The Jewish Publication Society of America

REPORT OF NINETIETH YEAR

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(Elected May 21, 1978)

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REPORT OF THE 90TH JPS ANNUAL MEETING

The 90th annual meeting of the Society was held on Sunday, May 21, 1978, at the Hilton Hotel in Philadelphia. Presiding was A. Leo Levin, president of the Society.

Jerome J. Shestack, associate chairman, presented the report of the Nominating Committee, which was chaired by Bernard G. Segal. The by-laws were amended, limiting the tenure of trustees to three consecutive three-year terms. The slate of officers and trustees was unanimously elected by the members in attendance.

Dr. Edward B. Shils was elected president of the Society. He served as chairman of the Department of Management at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and is currently director of the Wharton Entrepreneurial Center, which he founded. A past chairman of the Board of the Pathway School for brain-damaged children, he is currently a vice-president of the Federation of Jewish Agencies and a life trustee of the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science. He has been a trustee of JPS for 11 years and has held office as secretary and vice-president.

Six new trustees were elected to the JPS Board: Stuart Eizenstat of Washington, D.C., who heads the domestic policy staff at the White House; Max Frankel of New York City, head of the editorial department of the New York Times and a Pulitzer Prize recipient for international reporting; Michael Greenblatt of Montreal, Canada, a prominent attorney who is chairman of the Commercial Law Division of the Canadian Bar, has served as president of the Corporation of the Jewish General Hospital of Montreal, and is honorary president of the Solomon Schechter Society; Roberta K.
Levy from Minneapolis, Minnesota, who serves as judge of the Hennepin County Municipality and is president of the Talmud Torah of Minneapolis; Stanley Sheerr of Philadelphia, president of Crown Textile, honorary president of Moss Rehabilitation Hospital, and a recipient of the Federation’s Humanitarian Award; and Rabbi Gerald I. Wolpe, senior rabbi of Har Zion Temple of Philadelphia and assistant clinical professor of bio-ethics and medical ethics at Hahnemann Hospital and at the Medical College of Pennsylvania.

The following trustees were re-elected: Edward J. Bloustein of New Brunswick; and Alan H. Molod and Judge Charles R. Weiner, both of Philadelphia.

The following vice-presidents were also elected: Robert P. Abrams of Philadelphia, currently the chairman of the March of Dimes; Robert P. Frankel, a Philadelphia attorney and past president of Congregation Rodolph Shalom; Max M. Kampelman, an attorney from Washington, D.C., and chairman of the Board of Trustees of the American Friends of the Hebrew University; and Irwin T. Holtzman, a Detroit businessman and noted collector of books of Jewish interest, specializing in modern Hebrew literature.

Dr. Muriel M. Berman, vice-president of Hess’s of Allentown, was re-elected treasurer of JPS; and Norma F. Furst, dean of student affairs at Temple University, was elected secretary.

Maier Deshell, editor of the Society, introduced Dr. Yosef H. Yerushalmi, who presented the report of the Publication Committee, which met earlier in the day.

Following the reports of the treasurer, president, and Nominating Committee, Mr. Shestack introduced the new president, Dr. Shils, to the members. Professor Levin introduced Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, who addressed the Society on “The Confused American Jew.”

From the Annual Report of JPS President A. Leo Levin

It is a privilege to report that the Society is now distributing its books at a rate approaching 1,000 volumes every business day—a level unprecedented for us. Of far greater significance, the quality of our publications is generally recognized as truly superior. In recent years our books have had unusual success in commanding the attention of the book review editors of the New York Times, the Washington Post, and similar publications. The
comments of the reviewers have been satisfying indeed, a legitimate source of pleasure and pride.

I note this development, not because we view either Time or the Times as the ultimate arbiter of what is “significant, worthwhile, and informative” in the field of Jewish books or Jewish values, but rather because this recognition is so helpful in making it possible for the Society to fulfill the mission set forth in its charter, to ensure that our books will be widely read.

