

# Project Judaica

## Academic Advisory Committee

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January 24, 1994

2:30 PM

Private Dining Room

Jewish Theological Seminary

*Present: David Fishman, presiding. Zvi Gitelman, Rebecca Jacobs, Samuel Kassow, Ivan Marcus, Mayer Rabinowitz, David Roskies, Larry Rubinstein, Dorit Sallis, Menahem Schmelzer, Marek Web*

David Fishman opened the meeting by reporting on notable developments in the Moscow academic program: This year Project Judaica has 19 third-year students, and 21 first-year students enrolled in the School of Historical and Literary Studies. Mark Kupovetski, a local scholar, has been engaged as "academic curator" to teach, to offer guidance and advice for our students, and to provide academic supervision and continuity. Everyday operations are well-run and efficient.

David Roskies and Zvi Gitelman reported on their experiences teaching in Moscow during the Fall semester. Both found that the students were able to build on their previous knowledge, were engaged by the material, and participated in classroom discussions, much more than in previous semesters. Areas mentioned that call for improvement are Soviet-style work habits, and, within the larger university community, the atmosphere of isolation within which Project Judaica functions.

Dorit Sallis, Project Judaica's Moscow coordinator reported on the new group of students, They are still getting used to studying in English, and to classrooms that are less teacher-centered than they are accustomed to. Efforts are being made to integrate them with the older group.

There was some discussion on the curriculum. The third year students are being trained as experts on Eastern European Jewish History. The new curriculum is more diffuse. Will this education create real Judaica scholars? It was pointed out that some of the students have, in fact expressed an interest in specific areas of research. And on the Russian scene, even the general knowledge our graduates will acquire will make them Judaica experts. Their education is likely to be of use in the future.

### Archival Survey

Marek Web reported that the archival aspect of the program is well organized but work progresses slowly because of the collapse of the old centralized archival bureaucracies. Over the past year the following positive developments have taken place: A connection has been established with archives in St. Petersburg and with the Belarus Ministry of Archives. Our students are widely in demand as archivists; the high quality of their work is well-known. A guide to Jewish materials in Moscow and St. Petersburg is scheduled for publication in 1996. In the meantime, a preliminary volume of archival findings is now in print.