



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Moscow State Yiddish Theatre correspondence

1928

*T-Mss 1930-001

Summary

Creator: Moskovskii_gosudarstvennyi_evrei_ski_teatr imeni S.M. Mikhoe_Isa

Title: Moscow State Yiddish Theatre correspondence

Date: 1928

Size: .21 linear feet. (1 box)

Abstract: The troupe that became the Moscow State Yiddish Theatre was founded in Leningrad in 1919 as the Jewish Theatre Studio, and was known after its relocation to Moscow as the State Jewish Theatre, and also as GOSET, its Russian acronym. Founded in the wake of the Russian Revolution, the Jewish Theatre Studio was created primarily through the efforts of Alexander Granowsky (also Granovsky), a wealthy Russian Jew who did not learn Yiddish himself until his troupe, devoted to staging plays in that language, had been launched. As director, Granowsky used avant-garde techniques to present traditional material, and received official approval from Soviet authorities. Major productions included A SHOLOM ALEICHEM EVENING with murals by Marc Chagall, and Abraham Goldfaden's operetta THE SORCERESS. Under Granowsky's direction, members of the troupe appeared in the silent film JIDISCHE GLICKN (JEWISH LUCK) in 1925. GOSET toured Europe in 1928, and was on the verge of a U.S. tour when Soviet authorities summoned them home. When Granowsky chose to stay in Germany, leadership of the troupe shifted to lead actor Solomon Mikhoels (or Michoels). During the Stalin era GOSET switched to officially sanctioned socialist-realist drama and avoided censure, although Mikhoels refused to denounce Granowsky. In 1941 Mikhoels was appointed head of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. Mikhoels was murdered in January 1948 and given a state funeral, after which GOSET and the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were dissolved. The Moscow State Yiddish Theatre correspondence consists of telegrams, letters, and a contract, all from October, November, or December 1928, all concerning arrangements for a proposed tour of the United States by the Moscow State Yiddish Theatre. This was ultimately cancelled. The proposed 1929 tour of the U.S. by the GOSET troupe was to have been sponsored by the financier and philanthropist Otto H. Kahn, and managed by Broadway producer Jed Harris. GOSET's correspondence, some of which is in German, is primarily written by Alexander Granowsky's manager, Joseph Chapiro, while Harris and Kahn are represented by Arthur Kober, later a successful playwright. Several notes are from Kahn himself.

Preferred citation: Moscow State Yiddish Theatre correspondence, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library

Creator History

The troupe that became the Moscow State Yiddish Theatre was founded in Leningrad in 1919 as the Jewish Theatre Studio, and was known after its relocation to Moscow as the State Jewish Theatre, and also as GOSET, its Russian acronym. Founded in the wake of the Russian Revolution, the Jewish Theatre Studio was created primarily through the efforts of Alexander Granowsky (also Granovsky), a wealthy Russian Jew who did not learn Yiddish himself until his troupe, devoted to staging plays in that language, had been launched. As director, Granowsky used avant-garde techniques to present traditional material, and received official approval from Soviet authorities. Major productions included A SHOLOM ALEICHEM EVENING with murals by Marc Chagall, and Abraham Goldfaden's operetta THE SORCERESS. Under Granowsky's direction, members of the troupe appeared in the silent film JIDISCHE GLICKN (JEWISH LUCK) in 1925. GOSET toured Europe in 1928, and was on the verge of a U.S. tour when Soviet authorities summoned them home. When Granowsky chose to stay in Germany, leadership of the troupe shifted to lead actor Solomon Mikhoels (or Michoels). During the Stalin era GOSET switched to officially sanctioned socialist-realist drama and avoided censure, although Mikhoels refused to denounce Granowsky. In 1941 Mikhoels was appointed head of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. Mikhoels was murdered in January 1948 and given a state funeral, after which GOSET and the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were dissolved.

Scope and Content Note

The Moscow State Yiddish Theatre correspondence consists of telegrams, letters, and a contract, all from October, November, or December 1928, all concerning arrangements for a proposed tour of the United States by the Moscow State Yiddish Theatre. This was ultimately cancelled. The proposed 1929 tour of the U.S. by the GOSET troupe was to have been sponsored by the financier and philanthropist Otto H. Kahn, and managed by Broadway producer Jed Harris. GOSET's correspondence, some of which is in German, is primarily written by Alexander Granowsky's manager, Joseph Chapiro, while Harris and Kahn are represented by Arthur Kober, later a successful playwright. Several notes are from Kahn himself.

Key Terms

Subjects

Arts, Soviet
Soviet drama
Theater -- Soviet Union

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Telegrams

Names

Moskovskii_gosudarstvennyi_evrei_skii_teatr imeni S.M. Mikhoe_Isa
Granowsky, Alexander
Harris, Jed
Kahn, Otto H
Kober, Arthur, 1900-1975
Mikhoels, Solomon Mikailovich, 1890-1948