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1880 Founding Document

Translation from original Russian document

Declaration

Private Letter

Most esteemed Sir,

One of those here undersigned, S. S. Poliakov, has petitioned to H. E. the Minister of Interior Affairs for his approval of the proposal of several Russian Jews to assemble from among their co-religionists, a fund for a public charitable purpose, in honor of the first Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the glorious reign of our beloved Monarch, His Most Illustrious Imperial Majesty which will be held on February 19th of the year 1880. On that occasion S. S. Poliakov contributed 25,000 Roubles, toward that purpose. In reply to the petition, H. E. the Minister of Interior Affairs, on the 22nd March honoured S.S. Poliakov with a letter worded as follows:

“H.M. the Emperor having graciously heard my report on the proposal of the Russian Jews to collect in their midst a fund for charitable purposes, in honor of the 19th February 1880 and of the donation by your goodself for that purpose of 25.000 Roubles, expresses His Majesty’s appreciation of Your Excellency’s so considerable donation. I have humbly informed His Imperial Majesty that the contributions will be collected by your Excellency in a private manner and that the use of the funds, will be accounted for subsequently.”

Having received this letter, S. S. Poliakov applied to the undersigned inviting a common action with regard to the collection of funds, as well as the determination of those publicly-useful aims which should be materialized from the income of this capital.

The undersigned heard with sincere joy of the most gracious authorization of His Imperial Majesty to perpetuate the memory of the 19th of February 1880 by a work of general use for our people. With regard to the future determination of the character of that charitable work, which will be materialized in memory of that day, the undersigned consider that among the numerous needs of the mass of our co-religionists in Russia, the first place is occupied by the needs of the artisanal and agricultural occupations. Nothing, in fact, could better ameliorate the position of the mass of our co-religionists than a thorough and systematic development amongst that mass of artisanal and agricultural occupations.

In view thereof, the undersigned assume that the most generally useful work which could be achieved, would consist in the creation of a fund, the income from which could be used to the aid in the further development of already existing trade schools for Jews, for assistance towards the opening of new trade schools, for facilitating the movement of artisans from one place to another, and for assistance to Jewish agricultural colonies, the founding of such colonies, model farms and agricultural schools. The future determination of the use of the income from the capital for the purposes indicated above will be effected according to our proposals, by the Society, for the creation of which, upon the collection of a considerable part of the anticipated fund, we shall submit separately an application for the authorization of the Minister of Interior Affairs.

Though the scope of the aims for the materialization of which the income from the expected capital will serve is wide, the undersigned apply to you, most esteemed Sir, with full confidence in the success of the work already begun. This assurance they draw from those joyous feelings which are evoked in each one of us by this good work. The need among the masses of our co-religionists is extreme, and we are convinced that that need could be alleviated only by the development among the masses of artisanal and agricultural knowledge and trades.

On this basis the undersigned hope that you, most esteemed Sir, will afford the work started every possible support both by personally participating in the subscription, as well as by inviting other persons to take part. The participation of as large a number of people as possible in that subscription is extremely dear to us, and the gift of a rouble by a poor man is not less dear to us than donations of tens of thousands!

We request you to send the money to St. Petersburg, in the name of Samuel Solomonovitch Poliakov, who has already arranged for the deposit of all sums anticipated for this purpose, in the State Bank.

The names of donors, will be published in due course.

This, our application has the character of a private letter and it should not be attributed any publicity in periodical print.

Persons who will make their contributions not later than the 15th of July of this year will be considered as founding members of the proposed charitable institution.

Please accept, most esteemed Sir, our respectful greeting, and may God’s blessing grace the work we have begun.

S.S. Poliakov, Baron H.O. Gunzburg, A. I. Zak, I.M. Rosenthal, M. P. Friedland

St, Petersburg, April 10th, 1880

