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Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, General
Assembly 1967, speech on war against poverty, correspondence
and speech, 1967.



COUNCIL OF JEWISH FEDERATIONS AND WELFARE FUNDS, INC.

NATIONAL OFFICE: 315 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10010

TELEPHONE: AREA CODE 212, 673-8200

AIR MAIL

August 22, 1967

Dr. Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle & Silver Road
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

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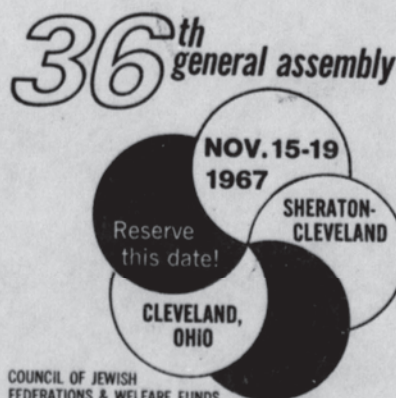
Dear Dr. Silver:

One of the most important subjects we will be discussing at the General Assembly will be the progress and problems in the war on poverty, specifically an examination of the nature of Jewish community responsibility.

For the General Assembly Program Committee, we invite you to speak to this subject. The Cleveland Jewish community has set an example of leadership in developing its program for participation of the Jewish community in this effort, to follow through on the commitment expressed in the purpose clause of the ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1964:

"to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this Nation by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity for work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity."

We are convinced that no one is in a better position to analyze the nature of Jewish involvement -- as agencies, as individuals -- in planning, sponsoring and operating programs, and to appraise our participation locally, and what we can do nationally. I know the Assembly will be particularly interested in your exposition of the rationale for Jewish involvement, and the developments now taking place in Cleveland in strengthening the cooperation between Jewish and Negro groups. We were very impressed with the creation, in the Negro community, of a Federation paralleling our own Jewish Federations.



Dr. Daniel Jeremy Silver
Cleveland, Ohio

August 22, 1967
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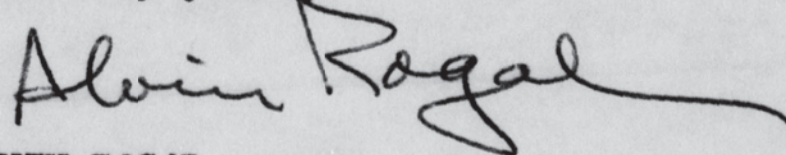
Since there are differences among Jewish communities as to how the Jewish contribution will be made, we will be seeking a discussant who will present what we think will be another point of view. There are those who, unlike the leadership of the Cleveland Jewish Community Federation, feel that the major Jewish contribution must take the form of participating in the planning mechanisms of the war on poverty as they relate to the programs made possible by the ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT. They feel that Jewish agencies as such have a limited, if any, contribution to make to the administration of projects. Their feeling is that while all of us have responsibilities as individuals, participation by Jewish agencies, in the actual rendering of services to the community on a non-sectarian basis will inevitably diminish services to the Jewish community. We have, therefore, listed this subject in the Preliminary Program as "THE WAR AGAINST POVERTY -- TWO VIEWS ON JEWISH RESPONSIBILITIES".

This session will take place on Friday, November 17, beginning at 2:30 P. M. at the Sheraton-Cleveland Hotel.

From every point of view, it is logical that you should be the one to present this subject, particularly the Cleveland thinking and experience.

I will be eagerly awaiting word from you that you will do so.

Sincerely yours,



ALVIN ROGAL
Chairman, General Assembly
Program Committee.

AR: fkr

August 24, 1967

Mr. Alvin Rogal
Council of Jewish Federations and
Welfare Funds, Inc.
315 Park Avenue South
New York, N. Y. 10010

Dear Mr. Rogal:

I shall be pleased to speak on Friday afternoon,
November 17th, at CJFWF assembly on the theme
"The War Against Poverty--Two Views on Jewish
Responsibilities." Would you indicate to me the
approximate length of the original presentation.
I look forward to welcoming you to Cleveland.

