

History of Jewish Publishing in Argentina

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Description: This presentation will include a brief overview of the most outstanding and worthwhile aspects of Jewish publishing in Argentina, including newspapers, periodicals, and books. Period of coverage: The history of Jewish publishing since the beginning of Jewish settlement in Argentina. Major topics: the immigrant era, the Golden Age of Jewish life, the bombing of the AMIA (the Jewish community’s umbrella organization), the economic breakdown of Argentina and its impact upon the Jewish community, and the new generation of Jewish writers.

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On July 18, 1994, at 9.53 AM a powerful bomb blew up a square block in downtown Buenos Aires. The immediate objective of the explosion was the destruction of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina, known as the AMIA, the building housing most of Argentina’s major

Jewish Organizations. Despite its primary intention to murder Jews and burn Jewish property, the bomb did not discriminate. Jews and Non Jews were killed that day, and apartment houses, schools and stores in the area were destroyed.

The terrorist bomb also left a gaping hole in the Argentine imagination. Alongside the dead and broken bodies were thousands of Spanish, Hebrew and Yiddish books and countless documents and folios – the archival and intellectual legacy of a community that for more than one-hundred years has struggled to be “**unmistakably Argentine**”, as Jorge Luis Borges wrote in his introduction to *Mester de Judería*, a collection of poems written by his friend and well known Jewish author Carlos Grünberg.

The AMIA bombing wanted to erase memory , but did not succeed.

Argentina had been settled by immigrants from many different countries, and its society encompassed a wide variety of ideological tendencies. The immigration flows of 1889, 1905, 1920 and 1930 were the most important ones. The first immigrants went to the colonies, but their sons and descendants subsequently moved to larger and more

cosmopolitan cities. As home to the world's fifth-largest Jewish population, consequently produced the overwhelming majority of Jewish Literature in Latin America.

Many newspapers and magazines were founded on the first days, but, unfortunately most of them failed, either because of financial problems, or because, having more access to the local press, Jewish readers lost interest in their own Jewish Press.

More than 250 Jewish periodicals were published in Buenos Aires only, apart from those from the interior of the country, and some of them lasted more than 50 years.

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES PUBLISHED IN ARGENTINA
From 1898 to 2004

| | Newspapers | Magazines | | Newspapers | Magazines |
|-------------|--|---------------------------------------|-------------|---|--|
| 1898 | Viderkol (Idish) Der Idisher Fonograph (Idish) Di Folks Schtme (Idish) | | 1971 | | OJI (Spanish) Continuidad-Hemshej |
| 1904 | El Sionista (Spanish) | | 1977 | Nueva Presencia (Spanish) | |
| 1908 | Der Avangard (Idish) | Juventud (Spanish) | 1979 | | Coloquio (Spanish) |
| 1909 | Broit un Ehre (Idish) Idisher Colonist in Argentine (Idish) | | 1982 | | Continuidad (Spanish) |
| 1914 | Di Idische Zaitung (Idish) | | 1983 | | Controversia (Spanish) |
| 1917 | | Vida Nuestra (Spanish) | 1984 | | Sefardica (Spanish) |
| 1918 | Di Presse (Idish) | | 1985 | Comunidades (Spanish) La Voz Judia (Spanish) | |
| 1919 | Oif di Bregun fun Plata (Idish) | | 1989 | Masorti (Spanish) | Jabad Magazine (Spanish) |
| 1921 | Undzer Spiegel (Idish) | | 1992 | | Raices (Spanish) |
| 1923 | Mundo Israelita (Spanish) | | 1993 | | Nuestra Memoria (Spanish) |
| 1924 | Rosarier (Idish) | | 1995 | | Comentarios y Opiniones (Spanish) |
| 1931 | | La Luz (Spanish) | 1996 | La Voz de Israel (Spanish) | |
| 1933 | | Judaica (Spanish) | 1997 | | Ktanim (Spanish) Golda |
| 1945 | | Davar (Spanish) | 1999 | La Ventana | AMIJAI Anajnu - Nosotros Bet Hillel Contacto del Joint Generaciones |
| 1946 | Nueva Sion (Spanish) | | 2000 | | CEFAI - 2a. Epoca Congregación en Libertad Tzedaka Informa Compartiendo |
| 1951 | | Nueva Vida (Spanish) | 2001 | | Bama - Daf Meida |
| 1953 | | Comentario (Spanish) | 2002 | | Guesher - Aciba + Oriente |
| 1957 | Amanecer (Spanish) | | 2003 | | AMIA para todos (Spanish) Cuadernos del IWO DAIA en breve |
| 1964 | | Maj'shavot (Spanish) | 2004 | | Carta Rusa Judaica |
| 1968 | | Rimon (Hebrew) Raices (Spanish) | | | |
| 1969 | Semanario Israelita (Spanish - German) | Indice (Spanish) Teshuva (Spanish) | | | |

