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The Accidental Immigrants: Canada And The Interned Refugees: Part 1

PAULA JEAN DRAPER

Résumé

Dans cet article l'écrivain étudie ce qui c'est passé à un petit groupe d'Allemands et d'Autrichiens dont au moins le 70% descendait d'un de deux grands-parents juifs. Ces hommes se sont trouvés pris entre la destruction et l'exclusion de la société. S'étant réfugiés en Angleterre, ils furent pris, emprisonnés et envoyés au Canada où ils passèrent une grande partie de la deuxième guerre mondiale.

Paula Jean Draper fait remonter le commencement de l'odyssée de ce groupe d'internés à 1930 lorsqu'ils cherchèrent asile en Angleterre. Pendant les premières 10 années, ils purent bénéficier d'une liberté presque absolue. Pourtant, à partir de 1940, ils furent mis dans des camps spéciaux. Après être envoyés d'un camp d'internement à un autre, une partie d'eux fut envoyée en Australie et 4000 internés partirent pour le Canada. Les autorités au Canada s'attendaient à ce que ces internés fussent de catégorie "A", c'est à dire "dangereux", mais il s'agissait surtout de personnes de catégorie "B" et "C", ce qui implique qu'ils avaient le droit à être remis en liberté.

L'écrivain donne d'abord un aperçu de la politique canadienne des années 30 sur l'immigration. Elle décrit l'arrivée et le traitement réservé à ce groupe particulier d'internés. Les recherches faites par l'écrivain prouvent que malgré les pressions de la part du gouvernement anglais et de la part de plusieurs organisations, les personnes de groupe "B" et "C" étaient traitées comme des prisonniers et non pas comme ayant des privilèges bien définis.

Le gouvernement canadien aurait préféré ignorer les plaintes de ces réfugiés mais ceux-ci et leurs amis firent ainsi que le gouvernement dut bientôt changer de politique.

Pour compléter ses recherches l'écrivain a consulté plusieurs articles de journaux, les éditoriaux de cette période et elle a eu plusieurs entrevues

*Out of respect to the privacy of the individuals who were interviewed in the preparation of this paper, the author has refrained from naming them in the footnotes. Those wishing precise documentation may contact the author through the office of the Editor.

avec des personnes dont, par raisons humanitaires, elle préfère cacher le nom.

This is an examination of how a small group of German and Austrian men, at least seventy percent of whom had descended from one or more Jewish grandparents, found themselves caught between destruction and exclusion. Refugees in England, they were suddenly seized, imprisoned and shipped to internment camps in Canada. There they were to spend a good part of the war years. While their story is not unique, it's outcome is peculiar to "the Canadian Way". The treatment these men received at the hands of the Canadian government and military reflects the changing self-image which Canada underwent during the Second World War. Newspaper editorials shed light on the political stances involved in humanitarian issues. The actions of the Director of the Immigration Branch of the Ministry of Mines and Resources further illustrate the prevailing views on what kind of people were desirable as future Canadians. And the attitudes, perseverance and triumph of these refugees illustrate the abilities man possesses to ward off despair.

ENGLAND AND THE INTERNED REFUGEES

Loss of freedom is a shocking experience. It was all the more so for us because we felt ourselves to be allies of Great Britain. We regarded Britain as the country that had rescued us from Nazi tyranny. To be then incarcerated by our friends seemed almost incomprehensible, a kind of betrayal.¹

By the late 1930's England had become the refugee centre of the world. In the summer of 1943, there were 114,400 war refugees in the country. They came from every nation in Western Europe. When war was declared, all people categorized as "enemy aliens" were brought before tribunals to be classified into one of three categories. Class "A" aliens were termed "dangerous enemy aliens" and immediately interned. Class "B" or "friendly enemy aliens" were under suspicion and were given restrictions such as curfews and a five mile travel limit. The third group, and the largest, was category "C", "friendly alien and refugee from Nazi oppression". Apart from general restrictions against driving and using cameras, "C" as well as "B"s were free from internment.

During the "phony war" these refugees were well-treated in England. But the spring of 1940 brought an end to tranquility in England. On April ninth, Denmark fell. Norway was subdued by May. On May tenth, 1940,

the *Blitzkrieg* began. Holland, Luxembourg, and Belgium collapsed. By June twenty-second an armistice had been signed between France and Germany. Britain was now the target of the Nazis. As fear of invasion mounted, the possibility that amongst the refugees in England there could be subversive elements waiting to help overthrow the government became increasingly realistic.

That the fifth column could be a decisive factor in modern warfare emerged from the Spanish Civil War. Although seldom clearly projected, the common image of the fifth column included saboteurs and spies, as well as propagandists who aimed to divide the populace and undermine the government by convincing masses of people of the fruitlessness of resisting the enemy.²

This fear was especially prevalent among the British military. Beginning in mid-May all categories of enemy aliens residing in eastern coastal or so-called "Protected Areas" in England and Scotland were interned by the Home Office. German and Austrian men between the ages of sixteen and sixty, totalling 23,000 and 3,000 women, were interned.³ They were placed in improvised camps and prisons. The government explanation of this round-up was presented by the Under-Secretary of the Home Office, Mr. Peake, on July 10th, 1940:

I wish we knew half as much about many of the neutral aliens and many British subjects as we know about the enemy aliens in this country . . . It was represented to us by the military authorities, on military grounds, that the whole of the coastal belt on the east and south-east coasts of England must be made into a protected area. Not only did they press upon us that enemy aliens, about whom we knew so much, should be turned out, but, they pressed upon us also that neutral aliens should be removed. The military authorities asked for the removal of all aliens from the coastal belt. The only practical method of dealing with the situation was, in fact, to intern the males . . . In my view the most humane thing to do with the aliens at that time, and with public feeling what it was, was to put them into temporary internment.⁴

Thus it was obvious that those refugees, who by accidents of fate were living in the designated protected areas, were deliberately interned. That it was a precautionary measure, which in fact served to remove these early victims of Nazism from possible danger zones, is also clear. No one believed that this was anything more than a temporary measure.⁵

I was working as an apprentice cutter in the large clothing factory

of the Montague Burton Company in Leeds, when, at 12:30 p.m., on May 16, 1940, I was called to the main office. This was so unusual an occurrence as to cause something of a sensation among my fellow workers . . . My knees shaking, I followed the man who had been sent to fetch me, and was taken to the office of the assistant general manager. Two men in rain coats were waiting . . . These gentlemen, he said, were detectives who had come to fetch me. The room began to sway. I could not find my voice. My throat seemed parched. What had I done? Then one of the detectives said that all aliens were being interned for a brief period. But there was nothing to be afraid of . . . It would all be sorted out quickly . . . I would soon be sent back . . . It was likely, he added, that I would be detained for a day or two. Therefore they would drive me home so that I could get some pyjamas and a toothbrush . . . Then I walked out of the office, between two detectives, a kind of prisoner.⁶

The younger the refugee was, the less ominous was the visit by the police.

I sat in the car, I'm sure they must have thought I was crazy, and I laughed and I laughed on the way to the police station. I knew something marvelous had happened to me.⁷

For thousands of those interned in this manner, freedom was not to be regained in one or two days, but in one, or two, or even three years.

Moved about from place to place, the internees found themselves congregated in ever growing numbers. Three of the larger camps were in Huyton, near Liverpool, and in holiday resorts on the Isle of Man.

Vividly I still see the picture as we went through the streets of Ramsey to the Internment Camp in a long marching column, everybody carrying his small luggage. The inhabitants of Ramsey stand in front of their houses. The rumor has spread: we are dangerous parachutists, and so we are looked at gloomily, perhaps one or the other astonished, how we managed to jump down with suitcases and portfolios.⁸

With the exception of those who had been transferred from Kitchener Camp, the Isle of Man was the first place in which many of the refugees were thrown together in large groups. The camps were segregated into those for men and for women. In these camps there was no work to be done and so time was spent in entertainment and discussion. They complained about the food, discussed the war, dwelt on the horrors they had escaped and worried about those they had left behind.⁹ For those who observed *kashrut* there was little to eat other than bread.¹⁰ While the few

who had friends in the kitchens ate well,¹¹ others had, on occasion, only a little bread to last them days.¹² One refugee recalls hearing that in Ramsey the quartermaster was selling nine-tenths of their rations on the black market.¹³ But the Isle of Man was a resort, so the conditions were comfortable and they could go swimming in the Irish Sea. Only for the men recently released from concentration camps was this incarceration difficult.¹⁴ The imminent threat of invasion caused fear in some that the large groupings of refugees on the island would serve as convenient concentration camps for the conquering Germans. Others saw their removal to an area far from the scene of battle as a measure of protection. Nevertheless, there were guards and barbed wire, though guns had to be exchanged at every change of the guard due to their shortage.¹⁵ For about two thousand of the men thus incarcerated, the comfortable stay was soon ended, by way of transfer to a camp in Huyton, and then a ship ride to Canada.

