THE PLACE WHERE THY GLORY DWELLETH: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN JEWISH INSTITUTIONAL SELF-IDENTITY

by

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A Thesis Presented to the FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA in cooperation with HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION, CALIFORNIA SCHOOL in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

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MASTER OF ARTS

IN

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and

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To all those
who have enabled me
to reach this season.
But most of all
to my friends and teachers,
BEN COHEN and
SHARON STERNE
who were there
when I needed them.

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THESIS PRECIS

By making use of an "insight stimulating" example, or employing the case study method, this exploratory study attempts to probe the question: What makes a Jewish human services agency Jewish? By carefully researching the history of Vista Del Mar Child Care Service, formerly the Jewish Orphans' Home of Southern California, the author was able to formulate a tentative hypothesis describing the behavior of three key variables which appear significant in helping determine the organization's Jewish institutional self-identity. The descriptive narrative traces the history of the organizational development of this Jewish agency from its inception in 1908 as an orphanage to its consolidation in 1955 as a psychiatric treatment center for children. The changing social forces in both the Jewish community and the field of social work which significantly impinged upon the development of this agency are highlighted.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: WHAT MAKES A JEWISH AGENCY JEWISH?

Statement of the Problem

In Zen Buddhism, there is a certain method of formal instruction whereby the devotees meditate on simple but profound questions which often possess no one rational answer. A simple example would be: "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" The field of Jewish social work has its own equivalent of this conundrum which runs: "What's so Jewish about Jewish Family Service?" Or by logical extension, what's so Jewish about Jewish community centers, or Jewish hospitals, or any one of dozens of organizations which the Jewish community sponsors and which are at least nominally Jewish?

One way to approach this problem is through an historical case study of one particular agency. Vista Del Mar Child Care Service was selected for this purpose. This agency, with a history of almost 70 years of continuous and varied service to the Jewish community, is one of the oldest Jewish social service agencies in the Los

Angeles area. Throughout its entire history, the agency has been self-defined as sectarian, serving what it has defined as an exclusively Jewish clientele. On a number of criteria such as organizational survival, professional recognition by the relevant accrediting bodies, and continuous growth and capital expansion it has attained considerable success. The focus of this study is an examination of how this agency has resolved the issue of Jewish institutional self-identity in the face of changing social forces. In the process it was hoped to arrive at one "successful" agency's answer to the question: What makes a Jewish social service agency Jewish?

Like all historical controversies this one also has attracted hardened zealots who are passionately devoted to both sides of the question. There are those who would cite the Pirke Avot (sometimes known as Ethics of the Fathers')--one of the 63 tractates of the Mishna--and argue that if an agency relies on Jewish funds and serves Jew and Gentile alike, with no avowed Jewish purpose other than to provide the best services available for all, it has a raison d'être. Others argue with equal vehemence that given the assimilationist forces at work in America and a vastly limited pool of Jewish financial resources, the community should invest its money in those distinctly Jewish services which would serve to further Jewish life;

in short, that Jewish institutions should be instruments of communal survival. It should come as no surprise that there are numerous social work professionals occupying intermediary positions between the two extremes.

My interest in the question was first aroused by Mordecai M. Kaplan (1972) who wrote:

> In the past when salvation meant attainment of bliss in the hereafter, the Jewish civilization was other-worldly in its entire outlook, content and motivation. Now when salvation depends on making the most of the opportunities presented by this world, the form of social organization, the language, religion, laws, folkways and art must so function that through them the Jewish people will help to make the life of the Jew creative and capable of self-fulfillment. Jewish life must not depend upon syllogistic rationalization. It must have body and substance. It must function through vital institutions and articulate itself in a plastic and creative ideology. (p. 513)

Or, to sound a more pragmatic note, Charles Miller (1976), a Jewish Federation executive, observed in describing a rationale for the support of sectarian and/or ethnic services:

> Jewish communal services are . . . more than mechanisms for doing things for people. They are social institutions of the Jewish community; they express our historic, religious, and cultural values; their support calls for unified communal effort and they are therefore unifying influences; they are visible symbols of united communities, visible to the client, to Jews, and to non-Jews. They are therefore concrete affirmations of the will of the Jewish community to maintain its sectarian identity, to develop, and to survive. (p. 31)

Miller goes on to point out that Jewish social service agencies serve as a "major vehicle through which Jews have expressed their acceptance of American civic responsibility." By also providing non-sectarian services to the general community Jewish agencies are able to increase mutual participation and further understanding while fulfilling what has been a traditional religious and moral obligation.

This liberal platform of providing sectarian services in some agencies with a strictly Jewish clientele, combined with offering services to the broader community, including Jews, in other agencies, while still maintaining a more traditional Jewish framework finds fairly wide acceptance within the professional community. The broad spectrum approach represented by this hard won compromise still leads us back to our original question: What's so Jewish about Jewish (family service, centers, etc.)? The fact of serving Gentiles in addition to Jews only further complicates the matter of Jewish institutional self-identity unless one is willing to use source of funds as the sole criterion. Even the use of financial support as an index to sectarian agency identity has become increasingly problematical as more and more agencies of a traditionally sectarian character are entering into financial partnerships with both the federal and local

governments. If one pauses to examine the broader implications of this problem it can easily be seen that it has serious ramifications for any agencies which are providing services within a religious or ethnic context.

Back in 1964, when writing on the subject of assimilation in American life, one sociologist noted:

> "Liberals," well meaning people, and professional intergroup relations workers . . . know that they are against racial, religious, and nationality prejudice and discrimination and want to see these phenomena eliminated from American life. They are "for" equality of opportunity in all areas for all men regardless of "race, creed, or national origin." . . . But the question of whether Negroes, or Jews or Catholics, or Mexican-Americans, should maintain or lose their group identity in this America of the future is one which, for the most part, receives no thoughtful attention or is dealt with largely in cliches. Do we want "total assimilation," "the melting pot," or "cultural pluralism?" (Gordon, 1964, p. 8)

More than ten years later this question continues to plague us and we are seemingly no closer to definitive answers. When today both federal funding and affirmative action are a way of life and show every sign of remaining with us throughout the foreseeable future, the public policy issues accompanying the funding of sectarian and ethnic agencies are clear. Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that such agencies will continue to receive both state and federal funds. One could therefore hypothesize that this issue of sectarian/ethnic institutional

self-identity will become one of increasing concern to a variety of agencies.

Significance of the Study

At a time when cultural and ethnic pluralism is increasingly seen as desirable by responsible representatives of both ethnic minorities and the majority culture, serious attention is being paid to the role of institutions as instruments of cultural survival. An ethnic group's institutions may be envisioned as repositories of "historic, religious, and cultural values" and indeed traditionally, with the exception of those avowedly "sociotherapeutic" organizations which aimed to turn recent immigrants into flag waving Americans (see Brager & Specht, 1973, chapter 3), have successfully played a role which helped conserve their respective cultural heritages. Thus, it is no accdient that in totalitarian societies the first targets are often the specialized institutions of the non-dominant minorities. In a democratic society such as ours, in essence a nation of immigrants, with a protestant majority and countless minority groups, the role which minority institutions could most valuably play vis a vis fostering cultural diversity without wreaking havoc on established norms has never successfully been determined.

Until the turn of the present century human services were largely sectarian in nature; that is, in most cases with the exception of the local unit of government, be it state or county, there was no secular alternative. Since the services provided by the states were generally inadequate and often unsuited to specialized needs, people generally turned to their particular sect or church-related agency. This interrelatedness of religion and the human services dates from before 150 B.C.E (Before the Christian Era) and was precipitated by the emergence of the synagogue as a versatile type of local organization. Thus for the first time laymen were afforded the chance to participate directly in all the related activites. Given this impetus it did not take too long before the synagogues naturally began evolving into agencies geared toward providing "for the wants of the poor, the dependent, and the stranger" (Frisch, 1924, p. 35). Prior to the Christian era, synagogues were performing a diversity of social functions which ranged from assisting strangers in securing appropriate employment to providing direct aid in the forms of shelter, food, and clothing. These activities were later to find their counterparts in the earliest Christian churches.

As might well be imagined, the complexities involved in administering such varied forms of relief

must have escalated rapidly. Thus early on in the evolution of the synagogue a lay president or special official was delegated executive responsibility for social welfare. Before long there arose a group of "special administrators of charity who had no connection with worship" and served without financial compensation. This position of prototypical social worker was at the outset considered a plum job and commanded very high status in the Jewish community. The same basic pattern of growth and development of organized relief was retained by the early Christian churches when they separated from the Jewish community. This arrangement proved durable until about the sixteenth century, when due to changes in population density the need for human services became so pervasive and complex as to require that special funds be set aside to meet specific purposes. At this point, the development of "modern" conditions necessitated that both the Jews and Christians begin to dissociate charity administration from the congregation and from ecclesiastical control (Frisch, 1924). It was also around the 1500s that the state emerged as a more significant funding source in the human services arena.

The uneasy partnership between the state and the various religious sects was to continue basically unaltered until the beginning of the present century which saw

the emergence of the Charity Organization Society (COS) movement. Though the movement drew many of its members from men and women of the cloth, at its inception it was conceived as being largely non-sectarian and secular. It should not go unnoted that to many the publications and work of the COS seemed to reflect protestant ethics and values; nonetheless, it is the self-perceptions of those involved which are of interest and they conceived of themselves as broadly non-sectarian.

Out of the COS movement were to grow both the first non-sectarian, secular, private social agencies and the early schools of social work. With the professionalization of the field of social work, the result was to force lay people to turn over the day-to-day management and operations of their agencies to specially trained social work professionals. As is reflected in this study of Vista Del Mar, and in countless other similar studies, professionalization was in numerous ways a tremendous step forward. It was not, however, an unmixed blessing as regarded an agency's ability to arrive at a meaningful institutional self-identity, particularly for religious and ethnic agencies.

The emergence of the profession of social work also generated, naturally enough, both a methodology and a set of values. Like the COS movement that gave birth to it,

the values of the field of social work were non-sectarian, rationalistic, hopefully scientific, and optimally democratic.

> From its inception, casework has stressed the value of the individual, and for the past forty years, at least, has constantly emphasized the right of each man to live in his own unique way provided he does not infringe unduly upon the rights of others. This emphasis upon the innate worth of the individual is an extremely important, fundamental characteristic of casework. . . . From it grow the two essential characteristics of the caseworker's attitude toward his client; first, acceptance and second, respect for the client's right to make his own decisions--often referred to as self-determination. (Hollis, 1972, p. 14)

It does not require exquisite insight or sensitivity to realize that these values might be in conflict with a religious persuasion which couches the phraseology of almost all its major prayers in the collective "we" and is heavily based on a system of 613 mitzvot or commandments laid down by the rabbis and meant to govern every aspect of an individual's existence.

It should be remembered that Jewish social workers were likewise trained in secular schools of social work, and secular social work values and ideals permeated their conception of practice. One rabbi has observed with regard to Jewish social work professionals:

> Many of them could find little or no rationale in "Jewish social work" and thus conducted Jewish social work agencies with little or none of what we call the "Jewish component" in social work. Thus an anomaly; institutions were created for the

> specific purpose of helping in the adjustment and readjustment of the individual Jew to his environment were often steered by their personnel in a direction which was often inimicable and sometimes hostile to the concept of Jewish religious and cultural values. (Trainin, 1962, p. 9)

A social worker noted in his master's thesis, which was later published, that:

> The essentially secular nature of Jewish social service and the essentially supernatural nature of the Jewish religion must be recognized and reckoned with. While this is complicated by the historical symbiosis of these two major components of Jewish life, the complexity of the problem does not alter the necessity for its solution. (Kutzik, 1959, p. 57)

Unfortunately, this very incisive description of the problem merely resulted in an oversimplified analysis which recommended that Jewish social workers resolve their conflicts "by recognizing and rejecting those Jewish values in conflict with social work." Kutzik is willing to acknowledge the efficacy of preserving a branch of social work which bears the modifier "Jewish," though if one consistently adheres to his prescription, only in an abstract academic sense would there be a practical difference between Jewish and traditional social work practice.

One contributor to the Jewish Social Service Quarterly who chose to remain anonymous had this to say in a short essay, provocatively entitled "Facing Reality "

> Ignorance, adherence to vague "tradition," self-glorification, and exhibitionism characterize the behavior of practically all boards of Jewish social agencies. These differences between Jewish and traditional practice are not conducive either to progress or to satisfactory social service.
>
> In the last analysis, the "separateness" of Jewish social work is merely one of the vestigal remains of a bitter ghetto past, in which one wave of persecution followed another. (Anonymous, 1966, p. 219)

This essay, which has since been reprinted, initially appeared more than 45 years ago; since it was printed, both the field of social work and particularly the course of modern Jewish history have been radically and irrevocably altered. Nonetheless, this viewpoint is still widely held by a respected and influential body of practitioners--some of whom are employed within the Jewish community.

I would argue that, if the above is true and there is no positive value inherent in the maintenance of a distinctly Jewish institutional self-identity among Jewish social service agencies and if we must reject Jewish values which do not conform to the prevailing professional norms, then there is no valid rationale for the continued existence of this type of sectarian alternative. Unlike the Jews in New Amsterdam (Dutch New York) in 1654, newcomers whom Governor Peter Stuyvesant reluctantly accepted "provided the poor among them shall not become a

burden . . . to the community, but be supported by their own nation," we enjoy full legal enfranchisement.

Indeed there is an ever increasing array of human services offered publicly through both the state and federal governments which are being heavily utilized by Jew and non-Jew alike. Even those services purchased privately are heavily subsidized in the form of third party payments by either the government or governmentally subsidized health insurance plans--not to mention the income which accrues to private agencies in the form of government grants and other specialized programs. To return to my original argument if a troubled family can receive roughly equivalent and identical services at a local community mental health facility there is no logical rationale, in financial terms, for the existence of Jewish Family Service. Like all other citizens, Jews pay out an ever increasing percentage of their income in the form of taxes for which they are entitled to centralized public services. Most of the communal services commonly maintained by American Jews owe their existence, at least in part, to a form of voluntary taxation whereby the greater Los Angeles area alone raised some $27 million in 1977 with some $7 million going for local community needs. Jewish communities across the country raise comparable amounts with some doing better on a per capita basis.

Historically, this tradition of dual taxation goes at least as far back as the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe in the late middle ages (Sachar, 1958, chapter 1). In the Polish shtelach such taxation was externally imposed and legally compelled. In the United States, of course, support of the Jewish community is considered to be a voluntary form of charity and must compete with other causes. Jews who do not support the organized Jewish community no longer face the threat of excommunication (cherem) nor loss of vital services; indeed Article XIV (due process) of the constitution guarantees them equal access to all publicly funded services. It is important to remember that in the recent past, in Eastern Europe, while the Jews contributed heavily to the services provided by the state, they were rarely the recipients. Today, if a dual structure of voluntary Jewish communal services is to be maintained in the United States these services must be perceived by both their supporters and beneficiaries as vital to the quality of Jewish life. As a corollary, Jewish life must be vibrant enough to warrant financial support in the first place since reliance on conscience and tradition is no longer adequate where financial sacrifice is involved.

