AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK
Preface

Of special interest in the present volume, the fifty-third in the series, is the article, "The Jewish Labor Movement in the United States," by Will Herberg. Its purpose is to present a popular, yet authoritative summary of the growth and development of the major unions with large Jewish memberships, their influence on the individual immigrant, their role in American Jewish life, and their impact on general American society. This study is presented in line with the traditional policy of the Year Book to supplement its detailed annual summaries with occasional special surveys on important subjects of Jewish interest covering longer periods of history, when it is possible to fill in the lacunae necessarily left in the annual reviews, to write with broader scope and discuss past and future trends.

The events described by Mr. Herberg represent a substantial and vital part not only of the American Jewish experience of the twentieth century but also of the general American experience as well, as a reading of the essay will amply demonstrate. The author is extremely well qualified to deal with the subject, as he has been an intimate observer of the labor movement, particularly its Jewish phases, for many years, as well as a participant in some of the events he describes. He has also made a close study of all the research, both primary and secondary, that has been done in the field. It is hoped that his essay will not only provide interesting and useful information, but will also stimulate others to write and do basic research in this field.

An interesting short companion piece to the special study on the Jewish labor movement, published elsewhere in the volume, is the biographical appreciation of one of the founders of the movement and one of its greatest leaders—the late Abraham Cahan, editor of the Jewish Daily Forward. The tribute was prepared by Mendel Osherowitch, a friend of Mr. Cahan and one of his collaborators on the editorial staff of the Forward.

The articles surveying the year under review (July 1, 1950–June 30, 1951), which occupy the larger part of the volume, follow in the main the pattern established in recent past volumes. The principal differences will here be noted.

In the section dealing with the United States, the articles summarizing developments in the cultural areas—the treatment of Jewish subjects in general literature, literary production in the Hebrew and Yiddish languages, Jewish music and Jewish art—have this year been omitted. On the basis of past experience, and after careful consideration, the editors have concluded that the reporting of trends in literature and the arts can best be done in articles which are more discursive and cover longer time-spans than the annual summaries. It is planned to publish such articles in future volumes. In
the present volume the annual "American Jewish Bibliography," which lists books of Jewish interest in English, again appears; it is supplemented by a bibliography on "Hebrew and Yiddish Studies in Jewish History and Rabbinic Literature."

Also omitted this year are the Jewish population estimates for the United States, owing to the absence of revised information. It is hoped to bring these statistics up to date in a future volume.

There have been two additions to the American section, both dealing with aspects of Jewish communal life which have become extremely important in recent years and in which a great deal of interest has been evinced. One is the financing of Jewish communal programs, which in the past year has taken on new and unusual ramifications owing to the initiation of the bond drive for Israel. The other is the youth and recreational activity of Jewish agencies, including services to Jews in the armed forces, which have taken on a new urgency. Both articles are prepared by authorities in their fields.

In the overseas section the practice of securing reports from residents of foreign countries has been extended to all the foreign areas reviewed with the exception of the Arab Middle East and the countries behind the Iron Curtain. From these regions it is not possible to secure objective first-hand reports, and American authorities have prepared the articles on the basis of the best available evidence, consisting of the press of those countries, special reports published in the press of Western Europe and the United States, information in the files of American Jewish agencies, letters from individuals in those countries, and other documents. The Year Book summaries of Jewish life behind the Iron Curtain for the past few years have constituted the best single source of information in this field and have been widely cited. Of particular interest among the reports received from abroad is the unusually comprehensive survey of developments in Western Germany, which contains a full description of the anti-democratic trends reappearing in that country.

Grateful acknowledgment is made of the work of Miss Dora Cohen and Mrs. Sophie Rubenstein of the Year Book staff. The former prepared the directories and performed the myriad of tasks necessary for the assembling of the volume; the latter typed the manuscripts and rendered clerical assistance. The services of the special Year Book staff are also acknowledged, namely, Martin Greenberg, who edited many of the manuscripts dealing with foreign countries; and Mrs. Effie Solis-Cohen, who did the proofreading and indexing. Miss Floralee Haas and Mrs. Lucy Dawidowicz of the staff of the Library of Jewish Information of the American Jewish Committee assisted in the preparation of the obituaries. Thanks are also due to the many persons on the staff of the American Jewish Committee and outside the organization who read individual manuscripts when invited to do so by the editors and offered expert advice and suggestions.

Morris Fine

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Contributors


MAURICE CARR, Paris correspondent of The Jewish Chronicle, London; author, under various pseudonyms, of The House of Napolitano; Calling All Arms; editor, Jewish Short Stories of Today.

ANDRE CHOURAQUI, LL.D.; Deputy Secretary-General of the Alliance Israelite Universial; Secretary-General of the Association of Jewish Studies and of the Council for Jewish Education and Culture in France; author of The Birth of the Jewish State; The Legal Status of the Moroccan Jew; The Song of Songs (new translation); The Social and Legal Status of the Moroccan Jew.

IVA COHEN; assistant librarian, American Jewish Committee.

URIAH Z. ENGELMAN, Ph.D.; director, Department of Research, Publications, and Information, American Association for Jewish Education; author of The Rise of the Jew in the Western World; Hebrew Education in America, Problems and Solutions; co-author, Jews of Charleston (with Charles Reznikoff).

