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Evans, Eli H., 1988-1989.

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Date	Nature of Contact/Status	Next Steps/Action Needed
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JUL 5 1988

*AIN - EE sent this in place of  
an interview*

CHARLES H. REVSON  
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June 29, 1988

Ms. Jenny Levi  
Premier Industrial Foundation  
4500 Euclid  
Cleveland, Ohio 44103

Dear Jenny:

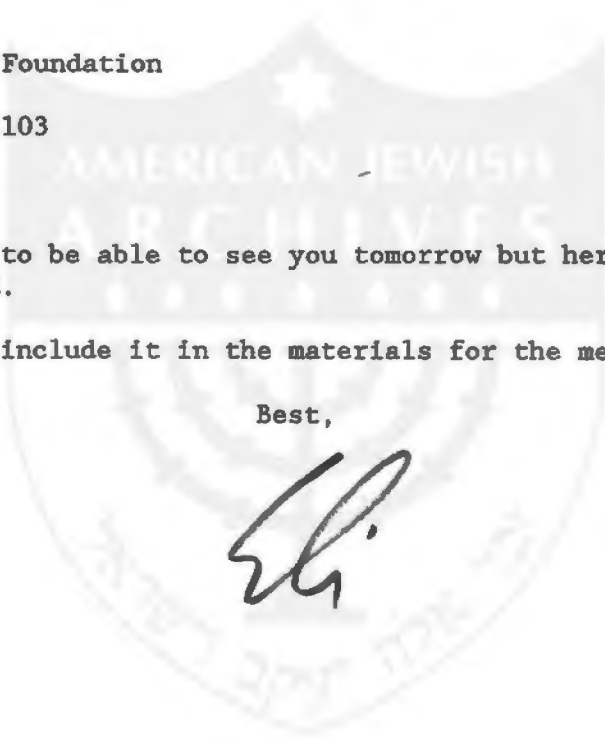
I'm sorry not to be able to see you tomorrow but here's the article (and speech) I mentioned.

I hope you'll include it in the materials for the meeting.

Best,



EE:rc  
Enclosure



# The Electronic Village Revisited

## Implications for Jewish Life

*Eli N. Evans*

Three years ago, I wrote an article entitled *The Electronic Village*, which tried to make the case for a much greater involvement in and commitment to new technology as a vital resource of renewal for Jewish cultural and educational life.

The proliferation of technology presents a whole new set of opportunities for touching those often considered "lost" to Judaism. I am talking about that large group of individuals who identify themselves as Jewish, who may be interested in aspects of Jewish culture, but who for one reason or another do not participate in the formal institutions of the Jewish community. Telecommunications certainly is not a substitute for such participation, but is a way to supplement it, enrich it, and—this is the great hope and possibility—stimulate it within the intimacy of their homes in those who have lost contact altogether with organized Judaism. While it cannot replace the small, tightly-knit communities that immersed many of our parents and grandparents in Jewish life, this developing technology does constitute a kind of electronic village, where every family can tap into the richness and diversity of Jewish culture. It provides a vital means of reaching out which will increase in importance as the current telecommunications revolution touches virtually the whole population, changing the way we live, work, and learn. And while the primary audience for most of programming I am going to talk about is a Jewish one, modern telecommunications—especially television—enables us to reach both Jews and non-Jews with materials designed for a broad audience.

Writing three years ago, I thought that cable television offered the most promising prospect. Specifically, I wrote about creating a special cable network for Jewish audiences, because of cable's advance in major

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ELI N. EVANS is president of the Charles H. Revson Foundation and was a member of the 1979 Second Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting. This speech, which represents his personal views, was presented in Detroit on May 19, 1986 as part of a national program sponsored by the National Foundation for Jewish Culture.

metropolitan areas where ninety percent of all American Jews live. One could envision a place on the cable dial for music, dance and drama presentations; children's shows; interviews with writers, artists and political figures; live news from Israel on a daily basis; satellite conversations joining intellectuals from several countries with thinkers in Israel, feature films and documentaries. Jewish cable initiatives have made promising starts in Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston and Miami and one can foresee a time of enough available channels in New York, Philadelphia, Dallas and Atlanta that a nationwide specialized Jewish Cable Network could be created. Since 1975 more than two dozen such new networks have been started, ranging from the Black Entertainment Television Network to the Spanish International Network to Nickelodeon, a children's programming service. I have thought about the prospect of it often over the years. When Natan Shchbaransky arrived in Israel and there were only snatches of coverage on the U.S. network news programs; or when a new book was published such as Martin Gilbert's *The Holocaust* and one wanted to hear in depth from the author; or when new Israeli cultural events occurred, such as the opening of the Dayan archaeological exhibit at the Israel Museum, that received little mention in America at all. I also imagined the impact of such an outlet several months ago when *Rehov Sumsun*, the Israeli *Sesame Street*, completed the production of 190 programs and the prospects of an adaptation for American audiences became a real possibility.