Sincerely yours,

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

DJS:rvf



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NATIONAL OFFICE: 315 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10010

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AIR MAIL

October 24, 1967

Dr. Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple
University Circle at Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Dear Dr. Silver:

We have decided to keep largely to the original schedule for the General Assembly session on the WAR AGAINST POVERTY. It will be held on Friday, November 17, from 2:00 P. M. to 4:00 P. M. in the Cleveland Room at the Sheraton-Cleveland Hotel. Instead, we have shifted the session on Careers in Jewish Communal Service to Thursday morning, thereby reducing the competition with the session you will be addressing.

Thanks for sending us the "bio" material.

I look forward to receiving from you whatever advance notes you can give us on the substance of the paper, or -- if you do get to it -- the paper itself.

Again, many thanks.

Sincerely yours,

MAURICE BERNSTEIN
Director of Community Planning

36th general assembly

MB: fkr



THE PUBLIC WELFARE PROJECT
THE JEWISH COMMUNITY FEDERATION OF CLEVELAND

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver - Chairman

Presented at The General Assembly
Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds
November 17, 1967

~~WHY A PUBLIC WELFARE PROJECT?~~

It is particularly fitting that I report on ^{this aspect of the} the Anti-Poverty Program of the Cleveland Jewish Community Federation to ^{the} General Assembly ~~of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds~~ because our program actually was conceived in this setting.

Some may remember the 1964 General Assembly held in St. Louis. At that meeting Michael Harrington, ~~then a consultant to Sargent Shriver in the government's war against poverty~~, delivered the Herbert R. Abeles Memorial Address. Mr. Harrington emphasized ~~the importance of~~ the role of the volunteer agency ^{in the war on poverty}.

- " (1) In making the community action program of the government not politics as usual, but something imaginative,
- (2) in breaking down the walls of segregation which we have built around, not only Negroes, but poor people in general and,
- (3) in taking the war against poverty, not simply as a political proposition which it most certainly is, but as an individual moral responsibility."

Mr. Harrington's words ~~helped to focus our thinking and~~ set us in motion.

Late in 1964 ^{before to} ~~and in early 1965~~ our Federation discussed how the Jewish community could most effectively share its experience, knowledge and human resources in the common attack on poverty. We asked: What structure would be best suited for

what programs? What financing might be needed - and from what sources? What about staff? How would such a program relate to beneficiary agencies which traditionally provide direct services, and to synagogues and service organizations which were engaged in a number of direct help programs? Would involvement in the anti-poverty area lessen our ability to deal with primary Jewish responsibilities? Could our welfare-orientated leadership and our highly-skilled staff add new ideas to the national strategy for combatting poverty? By the ^{summer} ~~fall~~ of 1965 these preliminary discussions had resulted in a specific proposal. ~~(Exhibit 1)~~

We proposed an action program within the scope of our special competence. We would try to coordinate and broaden existing action programs. ~~(Some of the scope of these activities can be gained from Exhibit 2.)~~ We would create a visible Jewish presence which would attract volunteers unaffiliated with existing programs and provide a rallying point for our youth, many of whom wondered aloud and critically why the organized Jewish community was absent from inner city work. We would give evidence of our participation with Protestant and Catholic agencies in anti-poverty activities and signal to our own community the urgency of these undertakings.

We proposed that the Jewish Community Federation engage a professional person to staff a three-year experimental program. He would collect and distribute information) stimulate and coordinate individual agency, congregational and organization efforts; engage the interest of volunteers and professionals and find means to make use of their talents; and operate experimental and demonstration programs.

