American Jewish

YEAR BOOK

Volume 50
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Volume 50 (5709) 1948–1949

Prepared by
THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

HARRY SCHNEIDERMAN AND MORRIS FINE
Editors

JACOB SLOAN
Assistant Editor

THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
PREFACE

With this volume the American Jewish Year Book completes fifty years of regular publication. Inaugurated by Cyrus Adler for The Jewish Publication Society in 1898–99, the Year Book has maintained a continuous record of events of Jewish interest and furnished basic data on contemporary Jewish life and institutions, both in this country and abroad. The history recorded in the Year Books covers the momentous events of the past few decades which have so radically shaped the destinies of the Jews of the world. The volumes mirror especially the tremendous growth in size and complexity of the American Jewish community during the past half century. It is worth recalling in this connection that when the first volume appeared at the close of the century, American Jewry numbered less than 1,000,000 out of a world Jewish population of 10,500,000, while it now numbers between 4 1/2 and 5,000,000 out of a world Jewish population of approximately 11,000,000. More significant than this physical growth, of course, is the predominant position in world Jewry achieved by the American Jewish community in the intervening period.

On the occasion of the Year Book's fiftieth anniversary it was deemed appropriate and not immodest to publish a special article reviewing the contents of the entire series, with particular stress on the manner in which the series has reflected the great events suggested above. The article is written by Harry Schneiderman, editor of the Year Book these many years. It is hoped that this survey, the latest in the series of articles on American Jewish institutions, will give some indication of the importance of the American Jewish Year Book in contemporary Jewish life, at the same time serving as a contribution to Jewish historiography.

The Year Book anniversary suggested the appropriateness of a feature article on some phase of American Jewish history, one more comprehensive than an institutional survey. The
subject chosen was Jewish immigration, a fresh study of which has long been indicated. Publication of such an article is particularly appropriate in this volume, since the year 1948 marks the hundredth anniversary of a landmark in American Jewish history—the beginning of the German Jewish immigration. This immigration was succeeded by the later mass immigration from Eastern Europe which brought approximately two million Jews to these shores in the past fifty years. The emphasis of this article, "A Century of Jewish Immigration to the United States," by Oscar and Mary F. Handlin, is not on the contributions of individuals to America, which has been often treated, but rather on the adjustment and acculturation processes of the Jewish ethno-cultural group, and the influence of the American environment on the immigrants' institutions. The Editors join the authors in the hope that this broad survey will inspire others to carry on intensive research into the vast and highly important subject of Jewish immigrant history.

Owing to the large amount of new and original material it contains, the statistical section this year has acquired the importance of a special feature. The section consists, in the first place, of a new survey of Jewish population in the 700 Jewish communities in the United States reporting more than 100 Jews. It was prepared for the Year Book by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. This was not intended as a scientific population study, but rather as a survey of the situation with regard to Jewish demography in the various communities. The figures are based either on actual local surveys or informed opinion; information is also given on the plans which the communities have for making surveys in the future. The master table is arranged alphabetically by communities; it is prefaced by an explanatory article prepared by Ben B. Seligman and Harvey Swados of the Council's staff, and by a selected geographical table prepared by Sophia M. Robison on the basis of the master table.

The Jewish population of the world is treated in a special study by Boris Sapir and Leon Shapiro of the research
department of the Joint Distribution Committee. This study contains the greatest amount of post-war population data assembled by the Year Book since the end of the war. The study on Jewish migration during the past year, by Sidney Liskofsky, is an attempt to assemble comprehensive data on the exceedingly complex topic of world Jewish migrations, where definitive data is often impossible to find. Here, as in all of the Jewish population figures, the Editors, no less than the compilers, are aware of the limitations of the material. The Editors feel, however, that the absence of comprehensive and official figures should not serve as a deterrent to the publication of even limited data based on informed private or semi-official sources and believed to be reasonable estimates. On other levels, efforts are being made both on the domestic and international scenes to organize the resources of the Jewish communities for scientific demographic research. It is hoped that these efforts will yield results in the not-too-distant future.

In addition to the above-mentioned statistical data, the Year Book also contains a special section on Jewish immigration to Palestine, 1917–1947, translated from Facts and Figures on the Yishuv and its Economy in Palestine, a publication of the Statistical Division of the Jewish Agency for Palestine; a table giving financial data on expenditures of American Jewish national and overseas agencies, prepared by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds; and tables on Jewish enrollment in American colleges and universities, reprinted from One Hundred Thousand Jewish Collegians, recently published by the B’nai B’rith Jewish Vocational Service Bureau. The accompanying text was prepared for the Year Book by Robert Shosteck, Director of Research of the Bureau.

The Review of the Year follows the same general pattern as last year, and is made up of more than a score of articles on the national, overseas and international scenes, with an introduction entitled “The Year in Retrospect” by Nathan Reich. In addition to the regular Year Book authors, a number of new contributors have been added, as follows: H. Lowenberg, who summarizes the military and political events in Palestine leading up to the establishment of the State of
Israel in May, 1948; Major Abraham Hyman, Deputy Jewish Adviser to the American Military Government in Germany, who surveys the DP situation; Marvin Goldfine, author of the article on France as well as the introduction to the Western European section; Sholom J. Kahn, who summarizes the Jewish cultural achievements in the United States; William Frankel, British correspondent; and Moses Senderey and Adolfo Fastlicht, authors of the sections on South America and Mexico respectively.

The supplements to the Review of the Year, consisting of "Special Events" and "American Jewish Bibliography," were again prepared in the office of the American Jewish Committee by Rose G. Stein and Iva Cohen, respectively; the former section is devoted solely to the United States. The Directory of Jewish National Organizations was also revised in the Committee's office, with the assistance of Dora Cohen.