But cable has been slow to develop in America, and disappointing in its result. The current limited number of channels make a nationwide Jewish Cable Network most difficult to establish; however, if planning and financing could be organized over the next few years, that vision would be accomplished as the next generation of cable systems come into operation with more than thirty-five channels in each city. (This is no longer a pipe dream: seventy channels are predicted for New York City by the late 1980's if the interminable delays can be overcome, and over one-hundred channels are being planned in Denver.)

The success of cable, as well as of the other innovative technologies, depends on attracting and keeping an audience—which means delivering high quality material not available more conveniently elsewhere. The technology itself is only a means; it is what we do with it that gives it value. Once the novelty has worn off, the content of the material must be such that people continue to want it.

While the growth and potential of cable has been disappointing, what has been promising is the receptivity and availability of public broadcasting in America to well-produced and creative Jewish material of interest to broader audiences as well. According to the Nielsen ratings, *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews* reached over 51 million viewers, and more than 200 colleges taught courses around the series. There have also been numerous films shown on individual public stations over the last few years and, just over the horizon, public television is going to broadcast

*Shoah*, Claude Lanzmann's nine-hour film, called by many critics and filmmakers one of the greatest documentary films in history.

It is also of interest how well-produced Jewish material for children has been accepted on commercial television. "Lights," a delightful and inventive animated film shown last Hanukkah, and "The Animated Haggadah" aired this recent Passover, had extensive audiences on independent stations and network affiliates during those holidays.

The most important and promising development is the speed with which the VCR revolution is making its way into American homes. The proliferation and impact of the video cassette recorder that observers three years ago were predicting as being a decade or so away has taken off like a moon shot, so that one can predict, in a matter of years, the existence of a VCR in almost every American home. If one imagines dozens of video cassettes on bookshelves in the home video library of the future, then the implications for the Jewish home could be profound and a number of strategies should be devised to take advantage of this new distribution system for quality programs.

The problem three years ago, and the problem today is both leadership and money. Good television cannot be wished into existence; the material produced must be of the highest quality in order to attract, sustain, and build an audience. Every program does not have to cost the millions of dollars involved in *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews* but the quality must be what audiences have come to expect in television. All of us have seen low budget television on public access channels—amateurish production and television-on-the-cheap—but that kind of television will only drive away the very audiences a new initiative desires to attract.

### **The Jewish Cultural and Educational Service**

In order to produce material of high quality that reflects the richness and diversity of Jewish tradition and experience, I believe a new entity should come into being that will foster the creation and distribution of such programming. For purposes of discussion I will call this entity the Jewish Cultural and Educational Service. Whatever its name, it is essential that it be founded with great vision and long-range purpose; it should be independent, national in scope, and open to all. It should draw leaders from all areas of Jewish life and should ultimately be endowed as an independent national service, similar to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Annenberg Fund, the \$10 million-a-year fund created by the founder of *TV Guide* to support the development of educational programs involving new technologies. That much money would not be needed but it should be substantially funded over a five to ten year period. In fact, it would be appropriate if this new service carried the name of its founder or of a philanthropic family which would see the creation of such a Jewish telecommunications system as a long-range way to change the tone, quality and reach of Jewish life.

The Service would seek to develop a community of artists, linking the creative film and television talent in Israel and America as part of this effort, sponsoring interchanges between talent in both countries and helping to create programs in Israel for distribution and broadcast in America and vice versa. The degree to which the young in both countries are enamoured of the media is remarkable: Israel is the largest per capita film-going audience in the world, and has far greater per capita VCR ownership than the U.S. As an example of American student interest in this idea, within two weeks after *Heritage* was announced, WNET-Channel 13 in New York City received 2,500 resumes, mostly from young people wanting to work on the series.

The Service would act, in some ways, like a foundation—making grants to develop new ideas and giving guidance to local and national organizations, many of which have begun to develop materials for new technologies and will continue to do so. Its staff would be experienced in communications matters and would be available to consult with other funders—foundations, individual givers, and the National Endowments. It would bring together creative talent in broadcasting and the arts for conferences, seminars and specific projects. It would provide a national umbrella for local cable services to cooperate with each other and perhaps seed large projects of its own. In a pattern similar to public broadcasting today, strong local entities would produce many of their own programs on both local and general topics, and a national entity would provide funds and develop major ideas in joint initiatives. It would promote charismatic local figures who, as has been the case with National Public Radio and public broadcasting, would provide continuity and a central focus for perspectives from their geographic areas or special points of view. Many local programs could be expected eventually to have national distribution, and the Jewish Cultural and Educational Service could help facilitate it.

