

THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA

M E M O R A N D U M

Date ~~1/11/79~~

TO: Dr. Gerson D. Cohen
FROM: Professor Roskies
Marjorie Wyler
RE: Yivo Conference

I know nothing about politics in Yiddishist circles, but was distressed to see that we have no presence at the three-day Yivo Conference at Columbia University. Will any of our students or faculty be in attendance? Have we no on-going relationship with Yivo which could prevent a recurrence of this? Surely, Moshe Laub is a friend, and could be approached.

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THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA

M E M O R A N D U M

Date 1/12/79

TO: Dr. David G. Roskies

FROM: Gerson D. Cohen

RE: YIVO Conference

I would appreciate an explanation to Mrs. Wyler's valid question posed in her memo to me of yesterday of which you received a copy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Gerson D. Cohen', written in a cursive style.

January 15, 1979

TO: Mrs. Marjorie Wyler

FROM: David G. Roskies

RE: YIVO Conference

To suspect the YIVO Administration of malice aforethought is to assume that a centralized and coherent decision-making process operates in their institution. In fact, as I had occasion to inform the Chancellor in September, the YIVO operates from hand-to-mouth and policy is decided on an ad-hoc basis, determined mostly by whether or not a grant proposal comes through. This particular conference was organized by a group of young academics who were fortunate enough to have their proposal funded and were given a virtual free hand by the YIVO. To prove their total lack of accountability, I may cite the example of the final session which, I happen to know, was tacked on after the program had already been announced. It was only at this point that the YIVO Administration stepped in to insist on a representation from its traditional Yiddishist constituency -- the Forward, the Workmen's Circle, and the Farband.

As for our own relationship with the YIVO, I can only say that we have no formal input in their decision-making process, such as it is. I have never been mandated by the Seminary to represent its interests, nor do I sit on any of the YIVO committees despite my role as editor of the YIVO Annual. The only recourse we have is to register a formal complaint with Mr. Laub.

cc Dr. Gerson D. Cohen