

REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

Association of Jewish Libraries Reference Book Award, 1988*

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The winner of this year's Reference Book Award is Joan G. Bratkowsky, author of *Yiddish Linguistics: a Multilingual Bibliography*, which was published in 1988 by Garland. *Yiddish Linguistics* is a detailed and wide-ranging, 400-page classified subject bibliography containing over 2,000 citations.

Scope

Conceived as a supplement to Uriel and Beatrice Weinreich's 1959 bibliography, *Yiddish Language and Folklore*, which was a mere 60 pages long, the scope of *Yiddish Linguistics* is quite broad. Included in it are sections devoted to the structure and history of the Yiddish language, the etymology of Yiddish words, early texts in the language, dialectology, the interaction of Yiddish with other languages, onomastics (the study of names), stylistics, semiotics, the history of Yiddish linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and applied linguistics. These chapter headings represent only the *main* subjects covered in the bibliography. Each chapter contains a number of subheadings as well.

The contents of *Yiddish Linguistics* represent a gold mine of information for all sorts of people: linguists, cultural and literary historians, ethnomusicologists, folklorists, genealogists, and Yiddish-lovers everywhere.

The work undertaken first by the Weinreichs and then by Joan Bratkowsky is, as is usually the case with bibliographies, not finished (in large part because of the time lag between the conclusion of the research and the publication of this work). In her preface, Ms. Bratkowsky takes note of some of her book's *lacunae*, sketches the steps necessary for its continuation, and

*Remarks made at the Banquet of the 24th Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries held in Washington, DC, June, 1989.

generously welcomes any efforts that future scholars may be able to make "to complete the work which we have only begun," as she puts it.

The Award

Publication of the Bratkowsky bibliography represents the culmination of five years of painstaking research. As a witness to the progress of this project as it unfolded, it is a pleasure for me to see its end-product recognized and honored by our Committee and, by extension, by the Association of Jewish Libraries. As chairperson of AJL's Reference Book Award Committee, I'd like to thank the Committee's members—Charles Cutter (of the Brandeis University Library), Norman Gechlik (of the New York Public Library's Jewish Division), and Adaire Klein (of the Simon Wiesenthal Center Library)—for their active participation in the choice of this year's Reference Book Award winner. I hope they will be able to continue on the Committee during this coming year. I would also like to thank our Association's President, Marcia Posner, for arranging the funding of both this and next year's AJL Reference Book Award. On behalf of Marcia, I am pleased to announce that Ivan Tillem, a New York City attorney—and the publisher of the *Jewish Almanac and Yellow Pages*—has agreed to fund next year's Reference Book Award.**

Remarks of the Recipient

Joan Bratkowsky is unable to be present among us tonight, having been pressed into jury duty this past week. But when I spoke with her last Friday afternoon, she passed along some remarks that I would like to relate to you, in acceptance of this award. First, she expressed her heartfelt

**In August 1989, Mr. Tillem died tragically in an airplane crash while on a philanthropic mission in Ethiopia. The status of the funding of the award is indeterminate.

thanks to the Association for tendering this year's Reference Book Award to *Yiddish Linguistics*. She apologized for not being able to accept the award in person, because of her jury duty. She thanked the many people who helped her in preparing the bibliography—the legion of research assistants and secretaries without whose assistance this work could not have been compiled. She expressed the hope that *Yiddish Linguistics* will prove useful to researchers (and I can assure her that, on the basis of our experience at YIVO, it is already a well-worn volume). Finally, seconding her remarks in the book's preface, she urged that an update of this bibliography, including citations for the most recent works in the field, be prepared in the not-too-distant future, by another bibliographer.

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As we were going to press, we learned that the following work had been selected to receive the 1989 AJL Reference Book Award:

The Talmud: the Steinsaltz edition: a reference guide, by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz. New York: Random House, 1989.

The Award will be presented at the First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians, to be held in Jerusalem, July 1990.