The future offers no less promise. Credit in full measure must be given to our executive vice-president, Bernard I. Levinson; to our editor, Maier Deshell; to the chairman of the Publication Committee, Professor Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi; and through them to the entire staff they have assembled and whom they stimulate and inspire.

It is appropriate to mention a number of our special projects. Our campus membership program, now in its second year, is reaching thousands of students. We are planning a significant expansion of our efforts in this area, primarily by way of appointing JPS representatives on major campuses throughout the country.

In its first phase, two years ago, the Berman project reached out to 2,000 college and university libraries with marked success. Thousands of additional JPS books were made available to faculty and students alike, in a wide variety of educational institutions in every region of the country. In its second phase, this past year, the project required recipient libraries to participate financially, paying a portion of the cost of each volume. Hundreds of libraries took advantage of this opportunity to add JPS books to their collections. It bears emphasis that every single one of the many thousands of titles distributed to date under the Berman project was specifically requested by the recipient institutions. I am pleased to announce that the Berman project will continue this coming year, and we thank Muriel and Philip Berman for their generosity.

I turn now to describe a new project, one approved by the Board and scheduled for prompt implementation. From time to time the Society receives requests for books from communal organizations—worthy organizations that are, however, financially hard-pressed. Included are homes for the aged, golden-year programs, hospitals, new Jewish study programs, new Hillel houses, fledgling synagogues, and various groups in Israel. By the same token, many of our members and friends want to make it possible for the Society’s books to reach such worthy recipients. Some would-be benefactors would like to identify recipients but not titles—and ensuring that the right titles are sent to the right recipients is by no means an unimportant
task. Some would prefer to specify types of organizations to be helped, identifying neither titles nor recipients, and still others would specify only that the money be used to “do good.”

To meet these needs and serve these ends, the Society is creating a Community Trust Fund, to accept gifts, large and small, and to distribute needed and wanted books to all such organizations, as resources are available.

Our charter provides that significant, worthwhile, and informative books of Jewish content be published so that our religion, history, literature, and culture will be known. This new Community Trust is designed to help us fulfill that mission by making Jewish books available to a wider audience than ever before.

Mr. Stanley Sheerr, one of the great communal leaders in this city, has accepted the chairmanship of this new project.

Permit me to conclude these brief remarks by looking both backward and forward and sharing some general thoughts concerning the proper role of the Society. It is fascinating to page through the Year Books of 50 to 60 years ago. In so doing, I came across the record of a debate at the annual meeting of the Society held in this city 58 years ago, March 21, 1920. Mr. Louis Marshall, at the opening of his address, stated the issue and his own view:

I do not agree with the President when he suggests a kind of Missouri compromise between those who desire scholarly books and those who desire popular books. I do not believe in that kind of a compromise. The President will have to “show me” that that is the proper thing. There are those who desire scholarly books and would be interested only in scholarly books, just as there are those who desire and would be interested in the popular books. We have three million Jews here, and I hope that some time in the not too distant future they will all be members of this association, and every member will have a right to receive such intellectual provender as he desires and you can supply.

Variant readings of a familiar figure of speech help to understand the question. We have long been identified as the People of the Book. Is it that we are people of the Book, the Bible, or does the phrase imply more: people of the book, a people devoted to reading and learning, people who have respect for any worthwhile book?

I think back to the type of synagogue so typical 50 years ago, a synagogue of many books. There were those who could be found studying a page of Talmud with commentaries, no mean feat. Then there was a special kind of book, a book of allegories and fanciful tales, all taken from the Talmud. Here was a far simpler text, or at least one that would be dealt with at a
simpler level. There tended to be more who preferred this work. Then there were those who “said Psalms.” Each, please note, held a book in his hands. I cannot say that those who said Psalms knew precisely, or even imprecisely, what the Psalmist was saying, but they all knew or felt what they wanted to say through the Psalmist’s words. The spectrum of books and of readers ranged wide, from the most scholarly to the most simple; but each of these books enriched the lives of its readers.