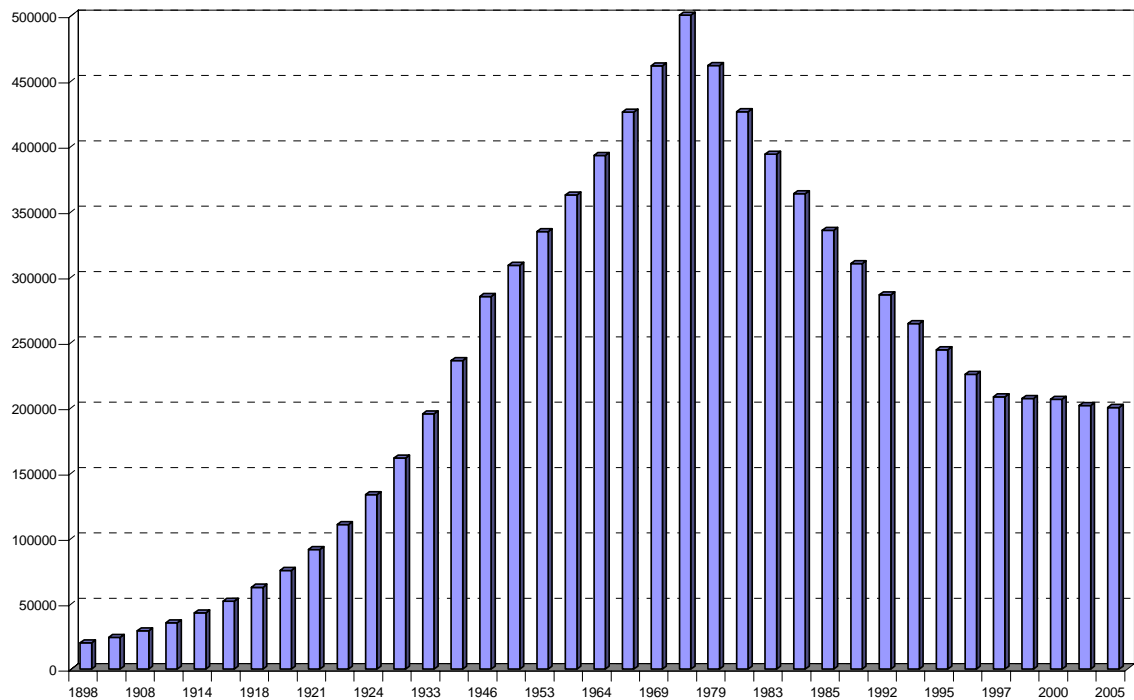
Many Jewish journalists and writers, such as Alberto Gerchunoff (outstanding journalist of the newspaper “La Nación”) and Jacobo Timmerman (who reached a national audience as editor of the newspaper La Opinión, and an international audience with his denunciation of the military government) were very active within the most important national newspapers, such as Clarin, La Nación, La Prensa, Pagina 12. Many other preminent Jewish people work for non Jewish publications, because they have more possibilities of growing and of having a stable job. (For example, most of the journalists of Pagina 12 are Jewish). Many of these Jewish writers helped in the creation and edition of literary non-Jewish magazines which are the pride of the Argentine literature.

