REPORT OF NINETY-FOURTH YEAR

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REPORT OF THE 94TH JPS ANNUAL MEETING

The 94th annual meeting of The Jewish Publication Society of America was held in Philadelphia on June 6, 1982 at the Hilton Hotel, with Dr. Muriel M. Berman presiding.

Bernard G. Segal, chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the report and the following new trustees were elected: Paul Cowan of New York, journalist and author; Bernard Frank of Allentown, attorney, who was chairman of the Ombudsman Committee of the American and International Bar Association; Reuven Frank of New York, president of NBC News; Maxwell E. Greenberg of Los Angeles, attorney, who served as national chairman of the Anti-Defamation League; Leon J. Perelman, Philadelphia businessman, president of West Park Hospital and founder of the Perelman Antique Toy Museum; Charlotte Wilen, Atlanta, who was a member of the Federal Select Panel for Child Health and founding chairman of the Council of Maternal and Infant Health; and Sonia B. Woldow, Philadelphia, who served as president of Akiba Academy and is chairperson of the Federation of Jewish Agencies' Commission on the Elderly.

Reelected as trustees were Harold Cramer, Philadelphia; James O. Freedman, Iowa City; Irwin T. Holtzman, Detroit; Jack Lapin, Houston; Richard Maass, White Plains; Martin Meyerson, Philadelphia; Rela G. Monson, Philadelphia, and Jerry Wagner, Bloomfield, Connecticut.
Dr. Muriel M. Berman, Allentown, was reelected president. The following vice-presidents were reelected: Stuart E. Eizenstat, Washington; Norma F. Furst, Philadelphia; Norman Oler, Philadelphia; Robert S. Rifkind, New York; and Charles R. Weiner, Philadelphia. Robert P. Frankel, Philadelphia, was reelected treasurer; Marlene F. Lachman, Philadelphia, secretary, Robert P. Abrams, Philadelphia, chairman of the Executive Committee; Bernard I. Levinson, executive vice-president; and Maier Deshell, editor.

Following the report of the president, treasurer, and Nominating Committee, Yosef H. Yerushalmi, chairman of the Publication Committee, paid tribute to the late Gershom Scholem. Dr. Chaim Potok addressed the audience on “A Historic Moment: The New Translation of the Bible.” Dr. Potok, special projects editor of JPS, was secretary of the committee of scholars who completed the translation of The Writings-Kethubim, the final portion of the Hebrew Bible.

From the Annual Report of JPS President Muriel M. Berman

An annual report could be prosaic, but this year has been an outstanding one for the Jewish Publication Society.

On Pesach, at the Seder, it is asked, “Why is this night different from any other night?,” and you might ask us the same question, “Why is this year different from any other year?”. The answer is, of course, that this is the year we celebrated an important milestone in Jewish culture when we presented to the world a new translation of the Holy Scriptures. This is the first complete new translation since 1917, which was the first in the United States to be published in English. Our new translation, in the making since 1955, represents the latest in biblical scholarship and archaeological discoveries—including the Dead Sea Scrolls—and conveys the meaning of the original Hebrew text into modern, literary English.

This new translation is the product of a rich heritage and the indefatigable efforts of a committee comprised of renowned, learned, and distinguished professors, as well as rabbis representing the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform traditions. The secretary to the committee was Dr. Chaim Potok, our own special projects editor.

Much devotion and inspiration were involved in the making of this magnificent work, years of stimulating and sometimes frustrating toil. Always the search for excellence, as well as truth and new scholarship, shines brilliantly from the pages of our new edition.
On Wednesday, the 26th of May, 1982—just twelve days ago—a significant and beautiful dinner was held in Philadelphia honoring the translators, the scholars, the rabbis, the past presidents, the board of trustees, the editors, and the Publication Committee. The honored guests read like a "Who's Who" of intellectual Jewry. A toast was proffered to our very special guests, the descendants of many famous people who had been involved in the original 1917 Bible project.

The theme of the evening was "Hope," and Elie Wiesel was our speaker. He is a man who lived through the horrors of the Holocaust, and who still expresses in his literary work confidence, solace, and inspiration derived from the meaning of the Torah. His very history is in itself a symbol of the continuity of our past, the living present, and the hope for the future of Judaism and all mankind. It was indeed an historic occasion, and a grand night to be remembered in the history of our Society.

