

November 12, 1991

TO: Dr. Ivan Marcus
FROM: David G. Roskies
RE: Academic year 1992-93

As you know, I have been hard at work on my new book, THE LOST ART OF YIDDISH STORYTELLING, for quite some time -- ever since I was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship back in 1986. The signed contract from Harvard University Press has been gathering dust in my files almost as long. Despite significant progress made during my sabbatical leave (in 1989-90), two things happened to foul me up: (1) I was seduced by my sister and Lucy Dawidowicz (two women you can't say no to!) to prepare an Ansky volume for the Library of Yiddish Classics. It is slated to appear in August 1992. (2) The book on storytelling, meanwhile, grew into a history of Yiddish narrative and song from the medieval Mayse-bukh unto the present. I must now finish what I have begun, strike while the iron is hot. I am therefore requesting a partial leave of absence without pay for the next academic year.

Specifically, I should like to teach two courses a semester instead of three, reduce my committee assignments by half, but still remain a student adviser, should the department so desire. Needless to say, I have already discussed the course distributions with Profs. Scheindlin and Holtz before making this request. We concluded that should Zvia Ginor up her teaching load from two courses to three, we could cover all bases and my partial absence would not be felt. I leave it to the administration to decide whether to reduce my salary and prorate my pension at two-thirds or three-quarters of the full sum.

Bracketed by two summers, and with more time to write during the academic year, I can complete the entire manuscript (all eleven chapters, as presently envisaged) by August 1993 and return with renewed vigor to my teaching, awaiting the inspiration for my next book!