The 50’s and 60’s could be considered the Golden Age of the Jewish Community in Argentina, with a flourishing literary and cultural activity. Editorial houses published lots of books that had been translated from Idish or Hebrew, most newspapers and magazines were published during this time, most people became strongly engaged with the Community and acted accordingly within their Institutions.

The fall of two most important Jewish Banks in 1998, caused the breakdown of many many Institutions who were backed by them. Apart from the lack of financial aid, people’s distrust towards their Community leaders increased.

In 2002 it was estimated that the Jewish population of Argentina reached some 190.000 (according to Sergio DellaPergola). The rate of aliyah, because of the economic crisis, reached one of the highest in the Jewish diaspora. There was a considerable emigration to the US, to other countries in the Western hemisphere, and, to a lesser extent, to Western Europe. 5.931 Argentine Jews had left for Israel in 2002, nearly four times as many as in 2001.

EVOLUTION OF JEWISH POPULATION IN ARGENTINA



Jews constitute an integral part of Argentine cultural Life. Jewish participation is evident in every sphere of culture – literature, journalism, theater, cinematography, television, visual arts, and classical and popular music. Jews generally make up a disproportionate part of the audience at cultural events and scholarly conferences

Jewish literary tradition earned international fame, Jewish writers and poets contributing with their texts and stories to add new chapters to the national bibliography. They are part of the literary crowd in a country which greatly contributes to Spanish literature.

Thousands throughout the country have read the works left by Jaime Barylko, Osvaldo Dragun, Leon Dujovne, Samuel Eichelbaum, Jacobo Fijman, Alberto Gerchunoff, Samuel Glusberg, Carlos Grumberg, Lazaro Liacho, Pedro Orgambide, Alejandra Pizarnik, German Rozenmacher, Simja Sneh, Cesar Tiempo, Maximo Yagupsky , Hector Yanover, among others.

Argentine Jewish Writers

First Generation (Idisch Writers)

Mordejai Alperson
Baruj Bendersky
Berl Grinberg
Pinie Wald
Pinie Katz
Moises Senderey
José Rabinovich
Iankev Botoshansky
Aharon Brodsky
Kalmen Farber
Jaim Goldstraj
Iaacov Sh. Liachovitsky
Mark Turkow
Abraham Zaid
Iardena Fain
S. Freilaj
Mosche Goldstein
Simja Granievich
Israel Helfman
Levi Itzjak Mass
Nahon Milleritsky
Mimi Pinzón
Mendel Pschepiurka
David Rashkovan
Samuel Rollansky
Izy Shaffer
Zalmen Wasertzug
Noaj Vita

First Native Generation

Alberto Gerchunoff
Enrique Dickman
Boleslao Lewin
Jacobo Fijman
carlos Grunberg
Lázaro Liacho
Cesar Tiempo
Samuel Eichelbaum
Lazaro Schalman
Leon Dujovne
Salomon Resnik
David Elnecave
Samuel Glusberg (Enrique Espinoza)
Abraham Rosenwasser
Maximo Yagupsky
Samuel Tarnopolsky
Simja Sneh
José Chudnovsky
Bernardo Kordon
Bernardo Korembli
Santiago Grimani
Clara Weil
leoshua Faigon

Hector Yanover
Arnoldo Liberman
Perla Chirm
Oded Sverlik
Aida Bortnik
Samuel Pecar

Second Native Generation

Bernardo Verbitsky
Bernardo Kordon
Pedro Orgambide
David Vinas
Lazaro Liacho
Humberto Constantini
Luis Kardiner
Mateo Goldstein
Jaime Barylko
Jose Itzigsohn
León Rozitchner
German Rozenmacher
José Isaacson

Third Native Generation

Mario Szichman
Mauricio Goldberg
Gerardo Goloboff
Ricardo Feierstein
Marcos Aguinis
Santiago Kovadloff
Isidoro Blaistein
Alicia Steimberg
Silvia Plager
Ana Maria Shua
Ricardo Forster
Eliahu Toker
Jacobo Timmerman
Tamara Kamenszain
Cecilia Absatz
Nora Glickman
Alejandra Pizarnik
Perla Suez
Manuela Fingueret
Liliana Heker
Liliana Lukin