WE DECIDED TO

~~In essence, we proposed a program to~~ test whether and how an organized Jewish community could contribute meaningfully to the concerted attack on poverty and its related social ills. We would establish a central resource within the Federation to stimulate interest and participation in community action programs. We would experiment in new forms of service. Our program would provide a knowledgeable, professional person who could help our agencies inform themselves about available government and

BUREAU

foundation grants to cover existing or new services to the general community. ~~It~~ ^{PROGRAM}

THERE ARE TODAY ALMOST NO JEWS LIVING IN CLEVELAND PROPER OUR
would test the willingness and ability of a suburban community to face the problems

of the central city. ~~Today there are almost no Jews living in the city proper.~~

Responsibility for this program was vested in a Public Welfare Committee. The staff person works directly for this Committee, under the supervision of the Federation's Director of Social Planning and in close liaison with its Director of Community Relations. Since our program was experimental and over and above the ongoing, day-by-day programming of the Federation, we proposed that it be financed out of the Federation's Endowment Fund which has as one of its purposes "to undertake research and study projects and constructive projects in the social, welfare, culture and medical fields which cannot be embraced by the Federation within the funds available for normal operating purposes." An allocation of \$25,000 per year for three years was requested of the Endowment Committee and subsequently granted, subject to an annual review.

By March of 1966 all of the pertinent committees of the Federation had endorsed the proposal, and the Board of Trustees had authorized the program. The Public Welfare Committee immediately began to recruit staff and to define specific programs. By June of 1966 we were able to announce the appointment of our staff. There was agreement that the professional's initial effort should be to educate himself and the Public Welfare Committee concerning the needs of the central city and how the Jewish community might be most helpful. The Committee visualized two basic aspects to the staff function: (1) a coordinating function, and (2) the development of projects that made special sense for the Jewish community.

Project proposals were considered from the point of view of feasibility, expected effectiveness, immediacy, and the possibility of their being carried forward by local leadership after we had established their validity. Through our discussions four guidelines emerged:

1. We would not duplicate programs being carried out under other auspices. We would concentrate ~~our efforts~~ on programs in which our skills and resources ^{could} be most effective.
2. We would not fund programs. We were a community service organization, not another community foundation.
3. We would work in ^{PARTNERSHIP} ~~cooperation~~ with central city organizations. ^{IF} ~~When~~ this was impossible, ~~We~~ would try to develop local leadership. Our specific function was innovative and it was important to find a partner who could continue a project, once ^{IT WAS ESTABLISHED AND VALIANTLY} ~~established~~.
4. We would focus on one specific program area and/or on one particular section of the community ~~To~~ prevent dilution of our efforts and to permit careful evaluation.

Ultimately, selection was narrowed to two activities ¹ - ~~concentrating on education and the other on employment.~~

1. A Manpower Readiness Program to demonstrate the ability of manpower program dropouts to obtain and retain jobs when provided employment opportunities and motivational support. (Exhibit 3)

This program was not ^{ATTEMPTED BUT REMAINS OUR PROBABLE} ~~effected~~ and remains a possibility ^{NEXT STEP} at some later time.

2. A cooperative venture with the Cleveland Public School System in one designated high school (Glenville) and

its feeder schools to ^{OFFER} ~~assist many~~ youngsters from a disadvantaged neighborhood ~~with~~ many supplemental aides and services. (Exhibit 4)

Some Background on the Glenville Project.

Glenville is located in the northeastern section of the City. ^{DURING} ~~In~~ the past decade, this once middle-class area ^{HAS} received a heavy immigration of poor, especially Negro poor, displaced by urban renewal efforts in other central city areas. Glenville is overcrowded, restless and uncertain of its survival as a viable community. On the plus side there is considerable neighborhood pride; a small, alert and determined group of local leaders committed to maintain the area; and a concerned and energetic school administration, zealous to do all that it can and prepared to welcome volunteer help.

Glenville is near those suburbs where Jews now reside. Preliminary inquiries indicated a willingness within both the Jewish community and the Glenville neighborhood for such a project.

