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MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

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September 24, 1977

Dear Mr. Tanenbaum:

Enclosed are my considerations as to materials which could help Russian emigrants to integrate themselves in this country. You also asked me to remind you about our personal matters.

1. We sent our baggage from Moscow to Boston port hoping that our son will be able to receive it. It happened however that he had no space to place the baggage and therefore could not receive it. After our arrival in the USA we also had no apartment to place the baggage, and have not had it until now, and also could not receive the baggage. The time of storage the baggage expires in October after which the baggage should be destroyed or something like. Since until now we have no space to place it, I would appreciate very much if you could ask the people, ^{in Boston} of whom you mentioned during our conversation, to receive our baggage and to get it stored for some time until we find an apartment and would be able to bring the baggage in New York. I do not know what to do with payment for the storage of the baggage in the Boston port. It may be a big sum. Until now I have no position and am not able to pay for the ~~storage~~. HIAS is ready to lend a small sum.

Wouldn't it be ^{possible} for your colleagues in Boston to find some solution to this question? You mentioned that they may have connections with port authorities.

This issue is very urgent. Would you be able to get in touch with your colleagues as soon as possible?

I enclose copies of documents pertinent to this matter.

2. As I have mentioned above, until now I am without job position and we live from fees which I receive giving invited lectures (episodic) to universities. It is enough only for paying for the hotel and meals and there is no guarantee that I will have invitations every month.

I developed a new theory and technology of instruction, and my books and articles have been translated into 15 languages. In particular, there are 13 translations into English, including translation of two books 717 and 497 pp.

As I was said, in New York exist two or more Jewish universities and colleges. Couldn't they be interested in my collaboration? I could give lectures, seminars and workshops in a sense unique for this country.

For your information I enclose my vita and some other materials which will give you some idea of my theory and approach to learning and instruction. You can feel free to get these materials copied and sent to those people or organizations that might be interested in my collaboration.

I am looking forward to see you on Monday, 3rd of October.

Yours sincerely,

Leo Landa

L. Landa



Mr. Marc H. Tanenbaum
Institute of Human Relations
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There are many factors which influence the level of Jewish (and not only Jewish) emigration from the Soviet Union. One of the critical is the condition of emigrants in the countries where they have emigrated, in particular in the U.S.A. Information from the U.S.A. about condition of emigrants in this country uninterruptedly flows in the USSR through letters, broadcasts of "Voice of America" and other sources. Soviet Jews constantly and thoroughly weigh conditions in the USSR and the U.S.A. before making decision to emigrate, and any information about difficulties in this country negatively affect decisions to emigrate.

That is why careful analysis of difficulties experienced by immigrants here and reasons for these difficulties may help to remove at least a part of them and, thus, not only to ease the immigrants' condition but also change the character of information sent to Russia and influencing the decisions made by potential emigrants.

There are different causes of objective difficulties generating psychological difficulties and discomfort of many of Russian immigrants in this country. Some of them - and primarily difficulties in finding the appropriate job position - are difficult to remove, since they are involved in general employment situation in the U.S.

There are however causes which are easy to remove, and these will be the subject of subsequent discussion.

Side by side with problems in finding an appropriate job position, all the immigrants experience great psychological difficulties in integrating in American life and culture. My own experience as well as observation of other immigrants showed that there are two major psychological reasons which cause difficulties in integration and create feeling of dissatisfaction in immigrants:

1. Lack of a command of English or poor command;
2. Lack of knowledge how to live in this society and country.

These reasons are interconnected, although not identical.

I do not know whether it is possible to find money for providing immigrants with English courses longer than 6 or 8 weeks what is absolutely

insufficient for getting even a minimum command of the language.

But it is possible to write a textbook "English for Russians" (may be with attached records and/or tapes) which will enable to study and improve the language independently.

Why is it necessary to compile a special textbook of English for Russians and not to use the existing courses of English as foreign language written by English and American authors?

As research findings showed, existing differences in grammatical and lexical systems of different languages create different semantic fields in minds of people speaking different languages. As a result, as a result, the methodology of language teaching is effective only in the case when these differences are taken into account and the instruction is based on contrastive grammar. That is why an efficient course of "English for Germans" should considerably differ from a course of "English for Russians". All textbooks of English not addressed to specific nationality may not be sufficiently efficient, since they do not take into account specific difficulties which specific nationalities experience in learning the language and do not overcome them. These theoretical findings has been supported by many observations and experiments. Difficulties which Russian immigrants experience in independent learning of English while using non-nationality-directed courses by English and American authors are an additional evidence of above mentioned fact.

I have worked much on psychology of learning languages and developed a theory and methodology of teaching foreign languages which considerably facilitate their acquisition and increased the efficiency of learning and instruction severalfold (see L. Landa, Algorithmization in Learning and Instruction, 1974 and L. Landa, Instructional Regulation and Control, 1976, both published by Educational Technology Publications, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.). This theory and methodology applies to teaching of all other subjects but here we mention their applicability to foreign language teaching.

I would be ready to guide a team of teachers of English as a foreign language knowing Russian in order to create a course "English for Russians".

This course could be given free to newcomers and sold to those already settled in the country as well as in other English speaking countries (Canada, Australia). It is not excluded that the expences for the creation of such a course may be not only compensated by its selling. The enterprise may become even profitable (a big market for such a course could represent

also Israel where many Russian Jews need or willing study English). Expedient would be bringing out the course by parts in which case each part would cost not so much and raise the sales of the course in whole.

As for the lack of knowledge how to live in this society and country many difficulties may be overcome by writing a book covering this topic. Russian immigrants have thousands of questions concerning all aspects of American life: how to make a telephone call, what is the system of fares in different means of transportation (for example, many immigrants do not know that there exist different fares for flights in the USA depending on different conditions, and for a long time renounce important flights because of high fare, having no idea that night or charter flights may cost twice as cheap), what is the system of medical service and social security, how to operate with banks (e.g. which types of accounts exist), where and how to look for a job (most of immigrants from the USSR do not know that there exist special firms helping in finding a job), what is a legal status of a worker working in a firm etc. etc. Lack of such and similar knowledge not only prevents from faster integration in American life and society (and, in particular, faster finding a job position) but leads to appearance of a feeling of "lostness" in this world which in turn sometimes bring about a deep psychological frustration and even depression.

In order to create the above mentioned book (it may have a title "How to live in America") it would be expedient to conduct some preliminary research on both newcomers and already settled immigrants - research aimed at gathering information what were (and are) the problems which they came across after their arrival in the U.S.A. and what specific questions such a book, in their opinion, should have covered. Such a research would permit to take into account more problems and make the book more comprehensive. It should be taken into consideration that no American specialist in certain area of American life (economics, law, mode of life etc.) raised in this society and accustomed to it cannot even imagine the questions which may arise before Russian immigrant, raised in quite another society where everything is different than here.

The book in question should be written in two languages with text printed in parallel and supplied by a dictionary or glossary of specific terms and expressions related to each of areas covered.

I would be also ready to guide a team of specialists conducting preliminary research and writing chapters of such a book. The conditions of its distribution may be the same as in previous case.



L. Landa

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