The fund raising apparatus which supports Jewish life in America, as well as meeting enormous obligations overseas, is probably one of the most efficient and

elaborate systems ever created. It has continually served as a model for other religious and ethnic groups and is a tribute to those largely first generation Americans who designed it and set it in motion. Though many are well aware of the long range problems concurrently confronting this strucure, it is not the purpose here to elaborate on them. Suffice it to say that, if this system is to continue to function, adaptive change is inevitable. Today, as always, the Jewish community still endeavors to care for its own, but the federal government is picking up an ever greater percentage of the geometrically increasing tab. Increasingly unrecognizable from the rest of the population, Jews today show an ever decreasing reluctance to turn elsewhere for the services which serve to sustain the quality of life. It is seen as one of the greatest unanswered challenges facing Jewish communal service professionals in the closing years of the twentieth century that those services which Jews are currently receiving in American Jewish communal agencies are more and more indistinguishable from those available in the general community.

Faced with the problem of shrinking communal coffers, those services deemed least necessary to the maintenance of Jewish life, i.e., the services which most closely resemble those heavily utilized

by Jews in the general community and which thus contribute the least to Jewish communal identity, are the first to be substantially reduced. The case of Jewish hospitals is probably the best example currently available and it has the added advantage of being widely known to the average reader.

> Prior to World War II, we often argued that it was necessary to maintain an institution, like a hospital, under Jewish auspices. . . . Yet, at that very time, many Jewish hospitals had abandoned kashrut, permitted the display of Christmas trees, even engaged non-Jewish top administrative personnel. No one was interested in the "Jewish component" in medicine, and, in fact, to raise the question was to invite ridicule.
>
> Today, with hospital internships open to Jews in most non-Jewish hospitals . . . with frozen kosher food served in non-Jewish hospitals, the rationale for separate training, for separate institutions on the grounds of psychologically, therapeutic comfortableness, no longer obtains. In fact we have to resort to public relations to justify their continuance as "a form of Jewish identification. . . ." The reason for a distinctly Jewish medical service becomes fainter if not totally obscured. (Berger, 1962, p. 18)

The percentage of Jewish community support which Jewish hospitals currently receive is an ever declining one. In a recent poll of its readers, a respected Jewish publication reported that 54% of its readers felt that Jewish hospitals received too large an allocation from the Jewish community (Our Readers Speak: Philanthropy, Moment, 1977, p. 44). Indeed in many communities--Los Angeles is for the time being a notable exception--Jewish hospitals

receive no formal financial support except through their own in-house fund raising apparatus. Even locally the continued support of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in the amount of $250,000 continues to be one of the more controversial items in the Federation-Council's budget.

It could easily and soundly be argued that those services which will continue to receive significant financial support from the organized Jewish community are those which are both uniquely Jewish, i.e., without analogues in the general community, and contribute most substantially to the preservation and maintenance of a strong identifiable Jewish life style. Examples of this type of activity would be resettlement of Jewish refugees; innovative activity in Jewish education for both children and adults; support of Jewish culture, i.e., museums, periodicals, endowments for the arts, etc., and programs which sponsor American groups in activities in Israel. The same type of services which are uniquely Jewish also serve to insure that there will be enough identification and commitment on the part of Jews to insure the continued support of the broader voluntary sector of the Jewish community.

There is nothing at all academic about the question: "What's so Jewish about Jewish (family service, centers, vocational service, etc.)?" Indeed with the changing priorities of the American Jewish community the continued

survival of many of these services as non-profit sectarian organizations might well depend on how well they answer this very question. Their answers will also significantly determine both the quality and viability of Jewish life in America.

Study Focus

This study attempted to explore the concept of institutional self-identity in religious and ethnic organizations. It employs the historical case study method and undertakes to examine one organization's resolution of this key issue. The agency under consideration is Vista Del Mar Child Care Service, which prior to 1924 was known as the Jewish Orphan's Home of Southern California.

Useful historical research demands that the historian attempt to bring order out of a series of events which, while suggestive of an overall plan, are just as often seemingly random and chaotic. Thus the researcher attempted to discover whether there was an overall organizing principle by which to be guided in determining which data are relevant, and how an agency responds to a changing socio-economic and cultural context. In the process of executing this research, the following hypothesis was suggested by the contents of the data:

Jewish institutional self-identity appears to be determined by at least three key factors which may be

examined as variables. These are:

1. Financial Sponsorship. Is the funding public or private? What proportion of the agency budget is contributed by these respective sources and for what purposes are these funds allocated? Does the organization actively solicit all its own funds or does the agency receive a yearly allotment from a combined community campaign such as United Way or United Jewish Welfare Fund? What percentage of the institutional overhead is contributed by the board? What constraints do these various sources impose on institutional policy?

2. Religious or Ethnic Values and Practices. This category refers to those rituals, holidays, life cycle events, and body of historical experience which are idiosyncratic to the particular group under consideration. It is suggestive more broadly of a shared belief system or world view which incorporates cultural norms. In Judaism, a complex body of law has been laid down and codified in the Talmud and the later legal literature dependent on the Talmud. How much of this has been incorporated programmatically?

3. Admissions and Personnel Policies. Is the institution run exclusively by and for Jews? How does the institution define who is a Jew? If the organization employs or serves non-Jews, how are they socialized and to

what extent does the institution demand conformity to its idiosyncratic practices and values?

Lay-professional relations become an antecedent variable which determines policy and practice with regard to the three aforementioned key areas. The term lay-professional relations is meant to describe the dynamic tension that occurs between the constituents, i.e., the legally empowered members of the board of directors who serve the agency without financial compensation, and the agency's salaried professional executive director. This is a major source of overall policy directives.

If income, educational level, religious orientation/ethnic identification, and number and type of institutional memberships, may be used as indices by which to measure the level of homogeneity which characterizes a given group of board members, then one may make the following predictions:

Homogeneous board: More involvement in operational decisions but less in determining the policies related to how religious practices and ethnic values will be incorporated programmatically.

Heterogeneous board: Less involvement in operating decisions but more involvement in determining the way in which religious practices and ethnic values will be incorporated programmatically.

It is axiomatic that the more professional the staff which a board employs to manage an institution, the less input the board will have into day-to-day operational decisions. Ideally, the board may begin to devote itself to determining broad policy directives and long range planning.

The practical implications of this theoretical material may be briefly described as the following: Strong homogeneity among a group of board members generally results in shared religious beliefs and comparable values (including ethnic ones). Having arrived at a consensus of opinion, this group will employ an executive who is capable of administering a program which incorporates these practices and values. They will confine their deliberations to other areas of institutional policy provided the executive does not deviate too far from their shared norms. When a board is heterogeneous in composition, as today's boards tend to be in response to increasing demands for representativeness, the picture becomes somewhat more complex. Lacking shared religious beliefs and comparable values, such a board will devote a disproportionate amount of time to questions involving these issues. On those occasions when they fail to arrive at clear policy directives, the initiative rests with the execution to make a decision on an ad hoc basis; such decisions of necessity become personal and idiosyncratic.

Methodology

As described in Sellitz, Wrightsman, and Cook (1976), this study may be categorized as exploratory or formulative research employing the analysis of an "insight stimulating" example. The authors note:

> Scientists working in relatively unformulated areas, where there is little experience to serve as a guide, have found the intensive study of selected examples to be a particularly fruitful method for stimulating insights and suggesting hypotheses for research.
>
> It should be clear that we are not describing what is sometimes called the "case-study" approach, in the narrow sense of studying the records kept by social agencies or psychotherapists, but rather the intensive study of selected instances of the phenomenon in which one is interested. The focus may be on individuals, on situations, on groups, or communities. The method of study may be the examination of existing records, it may also be unstructured interviewing or participant observation or some other approach. (pp. 97-98)

The object of such studies is to develop insights or hypotheses, rather than to test or demonstrate them and thus the study fulfills the key defining criteria for this type of research. While the present study suggests an empirically testable hypothesis, it does not offer quantitative support.

To complete this study, much reliance was placed upon the extensive use of institutional documents, in the form of board minutes which have been carefully preserved since the organization's inception, annual reports,

policy statements, etc. Use was also made, on a very limited basis, of unstructured interviews with key respondents.

No attempt was made to present a broad historical survey of the 70 years of this organization's existence to date. Rather, an attempt was made to offer a broad overview, focusing on key events and issues. The study foci are: the agency's formative years from about 1909 to 1929, which were also the formative years of the organizational structure of the American Jewish community and the profession of social work; the depression years from about 1929-39 with their special demands on human service agencies; then the study shifts to the 1950s when the agency's development into a facility offering psychiatric services is considered. An outline noting key developments and suggesting significant policy issues is offered for various decades.

The relevant literature is of two types which can broadly be described as strictly historical and theoretical. The former relates to early histories of the geographical region, the American Jewish community and the country at large, descriptions of the early histories of comparable institutions, biographies of significant individuals, and other chronological materials. The latter, owing to the complex nature of this study, is drawn from

three sometimes overlapping areas: social work, Jewish communal service, and other Judaic sources. That so many divergent rivulets should merge in an integrated literary stream is not only appropriate but also justified. For, as one editor noted, "The more we consider the function of religion, the more we realize that its primary concern is with humanity, with the improvement and enhancement of life" (Gamoran, 1941, p. V). It is upon this proposition that this study and the nature and direction of my professional life have been constructed.

CHAPTER II

A CONFLUENCE OF CIRCUMSTANCE: THE EARLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

Describing the Jewish orphan's home in its early years, two historians of Los Angeles' Jewry have written,

> the diet was not kosher. To the Jewish community, the children had the old fashioned aspect of wards of the community--individuals regularly contributed food or a treat in honor of a family event, and donated clothing and shoes, and were invited to visit weekly. The children would recite Kaddish for someone's departed relatives or for a benefactor. (Vorspan & Gartner, 1970, p. 178)

Just how accurate is this rather disparaging if casual account? If one stops to analyze the individual particulars, one could hardly find fault with its technical accuracy; however, the whole is often more than the sum of its component parts and this case is no exception.

To begin to understand the Jewish institutional self-identity of this agency means to undertake the exploration of the unique set of international forces which would eventually combine with circumstances peculiar to our own nation and the growth and development of the city of Los Angeles. This unusual confluence of occurrences, involving the break up of the Jewish

communities of Eastern and Central Europe together with the creation of vast opportunities in a young nation on another continent, was what brought into being one of the best organized Jewish communities in history. For the American Jew, regardless of what some might feel to be his theological shortcomings, managed to create a communal infrastructure of voluntary human services which equals or even exceeds any which has previously existed. It was the combination of events--and how they would be played out in what was in the opening decades of the present century a minor Jewish community located in real estate speculator's paradise--which would bring the Jewish Orphans' Home of Southern California into existence.

Two Successive Waves of Immigration

This study is part of the chronicle of what occurred when two great branches of Jewry, representing the development of both the Central and Eastern European Jewish sensibilities and intellectual striving, came to be thrown together on the North American continent after generations of geographic and cultural separation. How did this occur? Although there had been Jews living in what is now the United States since 1654, no numerically significant community emerged until around 1830 when the

first major waves of European Jewish immigration occurred as a response to rapidly deteriorating socio-economic conditions in post-Napoleonic Central Europe. There had been approximately 3,000 Jews in America in 1790, but by 1880 there were a quarter of a million, most of them German or Austrian in origin.

While the Jewish community grew very rapidly, its growth did not keep pace with the even faster increase in the national population, and thus Jews were an exceedingly small minority. Though small in numbers, this group of German Jewish immigrants enjoyed a disproportionate amount of financial success in a variety of business enterprises, particularly merchandising. Though, to be sure, Judeophobia had not been unknown in the United States prior to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, American Jews knew a comparative freedom from anti-Jewish discrimination and prominent Jews were sometimes included in the top social circles of metropolitan areas.

Hardly having had time to "unpack and relax," the German Jews in America found themselves confronting a set of circumstances that must have appeared both unwanted and gravely indicative. For simultaneously with an upsurge in anti-Semitic feeling across much of post-Civil War America, large numbers of largely impoverished Jews began pouring into the United States from Eastern Europe.

Describing the political climate of the times, Feingold (1974) writes:

> The coming of the Jews from Eastern Europe coincided in time with a rapid growth in nativist sentiment. It began in earnest during the period of the Gilded Age (1870-80) and continued almost unabated into the first decade of the twentieth century. Its opprobrium was directed against all groups associated with the 'new immigration.' Sometimes nativism assumed a ludicrous form. Michigan, for example, found razors in the hands of the foreign-born to be a threat and prohibited them from becoming licensed barbers. (p. 142)

Many historians view this post-war period, with its reformist, agrarian-minded "Mugwumps" and anti-immigrant "Know Nothing" party supporters, as one of reaction to the accelerating new industrialization and the consequent dislocation of tens of thousands brought about by the shift away from the traditional agricultural economy. This, however, would have brought small comfort to those making up the German Jewish upper class who began to find themselves systematically excluded where they had once been welcome. The change was brought home to them with cruel force when in the summer of 1877 Joseph Seligman, considered by his fellow Jews (and not a few non-Jews) to be a man of refinement and also a possessor of vast wealth, was refused admittance to the Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga Springs, New York. The Jewish community had the satisfaction of driving a firm

associated with the hotel into bankruptcy by instituting a successful boycott, but it was clear that economic clout would not be enough to stem the rising tide.

Goaded by Czarist-sponsored anti-Semitism, political upheaval, and rapidly deteriorating economic conditions, fully one-third of the Jewish population of the Russian empire uprooted itself geographically in the closing years of the nineteenth and opening years of the twentieth centuries. As part of what is probably the largest wave of mass immigration in history, East European Jews entered the United States in unprecedented numbers.

> Between 1881 and 1910, 1,562,800 Jewish immigrants arrived from the East; 1,119,059 from Russia; 281,150 from Austria-Hungary; and 67,059 from Rumania. In the next four years the total reached 2,000,000. (Feingold, 1976, p. 120)

This represented a 1300% increase, which meant that the American Jewish population increased at 11 times the rate of the rest of the United States.

America's German Jews, who at this historical juncture would undoubtedly have preferred as much lack of visibility as possible and who from the time of their arrival tended to blend with the larger population as much as possible, were suddenly confronted with a conglomerate of fellow Jews who by their manner and dress were even more conspicuous than most other ethnic

minorities. With their gaberdines, side curls, and broad hats, and governed by a myriad of what must have seemed to many Germans exotic religious rituals, these East European Jews promised to be easy targets for anti-Semities. Equally disadvantageous from the viewpoint of their German Jewish brethren was their insistence on living tightly packed together in highly visible Jewish neighborhoods. Largely without financial resources, these East European Jewish immigrants appeared very vulnerable to economic exploitation.

Mutuality and Antagonism Give Rise To Communal Organization

The response of the Germans to this situation was initially diffident, but soon enough it became largely affirmative. They began developing the organizational machinery which would allow them to administer what they perceived to be suitable aid to their hapless East European co-religionists. The greatest fear of the German Jews was that the children of those who they felt constituted a large mass of uncouth and unscrubbed immigrants, would for lack of proper guidance "fall prey to undesirable or even criminal influence" (Vorspan & Gartner, 1970, p. 146). Thus, beginning nationally around 1880, rising concern throughout the Jewish communities of America began to be

focused on aiding children and youth (Bernard, 1973; Morris & Freund, 1966, pp. 89-110).