^{THERE ARE 40 PUPILS IN THE AUG. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASS}
The Cleveland schools face many problems: overcrowding ~~and~~ underfinancing; (400%) outdated buildings; inadequate vocational education; a teacher shortage. The Cleveland schools are neighborhood schools, which means that they are largely segregated. Approximately one-fourth of the children in Glenville come from families who receive welfare assistance. The Cleveland Public School System is also a determined system under new, vigorous, and strong professional leadership. In the past few years it has taken decisive action and its leadership is eager to break out of old and unsuccessful molds. The Glenville school area has been given added funds, personnel, and a good bit of administrative autonomy in order to meet its problems effectively.

The Glenville Project is directed at a specific network of neighborhood schools. It enlists the services of volunteers in order to accomplish many education-related purposes. It is, for the most part, a cooperative venture with local groups, especially with the Negro Community Federation. Quite coincidentally, at about the time that the Federation embarked on its anti-poverty program, the Negro Community Federation was searching for an appropriate activity.

The Negro Community Federation sees itself as both a coordinating and service organization. First envisaged in 1964, the Negro Community Federation hopes to bring together the fragmented Negro community and also provide leadership in the development of health and welfare services to the Negro. Membership in the Negro Community Federation is obtainable at a nominal cost. In 1966 a general membership campaign acquired about 500 members. ~~In addition to recruiting a core of interested people, this campaign resulted in acquiring some funds. They have since raised additional funds and are now proceeding to apply for a supplemental foundation grant.~~ We were eager to encourage this potentially significant organization and our relationship has been a happy one.

The specific Glenville Project programs are the following:

A. GLENVILLE COUNSELING PROJECT (~~formerly named Project A~~)

In 1966-67 this program provided one-to-one counseling to 24 tenth grade students to help them break through psychological and learning barriers which limited their potential in employment or education. Eighteen men and six women were recruited equally by the Jewish Community Federation and the Negro Community Federation. After two orientation sessions with staff from Jewish Family Service Association, Jewish Children's Bureau, Jewish Vocational Service and the Federation, four interracial

teams of adults working under school guidance counselors were assigned students pre-selected by the school. Volunteers and students met on a weekly basis and volunteers ~~maintained~~ ^{WERE MAINTAINED} regular contacts with the guidance personnel and ~~the~~ project coordinator. After evaluation these ^{School 24} relationships were continued for a second year (1967-68) and will be maintained until the conclusion of the student's school career.

In 1967 the Jewish Big Brothers and the Jewish Big Sisters undertook to recruit volunteers for a new tenth grade group; and the Negro Community Federation has again recruited a number of volunteers for this second class.

In some cases school grades have increased dramatically. School authorities are enthusiastic about this supportive work with under-achievers and potential dropouts.

B. VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE PROGRAM

In 1966-67 this program provided the sophomore class of Glenville High School (about 1,000) with information about various fields of work, their requirements, and prerequisites. The Council of Jewish Women and the Women's Group of the Negro Community Federation each recruited 10 to 15 women to participate in two series of weekly half-day programs. A number of mothers of students at Glenville High were among the volunteers who, under the supervision of a High School "Job Coordinator," arranged lectures by experts in the vocational field. Following the lecture the volunteers lead group discussions. Four

orientation sessions were held for volunteers with the cooperation of Jewish Vocational Service.

The school had long wanted such a program but had been unable to provide it. It brings vocational information to tenth graders in a more individualized and intensive manner than was previously possible. With active school encouragement, the sponsoring groups are repeating the program this present school term.

We are presently talking with school authorities about a vocational guidance program directed to the Junior Class to begin in January 1968. Such a program would take the students out of the school situation to actual work sites and acquaint them with on-the-job conditions.

C. SCHOLARS' CLUB

In 1966-67 this program provided educational enrichment, personal counseling and scholarship information to a selected group of 25 sophomores. [The High School provides college counseling only to seniors.] It operated on a one-to-one basis with trained volunteers and occasional speakers.