The amount of manpower necessary to administer and guard 26,000 people led to a decision to send internees to Commonwealth countries. Canada and Australia accepted, as a means of aiding the war effort.

15 June 1940. Arrival in Douglas, Isle of Man. Hygenical conditions excellent. We sleep in beds again. Food is not enough, though. We are allowed to bathe in the sea, and are taken for walks. We live fairly peacefully and undisturbed for some ten days, when it is announced that all unmarried men between the ages of 16 and 40 are going to be moved. There are rumours to Canada, but we do not know.¹⁶

Two thousand internees of all categories were sent to Australia in the summer of 1940. More than four thousand internees were shipped to Canada. They were sent on three ships: the Arandora Star, the S.S. Ettrick, and the S.S. Sobieski. Canada had expected that her offer to take internees was restricted to those in class "A", dangerous enemy aliens, but she instead received approximately 2250 "B"s and "C"s. It was generally believed among the interned refugees that there had been a mistake in orders and that the refugees had not been officially designated for removal to the Dominions. There is no indication in the available documents that such was the case.

The fact that England was shipping these refugees to Canada came to a tragic light when the Arandora Star was torpedoed on June 30th, 1940. Four hundred lives were lost, all of them internees.¹⁷ Cables from Vincent Massey, the High Commissioner for Canada in England, indicate that at

least fifty of the internees aboard were in category "B".¹⁸ An additional 532 were stated to be German internees, category "A". The resultant exposure caused by this tragedy led to public outcries in Britain, and to many questions about the treatment of the refugees. On July 9th, Mr. Cross, the Minister of Shipping, in answer to a question in Parliament said: "The Germans on board were Nazi sympathizers and none came to this country as refugees."¹⁹ The next day he repeated the above statement and then went on to contradict it. "Having arrived at the names of the missing . . . the Home Office . . . (will) transmit them to the refugee organizations because it is only the refugee organizations who will be able to get in touch with the relatives."²⁰ In the following weeks and months the British government was forced to justify its actions. On July 23rd, the Home Secretary, Sir John Anderson, spoke in the House of Commons and explained that:

The recent restrictions for the internment of Germans and Austrians who had been placed in the "C" category provided for the exemption of those falling within certain specified descriptions . . . There have been cases of mistaken interpreting instructions which necessarily had to be carried out under a great deal of urgency.²¹

This explanation did not stand up to the further scrutiny of an Inquiry. In his report on the *Arandora Star*, Lord Snell stated:

The Canadian government agreed to take four thousand, and it was estimated that this number would absorb all the more dangerous characters. While the underlying idea was, in the first stage at any rate, to send out of the country those aliens who were proved or known to be dangerous characters, it would not be right to say that the orders issued ever laid down that only aliens who could be described as dangerous characters were sent overseas.²²

Thus while the original intentions of those who ordered internment were for temporary detention, the pressures of the time caused indiscriminate actions. We do not know which agencies were responsible for the sending of refugees to the Dominions. But there can be no doubt that the government was well aware of what was happening. That public sentiment was not behind this policy was clearly illustrated. In the following eight months five debates were forced in the Commons regarding the internments.²³ By the end of July opportunities for release were made available for "C" internees. Those eligible for release included: students under eighteen, those with work permits, workers in agriculture, scientists and academics for whom there was war work, doctors and dentists

authorized to practice or study, those engaged in refugee organizations, those with sons in the British armed forces, religious ministers with congregations, and people “about to embark on emigration overseas.”²⁴ These regulations were duly transmitted to the Canadian authorities. By the end of July the transferal of interned refugees was halted and those in British internment camps were being processed for release. Only two ships had brought refugees to Canada. How the Canadian government reacted to the knowledge of who the prisoners were, and the manner in which she treated them clearly illustrates the immigration policies and practices of the time.

CANADA’S IMMIGRATION POLICY IN THE 1930’s

Workers in Jewish agencies in the 1930’s were familiar with the often repeated stories of how recent Jewish immigrants had received their visas to Canada. Claiming to be farmers in order to pass the regulations, Jews were told to show the immigration officers their hands. It was not the texture of the hands these men were interested in. It was the money they held.²⁵ Many Jews lied about their religion, aware as they were that Canada did not want Jews. A large group of Czechoslovakian farmers, who were allowed into Canada in 1938, contained many Jews who only made themselves known to the Jewish community after they became citizens. The internees were well aware of the difficulty involved in Canadian immigration.

So began what was to be an internment lasting more than a year and a half. It was to take me to Canada, a country that I barely knew by name and that was only a large red stretch on the school maps we had used in Vienna in our geography lessons. It was a silent, mysterious land for me, known by all refugees as the country whose doors were most tightly shut. Virtually no one could get in.²⁶

When Auschwitz became an extermination centre, all the belongings of the victims were stored in a huge complex which was referred to by the inmates as “Canada”. In concentration camp slang “Canada” meant “an abundance of everything”, which was off limits and closely guarded.²⁷ This was an unfortunately apt description of Canadian immigration policies in the 1930’s and early 1940’s.

The anti-immigration policies of the 1930’s were based on simple prejudices as well as elaborately constructed economic and social theories. The restrictionist legislation of 1931 was predominantly a result of economic recession. The standard of living began to fall in 1929 and con-

tinued its downward trend every year until 1933.²⁸ By 1933 twenty-nine percent of the labour force was unemployed,²⁹ and over a million of Canada's population of ten million were on direct relief.³⁰ Admitting more job-seekers was a political impossibility. Coupled with this crisis were the effects of the imposition of a quota system in the United States. Canada's open door system of immigration had depended heavily on the outward flow of new arrivals to the south. This had long been criticized by opponents of free immigration, such as the Canadian historian R.M. Lower.

Wholesale immigration, productive as it is of wholesale emigration, turns our country into a training ground for American citizens. Meanwhile we in Canada have brought in another batch of raw material which out of the goodness of our hearts we proceed to prepare for our American friends.³¹

The change in American policy meant that only Canadian citizens were free to resettle in the United States. Fear grew that the departing native Canadians would be replaced by undesirable immigrant groups. Academics therefore devised a theory which would show that these immigrants were unnecessary altogether. Lower, writing in 1930,³² contended that the present natural surplus of births over deaths (1½%) was sufficient population increase due to the limited expansion of the economy. The end of the land boom meant that new settlers would only displace the native born. Thus immigration would cause emigration and "cheap men will drive out dear ones".³³ But as the 1930's progressed, the economic argument became less tenable. During that decade emigration exceeded immigration by over 100,000 and the standard of living rose every year but 1938.³⁴ By 1939 the economy had recovered to its 1928 peak, and after 1940 there was full employment.³⁵ Thus in the mid-thirties less tangible arguments took precedence in the restrictionist mind.

Those who opposed immigration on social grounds maintained, as did W. Burton Hurd, that an "appeal" to religious prejudices is patently un-British."³⁶ Their main concern was that the British character of Canada was seriously threatened by the massive influx of Central and Eastern Europeans, as well as by the importation of Oriental labour. Besides ignorance of English, these groups displayed an alarming propensity towards high birth rates and continued illiteracy.³⁷ They also seemed to defy assimilation, especially the Orientals, Negroes and Hebrews.³⁸ Hurd claimed that these new immigrants were significantly crime-prone and that this tendency persisted to the third and fourth generation.³⁹ He came

to these conclusions on the basis of children in reformatories. By some inverted reasoning Hurd then concluded that:

No claim is made for the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon and French races nor for the British culture. Nor is any blame attached to individuals or groups for circumstances beyond their control which make their assimilation in Canada difficult.⁴⁰

The racialism which surfaces from under the guise of social self-interest in these arguments was even more thinly disguised by W.A. Carothers in 1929.⁴¹ While complaining that the cheap labour of immigrants was destroying the economic chances of the Anglo-Canadians, he inferred that their low standard of living was a racial trait.⁴² Though he was mainly concerned with the threat of yellow, black and brown immigration,⁴³ he was willing to admit that "from the biological point of view their (central, south and eastern Europeans) assimilation would not necessarily lead to race deterioration."⁴⁴

The problem is not so much of racial inferiority, as of controlling numbers to ensure that they have the opportunity of understanding our social ideals and institutions.⁴⁵

Would-be citizens should be judged by "Canadian standards of life, justice, integrity, fair play, and morality, both public and private."⁴⁶ Thus, in social terms, the ideal non-British or non-French immigrant would be white, Christian, and a believer in democracy.