Another celebration of the completion of the new JPS Bible was a scholarly and fascinating symposium hosted by New York University in cooperation with the Department of Near East Languages and Literature and the Humanities Council. More than 250 people attended. The featured participants were no less than three of the brilliant translators: Harry Orlinsky, H. L. Ginsberg, and Nahum Sarna. The program was moderated by Baruch Levine.

As president, I welcomed the participants and explained the history and goals of our Society to the New York audience. The subject of the symposium involved the intricacies of the translations such as the idiomatic expressions and the search for the true meaning of the individual words of the Bible from the Hebrew text.

The translators explained that hundreds of times in the footnotes they had to use the words "Hebrew obscure," "Hebrew unintelligible," or "probable translation," etc., proving that, even now, some explanations of words in the Bible are still a mystery.

Another event took place on March 10, 1982. The Jewish Publication Society cosponsored a book review featuring Blu Greenberg, the author of the controversial book entitled, On Women and Judaism: A View from Tradition. A large audience, including many Philadelphia members, attended the talk and reception at the UJA Federation building in New York City. A most worthwhile, interesting, and successful afternoon was spent highlighting one of the Jewish Publication Society's newest and successful publications. The reception was cosponsored by the Commission on Synagogue Relations of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies.
A few words about the Commentary Project, headed by Jerome Shestack. Centuries ago, in 1475, the first printed Hebrew book appeared. It was Rashi’s commentary on the Torah. Five hundred years later, in 1975, the Jewish Publication Society announced its plan for a new English language version of the Commentaries, with original thought, original comments, and the opinions of scholars involved today. Each person has his own idea of how a poem should be interpreted and what a painting denotes. Similarly, with the Bible, scholars through the ages have their own explanations and comments of their interpretation, expressing their personal perception of the meaning of the original texts.

To date more than 25 pledges of $5,000 each have been received for the project. The original funding plan was to have 70 contributors. The number 70 was based on the historical connection with the Septuagint, which refers to the 70 scholars originally involved in the translation of the Hebrew Bible into the Greek language centuries ago. We would welcome your participation as part of the new 70.

We are proud of the many awards our books have received:

First, and foremost, the National Jewish Book Award, for the completion of the new Bible translation by the Jewish Book Council.

Another, the 1981–1982 Outstanding Academic Books Award for Andre Neher's book entitled The Exile of the Word: From the Silence of the Bible to the Silence of Auschwitz. This award was received from Choice, a publication that reviews books for academic libraries.

And yet another honor, the Philadelphia Book Show Award, for the highest standards of design, printing, and binding for the book K'tonton in the Circus: A Hanukkah Adventure, by Sadie Rose Weilerstein. K'tonton, the Jewish Tom Thumb, is a favorite with children. In his latest adventure, he goes to the circus, hobnobs with clowns, animal trainers, the fat lady, the human skeleton, and even snake charmers, but is safely returned in time to celebrate Hanukkah with his parents.

It was indeed a great honor to have Cricket Magazine, which specializes in children's works, use an excerpt from our publication In the Shade of the Chestnut Tree, written by Benjamin Tene. It is a poignant book of a young man who returns to Warsaw after the war, and finds and sits beneath his chestnut tree—the only familiar site still remaining in the city. He relives the laughter and the sorrow, remembering his dreams and frustrations with his childhood friends.

Commentary Magazine excerpted a section from Gershom Scholem's book Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship, a rare intellectual drama

And, now to Jerusalem, where our centrally located office attracts many visitors. We have an enthusiastic and growing membership throughout Israel. We are represented at Israeli book fairs, and our Israel office sponsors book reviews and symposiums.

One of our authors, Dan Pagis, a noted Israeli poet, was featured in readings from his own work entitled Points of Departure, which we published. He is one of the leading poets of this generation; his work extends from grim vistas of genocide to lyrical medieval Hebrew poetry, and even includes science-fiction poems, where time is accelerated, distorted, and even reversed.

But the highlight of the Hebrew intellectual season in Israel this year was a symposium, again on the new translation of the Bible, including two of the three distinguished scholars who produced the translations, Moshe Greenberg and Jonas Greenfield, both of the Hebrew University. The third distinguished translator is here today in the audience, Dr. Nahum Sarna of Brandeis University.

