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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.

Box	Folder
5	14

Corson, Maurice, 1988-1990.

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Mandel
Associated
Foundations

1750 Euclid Avenue • Cleveland, Ohio 44115 • (216) 566-9200

Jack N. and Lilyan Mandel Fund
Joseph C. and Florence Mandel Fund
Morton L. and Barbara Mandel Fund

July 18, 1988

Dear Maurice:

I am delighted that you will join the North American Commission on Jewish Education. The Commission will suggest practical steps and concrete recommendations for the improvement of Jewish education in North America in all its forms and settings.

The Commission will oversee the activities of Commission Director Arthur Naparstek and appropriate supporting staff, whose responsibilities will include gathering and organizing data, preparing background papers and reports, consulting with scholars, educators and policy makers, and coordinating the ongoing participation of important Jewish publics.

The Commission will start its work with some already established benefits. It has begun its planning stage in cooperation with JWB and the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA), and has held discussions with the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF). A number of national educational organizations and foundation leaders have also been consulted.

Enclosed is a paper describing our concept of the work of the Commission. It reflects the thinking of a small group that has worked to describe the idea behind the Commission. I am also enclosing a list of those who have agreed to serve on the Commission, thus far.

I hope to see you at our first Commission meeting. I look forward, with pleasure, to working with you.

Cordially,



MORTON L. MANDEL

Rabbi Maurice S. Corson
President
The Wexner Foundation
41 S. High Street, Suite 3710
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Enclosures

**Mandel
Associated
Foundations**

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Jack N. and Lilyan Mandel Fund
Joseph C. and Florence Mandel Fund
Morton L. and Barbara Mandel Fund

July 18, 1988

Dear Rabbi Corson:

I am pleased that you will be serving as a member of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America and look forward to working with you in my capacity as director.

The first meeting of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America will take place on Monday, August 1, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with a continental breakfast available. The meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. The location of the meeting is UJA Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 130 East 59th Street, Conference Room B, New York, NY 10022.

If you need to be reached during the day, messages can be left at (212) 836-1793. The caller should indicate that you are with the Commission.

At the meeting we would like to distribute a brief biographical sketch of each commissioner. I would appreciate your sending me information on your background. Please send it by Wednesday, July 20 to Premier Industrial Foundation, 4500 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44103.

Please complete and return the enclosed card by July 25 to confirm your plans. I look forward to seeing you on August 1.

Sincerely,



Arthur J. Naparstek
Director
Commission on Jewish Education
in North America

Rabbi Maurice S. Corson
President
The Wexner Foundation
41 S. High Street, Suite 3710
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Enclosure

TO: HLZ
NAME
DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

FROM: HLZ
NAME
DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

DATE: 8/5/88
REPLYING TO
YOUR MEMO OF: _____

SUBJECT: AUGUST 4 DISCUSSION WITH MAURICE CORSON

Corson believes the first meeting of the Commission was very good. He believes we have a complicated mix of people and that staff will have to work very hard to organize the areas for further discussion and for recommendation.

Corson is particularly interested in the college campus and what can be done with the college-age youth. This is his priority. However, he believes that he will get very little support for this priority in the Commission because Commission members will begin to emphasize support for other areas (i.e. their organizational priorities) rather than concentrating on this important college-age group.

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COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA
TOWARD THE SECOND MEETING
INTERVIEWS OF COMMISSIONERS

1. COMMISSIONER: Rabbi Maurice Corson
2. INTERVIEWER: Henry L. Zucker
3. DATE: December 1, 1988
4. SPIRIT: Still a bit skeptical, turning to quite supportive toward end of the interview
5. SETTING: Corson's office at the Wexner Foundation, Columbus, Ohio
6. DURATION: 3 hours including lunch
7. COMMISSIONER'S CURRENT STAND:
 - A. Personnel: very important, probably the most important opportunity for the Commission. However, cautions that Wexner is already deeply into this program, especially in the recruitment and training of senior personnel. Urges that we not duplicate their and perhaps other efforts in this area.
 - B. The community: understands the need to encourage first-string community leadership to participate in Jewish education program to set appropriate climate for big advance in community education, and to encourage infusion of substantial new money to make possible the advances which will be recommended.
 - C. Programmatic options: feels very strongly that we should undertake an analysis of the opportunities with college-age youth. "It is the one place where we can reach 90% of the Jewish youth at a time when we can effect their thinking and commitment." Believes that Hillel is far short of meeting the mark and should be undertaken as a communitywide responsibility. He will write a letter to Morton Mandel on this subject. I indicated we would call attention to the letter at the December 13 meeting, and possibly circulate it in advance to all Commission members.
8. SUMMARY:

Early in the meeting, Corson reiterated previous skepticism about what the Commission will be able to accomplish. He was very critical of "rumors" and publicity that indicate that the Commission will make a comprehensive

study of Jewish education and "co-opt" other organizations to carry out some of the recommendations. He made it clear that the Wexner Foundation does not wish to be "co-opted" by the Commission. Later he seemed to understand that Wexner programming is its own business and that its independence will not be threatened. The intent of the Commission is to encourage concerned organizations to specialize in areas of Jewish education which appeal to them, with a view to improving that area. (In discussing the 26 options, I made it clear that the vast majority could not be pursued by the Commission, and hopefully would be picked up by other organizations.) At the end of the interview, he seemed quite satisfied on this score.

Overall, I believe Corson will be mildly supportive of the Commission's work. He will require shoring up from time to time, especially as it relates to how the Commission is to deal with the Wexner Foundation. His concern, I believe, is the retention of the independence of the Wexner Foundation and its program, and recognition on our part that Wexner's deeply into training professional leaders.

December 9, 1988

Mr. Morton Mandel
Commission on Jewish Education
in North America
4500 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44103

Dear Mort:

I was delighted to have the opportunity to meet with Hank Zucker recently in order to review the progress of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, and the preliminary draft of the conclusions to be presented to the members of the Commission by staff. In the report's discussion of major areas in the field of Jewish education, I would like to underscore the importance of educational services to Jewish college students which, to my mind, represents one of the most critical areas to be considered. In response to this concern, Hank invited me to share some thoughts with the members of the Commission, which I am more than pleased to do.

A unique and important role an independent commission may play is the conceptualization of Jewish educational services in broader and potentially more effective terms. Authorities in the provision of Jewish campus services estimate that there are approximately 450,000 Jewish students currently enrolled in hundreds of colleges and universities throughout North America. Moreover, the Jewish community's love affair with higher education has been evidenced by the fact that, over the past three decades, in any given year, from 80-90 percent of all Jews of college age have been enrolled in a college or university.

Mr. Morton Mandel
December 9, 1988
Page 2

The college years for Jews and non-Jews alike are strikingly formative in the development of individual lifestyles and goals. Away from the parental home and community-based institutions for the first time, the college student becomes immersed in the universalist milieu of the campus community, and is afforded the exposure and opportunity to experiment with the widest variety of intellectual, political, social and personal challenges and enticements. In fact, during the college years, many young people consciously distance themselves from the values and traditions of the past in an effort to assert their budding individuality. It is commonly understood that, during the college years, individuals tend to lay the groundwork for, if not make, the most important decisions of their lives with respect to lifestyle, dating and marriage, career, and personal values.

The campus community is critical for another reason as well. In addition to the universalist, "melting pot" milieu referred to above, the campus is also the place in North American society where Israel is most consistently undermined and attacked. The propaganda campaign against Israel and her supporters is centralized on the campus and fueled by highly organized and well funded Arab and Third World organizations. The unsuspecting and ill-prepared Jewish student who arrives on the campus is immediately struck by these activities and is often at a personal loss as a result of them.

The typical Jewish student begins college with an inadequate if not insignificant Jewish education. The statistics shared with our Commission indicate that, in a given year, only 42 percent of all school age (ages 3-17) children are enrolled in formal Jewish education settings, the vast majority being in a congregational or supplementary school. Furthermore, with the widely acknowledged erosion of Jewish practices in the home, many if not most young Jews entering the college years do not arrive with a solid home-based sense of Jewish identification. In sum, the enterprise of Jewish education, both in schools and in the home, tends to affect in some significant way less than a majority of Jews who go on to the university setting.

A grave mistake of the organized Jewish community in defining the parameters and constituencies of Jewish education rests in the almost exclusive concentration on the age grouping spanning pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah to

Mr. Morton Mandel
December 9, 1988
Page 3

post-confirmation. Invariably, Jewish education is believed to have run its course by the time the young Jew graduates from high school. However, given the demographic and geographical concentration of Jews on the campus, the formative developmental stage the campus represents, and the inherent threats and challenges posed by the campus milieu, the continuation of an attitude relegating campus Judaism to a minor role within the framework of Jewish education is both neglectful and dangerous.

While the leadership of the Jewish community has long been aware of the problems and opportunities associated with Jewish education (congregational schools, day schools, preschools, Jewish camps, youth groups, et.al.), the top leadership of North American Jewish life has never seriously addressed the gross neglect in providing adequate and appropriate funding, staffing, and programming for Jewish college students. In the all too few Hillel Foundations where there are adequate levels of funding and staffing, the results have been very positive (e.g. Harvard, University of Michigan, U.C.L.A., and Washington University). In general, however, most campuses have a ratio of one full time Hillel staff person for every 1,000 - 2,500 Jewish students. As such, Jewish education on the campus, even allowing for the presence of Jewish Studies programs, is woefully underfunded.