Politics, in fact, were a dominant theme of the social supporters of restrictionism. The fact that large homogenous groups of Eastern and Central Europeans had settled *en masse* in the prairie provinces, and to a smaller extent in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg, gave rise to fears of a different sort. Communism, not fascism, was the primary evil which clouded the vision of the western world. The growing voting power of the unassimilated groups in Western Canada, and in the larger cities, combined with the massive unemployment in these areas to create anti-democratic movements. In capitalist Canada the threat of communism was perceived to far outweigh that presented by the little known ideals of fascism. In the 1930's the Communist Party actually gained very little support in Canada. By 1937 the total membership in the country was estimated to be less than fifteen thousand.⁴⁷ One example of the fears aroused by socialist ideas occurred in Ontario. The Oshawa strike of 1937 resulted in a political swing to the far right by Premier Mitchell Hepburn. Industrial unionism became branded as Bolshevism. Subsequently, Premier Hepburn demoted his two most progressive cabinet ministers.⁴⁸

One was a Jew. Allied with the government, the Toronto *Globe and Mail* editorialized that:

Although it cannot be said that a majority of Jews are Communists, the indications are that a large percentage, and probably a majority of Communists are Jews.⁴⁹

In reality only about four hundred and fifty members of the Communist Party of Canada were Jewish.⁵⁰ Thus the real, though unsubstantiated, fear of communism was directly linked to the Jewish people. This was utilized by the growing, and vociferous, fascist movement in Canada. With the help of Nazi propaganda the Canadian fascists were able to add an additional terrifying note to the spectre of Jewish communism - the Jewish world conspiracy. The pamphlet, *The Key of Mystery*, which consisted of forged and distorted texts proposing Jewish domination of the world, was published in Montreal by Adrien Arcand.⁵¹ This leader of the Canadian fascists found widespread support for his anti-Semitic propaganda, especially in Duplessis Quebec. The pervasiveness of these ideas was eloquently attested to as late as 1944 when a French Canadian member of the Federal Parliament was able to make the following statement without rebuke.

Mr. Liguori Lacombe (Laval-Two Mountains) . . . It would be criminal to listen to the advocates of immigration who are all in the pay of international finance and who frequently receive favours from communists and proponents of world revolution . . . Will the government understand where lie the interests most dear to our people, or will it give in to national and international conspiracies hatched in secrecy and all of them detrimental to Canada?⁵²

In the 1930's the largest pressures exerted on the government were on the behalf of refugees from Hitler's Germany. And who were these refugees? Communists, leftists and Jews. Thus a genuine fear of communist immigration combined with the slightly less fashionable reality of anti-Semitism under the guise of political and social restrictionism. The economic problems of the decade provided a convenient excuse for an anti-immigration government.

Newspaper editorials which followed upon the events of November 1938 in Germany, indicate that government policy was generally supported by public opinion. Those who supported the admission of refugees de-emphasized their Jewishness or else praised their stereotyped qualities, (shrewdness, industriousness, and thriftiness).⁵³ Other supporters stressed the need to populate Canada's vast lands in order that she might protect

herself from conquerors. Those opposed were either vociferously anti-Semitic, as in Quebec, or else valiantly British. By warning against the loss of the British character of Canada, these loyalists were outdoing the British themselves, who had accepted over a hundred thousand refugees. Many advocated the granting of money to send refugees to other lands. The wilds of British Guiana and Tanganyika were two popular choices. Most editorials took the moderate view which combined these various aspects to allow for admitting people on humanitarian grounds. Thus they felt that the “White Man’s Burden” should be borne, in part, by Canada.⁵⁴ The Toronto *Globe and Mail’s* views were typical.

It is necessary because of indifference in the past, to regulate immigration to keep this a British nation and this will be no small task. But Canada can relax immigration regulations sufficiently to admit a moderate number of German and Austrian refugees on a selective basis who will take up land as farmers and avoid intensifying the unemployment problem in urban communities.⁵⁵

That anti-Semitism played a significant role is illustrated by a public opinion poll taken in 1946,⁵⁶ after the atrocities of the Final Solution were well known. Asked “If Canada allows more immigration, are there any of these nationalities which you would like to keep out?”

(more than 100% because many gave more than one answer)

Japanese	60%	Middle European	16%
Jewish	49	Ukranian	15
German	34	Polish	14
Russian	33	Others	3
Negro	31	nine	18
Italian	25	no answer	7
Chinese	24		

Economic condition, nationalism, fear of communism and anti-Semitism thus combined to create a climate hostile to increased immigration, especially of refugees.

The government’s actions fit the demands of public opinion. Dr. Manion wooed the French voters by outspoken opposition to increased immigration. The C.C.F. favoured admission according to absorptive capacity, which in a time of economic depression was equivalent to the Conservative stand. The Liberal government of Mackenzie King maintained a low level of immigration and the ratio of Jews given visas was not altered. Various attempts by Jewish organizations to change the attitude

of the Prime Minister failed. Three Jewish members of Parliament (S.W. Jacobs, A.A. Heaps, and Sam Factor) pleaded in the House for an easing of restrictions. In 1938 King was pushed into setting up a committee of the Cabinet to deal with the refugee problem. These ministers: T.A. Crerar, Ernest Lapointe, Ian Mackenzie, J.L. Isley and F. Rinfret, made no recommendations to ease the situation. Meanwhile, Jews were being excluded in every conceivable manner. On November 9, 1938, Heaps wrote to King: "the existing regulations are probably the most stringent to be found anywhere in the whole world. If refugees have no money, they barred because they are poor, and if they have fairly substantial sums they are often refused admittance on the most flimsy pretext."⁵⁷ On the other hand petitions against refugees were flowing in from Quebec. The petition of the Saint Jean de Baptiste Society was presented to the Commons with 127,364 signatures in protest "against immigration of any kind whatsoever, and especially Jewish immigrants."⁵⁸ Caught in the middle of this argument the government remained content to avoid any policy regarding refugees. The answer to why King did not allow himself to act was that, in his attitudes, he was a typical Canadian.

His thinking was embarrassingly simplistic, and he could refer to a Jew as "a credit to his race", to a "darky" servant or to the "masses" in his private musings in his diary. There was prejudice in him, but no more than was commonplace in men of his class, age and upbringing.⁵⁹

As Jews continued to comprise about 5.4%⁶⁰ of the total immigration, and that number consistently dropped during the 1930's, Canada indeed became an impossible dream for refugees. While in 1931 4,164⁶¹ of 27,530⁶² immigrants were Jews, by 1938 there were only 584 Jews out of a total of 17, 17,244. Between 1933-1939 a total of 3,834⁶³ Jews were allowed into Canada, from all sources, including the United States. The reasons were summarized by the *Report of Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* in 1970.

In the late 1930's some of those arriving in Canada were refugees, but economic recovery was slow and the Canadian government was reluctant to admit even the victims of Nazi Germany. The tendency to give economic considerations priority over humanitarian ones was probably buttressed by the anti-Semitism expressed by small but noisy and even violent minorities in various parts of Canada in the 1930's.⁶⁴

CANADA AT WAR

Canada entered the war in September 1939. She declared war only because Britain had declared war, and for no other reason. "It was not a war for Poland; it was not a war against anti-Semitism; it was not even a war against Nazism."⁶⁵ There were no ideological or humanitarian motives involved in Canada's actions. Defence of the Empire was her sole concern. In Canada there were large numbers of enemy aliens, particularly in the West, who had settled in Canada early in the century. Refugees made up only a small proportion of the overall "enemy" population. It was clearly impossible that all these people should be interned. The urgency involved in Britain was not necessary in a country far removed from the threat of invasion. Yet the police had been monitoring the activities of foreign-controlled organizations in Canada.⁶⁶ As a direct result the *Defence of Canada Regulations*,⁶⁷ which had been drafted on July 6th, 1939 and which became law as P.C. 2483 on September 3rd, laid down provisions that "All enemy aliens in Canada, so long as they peacefully pursue their ordinary avocations shall be allowed to continue to enjoy the protection of the law and shall be accorded the respect and consideration due to peaceful and law abiding citizens." Article twenty-five created Registrars of Enemy Aliens (R.C.M.P. officers). Every enemy alien was required to report for identification purposes to a Registrar. Of a total of 16,643 registered by May 23rd, 1940, 4,322 had been given exemption certificates on the grounds that they were "people from Czechoslovakia and other similar refugees."⁶⁸ Appeals against internment were provided for in Article twenty-six and they were to be prompt and thorough. Thus a mechanism for release was in operation in Canada, as well as an awareness of the difference between a refugee and an enemy when the interned refugees arrived.