As is traditionally reflected in Jewish values, the concern was not only for the individual Jew, but also for the community. For it was feared that the acts of individuals would cast disrepute on the larger Jewish community. One could of course argue that the elite German Jews were not truly motivated by humanitarian concerns, but were merely fearful that this unassimilated mass of their co-religionists might fan the flames of anti-Semitism in the non-Jewish community. However, both the success and sincerity of these upper class "childsavers" are above reproach. Many contemporary social service agencies in Los Angeles and in other communities across the country owe their origins to this concerned group of men and women. The fact that Jewish child welfare agencies are still among those setting the standards for the rest of the country would seem to indicate that they were not lacking in compassion for fellow Jews.

During the early years of the present century, tensions ran very high in the American Jewish community between Jews of German and those of East European antecedents. While today the United Jewish Appeal can loudly proclaim of the Jewish community "We Are One!"

with at least, most would concede, a modicum of accuracy, this was hardly the prevailing state of affairs in the formative years of the home. Indeed, these two groups were so disparate in language, social mores, and approach to religious observance that intermarriages between them were uncommon and the split between German and East European appeared irreconcilable even to most Jews. (For a good account from a sociological perspective, see Sklare, 1971.)

The differing approaches to charity assumed by these groups tends to illustrate difference in mind set.

> Charity was no new thing to the Russian Jew. His prayers reminded him of it several times a day. His communal institutions and closely knit communal life in general afforded him many opportunities for becoming familiar with it. His views on charity were well formulated by the Scriptures and the Talmud, and definitely molded by his concrete contacts with the numerous charitable chevrahs [societies] in his town. (Silver, 1966, p. 58)

Not too suprisingly, the East European immigrant tended to judge the charities of his German co-religionists by what had existed in the Old Country, this being the only standard of reference available. Traditionally Jewish charity had frowned on the idea of a means test, the practice adhered to being that if one asked that alone was adequate evidence of need. Thus these still unwesternized immigrants took some exception to the sophisticated eligibility requirements, and the case

record and accounting systems, which were in place in the agencies which had been established by the German Jews. The German Jews on their part found their charitable institutions strained to the breaking point by this literal onslaught of refugees who often appeared to them to be singularly ungrateful.

In many communities across America the rift between German and East European Jews became so pronounced that some East Europeans established charitable institutions of their own in preference to becoming clients in those sponsored by the Germans. These same frictions were evidently present in Los Angeles also, for Sigfried Marshutz (1910) in his first annual report as president of the home wrote:

> I regret very much that I must call attention to the fact that the class of our Jewish population out of whose midst most of our applications come, gives us very scant support. I mean our Russian-Polish co-religionists. Many of them are well able to join us. (First Annual Report of the JOHSC, p. 9)

While these remarks apparently created quite a stir around town at the time, it was but a tempest in a tea cup, for the total Jewish population in the Los Angeles area numbered only several thousand. Elsewhere the "Russian-Polish" Jews rarely had sufficient financial means to break ranks and organize significant philanthropic enterprises, and this fact is not without

significance. Even on the lower east side of New York City, where East European Jews were far more numerous than in Los Angeles, when parents finally shunned the large uptown German-run institution and managed to organize two orphanages of their own which adhered to Orthodox Jewish practices (Bernard, 1972, p. 58), the results were less than impressive.

If you cannot start a new organization and are dissatisfied with existing services, the remaining alternative is to modify the organization which provides the existing services. If only for the sake of sholem bayit or "household peace," it is hard to imagine that the presence of so many East European clients would not have caused modifications in the organizational complexion of the Jewish orphans' home. Indeed one researcher found in a historical study of Jewish family agency that providing service to Jewish refugees significantly affected the Jewish self-identity of the agency (Cohen, 1972).

The East European Jewish immigrants had in essence come out of a distinctive Jewish environment for in most areas they had lived apart from non-Jews either in predominantly Jewish towns (shtetlach) or in ghettoes located in large cities, ghettoes which were in essence towns within towns. As a result of this enforced

isolation, a very pronounced Jewish lifestyle had come to characterize these communities.

> Religion from this point of view is co-extensive with that which in modern parlance goes by the name of social and cultural life. Judaism, in this formulation, regulates practically all the functions of life, even those which the Chirstian would never think of associating with religion, such as food and drink, as well as the manners and customs of everyday life.
>
> In a word, religious tradition dominates the entire range of his social life, which is thus, except for the external points of intersection with the economic and political factors of the outside world, wholly and exclusively Jewish. (Friedlander, 1919, p. 358)

The author, himself a Russian Jewish immigrant who had undergone the assimiliation process into the mainstream of American culture, pleaded with the established American Jewish community to be more sympathetic to their newly arrived brethren. He poignantly noted that their particular set of life circumstances had resulted in the,

> evolution of a peculiar Jewish mentality and, if I may use the expression, of a peculiar Jewish sentimentality, which marks off this type of Jew from his Christian fellow-citizens as well as from his coreligionists in other lands. (Friedlander, 1919, p. 359)

While their German Jewish benefactors, who were largely of the reform branch of Judaism, believed that the Torah (Jewish tradition) was "the record of the consecration of the Jewish people" (As the Pittsburgh

Platform, a declaration of principles adopted by reform rabbis, put it in 1885), Orthodox Jews, East European or or not, believed that the Torah had been divinely revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai. Orthodox Jews held that Jewish tradition as encapsulated in the Hebrew Bible and elaborated in the Talmud was immutable; reform Jews understood the tradition to have originated in bygone times and rejected those "views and habits" not in accord with modern civilization. Other points of disagreement were equally profound.

Summary

It was this amalgam of forces, together with some which were unique to the Los Angeles area, which brought the Jewish Orphans' Home of Southern California into existence. Unlike the east, anti-Semitism had not loomed large on the horizon of the Pacific and it was not unitl 1920 that it began "gardually encroaching upon the confines of even this [Los Angeles] broad and splendid community" (Vorspan & Gartner, 1970, p. 144). In consequence, the friction between German and East European Jews apparently did not loom as monumentally as it had in many metropolitan Jewish communities across America. As will be detailed later, the suffering wrought by tuberculosis which raged rampant through the urban Jewish

ghettoes of the Eastern seaboard, would also play a critical role in the development of the Los Angeles Jewish community and particularly in the history of the Jewish orphans' home; lured by the chimera of promised rejuvenation in this American riviera, ailing Jews would eventually arrive in the thousands.

Concern with Jewish youth did not see its first organized expression in Los Angeles until July of 1907, when three women under the aegis of the National Council of Jewish Women attempted to initiate a shelter for girls. Two of these women, Mrs. Berthold Baruch and Mrs. Jules Kaufman, the latter along with her husband, were to figure prominently in the early years of the Jewish orphans' home. Active in a variety of social work activities, these women eventually also opened a Jewish settlement house.

CHAPTER III

THE JEWISH ORPHANS' HOME'S FORMATIVE YEARS: 1907-1920

Lay Leadership Creates An Agency

Disturbing reports had been increasingly coming to the attention of a group of lay people, who by dint of education and socio-economic status, made up the then leadership of the Los Angeles Jewish community. Hearsay had it that Jewish chi'dren, the offspring of working parents, ran about the streets and gutters of the poorer neighborhoods totally unsupervised. Apparently those children in institutional placements often fared as bad or worse. "Poor destitute Jewish children" were customarily being parcelled out to the Salvation Army, the Volunteers of America, Catholic Orphans' Homes and private children's shelters in the Los Angeles area. Goaded into action, a group of members from the International Order of B'nai B'rith's Los Angeles Lodge, No. 487, set out to conduct an on-site investigation of the prevailing conditions. By their own admission they were gravely disturbed by what they found. The private

childrens' homes were of particular concern and were described by the lodge members who had visited them as being totally unfit environments in which to raise children. In response to these circumstances, on December 10, 1907, the lodge unanimously voted to undertake to establish a Jewish orphans' home for the area.

The decision to establish a Jewish orphan's home in Los Angeles had not come about easily. Decisions to begin such major undertakings never do. Two alternate strategies had previously been employed. A Jewish orphans' asylum established in San Francisco was willing to accept referrals from the Los Angeles area, but most attempts to place needy children there had resulted in failure. Parents and relatives were unwilling to place their children at a distance of 400 miles. Much to the consternation of their would-be benefactors, their poorer co-religionists also rejected the second strategy by generally refusing to jeopardize their children's religious training by placing them in non-Jewish institutions.

The prominent Jews of Los Angeles began to fear that without appropriate intervention they would be confronted with a generation of delinquent little Israelites. While they were partially motivated by the selfish concern that a shiftless generation of Jews

of East European stock would emerge and reflect badly upon themselves, there were also more humanitarian concerns generated by a desire to aid fellow Jews. Nevertheless, this aid had to take certain concrete forms which had been set down by the client population as virtually non-negotiable demands. To begin with, the prospective institution would have to be located within convenient traveling distance of their Los Angeles area homes, and then, their children would have to be assured a proper Jewish upbringing. The parents and relatives of the children thus adhered to two very strong traditional Jewish values, the sanctity and centrality of the family, by not allowing its members to be dispersed; and the positive biblical injunction that parents must pass on the teachings of the Jewish heritage intact to their children. Thus their wealthy benefactors, forced to "begin where their clients were," established a home with a distinctly Jewish flavor and atmosphere in the Los Angeles area.

On October 3, 1908, the Jewish Orphans' Home of Southern California (JOHSC) was formerlly incorporated, with Sigfried Marshutz, one of the B'nai B'rith lodge members, as its first president. He appears to have been an exceedingly able and dynamic gentleman. In addition to founding an optical company, he also served on the Los

Angeles Board of Library Commissioners and, through adroit financial maneuvering, is credited with the development of a substantial public library. Glancing down the list of executive officers listed in the "First Annual Report" for the year 1909-1910 of the Jewish orphans' home is analogous to reading the Who's Who of prominent Los Angeles Jewry. Largely made up of German reform Jews, the list included, among others, David Hamburger, a co-owner of the leading department store in town which prospered up until its eventual purchase by the May Company (a large chain). But he is overshadowed by Marco Hellman, who represented one of the three wealthiest Jewish families in Los Angeles prior to the 1920s. Another prominent benefactor soon to appear would be Harris Newmark, whose stature equalled or exceeded Hellman's (Vorspan & Gartner, 1970, p. 121; Newmark & Newmark, 1970).

A Decade Of Growth And Development

It was just as well that the early board members had benefactors represented such a constellation of wealth and organizational talent because the circumstances surrounding the beginnings of the Jewish orphans' home were hardly propitious. In fact, this group of men and women must have been called upon to exercise

inordinate forbearance. The first superintendent the board hired remained with the orphanage but a month. She was followed by another woman, who lasted in the superintendent's post a mere six months. When the board finally resolved the personnel problems by selecting an experienced agency administrator, the physical plant was totally destroyed a little over a year later. On August 1, 1910, the orphanage's first home on Mission Road was virtually levelled in a dramatic fire at around 2:00 a.m. Reportedly the superintendent singed his mustache rescuing children, but no one was injured.

By late the following day the children, who numbered around 50, had been provided with clothes and other essentials. They were also given a canvas roof over their heads. As a makeshift measure, they were housed in tents in a city park adjacent to the original site. Apparently the summer passed pleasantly enough, and by Labor Day, pending the construction of a permanent facility, the board had rented a three story house on East Fourth Street, opposite Hollenbeck Park. The children settled in rapidly with pets and playground equipment while the board undertook the arduous task of locating a suitable site on which to build and raising the necessary capital.

Seemingly indefatigable, Sigfried Marshutz headed up the site committee. Harris Newmark, a prominent benefactor, offered the home a 16 acre site in Montebello together with a cash gift of $10,000. After careful consideration and at the insistence of the superintendent, the board declined the offer due to the distance involved and the lack of public transportation. A gracious compromise was reached whereby Newmark sustained the cash gift and allowed the board to sell the property in Montebello, with the proceeds going toward the purchase of a 10 acre site in Huntington Park, at that time a rural area on the edge of Los Angeles.

Additional funds were raised and on Thanksgiving Day, November 28, 1912, the dedication of the home's new facility at Huntington Park took place between 2:30 and 5:00 p.m. The board had passed a motion "that all the Officers of Jewish institutions, congregations, and organizations of the Pacific Coast be invited" (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, Oct. 20, 1912). It was attended by more than 1,000 people and, during a call for subscriptions, the home was able to raise $24,000 within 30 minutes, with an additional $1,000 being subscribed in the following 2 weeks. The campus originally encompassed 10 acres and included an administration building, two cottage-type dormitories

which housed 25 children each, a synagogue, an auditorium, and centralized dining facilities. Some eight years later, by 1920, two additional cottages had been constructed to bring the total number of children in residence up to 100, and five additional acres adjacent to the property had been purchased.

This capital expansion reflected the growth and development of the local Jewish community. For while this period had been a time of unrelenting growth for the city of Los Angeles in general, by 1929, with the start of the Great Depression, the Jewish population had increased 30 fold since 1900 and exceeded the boom rate for the city at large. In 1900 there were a total of 2,500 Jews included in Los Angeles' total population of 102,000; by 1920, the Jewish community had grown to include 20,000 out of a total population of 576,000 (Vorspan & Gartner, 1970, p. 109). This thriving Jewish community also grew increasingly complex in formal organizational structure and in 1911 had enough social service agencies to warrant the founding of a Federation of Jewish Charities to facilitate inter-agency coordination and to assume some responsibility for centralized fund raising. Not surprisingly, many of the Jewish orphans' home's board members were attracted by the opportunity to participate actively in the broader

range of community concerns to which this new federation would address itself.

Policy Alternatives

Lay-Professional Relations

A board is only as good as the professional staff person whom it employs to perform the day-to-day management activities which allow an agency to exist. In this case, the executive leadership which the Jewish orphans' home successfully recruited was as talented and dynamic as the board itself; while this was highly advantageous to the agency in its formative years, it eventually proved to be the superintendent's own undoing. Appointed in the summer of 1909 as superintendent and matron, Dr. and Mrs. Sigmund Frey have been described as prototypical social workers (Axe, 1973). Before the board persuaded them to come to Los Angeles, Frey and his wife had been involved in a variety of social service activities in the Midwest. Their experience included administering an Orthodox Jewish home for the aged and a shelter for Jewish working girls and Mrs. Frey had had extensive experience in what is today referred to as social group work. Of equal significance was Dr. Frey's professional training as a reform rabbi. Upon arriving

in the United States in 1881 from Moravia, he had for a time studied at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio; while there he had the opportunity to build friendships with Isaac Mayer Wise (the college's founder-president) and other men who were notable in the reform movement.

Sigmund Frey was described by his daughter as having been,

> an ardent Jew and an eloquent speaker. He had a clear resonant voice of ringing timbre, a fine sense of humor, a thorough knowledge of English and French literature, the classics, Talmud and Torah. There was much demand for his services, both as rabbi and as fund raiser. (Axe, 1973, p. 313)

He was remembered by one of his former charges as a gruff but kindly man who could not see very well. When he was angered by the children, he would call them "sheeps head" and other benign epithets in his familiar German, which at least after the fact they generally found amusing. Mrs. Frey is described as having been softer spoken, but something of a tyrant whom the children "couldn't fool around with" (J.D. Rosenfield, interview December 27, 1977).