I think we in the Society have reaffirmed, and should continue to reaffirm, our commitment to provide provender for all constructive elements in Jewish life. There are no Jewish souls who can be ignored. Each is precious, each worthy of our concern and our care.

I look forward with confidence to a very bright future for the Society. We come from a tradition that balances constancy and change. Every year, on the Holiday of Freedom, we reaffirm our conviction that we ourselves have been taken out of Egypt. Every day we reaffirm the rebirth of the world as a daily phenomenon and assert our own rejuvenation and rededication. Yet, we take pride in our legacy, a long and ancient tradition. So, too, for societies generally and for this Society in particular. We are proud of our 90 years and are mindful of the need for constancy, but also of the need for change, for new techniques, new methods, new approaches. And there are so many in the JPS family who are devoted, dedicated, insightful and creative, that I have no doubt about our bright tomorrow.

“The Past is Prologue” reads the inscription on the National Archives in the nation’s capital. By now, the wise, albeit rather loose translation of a Washington cab driver is equally familiar: “You ain’t seen nothing yet!” Our hope is that in the perspective of the future, when the present has become part of the past, it will be viewed as a worthy prologue.

JPS Treasurer’s Report for 1977

I would like to begin this treasurer’s report by espousing a quote of which I was reminded by the arrival of JPS’s newest publication, Leo W. Schwarz’s Wolfson of Harvard—Portrait of a Young Scholar. The entire mood of the eleventh chapter is evoked by Ralph Waldo Emerson’s statement: “All men live by truth, and stand in need of expression . . . The man is only half himself, the other half is his expression.”

This then, is where JPS dollars go. For this society’s books run the gamut of expression . . . from novels to scholarly treatises . . . social, cultural and historical works . . . religious and spiritual expressions of all the ages, old
as the Bible, and new as Hillel Halkin's expression of Zionism, 1977. These publications devoted to Judaism bring to fruition that other half of man, expression, to make him whole.

And now I am pleased to report that in 1977, income from the sale of books and membership for the Society amounted to $986,679. This represents an increase of 2.6 per cent over the $961,811 reported in 1976. Not only were revenues up in 1977, but our expenses for the year also increased at a slightly higher rate. They were $1,145,291 in 1977, as compared to $1,096,339 in 1976.

The increase in expenses reflects an increase in advertising and promotional programs; the cost of moving our office into new and more efficient quarters; the cost of a new bookkeeping machine; and the expenses incurred in advance of the publication of several new books which will produce income when released. An increase of revenue from these efforts should be seen in 1978 and in future years.

Finally, I can report that royalty payments to authors set a record in JPS history. It is gratifying for us to encourage authors to write books on Jewish themes and to know that these books are read and appreciated.

Our special purpose funds are invested conservatively to enable the Society to continue to flourish. We have recently received word of a substantial bequest that should be processed shortly. Our accountants and bankers confirm that the Jewish Publication Society's financial position continues to be sound.

JPS Publications

In 1977 JPS published the following new volumes:

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<tr>
<th>Title and Author</th>
<th>Printed</th>
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<tr>
<td>CONTEMPORARY ISRAELI LITERATURE</td>
<td>4,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edited by Elliott Anderson</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE WORLDS OF MAURICE SAMUEL</td>
<td>4,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edited by Milton Hindus</td>
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<tr>
<td>LETTERS TO AN AMERICAN JEWISH FRIEND</td>
<td>7,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>by Hillel Halkin</td>
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<tr>
<td>JOSEPH KARO: LAWYER AND MYSTIC (paperback)</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>by R. J. Zwi Werblowsky</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIOLENCE AND DEFENSE IN THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edited by Salo W. Baron and George S. Wise</td>
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<td>ZIONISM IN GERMANY 1897-1933: The Shaping of a Jewish Identity</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<td>by Stephen M. Poppel</td>
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A WILL TO SURVIVE—Israel: The Faces of Terror 1948/The Faces of Hope Today 1,500
by John Phillips
(Co-published with The Dial Press/James Wade)

