

30th July 1990
119634 Moscow, Borovskoye shosse 58
kor 1 kv 385

Dear David,

I have received both of your letters almost simultaneously, and so I answer them together. First of all about Mr. Schwartz. To my great regret, I learned who he is only from your letter which I got at July, 25. True, he called my "in-laws"; but I was told about his calling only at the day of his departure, when only few hours were left to meet with him. I telephoned him, but could not come to the place where he was at that day. Besides, I did not know what ~~the~~ was the purpose of his visit and thought that you had asked him to take a message from me and nothing more. Now I understand what an opportunity I have missed. Please, try to convey him my deep regret, if possible. I think, the main cause of our misunderstanding is bad connection. Now I hope I have found a way how to improve it. My friend, a lawyer from New York, Daniel Rothstein, has ~~of~~ kindly agreed to help me. He is working now in Moscow office of American firm, which has its own express mail to New York. You can write at the address: DANIEL ROTHSTEIN, COUDERT BROTHERS, 200 PARK AV. MOSCOW OFFICE, NY NY 10166. Do not mention my name in the address, and Dan will give me your letters.

I want you to understand better my situation here and my plans for the 1990-1991 academic year. I will continue my studies at the Literature Institute and work in "Sovjetish Heymland". I hope to play even a more active role in the magazine, because from the January, 1991, it will be published partly in Russian. So I want to edit

not only "Yungwald"; but the Russian part of the magazine as well. So, as you see, my schedule is rather tight, but nevertheless I would like to participate at your project with MPRAN. You have mentioned in your letter some possible activities: supervision over the whole process, search in archives, looking for potential students and formation of the library. I guess (and I hope, you will agree) that I am not a person right for the supervision; besides, I am not so good connected neither with JTS, nor with MPRAN.

The next task, the work with archives, is, to my opinion, for Dr. Igor Krupnik. Nobody in the USSR knows so much as he about the Jewish collections in the country. As far as I know, he will be in Ann Arbor, MI, in August or/and September. I would recommend you to meet with him and to come to an agreement with him about his collaboration in the project.

For the search of the students you could use the network of societies which is now building Mr. Valery Engel and his Jewish Historical Society. You can address your proposal to Dr. Alexander Lokshin, the vice-President of the society, or to Mr. Engel.

I think that the best occupation for me would be the library. Though, I cannot do any organizational work (as transport of the books, looking for the room etc.). I can help to do only "intellectual" work. By the way, now in Moscow there is a long-term Israel book exhibition. May be the JTS can purchase some books there - like various encyclopaedies, Hebrew books on history and others?

They sell books for \$US. In that way you could save some money and troubles connected with transport of books to the USSR.

David, I think, it is needless to say, that I will not undertake anything without your command. All my recommendations are merely confidential, and the decision will be made by you only. Let me give also some general recommendation concerning the project. I suppose, that JTS/4/VO from one side and MFUAI from the other are not familiar yet with each other. The ~~are~~ possible misunderstanding between Soviet and American partners can arise as a result of an unclear distribution of the roles, when both of them would pretend to do the same part of work. Another cause could be ^a different approach to academic and business matters. So, do not wonder when you will meet those problems, but try to foresee them. Maybe, Martin Horwitz can explain it better than I. And one more source of problems will ~~be~~ ^{be the increasing} the increasing instability in the USSR. Though the general direction of development seems to me positive, it is accompanied with many troubles, primarily economical. You must be ready to pay more than you have planned, because absolutely everything you need to buy here for currency. The Jewish situation is critical. Now nobody seriously believes in future organized cultural life in the USSR. Probably, I am the last one who is losing this belief. The people who are staying and active in Jewish matters are either functionaries who are paid for their work, or those who is looking for the suitable position in Israel/USA. Frankly speaking, I belong to the last group. It does not mean that I want to leave immediately, I would like to prolong this process for some years, and to spend

much time here, but I do not believe in future of Jewish institutions here. It does not mean, also, that I do not believe in your project. There are enough people who can be ready to stay and work here for some period, though it depends on the general situation. But you will better understand them, if you will keep in mind their interests. In this respect Soviet Jews are becoming similar ~~to~~ to their Western brethren.

So, my interests after completing my studies in 1991 will be concentrated on the acquiring of Ph.D. in the field of Yiddish literature. Since it is impossible here, I would like to spend the 1991-1992 academic year in one of the institutions abroad, and thereafter to decide, whether to come back and when.

I am very thankful for your efforts to raise funds for me.

Please, explain me whether I must write concrete details about my future dissertation in the application for the Memorial Foundation, or it is enough some general words concerning the recommendations I think, maybe Dr. Mordkhe Schechter can give me one (besides yours, which is very appreciated). The third recommendation I would like to take here - from Dr. Krupnik, Dr. Chlenov or Dr. Sandler. Please, write me who of them seems to be the best person for this purpose.

Maybe I can do something for search of support ~~at~~ by myself? I can write to Mr. Blechman ~~the~~ the lawyer from Westchester who had sponsored my visit in US this year) and to somebody from Yiddishists, for example, to Mr. Zelmanowich. You know, I have absolutely no experience in this field, so please explain me more about the problem (how much money do we need, what could be possible sources etc.). Thank you for your ~~too~~ caring for me,
greet your family, yours Misha