While the men and women who staffed the board and its multitudinous committees might have exhibited a broad range of interests in the community at large, apparently the Jewish orphans' home was the main focus

of their attention. They maintained such strict control over the everyday operations of the agency that, as board minutes record, there was unanimous agreement on the motion that before expending funds exceeding $100 the superintendent be required to seek board approval (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, Oct. 19, 1913). Lay people totally staffed the admissions and discharge committee, and often the board as a whole decided on the day-to-day dispositions of the residents. Their span of control was so pervasive that they decided on the purchase of dairy cows as well as representing the institution to the State Board of Charities. Today it is hard to imagine a competent top administrator attempting to run an agency with so little discretionary authority and while this state of affairs was not atypical for its time in regard to lay professional relations, Sigmund Frey understandably grew increasingly disgruntled as time went by.

A number of other dramas were more or less quietly being played out during these early years at Huntington Park, dramas which would both determine the future direction of the agency to the present day and also significantly affect the agency's Jewish self-identity. In fact, regarding the three key variables cited in the first chapter, i.e., financial sponsorship,

religious or ethnic values and practices, and admissions policies, the board went through numerous crises of Jewish institutional self-definition. These crises were inevitably accompanied by vehement emotion and at times heated disagreement either between the board and the superintendent, the board and other organizations, or among board members themselves. However, for all the bluster which attended the policy formation process engaged in by the board of directors of the Jewish orhpans' home, the lack of systematic consideration given the long range implications of their policy decisions is rather astonishing.

Pragmatism largely prevailed as the order of the day; the overriding concerns were with expediency and short term efficiency. As is shown in what follows, everyday concerns often loomed so large that the process by which major decisions were made which would almost irrevocably determine the future course of the agency, and thus significantly affect the type of services offered the Jewish community, was exceedingly shallow. The fact that the decision making model utilized by the board so closely resembles that described by Lindblom (1969) and labeled the "muddling through" approach, which he claims is currently in use, indicates that the board's style was probably as much a matter of

preference as lack of managerial techniques in the opening years of the twentieth century.

Financial Sponsorship

It continued to be true that the board was representative of the wealthiest strata of society. These individuals tended to give generously of their time as well as their money. At one meeting it is rather routinely noted that a friend of the home's president contributed $12,000 for a new dormitory. In spite of their enviable fund raising capacities, the board was obviously disgruntled over the Jewish orphans' home's financial condition. The by-laws were amended to provide for the addition of 4 new board members, bringing the total to 15; it was hoped that by expanding the number of seats on the board of directors the home could "heighten" the community's interest. While the board members were willing to shoulder a large share of the responsibility for fund raising in the Jewish community, this responsibility was also partly shared by the Los Angeles Federation of Jewish Charities, of which virtually from its inception the home enjoyed recipient agency status. Nine board members from the home were appointed yearly by the president to represent the agency on the ederation's board. Each year the

federation sponsored a combined community campaign from which all of its member agencies would benefit; the agencies every year were required to submit a proposed budget on which ther allocation would be based. In exchange for financial support the member agencies were required to assist in the combined campaign and conform to a set of practices designed by the federation to facilitate interagency coordination.

The board minutes reflect the circumstance that the relationship between the Jewish orphans' home and the federation was growing increasingly formalistic and it reached a genuine low point when the board requested a $24,000 allocation for the year 1914 and they were informed by the federation that the home would be receiving $18,000. Swift action followed; the board complained vehemently to the federation about the inadequacy of their appropriation. Of greater significance was the board's decision to arrange with the Los Angeles County Supervisors for aid moneys for all orphaned and destitute children covered under the provisions of the county's new laws.

The board minutes reflect very little debate around the issue of accepting public moneys to cover the needs of Jewish children. The prevailing Jewish tradition in this regard had been that the Jewish

community should look after its own. In adherence to this principle, many Jewish social service agencies undertook the step of public assistance with the greatest controversy and reluctance. In describing the history of another Los Angeles Federation of Jewish Charities agency, Cohen (1972) notes that the agency's receptivity to public funds underwent a gradual process of change throughout the decade of the 1920s (pp. 35-42). By contrast, the matters of purchasing cows and grading the Jewish orphans' home's driveway, if one is to judge from the contents of the minutes, appear to have been matters of more pressing concern (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, January 9, 1914). The full extent of this progressive and functional attitude became exceedingly apparent when the following year the board requested that the federation reduce their allotment from $18,000 to $15,000 for the year 1915 so as to enable them to retain the state aid moneys.

There is no clear evidence regarding the derivation of the board's liberal attitude towards the utilization of public dollars. Far in advance of its time, it clearly had its definite limitation. When the question of who should be the target of an upcoming fund raising event which was sponsored by the federation known as "Dollar Day" was put before the board, they

recommended that,

> no stands or quarters be placed in any of the hotels, soliciting contributions from the non-Jew: that it has always been a matter of great pride with the Jew to care for their [sic] own poor, and that the board of directors . . . strenuously objects to soliciting money from other than Jews. (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, April 23, 1915)

Apparently the board members found this contradiction easy to reconcile. They clearly identified as Jewish Americans and as taxpaying citizens felt free to partake of those goods and services to which they were legally entitled. After 1900 years of dwelling in foreign states as a nation unto themselves, this was of the most momentous significance for the children of Israel. In prior times and under less benevolent governments, paying taxes had on occasion purchased a degree of relief from persecution; it had rarely purchased services. Through a system of dual taxation the Jewish community had historically taken care of its own and would continue to do so with the aid of the government funds available; this was not, however, synonymous with voluntarily taking money from non-Jews. Or so it seems the board members might well have reasoned.

Admissions

As the agency's reputation grew, word apparently spread throughout the Jewish communities of neighboring Western states and Mexico that child placement facilities had been successfully established in Los Angeles. Referrals began to trickle in from considerable distances; this circumstance, combined with the pressures of eligibility for public funding, forced the board into the position of having to concretize the admissions policy. The decision not to accept children from outside what could flexibly be called Los Angeles County, except under unusual circumstances, was reaffirmed. This continues to be largely true of the agency up through the present.

The factors motivating this decision were apparently multiple. An underlying belief in the idea of local responsibility and the notion of residency requirements resulted in the feeling that communities should look after their own, but not be called upon to assume burdens that rightfully belonged to others. Also involved were more moderate elements, many of which probably still seem familiar such as the desire to provide intensive services to a small client population as opposed to extensive services to a broad base.

While historically social work had not matured methodologically enough to have articulated a family centered approach to case management, there was still the realization that the child's family had a significant role to play. Unlike other contemporary orphanages (Fleming, 1978; Bernard, 1973) where siblings were rigidly separated by age and sex (often to such an extent that they were permanently estranged) and parents were discouraged from visiting by rigid policies, the Jewish orphans' home made every attempt to preserve families as intact units. The children all ate in a common dining room, parents and relatives came often, and every opportunity to return children to their families of origin was taken advantage of. This family centered approach is still a mainstay of the institution's philosophy of treatment.

Another key criterion for admission appears to have been the availability of financial support. The impact of this factor was probably mitigated considerably when the California State Law requiring,

> That no child whose parent or parents have not resided in this state for at least three years prior to the application for aid, or whose parent or parents have not become citizens of the state shall be deemed a minor orphan, half orphan or abandoned child

was struck down as unconstitutional (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, October 23, 1914). Preoccupied by the constant specter of budgetary deficits and mindful of the scope of the burden implied by assuming responsibility for a youngster over an extended period of time, the board understandably allowed financial considerations to influence eligibility heavily. Apparently the resources of those tendering the application were also scrupulously investigated, though applicants were never rejected for purely financial reasons. In those rare instances, excepting the cases of war refugees, when the board agreed to admit children from outside the local area, the determining factor appeared to be extreme need accompanied by available financial resources.

In the case of refugees there was never any disagreement around policy; the home felt that its responsibilities to service these unfortunate Jews from overseas were clear. Thus at the board of directors meeting which occurred early in 1916, they began considering the proper preparatory actions for receiving orphans of World War I. It was anticipated that in cooperation with HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) Russian Jewish orphans would be sent to the Pacific coast following the cessation of hostilities. The board

members were particularly anxious that sufficient funds be raised so that these children could be properly cared for.

The question of "Who is a Jew?" has plagued the world Jewish community since the emancipation reforms (1789-1791) legally enfranchising the Jews were issued by the leaders of the French Revolution. Indeed this question has become exacerbated in the present day by the creation of the modern state of Israel (Kraines, 1976). So potentially volatile is this issue that at one point it threatened to topple the Ben-Gurion government. The board of the home had to confront the issue, too, in its own baliwick. As part of framing a servicable admissions policy, the board was called upon to untangle this Gordian knot to its own satisfaction, for the agency had categorized itself as a resource of the Los Angeles Jewish community which did not serve non-Jews.

At various times all sorts of definitions have been proposed; halachic (which refers to rabbinic law), sociological, and strictly secular legal definitions have under differing circumstances all found favor with different groups. An example of a sociological definition would be: a Jew is a person who considers him/herself to be Jewish, while rabbinic law rejects the

liberal formulation and insists that, halachicly, a Jew is either a person born of a Jewish mother or one who has been converted to Judaism by undergoing circumcision (in the case of males) and ritual immersion following a protracted course of study.

The definition which the board of the Jewish orphans' home seemed to incline towards from the early years would have to be termed functionally pragmatic. A case with which the board grappled in 1915 provides an illuminating example. It involved two young children whose deceased father was a Jew and whose deceased mother was a non-Jew of Mexican origin. At the time of the referral the children were living in Mexico with relatives. The board was favorably disposed towards admission, provided proper financial support could be assured (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, January 22, 1915). Halachicly these children were non-Jews. From what can be gleaned from the numerous case examples recorded throughout the board minutes, the over-riding concern seemed to be what was deemed to be the best interests of a child client. In cases of mixed parentage where the child was halachicly Jewish, there were instances where a child was placed with non-Jewish paternal relatives to be raised as a Christian when the board felt a good home would be provided. Until the past two decades intermarriage was infrequent enough for such

cases not to arise with any regularity. The bulk of the population came from clearly Jewish parentage and in great enough numbers so that the possibility of admitting non-Jewish children was apparently never a realistic consideration.

To cite briefly the historical development of the City of Hope is useful as it helps to illuminate some of the policy alternatives confronting the board of the Jewish orphans' home. Founded in 1912 for the relief of tuberculous Jews by the Hebrew Consumptive Relief Association, which drew its following from the Los Angeles area, the sanatarium was located in nearby Duarte. In contrast to the Jewish orphans' home, from its inception it was conceived to be "not only for Los Angeles Jews but for Jewish consumptives who might come from anywhere in the country" (Vorspan & Gartner, 1970, p. 175). While the home on occasion received contributions from Chicago, New York, and the like, it was a firm policy not to actively seek financial support from outside the Los Angeles area. In contrast, the City of Hope sought nationwide support; by 1917, while a sizable amount of the budget was raised in Los Angeles, the bulk of the contributions already came from elsewhere. Eventually the City of Hope would develop into a free non-sectarian medical center. Thus another agency with

a similiar constituency, in the same time span, was able to play out an entirely different set of options successfully.

Religious Or Ethnic Values And Practices

The Jewish sponsorship of the orphans' home was reflected in a variety of ways, both with regard to programmatic content and the organization's relationship to the broader community. Most charitable institutions, particularly orphanages, at the beginning of the century in California were church sponsored. Historically in the Jewish community, however, human services organizations are generally legally independent of the synagogues and under communal rather than clerical auspices. Churches and their real property, a catchall which included church sponsored organizations, were tax exempt in the State of California; this franchise did not include orphans' homes and asylums not under the auspices of a recognized house of worship. Thus, due to a peculiarity in state legislation, the Jewish orphans' home paid a considerable tax bill every year. Cognizent of the inequity of this law, the board decided that, since the home was a non-profit institution providing a charitable service, they would request the State of California to pass a constitutional amendment,

> exempting from all taxation the personal and real property of all Orphans' Homes and Asylums which conduct their Institutions not for profit, but are supported by voluntary subscriptions and state or county aid. (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, January 19, 1915)

The well placed attorneys on the home's board proved, however, ineffective in swaying the state legislature on this proposed amendment; the home remained on the tax rolls for many decades.

Sometimes the outcome of the board's effort to intercede with the broader community was more successful. On one occasion, "The President reported that at the . . . public school exercises at Huntington Park the children were blessed in the name of Christ" (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, June 28, 1915). The matter was immediately referred to Dr. Frey, and the board eventually received a written assurance from the principal of the school that this practice would be discontinued. A more amusing example of the lack of understanding of Judaism, which predominated in the general community, occurred in response to the children's religious training. Dr. and Mrs. Frey encouraged the children to practice tzedakah of charity, a key concept in Judaism, and were very successful in motivating them. On one occasion, Dr. Frey received a letter thanking the children, on behalf of the flood victims they had

aided in Ohio, for their "unselfish Christianity."

Dr. Frey instructed the children in religion and Hebrew. He also placed heavy emphasis on celebration of holidays and life cycle events; this resulted in the development of a solid body of unique institutional mores and traditions. Some of the flavor of the Jewish orhpans' home during Sigmund and Hermine Frey's tenure is captured in these observations by their daughter:

> Visitors came from far and near. There were always guests at Saturday morning services; on holidays it was necessary to place folding chairs in the hall as the pews of the synagogue were filled. The Seder held in the spacious children's dining room was the most festive social event of the year, and was also a fund raiser . . . . The children enjoyed many outings and parties. In addition to birthday celebrations there were pet shows featuring horned toads, lizards, gopher snakes, chickens, dogs, cats, calves, goats, fish and birds. The Jewish and patriotic holidays all received proper observance, of course. (Axe, 1973, p. 322)

With Dr. Frey officiating in the capacity of rabbi, there were 8 bar mitzvahs, 40 confirmations, and 2 marriages in the home's synagogue during his 12 year tenure. Similiar services were extended to board members, alumni, and the children's relatives. Some 35 years later, Marco Hellman, who had been a prominent board member from the institution's inception, would recall for an anniversary publication that:

> Many of the activities and annual customs carried on for the children at the present time were initiated during this [early] period: the practice of interested persons donating Thanksgiving, New Year and other holiday dinners; the annual summer beach picnics . . . riding in the big red cars . . . to visit the many amusement places . . . . (M. R. Hellman, "The Story of Vista Del Mar," The 35th Anniversary Souvenir Program of the Vista Del Mar Alumni Association, January 24, 1945)

One family, during the early years of the home, initiated the custom of giving each child a new pair of shoes every year at Rosh Hashanah (the start of the Jewish year). While those who are out of touch with pre World War II philanthropic mores might view such a practice with disdain, during the depression years a new pair of leather shoes was a significant investment. The family carried on this practice for decades.

The Competing Values Of Lay Participation And Professional Autonomy

Outward appearances to the contrary, the picture which prevailed at the Jewish orphans' home was not totally one of sweet harmony, though the skirmishes taking place were apparently kept closely under wraps. The friction between the Freys and the board of the Jewish orphans' home was a chronic condition which, as the years went by, grew increasingly acute. Their points of disagreement were apparently numerous and varied.

On one occasion, Dr. Frey complained to the board of directors that each Saturday, in apparent violation of the Sabbath, different children were being sent to the dentist. Upon hearing of the superintendent's disapproval, the board decided that it did "not believe that Dr. Frey is justified in viewing the matter as he does" (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes November 27, 1916). Although it can reasonably be inferred that the dentist's time was probably donated and therefore subject to his own convenience, nevertheless the board's overriding concern in contrast to Dr. Frey's was on dollar savings. The fact that the superintendent could not even choose the childrens' dentist makes clear the full extent of the board's involvement in day-to-day operations.

