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Box	Folder
5	13

Colman, John C., 1989-1990.

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THE COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA  
TOWARDS THE SECOND MEETING OF THE COMMISSION  
INTERVIEW OF COMMISSIONERS

1. COMMISSIONER: John Colman
2. INTERVIEWER: Henry L. Zucker
3. DATE: November 9, 1988
4. SPIRIT: Upbeat, Supportive, Thoughtful
5. SETTING: HLZ's office
6. DURATION: 1 hour
7. COMMISSIONER'S CURRENT STAND:

Personnel and community are the priority topics for the Commission. These are the enabling priorities which are absolutely crucial. The programmatic options are important, but not necessarily crucial to a successful outcome of the Commission's work.

8. SUMMARY:

We reviewed the post-August 1st work of the staff and the planning group and senior policy advisors and some of the reactions in interviews of Commission members. Colman agreed that personnel and community are the two key priorities, the development which is absolutely necessary for the success of the Commission's work.

The mass of material and options presented at the August 1st meeting and subsequently is less crucial, but valuable nevertheless, and should not be lost. Colman suggests boiling down this material and crystallizing a smaller number of option categories, which then are carefully described and presented to the Commission. He suggested that the community option include the importance of top leadership participation in Jewish education leadership. He urged that rabbis be included in the leadership needed to carry out the Commission's recommendation. He urged that we not overlook the need for community leaders to be engaged as learners themselves.

Colman believes the first meeting of the Commission was a success, but warned against settling for a "winning streak of one." It was necessary to freewheel at the first meeting and to get peoples' ideas ventilated. The second meeting should begin with a synthesis of the thinking at the first meeting and the post-first meeting discussions. Staff should not present this summary in the form of recommendations, but rather as a reprise of the thinking presented.

Colman believes that the Commission is off to a great start. He believes the second meeting should determine the priorities which need to be developed for substantive discussion at meeting number 3, and that the chairman needs to draw a careful line between encouraging commissioners to participate and controlling the discussion so that decisions are made which will move the Commission to the next phase of its work.

We talked about the development of comprehensive studies of Jewish education in at least nine communities. We agreed that the Commission needs to stay in close touch with this development, both for integration of the local committees' thinking in the recommendations of our Commission, and also to encourage the follow up of the Commission's recommendations.

Colman plans to attend the meeting on December 13.

Arthur J. Naparstek

TO: Virginia F. Levi

NAME

DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

FROM: Henry L. Zucker

NAME

DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

DATE: 5/4/89

REPLYING TO  
YOUR MEMO OF: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT:

I met with John Colman on May 3 to review the progress of the Commission and some of our thoughts about the June 14 agenda.

He is well impressed with the developments in the Commission. He believes the IJE concept is sound and should be discussed by the Commission on June 14. He believes that the functions of the IJE have to be very carefully thought out. It should be assigned issues carrying over from the Commission's work when the report is issued.

The IJE should be the conscience of American Jewry in the Jewish education field. For example, it should make a periodic report on the state of Jewish education in North America. It should have a high powered research function to evaluate programs. It should be able to offer authoritative information to American Jewish leadership on Jewish education proposals and undertakings.

The Commission should take care that the IJE not turn into a second JESNA. Perhaps it should have a time-limited function during which JESNA is built up to its appropriate leadership position in the field of Jewish education.

Colman suggests that important papers issued by the Commission should be circulated in advance of meetings when they will be discussed. We should invite feedback from Commission members and this can be taken into account when the subject is presented at the Commission meeting. This process is important, particularly since there appears to be too long a period of time between contacts between the Commission's leadership and the members of the Commission.

Colman believes it is a good idea to determine now what will be the meeting dates of all the remaining meetings of the Commission. He suggests the possibility that the last meeting, which would be for the purpose of drafting a report, should be a two-day meeting. The draft report could be converted into the Commission's final report with the benefit of input of the Commission members.

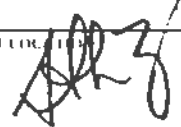
Colman plans to attend the June 14th meeting and has put on his calendar the October 4th meeting.

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TO: Virginia F. Levi  
NAME  
DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

FROM: Henry L. Zucker  
NAME  
DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

DATE: 9/13/89  
REPLYING TO  
YOUR MEMO OF: \_\_\_\_\_



SUBJECT:

I interviewed John Colman on September 5 in my office to get the update on his views of the work of the Commission.

He is very positive about the work of the Commission. He feels each of the meetings has been on target, and that the Commission has good momentum.

We spent most of our time talking about the next meeting on October 23 which he plans to attend. He believes that we are ready to begin to consider the implementation phase of the Commission's work. He is much interested in our ideas on financing, which would put the financial emphasis on federations for the long term and on family foundations for the next five years. As the new president of the Chicago Federation, he will be involved in helping to guide priority-setting in the direction of Jewish education.

Colman emphasized that federations like the Chicago federation, which have a heavy current financial obligation in the resettlement of Russian Jews in Chicago, are faced with a critical financial problem which will make it difficult to finance other important programs. He believes that the general problem of resettling Russian Jews faces a total American Jewish community which has not distinguished itself in arrangements up till now.

Colman believes that a very important aspect of the Commission's work is to encourage research into the effectiveness of education programs. He believes that it is crucial for communities to evaluate what they are already doing in Jewish education to see whether organization for Jewish education can be improved, and whether some programs can be changed or given up in favor of new and better ideas. Evaluation of programs and accountability to the public should be high on our list of emphases.

