

Jaffe: Project Renewal Not 'Just Another Gimmick'

EDITOR'S NOTE: Philadelphia's Jewish community has joined in partnership with the neighborhood of Ramat Shikma, within the municipality of Ramat Gan, in the program of Project Renewal discussed in the following article.

Charging that "the first major social program aimed at directly involving Diaspora Jews in Israel's social problems" is often assumed by American Jews to be "just another gimmick for raising money," Israeli sociologist Eliezer Jaffe recently warned that without proper understanding and implementation, Project Renewal could be a "fiasco," and that Diaspora and Israeli leaders will be equally to blame for its failure.



ELIEZER JAFFE
... a serious warning

Writing in the January, 1980, issue of the *National Jewish Monthly*, a B'nai B'rith publication, Jaffe, a faculty member of the School of Social Work of Hebrew University and a founding member of Zahavi, the Association of Large Families in Israel, noted that "Project Renewal could signal the most important social enterprise undertaken by Israel and Diaspora Jews in decades." But for it to succeed, he said, Diaspora Jews must take the project seriously and "break away from past patterns of philanthropy based on charity rather than partnership and personal involvement."

THE PHILADELPHIA-BORN SOCIOLOGIST,

former director of Jerusalem's Department of Family and Community Services, said that Israelis who put Project Renewal together were "well counselled by Jewish Agency personnel who understand the need for putting Israel's social issues on world Jewry's agenda in terms other than the tear-jerking, hit-and-run charity approach."

He said that the project, "a radical departure" from past attempts to rehabilitate Israel's slum neighborhoods, offers four basic innovations:

- An integration of physical and social service planning. "No building will be put up or refurbished without first submitting an integrated plan for the neighborhood that includes social services, community facilities, manpower needs in health, education, family services" and other physical improvements.
- Financial accountability. "For the first time, a separate budget account has been established in the Jewish Agency for Project Renewal funds," he said, adding that "no funds will be expended without approval by the Ministerial Committee.
- Involvement of residents in neighborhood planning. The old "paternalistic" Israeli approach has been discarded here, Jaffe asserted. "Project Renewal insists on input from local residents in developing plans for their neighborhood."
- Involvement of world Jewry. Jaffe noted that "Project Renewal, unlike past programs, demands a commitment of partnership rather than a commitment of charity from world Jewry. Involvement leads to more involvement . . . There should be no hand-outs; we are all in this Israeli enterprise together, and we really are brothers and sisters. We must get involved."

JAFFE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT communities should not be afraid of or "feel guilty about leaning on Israeli officials responsible for Project Renewal to get things done," though he cautioned against asking for "shopping lists" of buildings and facilities lest "we get back into old patterns."

"This is a 10-year program at least," he said, and every community, Israeli and Diasporan, has problems. "Help understand them and navigate them with us, but don't throw up your hands when the initial romance of Project Renewal fades."

Zinman Named to National Project Renewal Position

Philip Zinman, Philadelphia philanthropist and communal leader, has been appointed chairman of the United Jewish Appeal subcommittee for capital gifts to Project Renewal for the United States.



Zinman

Already serving as senior adviser to the Philadelphia Jewish community's Project Renewal efforts, Zinman has embarked on an effort to obtain capital gifts that will make substantial progress possible in the Project Renewal program.

"We already know that buildings alone will not achieve our mutual aims of improving the quality of life among the citizens of Ramat Shikma and the other communities targeted for Project Renewal," he said. "A sound infrastructure must be created and we fully intend to establish one."