Fourth Native Generation

Marcelo Birmajer
Diego Paskowski
Federico Finchelstein
Daniel Lbovich
Gabriela Mizrahe
Gisella Heffes
Diego Melamed
Tomas Abraham

Another generation of writers, those who published between 1960-2000, experienced the French May Spring (1969), the death of the Che Guevara (1967) , the military dictatorship between 1976 and 1983 in Argentina, (where human rights were systematically violated), and, the different military coups in the Latin American Continent, wrote about: persecution, social disruption, outcast status and exile,

Writers such as Mario Szichman, Gerardo Goloboff, Silvia Plager, Mauricio Goldberg, German Rozenmacher, Isidoro Blaisten, Antonio Brailovsky, Ana María Shua, Alicia Steimberg, Marcos Aguinis, Santiago Kovadloff, etc. belong to this generation. This was a generation with a higher educational level, although, paradoxically, with a shortened Jewish cultural life too.

In the 1980's, Sara and José Itzigsohn, Leonardo and Beatriz Senkman, Jaime Barylko, Isidoro Niborsi and others, have made extensive efforts to recover elements of Jewish Argentine history in danger of being lost. They have worked vigorously to assemble participant accounts and documentary sources on Jewish Argentine culture.

The most internationally known contemporary text by any Argentine writer was not a literary work, but a memoir, *Prisoner without a name, cell without a number (1981)*, (which was first published in the United States and in Great Britain), written by the Buenos Aires newspaperman Jacobo Timerman. Timerman's detention while serving as editor of La Opinión made him an emblematic figure of the offenses against human rights.

Upon the return to democracy in Argentina in 1983, the Under Secretary of Culture, Dr. Marcos Aguinis – who would become a world famous writer - took part in the opening of the Month of the Jewish Book.

By that time, Amia's publishing House, Mila, published a collection of books called "Roots", with fifty issues about Jewish Culture. The success of this collection was such, that you could find these titles in any newsstand of the city.

Many more books have been published since then. But, it is impossible to make a list of the literary production. Let me highlight for you, at this time, what happened in the last ten years.

In 1994 Anita Weinstein and Myriam Gover de Nasatisky published a two volume bibliographical source book “*Escritores judeo-argentinos: bibliografía 1900-1987 (Jewish Argentine writers: a bibliography 1900-1987)*).

In 1995, the Ministry of Interior issued a book on the holocaust *Seis millones de veces uno – El holocausto (Six Million times one – the Holocaust)*, edited by Eliahu Toker and Anita Weinstein). The particularity of this book, which I would like to point out, is that it was distributed among the Argentine non-Jewish public schools in order to educate the country’s young people about the subject. **Never before did something like this happen in Argentina.**

In 1998 DAIA - The Jewish Political Organization - edited: “ Proyecto Testimonio – Revelaciones de los Archivos Argentinos sobre la política oficial en la era nazi-fascista. (Testimony Project: Revelations of the Argentine Archives regarding the official politics during the nazi-fascist era). This fabulous documental work which was compiled by Beatriz Gurevich and Paul Warsawski, was not well received by the Government authorities, because of its denunciation.

A new generation of Jewish writers has appeared in the last years, publishing a great deal of books since the economic crisis. Not only do they write about Jewish topics but they focus on subjects such as: Argentine Nationalism (Daniel Lbovich), the Goldhagen thesis (Federico Finchelstein), novels and poetry which are not related to Jewish History (Ricardo Forster, Manuela Fingueret and Santiago Kovadloff).

And then we find the so called “fifth generation”. They are very young writers such as Marcelo Birmajer, journalist and writer, who has written many books in spite of his short age. He writes on Jewish topics, but, with a local background “**to be a Jew in his own way**”

Diego Paszkowski also belongs to this generation, as well as Gisella Heffes, Diana Sperling, Gabriela Mizraje and many others.