VAGABOND STARS: A World History of the Yiddish Theater 1,500
by Nahma Sandrow
(Co-published with Harper & Row)

AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK (Vol. 77), 1977 3,250
Edited by Morris Fine and Milton Himmelfarb
Martha Jelenko, Executive Editor
(Co-published with the American Jewish Committee)

1977 Reprints

During 1977, JPS reprinted the following books:

LEGENDS OF JERUSALEM by Zev Vilnay (3,000); LEGENDS OF THE JEWS-Volumes I and II by Louis Ginzberg (1,500); SABBATH: The Day of Delight edited by Abraham E. Millgram (1,500); HOLY SCRIPTURES (25,000); GEOGRAPHY OF ISRAEL by Efraim Orni and Elisha Ofrat (1,000); THE SECOND JEWISH CATALOG compiled and edited by Sharon Strassfeld and Michael Strassfeld (45,000); THE TORAH (15,000); THE PROPHETS by Abraham J. Heschel (2,000); THE JEWISH CATALOG compiled and edited by Richard Siegel, Sharon Strassfeld, and Michael Strassfeld (30,000); PATHWAYS THROUGH THE BIBLE by Mortimer J. Cohen (5,000); A HISTORY OF THE JEWS by Solomon Grayzel (5,000); THE RISE AND FALL OF THE JUDAEAN STATE-Volume II by Solomon Zeitlin (1,000); WHAT THE MOON BROUGHT by Sadie R. Weilerstein (3,000); THE ALEPH-BET STORY BOOK by Deborah Pessin (2,000); MASADA WILL NOT FALL AGAIN by Sophie Greenspan (1,500); EMBATTLED JUSTICE by Ellen Norman Stern (1,000); THE JEWISH MARRIAGE ANTHOLOGY by Philip and Hanna Goodman (2,000); and MAIMONIDES by David Hartman (2,000). The total number of books distributed by the Society during 1977 was 200,000.
The Jewish Publication Society of America was founded in Philadelphia in 1888 to provide the children of Jewish immigrants to America with books about their heritage in the language of the New World. As the oldest publisher of Jewish titles in the English language, the mission of JPS is to enhance Jewish culture by promoting the dissemination of religious and secular works of exceptional quality, in the United States and abroad, to all individuals and institutions interested in past and contemporary Jewish life. Over the years JPS has issued a body of works for all tastes and needs. Its many t Browsing subject area: Jewish Publication Society of America (Exclude extended shelves) You can also browse an alphabetical list from this subject or from: Jewish Publication Society of America. Online books by this author are available. See also what's at Wikipedia, your library, or elsewhere. Filed under: Jewish Publication Society of America. The Jewish Publication Society of America, twenty-fifth anniversary, April fifth and sixth, nineteen hundred and thirteen, Philadelphia.Â Beating sea and changeless bar, (Philadelphia, The Jewish publication society of America, 1905), by Jacob Lazarre (page images at HathiTrust). Items below (if any) are from related and broader terms. Help with reading books -- Report a bad link -- Suggest a new listing. Discover new books on Goodreads. See if your friends have read any of The Jewish Publication Society of America's books. Sign in with Facebook. Sign in options. Join Goodreads. The Jewish Publication Society of Americaâ€™s Followers (1). The Jewish Publication Society of America. edit data. Combine Editions. The Jewish Publication Society of Americaâ€™s books. The Jewish Publication Society of America Average rating: 4.0. Â· 4 ratings Â· 0 reviews Â· 3 distinct works. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES: According to the Masoretic Text (Annotated Christianity Theology of beliefs and practices): A new translatio