CANADA AND THE INTERNED REFUGEES: WHY THEY CAME

The S.S. Ettrick and the S.S. Sobieski landed in Canada in July of 1940. The possibility that they had brought a large number of refugee immigrants to Canada could not have been further from the minds of the authorities involved. Yet there had been ample indications that these internees were not the dangerous enemy aliens that the government had agreed to accept.

The earliest indication that Canada might be willing to take men interned in England came in February of 1940. A former member of the King's African Rifles wrote from Vancouver to the Minister of National Defence, suggesting that it would be "a very valuable addition to Canada's

war effort if arrangements were made for all German prisoners of war to be held in Canada for the duration.”⁶⁹ He further suggested that veterans of the “Great War” could be used as guards. The Under Secretary of State, E.H. Coleman, agreed with this idea, while envisioning problems of world criticism.

From the physical point of view, I have no doubt in my mind that we could in Canada set up an additional number of internment camps but it seems to me the suggestion raises an important question of policy. There is no doubt in my mind that a transfer of a considerable number of German prisoners to Canada by the government of the United Kingdom would be represented to the world as an act of barbarity. . . . It would be represented that the prisoners were interned in Canada in Arctic wastes.⁷⁰

Yet he did conclude that there was no doubt that if the United Kingdom asked, Canada would accept. In May, the request came. Massey cabled that there were nine thousand Austrians and Germans already interned in England.

The custody of so many potentially dangerous persons in area which may be the scene of active operations presents a very difficult problem Consideration thus being given to the possibility of easing these difficulties by sending certain internees out of the U.K. . . . The U.K. government would be glad to learn whether the principle of receiving alien internees from this country is acceptable to the Canadian government.⁷¹

Meanwhile fears that there were already too many enemies among Canadians were spreading. The Minister of Justice, Ernest Lapointe, tried to allay these fears. In a speech to the House on June 3rd, 1940, he warned:

It is a great disservice to Canada and the allied cause to spread stories that Canada is filled with enemy sympathizers But let us be careful not to mistake for pro-Germans persons who have German names and German descent. Most of them came to Canada to escape the Prussian yoke. The overwhelming majority are passionately anti-Nazi.⁷²

The government therefore recognized that there were many Germans who were not sympathetic to the Third Reich. At the same time she unsuspectingly prepared to receive a whole new batch of them.

On June 7th, Massey again cabled, with the information that there were now 12,000 internees of whom 2,500 were pro-Nazi and “therefore dangerous in the event of parachute landings or invasion.”⁷³ He urged that

accomodation be made quickly for the transfer of these "dangerous type" internees, and added that all costs in transportation and maintenance would be borne by the British. The Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. O.D. Skelton, replied on June 10th that: "Under the circumstances the Canadian government are prepared to accept up to 4,000 internees as proposed, and also up to 3,000 prisoners of war."⁷⁴ Simple arithmetic proves that Canada, while implying she wanted only dangerous internees, invited the possibility that as many as 1,500 refugees could be sent over. It seems probable that the request for 4,000 internees was based on accomodation capacities rather than on a careful reading of Massey's cable. The next day, June 11th, a Member of Parliament brought the plight of the interned refugees to the attention of the House. Quoting an article in the *London Spectator*, Mr. Hanson informed the House of the reasons for the mass internments in England.

The safety of the country demands that no half-measures should be taken to guard against it here even if hardship is imposed on many innocent people . . . This drastic treatment of foreigners, the majority of whom are perfectly loyal to the allies is regrettable, but there is no alternative. It is promised that the measures will be mitigated when circumstances permit.⁷⁵

The fact that there were large numbers of friendly aliens interned in England was not connected with the problem of bringing internees to Canada.

The War Cabinet Committee meeting on June 14th covered the subject of locating the new camps.

The general view was that the majority should be located in New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario, rather than in the Western provinces. . . .

The Minister of Finance referred to the "political" problems connected with the locating of internees and prisoners of war . . . It had been felt that to locate large numbers in Saskatchewan might be unwise because of the German populations there; on the other hand, to send some to Alberta and not to Saskatchewan might appear to be a reflection on the loyalty of the other province.⁷⁶

As a result of these fears the internment camps were located far away from the German settlements of the west. For the refugees this was to be a great advantage, as they were thereby placed in close proximity to the largest Jewish communities in Canada.

While arrangements for the prisoners of war and internees were being

made, the government expressed a willingness to accept larger numbers of civilians from the United Kingdom.⁷⁷ To begin with, ten thousand British children would be accepted. Vestiges of colonialism remained in Canada before and during the Second World War. This offer to accept tens of thousands of British refugees reflects the extent to which this mentality still pervaded the government. As in her immigration policy, in her humanitarian policies Britain came first, often to the exclusion of all others. But, while Canada did not want other species of refugees, she got them. The first flight of internees sailed on June 21st, carrying 530 prisoners of war, and 2160 internees.⁷⁸ Internees were placed, on arrival, in Camp "F", Fort Henry and camp "R" at Red Rock (near Fort William) Ontario. Prisoners of war and 347 internees were put in Camp "T" in Trois Rivieres. Information available shows that thirty-six of the internees at Camp "R" were Jews.⁷⁹ It is not known whether there were any more than this on the first flight. The second flight was to be the *Arandora Star*. Massey's cable of June 29th, stated clearly that 50 "B" internees would be on the *Arandora Star*, as well as 858 on the *Ettrick*. On July 4th, he informed the authorities that 982 category "B" and "C" internees would sail on the *Sobieski*. The two ships sailed, without incident, (the Germans were informed that prisoners of war were on the ships), on the third and fourth of July. The cable of July 6th, corrected the information earlier sent, changing the number of internees on the *Ettrick* to 1,308 "B" and "C" aliens. Thus the government was informed that 2290 refugees were en route to Canada.

The interned refugees were placed on ships with Nazis and prisoners of war. While the prisoners of war travelled first class, under the Geneva Convention, the internees were quartered in steerage and surrounded with barbed wire and machine guns. The voyage was rather unpleasant for most. They had to sleep on hammocks or on the floor. Seasickness and salmonella (gastrointestinal diarrhea) plagued a large number and food ran out the last few days. One internee remembers a British colonel who hit people who did not follow his orders fast enough.⁸⁰ For many, knowledge of their destination was uncertain until their ship entered the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. There was little communication with the prisoners of war, and fortunately they were separated from the refugees. The British obviously were aware of the antagonism between the two groups.

Our stay on the Isle of Man is only short. Again we go on board of a ship. In Glasgow we embark on a transoceanic liner and after