The Service would link up with, and build on, the best programs of Jewish culture already under way. The 92nd Street Y, with its diversity of offerings in music, dance, lectures and discussions, perhaps could be one source of programming. Others might include the Jewish Television Network in Los Angeles, which has begun to produce some programs drawing from the talents of the entertainment industry; the National Jewish Television Service, which has developed a weekly show from Jerusalem and has satellite time reserved and available for other projects; Jewish Media Service in New York under the Council of Jewish Federations, which distributes some 100 films to local cable services and Jewish organizations; the Institute for Computers in Jewish Life in Chicago, which is beginning to develop software for home computers; the Center for Jewish Film at Brandeis University, which acquires and distributes feature films; and the interview programs of the Union of American Congregations Television and Film Institute.

Let me describe some of the projects funded by the Revson Foundation over the past eight years which suggest some of the uses of telecom-

munications to preserve, record and share the Jewish cultural experience. The projects use conventional broadcast television, videotape, and video-disc technologies in partnership with books, teaching materials and home computers to reach individuals of all faiths in homes, schools and universities as well as in community centers, churches, synagogues and temples.

### ***Heritage: Civilization and the Jews***

One of the first grants made by the Revson Foundation, in 1978, launched a major documentary series entitled *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews*, which was, at the time, the most ambitious project ever undertaken by American public television. The series, narrated by Abba Eban, traced Jewish history from early Biblical times to the present, describing and interpreting Jewish experience on four continents and its impact on other traditions. It was conceived, from the beginning, as a project for all Americans which therefore carried with it a special mission of exposition and interfaith understanding.

*Heritage* was filmed in eighteen countries, the major sites of Jewish settlement over the past 4,000 years, at a cost of over \$10 million from more than 100 contributors. Mr. Eban's book on the series has sold more than 200,000 copies in the U.S. and was also a best-seller in England while the series was shown.

To ensure a lasting educational value for the series, educational materials for college, high school, adult education, and the general home audience were developed—in addition to the book by Mr. Eban with 300 photographs and text, there are also a second set of two books for colleges to serve as a study guide and as a sourcebook of readings from Jewish history; a family viewing guide; and teaching guides for schools, colleges, and adult discussion groups. The series was a noteworthy success in the south and the midwest, where it had unusually high ratings. Of the 200 colleges teaching courses around the series, about a third were denominational schools in the Bible Belt. The series was broadcast in the fall of 1986, and will be available on cassette for future use in high school and college classrooms. Jacob Bronowski's *Ascent of Man* and Kenneth Clark's *Civilization* have been shown in 5,000 college classrooms since they were broadcast in the 1970's. *Civilization and the Jews* should have the same lasting impact.

### **Rehov Sumsum, The Israeli Version of Sesame Street**

After three years, the Israeli version of *Sesame Street* has completed 190 programs on Israeli television. It has been an enormous success in Israel, captivating not only the pre-schoolers for whom it is intended but also their older siblings and parents.



The Hebrew-language series is a joint production of the Children's Television Workshop, which originated *Sesame Street* in 1969, and the Instructional Television Center of Israel, the educational broadcasting entity of the Israeli Ministry of Education Culture. The series, called *Rehov Sumsum*, was funded initially by the Israeli Educational Ministry and the Revson Foundation, but has since received funds from many contributors.

The programs feature as regular characters children on an imaginary Israeli street, *Rehov Sumsum*, animation introducing the Hebrew alphabet, and original film shot in Israel. The film segments highlight the many cultures that exist side by side in Israel, from desert tents to Jerusalem streets. The voices of such Muppet characters as Bert and Ernie, Cookie Monster, Grover, and, of course, Kermit, have been dubbed in Hebrew in a way that captures the personalities of each Muppet without losing anything in translation.

*Rehov Sumsum* is designed to prepare Israeli youngsters for school and to improve relations among the different segments of Israeli society, showing positive relationships between Sephardim and Ashkenazim, religious and non-religious people, Arabs and Jews. The Ministry of Education has been training teachers and parents to use the series, which is being seen in the public kindergartens that are attended by almost all three-, four-, and five-year olds in Israel.

A fascinating aspect of this project is a plan to adapt the series for American audiences and use it as a home video project where it can be an exciting aid to foreign-language learning. CTW believes that *Rehov Sumsum* has the potential to reach millions of American children and adults, providing a window to the culture, traditions, and people of Israel. It can also motivate the learning of Hebrew. The first five programs, hosted by renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman, are now available and, if plans work out, will be seen in the near future on American public broadcasting with similar adapted *Sesame Streets* from Mexico, France, and other countries.

### **Yale Video Archive for Survivor Testimonies**

A visual and oral history that captures the personal, human testimony of the Holocaust has been established at Yale University as the Video Archive for Survivor Testimonies, with the help of a grant from the Revson Foundation. The project's principal goal is to preserve for posterity the living memory of all survivors who wish to tell their story, a task that has special urgency because of the survivors' advancing age. Nearly 800 interviews have been collected in the Archive and teaching materials using them are being planned with the public schools.