Getting back to our United States activities, our public relations activities have been especially outstanding this year. We received reviews in the New York Times for Gershom Scholem’s book Walter Benjamin, and have been interviewed by Time Magazine and the New York Times on our New York symposium. The Philadelphia Inquirer did almost a page, and press releases have gone throughout the country. Our translators have been interviewed by numerous radio stations, and one of the television stations even brought their cameras right into our office, on the 23rd floor. We have literally hundreds of book reviews a year—in the secular and Anglo-Jewish press—from California to New York and all points in between.

On Monday, the 24th of May, Mayor William Green honored the Jewish Publication Society with a Proclamation from the City of Philadelphia. Many of our board members attended the ceremony in his spacious office at City Hall. The completion of the new translations coincided with the celebration of Philadelphia’s 300th anniversary, and the Jewish Publication Society will, officially, be forever a participant of Philadelphia’s Century IV archives.

Now, from the sublime of books to an administrative situation: paramount was the real estate problem. Our lease was up and a decision had
to be made. A Real Estate Committee was established, and the search was on. After many months, and in consultation with the Administration and Executive Committees and Board, no less than sixteen specific locations were examined and diagnosed by the Real Estate and Administration Committees. A prominent architect was consulted about feasibility of space and our choice of location.

I can now announce that on September 15, our new address will be 1930 Chestnut Street—the entire 21st floor.

I am pleased to report that our membership has held its own. In order to raise the visibility of the organization throughout the nation a National Membership Committee is being formed. There are members on our board from at least eighteen important cities in the United States and Canada. Regional meetings are in the planning stage.

Some months ago a planning meeting was held in Washington, D.C., hosted by our vice-president Stuart Eizenstat, and a small, but prominent group of Washingtonians was invited. Your president and executive director also attended. The question was raised, "What can we do in Washington that we can't do in other cities?" So we investigated the possibility of a presentation of our new Bible to the president of the United States, and understand he is pleased with the idea. The White House is now trying to set a definite date. This will be the focal point for our D.C. event.

Los Angeles was next on the list, and Bernard Levinson has just returned from there, where he spoke on our behalf, and he will tell you about it himself.

Detroit hosted a JPS function on November 22, 1981. Allentown, Atlanta, and the University of Iowa have agreed to follow suit. With your cooperation, I am sure we can spread the word about our publications throughout the country.

And, lastly, in a few short years, we will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of this Society. I believe we must begin now to set the goals and initiate events, so they can come to fruition for this important event. We propose a year-long celebration. Among the projects already planned are: A book to be commissioned on the history of the organization—interesting, readable, and of the highest literary quality. We propose an anthology of the greatest Jewish writers—some pieces to be especially written in honor of the occasion, and some selected reprints from authors no longer living. Also, a wonderful JPS 100th Anniversary Weekend, comprising Sabbath services and Oneg Shabbats throughout the United States and Israel, featuring JPS
books with authors reviewing their own works. An original lithograph for the occasion has already been discussed.

We are brimming with enthusiasm and ideas. We would like to hear your suggestions, and have your participation in this wonderful event. Please send your ideas to us.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to close by reading a note that Yehuda Blum, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, sent to Bernard Levinson, our executive vice-president:

"I returned from an out-of-town engagement this morning to find your complimentary copy of the JPS Holy Scriptures on my desk. Please accept my grateful thanks for your thoughtful gesture, which I truly appreciate. You may be sure that I shall have many an opportunity to use it and quote from it in my statements both in the United Nations and elsewhere. It will no doubt also serve me well in my search for a suitable quotation to replace the one currently engraved in the Isaiah Wall facing the United Nations Headquarters."

**JPS Treasurer's Report for 1981**

I am pleased to report continued improvement in the financial picture of the Society. We reduced our operating deficit by 46 per cent and we increased the principal of our endowment funds by 35 per cent during 1981.

Income from sales of books and membership dues amounted to $1,038,470 while expenditures for printing and distributing our books came to $1,301,047. Fortunately, contributions and income from our special purpose funds of $213,413 reduced our operating deficit to $49,164, a significant drop from the 1980 deficit of $91,230.

In addition to the contributions the Society receives annually from welfare funds, federations, and individuals, during the past year we received gifts that have had a significant impact on our fiscal situation. It is my privilege to acknowledge them at this meeting. I would like to thank Joseph P. Mendelson and Prof. Jacob R. Marcus for their respective contributions of Israel Bonds to the Society.