Memoria Activa, -a Jewish Civil Rights Group, created after the bombing of the AMIA - , can also be considered, a revelation of Argentine-Jewish History.

On July 18, 1997, on the third anniversary of the AMIA bombing, Laura Guinsberg, in her tough speech “Abro los ojos” (I open my eyes), “accused the government of

consenting to the impunity, to the indifference of those who know but keep silent, to the insecurity, the impotence, the ineptitud”..... The power of the speech was such that it has become not only a foundational text of Post Amia Testimonial writing, but it is also called the “Yo acuso” (I acuse, J’accuse), a straight denunciation, without the typical euphemisms used by the community leaders. Women are the trigger behind Memoria Activa and they are also called *las madres de la calle Pasteur* (*The mothers of Pasteur’s street*). In his book “Los judíos y el Menemismo “(Jews and Menemism), Diego Melamed says that “in the land of soccer and the cult of *machismo*, mothers and grandmothers have become the symbol of bravery in the face of crime and impunity”

I am herewith presenting a poem written on that occasion by Salo Loterztein.

In memorian

By Salo Lotersztein

To Marisa and her smile,
Receptionist only
To the world’s goodness;

To Jaime, dean of workers
And culture makers

To Marta, Yanina, Noemi and Silvana,
The girls in Social Work
Young and open,
Ready to alleviate other’s sorrow and pain;

To those who met us
At the doolr
And watched our coming and going
With a human touch:
Carlitos, Naum, Ricki, Gregorio and Mauricio;

To Rosita, the operador,
Who Hill never again say:
“AMIA, JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER
OF BUENOS AIRES, MY NAME
IS ROSITA, HOW CAN I HELP YOU?”

To Susy and Dorita,
Who kept the Job exchange going
And suffered the anguish of joblessness,
Opening doors of hope
With their search

To the people of the Burial society,
Who brought comfort to the bereaved
In their loved ones’s final hours;
To the tireless Kuky and his stoic assistants
Norber, Claudio, the young Agustín and
Fabian
Who were taken away, together with Rita,
The one with the bright blue eyes.

To Mirta trapped
Under the rubble,
Who after that day
Can never again take care of her kids

To Cacho Chemuel, who was saved and
brought back to life,
Only to be caught by death this time around.

To the memory of the men in Maintenance;
Olegario, dragged down by his ailing heart;

Buby who brought the hot coffee every
morning;
Avedano, who came from Chile
To fix lights
But was swept up by the dark.
To Jorgito
Who was just coming
From the corner coffee shop
Feeling so alive
When the deadly bomb
Caught him

And blew him apart
With his tray full of cups;
To Paola, so young and perky,
Who was coming to pick them up
And picked up death and desolation instead

To the Bolivian workers who came to find a
better future and didn't
Because the terrorist "decided"
What was to become of them;
To the passerby who just happened to chance
Into the valley of death;
To the girl who signed up for college
And took only one final exam;

To the architect
Who designed for Life;
To those who were there to take care of some
matter
Or to find work so that they could go on living;
To all those who fell or suffered
Simply because they were close by,
In next door stores and houses,
Paying for the horrible desire to harm.

To all of them:
Our anguish, our pain
Our solidarity as those who survived.

(Translated by Edna Aizemberg – "Books and Boms in Buenos Aires")

In 2001 Eliahu Toker and Anita Weinstein published a very important historical document: "Cinco Décadas de Nueva Sión, Un Siglo de Periodismo Judeo – Argentino" (Five decades of Nueva Sión, a Century of Argentine-Jewish Journalism").

In the Book Fair that took place in Buenos Aires, in April 2005, AMIA presented a book on the occasion of the 110th anniversary of its foundation. Its title: "Retratos de una Comunidad", (Portraits of a Community), is a photographic album of the Jewish Community.

What happened with the Jewish Editorial Houses??

A very few Jewish Editorial Houses have survived the economic crisis. They are: Editorial Mila, CIDICSEF (Sephardic Organization) , Fundación Memoria del Holocausto (which is the Argentine version of the Holocaust Museum), Kehot (Jabad Lubavitch), Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano "Marshall T. Meyer".