The establishment of the Archive at a leading American university ensures the preservation of this precious material and its availability for scholarly research and educational purposes. All involved hope that future generations will learn from the experiences recorded in the project.

## **The National Jewish Archive of Broadcasting**

The opportunity to look again at people and events that have shaped our time, as recorded on the spot and viewed with the perspective of the intervening years, is an extraordinary gift of modern communications. To ensure that the primary programming on the Jewish experience recorded in the media is not lost and that it is accessible to the widest possible audience, the Foundation helped establish the National Jewish Archive of Broadcasting at the Jewish Museum in New York City.

The Archive was founded out of a belief that the programs created by broadcasters over the last 35 years, if preserved and displayed creatively, could have a profound impact on the transmission of Jewish culture and could contribute to intergroup and interfaith understanding. The results of a detailed study uncovered an extraordinary treasure of programming of Jewish content and interest, including hundreds of hours of documentaries, drama, interviews, conversations, and films. The Archive has collected, catalogued, and displayed these materials and now consists of some 1200 programs.

These programs will be invaluable to scholars and students, especially as the years go by and the people who participated in the events are no longer alive. Any visitor to the Archive will be able to come face to face with such famous figures in modern Jewish history as Chaim Weizmann, Martin Buber, Albert Einstein, David Ben Gurion, Rabbis Abba Hillel Silver and Abraham Heschel. They will be able to experience again Anwar Sadat's arrival in Jerusalem in 1977; a personal story by Isaac Bashevis Singer; a recital by Isaac Stern; the dramatization of Passover by Sholom Aleichem. All of it is on film and on tape, able to move a new generation of students and adults.

## **YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York**

In an innovative experiment joining the old with the new, the latest videodisc technology is being applied by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research to its unique film and photograph collections.

With videodisc technology, more than 100,000 images can be stored on a single disc, and an audio track—music, sound effects, or voice commentary—can be added to the visual material. When programmed and linked to a computer, videodisc images and sound track can be retrieved in any sequence desired.

YIVO's holdings include an enormous body of audiovisual material on Jewish life in prewar Eastern Europe, including more than 100,000 photographs; 4,000 slides; 1,200 records of Jewish music; 600 hours of field recordings on tape; and eight hours of silent film.

The project has produced a fully-programmed disc containing 20,000 photographs—a kind of "visual encyclopedia" of prewar East European Jewish life. One side will store the photographs, catalogued geographically, while the other will contain presentations on such topics as

synagogues, the labor movement and the role of women, each using a small selection of stills together with the appropriate audio material. This "smart" or programmed disc will be an invaluable teaching aid in both religious and secular schools at elementary, secondary, and college levels. It will also give people all over the world access to YIVO's collection, which up to now has only been available at their headquarters in New York. The success of the YIVO project may open the way for many other exciting educational and archival activities that would not be possible without the new technology, which is the most efficient means known of storing large numbers of images.

### **Two New Major Ideas**

These projects have all been instrumental in making available to broad audiences, as well as to specialized groups and to individuals, material which had previously been accessible primarily to scholars, travelers, and those already deeply involved in Jewish education.

For the next few years, I believe the goal should be to create a new video educational curriculum in Jewish education, by consolidating already existing resources and by adding substantially to them. Two major new ideas would provide the institutional setting for testing, using, and broadly disseminating this new curriculum. The proposed New Jewish Museum in New York City could become an institutional innovator in Jewish life, serving not only as the home for the creation, display and use of the educational materials but also, with public television, as its primary showcase. To ensure that the materials are used well beyond the Museum's four walls, the curriculum could also be packaged and distributed as the "Jewish Heritage Video Collection," along with the best feature films made in Hollywood with Jewish themes in the last fifty years. This collection, which would be disseminated as broadly as possible, would ensure that the materials were easily available for use in settings around the world—in schools, in religious institutions of all faiths, in libraries, in community centers, and in homes.

#### *1. The New Jewish Museum*

In June of 1985, the Jewish Museum in New York announced plans for a major expansion within the next three to five years that will transform it into an institution with national and international impact. At the center of this expansion will be a "permanent multi-media exhibition" in one or more new buildings that would trace 4,000 years of Jewish history." The inspiration for the ideas is the Museum of the Diaspora in Tel Aviv, a twenty-first century museum which is now (after the Wall in Jerusalem) the second most popular tourist attraction in Israel.

The plan for the New Museum foresees creating evocative situations for museum visitors; for example, visitors would be able to walk into the middle of sound stages, video displays, and models recreating places and

moments in history. One such situation might depict Jerusalem during the time of the Second Temple, another might depict Toledo, Spain, during its Golden Era. Throughout, the new museum will employ state-of-the-art video and audio technologies to put people in touch with events, art, culture, and personalities; there will be sophisticated uses of computers for access to information about families, genealogy and Jewish history; art and artifacts will be displayed against a backdrop of photographs showing the place each piece of art came from and its meaning.