From time to time, there have been isolated studies and discussions about Jewish campus constituencies, but in every case they have been aborted by the timidity of national leadership and the political realities of B'nai B'rith's internal agenda and limited funding capacity.

Finally, even given the best efforts of B'nai B'rith Hillel as the national centerpiece for campus services, and local Federations, which often contribute generously to localized Hillel programs, dozens of campuses with thousands of Jewish students have literally no Jewish program as a result of Hillel's inadequate financial resources, or the fact that such campuses happen to be isolated from any Federation's service area.

B'nai B'rith Hillel, in partnership with numerous local Federations, has an immensely important task. It has, to date, been generally viewed as a marginal institution dealing with a marginal constituency, on the periphery of concern to top leadership. Ironically, it is precisely this constituency which holds unparalleled potential in our efforts to upgrade Jewish education.

Mr. Morton Mandel
December 9, 1988
Page 4

For these reasons, it is my strong belief that the Commission on Jewish Education in North America must place the campus agenda among the highest Jewish education priorities. We now have an opportunity to take these constituencies seriously, for the sake of Jewish education, and the future of our community. I urge the Commission not to turn it's head away from this challenge.

Sincerely,



Maurice S. Corson, D.D.
President

MSC:sgb

cc: Mr. Henry Zucker

February 3, 1989

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

Dear Mort:

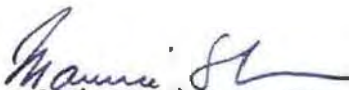
I have just finished reading the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America. I regret that I was unable to attend this meeting, but it appears from the minutes and from what I have heard from Hank Zucker and Art Naperstak the meeting made significant progress towards identifying critical areas for intervention.

I would like to thank you and Art for circulating my letter regarding the need for addressing the critical problem of Jewish campus services.

It is regrettable that someone representing the Hillel structure is not involved in our process. If at all possible, I would urge, even at this late date, that someone who can speak with authority about the college scene be involved in the Commission's work. As you may know, the National Hillel Commission of B'nai B'rith recently appointed a new Executive Director, Richard Joel. I have had several conversations with him, and I personally can't think of anyone who would be more appropriate for this role.

I certainly concur with the conclusions of the meeting on December 13th and look forward to attending the next meeting of the Commission.

Sincerely,


Rabbi Maurice S. Corson
President

MSC/np

Copies to
H. Stein
J. Reiner
S. Fox
A. Hochstein
H. Zucker

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HL?

MORTON L. MANDEL

4500 EUCLID AVENUE • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44103

February 10, 1989

Dear Maurice:

Thank you for your recent note to me about the minutes we sent out. We missed you at the meeting, but hopefully, between the minutes and your personal contacts, you will get a lot of the meeting content.

We have your idea with regard to Hillel, and we appreciate, very much, your sending us your thoughts this way.

Best personal regards.

Sincerely,

MORTON L. MANDEL

Rabbi Maurice S. Corson
President
The Wexner Foundation
Huntington Center, Suite 3390
41 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

cc: Arthur J. Naparstek
Henry L. Zucker

INFORMATION OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO: Arthur J. Naparstek
Virginia F. Levi
NAME
DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

FROM: Henry L. Zucker
HLZ
NAME
DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

DATE: 5/15/89
REPLYING TO
YOUR MEMO OF: _____

SUBJECT: COMMISSION INTERVIEW WITH RABBI MAURICE CORSON
ON MAY 11, 1989, ONE HOUR AT THE LAGUARDIA AIRPORT
AND IN THE LIMOUSINE ON THE WAY TO HIS NEW YORK OFFICE
LARRY MOSES PARTICIPATED IN SOME OF THE INTERVIEW

Corson is skeptical about the mechanism to follow up the findings of the Commission. He believes that Seymour Fox knew before the Commission was organized what sort of follow-up mechanism should be developed. Corson believes that while there is need of a follow-up mechanism, it is not a good idea to establish a new IJE agency. Rather, the function should be assigned to JESNA.

The Wexner Foundation would not support an independent IJE. It probably would support a JESNA department for the same purpose.

Corson is very touchy on the idea of financial support of the Commission's recommendations because he made it clear in advance that in joining the Commission, he was not implying that Wexner would take on a financial obligation to support the Commission's findings. I made it clear that all financial support for ideas which emerge from the Commission would be strictly on a volunteer basis. Participating foundations would take on financial support in areas in which they have a specific interest.

