

*TIJS Graduate Research & Travel Grants  
Summer 2015*

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Advisor: Eric Goldstein (HIST)  
Purpose: Participate in the Naomi Praver Kadar International Yiddish Summer Program at Tel Aviv University, Israel to acquire Yiddish-language proficiency sufficient to study Yiddish periodicals published in the Late Russian Empire.

The Schatten Scholarship Grant available through the Tam Institute for Jewish Studies at Emory University enabled me to participate in the 4-week intensive Yiddish language program at the Tel Aviv University in Summer 2015. Moreover, using an opportunity of being in Israel I spent the week preceding the program (June 21-26) in Jerusalem searching for materials that I can use for my dissertation project at the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People and The National Library of Israel. The short visit to the archive revealed the necessity of the follow-up visit when I would be able to make more detailed examination of the available documents. Furthermore, at the library I copied rare books that I plan to use this academic year for writing my seminar papers.

The Naomi Praver Kadar International Yiddish Summer Program itself became a very enriching experience for me. My prior Yiddish knowledge allowed continuing to study the language at the Intermediate IV level taught by a wonderful couple of native Yiddish speakers, Mr. Eliezer Niborski (Hebrew University, Jerusalem; originally from Argentina) and Dr. Miriam Trinh (Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, US; originally from Poland). Not only they teach Yiddish to young Jewish Studies students and scholars, they also decided to bring up their four Israeli born children in the Yiddish speaking secular environment, by this proving that Yiddish is not a dying language contrary to the wide-spread belief. In the classroom, Mr. Niborski taught the Yiddish grammar and Dr. Trinh, a specialist in the Holocaust literature, revealed the hidden treasures of the Yiddish prose and poetry. Moreover, a couple of sessions were held by their children, who shared the experience of being raised as Yiddish speakers in modern Israel.

Apart from the everyday classes of Yiddish grammar and literature, I greatly benefitted from the afternoon activities in the program curriculum as, for example, conversation classes with Ms. Esther Rollansky (Beit Shalom Aleichem, Tel Aviv; originally from Argentina) and Mr. Yuri Vedenyapin (Harvard University, Cambridge, US; originally from Russian). Before pursuing a teaching career, Mr. Vedenyapin received a degree in performing arts and could offer Yiddish theater and singing workshops. Besides these recurrent activities, the program also hosted a series of afternoon talks given by Professor Justin Cammy (Smith College, Northampton, US), Professor Kalman Weiser (York University, Toronto, Canada), Professor David Roskies (Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, US), and others. Finally, the program provided an access to a number of Yiddish musical and theater performances all around Tel Aviv and a city tour "Between Yiddishland and Altneuland" guided by Mr. Yaad Biran (Hebrew University, Jerusalem), all of which proved the continuing presence of Yiddish in modern Israel.

To conclude, the Naomi Praver Kadar International Yiddish Summer Program at the Tel Aviv University appeared to be a valuable experience, not only improving the language proficiency necessary for my research, but also culturally enriching.