Planning is also already underway to ensure that the design of the new museum is attractive and accessible to families, from grandparents to young children, and of interest to people of all faiths. Those involved in its planning are calling the new Jewish Museum "A Walk Through Jewish History," one which will put people in touch with and allow them to experience Jewish history. The New Jewish Museum in New York hopes not only to be an equally popular New York City-based attraction, but also to become a center for and creator of educational materials for use internationally in schools, universities, and homes.

After the *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews* series was completed, the more than 250 hours of unused film material and research was transferred from WNET-Channel 13 to the Jewish Museum in New York. The Revson Foundation supported an analysis of the more than 250 hours of unused material by a group of experienced consultants. They came up with a number of ideas for future steps which involve re-using the existing material creatively both inside a new museum and outside in schools and homes. Without going into detail, the ideas include:

- A children's version of the *Heritage* series, recasting it with a new host and writing a special narration for children. The series would be repackaged in 20-minute units for classroom or possible television instruction, perhaps incorporating animation and other creative techniques to engage children in the series. A special version would be created for home use, aimed at 10-13 year olds.
- Creating a video-disc of all the art objects filmed for the series. Some 5,000 art objects from museums including the Louvre, the British Museum, the Vatican Collection, the Prague Museum, the Israel Museum, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and the Luxor in Egypt, were actually "animated" for use in the series—that is, beautifully filmed and prepared for actual on-screen use. Only about one thousand were ultimately used as the series was refined. With this material, it is possible to create a video-disc that would, in effect, be a "visual encyclopedia" of a world-wide collection of art of Jewish interest from the great museums of the world. For example, the material includes some 60 various images of Moses and of David over a 2,000 year period, to which historians, artists, and scholars would, for the first time, have ready access. They, as well as students and others interested in art, would be able to compare and contrast Michelangelo with Donatello, Rembrandt with Rodin. A more ambitious undertaking which has also been proposed would be to create a more sophisticated "interactive" disc, which could contain not only the artwork, but also two-minute explanations or commentaries for museum visitors. Once created, it could also be made available to other

museums and to the more than 900 Jewish studies courses all over the world. A major publisher has expressed interest in a book the publisher has suggested calling *Art Treasures of the Jewish People*, to accompany the disc.

What is perhaps most attractive about this project is that one of the most expensive parts of creating a video-disc has already occurred: crews have already been sent all over the world to film the objects and prepare them for television use. Some gaps would remain to be filled, but a large part of the task is already accomplished.

- *Special "Museum Modules"*. The consultants believe that the Heritage material might be particularly useful for creating special museum modules—that is, short films for specific use in the New Jewish Museum. As with the art objects, these films would also be made available to visitors on video-disc, with easy access to the material through computer terminals. Some suggested subjects for the modules include Jewish Synagogues Through the Ages; Jews of the World—from England, America and Israel to North Africa, China and India; the Vanished World of Eastern Europe; the Desert and the Giving of the Law; and Profiles of Great Figures in History—from Biblical figures to Maimonides, Spinoza, Disraeli, Einstein and Weizmann.

## *II. The Jewish Heritage Video Collection*

Beyond the continued use of existing materials and the creation of new materials, however, a number of other basic would have to be undertaken if these materials are to become the core of a real curriculum for education about the Jewish heritage. For example, even for use within the new museum itself, the video materials must be properly coordinated and packaged. Books, workbooks, and other written materials, as well as materials for teacher training and classroom use, must be developed to complement and enhance the video material. Moreover, since the New Jewish Museum aspires to be not only a great center in New York but a national curriculum creator as well, exploration of mechanisms for dissemination of the entire package of materials becomes critical. In terms of dissemination, one priority is to reach the institutional market—schools, community centers, libraries, and religious institutions. Another, however, is to open up an entirely new market for these materials—within the home through the use of videocassette recorders.

The legal and marketing problems of distributing the best of the 1,200 programs of the National Jewish Archive of Broadcasting have been explored by Revson consultants. In the course of this exploration, one idea that has arisen is to package a selection of 50-75 programs from the Archives—documentaries, interviews, news programs, dramatic specials with appropriate educational and teaching materials, perhaps some feature films—and make the package available to institutions and to families. The feature films would include Hollywood's best: from *The Jazz Singer* to *Gentlemen's Agreement*; from *Exodus* to *Judgment at Nuremberg*; from *Fiddler on the Roof* to *Hester Street*; and from *The Diary of Anne Frank* to *The Garden of the Finzi Continis*. In addition to the materials from the

Archives, the package would include *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews* (with accompanying educational materials) when the home rights to the series become available. It might also include the Hebrew *Sesame Street* adapted for American audiences. As new materials are produced or become available, such as Lanzmann's *Shoah*, or *Pillar of Fire*, the history of Zionism prepared by Israel Television, they would be added to the collection.

