



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
**AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES**

**MS-831: Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980–2008.**

Series B: Commission on Jewish Education in North America (CJENA). 1980–1993.

Subseries 2: Commissioner and Consultant Biographical Files, 1987–1993.

---

Box  
6

Folder  
20

Rosenthal, Harriet L., 1988-1990.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the  
American Jewish Archives website.

---

## 4

Assigned to AR

Off. phone 201-762-7242

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_

Telex \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Nature of Contact/Status	Next Steps/Action Needed



15 EAST 26th STREET • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10010-1579

August 10, 1988

To: File

From: Arthur Rotman

Re Commission on Jewish Education.

Comments in a call with Harriet Rosenthal:

Found the meetings very interesting and exciting. Thought that comment of Esther Leah Ritz that the success of the Commission will be determined by the change on a local level, was very pertinent.

Also liked Lester Pollack's comment that "we don't have to invent the wheel" all over again. There are lots of good programs and activities and it's not really necessary to search for new ideas. It's more a question of getting some of the existing good ideas properly supported.

The concern about personnel seems to be universal.

November 23, 1988

Commission on Jewish Education in North America toward the Second Meeting

Interview of Commissioners

Commissioner: Harriet Rosenthal

Interviewer: Art Rotman

Date: November 22, 1988

Spirit: Very positive

Setting: Harriet Rosenthal's home, So. Orange, NJ

Duration: 1 1/2 hours

Commissioner's current stand: Personnel and community both clearly the consensus issue arising from the first meeting. Program option priority: Younger groups from preschool through high school and generally education in informal setting.

Summary: Rosenthal believes that the focus should be on children at the "beginning of the process" starting with preschool when the "slate is clean". By the time they get to college, they have so many other concerns, that it is too late.

Rosenthal also identified another age group as being vulnerable, mainly the older adult. They have completed their main life goals such as career and family and, at this point in their lives have the time and, in many cases, the money to make choices which they have been delaying.

Education in informal settings is a priority.

Israel visits are not usually a good opportunity for education.

The study of Hebrew on an active scale, while an interesting possibility, would not probably make much difference in Jewish continuity.

Personnel: What is needed is a multi-faceted assault on the entire system including:

- Better compensation
- Better training
- A career line



"Awards and rewards are needed for entering and staying". The late '40s and early '50s are an opportunity for career change. This could be a fruitful source of recruitment.

Community: There is a need for a long-term commitment by the community leadership, which will hopefully mean that resources will follow. There would be a need to involve top leadership and people of influence by involving them in the process at an early stage. Faced with the problem and concerns, leadership will respond.

Rosenthal thought out loud that a program of no tuition would be an interesting development. However, on reflection she feels that it would not make a substantial difference in people's choices.

Ways of proceeding:

- Once the goals have been set and strategies developed which should be, Rosenthal guesses, by the second meeting, it would be desirable to break up into smaller groupings in some way, as it is only in smaller groupings that any action can be developed.
- AR shared with Rosenthal the Option 12 preschool as an example of the staff work. Rosenthal thought that it would be essential to develop this type of option clarification for whatever options are selected. In the particular case of preschool, with which she has considerable familiarity because of her involvement with the JCC, the approach is somewhat "aleph bet" and the questions raised are really rhetorical.



REPORT ON INTERVIEW WITH HARRIET ROSENTHAL -- 9/13/89

By Jon Woocher

HR believes that we must agree on a definition of "community" with respect to CAS. For her, "community" means a group of organizations linked to a Federation in a locality. This includes the synagogues. This approach may not immediately include the unaffiliated, but they will enter in, if at all, somewhere through this system.

HR is not in favor of spreading money around in a number of small research projects. She suggests pouring a sizable amount into one CAS, where the leaders could really be stirred to action. The aim should be to move a community to turn out really good Jewish education. The community chosen can't be in crisis, and can't be either too small or too large.

The Commission should be the basic implementing tool. Groups should come in and meet with local leadership. This will get people thinking. If we have "best models" available, we can help the community define what it needs to create a good educational system, and then develop a funding match.

The existence of the process will stimulate other communities to look at themselves.

To develop substantive recommendations, we may want to send Commissioners into communities to elicit their recommendations. The report will then include what communities themselves are saying.

HR also believes that one outgrowth of the Commission should be a computerized system to accumulate and access what we do know about Jewish education to reduce guesswork. This would include statistical information, information about programs, etc. She sees this as located in JESNA with software to access the information made available to local agencies.

For the next meeting, she sees the following as key agenda items:

1. updating the Commissioners on the progress of the report writing -- involvement is not really needed at this time
2. a decision to continue the Commission, at least for a while, to monitor implementation
3. a basic plan for the CAS process -- there should not be RFPs; the Commission should invite selected communities to be involved
4. a decision to reach out and solicit input from others "out there" -- need to begin to get their "buy-in"
5. agreement that we are talking about communities, not a single denominational system, as implementing focus

HR likes breaking into groups. The groups might be asked to formulate criteria for the CAS.