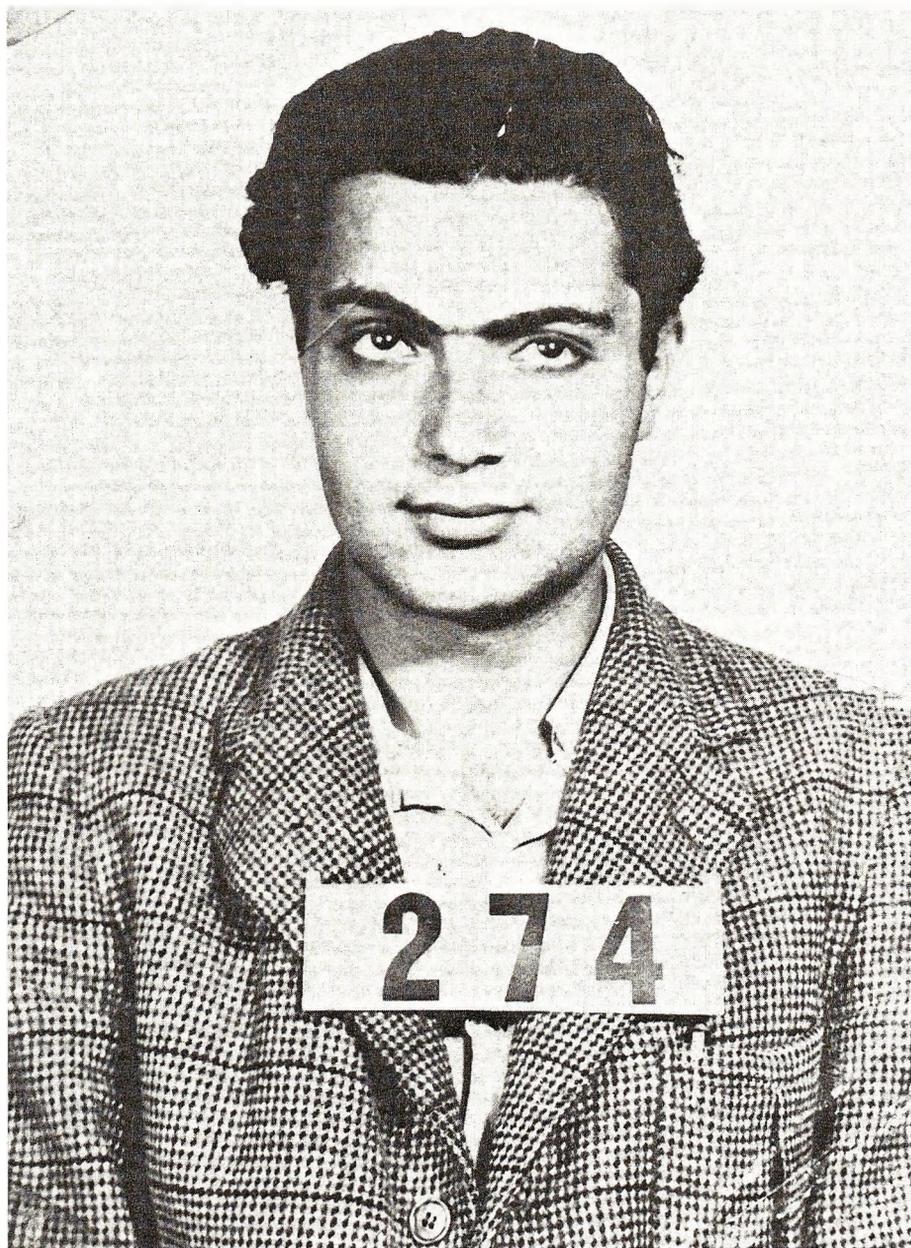


Figure 1
Marcell Seidler, interned refugee, (Official photo)
Mr. Seidler took all the photographs reproduced here
with an illegally constructed cardboard camera.

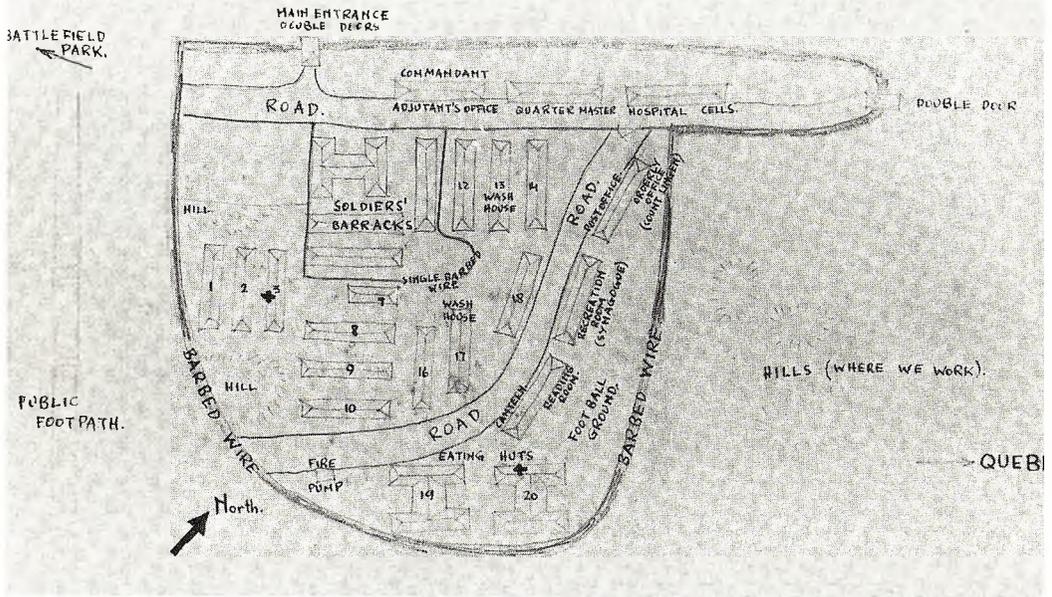


Figure 2
 Sketch of Camp "L", from the
 diary of Harry Seidler.

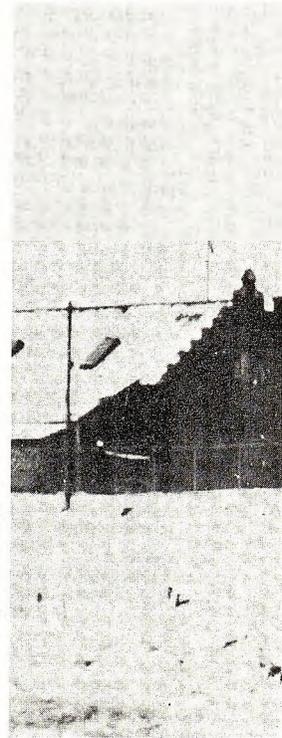
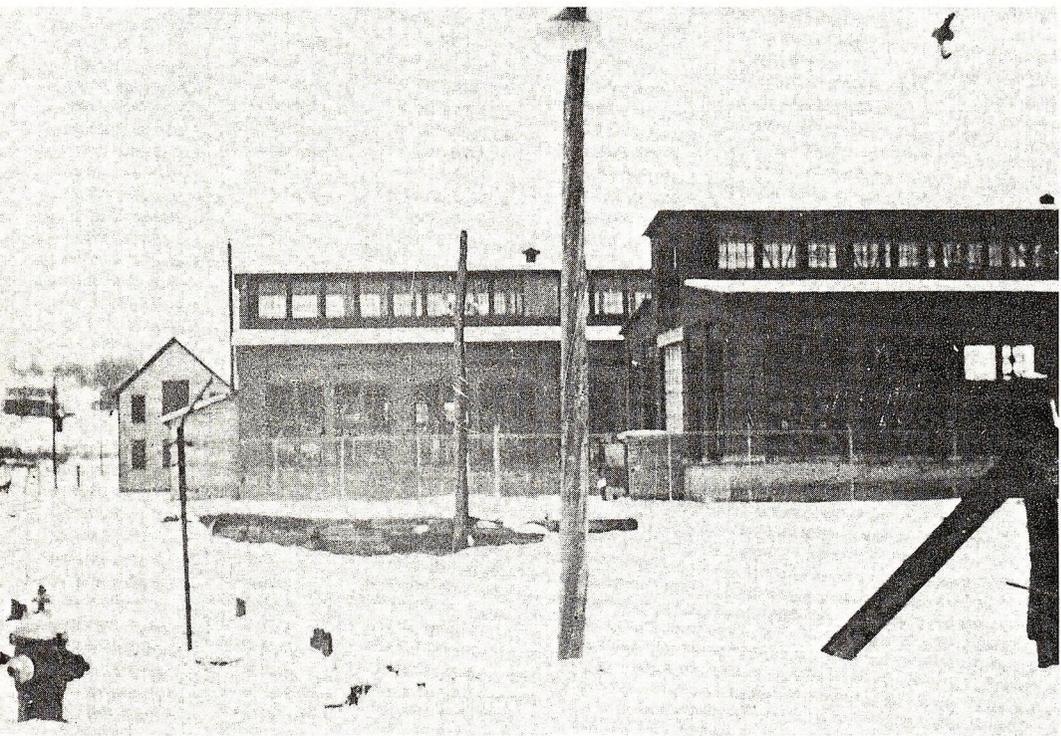
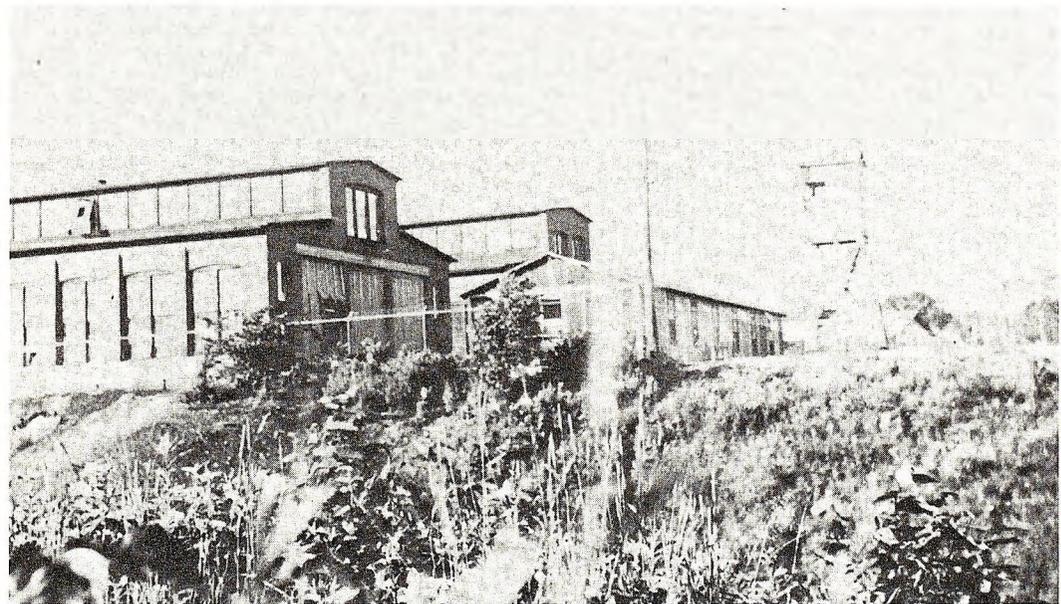