Though the minutes suggest that the cost of maintaining a child at the Jewish orphans' home--it was estimated to be $19.60 per month--compared not unfavorably with similar figures at other institutions around the country, the board was constantly looking for ways to pare down the operating budget. Much to the displeasure of the board, however, Dr. Frey was very headstrong about certain practices such as paying the children for those tasks which they were able to perform on behalf of the home; the board saw this as an unnecessary expense.

The board was also concerned over the amount of funds expended by Dr. and Mrs. Frey for "such luxuries . . . as [hair] ribbons, pastries, etc." (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, September 23, 1912). The minutes also mention disagreements around the disposition of cases, though they are not specified.

In all fairness to the board's apparent myopia, it must be said of Dr. and Mrs. Frey that they were far in advance of their time with regard to the child rearing practices in effect at the home. At the turn of the century in New York, for example, all three Jewish orphanages followed a strict practice of shaving the children's heads for cleanliness and purchasing their clothes in job lots (Bernard, 1973, Chap. 2). These homes were densely populated and had an average staff ratio of one attendant per 100 children. Against such a backdrop, it appears that the board was relatively progressive in making as many concessions to the Freys as they evidently did. Frey's experience also makes it emphatically clear that one of the major tasks of the agency executive attempting to exercise innovative leadership is the responsibility of educating his or her lay leadership so as to bring them along.

Dr. Frey's efforts to educate the board must have been seriously hampered by the fact that he was

not even permitted to be present at most of the regular board meetings. In fact the only opportunity Sigmund Frey had to make his presence felt at these monthly deliberations was through a written "Superintendent's Report" which he was required to submit. It can be assumed that these reports often represented a minority viewpoint; unfortunately, they have not to my knowledge been preserved anywhere. As points of disagreement between the board and its executive leadership multiplied, a compromise measure was worked out whereby Mrs. Frey was asked to report to the board, in person, on a monthly basis.

In addition to the formal corpus of the board of directors, the home was also served by 13 committees ranging from Friendly Visiting and Finance to one as seemingly peripheral as Entertainment. It was evident that the organizational complexities of the agency were growing so rapidly that the board, as a whole, was no longer able to attend to its everyday operations, yet this group remained unwilling to delegate the major share of the responsibility to Dr. and Mrs. Frey. There is an old adage that "a camel is a horse which was designed by a committee," and apparently from the standpoint of Sigmund and Hermine Frey this system of participatory management left a great deal to be desired.

As an expedient to facilitating lay-professional cooperation, in the fall of 1914 Dr. and Mrs. Frey were given to understand by the board that, should they wish to remain employed at the Jewish orphans' home, they would be obliged to follow the directives of the board and its special committees. Evidently the Freys, having reached a temporary impasse, acquiesced.

Though subtler in its manifestations, disharmony between the board and its executive leadership continued to grow; in addition to being enduring, it was both heated and mutual. In late September of 1920, the board ordered "That a committee be appointed to make a written report to the board on points of dissatisfaction with Dr. and Mrs. Frey."

A month later, at a specially scheduled board meeting, Dr. and Mrs. Frey were asked to be in attendance as invited guests. Though it is not reflected in the tersely worded board minutes, one can only guess that feelings must have been running very high as the board refused to yield on issue after issue. Any decisions on engaging and discharging employees, fixing salaries, modifications in buildings, and a variety of other matters were not to be left to the discretion of the superintendent, but rather were to be determined by the respective committees. Also at issue were the admission

and discharge of cases and the hiring of a trained nurse, with Dr. Frey against and the board for such an addition to the staff.

The following week at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board, it was duly noted that along with his regular report, Dr. Frey had submitted a letter of resignation on behalf of himself and his wife. The board unanimously agreed that Dr. and Mrs. Frey be informed that said resignation had been received and would be considered at a special board meeting prior to the first of November.

The board met Sunday morning October 31, 1920, at the Jewish Federation Building where "The following motion was duly made and carried: That the resignation of Dr. and Mrs. Frey be accepted with regret . . . ." The secretary was ordered to prepare a letter to be signed by the president "notifying Dr. and Mrs. Frey of its acceptance and of the appreciation of the directors for their services." The sole dissenting vote was that of Sigfried Marshutz. A committee of three was appointed to undertake a search for eligible candidates for the position of superintendent.

Armand Wyle, of Rochester, New York, was hired on the interm basis of one year to serve as superintendent. To make the transition easier, Dr. Frey's son Harold and

and his wife were to serve as superintendent and Matron, while the elder Frey traveled through Europe registered as superintendent of the home, per his request. A compromise was eventually reached whereby the outgoing superintendent would receive $125.00 in traveling expenses. So after 12 years the Freys departed without fanfare.

Summary

In the creation of the Jewish Orphans' Home of Southern California certain elements can be found which are unique to this particular organization; nevertheless, like any other institution, it was a product of its time. Numerous other developmental factors common to hundreds of other Jewish communal agencies, which were springing up across the country in the opening years of the twentieth century, can also be noted.

The birth of this, and similar agencies, antedated the professionalization of social work; philanthropy had yet to become a science. A group of lay leaders who possessed sufficient socio-economic means perceived a critical but unmet need in their community, came together to define the problem, and created a solution in the form of a human service agency. In the case of the Jewish orphans' home and numerous

other Jewish institutions, where the benefactors were German reform Jews and the clients were largely East European Orthodox Jews, there tended to be conflicting definitions of the problem. The resulting need for compromise between the desires of the donors and the needs of the recipients created a dynamic tension which found a unique resolution within each individual agency. At the Jewish orphans' home this conflict was creatively resolved through the creation of a family-centered, locally based institution which provided the children with a good religious background.

At the turn of the century, when a group of lay people established an agency, it was generally regarded as "their" institution, with control over it something to be jealously guarded. Being equally products of our own time, with affirmative action, public funding, and multimillion dollar physical plants, we sometimes find the extent of board control over the day-to-day operations of an institution such as the Jewish orphans' home hard to fathom. It must be carefully borne in mind that the growth of professionalism and the consequent change in the role of the board of directors are relatively recent phenomena. This transition, inevitably painful for both staff and lay leadership, is still an ongoing one in the majority of private sectarian agencies.

Regarding lay-professional relations, several factors proved to be unique determinants with respect to Dr. and Mrs. Frey's role as executive employees of the board of directors of the Jewish orphans' home. Unlike Boston or New York, the Jewish community of Los Angeles was hardly an established entity when the Freys arrived in 1909. On the contrary, the Jewish community, like the region as a whole, was in a state of great plasticity. Southern California has always been a place open to new ways of doing things. Thus, without the benefit or the burden of an entranched set of institutional mores, Dr. and Mrs. Frey set out to shape an agency.

In comparison to simliar bodies in other institutions, the board of the Jewish orphans' home was relatively liberal. Dr. Frey, however, appears to have been like a spruce among pines with regard to his professional peers--a man of enormous vision. With his innovative approach to institutional child care, he rapidly outdistanced his board; nevertheless, the trustees of the institution remained his professional constituency. His greatest failing was probably the fact that he neglected--or, at least, failed--to educate his board and elevate their level of understanding. The board, for their part, anxious to maintain extensive

control over the management of the institution, invariably felt threatened. The outcome appears to have been almost a foregone conclusion. As predicted by the hypothesis described in the first chapter, the variables of financial sponsorship, admissions policy, and religious or ethnic practices and values significantly shaped the Jewish institutional self-identity of this agency in its formative years.

CHAPTER IV

SELF-DEFINITION AND NEW DIRECTIONS: 1920-1930

In late fall of 1908, a group of orphaned and half-orphaned Jewish children, perhaps eight or ten, were removed from the non-sectarian Los Angeles orphanage. These children were taken by street-car to North Mission Road where they became the first group ever to be admitted to the Jewish Orphans' Home of Southern California. A little over a decade later the home was serving more than 100 children annually, and had been relocated on a 15 acre site. The mortgage on the Huntington Park property had been entirely paid off and the grounds were well developed to include even a tennis court.

Nevertheless, the board of directors was clearly dissatisfied with the status quo. Dr. and Mrs. Frey had been replaced, but the board members found that the pressures toward professionalization and relinquishment of board authority to salaried staff could not be banished; indeed the societal forces precipitating these developments were irresistible. Following the First World War, life had become far more complex. A new federal income

tax system was in operation, with a consequent growth in bureaucracy; and the course of American life was rapidly being altered by staggering technological developments in transportation and communications. The populations of cities were growing at a disproportionately rapid rate with ever increasing numbers of people requiring social services. It became clear that improved service delivery systems had to be developed if the bulk of those in need of help were to be reached. Philanthropy was becoming increasingly "scientific"; indeed, systematized knowledge was being set down and incorporated into curricula in professional schools of social work, some of which catered to graduate level practitioners.

With this increase in technical sophistication came an increased attention to research methodology. Thus an early study of child placement, with a social worker attempting to compare the causes for Jewish child placement with the causes for non-Jewish child placement, found little significant difference in etiology; rather, the number of Jewish children placed away from home seemed to rise proportionately to the number of available beds and the extent of lay involvement. Blanc (1927) notes:

> In an unorganized community, that is, one in which social work is carried on entirely in accordance with the untutored benevolence of generous individuals rather than according to sound casework principles, placements are exceedingly numerous. (p. 29)

A slow realization was beginning to dawn that placement in a residential institution was not always the alternative of choice. Large institutions were growing increasing uneconomical to maintain and some children seemed to adjust poorly even in the best-run facilities. Individualized case study was an idea whose time had come; all across the country institutions serving families and children began to develop highly sophisticated intake procedures. Admitting clients became a professional function which included screening interviews and a recommendation based on a careful psychosocial diagnosis.

Such developments were not totally lost on the recalcitrant board of the Jewish orphans' home. This group of lay people was beginning to understand that there would be no return to the halcyon days of yore when as financial benefactors they had been able to exercise complete control. Slow ripples of change were coursing through the organization. The board considered it "prudent" to engage a consulting psychiatrist to screen children prior to admission and make recommendations on those children in residence who were experiencing difficulties. As part of the move toward increasing professionalization, the board also requested copies of applications and operative policies from other orphanages. It was decided, after careful study, that the new application forms would include a clause to be signed by parents or guardians

relinquishing full control until the child's discharge. The number of committees appointed by the board dropped from 13 to 6, and perhaps most noteworthy was the timely demise of the "Superintendent's and Assistant's Committee" which had for so long been Sigmund Frey's special nemesis.

A Reconsolidation of Authority

The board's resistance to increasing professionalization proved, nevertheless, to be a strong countervailing trend. Armand Wyle assumed the office of superintendent of the Jewish Orphan's Home of Southern California (JOHSC) on a temporary basis on July 1, 1921. Little is recorded about him anywhere beyond the fact that he arrived from Rochester, New York. While little was apparently deemed noteworthy about the man himself, the course of his actions as superintendent of the home during his year in office was carefully recorded.

At a special meeting of the board about a week after his arrival, Wyle presented an oral report giving his "impressions and recommendations," which were carried out unanimously. Aside from reestablishing the status quo whereby the board would have total and unqestioned discretionary authority on the matters of personnel, disposition of individual cases, and buildings and grounds,

a variety of other measures were to be instituted. These included such "progressive" innovations as requiring the matrons to wear "uniforms of wash material"; forbidding the children to charge purchases to the home; requiring that "all mail received and sent by children be looked into by the Superintendent"; restricting visiting hours further; and finally that the "Home provide all necessities and require children to buy all luxuries--definition of necessities and luxuries to be made by Superintendent." Just how the children were to pay for such luxuries as their childish whims dictated had not been defined. The policy of paying children for their work around the home, which Dr. Frey continually defended, was once more before the board for review (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, July 10, 1921).

With the departure of Frey, who had also served the home in the capacity of rabbi, it became necessary to bring in a Hebrew teacher. The Sunday school classes were to be conducted by a lay volunteer under Wyle's supervision. There were, however, far more significant changes in the offing. Plans were being discussed for disposing of the Huntington Park site together with the JOHSC's buildings and equipment. The board soon found a suitable buyer in the Huntington Park School District and the decision was made to relocate. The

move had the additional implication that some 100 already homeless children would be temporarily displaced; thus the board decided "that foster home finding for children be adopted in principle."

The Agency Charts a New Course

The Foster Home Department

Those children, numbering 35, who could be neither discharged nor placed with foster families were moved to temporary quarters which the board leased at 137 West Adams Street, in downtown Los Angeles. Huntington Park was formally vacated on September 11, 1922. The foster care program was "officially" initiated a month later when a paid professional was employed as "visitor" to locate potential homes. She was to be responsible to the superintendent, and a Home Finding Committee consisting of three lay people appointed by the board would do the follow up post-placement visits. The chairperson of the Home Finding Committee would have final say in any disagreements between the superintendent and the visitor.

Ordinarily, use of foster homes was initiated in a given Jewish community in response to a crisis, for example, an influenza epidemic which generated dozens of children bereft of parents at a time when the local orphanage was under quarantine. This is how Baltimore got

into the "home finding" business in 1918. Once the initial step had been taken, it generally happened that such programs were so successful that they tended to expand rapidly. Outlining the development of the foster home program by Baltimore's Jewish orphanage, a social worker offered the following advice:

> The processes of home finding are exceedingly complicated, though actually based on a fundamental principle, simple enough in itself--publicity--publicity in the very broadest sense of the word, with unlimited and widely diversified rammifications. Publicity that varies from blatant forms of advertising and snappy salesmanship to the slow, subtle, but steady campaign of attrition against the enormous solid wall of an indifferent and uninformed community. (Lauer, 1928, p. 55)

Charles Loring Brace is officially credited by many with initiating the home finding movement in the United States. Trained at Yale Theology Seminary, this young organizer founded the Children's Aid Society in New York and, beginning in 1854 with a group of 46 children, sent train loads of them en masse to the Great Plains. By this haphazard method, 51,000 children were reportedly placed by the society in the first 25 years of its existence. Given to excesses in its early history, foster care would eventually become both more moderate and more professional.

Publicity would always be an important factor in developing a good foster care program, but only if it led

to increased selectivity among potential foster parents by trained professional social workers. Successful placements were rarely accidental, but rather resulted from careful psychosocial study of both the child in need of placement and the available foster families. Precise follow up work would necessitate regularly scheduled visits by an agency representative to the child in foster placement and supervisory conferences with the child's foster parents. The JOHSC was guided by these and other professional principles in its utilization of foster care placements from the beginning and today continues to utilize foster homes in its work with emotionally disturbed youngsters. Rather than being perceived as a panacea, the proper role of foster care is that of one option among many for the child in need of placement and the home wisely set a moderate course.

