In its fifty-six years of publication, the American Jewish Year Book has provided a unique chronicle of Jewish life in the United States and throughout the world. This latest volume, appearing in a time of crisis for Jews in the Middle East and North Africa, whose ramifications are being felt everywhere, once again colors in the indispensable background for an intelligent reading of today’s headlines.

Experienced on-the-scene correspondents report from the troubled areas themselves — Israel, Algeria, Tunisia and French Morocco. United States actions and attitudes vis-à-vis Israel over the past twelve months are discussed by an astute observer of the American scene.

In its treatment of Jewish communal activities in Western and Central Europe, in the Soviet Union and its East European satellites, and in Latin America, the Year Book maintains the high standards of objective reportage and informed interpretation that have been its hallmark since the beginning of the century. A special international section brings up to date the manifold accomplishments of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

The major feature of the 1956 edition of the American Jewish Year Book is a ninety-three page historical survey of “Jewish Social Work in the United States,” specially prepared by Professor Herman D. Stein, of the New York School for Social Work of Columbia University. This definitive essay traces the development of the American Jewish

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AMERICAN
JEWISH
YEAR BOOK
Preface

The present volume features the article “Jewish Social Work in the United States, 1654–1954,” by Professor Herman D. Stein of the New York School of Social Work. This article presents a survey of social work activities carried on under Jewish auspices from the beginnings of the Jewish settlement in this country until the present day. It is the last in the series of four articles published in observance of the American Jewish Tercentenary, three of which appeared in the Tercentenary volume of the American Jewish Year Book (volume 56).

The editors are grateful for the assistance of a number of authorities in the field of Jewish communal service, including Herbert H. Aptekar, Emanuel Berlatsky, Harry L. Lurie, Jacob R. Marcus, Frances Taussig, and Morris Zelditch, who read Professor Stein’s manuscript and offered useful criticisms and suggestions. The editors also again acknowledge the collaboration of the Advisory Committee of the American Jewish Year Book, whose names are listed elsewhere in this volume, in the selection of the topics for the four Tercentenary articles.

Among the regular features of the Year Book, mention should be made of the sections dealing with the Jewish population of the U.S., Jewish education, and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. The first contains an estimate of the Jewish population of New York City based on the health survey conducted in 1952 by the Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York (HIP), brought up to date by the New York Federation of Jewish Philanthropies as part of its study of child care needs. The inclusion in the HIP survey of a question on religious affiliation, the size of the sample (4,190 households and 13,558 persons), and the fact that the households were selected as part of a mathematically defined sample, make the HIP estimates of the Jewish population the most reliable thus far obtained, and the Year Book is pleased to revise its figures accordingly.

The 1955 volume contained a census of Jewish educational enrollment conducted in 1954 by the Commission for the Study of Jewish Education in the U.S., as part of its National Study of Jewish Education. The present volume contains some additional tables from that census, giving the Jewish school enrollment for 1948–1954 in fourteen major Jewish communities. This volume also contains summaries of the self studies of Jewish education in Cleveland, Ohio and Savannah, Georgia, which served as pilot studies of the National Study of Jewish Education. The editors are indebted to Dr. Oscar I. Janowsky, chairman of the Commission for the Study of Jewish Education in the U.S., to Dr. Uriah Z. Engelman, director of the National Study, and to Sidney Z.
Vincent of Cleveland and Paul Kulick of Savannah, for their cooperation in making this information available to the Year Book.

The third article summarizes the policies, program and procedures of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany in the allocation and distribution of funds obtained as a result of that Conference's agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany in September 1952 for collective indemnity to the Jewish victims of Nazism outside of Israel.

The editors again wish to thank their colleagues on the Year Book staff, Miss Dora Cohen and Mrs. Stella Ettlinger, for their splendid cooperation. They are also grateful to Dr. Moses Jung, who assisted in the preparation of the Calendars, to Maurice J. Goldbloom, who assisted in the editing, and to Mrs. Freda Imrey, who did the proofreading.

February 6, 1956

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