M. Z. FRANK, LL.B.; director of publicity, Haifa Municipality.

JACOB GLANTZ; poet, literary critic and publicist; representative of the Jewish Scientific Institute-YIVO in Mexico, Central and South American countries; author of the epic poem, Christobel Colon.

JOSEPH GORDON; research specialist, Library of Jewish Information, American Jewish Committee; former member research staff, Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO), New York City; author of studies on Eastern-European affairs.

ARNOLD GURIN, M.S.; director of budget research, Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

STANLEY D. HALPERIN, LL.B.; associate consultant to B'nai B'rith and Co-ordinating Board of Jewish Organizations on International Affairs; member, New York State Bar, Association of the Bar of the City of New York, American Society of International Law.

LEON HALPERN; director of the Kehilah in Montevideo, Uruguay; author of Gaysike Sbblofen, etc.

WILL HERBERG, M.A.; director of research and education, New York Dressmakers Union of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (AFL); author of "The Political Theory of American Socialism" (Socialism and American Life); Judaism and Modern Man; an Interpretation of Jewish Religion; Bureaucracy and Democracy in Labor Unions.

J. C. HUREWITZ, Ph.D.; lecturer in government, School of International Affairs (Center of Israel Studies), Columbia University; lecturer in Middle East political history, Dropsie College (Institute for Israel and the Middle East); author of The Struggle for Palestine.

GEORGE KELLMAN, LL.B.; writer; lecturer; director, Investigative and Fact-Finding Division, Civil Rights Department of American Jewish Committee.

MORRIS N. KERTZER, Rabbi, D.H.L.; director, Interreligious Activities Division of the American Jewish Committee; author of With An "H" on My Dog Tag.

I. EDWARD KIEV, Rabbi; librarian, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York City.

FRANCES LEVENSON, LL.B.; staff attorney, Civil Rights Department, American Jewish Committee; member of the Bar of the State of New York.

ELIAS LIPINER, LL.D.; attorney; editor-in-chief of Der Naye Moment, Sao Paulo; author of Oisigus Dertzeylen; Bay di Tiren fun Portugal (awarded Louis LaMed prize in 1949).

SIDNEY LISKOFSKY, B.S.S., M.A.; staff consultant on immigration policy and United
NATIONS, Foreign Affairs Department, American Jewish Committee; author of studies on United Nations and immigration.

BARNET LITVINOFF; journalist; director, public relations, the Joint Palestine Appeal and the Jewish National Fund of Great Britain and Ireland.

WILHELM MICHAELI, LL.D.; director, Jewish Congregation's Emigration Department in Stockholm affiliated with American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society; author of Private International Law according to Swedish Law and Swedish Jurisdiction.

EDWIN S. NEWMAN, B.A., LL.B.; member, New York Bar; lecturer, New School for Social Research; member of staff, American Jewish Committee (on leave); author of The Law of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties; executive editor, Planning Our Human Relations Series, Oceana Publications.

REGINE ORFINGER-KARLIN, LL.D.; attorney, Court of Appeals, Brussels, Belgium; correspondent, American Jewish Committee.

MENDEL Osherowitch; member, editor, the Yiddish section of the P.E.N. Club; author, Umruke Neshomes, Shtet un Shtetlakh in Ukraine.

ARNULF M. PINS; editor, National Jewish Youth Review; chairman, National Jewish Youth Conference 1948-50; president, Young Adult Council, National Social Welfare Assembly; chairman, Youth Advisory Council, Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth; consultant to United Nations for World Assembly of Youth; compiled and edited Youth Organizations in the United States; contributor to Student Zionist, Reconstructionist, Furrows, Survey, and other periodicals.

ISRAEL PORUSH, Ph.D.; Chief Rabbi, The Great Synagogue, Sydney, Australia; president, Australian Jewish Historical Society; president and director, New South Wales Board of Jewish Education; chairman, Sydney Beth Din; author of Dissertation in Mathematics; collaborator, Soncino edition of the Talmud and Vallentine's Jewish Encyclopedia.

EMIL RAAS; attorney; president of the Jewish Community of Berne; collaborator, Verzichtung einer Fälschung; author, Der Prozess um die erfundenen Weisen von Zion.


EDWARD N. SAVETH, Ph.D.; member of staff, American Jewish Committee; lecturer, New School for Social Research, New York City; author of American Historians and European Immigrants, 1875-1925.

LEON SHAPIRO, Lic. en Droit; author of studies and articles on contemporary problems in Israel of Tomorrow, Jewish Social Studies, and other publications.

LOUIS SHUB, M.A.; executive director, Zionist Youth Commission, Southern Pacific Region at Los Angeles, Cal.; lecturer, West Coast University of Judaism; lecturer, University of California at Los Angeles; joint author, Jews in the Post War World Series.

DOV TIBBON (SZTRAUBAUM), LL.M.; director of the Information Department of the Jewish Agency, Jerusalem.

ZALMEN WASSERTZUG; Professor, Hebrew Teachers' Seminary of Buenos Aires; member of staff, Di Yidische Zaitung, Buenos Aires; author, stories for children; Mit Eygene Oygen; Farshvekhte Yerushe.

NANCY F. WECHSLER, LL.B.; counsel, The President's Committee on Civil Rights.

MILTON WEISSBERG, M.H.L.; Rabbi; formerly, director, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, Cuba.