This entire package of approximately 100 programs and an additional cluster of feature films might comprise a new "Jewish Heritage Video Collection," which could reach audiences in all parts of the country. As a first step, the Collection could be placed in schools, religious institutions, community centers, and libraries, for direct use by those institutions and for loan or rental to their members. In addition, Federations around the country could market the package by direct mail to families with VCRs in their homes, thereby taking advantage of the video cassette revolution for education and offering, for the first time, a home video library of Jewish-oriented programs.

### **Future Directions**

These ideas represent just the beginning of the kind of communications-led renaissance that can be achieved in the Jewish home and with the leadership of new and creative Jewish institutions. If the future communications era is to live up to its promise, however, educators, community leaders, writers, filmmakers, and a responsive philanthropic community will have to seize the opportunities presented by new technology and create exciting materials and ideas for the many new outlets for programming. If they do, this can all be the basis for a reawakening of millions of people to a rich heritage, and for reaching out to non-Jews.

Not all the programming needs to be large-scale or high-budget; there is room for a full range of creative activities by small foundations and individuals and much that is needed—training teachers; providing opportunities for young filmmakers to train and work; financing preliminary research of ideas, treatments, and pilot programs; developing oral and video histories of current leaders and thinkers in Jewish life; helping with hardware costs in community and national institutions; sponsoring international and national seminars; evaluation and assessment; setting up awards and prizes to encourage excellence.

Potential grantees might include video-disc creators; independent filmmakers; public television entities; organizations like YIVO and others with film ideas; Israeli-based cultural institutions such as museums, universities, and the Israeli Instructional Television Centre and Broadcasting Authority; and broadcast entities in England and elsewhere. Partners would be needed from other foundations, individuals and government entities such as the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowments.

To create a significant quantity of superior programming will require new mechanisms of production and distribution, along with, of course, a substantial investment of resources. The question no longer is the hardware or the technology to disseminate ideas; the question is the will and the funds to invest in creative programs for the future. It takes a long lead time to plan and develop programs; the seeds planted by our own foundation have taken five years to begin to bear fruit. Meanwhile, the technological advances are proceeding rapidly. The time to think about how to organize and finance such mechanisms is now. The dimensions of Jewish programming in the future will be limited only by our imaginations and the resources we are willing to devote to the enterprise. But the opportunities to use technology creatively are all about us, waiting to be seized.

AJW

Premier Industrial Foundation

4500 EUCLID AVENUE  
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44103

September 8, 1988

Dear Eli:

I have recently returned from vacation and read your letter of August 16. Thank you very much for your kind words on the meeting. I also believe the meeting turned out to be very successful. In fact, the success of the meeting, in large part, was due to the comments made by yourself. You were very helpful and your input was extraordinary.

During the coming three months, we will be developing a series of papers that could be used as a basis for our December meeting. In our debriefing meeting, the planning committee has agreed that we need an options paper. This paper will include the possible alternatives for the content of the Commission, the topics the Commission could decide to focus on. It will be based on the proceedings of the first meeting, on the interviews and knowledge of the field, and of educational theory. This paper could become the background document for the deliberations on what topics to address and how to address them.

For now I would very much like to meet with you prior to the December meeting to discuss the development of this and other papers and how your ideas, particularly ideas related to media and technology, can be incorporated.

Thank you again for your commitment and interest in the Commission.

Sincerely,



Arthur J. Naparstek  
President

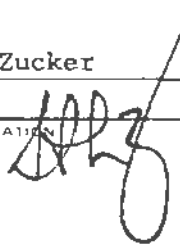
Mr. Eli N. Evans  
President  
Charles H. Revson Foundation  
444 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10022



TO: Arthur J. Naparstek  
NAME  
DEPARTMENT, PLANT LOCATION

FROM: Henry L. Zucker  
NAME  
DEPARTMENT, PLANT LOCATION

DATE: 12/15/88  
REPLYING TO  
YOUR MEMO OF: \_\_\_\_\_



SUBJECT:

Following are the highlights of my discussion with Eli Evans in his office in New York on December 12:

1. He raised the question whether we are underwriting the currently inadequate system of Jewish education by encouraging greater financial and personal support without making a critical analysis of the field. We need to establish a better system of Jewish education, to review critically what we are doing, and to emphasize new ideas, innovation, demonstrations, and accountability. We should evaluate American Jewish education, face up to its inadequacies, and suggest changes.
2. Eli says we owe the public a "snapshot" on what is the state of Jewish education in North America now. At the same time, we should suggest where it should be ten years from now.
3. Eli believes we should put more emphasis on informal education, including new opportunities through the electronic revolution.
4. Eli would stay away from task forces or other sub-groups. We should depend on experts to analyze the areas we wish to explore and take their reports directly to the total Commission. A possibility would be to have a general sub-group (executive committee) review the experts' reports and prepare them for discussion by the total Commission. Eli's experience with national commissions leads him to believe that people who have a special interest volunteer for task forces which review their area of interest, and can be expected to be prejudiced in favor of the discipline they represent. Thus, the task force idea plays into the prejudice of the advocates.
5. Eli's general attitude toward the Commission is very positive. He is greatly impressed by the personnel and believes that it has the potential for encouraging a much better system of Jewish education.
6. Eli says that he is going to get a substantial grant from Charles Bronfman and from Lester Crown for Shalom Sesame. He plans to approach Mort Mandel for a substantial grant.

