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## Message from the Editor

With the publication of the Fall 2012 issue, the *Jewish Political Studies Review* is entering its twenty-fourth year of continuous publication. When he published its first issue in the Spring of 1989, the founding editor of the journal, Daniel J. Elazar, included a statement of purpose, “The Themes of the Jewish Political Studies Review.”<sup>1</sup> At this time, it is fitting that we return to this contribution.

Daniel Elazar wrote: “The study of Jewish modes of self-government, political perceptions, and exercise of political responsibilities is the subject of Jewish political studies and therefore of this journal.” Elazar’s main idea was that each Jewish community with its established methods of self-government formed a polity. The polity, it may be recalled, is the most basic unit of political organization, and from ancient times this model has been used to describe the city-state. This was a subject to which Aristotle, the first political scientist, devoted extensive attention in his classic, *The Politics*. Elazar noted that the political organization of Jewish community represented “the oldest extant polity in the Western world,” even antedating the Catholic Church by some 1,500 years. According to him, there is a need to apply the methods of political science to the study of Jewish communities, their methods of self-government and interaction with the environment.

In this essay, Elazar gave an inclusive list of the “subfields” of Jewish political studies, as follows:

- Jewish Political Thought
- Religious Movement, Ideologies and Public Persuasions
- Defining the Boundaries of Jewish Society
- Jewish Political Culture
- Jewish Political Behavior
- Jewish Political Organization
- Jewish Public Law
- Jewish Political and Communal Institutions
- Jewish Organizations and Interest Groups
- Civic Education
- Public Personalities
- Israel
- Subdivisions of the Jewish People
- Country, Community and Area Studies
- Intercommunity Relations
- External Relations

## Jewish Political Studies Review

The Course of Jewish Public Affairs  
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He explained further: "...We are interested in Jewish political behavior, both within the framework of Jewish politics and because of the unique character of the Jews as a diaspora people interacting with other civilizations on the latter's own territory in relation to their host countries. We are concerned with issues of Jewish public policy. In short, nothing that deals with the Jewish people or Jews, functioning in their political capacities, is necessarily foreign to us."<sup>2</sup> In addition, Daniel Elazar stressed the importance of following the literature in these subjects by maintaining a solid book review section.

The scope of our editorial interest makes it possible for our contributors to choose adventurous topics and to share their findings with our readers. Despite the great technological achievements of our time, our format has continued to be timely and relevant. As opposed to writing a book, an article allows the writer to get a grasp of a problem and to share his or her findings with our readers. As a rule, there are two approaches. One may describe a subject or present a problem in its complexity. Similarly, the book review format gives the reader an awareness of the state of the literature and the addition of new information and knowledge to the field.

We are pleased to report that over the years the *JPSR* has remained faithful to these principles. The present issue contains six solid articles dealing with the Jewish polity in its wider environment and fifteen book reviews which equally reflect the comprehensive scope of our editorial interest. We hope that our readers will find the content of this edition timely and informative. We welcome your suggestions and proposals for new articles.

Joel Fishman, Ph. D.  
Editor

### NOTES

1. *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 1: 1-2 (Spring 1989), 1.
2. *Ibid.*, 3.