A committee had been appointed by the board of directors to frame a future policy for the home. When this report was presented early in April of 1923, most of it was unanimously adopted by the board without change. It was formally resolved to purchase a lot and build a home which would accommodate 50 children; a superintendent; and the necessary staff, with the provision that the grounds be extensive enough to allow for future expansion. They placed the "home finding" department under the jurisdiction of the board of directors; an advisory committee to

the board was also to be appointed, consisting of nine members, including the superintendent and the social worker who found the homes. This home finding committee had no vote and was to be utilized by the board strictly in an advisory capacity. The report noted that:

> Under this arrangement the Orphans' Home will have jurisdiction over all dependent Jewish children, except those who are kept with their parents. This latter will come under the jurisdiction of the Jewish Aid Society [the forerunner of Jewish Family Service] as they do at present.
>
> It is the sense of this committee that the Orphans' Home should serve as a clearing house for normal children until such time as they can be placed in foster homes, and as a permanent home for atypical children and those who are not placeable. (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, April 18, 1923)

It is worth noting that initially the board had been so taken with the success of its "home finding movement" that the members gave serious consideration to terminating their work as a residential care facility altogether and specializing in foster care. It was their initial plan that the Los Angeles Federation of Jewish Welfare Organizations assume responsibility for those children who had difficulties which made them unplaceable. One is inclined to wonder if strong resistance from the federation was responsible, in part, for this change in plans.

Armand Wyle had been hired on an interim basis of one year and his term as superintendent was rapidly drawing to a close. From the beginning his role had been defined as rather marginal in that he was to preside over the changing of the guard and, such as it was, he managed to play the part admirably. He had voluntarily relinquished full control over institutional policy to the JOHSC's lay leadership--an act which allowed the organization temporarily to regain its equilibrium. The period of Wyle's administration was a time of institutional redefinition during which the board of directors undertook to chart a new course for the home. It had committed substantial resources to the development of a foster care program and henceforth the organization would strike out on a new path in the direction of becoming a multi-service child welfare institution.

The Superintendency Changes Hands

The transition in leadership occurred in the summer of 1923. Wyle concluded his term of employment in July and Joseph Bonaparte officially began serving as superintendent in September. Upon his arrival, Bonaparte must have found the JOHSC in a considerable state of disarray. The site on West Adams which had been chosen as a temporary residence for the children was in poor physical condition

and some of the parents were so displeased with the level of care their children had been receiving that the federation had received occasional complaints.

Bonaparte was rapidly to prove himself more than adequate to the task of restoring a sense of balance to the organization which would allow for a creative admixture of lay leadership and trained professional guidance. Born in 1889, he was raised in New York and grew up as the eldest son in a Reform Jewish family. A natural athlete, he had always enjoyed coaching younger children in sports and during his years as an undergraduate he began working at the famous Hebrew Orphans' Asylum in New York. (For an account of this institution, see Bernard, 1973.) Eventually he became athletic director and boys' counsellor. He left the employ of the Hebrew Orphans' Asylum in 1912 and was married the same year. A honeymoon trip brought Joseph and Pearl Bonaparte to San Francisco where he visited his brother who was employed as the director of the Pacific Orphans' Home. He remained in this position for nine years and then in 1921 returned to the Hebrew Orphans' Asylum in New York as assistant superintendent. During the next two years he completed a master's degree in sociology at the City College of New York. While living in New York, Bonaparte had been receiving persistent entreaties from the JOHSC to accept the position of superintendent and following the completion of his degree

he finally yielded. Thirty-four years old at the time, he provided leadership for the agency during the next 43 years, retiring in the fall of 1966 shortly before his death.

A New Physical Facility

On assuming the position of superintendent, he was also granted the position of recording secretary, which meant that for the first time the person serving in the capacity of superintendent would be a party to all formal board deliberations. Swift action followed. Within weeks, Bonaparte had reorganized the committee charged with finding a future site for the institution's new home. Headed by the inimitable Sigfried Maishutz, this committee would visit over 100 sites in the course of a year as Bonaparte argued effectively against neighborhood after neighborhood. Finally on January 28, 1924, came the decision to purchase a 22 acre tract known as Vista Del Mar in the Palms area of Los Angeles. Dedication ceremonies for the new site and physical plant took place on Sunday, May 10, 1925, with about 1,000 people in attendance. The guests were addressed by four reform rabbis, who also led them in an opening and closing prayer. Also featured among the speakers were the presidents of both the federation and the Community Chest--both were significant financial sponsors of the organization. Along with a new

home came a new name: after 17 years as the Jewish Orphans' Home of Southern California, it would henceforth be known as Vista Del Mar Child Care Service. This change in nomenclature represented significant changes in consciousness and in the agency's internal self-definition. No longer a mere orphans' home, the organization was well on the way to becoming a multi-service child welfare agency, and with increased professionalization came the awareness of the societal opprobrium which the former name had brought on the dependent children.

Through an ill-fated series of events the organization began to run into significiant financial stumbling blocks for the first time in its history.

> In 1924 the Board of Directors of the Jewish Orphans' Home resolved to raise the sum of $350,000 for the purpose of building a new home . . . the then president appointed a committee. The committee decided to undertake a mail campaign and a list of some five hundred people was prepared, each of whom was asked to contribute $1,000.00. As a result of the letter and without any publicity or follow-up, $70,000 was subscribed. (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, October 27, 1937)

At that time, Boris Bogen, newly appointed director of the Federation of Jewish Welfare Organizations, urged the home to merge its fund raising campaign with that of the Cedars of Lebanon Hospital under the leadership of the federation. "A goal was set at $1,000,000 of which $300,000 was to be for the home and $700,000 for the hospital."

As evidenced by the incredible response of $70,000 to a mere written appeal with no follow up, the fund raising potential of the home was indeed formidable; thus it was with considerable misgivings that the board agreed to Bogen's scheme. The million dollar campaign was plagued by one difficulty after another. Shortly after it got under way the Young Peoples Hebrew Association, then functioning in Boyle Heights, petitioned that they be included in the campaign. They were desirous of a $30,000 allocation for a new building.

"In the fall of 1924 the Community Chest got underway and requested the federation to defer the completion of its campaign to a later date. This request was granted" (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, October 27, 1937). In the meantime, construction had already begun on the new Vista Del Mar plant in Palms. The board of Vista Del Mar (Vista), finding themselves in less than enviable circumstances, requested the federation to distribute the funds already obtained.

> Although it had been agreed at a previous meeting that the money would be divided on a 70-30% basis . . . [the] president of the Hospital Board of Directors and chairman of its building committee, held out for a division of 75-25% and this percentage prevailed. Subsequently, we [Vista] learned that the $70,000 originally subscribed to the J.O.H. was included in the total to be distributed. Thus it happened that we received but $197,000 out of the total Joint Fund in 1928. (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes,

Shortly afterwards Cedars of Lebanon renewed its fund raising efforts in the form of a capital funds drive; Vista demanded inclusion but was prevailed on by the federation to withdraw its name and was promised a share of the money at the campaign's conclusion. The board minutes tersely note that the "latter part of this program was never consummated" (Board of Directors Meeting, JOHSC, minutes, October 27, 1937). As a result, Vista was left holding a mortgage indebtedness of $200,000.

The wild and woolly growth of the Los Angeles Jewish community was typical of the unplanned and undisciplined expansion of the city at large during the 1920s (see McWilliams, 1946, chapters 7 & 8).

> Los Angeles was the boom city in America of the 1920s. The city's economic growth was startling. The figure of 266,000 employed workers of 1920 increased to 724,000 in 1930, and in the same span of time the value of the city's product jumped from $278,000,000 . . . to $757,000,000. . . . Sales made in downtown Los Angeles department stores ascended from $41,970,000 in 1919 to $106,900,000 in 1929. (Vorspan & Gartner, 1970, p. 126)

Development towns were springing up within and around Los Angeles County like weeds; some would eventually be incorporated as cities, but many would fade from the map without a trace. Fortunes were rapidly being lost, won, and reappropriated.

Climatology and the Health Seekers

Few histories are ever complete without a seemingly perverse twist of fate and this one is no exception. It was the tragedy of tuberculosis and its devastating effect on vast numbers of families which was to play a significant role in the development of the city of Los Angeles for a time and, with even greater force, determine the course of the local Jewish community.

> After exploring Southern California at some length, Dr. William A. Edwards, an early tourist concluded that its climate could relieve, and possible cure, the following ailments: incipient phthisis, chronic pneumonia, tuberculosis, diseases of the liver . . . functional female disturbances, the organic ills of advanced years, simple congestion of constipation, hepatic catarrh, scofulous affections, insomnia, and enlarged glands. (McWilliams, 1946, p. 98)

Caught up in what McWilliams describes as the "folklore of climatology" and probably also motivated by strictly monetary considerations, the Southern California Medical Society set up a special committee to enumerate and describe the various ailments which could be cured by the medicinal rays of the Los Angeles sunshine. Scores of booklets on the healing properties of life under the Mediterranean skies of Southern California were published and undoubtedly found their way across the eastern and midwestern states. Apparently these pamphlets fell into

eager hands for the ailing and infirm began to arrive in droves.

While most of the newcomers probably did benefit from the change of climate, it appears that there were few miraculous cures. While Los Angeles area physicians did a brisk business, other local residents began to find it something of an "embarrassment." The situation grew to such proportions that:

> By 1880 the whole foothill district around Sierra Madre and San Gabriel was "one vast sanatarium." As early as 1869 the City of Los Angeles had begun to complain of the cost involved in providing medical care and hospital treatment for indigent invalids. It would seem that almost one out of three of the early tourists were, as they phrased it, "run down," "consumptive," or "ailing." (McWilliams, 1946, p. 99)

Out-of-state newspapers referred to Southern California as "the sanataria and fruit country." Doctors, dentists, morticians, and faith healers of every color and stripe were busy day and night. That Los Angeles was not bankrupted by the inordinate expense of providing medical care for so many transients is probably attributable, at least in part, to the fact that so many of the ailing out-of-staters died soon after their arrival.

Among large metropolitan Jewish communities Los Angeles is distinctive in that very few Jews arrived there directly from Europe. (This was not possible until after the completion of the Panama Canal with regard to

ship passengers. A small percentage of other immigrants were aided in relocating in the Los Angeles area by the Industrial Removal Office.) The overwhelming majority had already established themselves elsewhere previously and then by conscious intent made their way to California. Not too surprisingly, it seems that a high proportion of the influx consisted of consumptive Jews attracted, like all the rest, by the "folklore of climatology." This deluge of ailing East European Jews naturally provoked both consternation and concern among their locally established co-religionists, who were largely German Jews. All pleas to the contrary, notwithstanding, the East Europeans continued to arrive in the Los Angeles area in substantial numbers and it is a credit to the Jewish community that it both adjusted and was able to respond.

The ravages of tuberculosis on children and their families played a significant role in the development of Vista by creating a heightened need for child placement services. Bonaparte, in his capacity as secretary, noted in the board minutes that:

> At Vista Del Mar, 19% of the childrem come from tuberculous families and 15% from families in which one or both parents are insane. In boarding homes 30% come from tuberculous parents and 17% from families in which one or both parents are insane. (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, September 19, 1927)

Parents were obviously not the only family members whose health was at risk. The Child Welfare Committee at Vista was so greatly concerned "for the large number of children classified as predisposed to tuberculosis" that they decided to begin investigating the possibility of establishing a special recuperative unit for girls. Evidently persuaded by the extent of the need, the president of the board of directors contributed the cost of a preventoria adequate to house 20 girls; dedicated on January 6, 1929, it was known as Jacoby Cottage.

A year later, a local Jewish philanthropist offered to contribute $20,000 to Vista for the construction of a recuperative cottage for boys, provided that the facility would be conducted on a strictly kosher basis. Having been non-observant of the Jewish dietary laws since the agency's inception in 1909, the board found the gift in the form it was offered unacceptable, and eventually the offer was withdrawn (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, February 17, 1930). Until problems developed, which will be detailed later, boys who were diagnosed as chronically ill with pulmonary problems were referred to non-sectarian facilities.

Summary

The 1920s had been a decade of turbulence and growth both for greater Los Angeles and the local Jewish community. Within the organized Jewish community, the basic infrastructure of governance and fund raising adequate to the provision of extensive sectarian social services had taken shape. Its non-sectarian counterpart--the Community Chest--had also been established. Following the First World War, rapid social change took place, in part as a response to vast technological developments. It became clear that improved service delivery systems had to be developed if the bulk of those in need of human services were to be helped. For the first time philanthropy was seen as "scientific" and professional schools of social work came into being. Thus the lay person and the professional were to enter into a new and fruitful type of partnership.

The same years saw the Jewish Orphans' Home of Southern California become the Vista Del Mar Child Care Service. The agency was no longer a refuge for dependent children in which the haves gave to the have-nots; it was now a professional agency with a multifacted approach to meeting the child welfare needs of the greater Los Angeles Jewish community. While a core of dedicated

benefactors remained, the agency was relying increasingly on the community for financial support. A beneficiary of both the Federation of Jewish Welfare Organizations and the Community Chest, the agency would become increasingly dependent on public funding. Under Bonaparte's skillful influence, the board had successfully negotiated the treacherous schoals of encroaching professionalism, and a comfortable partnership had been established.

CHAPTER V

SHIFTING DEMANDS AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATURITY: 1930-1940

Changing Clients and Changing Services

Already suffering from the ill effects of declining real estate values, Los Angeles was particularly hard hit in 1929 by the stock market crash and the onset of the Great Depression. During the decade of the 1930s, the population of the county saw the smallest proportionate increase in its history with a net gain of 500,000 individuals, the population reaching 2,785,000 in 1940. Before employment figures rebounded in 1940 there were at various times less than 723,000 people at work (Vorspan & Gartner, 1970, p. 193).

During the late 1920s, the demand for services had already begun to change as reflected by the types of applications the agency was receiving. The board minutes indicate that "the Child Welfare Committee was faced with the problem of reviewing an increased number of cases coming from broken homes with their attendant health and

behavioral problems (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista minutes, January 9, 1928). Faced with "the need for more intensive care and a better understanding of our children" the committee turned to a child guidance clinic and the Psychology Department of the Board of Education; on occasion, the Juvenile Court was also involved. These community resources were only available to Vista Del Mar Child Care Service (Vista) in the most extreme cases and it was the feeling of the board "That all of the children coming to our attention merit psychological study and many of them psychiatric study" (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, January 9, 1928). For this reason, it was finally decided to bring a psychologist on staff. By the end of 1929, the minutes note, an increasingly large number of children were being admitted at the request of the Juvenile Court and the Probation Department.

As the economic depression deepened, the number of children with mentally disturbed parents also began to climb rapidly. Understandably, several of these children too, appeared to have manifested significant behavior problems. The harbingers of the times were not good. By September of 1930, Bonaparte reported "that the large number of admissions and the small number of discharges during the month were in large part a reflection of the general economic and industrial situation in our community."

The problem of finding suitable employment for those children who had completed high school and were awaiting discharge was also growing acute. At a time when the needs were so great the agency began to find itself plagued by increasing deficits with the Community Chest falling increasingly short of its campaign goals.

In spite of all this, in the winter of 1930, the traditional Chanukah celebration took place with carefully wrapped gifts for all the children and entertainment. Poultry and flour were donated for the festivities. Half the children were involved in classes in music, dance, or voice and their talents were utilized also. The expected $6,000 deficit for the year was to be financed out of the capital funds' account and life went on.