Figure 3 & 4
 Camp "N" Sherbrooke, P.Q.
 (photos by Marcell Seidler)



*Figure 5
Camp "L", Quebec City.
The man playing with
the cat is pianist John
Newmark. (Photo by
Marcell Seidler).*



*Figure 6
Camp "L", Quebec
City. Note the guard
tower and barbed
wire fence. (Photo by
Marcell Seidler).*



scarcely eleven days of voyage we get ashore in Canada. On the vessel were real prisoners of war, too. Some comrades of ours sleep together with them on the same deck. One evening the prisoners of war sing "Wir fahren gegen Engeland". (i.e.: We go against England) whereupon one of us strikingly remarks: "Then, gentlemen, you must change! Because you are going in the wrong direction."⁸¹

Among the refugees on the S.S. Etrick was Count Frederick von Lingen, prince of Prussia and grandson of the Kaiser. To the amazement of his companions, who shared the baggage compartment with him, he organized toilet fatigues to clean up the refuse resulting from widespread illness. After ten days of discomfort, the ships reached their destination: Quebec City.

On arrival they were treated as if they were prisoners of war. For reasons unknown, the authorities had chosen to disregard the information relayed by Massey. For the refugees it was a rude shock. The British Liaison officer whom the U.K. had sent to handle the treatment of these men had been saved from the Arandora Star. He was not to arrive until later. Thus this odd collection of male refugees was given an enemy's welcome in Quebec.

Some people probably, it will never get out of their minds. We received a reception as German spies. On the boat where we were we had I don't know how many German navy and Luftwaffe officers and a couple thousand Italian civilians. When our boat docked in Quebec the first . . . allowed to get off the boat were the German officers. We watched how the Canadian soldiers were carrying the suitcases of the German officers. The German officers walked down the plank just with their coats over their arms. They were treated like supermen which made us feel already rotten. Then when we were let down the plank we were put into army lorries and in all the corners, and in front of us and behind us were motorbikes with loaded machine guns. And we were herded in like cattle into the trucks. It doesn't give us a good feeling.⁸²

It was unforgettable . . . We arrived and as we came from the boat and there were soldiers in shorts and brown and tanned knees at the gangplank and had their guns sort of pointing at us and we thought it was wonderful. And we went . . . and we were searched all the time and everything was taken from us . . .⁸³

We got mixed reception. After we disembarked there were some

“Heil Hitler’s” and some waved their fists at us “You bloody . . .”⁸⁴ When we arrived for example in Quebec - it was usually just arrival time were the worst things - because when we arrived in Quebec I remember a soldier saying: “These people seem to speak English very well” so the other guy said: “Oh, those are the most dangerous ones.” But we just laughed about that one because it meant that they didn’t have the slightest conception of the difference between fifth columnists and Jewish refugees.⁸⁵

People lined the streets and kept threatening us, even spitting on us because we were German prisoners.⁸⁶

The first evening of their stay in Canada the internees were relieved of their remaining riches.

On the night of our arrival the Canadian troops detailed to search us robbed us of everything except our virtue. The searches were conducted in two shifts. During the first all our valuables were taken away and receipts issued. During the second search they just took the receipt.⁸⁷

Watches and typewriters were about the most costly of the articles confiscated. These men had nothing else worth stealing. (After the internment some of the internees recouped their losses through the waging of successful court cases against the Canadian Provost Corps.) Such was the reception of the interned refugees.

THE PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS

These refugees, who had begun their collective journey from the Isle of Man, were separated on their arrival into four groups. Of those who had journeyed on the Ettrick, 500 were placed in trains and sent to Camp “Q” in Monteith Ontario (near Timmins). Ninety-five percent of these men were Jews.⁸⁸ Another 808 refugees were taken to Cove Fields in Quebec City, Camp “L”, which already quartered prisoners of war. From the Sobieski 722 refugees went to Camp “T” at Trois Rivieres and 260 went to a new camp, Camp “I” on the Ile aux Noix, near Montreal. In Camps “T” and “L” refugees were for the first time thrown together with Nazis and prisoners of war. The military detachments were dumbfounded when violent confrontations ensued as a result. The two groups were quickly partitioned. Despite the ardent protests of the refugees, the commandants of the internment camps refused to treat them any differently than prisoners. They had not received any orders to do so. The prisoners were German and Germany was the enemy. The persecution of the Jews of

Germany and the problem of political refugees were subjects about which they neither knew nor cared. Their job was to defend Canada by guarding her enemies and no amount of protest was going to disillusion them about the importance of their job.

Why the government either did not realize, or did not want to realize that these people were not enemies has not been sufficiently explained. But their treatment could have been worse. A lady in Winnipeg wrote the government about her scheme for German prisoners. She proposed they be sent to:

Some of the rock grit uninhabited islands of the South Pacific . . . Give to each group the regulation medicines and medical kit, the necessary clothing, food for four or five months and enough seed grain and vegetable seeds for each group to plant in order to grow food to maintain themselves for the remainder of the war . . . (Books should be sent stressing) the worth of freedom, liberty, truth and righteousness . . . One small vessel equipped with a good radio and manned by a small crew should be able to guard all the prisoners . . . Only when the war was over would they again be permitted to mingle with the rest of the world.⁸

Fortunately the refugees were not interned on desert isles. Rather they found themselves only miles away from their long-awaited goal, the United States.

CANADA AND THE INTERNED REFUGEES: POLICY, JULY TO OCTOBER 1940

By the end of July the Canadian government could no longer ignore the problem. On July 26th a Member brought to the attention of the House a letter he had received from a refugee organization in England.

Mr. Coldwell . . . They implore me to press for discrimination as between the Nazi prisoners and quite a different kind of refugee of Sudetan, Czech, Austrian and German anti-Nazi sentiments. Will the government give immediate attention to this matter?

Hon. P.F. Casgrain (Secretary of State) . . . amongst the people who came here from England recently there would appear to be some people in the category of which my honourable friend has spoken . . . I am given to believe that some liaison officer of the British government will be coming soon to Canada and the matter will be submitted to him upon arrival.⁹⁰

As early as July 16th Skelton had cabled Massey regarding petitions he

had received from the refugees. At Camp "R", as elsewhere, men had written their autobiographies and had submitted them to the authorities. Skelton sent eight such statements as well as one from the British officer who had made the journey with them. Skelton concluded that: "It would appear from the statements and from Captain Bierne's letter that an injustice might have been done to these men in sending them to Canada."⁹¹ Camp commandants flooded the Defence Ministry with queries about their unusual prisoners. Finally, on August 3rd, the Liaison officer arrived from Britain. Major G.A.I. Dury was immediately questioned by the Director of Internment Operations, E. de B. Panet.

Attention is drawn to the fact that, while Canada agreed to accept prisoners of war and dangerous enemy alien internees requiring close scrutiny there has been sent to this country a very large number of Jewish and other refugees, Norwegian, Dutch, and Spanish citizens, also a large number of refugees who had applied for permission to enter the United States and whose names were on the various quota lists . . . Approximately 2250, including 401 Italian internees whose cases have never been reviewed or examined by the Tribunals, are of the refugee type and include a large number of school boys, college undergraduates, priests, rabbis, etc. The Canadian arrangements are such that these 2250 persons cannot be suitably accommodated or administered under existing conditions and it is very questionable whether it is desirable to set up special arrangements for enemy aliens in Canada. It is considered that those people should not have been sent out to Canada and that it would be much better if they were replaced by a similar number of prisoners of war or dangerous enemy alien internees.⁹²

In other words, Canada wanted these people shipped back to England. Refugees were not her responsibility. Dury agreed. Meanwhile conditions in the Camps were not improving.

Aware that their incarceration was to be lengthy, the interned refugees adopted positive attitudes which were to preserve their sanity. For those who had been incarcerated in Germany and Austria it was the most difficult. But for the young, the situation was more frustrating than anything else.

