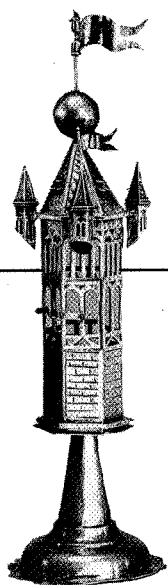


# MOMENT

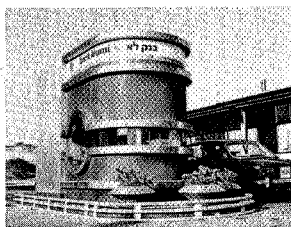
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Cover: "Maze," serigraph by Shraga Weil, courtesy of Pucker/Safrai Gallery, Boston.

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MOMENT (ISSN 0099-0280) is published monthly except January/February and July/August, when bi-monthly, by MOMENT Magazine, a division of Jewish Educational Ventures, Inc., 462 Boylston Street, Suite 301, Boston, Massachusetts 02116. Second class postage paid at Boston, Massachusetts.

POSTMASTER: Send address change to MOMENT Subscription Department, P.O. Box 922, Farmingdale, New York 11737, where all subscription and circulation queries should also be directed. Subscriptions: \$22 for one year, \$36 for two years for United

States; single copy \$2.50; Foreign, including Canada: surface mail add \$6 per year, air mail add \$12 per year.

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implicated in it are remembered dimly, if at all, the Report's section on indirect responsibility will be read by all students of Jewish history and ethics.

Readers who'd like to know more about Israel's new President, Chaim Herzog, may want to dig out of their files our issue of September 1978, where *MOMENT* interviewed Mr. Herzog, then retiring as Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations. We wish the new President well, and look forward at an appropriate time to an updated interview.

Recently, we had the covers of every issue of *MOMENT* framed, and they now decorate our office walls. Looking at them in the aggregate, we realize the debt we—and our readers—owe to Bernie and Sue Pucker, of Boston's Pucker/Safrai Gallery. Very many of our covers have come to us through their generous cooperation, always extended with grace and wisdom. It's nice to have them as neighbors, and a blessing to count them as friends. (Their gallery is around the corner on Newbury Street, and is worth a stop when you're next in Boston. Among other things, you'll find there Bill Aron's photographs, which you know from these pages, on display.)

This issue includes excerpts from two unusual and engrossing memoirs, one by Barbara Probst Solomon, the other by Kim Chernin. Each in her own way describes an element of the extraordinarily variegated past of American Jewry—as, for that matter, Peter Rozovsky chronicles an element of that present, hardly less variegated.

Wanna know how variegated? Last year, you may recall, a few summer camps around the country announced that they were offering full programs in computers. By now, the few have become dozens, as far as we can tell from the ads, and there's one, at least, that advertises as a kosher computer camp. Ay, America.

The down side of modern technology: C'mon, now, it's not nice you should make copies of *MOMENT* articles—much less reprint them—without ask-

ing permission. Most often, we'll grant it. But we kind of like to know where our material is being used, and for what. Also, there's a thing called the copyright law, and it prohibits copying without specific permission. Please?

Now and again, as our circulation rolls increase, it's worth recalling, for the benefit of our new readers, the origins of our name. *Der Moment* was one of the two leading Yiddish dailies of pre-war Warsaw, and then, of course, a victim of the Holocaust. Why not, we thought, extend the custom of naming our offspring after deceased ancestors: Hence, *MOMENT*.

Which wishes you a happy Spring.