The American Jewish Committee adopted this project and provided volunteers. Each youngster had a college-experienced adult to talk with. Each received instruction on taking college board tests. Summer employment was provided so the students could put something away in a college savings account.

The Scholars' Club received the unqualified endorsement of school officials. The American Jewish Committee has recruited sufficient volunteers for a second class. There are plans to include a partner group from within the Negro community. Not only is this a program which our volunteers and the school system view with enthusiasm, but it has achieved something of a status position in Glenville High School.

D. SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOOD YOUTH CORPS PROGRAM

This program offers an opportunity for meaningful well-supervised, part-time work for high school students. The School Neighborhood Youth Program is government-financed and seeks to place high school students from poverty homes in part-time jobs in non-profit organizational settings. Generally, Youth Corps job opportunities have been in schools, recreational centers, and government organizations. Our intent ^{LARGELY BUSY WORK} ~~was~~ is to provide additional work opportunities of greater depth than customarily offered through participation of our two agencies, Jewish Orthodox Home for Aged and Mt. Sinai Hospital, which are located in or near Glenville. Fifteen of these youngsters are working in our agencies and are provided with orientation, with adequate and instructional supervision, and have been made to feel that their work is important.

The School Neighborhood Youth Corps officials are enthusiastic and consider our agencies prime work sites. Due to their interest we helped place an additional 8 youngsters from another school area at the Jewish Convalescent Hospital.

E. "PRIDE" PROJECT

Originally this project sought to assist the National Teachers' Corps Program in stimulating special learning classes at Patrick Henry Junior High School, a feeder school to Glenville High School. The program took its own path and became a project aimed at developing a sense of pride on the part of the youngsters in themselves and in their school.

Project "Pride" is a one-woman operation. Our volunteer contacted ~~some~~ Patrick Henry alumni who have been successful. She compiled their biographies in pamphlet form graded for remedial reading classes at the school. Several alumni returned to the school and at assemblies relate their experiences. The youngsters saw that "you can make it out there."

F. TUTORIAL SERVICES

In 1966-67 extra tutoring help was requested both at Patrick Henry and Franklin D. Roosevelt Junior High School, which feed Glenville High. Through the assistance and participation of two congregations, volunteers were recruited for weekly evening sessions. The program continued during the summer, and this fall the program has been augmented through the enthusiastic involvement of 30 college students representing the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation on the Case-Western Reserve University campus.

G. STUDY HALL SPECIALISTS

In 1966-67 this program sought to assist Glenville High School students with their academic work during study hall periods.

It was felt that special help would increase the value of these often wasted periods.

Hadassah adopted this program and worked closely with a committee of the Women's Organization of the Federation and several congregation sisterhoods. Teams of volunteers served the study halls on a one-day-a-week basis. They worked on a pre-assigned basis with specific students under the general supervision of a school staff person.

These 17 volunteers accepted their tasks diligently and performed valuably. The program, however, failed because of the frequent non-appearance of the students. We are dealing with the low-achiever and the habitual truant. There was a lack of administrative supervision. There was agreement at the conclusion of the school term that this program should be discontinued. However, this fall Franklin D. Roosevelt Junior High School specifically requested this program. The principal believes that he can make it work by careful selection of students. He promises they will be in the right place at the right time.

In addition to these original programs we have added this school year the following projects:

(1) JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

The Junior Achievement Organization requested our help in providing a sponsor for a unit of 25 youngsters operating at Glenville High School. We were able to interest the American Jewish Committee and the program is in operation. To our

knowledge this is the first time a Jewish communal organization has undertaken sponsorship of a Junior Achievement group in a poverty community.

(2) LAYMAN'S LAW

A new school-sponsored program of adult education began at Glenville High School in September. The Director discussed with us the need for a series of lectures by lawyers with basic information on installment buying, public safety, the legal responsibilities of landlords and/or tenants, etc. The American Jewish Congress has indicated interest in this project and we are searching for a Negro group as a co-sponsor. We hope eventually to direct this program also to local block clubs

(3) PHYSICAL TRAINING

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Junior High School Principal asked our help in establishing an evening athletic program. The Recreation Council of the Jewish Community Center has undertaken this assignment. They are currently recruiting coaches and officials to staff a basketball league and also expect to offer wrestling and swimming instruction.