Vista began to gear up for an increased number of placement requests, but due to radical changes in public funding the expected onslaught of applications never materialized. As one social worker noted in a national publication:

> The economic depression has not caused an increase in the volume of foster child caring [and placement] work. The effect of the depression in this field has been primarily financial. There has been a falling off in normal contributions, in returns on endowment funds and in government subsidies. But while less money was available for the foster [and residential] care of children, more money became available for the care of children in their own homes. No restriction was placed on the use of Federal funds for family

> assistance. Until the end of this year the Federal Relief Administration has made no distinction between employables and unemployables, while there has been a ruling against financing foster care of children. This situation naturally tended to discourage the foster care of children. (Kepes, 1936, pp. 294-95)

It was obvious that the depression was there to stay, at least for a while. Members of the community began donating everything from shoes to food stuffs and on February 17, 1932, Vista's first organized community support group was organized--the Vista Del Mar Associates. The girls went without haircuts, new clothing purchases were curtailed, and the boys assisted with the manual labor.

Making do with little would soon give way to learning how to get by on far less. As of April 1, 1932, all Vista employees who earned over $1,200 sustained a 10% salary reduction under a broad set of guidelines affecting all federation agencies. As the pressures of the economic situation increased, 20 to 25% of the children in placement had one or both parents in "the State hospital for the insane." Even children fortunate enough to have parents and relatives free to pursue a livelihood were largely financially dependent on the agency as parents and relatives were increasingly unable to contribute to their support. One unexpected boon precipitated by the

depression was the decrease in desertions and divorces. Apparently, it was somewhat easier to obtain public assistance if one had "encumbrances" as opposed to being unattached, and perhaps misery loves company. Of particular concern to Vista was the increasing numbers of young people adrift and unemployed. Its resources were taxed to the breaking point by the end of 1932. The agency incurred a deficit of over $12,000 from the preceding two years. It is surely a credit to the organization that throughout the depression, no child was ever turned out on the street for lack of funds.

Regardless of economic indicators and the mood of the nation, as a whole, Vista Del Mar Child Care Service continued to be stalwart in its slow but steady progress. Bonaparte had occupied the position of superintendent for some ten years and the full extent of his professional maturity was becoming increasingly evident. As he went about educating his lay board of directors, the minutes of their monthly meetings came increasingly to read like a good intensive course in social casework and agency administration. Carefully prepared brief case studies illuminating various aspects of the agency's work with different types of children became increasingly numerous and the records of the individual meetings grew in length. Tuition to these very private seminars was steep, for the

board continued to be a working one. Not only were they expected to give of their money, but they were also expected to give liberally of themselves. Bonaparte frequently spoke,

> of the importance of the members of the Board of Directors becoming more intimately familiar with some of the details of operation of the Jewish Orphans' Home, and of more frequent personal contacts with the institution and its children. (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista minutes, April 13, 1934)

In addition to their direct activities on behalf of the agency, they were also expected to participate in the fund drives of the federation and the Community Chest.

Programmatically the agency scored its biggest gains in the continuing development of the Foster Home Department. By 1933 arrangements were being made with the Probation and County Welfare Departments "for the supervision of Jewish children in foster homes. All of this is part of the plan to work out a complete social service program for the Jews of Los Angeles" (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista Del Mar, minutes, October 23, 1933). Something approaching this dream of total services delivery in the Jewish child welfare arena was not to become a reality for another 40 years. Nevertheless, the agency was able to watchdog the health and secular and religious education of Jewish children placed by the county in what

were often non-Jewish homes. Whenever possible, they also hoped to be able to provide follow up work for these children after discharge from placement.

The Children in a World of Disarray

Refugees of the Holocaust

The effects of Hitler's growing dominance in Central Europe and its disastrous consequences for world Jewry were also being felt increasingly. One evening early in September of 1933, a group of vandals defaced some of Vista's buildings with swastikas and slashed some tennis nets. This was the first instance of overt anti-Semitism in the agency's 25 year history and because of the nature of the vandalism, the board considered giving the incident widespread publicity. Finally, a circumspect approach was adopted and the board agreed to let the B'nai B'rith handle it.

That spring "a letter from the German-Jewish Children's Aid of New York requesting a free home for two children from Germany was referred to the Executive Committee (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, June 25, 1934). These children were eventually admitted by Vista and were to be the first of many. Some of these young refugees were eventually placed in foster homes

where they would make a successful adjustment. Others as a result of their traumatic experiences had become seriously disturbed and spent years in residence at Vista with the hope that the family-type groupings in the cottages could ameliorate the more obvious effects of their experiences.

By 1936 a coordinating committee for German Jewish refugees was organized in the Los Angeles area and refugees continued to trickle into Vista at a slow pace. By late 1938, 11 German children had been placed and were under Vista's supervision and homes had been made available for an additional 14. It was decided at that point to request the Los Angeles Coordinating Committee to fund a half-time social worker for the agency. In the spring of 1939, members of the board were urged to communicate with their senators and congressmen to facilitate the passage of a bill (Wagner-Rogers) which would have allowed the admission of 20,000 refugees under the age of 14 years for the years 1939 and 1940, exclusive of the immigration quotas.

The Emotionally Troubled and Physically Infirm

Health continued to be a major factor determining the admission of children from the local community. Due to shortages in public funding, children who would

ordinarily be placed were maintained in their own homes on public aid to families. For this reason, only those cases which had become acutely critical were ever referred for residential placement. Frequently Vista found itself in disagreement with the treatment plan designed by the county, but was unable to intervene due to a seemingly omnipresent lack of funds.

The health cottage for boys, following the refusal of the conditional bequest for the construction of a kosher facility, had never been built. As an alternative, Vista had been placing boys with the Los Angeles Tuberculosis Health Camp for the past 10 years with very satisfactory results. This camp accommodated 90 boys. Relations with this camp association began to grow strained, however, when it was realized by the association that "more than sixty of the boys in residence at the Camp were of Jewish parentage." The association began to restrict their intake of additional Jewish boys and began to manifest a general unwillingness to accept referrals from Vista--the implication being that they should provide adequate care for their own.

Apparently, on the average the general level of health of those children requiring placement began rising slowly because by 1938 the Jacoby Health Cottage (the sanatorium for girls) generally had only 65% of its beds

occupied in the course of the year (Building Committee Meeting, Vista, minutes, February 6, 1938). For this reason it was decided that, rather than build a separate facility for boys, 13 additional beds would be added to the girls building at a considerable savings in construction costs.

The demand for child placements appeared to be rising again by the late 1930s. While it was difficult to learn to what this might be attributed, Bonaparte speculated that at least part of the blame lay with the "current recession or the aftermath of years of public assistance which can provide but an inadquate standard of living." Vista at this point found itself confronted with a $1,000 monthly deficit and--just when the need was greatest--felt obliged to impose "greater restrictions in reviewing applications for admission." The depression years had been extremely difficult on children and families as became apparent as applications continued to roll in reflecting ever growing degrees of individual and social pathology.

On December 17, 1939, a motion was carried by the board of directors that the "official title of the manager of Vista Del Mar, or the Jewish Orphans' Home, be changed from Superintendent to Executive Director" (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes).

At long last, in the spring of 1940, the official name of the institution became Vista Del Mar Child Care Service, a designation which by now accurately reflected the broad range of activities the institution was engaged in. By November of 1940, there were 124 children in residence, 104 in foster homes and 86 under supervision of their own homes, making a total of 315.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROCESS OF GOAL SUCCESSION: THE ORPHANS' HOME BECOMES A TREATMENT CENTER

The Tenor of the Times

By the spring of 1942, the effects of the war years had begun to be felt intensely. The Los Angeles Community Chest advised the Vista Del Mar Child Care Service (hereinafter referred to as Vista) "that the basis for adjusting increased costs on supply items is approximately 20% for food, 15% for laundry, 25% for medical supplies" and on down the list of major commodities. In addition to an upwardly spiraling rate of inflation, the war provoked countless other social side effects. The tensions of the crisis had begun to arouse an understandable restlessness in young people. Confronted with the inevitability of the draft, many young adults were inclined to think fatalistically and apparently this was accompanied by a pronounced relaxation of sexual restraint.

The depression years had given way to a war time economy in which high school graduates were earning

$150 to $300 monthly in defense industries, sums which in prior times had been virtually unheard of. While automobiles and gasoline were in short supply, ever increasing numbers of people were looking forward to taking to the roads as soon as they were able. This overall restlessness and concern with immediate gratification was, of course, shared by the children at Vista, many of whom wished to leave high school prior to graduation. Fifty of Vista's graduates were scattered around the world in various branches of the armed forces, and the agency was actively involved in local civilian defense efforts.

Before long the social repercussions of the situation were of sufficient magnitude to reverberate all the way down to the types of applications which Vista was receiving. Bonaparte tersely noted that:

> There are evidences of the impact of the war upon our services to children. A father in the armed forces with the mother employed, women in defense industries, and disturbances of parents which border on a war neurosis, account for some of our recent placements. (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, April 26, 1942)

Applications also began to reflect an increase in children from broken homes as fathers deserted "obnoxious" domestic situations for employment elsewhere, and mothers "threw off their shackles" and became self-supporting. Due to the draft, the number of temporary one-parent families swelled and some women found themselves suddenly unable

to cope. The same social forces which helped to create an unprecedented demand for child placement services also conspired to keep this need unmet. Like other individuals in society, Vista's child care staff left both for reasons of the draft and in pursuit of better paying opportunities in industry--before long, a chronic labor shortage developed. For similar reasons good foster homes were becoming scarcer. The agency was also plagued by the then common shortages in food stuffs and gasoline. This eventually led to the children embarking on several "Victory Garden" projects with the agency purchasing their product from them.

The Demise of the "Great" Orphanages

With the termination of the Second World War in 1945, there was growing concern about the need for child welfare services nationally during the readjustment period that followed. Vista found itself operating at 95% of capacity and had a waiting list of 40 children for foster homes. The board minutes report:

> Our major concern is with the shortage of foster homes. We now have fifty-three children placed. Of this number two are in the home of a Seventh Day Adventist, two in a Catholic home and seven in Protestant homes. Only the first is religiously devout; but we are very unhappy

about placing children in non-Jewish homes. (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, November 19, 1945)

Based on the experience of Great Britain, a greatly accelerated demand for services was anticipated due to,

> broken home situations deriving from war causes such as incompatibility of parents who have been long separated, reduced incomes in families due to economic shifts, and juvenile delinquency. (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, November 19, 1945)

Thus the 1940s became a time of institutional redefinition for Vista. The agency had made its new name official after a hiatus of almost 20 years and at long last its superintendent had become the "executive director," but changes in semantics do not define an institution or create a coherent program of services. Nationally, the era of the great orphanages was past, largely due to constructive changes which had grown out of the depression years and medical advances. Bernard has accounted for it as resulting from:

> Principally, the broad social welfare programs enacted since the New Deal, longer parental life span due to public health advances, and increased community resources for families and children in need of help. And--for the Jewish community--the virtual cessation of immigration, and the greater stability and security of a settled population. Another factor is the recent decline in birth rate.
>
> Community resources like group day care and family day care, homemaker services, family service programs, child guidance clinics, treatment programs

> offer viable alternatives to placement although they still fall far short of the need. (Bernard, 1973, p. 152)

What few full orphans there were would generally be placed permanently with an adoptive family. As a sound body of casework practice had gradually accumulated, it was increasingly realized that even the most optimal institution could not provide the number and types of experiences needed for proper child development.

A Jewish Adoption Service

As a seemingly logical step toward implementing such services for the Jewish community, the State Department of Public Welfare took the lead and in June of 1946 requested Vista to consider assuming responsibility for the adoptive placement of Jewish children in Southern California. At that time, it represented a case load of some 12 to 15 children per month. Gradually an adoptions department was put together and Vista's formal program got under way on April 12, 1950, with approximately 85 registered applicants who wished to be considered as potential parents and 5 children who were under consideration for adoptive placement (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, April 17, 1950).

As the only licensed Jewish adoption agency in Southern California, Vista was virtually inundated by

applications from prospective parents, though the children available were few in number. The logistics of the problem eventually became so acute that the agency finally decided to limit applications from prospective parents to the geographical area covered by the Los Angeles United Jewish Welfare Fund drive, but to accept children from all of Southern California (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, May 20, 1952).

Adoptions work has always been popular with social workers because it is so often an area where people go away happy and it is relatively easy to feel a genuine sense of professional accomplishment; but this population was only one among many requiring skilled child placement services. It was becoming clear that an exceedingly large group of potential clients was not currently being served and indeed was almost totally lacking in placement alternatives.

Residential Treatment of the Emotionally Disturbed

By 1940 the board minutes had begun to express the executive director's mounting concern over those children whom the institution was not equipped to serve. In a typical statement he observed,

> we have been helpless in serving children whose behavior does not warrant placement in a correctional institution and yet who do not seem

> to fit into a foster home or Vista Del Mar cottage. (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, December 9, 1940)

The cottages were at that point not equipped to handle children given to violent or acting out behavior. Thus the director requested that the board appoint a committee to study the possibility of developing a special facility for six to eight girls with a specially selected housemother and psychiatric services as a "constructive resource for the prevention of delinquency."

Three years later, in the winter of 1943, Bonaparte was still concerned about these difficult to place children. By that time he had done considerable research on the problem and, in addition to planning a deployment of institutional resources, was busy educating both the board of directors and the lay and professional communities. Summing up the state of affairs with regard to child care institutions, he noted that:

> There was a consensus among the workers in the field that there were recognizable trends in the types of children that are in need of help which was similar for all communities.
>
> In the past decade the Federal and State governments have set up devices which make it possible for competent and responsible parents with inadequate resources to keep their children at home. Thus child-care agencies are concerning themselves latterlly with boys and girls manifesting more serious emotional disturbances and acute behavior problems. These children stem from parents who have been in serious conflict with one

> another, with their own children and with society itself. . . . Many of the parents concerned have had unsatisfying life experiences themselves and have unwittingly transmitted their frustrations to their children, sometimes with great violence. (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, February 17, 1943)

At that time Vista began seriously considering plans for establishing "a cottage for the care of emotionally disturbed and behavior problem children." To be located in the community, the cottage was planned to serve eight to ten children. Several homes in North Hollywood had also been considered as potential sites.

Integrating emotionally disturbed or other special-needs-children into the mainstream of our communities has always met with significant resistance. Those asked to share their schools and neighborhoods with these troubled youngsters often respond out of ignorance and fear rather than compassion. This remains true today and apparently the situation 35 years ago in the environs of greater Los Angeles was no different. For this reason and a variety of others, the decision was finally made to locate Vista's treatment cottage facility on the institution's grounds.

The choice of the Jacoby Health Cottage seemed in many ways to be a natural one. The need for a health facility for chronically ill children of the type Vista was equipped to handle seemed to be steadily decreasing.

It was a good sound physical facility and the social workers had begun more and more to view the children it currently served as having emotional disturbances rather than health problems. The protective environment of the cottage as it had been managed was felt by the social workers to be infantilizing. The children were required to move at the age of 12 and many were experiencing difficulties making the adjustment to more normal settings (Applebaum, interview, October 24, 1977).

Thus in 1944 Jacoby Health Cottage was converted into a treatment facility for 14 boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 12. These children were felt by the staff to present problems serious enough to exclude them from the other cottages. They could not be expected to meet the demands of a more normal group living type of experience. With special understanding and support, however, these children were able to attend the local public schools, as the decision had been made to terminate the special classes which had been provided in prior years. To meet the needs of these and additional disturbed children, a consulting psychiatrist was brought on staff on a one day per week basis, beginning in the fall of 1944.