In 1965, The Seminario Rabinico, for which I work, had an agreement with a very important Editorial House – Paidós – and published approximately 70 titles related to the different aspects of Jewish Civilization and Culture; some of them translations of Jewish classics, such as The Prophets (Heschel), History of anti-Semitism (Poliakov), Elie Wiesel, Leo Trepp, etc. Furthermore, these publications comprehend bilingual editions of the

Machzor, the Siddur, the Passover Haggada with commentaries and a bilingual Humash (also with commentaries). The Seminario also publishes an Academic Journal – Maj Shavot – with articles devoted to the promotion of the most highlighted works of Jewish Thought, Bible, Jewish History, Jewish Communities around the world, etc. MajShavot should be published four times a year, but due to the lack of budget, it hardly comes out once a year. Still, at least its edition has not been interrupted.

Editorial Mila is a project created by AMIA which intends to find a place for the new generations taking into account the contemporary Jewish condition in its different aspects. They also publish a magazine on social activities showing the experiences of Jewish professionals in the different areas of education, history and humanities.

Editorial Mila was invited – for the first time in Argentine-Jewish History to the Book Fair in Frankfurt in 2003. Never before has an Argentine-Jewish Editorial been invited to any International Fair.

There is a boom of Jewish cultural activity. Let me tell you that in 2004 Editorial Mila and the AMIA Cultural Department organized a Literary Competition on Essays on the subject: “**what it means to be a Jew today**”. The jury was integrated by famous Argentine-Jewish writers such as Marcos Aguinis, Marcelo Birmajer, Gabriel Gotlib, Bernardo Kliksberg, Ricardo Feierstein, Mario Ber and Moshe Korin.

Although there is a boom or rise of cultural activities, this does not mean that the Jewish editorial houses publish more. Many of the new Jewish authors would like to have their books published by Editorial Mila, but, if they don't have a sponsor, this is a very hard task.

Mr. Ricardo Feierstein, its director, works against the stream, almost without a budget but working hard and looking for donations in order to publish the books. Still, for this year 2005, Editorial Mila intends to publish and re-edit almost 20 titles.

Kehot, which belongs to Jabad Lubavitch, has a very interesting collection of books, and they publish a lot, specifically Spanish translations of the Hebrew or Yiddish Texts.

In the University of Rosario, in the Province of Santa Fe, there is an important group of young Jewish Philosophers who are translating into Spanish the works of Levinas, Rosenzweig and Buber, and are published under the auspices of the University. The same happens in the University of Córdoba. This group is being represented by Argentine-Jewish philosophers such as Diana Sperling, Ricardo Forster, Pablo Dreizik , etc

NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES AND BULLETINS CURRENTLY PUBLISHED IN ARGENTINA 1999

| Newspapers | Academic Magazines | Bulletins |
|---|--|--|
| <p>La Voz Judía La Voz de Israel Mundo Israelita Masorti Semanario Israelita La Luz Boletin OJI (on Internet)</p> | <p>Nuestra Memoria Maj'Shavot Plural Sefardica</p> | <p>Jabad Magazine Ktanim Kol Macabi * Revista Hacoaj *RevistaHebraica Forum Mitzva Toldot Keshet Kehilati A.C.I.S.B.A. * Avatares Comentarios y Opiniones Noti Cissab* Todo Faccma * Israel Hoy Amigos de la Univ. de Tel Aviv Amigos de la Univ. de Jerusalem</p> |

(*) Boletines de Instituciones Deportivas

And I want to finish my presentation by reading to you an article published two months ago - on March 25th., 2005 - in the influential newspaper La Nacion, who dedicated one of its pages to this article *“kids read less than one book per year”*. *This is related to the recent statistics that show that 40.2% of the population is under the line of poverty and cannot meet their basic needs.*

However the other 60% of the population which is over this poverty line, is not very different: only three out of 10 children buy a book per year.

