

A Conference on Jewish Participation
in Movements Dedicated to the Cause of Social Progress

The Proposal

On the ~~The~~ initiative of the Research Planning Committee of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, the Executive Board of YIVO has approved the plan of a research conference on Jewish participation in movements dedicated to the cause of social progress. The theme encompasses the different aspects of the history of Jewish movements which may be broadly described as being to the left of center and, in addition, the role of individual Jews in non-Jewish political parties and groupings falling within the same ideological spectrum. Emphasis will be placed on developments in Eastern Europe, Israel and the United States from the late nineteenth century till the present. The conference is to meet in New York and to be in session for three days.

Timeliness of the Conference

For sometime the proposed subject matter of the conference has been dealt with by what may be called "party historians," and many a valuable volume has been published. In recent years, an interest in these problems has arisen in academic circles in this country and abroad; here, Jewish ideologies and movements have begun to be regarded as test cases in Jewish social history and in the history of ideas more generally.

It is felt, therefore, that the time has come to bring together representatives of the two schools just referred to for a stimulating exchange of viewpoints on methodology and material. The fact that the conference will be held under YIVO auspices will guarantee its detachedness in consonance with accepted academic standards and, simultaneously, underscore the necessity of what has been the tradition of YIVO since its inception: the use of genuine sources to the full and the evaluation of any single Jewish phenomenon within the framework of Jewish and general historical developments.

Some of the Participants and Their Topics

The reaction of the scholars thus far approached has been highly gratifying. Correspondence with a number of persons in the U.S., Israel and England is still going on; however, a number of academically prominent scholars have already expressed their willingness to attend. The following names (with the tentative titles of their papers in parentheses) are given only by way of illustration and, obviously, are far from representing the final program of the conference:

Abraham Ascher, Brooklyn College

(Paul Akselrod and the Pogroms in
Russia during the early 1880's)

Michael Astour, Brandeis University

(Aspects of History of the "Territorialist"
Movement)

Lloyd Gardner
Gladys Rosen → TS

Niko Laevsky
7/7/51

PPS?

Schapiro's
(am about
Abrahamson)
Berlin

Handwritten notes on the right side of the page, including "min", "papers", "examined", "documented", "Lloyd Gardner", and "Gladys Rosen".

Jonathan Frankel, Jesus College,
Cambridge, England (Aspects of
the Labor Zionist Movement, 1890-1920)

Ezra Mendelson, Columbia University
(The Jewish Trade Union Movement in
Russia before 1914)

Moses Rischin, University of California,
Los Angeles (paper based on his forth-
coming biography of Abraham Cahan)

Leonard Schapiro, London School of Economics
and Political Science (The Role of Jews in
the Russian Liberal Movement)

Harold Shukman, St. Antony's College, Oxford,
England (The Bund's Relations with Iskra
to 1903)

Henry Tobias, University of New Mexico
(not yet determined)

As for historians who do not have academic affiliations but
who have done considerable work on various phases of Jewish social
history and ideologies, it is contemplated to extend invitations, among
others, to Rudolf Glanz, Jacob S. Hertz, Abraham Menes, Leib Spizman,
Zosa Szajkowsky.

E. Silberner

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Josef Kisman
Halpern

Financing

Since many of the prospective participants reside outside of the New York area, the problem of traveling expenses assumes paramount importance. We count on financing two trips from Israel (\$2,000) three from England (\$1,800), and three from several points in the United States (\$600). These travel expenses, together with disbursements in New York on behalf of the participants, printing expenses, etc., bring the costs of the conference to the amount of \$5,000. If this sum could be secured by May 15, the conference could be held in the fall of 1963. No additional funds will be requested, but it is suggested that shifts from one budget item to another be considered legitimate. Needless to say, the support of any institution or individual will be gratefully acknowledged.

The Research Planning Committee, which will also be in charge of the scholarly aspects of the conference, consists of Dr. Alexander Erlich, Columbia University; Dr. Joshua A. Fishman, Graduate School of Education, Yeshiva University; Dr. Uriel Weinreich, Columbia University. Specialists in several fields of Jewish and general history have served and will continue to serve as consultants in the preparation of this conference.

April 12, 1963

Submitted by Max 