The Editors wish to express their appreciation: to the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, particularly to Harry L. Lurie and Ben B. Seligman of the Council, for their assistance and co-operation in preparing the United States population survey, the directory of Jewish Community Councils, Federations and Welfare Funds and the tables on expenditures of national and overseas Jewish agencies; the B'nai B'rith Vocational Service Bureau and the Statistical Division of the Jewish Agency for permission to reprint from their publications the materials noted above; and the following staff members of the American Jewish Committee for editorial assistance and translation: Claire Marck, Audrey Meltzer, Geraldine Rosenfield, Marvin Goldfine, Milton Himmelfarb, George Kellman and Sidney Liskofsky.

The Editors wish to thank all the authors and compilers for their contributions to the present volume. They must, however, record their special thanks to the authors of the feature article—Oscar and Mary F. Handlin—for their willingness to undertake a particularly difficult assignment in a short space of time, the high quality of their contribution and their promptness in meeting their deadline.

The Editors also acknowledge the assistance of Joseph Lasky
who did the proofreading. Finally, the Editors express their appreciation to Maurice Jacobs, Executive Vice-President of The Jewish Publication Society, for his patient and understanding handling of the production of the volume.

Two announcements on *Year Book* editorial personnel are in order at this point. First is the addition of Jacob Sloan as Assistant Editor. Mr. Sloan, formerly of Schocken Books, Inc., came to the staff in May, 1948, and has since then carried through painstakingly and ably the arduous task of editing all the copy and seeing the book through the press. It is hoped that Mr. Sloan's association with future volumes in the series will be long and mutually fruitful. Second is the announcement that this volume is the last to be edited by Mr. Schneiderman, who is being retired at his own request after forty years of association with the *Year Book*, thirty years as Editor. Through the medium of the *Year Book* Mr. Schneiderman has made an invaluable and lasting contribution to American Jewish history and Jewish communal life. His colleagues trust that they will continue to have the benefit of his wisdom and experience for years to come.

*Morris Fine*

November 20, 1948
CONTRIBUTORS

EDGAR BERNSTEIN, Journalist, correspondent of Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Johannesburg, Union of South Africa; subeditor of the *South African Jewish Times*.

IVA COHEN, Assistant Librarian, American Jewish Committee.

MAURICE R. DAVIE, Ph.D., Chairman, Department of Sociology, Yale University; author of *World Immigration and Refugees in America*.

URIAH Z. ENGELMAN, Ph.D., Director, Department of Research and Information, American Association for Jewish Education; author of *The Rise of the Jew in the Western World*.

ADOLFO FASTLICHT, President, Anti-Defamation League (Comité Unido de Antidifamacion); President, Emergency Pro-Palestine Committee (Comité de Emergencia Pro-Palestina); Mexican representative, Jewish Agency.

JERZY G. GLIKSMAN, Doct. en Droit; author of *L’aspect economique de la question juive en Pologne, La structure professionelle et sociale de la population juive en Pologne*, and other works.

MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM, M.A., Executive Secretary, American Association for a Democratic Germany; author of *Human Rights in the Peace Treaties*.

JULIUS H. GREENSTONE, Ph.D., Principal Emeritus, Gratz College, Philadelphia, Pa.; author of *The Jewish Religion, Jewish Fasts and Feasts*, and other works.

OSCAR HANBLIN, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of the Social Sciences, Harvard University; author of *Boston’s Immigrants* and of numerous articles specializing in the problems of American ethnic groups.

MARY FLUG HANBLIN studied political science at Columbia and at the London School of Economics. The Handlins have collaborated in writing *Commonwealth: a Study of the Role of Government in American Economy*, and *Danger in Discord*.

ABRAHAM S. HYMAN, Major, United States Army; Deputy Adviser on Jewish Affairs in Frankfort, Germany.

SHOLOM J. KAHN, M.A., studied at the Seminary College of Jewish Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Columbia University, and has taught at City and Queens Colleges.

SIDNEY LISKOFFSKY, M.A., member of staff, Foreign Affairs Department, American Jewish Committee.
H. Lowenberg, Magistrate, Tel Aviv District Court, Israel; Correspondent of the American Jewish Committee.

Harry L. Lurie, M.A., Executive Director, Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

Isaiah M. Minkoff, A.B., Executive Director, National Community Relations Advisory Council.

Israel Porush, Ph.D., Chief Rabbi, the Great Synagogue, Sydney, Australia; Contributor to Soncino Talmud Translation and Valentine's Jewish Encyclopedia.

Nathan Reich, Ph.D., Chairman, Department of Economics, Hunter College; Lecturer at Columbia University.

David Rome, B.L.Sc., Press Officer, Canadian Jewish Congress; editor of Canadian Jews in World War II.

Geraldine Rosenfield, M.A., member of staff, Library of Jewish Information, American Jewish Committee.

Boris Sapir, Jur.D., Research Associate, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Harry Schneiderman, Co-editor of the American Jewish Year Book

Abba Schwartz, Reparations Director, International Refugee Organization, Geneva, Switzerland.

Ben B. Seligman, Research Associate, Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds; Instructor in Economics, Brooklyn College.

M. Senderey, Director of the Argentine Zionist Federation.

Leon Shapiro, Lic. en Droit, Contributor of articles on contemporary problems to Jewish Social Studies and other journals.

Louis Shub, M.A., Executive Director, Zionist Youth Commission, Los Angeles, Calif.

Rose G. Stein, B.A., member of staff, Library of Jewish Information, American Jewish Committee.

Ernest Strauss, Jur.D., practised law in Austria; journalist and social worker in Shanghai, China, since 1938.

Harvey Swados, B.A., Special Research Assistant, Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

Joshua Trachtenberg, Ph.D., Rabbi, Temple Covenant of Peace, Easton, Pa.