

12-31-1995

The Library of the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano (Latin-American Rabbinical Seminary)

Irene L. Münster

Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano, Buenos Aires, Argentina, imunster@umd.edu

Rita F. Saccal

Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano, Buenos Aires, Argentina, risacal17@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://ajlpublishing.org/jl>

 Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Information Literacy Commons](#), [Jewish Studies Commons](#), [Latin American History Commons](#), [Latin American Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Latin American Literature Commons](#), and the [Reading and Language Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Münster, Irene L. and Saccal, Rita F.. 1995. "The Library of the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano (Latin-American Rabbinical Seminary)." *Judaica Librarianship* 9: 125-130. doi:10.14263/2330-2976.1195.

- (11) World literature;
- (12) Other.

The IWO library had a card catalog, but only a small portion of the library's books were classified; that is why it was usually impossible to find specific items. Readers had to be lucky and meet Samuel Rollansky, in the hope that he could locate what they were searching for. In the last years before the bombing, hardly any researchers visited the library. A few months before the bombing, Ester Szwarc was named the new library director, with a mandate to reorganize the collection. She now has the chance to organize a library not only with all modern technological methods, but employing concepts of librarianship as well.

2. José Mendelson

In 1969, the Palacio de la Educación—Eijal HaJinuj was built by AMIA's leaders. Its main purpose was to bring together the following educational centers:

- (a) *Rambam*: a Jewish complementary secondary school. It aimed to provide some Jewish background education to Jewish youth who studied at public schools.
- (b) *Midrasha*: a center for the training of secondary Jewish teachers.
- (c) *José Mendelson Library*: José Mendelson, the director of the Seminario de

Maestros de AMIA (AMIA's Teachers' Seminary), donated his private library. With this and other donations, the library specialized in materials for Jewish educators. At the end of 1993, the collection was incorporated into the IWO library. Since it was located at a different site, the José Mendelson library was not damaged by the bombing of the AMIA building.

3. Sociedad Hebraica Argentina

Belonging to a Jewish club that is analogous in its functions to those of a North American Jewish "Y" or Community Center, this was a large and important library during the 1950s. Nowadays the library circulates only bestsellers. All of the Yiddish books were sent to Florida Atlantic University (Boca Raton, FL).

4. Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano

The library of the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano is described in detail in a separate article, which follows this one.

Conclusion

As stated in this brief survey, the situation of Judaica libraries and archives in Argentina is very poor. No Jewish libraries exist in the interior, except for those in Hebrew schools; the archives of the agricultural colonies were brought to Buenos Aires, or else they disappeared.

Hiring a professional librarian to develop a library/archive has not been considered in institutions other than the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano, and therefore it is locally considered the only Jewish library that is worth visiting. Although this statement may sound very partisan and strong—since the authors of this article work at the Seminario's library—this is what we hear from researchers, students, and teachers who come to the seminary.

Acknowledgment

The editor thanks Zachary Baker, Head Librarian of YIVO, for reviewing the manuscript. Mr. Baker visited Argentina after the bombing of the Jewish community center.

Reference

Avni, Haim. *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1991

Rita F. de Saccal has been the Assistant to the Head Librarian of the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano since 1990. She previously worked in reference at the Library of the United Nations Information Center.

Lic. Irene L. de Münster is Head Librarian of the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano. She received a degree in librarianship from the Museo Social Argentino (licenciada en bibliotecología y documentación).

The Library of the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano (Latin-American Rabbinical Seminary)

Irene L. de Münster and Rita F. de Saccal
Seminario Rabínico
Latinoamericano
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Abstract: The history, organization, and current financial situation of the Library of the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano in Buenos Aires, Argentina, are described. Besides a card catalog for books, the Library maintains an analytical catalog for journals and collections. Sample entries from the two catalogs, as well as an excerpt from the authority list of Spanish subject headings, illustrate the paper.

History

The library of the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano was founded in 1963, two years after the Seminary opened its doors, by librarian Dr. Suse Halenstein Harf (of Germany), under the supervision of Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer (USA) and Rabbi Mordechai Edery (Morocco).

Rabbi Meyer, with a great vision of what could be achieved for Argentine Jewry,

sought someone to take charge of the library who possessed both a Jewish background and knowledge of how to manage a library. He chose Dr. Harf, who had worked before the war at the Library of the Hochschule für Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin, and who emigrated to Argentina with the "Riegner Gruppe" during the '30s to escape the Nazi regime. (The Riegner Gruppe was organized in 1938 by Kurt Riegner [a lawyer] and Günther Friedländer [a rabbi]. They led the first

evacuation of the members of the "Ring" Jewish youth movement—a branch of the Bund Deutsch-Jüdischer Jugend—from Berlin to Argentina.)