In last month's *Alef*, I indicated that in this issue I'd have something to say about the Report of the Commission of Inquiry, then just off press. As it turned out, my own article later in these pages makes only passing reference to the Report. Since the Report, for all the publicity it has generated, has not been widely read, we decided that it would be a service to our readers to reprint a part of it. Choosing a section was relatively easy: Most of the fuss about the report dealt with its discussion of the personal responsibility of the various prominent Israeli leaders. That focus tended to obscure the Commission's very interesting and very thoughtful consideration of the matter of indirect responsibility as a general question, independent of the specific actors. Yet I suspect that many, many years from now, long after the tragic event and the leaders



## **WANTED: A NEW AGENCY**

**In one expert's view,  
it's a delusion to  
think the Jewish  
Agency can spend  
our philanthropic  
dollars wisely or  
well—so it's time  
for a change.**

**ELIEZER  
JAFFE**

How much influence do American Jews have over the way their philanthropic dollars are spent in Israel? How much power do their leaders have?

A good friend of mine, a former chairman of Project Renewal and now General Chairman of the United Jewish Appeal in a large eastern metropolis in the United States, wrote to me recently complaining about the persistent attacks on the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Congress. These, he said, "have not helped me in my present capacity"—that is, in his fundraising efforts. Such attacks, he believes, feed into the disposition of many American Jewish philanthropists who hope to change the allocation of the philanthropic dollar, keeping more of it for communal needs in America, sending less on to the United Jewish Appeal and eventually to Israel.

My friend then went on to write that "the Agency is a miniaturized stereotype of the whole Israeli scene, and for it to be any other way it would have to operate in a vacuum or be directed entirely by non-Israelis." Of course, he admitted, changes are needed in the way the Agency is managed; "You know very well," he concluded, "that many of us are trying in our own way to break down the bureaucratic walls."

These comments summarize in a nutshell the dilemma, the bewilderment and the essential powerlessness of many relatively sophisticated givers when it comes to their relationship with Israel. Beyond the deep emotional tie, the content of this relationship is overwhelmingly financial. Its core is the response of American Jews to the pleas of the Israeli Government and of the Jewish Agency, which is the major recipient of tax-deductible philanthropy for Israel.

But unfortunately, the Jewish Agency and its parent body, the World Zionist Organization, are highly politicized institutions. That politicization has not only been tolerated by UJA donors; it has been explicitly

rationalized as an inevitable reflection of the larger political environment in Israel.

This benevolent tolerance of the intrusion of Israeli politics into the distribution of American Jewish philanthropy represents an irresponsibility and a defeatism totally unbecoming of Diaspora leadership. Given the potential power the American Jewish community might wield, its fatalistic and passive approach to the question of politics in the Agency's functions is incredible.

The UJA at present transfers its Israel-bound funds to its principal beneficiary, the United Jewish Appeal (UJA). Income from the UJA comes to 87.5 percent of UIA's funds. And income from the UIA, in turn, is the major source—more than 60 percent—of the Jewish Agency's annual operating budget. In dollar terms, the UJA-UIA alone provided \$2,857,752,000 to the Jewish Agency in the course of the last eleven years—more than 65 percent of the Agency's operating budget. In fiscal 1982, UIA support for programs in Israel amounted to \$298 million. For fiscal 1983, the Agency has requested a total of \$282 million from the UJA-UIA, as well as funds for Project Renewal (\$21 million in 1982), the Israel Education Fund (\$5.9 million in 1982) and the Debt Retirement Program (\$44.6 million in 1982).

Actually, the "shares" of the American Jewish community in the Jewish Agency are even more formidable than the figures suggest. For the ten consecutive past years, the UIA obtained grants from the American government to aid in the resettlement of Soviet and Eastern European Jews in Israel, for a total of \$240,615,000. (These Federal funds account for nearly seven percent of the total Agency budget.)

The American Jewish donor gives his money to his local federation, which transmits the Israel-bound dollars to the United Jewish Appeal. Since so large a portion of the Agency budget derives from the UJA, it is appropriate that the UJA (and UIA) be held accountable for the efficient and effective expenditure of funds by the Agency. Yet, incomprehensibly, the UIA has only 30 percent representa-

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tion on the Jewish Agency Assembly and Board of Governors, and only three representatives—out of 13—on the Jewish Agency Executive. Whoever agreed to such meager representation for such a major “stockholder” shares much of the blame for the diminished responsibility and accountability to American donors.