(4) TEACHER AIDES

The Patrick Henry Junior High School Principal approached us to provide teacher aides. The volunteer ~~would~~ work in the classroom directly with the teacher and ~~would~~ assist ^{A TUTORIAL} on a one-to-one basis those children who may be either below or above

the general level. This program is now in operation with 11 volunteers. The school's PTA is our partner.

(5) REMEDIAL SPEECH

We have been approached by the Board of Education to help recruit volunteers for a kindergarten remedial speech program. This is a community-wide effort and ordinarily would be outside our province. Nevertheless, since several of the designated schools are in the Glenville area, we are recruiting the specialized volunteers required.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR PROGRAM?

We are now about half-way through our three-year project. We are certain about some things - but obviously, there is still much that we can not assess. We do know that if the Federation Anti-Poverty Program had not come into existence:

- . . . 50 under-achieving high school students would not be benefiting through a one-to-one relationship with a competent adult.
- . . . 50 top high school students would not be getting advice and help which practically ensures their going on to college.
- . . . 2,000 high school sophomores would not have received an initial and broad exposure to vocational education.
- . . . 23 youngsters in the School Neighborhood Youth Corps Program would either have no jobs, or jobs which provide a minimal work experience.

- . . . 25 inner city high school youngsters would not be in the Junior Achievement Program because of the lack of a sponsor.
- . . . Over 100 youngsters would not have had helpful tutoring.
- . . . Many of our volunteers would never have realized what twentieth century urban poverty is and would not be as sensitive to the city's needs.
- . . . Many Negro and white adults would not have had the opportunity of working together in an interracial program toward a common goal.
- . . . We would not have established a close working relationship with the Negro Community Federation nor have been able to assist them in the development of a substantial program.
- . . . The Jewish community would be without a focal point for anti-poverty service, and would not be in touch with ~~any~~ ^{THE} new self-help organizations.
- . . . Approximately 100 activist Jewish youth would not have worked in urban area projects under Jewish communal auspices.

By January 1968, we ^{will} ~~expect to~~ have ^{WORKED WITH SOME} ~~contacted approximately~~ 2500 youngsters through the help of 250 volunteers.

The task of evaluation lies immediately before us. I can tell you that the residents of the area and the Superintendent of Schools, the Principal of Glenville High School, and every school administrator and teacher with whom we are involved are enthusiastic about the program and its potential. (Exhibit 5) This fall the schools have hired a professional just to work with and coordinate our projects in the Glenville area.

I have been asked to comment on the ability of a Jewish community to involve ^{ON SUCH AN ACTION BASIS} itself in the anti-poverty program without slighting the more traditional interests of the Jewish community or diminishing the level of service offered by our agencies. I can only report that in Cleveland our program functions without detracting at all from the main thrust of our Jewish organizational life; that we have brought a number of peripheral Jews into the organized community; and that we have not curtailed a single agency or professional service.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Our grant is for three years. We are energetically working to strengthen our partners in these projects. It is our hope that in the next twelve to fifteen months the Negro Community Federation will develop to a point where it will be able to assume organizational responsibility for the majority of these programs. We are also exploring cooperative arrangements with other local groups such as the PTA'S, area councils, etc. It is fairly easy to ensure the continuation of each specific program. However, the development of a single, strong, community-wide Negro service organization seems to us of prime importance. If we can help in this direction we believe we will have made a significant contribution to our city.

We want to move ahead, tackle other areas, create structures, involve people. We have found every step we took exciting and surprising. We cannot solve even a major part of our city's problems, but we can do our share and we are doing it. After all as our tradition tells us: He who saves a single life, he is treated as if he has saved the world.