The day Dr. Harf started working, the library owned merely 200 books. It was a great day, not only for the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano, but also for all Jewish scholars in Latin America, since this was to become the only professionally classified and organized Jewish library in the region. With money from benefactors of the Seminario, as well as other donors (including the Rothschild Foundation and the Rich Foundation), the library started to grow.

Organization of the Library

Today the library is located in a modern building, occupying its top floors. On the first floor of the library are the reference room, the periodicals room, part of the collection of books, and the offices; on the second floor there are only stacks.

Reference room

There are two card catalogs: the first, for books, is arranged in alphabetical order by author, title, and subject headings; sample entries are in Figure 1. The second catalog is for articles in serials and collections—journals, yearbooks, festschriften, etc. This catalog provides an analysis of their contents, with entries arranged in alphabetical order by author and subject headings. Subject entries are illustrated in Figure 2.

We still have to type these cards because we cannot afford to buy modern technology. As no romanization of Hebrew or Yiddish is done, we have a separate catalog for these languages. The subject headings are often, but not always, in Spanish. An excerpt from the list of subject headings used in the analytical catalog is in Figure 3.

Periodical room

We receive journals and yearbooks primarily from the U.S., Israel, and Europe. Most of these are academic journals. Some serials are bought, some are received as a gift, and others are exchanged for the journal *Maj'shavot* which is published by the Seminario. Owing to a lack of funds, it is not possible to order all the serials that we need.

HP93
G76

Israel - agricultura.
Granot, Abraham
La tierra y el labrador. (Reformas agrarias en Israel y el mundo). Buenos Aires, Ed. Candelabro, 1956.
429p.

HP93
W63

Israel - agua
Wiener, Aaron
El desarrollo de los recursos hídricos de Israel. Jerusalem, Israel Information Center, 1973.
19p. il. (Reseña Informativa 12).

HP83.6
R663

Israel - Alemania
Romberg, Otto R. -ed.
Twenty Years of Diplomatic Relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and Israel. Edited by Otto R. Romberg and Georg Schwinghammer. Frankfurt, Tribune-Books, 1985.
104p. il.

HP83.6
C76

Israel - América Latina
Congreso Latino-Americano pro Israel
Por la Paz en el Medio Oriente.
Buenos Aires, 1956.
172p.

Figure 1. Sample subject entries from the catalog of books in the Seminario Library. The headings are in Spanish, even for books in English.

HP62.5
L71
HOLOCAUSTO - ALIADOS
WYMAN, DAVID S.
THE ABANDONMENT OF THE JEWS.

En: LITTELL, MARCIA Y OTROS-EDS.; THE
HOLOCAUST FORTY YEARS AFTER:
P.19-27.

EA13
W39
10.B.2

Holocausto - Alemania
Bankier, David
German public responses to the Holocaust: The
reactions to the Yellow Badge.

En: Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies, 1990,
Parte B, vol.10, no.2, p.395-402.

EA12
G33

Holocausto - antisemitismo contemporáneo.
בכרך, צבי
היסטור, הסרביטים, הערבים והרב כהנא.

En: גשר, 1986/87, año 32, v.115, p.99-102.

EA11
J56

Holocausto - arte
Bohm-Duchen, Monica
After Auschwitz: Art and the Holocaust.

En: Jewish Quarterly 1994/5, v.41, no.4, p.50-54.

Figure 2. Sample subject entries from the analytical catalog of the Seminario Library. The headings are in Spanish, even for articles in Hebrew.

Antisemitismo - Europa
Antisemitismo - Europa Oriental
Antisemitismo - feminismo
Antisemitismo - Francia
Antisemitismo griego
Antisemitismo - historiografía alemana
Antisemitismo - Holanda
Antisemitismo - iglesias alemanas
Antisemitismo - Inglaterra
Antisemitismo - Islam
Antisemitismo - Israel
Antisemitismo - Italia
Antisemitismo izquierdista
Antisemitismo - Japón
Antisemitismo judío véase también Odio a sí mismo judío
Antisemitismo literario
Antisemitismo - literatura alemana
Antisemitismo marxista
Antisemitismo medieval
Antisemitismo moderno
Antisemitismo negro véase también Negros - judíos
Antisemitismo neotestamentario
Antisemitismo - Perú
Antisemitismo - Polonia
Antisemitismo - psicoanálisis
Antisemitismo - Rusia véase también Historia judía - Rusia
Antisemitismo secular
Antisemitismo - socialismo
Antisemitismo - Sud Africa
Antisemitismo - Suiza
Antisemitismo - Tercer Mundo
Antisionismo
Antisionismo - Alemania
Antisionismo - Estados Unidos
Antisionismo izquierdista
Antisionismo religioso
Antisionismo - URSS
Antonius, George
Antonovsky, Aaron
Antropocentrismo
Antropología véase también Racismo
Antropología - Africa