HR expects to be at the meeting.



## REPORT ON INTERVIEW WITH HARRIET ROSENTHAL, 5/4/89

### I. IJE

HR found the concept as described exciting, although she wondered how the operational decisions would be made.

She sees evaluation as a significant issue, especially if the goal is to develop good, replicable models for other communities to emulate. Program impacts will need to be evaluated and measurable.

HR agrees that concentrating on one site (a la the Flexner report and Johns Hopkins) can push others to address their needs.

She also raised the question of whether and how the IJE will develop the conceptual base needed to guide the change process. Do the professional "experts," e.g., agree on universal standards for professional development? She is skeptical that the Commission could in fact agree on what is adequate training of Jewish educators. So what base of concepts will guide the IJE in its work? The diversity of the community also makes it difficult to devise universal personnel standards.

As a practical matter, she is also concerned about whether communities will buy into the scope and intensity of change which IJE might try to induce. When one seeks to introduce universal changes, there is often a tendency to retreat to the "tried and true" because it is much easier to build consensus around. Communities may not be prepared to make the degree of commitment -- financial and political -- which they will be expected to under this approach.

### II. Commission Process

HR feels the next meeting should focus first on the personnel issue. (When we need to, we can figure out how to market almost anything.)

We need the beginnings of a plan for how to develop the personnel we need. We should attempt to answer: What would constitute a "well-trained" teacher or administrator? Can such people teach all age groups? What would be a well-trained informal educator? Do we have the places available, locally, to train such individuals? We have to define who the personnel are and what training they need.

Ideally, we should develop a model of what a well-planned educational process would look like in a few communities. Based on the demographic profile, this is what we would need for a good educational system in community X, in terms of structures, support systems, funding, personnel, and lay leadership.

We might also ask what would constitute a well-educated Jewish

child, perhaps by the time of Bar or Bat Mitzvah, and then look at what we would want for the next period in their lives, etc.

*J. Woocher*





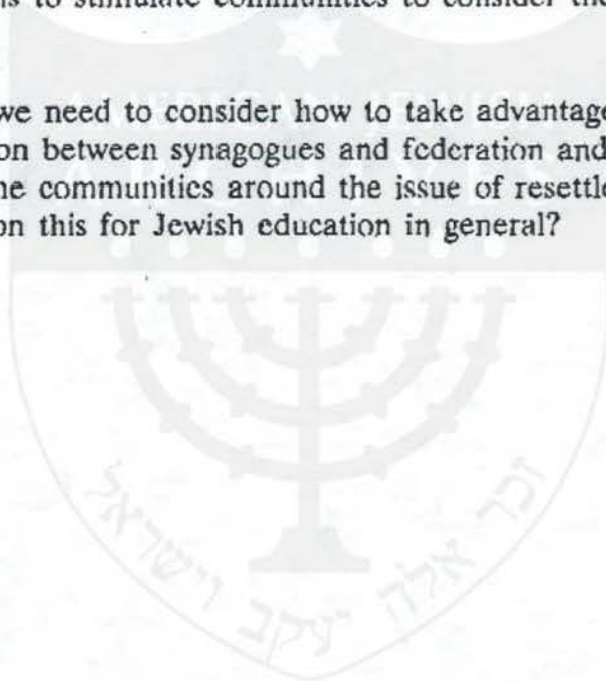
NOTES ON CONVERSATION WITH HARRIET ROSENTHAL -- 2/7/90

prepared by Jonathan Woocher

HR had begun, but not completed, reading through the Background Materials for the February 14 meeting. Her reaction to what she had read was extremely positive. Special commendations to Seymour and Annette for "clear and cogent" writing.

Her major concern is how we insure maximum impact of the report and recommendations in a) communities that want to be CAS, but are not selected, and b) communities that don't even ask to be considered. She feels that communities will not simply read the material and organize to take action. She recommends a process of community visitations to stimulate communities to consider the local implications of the Commission's work.

She also feels that we need to consider how to take advantage of the climate of enhanced cooperation between synagogues and federation and among synagogues that is developing in some communities around the issue of resettlement of Soviet Jews. How can we build on this for Jewish education in general?



Hyatt

Dear Jimmy —

Please may I have  
Annette's Report to us today  
on Tape?

Harriet Rosenthal  
368 Woodland Place  
So Orange NJ

07079



Virginia  
Levy



Virginia F. Levi



PREMIER

TO: Harriet Rosenthal  
DATE: 11/20/90

Harriet -

Here's the tape you requested. Unfortunately, the conclusion of Annette's remarks occurred while the tape was being turned over. I hope this is helpful.

Sincerely,  
Sunny



PREMIER INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION  
4500 EUCALYPT AVENUE • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44103 • (216) 391-8300

76857 (1/83) PRINTED IN U.S.A.