Corson commented that there are serious splits in the organizational functioning of all three denominations, and that this will probably have a negative effect on the ability of the denominations to be helpful in carrying out ideas developed by the Commission. For example, anything recommended by the Hebrew Union College is likely to be ignored or opposed by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

In general, Corson was supportive of the work of the Commission. He believes it will produce a report which will have substantial influence on Jewish education. He made it clear that the Wexner Foundation has a deep interest in Jewish education and is already supporting major efforts in this field and will continue to do so.

REPORT ON INTERVIEW OF RABBI MAURICE CORSON - 10/4/89

(conducted by Jonathan Woocher)

Rabbi Corson is skeptical about the Community Action Site approach. He believes that a strategy of seeking to create broad-based change through what will essentially be pilot projects is flawed in several respects:

1. Since the CAS will rely on extraordinary resources, replication in communities lacking those resources and even continuation in the CAS once the special resources are withdrawn will be difficult. He cites the failure of the Melton program in Columbus to be replicated or sustained as a relevant cautionary example.
2. Implementing the CAS will apparently be seen as requiring the creation of a new structure which is likely to be made permanent. This will be unnecessarily costly and duplicative. If the CAS strategy is to be followed, he suggests that implementation be done through a special desk at JESNA. No separate, permanent entity should be created.

In general, he feels that the Commission has not yet reached out successfully to engage the critical grass roots delivery systems, especially the synagogues and their supplementary schools. They may have no investment in the findings and recommendations.

He also believes that insufficient emphasis has been given to examining existing structures and how to strengthen them: JESNA, the denominational commissions and departments, the bureaus of Jewish education. These are the agencies which together with the schools and other direct service providers are the delivery system (and will be so for the foreseeable future). Unless they are materially strengthened, the Commission will not have the desired impact.

MC feels that a "messianic" element has been creeping into the Commission's thinking. This has led to a shortchanging of many practical areas of intervention, e.g., developing better compensation and benefit packages for teachers, including pension and health insurance, stipends for professional development, etc.

In looking ahead to October 23, MC hopes we will come away with:

- 1) a commitment not to build a new bureaucracy
- 2) a commitment to focus greater attention on and to involve directly the synagogue community and the campuses (an important lacuna in the Commission's work thus far)
- 3) more attention given to how to upgrade professionalism and self-esteem of educators, which he sees as a national, not simply a local issue

MC expects to attend the meeting on October 23.

NOTES ON MEETING WITH MAURICE CORSON -- 1/22/90

prepared by Jonathan Woocher

I reviewed the draft recommendations with MC. Most of his comments were directed toward the recommendation to establish an independent implementing mechanism. He continues to question the wisdom of setting up a full-scale institution with a board, staff, and funding. He would prefer to see existing structures utilized for the implementation by adding this to their mandates and providing additional funding to them. The primary members of such an implementation consortium would be CJF, JESNA, and JWB. They could under their joint auspices organize a separate high level task force on implementation, but this would be linked directly to existing organizations. The operation would be housed at JESNA.

If a free standing implementation mechanism is created, MC believes that it must relate itself positively and cooperatively to the existing structures. This can be best assured by having these agencies share in the governance and executive management of the implementation mechanism together with philanthropists.

MC indicated that he was also still skeptical about the community action site strategy. However, we were unable to discuss this in greater detail due to time constraints.

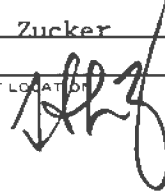
MC expects to be at the meeting on 2/14.

cc: Seymour Fox
Mark Gurvis

TO: Morton I. Mandel
NAME
DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

FROM: Henry I. Zucker
NAME
DEPARTMENT/PLANT LOCATION

DATE: 6/7/90
REPLYING TO
YOUR MEMO OF: _____



SUBJECT:

At Seymour Fox's suggestion, I talked to Maurice Corson about the Wexner Foundation program and plans in the field of Jewish education.

Corson will be very pleased to comment at the Commission meeting on what Wexner has done in the field of Jewish education, and what it proposes to do during the next several years. He will emphasize their program emphases. He will probably not discuss dollars.

Seymour advises me that Kathleen Hat will be prepared to comment on Riklis plans to fund a preschool education program in New York, one which has national implications.

I hope that you, Bronfman and Crown will volunteer to comment on your funding and program plans during the next few years to get this part of the program started. I believe it will be very well received by the Commission if they can hear personally from a good sprinkling of the funders who are represented on the Commission. You could supplement these reports by noting that we are seeking funding from a number of foundations which are not represented on the Commission such as Cummings, Koret, Scheuer and Avi Chai.

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