



AND THE BUSH וְהַסִּבָּה
WAS NOT אֵינֶנּוּ
CONSUMED אָכַל

THE JEWISH
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY
OF AMERICA

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January 11, 1991

To: Academic Advisory Committee,
Soviet Archival Project

Enclosed are the minutes to our recent meeting. I'm glad that so many of you found it informative and productive.

Our friends from MGIAI are now scheduled to come to New York in mid-February. We will try to arrange a meeting of the Academic Advisory Committee with them during the second half of the month.

Our faculty team for fall 1991 is now in place. It will consist of myself, Pascual Fiszman of YIVO, and Drs. Moshe Greenberg and Shmuel Glick of the Seminary's Jerusalem affiliate (; the latter - for consecutive three week visits).

Thank you for your interest and counsel. I hope to follow up on your suggestions in the near future.

Sincerely,

David E. Fishman
Project Director

Stanislawski cautioned that many other parties are working in Soviet Archives: the Holocaust Museum, Norman Ross (in Riga), Yad Vashem, The Jewish Geneological Society, and perhaps the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People. He urged that efforts be made to coordinate/exchange information with them, in order to avoid duplication and embarrassing situations. Norich, Gitleman and Web believed that the current situation was quite chaotic, with people making all sorts of "deals" to microfilm (and perhaps even purchase) materials.

Web reiterated that our task is different than that of all the above parties: We want to create a comprehensive guide to Jewish archival materials (a la Patricia Kennedy Grimsted), not to microfilm this or that isolated collection. We want to train people to put neglected collections in order, so as to make the materials accessible to the scholarly community. Ours is a broad and long-term approach to this body of material.

Fishman: If other institutions microfilm materials which were discovered and put in order by our search, that constitutes the success of our project.

Nonetheless, the consensus of the committee was that we should be communicating with other institutions to find out what they are microfilming, and maintain a list of such information. Schorsch also suggested that the question of microfilming materials be taken up with the Judaica Conservancy, which may be able to cooperate with the project in that area.

3. Discussion moved on to the curriculum of the program in Jewish History and Culture at MGIAI, to begin next fall. Fishman submitted a draft "parallel curriculum" in which the study of Jewish history was coordinated with MGIAI's required curriculum in World and Russian history. The committee supported the integration of general and Jewish studies in this manner. Gitelman and others

agreed that the program's primary responsibility was to train archivists, and that the curriculum should be heavily weighted toward history (with attention to Judaica bibliography/reference tools). "If others find such a program meaningful, that's fine."

The draft curriculum proposed teaching Yiddish first, and Hebrew afterwards. Fishman explained his rationale: Yiddish is easier and can be acquired more quickly. It is essential for the students to master a Jewish language as soon as possible, so as to gain access to a body of literature on East European Jewish history and culture. After some discussion, this sequence was endorsed.

Horwitz and Gitelman suggested that the course in ancient Jewish history should actually serve as an "Introduction to Jewish Culture and Civilization". Students will need to be taught what Pesach, Shabbat, and a Menorah are.

The team of instructors preliminarily slated to teach at MGIAI in the fall 1991 semester are: David Fishman (East European Jewish History/Culture), Pascual Fiszman (Yiddish), and someone from Israel (to teach Ancient Jewish History/Intro. to Jewish Civilization).

4. Regarding the matter of housing arrangements for our faculty, Zvi Gitelman noted that many Western universities have been "purchasing" apartments in Moscow. This involves re-registering the apartment in the name of a new resident. The price of a large apartment in the center of the city is no more than \$8,000-\$9,000. The idea was attractive to many members of the committee, since it would give our program a "home" and permanent address.

MEETING OF ACADEMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE,
SOVIET ARCHIVES PROJECT

December 13, 1990

At the Jewish Theological Seminary of America

Present: Ismar Schorsch (Chancellor, JTS), Samuel Norich (Executive Director, YIVO), David Fishman (Project Director); Zvi Gitelman, Martin Horwitz, Samuel Kassow, Mayer Rabinowitz, David Roskies, Menahem Schmelzer, Michael Stanislawski, Marek Web.

1. Fishman opened the meeting with a brief report on the project's finances. Grants have been awarded by the Rothschild Foundation of London (\$156,000 over 6 years), Malcolm Thomson (\$50,000 in installments), the Joint Distribution Committee (\$11,000), and the Winston Foundation (\$40,000). The project is being actively considered by the following Foundations: Cummings, Scheuer, Dorot, Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. Other prospective funding sources are being researched. The project is financially viable enough to begin the program at MGIAI next fall, as planned.

2. Discussions then moved on to the archival search. Fishman reported that MGIAI had engaged Mr. Ilya Altman to supervise the search, and shared two letters from Altman reporting on his activities to date. His preliminary work has focused on three Moscow depositories: TsGAOR [October Revolution Archive] (where he was head of the Department of User Services before assuming this post), TsGADA [Archive of Ancient Acts], and TsGALI [Archive for Literature and Art]. A comprehensive search for Jewish archival materials in the USSR will require additional funding and staff. Altman requests a meeting with us as soon as possible to discuss these and other matters. JTS has invited him and Prof. E.V. Starostin to visit us in New York in January.