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Series B: Commission on Jewish Education in North America (CJENA). 1980–1993.
Subseries 2: Commissioner and Consultant Biographical Files, 1987–1993.

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Yanowitz, Bennett, 1988-1989.

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| Date | Nature of Contact/Status | Next Steps/Action Needed |
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INTERVIEW WITH
BENNETT YANOWITZ

ARTHUR NAPARSTEK
JUNE 28, 1988

I. Personal Profile

Bennett Yanowitz grew up in a Cleveland orthodox home and has a strong background in the religious, cultural, and intellectual traditions of Judaism. As a student at the University of Michigan, he founded a Sunday School. Later, as an adult in Cleveland, he played a lead role in organizing Shiva High School and became the School's founding president. A child of immigrant parents, Bennett has been influenced by a strong European cultural environment.

His work in Jewish education evolves from various roles: as a parent, practitioner and lay leader. (See resume and bio.)

II. Views on Jewish Education Today - Problems

- A. Limited number of American teachers in day schools. It is difficult to find good teachers. Israeli teachers do not relate as well to American children.
- B. The content of curriculum materials needs to be assessed. As indicated in the Schiff study, youngsters after sixth grade do not learn very much. Bennett Yanowitz believes we have a wonderful product to sell, but we are not doing a good job competing with other areas in the Jewish and general community. Until we can more effectively market Jewish education, we will not fill our day schools and synagogue schools with a sufficient number of students. Thus the role of synagogues, bureaus and federations needs to be reassessed.
- C. The correlation between Jewish education and Jewish continuity is not automatic. That the Jewish socialization process is as important as the Jewish education process. Need to define Jewish education in the totality of one's life experience.

III. Opportunities That Make The Commission Timely

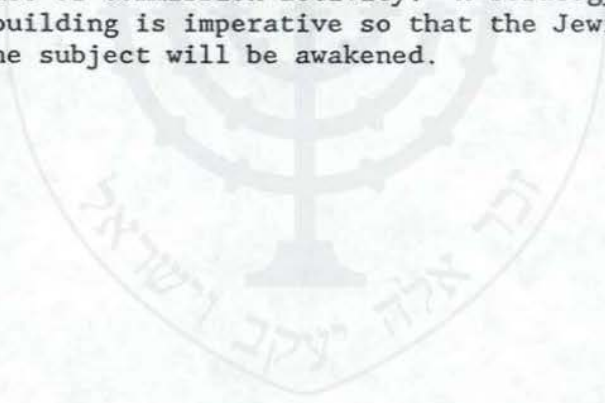
- A. Bennett believes there is a receptivity to Jewish education concerns. The increasing concern and focus results from a sense that Jews in North America have moved too far into patterns of assimilation. He believes there is a new supportive climate for education, and a resource base to fund good programs. The resource base results, in part, from new endowments.

IV. REPRESENTATIVENESS OF COMMISSION

He is enthused, excited, and skeptical of the work of the Commission. A major problem is the lack of Commission staff or advisor representation at the grade or high school teacher level. He believes we are relying too heavily at the planner and administration levels and do not have sufficient involvement of educators at the primary or secondary level.

V. Outcomes

Bennett focused on process outcomes. He felt important outcomes related to issues of partnerships, coordination, constituency-building, and public awareness. For example, there is a need for coordination between JESNA and the Commission as the JESNA program evolves. How can the two entities support each other in a synergistic way. Further coordination is necessary between the Commission and various foundations; the key being that no one entity be perceived as owning the Jewish education field. Partnerships with parity are key. Finally, the American Jewish community should be kept informed of Commission activity. A strategy of constituency-building is imperative so that the Jewish public's interest in the subject will be awakened.



INTERVIEW WITH
BENNETT YANOWITZ

ARTHUR J. NAPARSTEK
MAY 23, 1989

I. Progress Report on Commission Activities Since the December 13 Meeting

I reviewed with Bennett Yanowitz the progress the Commission has made. Specifically, we focused on the consensus that came out of the December 13th meeting. I asked Ben if he agreed that commissioners were comfortable with the idea that the Commission's mission was to bring about across-the-board change on a systemic level and to focus on implementation. I also reviewed with Ben the framework which was agreed to by the Commission at the December 13th meeting. The framework includes the identification of personnel and community as enabling options and the identification, without prioritizing, of 23 other programmatic options.

Ben pointed out that the challenge before the Commission is to bring about implementation.

II. Implementation

I reviewed with Ben that in thinking about implementation, we need to look at education on a local level. He agreed with that perspective. I then put forward the idea of the development of demonstrations. At that point Ben indicated that before we begin thinking of demonstrations or any other mechanism related to implementation, we need to assess the problem and get a group of commissioners to talk it through. Let people begin thinking of what personnel means in relationship to implementation on a local level.

Ben spoke of JESNA's emerging role in this area. JESNA is committing more and more time to the issues of personnel. Last month, JESNA's Executive Committee approved the concept of JESNA becoming the organization that could house an endowment for Jewish education. The JESNA goal is to raise \$10 million for the endowment.

He then asked me if I thought this would compete with the Commission. I turned the question back to him, his response being that he and Woocher discussed the problem of competition and felt that the needs in the field were great, and if the Commission only focused on community and personnel and not all the programmatic options, there would not be any competition. I pointed out that there was a relationship between personnel, community and the programmatic options.

INTER-OFFICE
CORRESPONDENCE

Morton L. Mandel

Henry L. Zucker

TO: Virginia F. Levi

NAME

DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

FROM: Arthur J. Naparstek

NAME

DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

DATE: 5/26/89

REPLYING TO

YOUR MEMO OF: _____

SUBJECT: IMPRESSIONS OF MEETING WITH BENNETT YANOWITZ

Bennett Yanowitz can be an eloquent spokesperson for the Commission. He understands the issues well. We may have to reconcile how a Commission-initiated mechanism will differ from what JESNA is planning with regard to the Endowment Fund. I asked Bennett for a copy of the proposal, and through Jon Woocher, have received it. I am attaching it to this memo.



REPORT OF INTERVIEW WITH BENNETT YANOWITZ - 9/11/89

BY thought the last meeting was well structured, with good professional preparation setting the framework.

In his mind, "community action" means: assisting communities in funding the development of comprehensive educational plans, including new programs.

One of the key questions is how will we (i.e., the Commission or whatever implementing mechanism is developed) have a role in recommending or approving new programs in the communities? What will the validating process be? What will happen if the communities and we disagree about the merits of proposed initiatives?

A second major concern he has is in the area of evaluation, especially in light of the areas -- personnel and community -- we have chosen to focus on. Many of the initiatives that may emerge in communities will aim at long-term effects that are difficult to quantify. E.g., how do we measure an enhanced climate of community support: increased federation allocations? a better quality of leadership on the BJE board? If we are seeking to evaluate individual programs with an eye toward replicability, this may not be easy.

What are the criteria for success? How do we set a time frame if we are looking for a long term effect on personnel development and community climate? Will people be patient enough?

Since the heart of implementation will be a funding process as well as encouraging community-wide planning, we must be prepared to deal with these two issues.

BY will be at the next meeting.

REPORT OF INTERVIEW WITH BENNETT YANOWITZ - 9/11/89
BY JON WOOCHEER

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