A month later, this same newspaper La Nacion, in its edition of 27 April 2005, refers now to University students and it says:

Ten percent of university students have not read an entire book in the last year. Only 23% has read between one and two books and 22% has read more than six. 45% admitted having read between three and six books.

To make things worse:

37% of those who claim to read, they do so from photocopies, whereas 63% does it from books.

Over 2500 million pages are reproduced illegally at the university per year, damaging, in this way, the book industry. Sixty percent of the photocopied material is protected by rights of author.

The use of book photocopies is habitual in all levels of Argentina's educational system. The president of the Foundation El Libro, organizer of the Annual Book Fair, said that "the use of photocopies at school is a cultural issue".

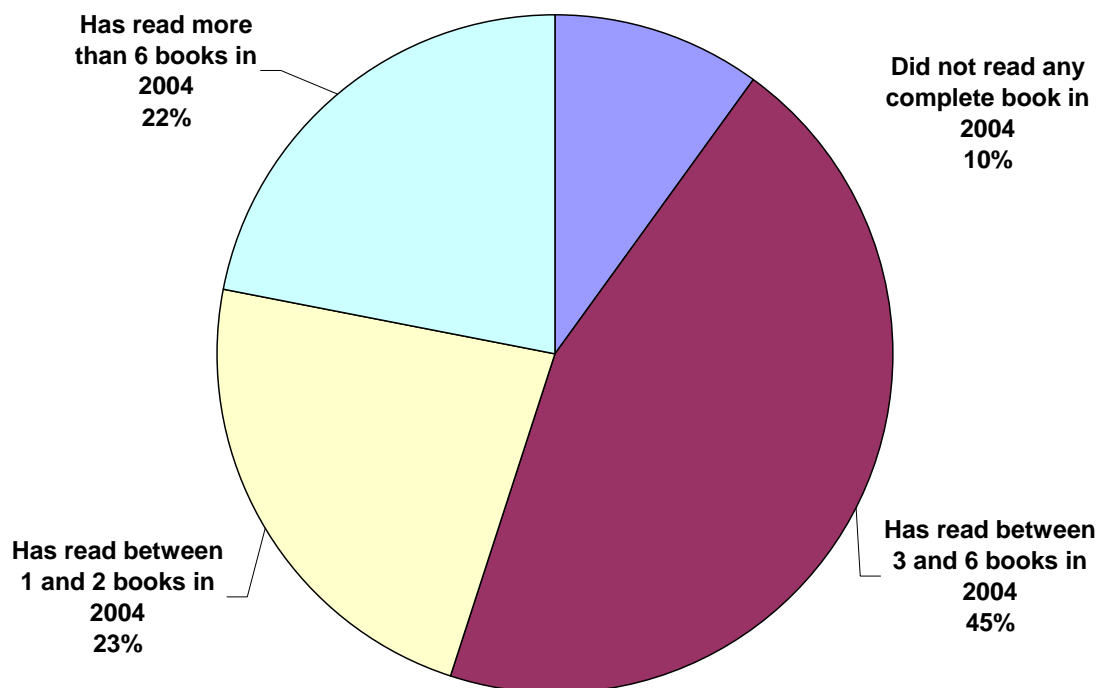
Also, he said, "At the university, teachers and book authors actually allow the use of photocopies. Neither the political nor the judicial power is aware about the seriousness of this problem. **Intellectual rights are not valued in this country**".

While university students claim that they cannot afford to buy books, they still buy CDs, go on holidays, buy brand shoes, attend rock concerts and go to the movies.

This is a cultural issue.

Nobody would take an expired yogurt, but many would photocopy a book".

Reading among university students



How do you get your books?

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| I buy the books I read | 59% |
| I borrow the books I read | 39% |
| I photocopy the books I read | 34% |
| I take them from a Library | 30% |
| I read them from the Internet | 4% |
| Others | 8% |

As you can see, Jewish publishing in Argentina is not a Jewish problem only.

Jews, as I said in the beginning of my dissertation, constitute an integral part of Argentine cultural life, therefore this problem is not only Jewish, it is a cultural problem in our latitudes.

There is no education for books and let alone for libraries

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