Figure 3. Part of the authority list for Spanish subject headings used in the analytical catalog.

Stacks

The stacks are not accessible to the public, since no electronic alarm system has been installed. They house approximately 30,000 books, mainly Judaica in various languages. Most of the books are in English, Hebrew, Spanish, German, and Yiddish. Some other languages (including Portuguese and French) are represented as well. The books are arranged in the stacks according to the classification numbers assigned.

Classification Scheme

The classification is based on the one created by the Union Theological Seminary for its library. The Jewish section was not suitable for us; by taking as a basis the general outline of the classification, we created a new scheme for Jewish themes, adapted to our needs (see Figure 4). Nowadays this classification system is also consulted by other libraries and archives in Buenos Aires.

Loan Policy

We have no lending system, since we generally have only one copy of each book. We have a small photocopy machine for people to make copies of the material they need. Although one machine does not fulfill the Library's requirements, our patrons have gotten used to the limited resources.

Patrons

Although most of the users of this library are rabbis or professors and teachers of Hebrew or Jewish subjects, for the past few years people from non-Jewish high schools and universities have been coming in as well, in search of information. The topics most sought by this type of reader include the Holocaust, the Inquisition, Israeli-Arab relations, bioethics, and comparative religion. In addition, many students from Jewish high schools are sent to the Library to research various subjects such as Jewish history, the Holocaust, and Jewish holidays.

Thanks to ecumenical relations, many priests, seminarists, and professors from Catholic and Protestant schools and universities come to the library in search of information related to religion and philosophy.

ER		ER
	LITURGIA Y RITUAL JUDIO	
ER22	HISTORIA DEL CULTO	
ER23	RITOS Y COSTUMBRES EN GENERAL	
ER25	RITOS Y COSTUMBRES DE LAS FIESTAS	
ER25.1	SÁBADO	
ER25.3	PESAJ	
ER25.4	SHAVUOT	
ER25.5	ROSH-HASHANA (Y IOM KIPUR)	
ER25.6	TISHA B'AV	
ER25.7	SUKOT	
ER25.8	PURIM	
ER25.9	JANUKA	
ER26.2	Iom Haatsmaut	
ER27	RITOS Y COSTUMBRES ESPECIALES, MATRIMONIO, MUERTE, BAR MITZVA, ETC.	
	LITURGIA - ORACIONES Y RITUAL DE ORACIONES	
ER32	HISTORIA DE LA LITURGIA Y OBRAS ALUSIVAS	
ER44	COLECCIONES, MANUALES	
ER47	SIDURIM	
ER47.5	MAARIV	
ER51	SIDURIM PARA SÁBADO	
ER51.1	SIDURIM PARA SÁBADO Y LAS 3 FIESTAS	
ER51.5	HAFTAROT Y PARASHOT	
ER53	ORACIONES PARA LOS DÍAS DE AYUNO	
ER54	SLIJOT	
ER56	BENDICIONES	
ER57	ORACIONES PARA LA CIRCUNCISION	
ER58	ORACIONES PARA ENFERMOS Y DIFUNTOS	
ER59	LECTURAS	
ER59.5	LECTURA DEL TANAJ	ER58.5 Oraciones para mu- jeres.
ER59.6	CANTURREO	

Figure 4. Classification scheme for Jewish topics used in the Seminario Library.

