

TERCENTENARY VOLUME

# American Jewish Year Book 1955

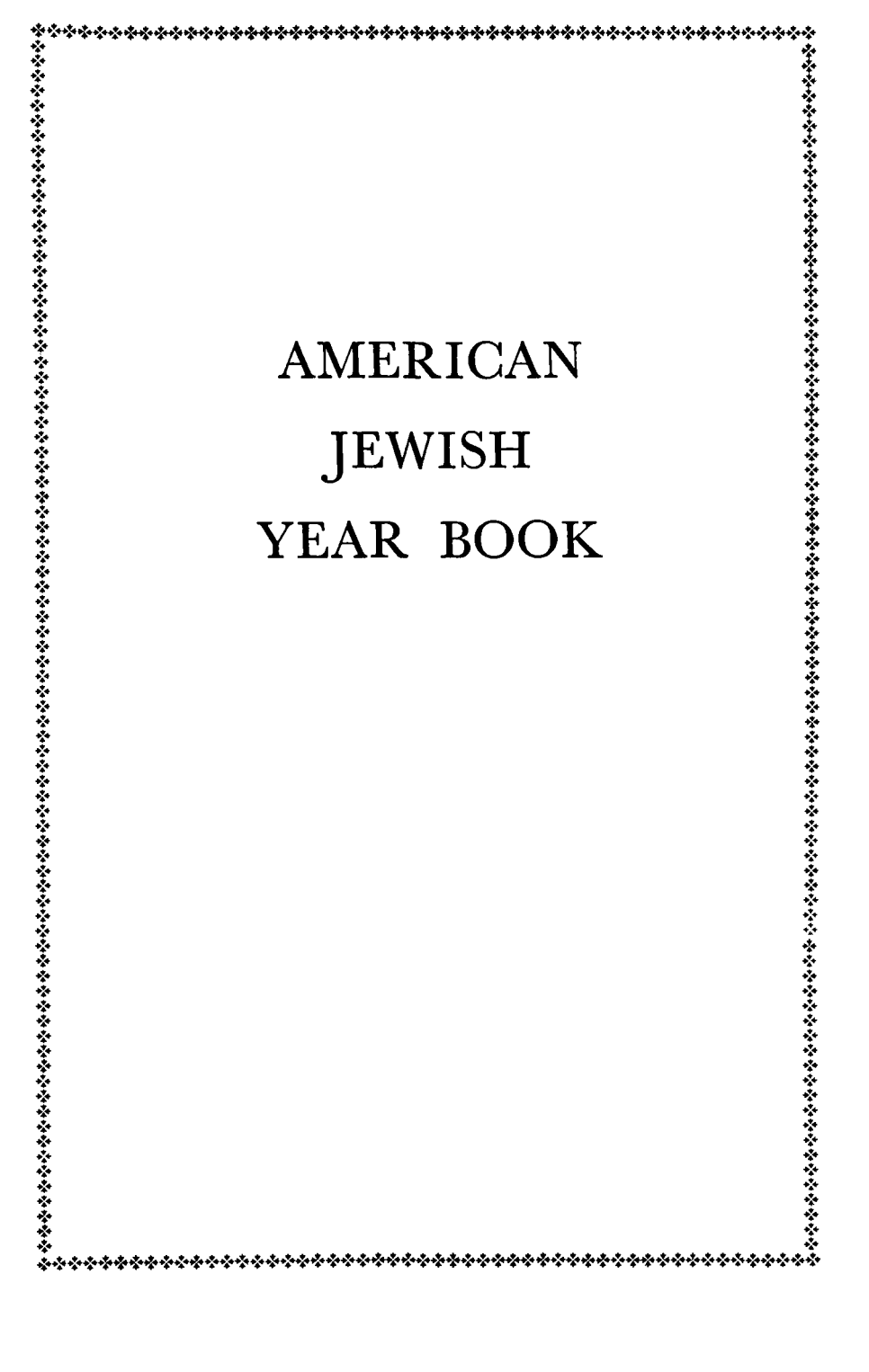
A Record of Events and Trends  
in American and World Jewish Life

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE *and*  
JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA

**T**HE Tercentenary edition of the **AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK** (Volume 56) features three special articles in celebration of the 300 years of Jewish life in the United States. Each of the three is notable for its fresh insight into a crucial aspect of American Jewish life. Nathan Glazer, brilliant sociologist and Guggenheim Fellow, summarizes all the available knowledge about the social characteristics of American Jews. Glazer notes how traditional Jewish values and capacities, cramped within the confines of narrow European possibilities, were liberated to find free expression in American society. Similarly, Pulitzer Prize winner Professor Oscar Handlin of Harvard University describes how Jews were able to achieve a large measure of civic and political equality in the New World, only to face the new twentieth-century problems of social discrimination. In "The Spiritual life of American Jewry" Joseph Blau, professor of philosophy at Columbia University, finds the religious values of Judaism expressed both within the synagogue, and significantly, in the wide range of humanitarian and communal works that has typified all religious groups in America.

With these studies the **AMERICAN JEWISH YEAR BOOK** continues its fifty-six-year old policy of presenting, along with a wealth of factual material, illuminating interpretations of trends in Jewish life. It is revealing that much of the information on which the three tercentenary articles were based came from past issues of the **YEAR BOOK**. For

*(Continued on back flap)*



AMERICAN  
JEWISH  
YEAR BOOK

# American Jewish Year Book



VOLUME 56

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## 1955

Prepared by  
THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE



MORRIS FINE, Editor  
JACOB SLOAN, Associate Editor

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE  
New York

THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
Philadelphia

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## Preface

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IN SEPTEMBER 1954 American Jewry launched the celebration of the 300th anniversary of Jewish settlement in the United States. In observance of this event the present volume features three special articles on American Jewish history. The first, "Social Characteristics of American Jews, 1654-1954," by Nathan Glazer, summarizes our available knowledge of the socio-economic position of the Jews in America, at different stages of their history in this country. The second, "The Acquisition of Political and Social Rights by the Jews in the United States," by Oscar and Mary F. Handlin, deals with the theme of Jewish emancipation. It reviews the progress made by Jews in America in achieving full rights as citizens and points to some of the remaining barriers to full equality. The third, "The Spiritual Life of American Jewry, 1654-1954," by Joseph L. Blau, describes the history of the American synagogue, paying special attention to the influence of the American environment in shaping Jewish religious and other moralistic institutions. A fourth article, "A History of Jewish Social Welfare in the United States," by Herman Stein, will appear in volume 57. It is hoped that these monographs will contribute to a better understanding of the American Jewish community and the forces that have shaped its development in the New World during three hundred years.

The editors are grateful to the advisory committee of the Library of Jewish Information of the American Jewish Committee, and to its chairman Benjamin W. Huebsch, for helpful advice in connection with the selection of these subjects. The editors are also grateful to Arnold Gurin, Edwin J. Lukas, Jacob R. Marcus, Ben B. Seligman, and Marshall Sklare, who offered valuable criticisms and suggestions on the manuscripts.

The American Jewish community suffered the loss of a number of its distinguished members during 1953 and 1954, among them, Hayim Greenberg, noted Zionist and Jewish cultural leader; Louis Ginzberg, the world-renowned Talmudic scholar of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; and Alexander Marx, the great Jewish bibliographer and librarian of the Seminary. The YEAR BOOK is honored to present brief biographical appreciations of these American Jews, prepared by their long-time friends and colleagues: Marie Syrkin, editor of *The Jewish Frontier*; Louis Finkelstein, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; and Abraham S. Halkin, associate professor of Jewish literature and institutions at the Seminary.

In the regular features of the YEAR BOOK mention should be made of the 1954 census of Jewish educational enrollment in the United States, submitted

by the Commission for the Study of Jewish Education in the U. S. This commission, under the chairmanship of Oscar I. Janowsky, is an independent body set up to supervise a nation-wide study of Jewish education. The study is being sponsored by the American Association for Jewish Education and directed by Professor Janowsky and Uriah Z. Engelman. The editors are grateful to both Professor Janowsky and Dr. Engelman for their cooperation in making this enrollment study available.

The editors again wish to thank their colleagues on the YEAR BOOK staff, Miss Dora Cohen and Mrs. Stella Ettlinger, for their splendid collaboration. They are also pleased to acknowledge the editorial assistance of Maurice J. Goldbloom, the research help of Theodore Leskes, the proof-reading services of Mrs. Freda Imrey and the reference aid of Mrs. Lotte Zajac.

January 10, 1955

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