Vista's mortgage indebtedness had been reduced from $200,000 to $15,000 and apparently Bonaparte was

once more feeling sufficiently secure to dream. Commenting on an analysis of 64 applications pending disposition, he noted that "about one fourth are cases of children whose parents are separated or divorced. About one-third present behavior or personality problems, or have mothers who are mentally ill" (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, February 21, 1944). Challenged by these trends, he began to envision the construction of a specialized treatment cottage where a highly specialized therapeutic milieu could be provided for a group of acutely troubled children. This dream became a reality in 1957 with Cooper Cottage for Boys. In the meantime, progress was slow but steady. At a special board meeting in October of 1944, it was announced that the plan to establish a treatment cottage had received the initial approval of the Community Chest, the Federation of Jewish Welfare Organizations, and the Council of Social Agencies. A year later the federation allocated $4,550 and the Community Chest allocated an additional $8,000 as a show of tangible support for Vista's endeavors in aiding this population.

By mid-1947, it was clear that policy-wise Vista had made the decision to offer intensive services of high quality to a small percentage of the population rather than extensive services to the broader community. In an effort to meet a rapidly expanding case load of

disturbed children, a new social worker and a part time psychologist had been added to the staff, and the agency was also hoping to procure the services of an additional psychiatrist. That spring the Budget and Finance Committee of the federation recommended that special funds be allocated for the construction of a treatment cottage.

A Consolidation of Services

By the fall of 1948 Vista's resident population had dropped to just under 100 children, with a corresponding increase in the foster home load to 80. By providing increased services to children in their own homes, in many cases, the agency found it was able to maintain family integrity. This service, the social workers were soon to discover, was as time consuming as child placement work. Bonaparte, summarizing the agency's new course, observed that,

> children referred to us today give evidence of having more serious emotional and behavior problems than in former years. In the past six months we have had to reject about six cases because the problems presented by the children could not be effectively met in a treatment cottage setting. Because so many disturbed youngsters have been referred to us, we have found it necessary to use more of our psychiatrist's time in our intake process. This condition has also had its effect upon the quality of services requested of social workers . . . and consequently they were able to serve fewer children. (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, September 25, 1950)

As a logical response to the changing needs of the population served, Vista began instituting increasingly elaborate intake and counselling services until finally this aspect of the agency's work became so institutionalized as to form a department. In addition to performing pre-placement evaluations, the department also served children in their own homes by providing counselling and casework intervention. As a logical outgrowth of the adoption program, the agency also began providing counselling and concrete services to unwed mothers.

Exploring the Role of the Private Agency

During the 1940s and 1950s, Vista also began considering the role of the private agency within the total human services delivery system. The two most cogent policy issues which Bonaparte and the board explored were program and funding. The executive director, in tracing the history of child placement institutions, explained that:

> For a century "orphan asylums" were managed as huge barracks in which orphaned and neglected children were herded under one roof and subjected to a military routine in which mass movement was the rule and individual differences were not recognized. Severe disciplinary measures were used to bring about regimentation and constant pressures were applied to make the children aware of the fact that they were objects of charity and they should therefore be ever ready to indicate

their gratitude. (Board of Directors Meeting, Vista, minutes, September 16, 1941)

In examining Vista's own track record for innovative excellence in providing casework services to homeless children, he felt that it was in keeping "with the function of the private child care agency in its pioneer and exploratory efforts as distinct from the relief function of public agencies." Thus the private agency often had the necessary financial resources and institutional flexibility to experiment with alternative services, and those which proved to be of special value could be adopted by the often more conservative public agencies.

But, unlike agencies in the public sector, Vista did not share the advantage of being guaranteed funding out of public tax dollars, and innovative excellence in casework or anything else does not come cheap. For every successful innovation there are generally several failures. As is well known to agency directors, one of the most crucial and exacting tasks for which they are responsible is the design of a balanced budget; the money to get new or expanded services going generally must be derived from additional funds above and beyond those required for bare maintenance. Often a relatively small amount of money can determine the fate of a promising new program proposal. Thus Vista began searching for new patterns of funding.

One of the avenues which Vista, like many private social agencies, began exploring durin the 1940s was the question of fees for service. Increasingly the techniques of family casework and services to children were being seen as valid for all economic groups, and in a free market economy such as our own, one of the quickest ways to grant legitimacy to such a service was promoting it as a purchasable commodity for those able to pay. In addition to the political implications, there was a growing awareness of the psychological realities.

> We worked harder at the problem of maintaining the client's strength, we worked harder at finding ways of enabling the client to feel that he was not a total failure because he needed help, and at the same time we insisted that he come to us stripped of proof that he wasn't a total failure. This was certainly what we did when we said to a self-supporting person that one of the conditions of receiving our help was taking it free. We thus forced an applicant to drop proof of his capacity to meet one of society's important standards of adequacy--supporting one's self--and created for ourselves an unnecessary and serious block. (Levenson, 1945, p. 12)

As a result of the war-time economy, the overall economic condition of Vista's client population was considerably improved. This tended to facilitate an expansion in payments from parents and relatives, whereas state aid went down as family incomes improved and children became ineligible. Income from relatives thus increased from $16,000 in 1942 to $27,000 in 1944. By

1949, annual collections from parents and relatives were averaging between $38,000 and $40,000 per year. In spite of this trend, public monies continued to play a substantial role in the fiscal picture of the agency. Due to the shortage of foster homes, the County Department of Public Assistance had been forced to place more children at Vista.

The Volunteer: A New Configuration of Lay Leadership

Vista also had the support of four excellent community-based groups: the Vista Del Mar Associates, the Alumni Association, the Junior Associates, and the Men's Association. Involving many thousands of men and women over the course of many years in addition to extensive fund raising, these groups provided vast amounts of in-kind service and functioned as an integral part of the overall program. The Men's Association in particular was active in undertaking to provide the agency with additional psychiatric services. Realizing the necessity for a broad base of support in the Jewish community, the agency had been devoting increasing amounts of time and attention to public relations. The result was that in 1951, when a board member offered to underwrite the initial costs of a professional public relations program, it was formally incorporated as an agency function.

The very success of these community organizing efforts shortly brought Vista into somewhat of a confrontation with the federation's leadership. When the United Jewish Welfare Fund campaign, by which the federation had been raising funds for local needs since 1929, fell short of its goal for the 1951 drive and the agency's allocation was cut, Vista refused to curtail direct services as the federation requested. As an alternative, Vista proposed to approach its lay support groups to raise the difference. At that time the four groups had a combined membership of 3,500 people. The federation was of the opinion that this action would further weaken a poor campaign, while Vista claimed that it would increase contributions to the welfare fund by reaching and educating the previously uninvolved. At that time as a result of poor Community Chest campaigns over the course of several years, Vista found itself relying on the federation's United Jewish Welfare Fund for 60% of the annual budget. Many of the local federation agencies were becoming increasingly concerned over the competing needs of Israel and other Jewish communities overseas. As one alternative, Vista became more aggressive in its pursuit of public monies.

Union Organizing and a Changing Concept of Professionalism

The late 1940s and early 1950s were turbulent years in a great many ways, for they spanned the "McCarthy Era" and the infamous "Red Menace"; the Los Angeles Jewish community would eventually be particularly hard hit. It was also a time of intensive labor union organizing on the part of the local Jewish community's human service agency employees. It did not take too long before the conservative and the more progressive elements were set on a collision course. The movement to organize into unions for collective bargaining purposes had first begun to be taken seriously by federation agency employees during the mid-1940s as a way to take advantage of the acute labor shortage brought on by the war. Undoubtedly, many of their grievances were perfectly legitimate, for among other things, although the Old Age Security section of the Social Security Act had become law in 1934, workers in non-profit organizations were not covered. Thus until 1945, when the employees brought enough pressure to bear on the national umbrella organization of the Community Chest, workers in Vista and many other agencies had no retirement insurance plan. Spurred on by victory, the staff members at Vista and other federation agencies began requesting that they be represented in administrative

decisions which would affect working conditions.

The federation was serving as the exclusive bargaining agent with the employees' unions for its affiliate agencies. When the contract came up for renewal in 1946, the federation felt that the negotiations were very difficult, while the workers for their part instituted work stoppages and demonstrations in front of the federation building. A basic contract was eventually signed, but feelings continued to run high and there were accusations on both sides.

In the spring of 1949 these frictions were brought to a flash point when the local union representing the organized federation agency employees was thrown out of its parent organization--the nationally based CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations)--for being Communist-dominated. Not easily deterred, its members showed extreme loyalty and remained with their local union which they felt had been so effective in the past, and it began functioning independently.

Contract negotiations between the employees' independent local union and the federation's executive staff went from bad to worse. The employees claimed that the federation refused to sign the contract because the union had been declared a Communist organization, while the federation claimed publicly that their refusal to

negotiate was attributable to the unreasonableness of the demands, given the poor campaign results and the difficulties of reaching an agreement with the Community Chest.

By November of 1949, work stoppages had begun to take place in some federation agencies and by February of 1950, casework services at Vista were being curtailed by walkouts. The federation responded to all this activity by instituting pay deductions for hours missed and reminding workers that such behavior was grounds for dismissal. Technically the contract was abrogated and those workers affected went out on strike in January of 1950. Six weeks into the strike the federation and the union began a series of successful negotiations beginning with a fact finding committee which considered salaries. Following the settlement, all but two of Vista's employees were back on the job. Just who initiated the terminations was never made clear. The social workers had at last defined themselves as a professional class of people who were, nevertheless, non-management, service-providing employees. Ironically enough, management in both the federation and its agencies would also continue to define themselves as professional social workers rather than administrators or some other subgrouping. This contradiction remains a challenge to the profession up to the present.

Summary

The Great Depression was to become a watershed in the history of the development of human services in the United States, for it forced a radical change in the national consciousness about public assistance. Prior to this time, it was common practice that those applying for relief be divided into two broad categories: the worthy poor and the unworthy poor. In the former category were found the blind, aged, infirm, and widows and dependent children; in the latter category was anyone else who had need of anything more than the most temporary assistance.

When the economic paralysis of the 1930s threw millions of otherwise able men and women out of work for months and sometimes years, it was finally recognized that social and economic factors had a role to play in the dynamics of poverty. A whole generation of working men and women were to discover that individual initiative and the motivation to succeed were not always enough. While society's preoccupation with "welfare chislers" and "sturdy beggars" would continue, the way was nevertheless paved for the Social Security Act of 1935, and the broad range of reforms which came to categorize Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs. Thus with regard to this chronology, the stage was set for the events which were

described in chapter V for the set of options which would be played out as discussed in chapter VI.

In the history of social policy, relief has generally also been divided into two categories, i.e., outdoor and indoor. For more than four centuries it was generally felt that it was cheaper and more efficient to maintain the poor and dependent in institutions rather than their own homes. This form of "outdoor" relief was to give rise to such once familiar institutions as the orphans' home and the county poor house. With the rise of indoor relief programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Old Age Assistance, these institutions would rapidly become anachronisms.

Although Vista Del Mar Child Care Service was a private agency serving the Jewish community, it was inevitably affected by the massive shifts in public policy. The decision to rely on public funding had been made initially in 1914 and had been reaffirmed on numerous occasions throughout the years. Due to this dependency on public funds, the changes in legislation were felt very directly, but they were also felt indirectly in the number and type of clients who approached the agency for child care services. As Bonaparte noted, due to the expanded relief programs it was now "possible for competent and responsible parents to keep their children at home."

For this reason, in the years following World War II, the "great" orphanages largely met their demise; nevertheless, the need for child care services would remain high. With the development of the fields of child psychiatry and social work, the diagnosis and treatment of the emotionally disturbed child became possible. Through a logical process of organizational goal succession, many organizations such as Vista were able to make the transition to this new field of service to children and families.

EPILOGUE

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE MEANING OF JEWISH INSTITUTIONAL SELF-IDENTITY

If you have read this far you are probably cognizant of a certain incompleteness with regard to the analytic component of this study. To attempt to understand 50 years in the lifespan of an agency is an ambitious undertaking due to the sheer volume of material which must be digested. The analytic process also requires sizeable amounts of time, though of an entirely different quality; one might envision a period of relative freedom from constraint during which the creative imagination can be given freeplay. Thus in this case, the comprehensiveness of this study with its exacting research requirements

precluded the necessary time for quiet and unhurried reflection. For this reason the final section represents an epilogue rather than a comprehensive presentation of findings. It is my intent to complete the analytic aspects of this study in the near future; so I must beg the reader's indulgence in viewing this study as a work in progress.

To my knowledge, a study such as this has never been previously attempted. To complete an in-depth historical study would seem to be one way of approaching the problem of Jewish agency identity. There are, of course, other avenues open. Those which come most immediately to mind are a quantitative approach utilizing analysis of variance and other statistical tests to make comparisons between institutions, or a study utilizing the theory and methodology of organizational behavior.

As the desire to preserve and express one's ethnic heritage becomes more acceptable in our pluralistic society, and as more minority groups come to see their communal institutions as "the place where th[eir] glory dwelleth," such research will warrant increasing attention. As the impetus toward public funding of human services continues to grow apace with the urge towards ethnicity on the part of many groups, the public policy

question of funding minority institutions might well force a good deal of clarity on this murky area of research.

At the conclusion of this study, the question might well be asked: Is there such a thing as Jewish residential treatment for emotionally disturbed youngsters? While absorbed in Nazi doctrine, Philip Lenard claimed that there was a "German physics" as opposed to the "Jewish physics" represented by Albert Einstein. Those concerned with the funding of Jewish hospitals often inquire, half in jest, if there is such a thing as Jewish medicine. The cynic might answer chicken soup, but some believe there is far more to it than that.

It would seem that the concept of religious or ethnic identity with regard to both tangible institutions which serve us daily, e.g., schools or clinics, and intangible institutions such as the fields of psychology or medicine, has tremendous potential for creative development. It is to native American Indian medicine that we owe a number of valuable "modern" drugs, and some would claim that we owe many of the "innovations" of Freudian psychology to thousands of years of Jewish experience. Our cultural differences, in spite of their potential for creating conflict, are valuable resources--resources worthy of conservation.

It could be a fruitful exercise for many sectarian agencies to undertake a conscious process of self-review,

on a managable scale as part of their planning process. Such an inventory can yield some surprises. While possibly less self-conscious about its Jewish identity in the 1950s than in the 1920s, Vista continued to remain faithful to the demands which had been presented to Sigfried Marshutz by a group of largely East European Jews anxious to preserve their heritage. Thus the agency continued to maintain a synagogue and a Jewish education program as well as a family-centered approach geared to meet the needs of the local community. Analyses need not be complex to be useful in the process of institutional self-definition.

As a consequence of the recent increases in public funding, pressure has been placed on sectarian agencies to alter their admissions and personnel policies to comply with affirmative action. The full ramifications of the issue of an ethnic group's desire to develop a specialized program or milieu to serve its own in opposition to the right of the tax paying citizen to equal access have not been explored. In the introduction, three factors were hypothesized: source of funding, admissions and personnel policies, and religious or ethnic values and practices, as determining Jewish or ethnic agency identity. The narrative has borne out this tentative hypothesis. With greater reliance on government funding and decreasing

control over admissions and personnel policies as a predictable likelihood, the areas of specialized programming and ethnic practices will take on increased importance. This will require careful thought and conscious self-searching on the part of agency leadership, which recalls the intervening variable of lay-professional relations.

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