EZ		EZ
JUDAISMO Y OTRAS RELIGIONES		
EZ1	GENERALIDADES	
EZ10	CONVERSIÓN AL JUDAISMO - MATRIMONIOS MIXTOS	
EZ20	JUDAÍSMO E ISLAM	
EZ23	Judaísmo - Morrónes	
EZ25	JUDAÍSMO Y RELIGIONES ORIENTALES	
EZ30	JUDAÍSMO Y CRISTIANISMO	
EZ31	HEBRAÍSTAS	
EZ32	DISPUTAS	
EZ33	NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS, MATERIAL DIVERSO	
EZ34	COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS: MATERIAL DIVERSO	
EZ35	CONVERSIÓN AL CRISTIANISMO	
EZ39	POLÉMICA RELIGIOSA JUDÍA	
EZ40	ÁPOLOGÉTICA JUDÍA	
EZ41	ANTISEMITISMO ESCRITO ANTES DEL 1800	
EZ42	ANTISEMITISMO ESCRITO 1800 - HOY	
EZ43	FOLLETOS ETC. SOBRE EL ANTISEMITISMO	
EZ44	ANTISEMITISMO NEGRO	
EZ45	JUDÍOS EN LA LITERATURA	

Figure 4 (Continued). Classification for Jewish topics, p. 2.

Our rabbis and Seminary students also come and try to manage with the material we have, although it is not always what they require. They feel comfortable working here, and are always ready to consult on library questions when asked.

Current Situation

Running a library without an adequate budget is very difficult, if not an impossible task. This has been the situation of the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano's library for the last few years. The economic situation in Argentina has been getting worse of late, and so has the economic situation of the Jews in Argentina. As explained above, the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano is supported by a number of well-intentioned donors, and 10% of the money is assigned to the purchase of books for the library.

Since the budget was and is so limited, we had to decide whether to buy new books or continue the library's subscriptions to journals, yearbooks, etc., in order for the collection to be up-to-date regarding developments in the Jewish scholarly world. We opted for the second approach.

In an attempt to ameliorate the situation, we started corresponding with other libraries in Argentina and Latin America, without success. When we contacted libraries outside Latin America, however, it was a wonderful surprise for us to receive great help from such libraries as the Library of Congress, The New York Public Library, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the University of Florida, the University of Texas at Austin, in the United States; and the libraries of the Hebrew University and Haifa University in Israel.

In 1978 we initiated an exchange program with these and other libraries around the world, which resulted in a very productive way of obtaining inaccessible material for us, as well as for the participating libraries. Unfortunately this system has slowed down in the last few years. But after attending for the first time a national Convention of the Association of Jewish libraries—in Chicago, June 1995—we hope that we will be able to reinforce these and other contacts with Jewish and academic libraries.

In 1994 we took an important step by inviting the most important representatives of the theological libraries in Buenos Aires to our Seminary. We are planning to work together, in order to join efforts and financial resources. We are, however, the only Jewish library represented in the consortium. We tried to establish the same type of cooperation with Jewish-Hebrew libraries in Argentina, without success. The economic-financial situation here is affecting not only our library and institution, but the entire Argentine academic system.

Conclusion

For some who read this paper, the library of the Seminario may seem to date from the '60s. But although we are so far away in terms of distance, technology, and resources, our goal is the same as that of American Judaica libraries. It is very difficult to run this library and develop it in a community like ours, which refuses to accept its Judaism, its background, its identity, and worst of all, its education.

But we will keep up the fight to make the Seminario's library accessible and known to every individual who wants to acquire

Jewish knowledge, education, and "menschlichkeit." We will keep on fighting, trying to obtain new materials that are requested by our patrons. We will keep on trying to subsist without a budget. And we hope we will succeed!

Rabbi Tarfon used to say: "You are not expected to complete the work, and yet you are not free to evade it" (Avot 2:16).

Irene L. de Münster is Head Librarian and Rita F. de Sacca is Assistant Librarian of the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

... So that we never forget.

Uncertain Refuge

Italy and the Jews During the Holocaust
Nicola Caracciolo

Translated and edited by Florette Rechnittz Koffler
and Richard Koffler
Foreword by Renzo de Felice

"Credible, vivid, and revealing." — Roland Sarti,
author of *Long Live the Strong: A History of Rural
Society in the Apennine Mountains*

Of some 50,000 Jews in pre-war Italy, 42,000
managed to survive World War II. In a country
allied with the National Socialists, how did so
many survive? Why did individuals and networks
take such great risks to rescue them? During the
mid-1980's the Italian journalist Nicola
Caracciolo, intent on answering these questions,
interviewed more than sixty Jewish survivors of
the Italy of that era.

