



Saul Hayes

Photograph by *Howard Kay*
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Saul Hayes — A Tribute

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Résumé

Sans vouloir contredire feu Maurice Samuel qui écrit un livre intitulé: "The Gentleman and the Jew" dans lequel il opposait l'idéal de galanterie des chevaliers du Moyen-Age aux valeurs que l'on associe à l'idéal du Juif tel: la compassion, la recherche de la paix et de la dignité et celle de la vie humaine, force m'est de reconnaître que lorsque nous parlons de feu Saul Hayes décédé en janvier 1980, nul ne peut s'empêcher de considérer qu'il y eut paradoxalement en lui cette proportion idéale du juste mélange de "Gentleman" et de l'être Juif. Bien que direct, il était et fut courtois. Quelque désagréable qu'ait dû être le message qu'il avait à formuler, nul n'en ignorait le sens car sa façon d'être ne cachait pas sa pensée.

Il avait un sens aigu des responsabilités tant envers le Judaïsme au Canada qu'envers les Juifs vivant à l'étranger.

Quelles que soient les circonstances, tristes ou gaies, M. Hayes était un homme imprégné d'humour et de traits d'esprits. Un appel téléphonique banal avait le don de tourner en véritable plaisir de l'esprit, agrémenté de citations en anglais, en français ou en latin ou tout simplement d'un Sage Juif.

M. Saul Hayes fut un vrai, un grand Montréalais. Il n'oublia jamais toutefois qu'il était uni au reste du Canada.

Il n'est que justice que de lui rendre cet hommage dans notre journal d'histoire.

Le trépas de Saul Hayes, âgé de 73 ans, nous a tous gravement atteint. Sans contredit, il fut l'être exceptionnel qui a bâti une communauté toute entière, il en fut l'artisan, le maître d'armes et le titan, celui qui a donné ses enseignements semant à tous les vents. Une communauté en est née. Elle continue de se débattre dans l'ombre de ce géant.

Maurice Samuel once wrote a book entitled "The Gentleman and the Jew" suggesting that the European chivalric ideal of the gentleman, stemming as it did from the values of the feudal Middle Ages based on the cult

of the soldier and the mystique of militarism, was inconsistent with the values we associate with the Jew and Judaism: compassion, the pursuit of peace and the dignity and worth of individual human life: that the two were incompatible.

Without any intention of contradicting the late Maurice Samuel for whose writings I have a profound admiration and respect, taking the word "gentleman" in the context of the residual connotations it has acquired, shorn of its more brutalized historic origins, Saul Hayes, whose loss we mourned in January of this year, combined the concepts of gentleman and Jew in an ideal mingling of proportions. He was polished yet direct. One never was in doubt of his meaning, as his manner never concealed his thought, however unpalatable his message might have to be. He was compassionate, not only in the public endeavours which he led and directed but in his very own private and personal life. Once in the 1950's I mentioned the name of an elderly couple I had worked with in Ottawa in the wartime Censorship. I learned from his reply that he knew them, that the husband had died, the widow was ill and alone and Saul was trying to find some shelter and assistance for her — all within his greatly overburdened agenda. He had a keen sense of responsibility for his total constituency — Canadian Jewry — as well as for Jews abroad. Above all, whatever the circumstances, in sorrow as well as in joy, he was a man of humour and wit. A conversation with him, however casual, in his office or on the phone between Toronto and Montreal was an intellectual treat, chock-full of literary allusions, quotations from sources in English, French or Latin or from a Jewish sage — not out of pedantry but of sheer saturation with the writings of the ages.

In this cosmopolitan manner and his Gallic air Saul was a true Montrealer. But he never forgot that he was linked with the rest of Canada. One of his favourite expressions was an allusion to the ever present Canadian *Mariposa*, the counterpart of the *shtetl* — when a proposal was projected he would often say: "what will they say about it Vegreville?"

It is not unfitting that this tribute should appear in an historical journal for though we know of Saul's interest in archival matters, how many of us know that what was to be his first appearance in print, frustrated unfortunately by circumstances, was of an historical nature? In 1928, Mac-Millan of Canada was preparing for publication the Master's thesis Saul had written at the University of Toronto entitled "An Economic History of Canada". The announcement under "Forthcoming Books" appeared in

the jacket of a volume of MacMillan that came into my possession many years later. But where was the book? I asked Saul and he explained that it never saw the light of day as his father's sudden and early death had upset all his plans and the book never appeared.

Saul's death at 73 deprived us all seriously. There was so much he knew, so much that he had to convey to us of his experience and insights of his communications, his contacts with the great and the less, with government and community, with Jewish leadership the world over, so much that we wanted to know and needed to know that only he was privy to. We can only mourn his departure and be thankful that we had the good fortune to have him as our guide and counsel these many years.