that what is ultimately real is personal self-consciousness, the indubitable foundation, even the unrecognized presupposition of all else. All else can be doubted, but the doubter cannot doubt himself. Christian individualism that acknowledges the primacy of self-consciousness and conscience gave rise to democracy and capitalism," Richardson states. (11)

"The modern period of history is being superseded by the socio-technic age. Sociotechnics, the new knowledge whereby man exercises technical control not only over nature but also over all the specific institutions that make up society - economics, education, science, and politics - is replacing even politics as the dominant method of social control.

"Sociotechnics regards the free decisions of individuals as mere quanta to be ordered with the system of mass society, the compass of rationality itself. The new sociotechnical movement, displaces the ultimacy of individual self-consciousness and free choice. In subordinating these values to sociotechnics, it also rejects the conception of a transcendental personal God who undergirds them. This pantechnicism which appears to be emerging in our time appears to be destroying the individual person and overthrowing the 'holy ultimates' of the modern period of history. This transformation is inevitable."

Asserting that "the high valuation of personal self-consciousness is simply the projection of seventeenth century philosophy into Scripture," Richardson adds:

"Theology must develop a conception of God which can undergird the primary realities of the cybernetic world, viz., systems. Ethics must reorient its work in terms of these systems and forms on the problem of control. Cybernetics is concerned with the control of the probability systems whose terms are the manifold decisions of individuals. Just as the personal God of the modern intellectus undergirded the ultimate value of individuals, so the God of a sociotechnic intellectus must be reconceived as the unity of the manifold systems of the world. Such a God will not only be the encompassing whole, and the principle of individuality, but most importantly, he will be the unity of an encompassing system of relations. Such a conception has already been developed by earlier American theologians whose vision of God was essentially social.

"New ethical principles are needed to enable men to live in harmony with the new impersonal mechanism of mass society. This socio-technic ethic will affirm the values of a technical social organization of life in the same way that earlier Protestantism affirmed the values of a radical individualism which opposes all social structures in principle," Richardson concludes.



While I believe that Richardson overdraws the opposition between individualism and the social realities of church life, I am impressed by his futuristic probings into the theology of socio-technic age, and I believe they have profound implications for Judaism. In terms of relevance to the emerging world order, it is quite conceivable that the very structure of Jewish peoplehood and the this-worldly emphases of Judaism could become models for restructuring the corporate life of other religious communities. Certain theological strains in both the rabbinic and hasidic traditions emphasizing the goals of holy worldliness may well become more central to the contemporary religious consciousness than heretofore.

"The tradition of Israel," Will Herberg has written, "the ongoing tradition of self-understanding of Israel in relation to its God has always defined Israel as a covenant folk.

"As Jewish teaching has always understood it, Israel is a people brought into being by God to serve him as a kind of task force in the fulfillment of His purposes in history...The vocation to which Israel is appointed by divine covenant is traditionally defined in the term kiddush hashem, sanctification of the name --standing witness to the living God amidst the idolatries of the world...For the Jew, the God of personal existence - 'My God'--is the God of the covenant - the 'God of our fathers.' The decision for God is a decision for the covenant, and the decision for the covenant is a decision for God. The Jews find the living God of faith in and through Israel, and in and through the covenanted people of God, that has stood witness to God through the ages and that finds the meaning of its perilous existence only in its world-challenging and world-transforming vocation."

In this perspective Judaism is more than a religion, more than "ethical monotheism." Judaism has elements of peoplehood, culture, and religion. The concept of Jewish peoplehood incorporates the reality of the land of Israel, which is seen as fundamental to the preservation of the Jewish spirit, and as the major contemporary incarnation of Jewish attempts to confront modernity and shape history in terms of the distinctive Jewish ethos. There is no virtue in Jewish nationalism as such, the late Chief Rabbi Kook of Israel, reminds us; it is "holy and righteous only if it is animated by the longing for perfection." The Biblical challenge to Israel, both people and nation, to undertake the role of "a kingdom of priests" means, according to Rabbi Kook, assuming the obligation as a community "to work and toil with utmost devotion to further the divine ideal of human perfection."

On the face of it, it would appear that these goals of social justice and the emphasis on community ought to have commanded substantial, if not widespread, response and commitment by young Jews to the Jewish community and its institutions.

It would seem, . These themes are central to Jewish tradition and/suggest modes of thinking and action that are the Jewish part of that wave of the future noted by Christians like Richard Shaull, and Herbert Richardson and others.

But how and why did the Jewish community fail to capture its youth?

Why, as Professor Irving Greenberg of Yeshiva University has said, is the Jewish community bleeding to death on the campuses as a result of youth alienation, intermarriage, and apathy.