Many were very enraged. We wanted to participate in the war effort and we couldn't. Others, like myself, took it as an unbelievable adventure. I mean its foolish.⁹³

There were those, though, who found the irony of their dilemma too much to handle. The Medical Officer in Camp "L" was amazed to find that

some of these supposedly tough prisoners of war were suffering from emotional disturbances.⁹⁴

I think a lot of boys had (psychological difficulties). For instance, everybody would grab food as if it was the last time . . . Because we had been hungry so many times and we never knew when we would (be again) . . . With some people I don't know if it was willful, or if they just lost their guts to live . . . You have to keep your morale up, this is the main thing I figured. And some people would be terribly sloppy. They wouldn't wash, they would let everything go. And the group that I associated with, we made sure that we dressed neatly - our clothing was always clean . . . We would never let ourselves go . . . Anything that would be demoralizing I would just stay away from . . . You didn't want to talk about unpleasant things. You try to keep your morale up, to talk about the future and the pleasant things and you try to keep as busy as possible.⁹⁵

The first few months in Canada were the most difficult psychologically. The majority found that activity - mental as well as physical - was the key to survival.

It was up to each individual . . . If he didn't organize himself and brooded that he had to stay behind barbed wire . . . If he was bothering himself constantly with this kind of question, he was making himself sick, and more miserable. But if he was active! . . . As long as I was active I got a little bit tired . . . I was occupied . . . When I was tired I could sleep. When I wasn't tired the night was long.⁹⁶

As the internment became longer and more permanent these depressions lessened. Apart from the incidence of sexual problems, one interned doctor was able to note that there were remarkably few people seriously disturbed in the camps he was in.⁹⁷ Certainly the internment itself was one of the lesser worries of most of these men, but it was the major obstacle in their lives. They therefore focused all their energies towards overcoming it, emotionally and physically.

INTERNMENT OPERATIONS AND GOVERNMENT POLICY TO JULY 1941

Despite the information available to them, the administrators of Internment Operations refused to make any concessions to the refugees. During the first few months these internees had no one to represent them. When the Swiss consul, who represented Germany, called upon them on August 6th, in Camp "T", as in the other Camps, the refugees refused to have

anything to do with him.⁹⁸ Thus they were stateless men, and not covered by the Geneva Convention. The Jewish community was informed of their presence in mid-July. Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, received a letter from a Jew in Camp "R" which was forwarded to Saul Hayes, President of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Inquiries began immediately. Bloomsbury House, the Jewish refugee organization in London, sent the information they had to the Canadian Jewish Congress. The government refused to recognize the validity of Jewish representation for the internees. On August 23rd, a representation was made by sixty young members of the Hechalutz (pioneer) Movement that visitors from Jewish organizations be allowed into Camp "B". (Camp "B" was located in Little River, New Brunswick, near Fredericton. The refugees from Camp "T" had been relocated there on August 12th.) The reply from Colonel Stethem, the new Director of Internment Operations, was emphatically negative "because the number of persons permitted to visit these camps must be restricted."⁹⁹ Stethem stood fast in his view of the refugees.

They were transferred to Canada as interned enemy aliens, and until such time as discussions now under way between the governments concerned are concluded, they will continue to be treated as such while being afforded as kindly treatment as circumstances permit.¹⁰⁰

Hayes persisted in a polite manner. "It is only because of our convictions that the Jewish internees of classes "B" and "C" really have a clean bill of health that our intervention has at any time been made" (August 29th).¹⁰¹ While Jewish organizations were barred from the camps, Christian ones were not. On August 28th the International Red Cross, and on September 9th, three men from the Y.M.C.A. were permitted to visit the camps. While there was no doubt among the authorities, notably Panet and Stethem, that these were Jewish refugees, they persistently refused to recognize Jewish interests. A letter from the spokesman at Camp "B" to the Prime Minister was not delivered because, according to Panet.

These internees have not the right or privilege to communicate with the P.M. They have not passed the necessary immigration requirements for entry into Canada and it is not desirable that there should be any mass immigration of enemy aliens to Canada, category C or otherwise, under present conditions, nor is there any reason why these persons should be given a temporary refuge in Canada, which is not available to the hundred to British subjects in England.¹⁰²

The mentality which pervaded the newspapers was the same one that

determined the actions of the government and the military. While the facts of Nazi persecutions were pressed upon these authorities by the internees and the Canadian Jewish Congress, they were not to be moved. Saul Hayes interprets the stance of Colonel Stethem to be the result of the exigencies of war.

Col. Stethem was so close to the picture and so intoxicated by the fear of imminent Nazi uprisings it would not be fair to attribute his attitudes to an inhumane point of view but rather to the ignorance of the military mind.¹⁰³

These attitudes were transmitted to the camp authorities.

On July 16th, just three days after his arrival in Camp "L", Ernst Scheinberg was "shot by sentry on guard duty while attempting to escape from the guard room."¹⁰⁴ For some unknown reason he had tried to go outside his hut one evening, after the curfew. The treatment which had marked the reception of these refugees in Canada was particularly disturbing for many, especially those who had experienced the concentration camps. Scheinberg died because his captors were zealous soldiers under the command of men whose instincts refused to allow them to realize that these boys in short pants, and men with long beards who refused to eat meat, were not dangerous enemies. On July 23rd, a military inspector reported to Internment Headquarters the following information about the inmates of Camp "T".¹⁰⁵

Refugees: racial 610, religious 11, political 54, others who won't return to Germany 41.

Jews: 515 (124 Orthodox)

Catholics: 66, Protestants: 106, others: 29

Dutch: 1 others: 11 stateless: 15

Imprisoned by the Nazis: 231

British Naturalization applied for: 74

Registered with Refugee Committees: 610

16-18 years old: 280

19-20 years old: 145

Students: 220

Visas to U.S.A. or neutral countries: 317

Relatives in Allied Forces: 198 (including 109 U.K.)

Artisans: 179, Farmers: 171, Professionals: 236

British Education: 175

Holders of U.K. labour permits: 373

Resident in the U.K. to 1 year: 180

Resident in the U.K. to 2 years: 385

Resident in the U.K. to 3 years: 34

Resident in the U.K. to 4 years: 33

Resident in the U.K. to 5 years: 26

Resident in the U.K. to more than 6 years: 41

With this information available to him Colonel H.N. Watson visited the camp for inspection on August 3rd. He commented on the physical plan of the camp in a spirit which indicates that he was unable to believe that such enemies of the Nazis could be on his side of the war.

It will thus be seen that it would be possible to seize the Commandant and all his staff . . . and confine them in their office building.¹⁰⁶ This same inspector had previously visited Camp "L" on July 22nd, where he had found the most illustrious of the internees - Prince Frederick of Prussia. His greatest fear was to be exchanged to Germany for prisoners of war.

Count Lingen, a nephew of one in high places (the Governor-General) is acting as the representative of the prisoners, and is apparently given a considerable amount of authority, and is treated with a certain amount of deference by the staff of the camp, which he himself is being careful not to take advantage of, but a situation, like this, is not very good for the general discipline of the camp.¹⁰⁷ Further problems at Camp "L" were being caused by Captain G.S. Barrass, a British officer who had been with the refugees since Kitchener Camp. Inspectors complained that he had gained too much authority over the Commandant who was "rather handicapped by the fact that he has a non-descript group of refugees, practically all of whom are Jews, and he is not exactly sure how to treat them."¹⁰⁸ The British officer insisted that they were anti-Nazi refugees and "undoubtedly influenced the officers and staff of the Camp to think along the same lines."¹⁰⁹ Watson's other criticisms were mainly in regards to the lack of respect the internees showed to officers. Cleanliness was another major issue. Of Camp "T", Watson reported:

The question of kosher meat was also an acute one in this camp, but it is being dealt with by feeding the Orthodox fish or letting them go without. This type of Jew seem to be people of very unclean habits, and are difficult to discipline and deal with. They have no idea of cleanliness within their kitchens, and the Commandant is experiencing difficulty in dealing with them.¹¹⁰

In such a large group of single men the effects of years of persecution

and flight, separation from wives, children and parents, thousands of miles away, and the anxiety and fears about friends and relatives caught in the Nazi web, left few untouched. The behaviour of disciplined prisoners was far beyond the ken of men who rightly felt their situation to be unjust. Having fled the Nazis because they were considered less than human, they had been incarcerated by those who claimed to be fighting the same ideals from which they had escaped. That most were Jews made the problems twice as complex. Not only did they need to overcome the ironies of their flight from one type of persecution to another, the inbred anti-Semitism of the Canadian mentality created a situation in which they could not present themselves as ordinary men. They were not men who were arrogant, or disrespectful or unclean. They were arrogant, disrespectful and unclean Jews.

