

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY
Office Of The President

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 12, 1992
TO: Files
FROM: DR. NORMAN LAMM
SUBJECT: Rabbi Moshe Sherer

I met with him, by appointment, after we both attended the meeting with the President of the Ukraine.

I criticized his house organ, *The Jewish Observer*, for its incredible negativism. I told him about the Wolpin letter to me -- a gratuitous insult -- after my article was accepted for publication in that journal in the Twersky journalistic mugging (which is what I called it to Sherer's face). I then told him that I was amused by the recent critique of my book *Torah U-Madda* by Rosenblum in the recent issue of the journal, and that I never before came across a review which didn't even comment, at least sarcastically, about the merit of the book, such as: Good binding, fine dust jacket... And in general, I told him, their rhetoric was snide and negative in a self-defeating way.

He disclaimed any responsibilities for it because he has no time to read it, etc., and asked if he could speak to Wolpin about the letter. I told him no, but anyway I will send him a copy of the letter FYI.

He then told me that I had made a major error in using the term "Centrist Orthodoxy," because although he knows what I was intending, to give definition and form to what we stand for, he felt that that it implied a breaking away from Orthodoxy and that resulted in a tremendous gap between his world and mine. He expressed a fear, in which I joined him, that our camps were moving inexorably apart, and that there was a danger of a permanent split.

He then suggested that we look for some way to bridge the gap. He laid down three items (which I accept as conditions):

- a) The name "Centrism."
- b) Synagogue Council of America.
- c) The RCA leadership.

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He fulminated against Marc Angel, and said that as negative as *The Jewish Observer* was against us, the *RCA Record*, especially in articles by Bernstein, was far more abusive.

Assuming, I told him, that I cut down on any mention of Centrism (because I agree with him that many left-wing Orthodox people were using the term to cover up a variety of sins), that I urged that the Synagogue Council be given a decent burial, and that I kept the lid on the new RCA leadership -- what could I expect in return? I told him I was very skeptical as to whether his side was capable of anything more than *Schadenfreude* and a boasting triumphalism. He said that it required thought and we had to think about.

I suggested that we meet at a time when life is a bit easier, perhaps during the summer. He agreed, albeit not too readily.

In talking about the Rosenblum article, I also mentioned the paragraph about Yeshiva alumni wearing tuxedos...

/nv