Reflecting on the writings of young Jews and on numerous conversations leads me to a number of conclusions:

1. The Jewish community is too overorganized to cope with old issues and underorganized to face new situations.
2. The Jewish community is terribly underorganized for accommodating youth culture.
3. The Jewish community is terribly underorganized for providing effective vehicles for serious Jewish participation in American society, and in the solution of world problems.

Several brief comments are necessary.

On the first point: most young Jews today were born after the Nazi holocaust, while their parents, live in the shadow of that traumatic experience. The rise of anti-Semitism in the United States at the height of racial confrontations in the large cities, systematic anti-Semitic campaigns by the Soviet Union and her satellites, anti-Jewish acts by Arab propagandists and threats to Jewish lives by the Al Fatah trigger a conditioned reflex in the older Jewish generation and if this reflex is sometimes exaggerated out of proportion, it should be remembered that the Nazi crematoria burned a lesson into the mind of every Jew over 35 years old today: we take threats of persecution and "final solution" seriously, and we believe what our enemies say.



To many young Jews those are "old" issues and the older generation is "uptight." Especially Jews in the radical left, there is an unconcern about the place of Jewry in the contemporary world. They just don't care about institutions which seek to guarantee the security of Jews.

They have never lived in a world where the State of Israel did not exist and do not know that older Jews continue to feel, despite recent Israeli military successes, that the existence of Israel is still precarious, especially in light of the Soviet Union's heavy presence in the Middle East. In addition, current student ideology is not sympathetic to particularistic loyalties. This is paradoxical and baffling to an older generation which sees enthusiastic support by the new left young of the nationalism of microstates, ministates, and states whose names they have never heard. The radical young see Israel as an inheritance of European nationalisms, which is bad nationalism; the older generation sees Israel as part and parcel of new movements toward self-determination in the Third World, or good nationalism. The point is often made across the generation gap that for the 20 years of its existence, despite an onerous burden of security and survival, Israel has paid for and staffed technical assistance programs to 65 nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; about 1,000 black and colored Asians and Africans have studied in Israel this year in technical assistance, economic development, and nation-building programs.

The support of the people and the State of Israel, the defense efforts against anti-Semitism in the United States and abroad, remain the high priority issues of the major Jewish communal bodies. As long as there is no peace in the Middle East, and anti-Semitism remains part of the group conflict scene, the situation will be hard to change.

Second, preoccupation with valid claims of Jewish survival and defense has until now precluded the Jewish organizations' taking students' problems seriously. Some programs have been carried out by Jewish religious bodies, Hillel, and, increasingly, other agencies, but apparently they are not very effective. As Prof. Leonard Fein of MIT has noted,

"We seek to convert the student to forms that have little to do with his positions and understandings. We patronize the young because we don't have anything really to say to them. In patronizing the student we are wasting the richest potential resource, whose value to us might be precisely his ability to help define



present message of Judaism."

We need new movements, institutions and structures where students can participate in defining the message of Judaism, and where he can articulate and act out his values, experiment with methods for generating social and interpersonal concerns. Jewish education needs to lift its shallow educational goals. Training in character and values for life in the present and the future must become the orientation of Jewish education rather than the teaching of words and texts alone which are primarily past-oriented. Jewish liturgy needs to be reconceptualized in order to enable it to yield its rich potentialities of aiding the worshiper to recover the sense of mystery and transcendence, to that which is more than the everyday; to experience prayer as a means for moral reassessment and recommitment.

## AMERICAN JEWISH

Third, it is a great tragedy that so many young people feel compelled to choose between Jewishness and concern for mankind. The basic moral principles of Judaism are relevant, and the moral insights and historic experience of Jewry can serve as a guide to some of the great issues of the day - Vietnam, Biafra, racial justice, anti-poverty efforts, apartheid, nuclear disarmament, economic development. Many of our young people are not leaving Judaism; they are leaving the Jewish organizational scene which is still far too unreceptive to the young.

In the conviction that Judaism can make a contribution in the contemporary struggle to humanize life, a number of persons in the adult Jewish community, together with young Jewish leaders, have undertaken to explore the possible creation of several new structures which it is hoped will meet some of the needs we have just discussed. Among the models which are being studied are two of special interest. The first is a proposal by two British Jewish leaders, Prof. Raphael Toew of the University of London, and William Frankel, editor of the London Jewish Chronicle, which calls for the creation of a "Jewish World Service" based on the pattern of Church World Service and Caritas International. Following the positive experience of the American Jewish Emergency Effort for Nigerian-Biafran Relief, these two gentlemen have communicated with a number of Jewish leaders in the United States, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East and have received much encouragement.



The second involves a proposal to establish a central Jewish urban instrument on a national basis, which, in addition to serving such other purposes as aid to the Jewish poor, black Jews, and the poor and deprived of other communities, can become a vehicle for leadership training and community organization work for young competent Jewish activists.

We fervently hope that, in time, such programs will become the tangible expressions of the prophetic universalism of Judaism which is so alive, and often so anonymously alive, among our young.