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CHARLES H. REVSON  
FOUNDATION

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444 MADISON AVENUE  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022  
(212) 935-3340

ELI N. EVANS  
President

FEB 16 1989

February 7, 1989

Morton L. Mandel  
Chairman  
Commission of Jewish Education  
in North America  
4500 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44103

Dear Mr. Mandel:

Thank you for your letter of February 1 to Eli Evans and the enclosed minutes of the December 13 meeting of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America. Mr. Evans will be in touch with you with any comments he may have.

Sincerely,



Debbie Francis  
Grants Administrator

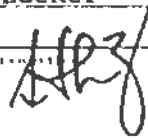
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TO: Arthur J. Naporstek  
Virginia F. Levi  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FROM: Henry L. Zucker  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DATE: 5/15/89  
REPLYING TO  
YOUR MEMO OF: \_\_\_\_\_



SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH ELI EVANS

I met with Eli Evans on May 11, 1989 at his office for about one hour. Part of our agenda was devoted to another subject and our discussion about the Commission lasted perhaps 30-40 minutes.

It is clear that Eli believes we should not put the emphasis at the June 14 meeting on an implementation mechanism; rather we should come up with some ideas and should begin to point to what we will eventually be reporting and how we will implement our emphases on personnel and on community and financing. We should make it clear that we hope to come up with new ideas and with money. For example, Eli believes that there is a need for funds for a national pension system for education personnel. He believes there should be a fund for Jewish education built on the model of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Eli believes that the Commission has made good progress, but that there is now some impatience to get at more specific ideas.

Eli referred to his prior discussion with Seymour Fox. Seymour suggested the possibility of a national fund for the IJE, possibly in the neighborhood of \$50 million. Evans believes there is not a chance to raise a fund of this size. Evans believes that a fund of any considerable size would have to begin with a major contribution from Mandel, Bronfman, and Crown.

We reviewed the personnel option, the community option, and the implementation mechanism and the need for a follow up of each by the Commission. It is clear that Eli believes that the implementation mechanism should grow out of prior discussions about the enabling options and the related programmatic options. He believes it is necessary for the commissioners to become excited about the need for improvement in education and about the possibility of bringing about improvements.

evans/1FOX-W

TOWARDS THE THIRD COMMISSION MEETING

INTERVIEW OF COMMISSIONERS

COMMISSIONER NAME: DR. ELI EVANS  
INTERVIEWER: SEYMOUR FOX  
DATE: FRIDAY, MAY 5, 1989 -- 3:30 P.M.  
PLACE: NEW YOR CITY

Summary:

I had a two and a half hour meeting with Eli Evans, which was very useful. He was quite skeptical about the concept of demonstration site and ii throughout most of the meeting.

Before the meeting ended, he was able to see some value in it, but still felt that we were missing the main point which was the broad issues that he thought the Commission should present to the Jewish community -- issues such as how to effect families; the role of women and their relationship to the professions; what is likely to have a real impact in Jewish education, etc.

He felt the real role of the Commission was to set the agenda for philanthropy for the next 10-20 years, and that this is something we ought not neglect. He felt that the Commission was a very important entity and ought to be continued. He warned us about the complicated problems involved in evaluation. One of the issues that he thinks is major is the issue of the unaffiliated. He thinks that this is a great moment in the history of Jewish life, a time to emphasize the big issues. He also felt that his own matter of the media should be given sufficient attention.

Later in the meeting he saw some value in the suggestion of demonstration site, but still felt that we might be defining our outcomes too narrowly. He also warned against putting all our emphasis on one approach.

He was suprised to hear that we had specific implementation goals such as building a demonstration site, and warned us that this should not be undertaken unless there was approximately \$10 million a year to be spent on the project.

I think there should be a meeting of Mort Mandel, Evans and possibly Hank Zucker because I believe he can be brought on board and can be very helpful.

Dr. Evans was very constructive throughout; he just disagreed. At the end of the meeting he said that he certainly felt a demonstration site was an approach, providing it was sufficiently funded.

By the end of the meeting he suggested some kind of a balance between the broad issues and the issue of a demonstration site. He said the ii depended entirely on who the personnel would be; that unless the right person was put into the ii, it was better not to begin with it.

He continued to emphasize that he thought the purpose of the Commission would be to list the issues, and set the agenda for the next decade or two.

He indicated that many of the funders would be looking toward what the Mandel Foundation decided to do in this area to give them some conception of the proportions that are being considered.