It is clear that Colman is an enthusiastic and thinking member of the Commission and will continue to be very helpful, both in the work of the Commission and in our implementation period.

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REMARKS FOR JOHN COLMAN FOR THE GA PRESENTATION ON THE  
COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

I am pleased to be able to add my thoughts to this presentation. I've been honored to serve on this Commission and been deeply impressed with the quality of participants and the level of discussion. There are three points I want to highlight from my own perspective as Commission member and now a federation president.

First, this Commission has brought together an extraordinary group of people who have been able to operate at a very high degree of interest and consensus. To my knowledge this has never happened before in the area of Jewish education. This is the first time that such a broad and high level leadership group is focusing its energies on Jewish education to such an extent.

Second, as anyone engaged in problem-solving knows, success depends on whether you have defined the problem correctly. There is no question in my mind that the Commission's focus on personnel and community support and financing is right on target. There are many ways to tackle the complex web of Jewish education activity. These two areas cut across everything we want to accomplish, regardless of where we sit. If we can succeed in upgrading personnel and increasing community support and financing, we can make a difference.

Finally, what strikes me most is the opportunity at hand for our communities. How often have we struggled with the critical questions in Jewish education without seriously, systematically addressing them?

How long have local communities looked for a road map--a guide to what can make a difference in Jewish continuity? How long have we failed to attract appropriate leadership and funding in support of Jewish education?

This Commission offers an opportunity for change, a chance to demonstrate what can be successful in Jewish education and the ability to marshal resources yet untapped for this cause. There is no question that on a day to day basis in a local community, it is extremely difficult to see beyond this year's budget crisis. That is especially so now in the midst of massive Soviet Jewish resettlement, and believe me, Chicago is feeling it as much as anyone. However, if we have the vision to look beyond today the possibilities are enormous. Jewish leaders with substantial resources are increasingly interested in investing in Jewish education. They are particularly interested in doing so in a way that strengthens local communities.

I have become convinced through this process that there is a viable partnership awaiting us, the local community. The question then is will we have the vision and strength to think differently and act differently about Jewish education to take advantage of the opportunity. And, if we don't, what kind of future will we really have as a community?



1/11/90

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN COLMAN  
ON JANUARY 10, 1990  
BY HENRY L. ZUCKER

I met with John Colman on January 10 to bring him up to date on Commission developments and to prepare him for the February 14 meeting. He plans to attend that meeting.

We talked largely about the community/financing aspects of the Commission's work. I was especially desirous of getting his views about federation participation in the implementation work. He is particularly well qualified to discuss this because he is currently the president of the Chicago Federation.

We agreed on the following points:

1. Our report should not leave the impression that money alone will cure the problems in Jewish education. Certainly throwing money at these problems does not assure success in overcoming them. However, it is clear that substantial new funds will be needed for improvements which will be identified in the Commission's report. The Commission and the implementation mechanism needs to point the way to how to raise these funds.
2. The key financial resource for Jewish education will no doubt remain the institutions which sponsor Jewish education through tuition and their own fundraising efforts. Their support of Jewish education will not be replaced by federations and foundations. Rather, the latter will complement the funds supplied through tuition and through institutional resources.
3. There has been a sea change in the attitude of federation leaders toward Jewish education. A generation or two back, federation leaders were on the whole indifferent to Jewish education and some even antagonistic to it. Important supporters of Jewish education in federation circles were few and far between. Now, federation leadership generally understands the importance of Jewish education and supports it. This has not been automatically followed by greater federation financial support for Jewish education, or by general participation of top leadership in the education enterprise. However, Jewish education is higher on the priority list for federation financing, and some top leadership is getting into Jewish education. The trend toward greater federation support from its operating funds and greater participation by top community leadership is something which needs to be encouraged at the present time and, if it is pursued vigorously, will probably bring substantial results.

4. At this time, it will be difficult in most federations to increase rapidly the support of Jewish education from operating funds. This is because annual campaigns are flat and there are other important claims on campaign funds. At the present time, for example, there is the special need for large sums for the resettlement of Russian and eastern European Jews.

It is not unreasonable, however, to expect that there will be a gradual increase in support of Jewish education from normal federation operating funds even if this must come at the expense of other beneficiary agencies. For example, it is more logical to grant additional funds for local Jewish education than it is to send money to the Jewish Agency which in turn, devotes it to Jewish education in America.

5. At least a dozen cities now have special committees or commissions on Jewish education, doing locally what the Commission on Jewish Education in North America is attempting nationally. As these communities get to understand the need, and spell out necessary improvements, they are likely to find the funds which are needed to improve the field.
6. Many federations have a substantial new source of funds in the form of endowments, which can be applied to Jewish education. It is easy to overestimate the amount of money currently available from these funds. Nevertheless, there is a substantial amount already available from this relatively new resource and a strong likelihood that this amount will grow rapidly. These funds, especially if they are leveraged with other federation funds and with funds from private foundations and individual donors, could form a nucleus for funding improvements in the field. These sources are especially important, because they can produce money fairly rapidly to get some of the improvements inaugurated while federations are gearing up to take greater responsibility over the long pull.
7. A few communities have already begun to face the funding problem by raising new funds or projecting new funding efforts by a combination of federation increases from operating and endowment funds, and appeals for funds from private foundations and families which are concerned with Jewish continuity and are interested in Jewish education. These initial efforts indicate that these efforts can be successful.