Illus. Cloth, \$39.50; Paper, \$16.95

Chosen by the New York Public Library for its
Books for the Teen Age List

Seed of Sarah

Memoirs of a Survivor

Judith Magyar Isaacson

"European culture may have failed the human
race during the crucial Holocaust years, but it is
vindicated in this memoir in the person of the
young Judith Magyar." — Freema Gottlieb, *New
York Times Book Review*

Paper, \$12.95

To Tell At Last

Survival under False Identity, 1941-45
Blanca Rosenberg

"This is one of the finest, most authentically
dramatic and richly detailed memoirs written by
a survivor of the Nazi Holocaust." — Alan
Adelson, executive director, the Jewish Heritage
Project, producer/director of "Lodz Ghetto"

Illus. Cloth, \$19.95; Paper, \$12.95 (July)

Supported in part by a grant from the Jacob and Clara
Egit Foundation for Holocaust and Jewish Resistance
Literature, Toronto, Canada, through the Histadrut
Assistance Fund

The Holocaust and the Jews of Marseille

The Enforcement of Anti-Semitic
Policies in Vichy France

Donna F. Ryan

"An outstanding piece of research." — John F.
Sweet, author of *Choices in Vichy France: The
French under Nazi Occupation*

Ryan explores the extent to which the Vichy
government participated in the German plans
to exterminate foreign Jews in Marseille.

Illus. Cloth, \$36.95; Paper, \$15.95

Now available

Escape from Sobibor

Richard Rashke

"Breathtakingly suspenseful and horrifying at the
same time." — *Publishers Weekly*

"A sensitive, thoughtful, and well-researched
account of the 'biggest prisoner escape of World
War II.'" — Samuel Gold, *Jewish Chicago*

"Gives us a very good idea of how the will to
survive can lead quite ordinary people to surmount
the most extraordinary obstacles." — Meir
Ronnen, *Jerusalem Post*

Paper, \$16.95

Truth and Lamentation

Stories and Poems on the Holocaust

Edited by Milton Teichman
and Sharon Leder

These stories and poems, written during and after
the Holocaust, reveal the human faces hidden
behind the all-too-familiar statistics of the event.

Cloth, \$39.95; Paper, \$17.95

Supported by the Max and Clara Fortunoff Foundation
and the National Endowment for the Arts

The Twisted Road to Auschwitz

Nazi Policy toward German Jews,
1933-39

Karl A. Schleunes

New foreword by Hans Mommsen

"The 1970 publication of Karl Schleunes's *The
Twisted Road to Auschwitz* was a landmark in
Holocaust historiography. His interpretation of
the Final Solution as a product of unplanned
evolution rather than premeditated 'grand de-
sign' triggered a debate that has energized Holo-
caust scholarship over the past two decades." —
Christopher R. Browning, author of *The Final
Solution and the German Foreign Office*

Paper, \$11.95

New York Public Library Books to Remember List

Diary from the Years of Occupation, 1939-44

Zygmunt Klukowski

Translated by George Klukowski

Edited by Andrew Klukowski and Helen Klukowski May

Foreword by Monty Noam Penkower

"Because of his post as superintendent of a county
hospital in southeastern Poland, Klukowski
(1885-1959), unlike the Jews and others among
his fellow Christians, was not transported to a
concentration camp. . . . The diary is unusual in
its depiction of a region's population at large,
gentiles as well as Jews, making this a document
of historical value." — *Publishers Weekly*

Illus. Cloth, \$37.50

IRVING CUTLER
The JEWS *of*
CHICAGO



From Shtetl to Suburb

The Jews of Chicago

From Shtetl to Suburb

Irving Cutler

The first comprehensive history of
Chicago's Jewish population in seventy
years, *The Jews of Chicago* brings to life the
people, events, neighborhoods, and insti-
tutions that helped shape today's Jewish
community.

The Ethnic History of Chicago series

Illus. Cloth, \$29.95

The Holocaust and Israel Reborn

From Catastrophe to Sovereignty

Monty Noam Penkower

In this vivid and compelling collection, Monty
Noam Penkower examines the crucial link be-
tween the Holocaust and the rise of the State of
Israel, demonstrating how British and American
indifference to one of history's greatest crimes
confirmed Jewry's need for sovereignty in its his-
toric homeland.

Cloth, \$47.50; Paper, \$19.95

Singing for Survival

Songs of the Lodz Ghetto, 1940-45

Gila Flam

"The Nazis could take everything away from us,
but they could not take singing from us. This re-
mained our only human expression." — Miriam
Harel, a survivor of the Lodz ghetto

Illus. Cloth, \$27.50

Supported by the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation

Illinois

at your favorite local bookstore, or call toll-free 800/545-4703 • UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PRESS • 1325 South Oak Street • Champaign, IL 61820