The central and most serious error of American philanthropists and UJA leaders is the delusion that a politicized World Zionist Organization, Zionist Congress and Jewish Agency can produce “appropriate, efficient and effective expenditure of monies collected.” The plain fact is, of course, that the politicization of the structure guarantees the politicization of the function.

Perhaps the best current example of how this works out in the real world and of the difficulties American leaders encounter when they do try to “break down the bureaucratic walls” has to do with Project Renewal. In December, on the eve of the World Zionist Congress, two meetings were held between representatives of the Ministry of Housing (including Minister David Levy, Moshe Katzav and Daniel Shimshoni) and representatives of the Jewish agency (including Chairman Arye Dulzin, Akiva Lewinsky and Yechiel Admoni). The result of these two meetings—which were held with neither the participation nor even the knowledge of any American connected with Project Renewal—was an agreement whose effect was to place Project Renewal under the control of the Ministry of Housing. The Jewish Agency was relegated to such functions as “contact with Jewish communities abroad and responsibility of dealing with the twinned communities,” “responsibility for activities abroad such as campaigns and public relations,” “decisions on twinning relationships,” “allocation of approved projects to be adopted by the (diaspora) communities,” “responsibility and supervision of volunteers,” and “monitoring and reporting on progress of projects to the communities abroad.”

In essence, therefore, the agreement consigns the Jewish Agency to the role of conduit for funds, and re-

stricts it from meaningful involvement in policy formation or administration, by barring it from direct relationships with the neighborhood steering committees. And this in the one sphere of activity, Project Renewal, which was to have been a showcase of serious and mature involvement by Diaspora communities in the philanthropic work their dollars support.

The net effect of the agreement, negotiated and approved without the knowledge of relevant Americans, was the relegation of the donors to third-class status. The Jewish Agency representatives also agreed that “the Jewish Agency will not establish a planning section and will not appoint evaluation teams for Project Renewal.” And the final insult to the unknowing American and other diaspora fundraisers is found in paragraph 15 of the agreement, in which the Ministry of Housing and the Jewish Agency signers sum up the whole spirit of the agreement, that “Jewish communities will have no veto power on decisions of the Local Steering Committees which have been authorized by the Interministerial Committee.”

Weeks later, when Jerold Hoffberger, Chairman of both the UIA and of Project Renewal, finally read a copy of the agreement, he rejected as absurd any notion of denying Americans veto power concerning the use of their Renewal funds.

Perhaps Project Renewal should, indeed, become a government rather than an agency enterprise. That is not the issue here. The issue here is that American Jewish leadership has neglected its responsibility to its own constituents. For decades, it has played along with Israeli demands to give money but not to get involved in its disbursement. The Americans have accepted this arrangement because they have chosen to interpret the problem paternalistically, defining it as a product of “Israeli bureaucracy” rather than as a struggle over social policy, control over the use of massive philanthropic funds, and, ultimately, political power in Israel.

Despite the rhetoric of Jewish Agency officials, it is not “Zionism” that is at issue here at all, nor even Jewish “commitment.” Even if we accept the unacceptable equation of Zi-

onism with fundraising and philanthropy, such a Zionism does not justify utter passivity with regard to issues of fiscal responsibility, accountability, efficiency and morality. The purposeful blurring of welfare work with Zionism is detrimental to both welfare work and Zionism. The least that American and other diaspora Jews can do is to run their philanthropic affairs more responsibly, and use their considerable resources in a more sophisticated and innovative manner.

That is why I think the time has come for the fundraisers to develop and establish new mechanisms for spending their money in Israel. They cannot rely on the Jewish Agency, which is inescapably a reflection of Israeli political arrangements, nor, for the same reason, on the World Zionist Organization and the World Zionist Congress.

Dare they, perhaps, rely on themselves? ★