Through the efforts of Muriel and Philip Berman and Joseph Mendelson, the number of sponsors of the JPS Bible Commentary project has more than doubled. We are indeed fortunate to be able to add new names to our growing list of patrons of this important undertaking.

We are grateful to Robert P. Abrams, the chairman of our Executive Committee, for his contribution in memory of his father, Peter Abrams. This gift helped us to underwrite the publication of *Spain, the Jews, and*
Franco, and this publication contains an appropriate inscription of Mr. Abrams's gift.

Finally, on behalf of a grateful society, on this occasion, I want to acknowledge again and thank Muriel and Philip Berman for their gift of $500,000 to our endowment fund. This magnificent gesture helps build a base to insure the future of the Society for coming generations.

Our endowment funds continue to be prudently invested so that we can remain confident of our ability to publish Jewish books of high quality.

**JPS Publications**

In 1981 JPS published the following new volumes:

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<th>Title and Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>THE BIOBIDZHAN AFFAIR: A Yiddish Writer in Siberia by Israel Emiot</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL RESISTANCE: Art from Concentration Camps 1940–1945 with Union of American Hebrew Congregations</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>JUDAISM AS A CIVILIZATION: Toward a Reconstruction of American-Jewish life by Mordecai Kaplan with the Reconstructionist Press</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<td>THE EXILE OF THE WORD: From the Silence of the Bible to the Silence of Auschwitz by Andre Neher</td>
<td>2,500</td>
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<td>MA'ASEH BOOK: Book of Jewish Tales and Legends translated by Moses Gaster (paperback edition)</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>TANNA DEBE ELIYYAHU: The Lore of the School of Elijah translated by William G. Braude and Israel J. Kapstein</td>
<td>2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEBREW BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS by Else Lasker-Schuler</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN LIGHT OF GENESIS by Pamela White Hadas</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE SYRIAN-AFRICAN RIFT AND OTHER POEMS by Avoth Yeshurun</td>
<td>2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>K'TONTON IN THE CIRCUS: A Hanukkah Adventure by Sadie Rose Weilerstein</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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<td>HERSHEL OF OSTROPOL by Eric A. Kimmel</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<td>IN THE SHADE OF THE CHESTNUT TREE by Benjamin Tene</td>
<td>4,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK—Volume 81 edited by Milton Himmelfarb and David Singer (Co-published with the American Jewish Committee)</td>
<td>2,500</td>
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<td>VICHY FRANCE AND THE JEWS by Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton (Co-published with Basic Books)</td>
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THE BOOK OF LIGHTS
by Chaim Potok
(Co-published with Alfred A. Knopf)
THE PENGUIN BOOK OF HEBREW VERSE
edited by T. Carmi
(Co-published with Viking Press)
THE ART OF BIBLICAL NARRATIVE
by Robert Alter
(Co-published with Basic Books)

1981 Reprints

During 1981 JPS reprinted the following books:

DONA GRACIA by Cecil Roth (2,000); THE FIVE MEGILLOTH AND THE
BOOK OF JONAH (3,000); THE HANUKKAH ANTHOLOGY edited by Philip
Goodman (2,000); THE HOLY SCRIPTURES (25,000); THE JEWISH CATA-
LOG edited by Richard Siegel, Michael and Sharon Strassfeld (16,000); JEWISH
COOKING AROUND THE WORLD by Hanna Goodman (2,000); THE JEWS
OF ARAB LANDS by Norman A. Stillman (2,000); KTONTON ON AN IS-
LAND IN THE SEA by Sadie Rose Weilerstein (2,000); LEGENDS OF THE
BIBLE by Louis Ginzberg (3,000); LEGENDS OF THE JEWS—Vol. VII by Louis
Ginzberg (1,500); MANDARINS, JEWS, AND MISSIONARIES by Michael Pol-
lak (2,000); SABBATH by Abraham E. Millgram (1,500); THE SECOND JEWISH
CATALOG edited by Sharon and Michael Strassfeld (10,000); THE SHAVUOT
ANTHOLOGY edited by Philip Goodman (2,000); THE THIRD JEWISH CATA-
LOG edited by Sharon and Michael Strassfeld (10,000); THE TORAH (10,000);
THE TREATISE TA'ANIT OF THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD edited by
Henry Malter (2,000); WHAT THE MOON BROUGHT by Sadie Rose Weilerstein
(2,000).