He was also very much interested in the question of yordim and their impact on the American Jewish community, as well as on the area of Jewish education.

He would be willing to participate in small groups, especially a small group on evaluation together with Hirschhorn, Arnow, etc.

He intends to participate in the meeting on the 14th.

## NORTH AMERICAN COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION

Date of Interview: 9/14/89                      Location: Revson Foundation  
Interview with: Eli Evans                      New York City  
Interviewer: Art Rotman                      Duration: One Hour

Evans had obviously prepared for the interview. He had asked me a few days before the interview for additional background material and it was evident from the discussion that he had read it and was familiar with the minutes of the last meeting.

Evans had a number of what he referred to as "questions" but which were really points of disagreement.

1. The governance of the "successor" to the Commission. He understood very well the necessity for having the mix of Commission members that we had including philanthropists, educators and academics. However, he was concerned that there seems to be an assumption that the work of whatever successor would emerge from the Commission would be composed in the same way. He thought that this would be disastrous. "Form follows function." In other words, the form that was suitable for the work of the Commission is not at all the form which should apply in the case of the "successor" as its function is completely different. Evans sees the function as being one of creating new opportunities, negotiating on a local and national level, etc. It is his opinion that this can best be done by a small Board of no more than 10 to 12 people and the personnel should be picked "ad persona." Consideration of representing various points of view should be secondary. We should avoid involving people who represent particular interests and/or who are diplomatic in their views. He suggests that MLM should convene a small group in consultation with some of the members of the current Commission, but that, in his experience, one person alone making these decisions is the best route. He wouldn't necessarily exclude people who are currently members of the Commission but, on the other hand, he would also not be limited by the Commission roster. People should be selected "ad persona" whether or not they had been members of the Commission.
2. Evans basically disagrees with the Community Action Sites as a starting point with a national entity almost as an afterthought. He doesn't think that the Commission leadership, both lay and professional, realize how "tough" it is to operate in a local community on behalf of a foundation. He has had considerable experience in his

career in doing this and does not underestimate the difficulties. It is also, he feels, an "extremely expensive" way to go and would not provide in the long run what the Commission is after.

The difficulties on the local scene could be anticipated. While many in the community leadership will be pleased that their community had been selected as a site, there would be many who would be negative. The local community would no doubt be asked to come up with a portion of the funding for whatever is needed. This, in itself, would cause resentment since not all of it would be new money and some of it, at least, would be taken from existing community priorities. There is also a danger that the CAS would be seen as interfering. In his experience, too often, foundations or entities established by foundations operating in this area, no matter how skillful, are nevertheless seen as arrogant. It will require staff with highly honed skills of diplomacy to function in this arena and such staff would be difficult to locate.

3. Evans discerns a premise in the Commission documents that a relatively short period of time would be required for the Commission's successor to be effective. His own feeling is that we are talking about a much longer period of time, perhaps five to ten years and that this should be understood from the beginning. Whatever funding is provided should be available for an extended period of time. It is his experience that too often "philanthropists" become excited, provide funding for a year or two and then disappear. This would be fatal.
4. Evans is of the opinion that insufficient attention has been paid to the "infrastructure" which would be needed on a national level to make the Community Action Sites viable. He mentioned training and development of educational personnel, providing curricula, the development of new ideas, books, videos, etc. It is not merely a matter of going into a local community and saying "let's do the same a little better." It is his opinion that there needs to be a radical breakthrough on a national level of support for whatever is done on a local level. In addition to the educational materials and training, he suggests making sure that educational personnel have the appropriate salaries and fringes. Insurance, including retirement, disability, life insurance, etc., can be provided much more economically on a national level because of the economies of scale.

A portion of whatever funds are provided should be earmarked for the development of a national communications program directed to the home including approaches based on the latest audio-visual technologies.

Evans also suggested a national program of both master teachers and/or "fellows" which, in addition to training, there would be provision for monetary awards and salary supplements. This, too, could be done best on a national level.

5. Evans does not feel that enough attention has been paid to the scope of funding which would be necessary. It is his opinion that providing one or two million dollars per year would be a waste. The effort requires the assurance of the availability of at least \$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000 per annum for a period of ten years.
6. In a community, leadership will be excited, particularly by ideas. They will buy a package of personnel shortage and retention but only if it is tied to the provision of new ideas, new curricula, exciting video, etc.



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**CHARLES H. REVSON  
FOUNDATION**

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444 MADISON AVENUE  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022  
(212) 935-3340

NOV 29 1989

November 6, 1989

Morton L. Mandel  
Commissioner  
Commission on Jewish Education  
In North America  
4500 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44103

Dear Mr. Mandel:

Thank you for sending Eli Evans the minutes of the October 23rd meeting of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America. Mr. Evans is sure to find it of interest, and will be in touch with you if he should have any comments or questions.

Sincerely,



Chui Chan  
Grants Administrator

cc/ackn