Changes pressed by public opinion in the United Kingdom were the only influence strong enough to alter the treatment of the refugee internees. On August 6th it was announced in the British Commons that: Arrangements will be made to bring back to this country any person whose release is authorized unless the Dominion government concerned is prepared to allow him to be at large in the Dominion and he himself desires to stay there.¹¹¹

On September 26th, the Canadian government received copies of the White Paper regarding the release of interned aliens,¹¹² category "C". The directions involved the same stipulations as for those in English camps, with some major exceptions. All of these dealt with release in Canada. The British expected that invalids and the ill should be treated outside the camps, and that those eligible for release to join auxiliary military corps (for example, a labour battalion) should be allowed to do so in the Canadian Forces. Most significant was the stipulation that some internees should be allowed to be released for residence in Canada, especially to do war work or to pursue studies. All category "B" aliens would have to have their cases reviewed by the Home Office before release would be authorized. Appended to this notice was the comment: "It is clear on the face of it that they ("B" and "C" internees) should be treated on a different basis."¹¹³ With all of this information the Canadian government remained unconvinced. As long as there was the slightest chance that even one of these men was an enemy sympathizer, the government would use it as an excuse to keep her doors shut. The Secretary of State replied to Britain:

While it is understood that "B" and "C" category internees should

not generally be considered anti-Nazi in views, it appears . . . that this cannot be said to apply to all the internees in these categories . . . As far as the Canadian government knows there may still be a substantial minority of “B” and “C” internees who are not refugees from Nazi oppression. . .

The Canadian authorities, therefore, do not consider that any action can be taken to apply “a system of less rigid custodial treatment” . . . solely on the basis of the present categories . . . The Canadian government do not feel in a position to take the responsibility of relaxing custodial restrictions without the definite participation and direction of some authorized representative of the United Kingdom.¹¹⁴

The possibility that Canada might release some of these men for residence was not touched upon. Enemy alien registration of Canadian residents had shown that only a very small percentage were not trustworthy. The Minister of Justice had clearly stated that “there were many, who while technically enemy aliens . . . did not adhere in sympathy to the cause of the enemy.”¹¹⁵ Either the government did not believe its own rhetoric or else the Jewish, leftist and numerical aspects of the refugee problem played an overwhelming role.

Nevertheless the authorities did find it necessary to create two new camps, in addition to Camp “I”, which were just to house refugee internees. As they prepared to move to new locations in mid-October, the refugees believed their request for better treatment had been met. But in the pamphlet that the inmates of Camp “L” published for themselves, this belief was put in question.

We have been repeatedly promised that our cases - one humble word for the misery and tragedy of our present situation - would be reconsidered. We have been promised this and that, but now the only thing that happens is one more move from camp to camp. We have waited patiently for some concessions, some alterations with regard to our positions as persons interned without even knowing why. A convict gets an idea of why he has to serve his sentence. The murderer knows why he is not free, but we do not know. What will be our fate? . . . Once again we are told that we have to move to another camp. It is not a move towards liberty, not even supervised freedom; it is just a new prison, and barbed wire will be around us as before.¹¹⁶

For some there was an ominous note, as non-Jews were told they would be

divided from the others. For the Jews this was an upsetting reminder of their immediate pasts.

Our community will be dissolved and probably split up again in different camps. There is no doubt that the overwhelming majority of the camp desires to be separated from Nazi sympathizers. The Jewish and "Gentile" racial and political refugees decline to be separated according to Hitler's racial laws and wish to be transferred as a body to the new camp. We know each other by now, we have lived, suffered, laughed and worked together. We have built up a sound and efficient community. This moral asset should by no means be destroyed.¹¹⁷

Nevertheless, division along religious lines did take place. The new organization of camps was as follows: Six hundred Jews remained in Camp "B". At Farnham, Quebec, Camp "A", there were 58 Jews among 211 Protestants, 111 Roman Catholics, 18 Anglicans and 10 unaffiliated.¹¹⁸ In Camp "N" at Sherbrooke, all but 75 of the 721 men there were Jews.¹¹⁹ To Camp "I" went all those who required kosher food and they joined the 273 men already there.¹²⁰ When they arrived in the new camps the internees expected to find vastly better conditions. Things they had especially resented: wearing prisoner of war clothing and the barbed wire, were still to be their lot. They also found that nothing was ready for them. In Camp "A" the beds had not arrived. Those who had spent months beautifying Camp "L" with gardens, and making it livable had to leave their handiwork behind for Nazis to enjoy. Instead, on their arrival at Sherbrooke all they found were railway repair shops in which the vestiges of recently departed trains were in filthy evidence. There were only a few toilets and little cooking or washing facilities for the 721 men.

In the beginning the toilet facilities were such that when you finished doing what you had to do, you lined up again.¹²¹

Car pits were not even boarded over. For two nights they had to sleep on the greasy floors.

When we got there it was just like if the crew who used to repair locomotives had just moved out and we moved in. It was quite an experience. I slept on a plank, it was leaned against the wall . . . I didn't want to sleep on the concrete floor so I slept on that plank. I don't know how I slept that whole night. I didn't fall off . . . In no time one of the halls contained eight hundred people. It was one bedroom with eight hundred people.¹²²

If the refugees had been prisoners of war, Canada would have been open

to prosecution under the Geneva Convention.

The refugees immediately went on a hunger strike in protest.

The only time was when we were shipped from Quebec City to Sherbrooke and we decided that we have just not been told the truth all along as far as our camp is concerned, and we decided to go on a hunger strike. We went on the strike for two days or three days, then some of the boys became rather sick and the authorities stepped in then . . . We were being pushed around, we had no law on our side, and the conditions were absolutely horrible.¹²³

Since the hunger strike had little tangible effect, the “camp boys”, as they still call themselves, focused in on more disruptive tactics.

The Sergeant-Major, Mr. MacIntosh, called us together one time and said: “Well boys, this is where you’re going to live. This will be your home for many years. The war is going to last a long time . . . The first thing you have to do is sleep on the concrete floors until we get the beds and the mattresses. . .” And this created a tremendous amount of ill-feeling in camp and we had all kinds of meetings and it was decided that we should go on - like a slowdown. In other words, whatever requests are being made of us we should take at least ten times as long to carry it out as you normally would. When the mattresses finally did arrive, for instance, and my group was ordered to go outside and bring the mattresses in, it would have been easy for one man to carry six to ten mattresses, but he collapsed under the weight of one . . . And the Sergeant-Major was very much annoyed with our behaviour. But these things got eventually straightened out.¹²⁴

The government officials decided to find out just what was going on in Camp “N”. Less than a week later, another inspector came to report on the situation. He became known by the internees there as Major “Balls”. As the first official representative of the Canadian government who had spoken to the refugees, he made quite an impression. All of the internees interviewed recall his speech to them. Climbing onto a table in the middle of the courtyard he asked:

“Most of you are Jews, aren’t you?”

We said yes.

“Nevertheless, you have to keep clean.”¹⁵

The circumstances of where the dirt had come from had been clearly noted in his inspection report.¹²⁶ But his attitude was obvious.

The internees in this camp are all Jews, and they definitely need

severe disciplining. They are disposed to be sullen and uncooperative, as well as thoroughly dirty.¹²⁷

This visit was a depressing one for the refugees.

If I ever saw an anti-Semite, that guy was it . . . Canada wasn't going to put out the red carpet for us, and why should they, there was a war on. We understood all this. But we wanted our dignity . . . it was not too much to ask.¹²⁸

That evening the two rabbis in camp were called in to see Major "Balls": because he'd been told - some kind of primitive notion - that clergymen, even if they're Jewish, you can talk to them.¹⁹

The rabbis explained their situation to him, noting that many had been in concentration camps, and stating that their main complaint was not about the food, or the accommodations, but about their treatment as prisoners. Major "Balls" replied:

"You've been in camp before? Then you know how to behave in the presence of an officer. Kindly stand at attention!"¹³⁰

This inspector's final recommendation to the internees earned him his nickname. Thus, the representative of the Canadian government offered this solution to the refugees.

"If you play ball with us, we'll play ball with you."¹³¹

While the interned refugees had little initial success in convincing the authorities that they should be released, there was one group with whom they found it easy to deal - their guards. The following story illustrates the degree of friendliness which characterized some of the prisoner-guard relationships.

In January of 1941 it was discovered by the authorities that a guard, Barney Henson, who had been with the refugees since Camp "L", was involved in illicit mail dealings in Camp "N".¹³² His daughter, Winnifred, was corresponding with three internees in the camp and he was transmitting the letters. A careful examination of correspondence found:

Miss Hensen, it would appear, is the daughter of _____ who is referred to in the letter as "Dad", and also presumably as "Barney" . . . She is referred in the correspondence as "Winkie".¹³³

It had all begun when Hensen had given a photograph to an artist internee in order to receive a sketch of his daughter. Then three internees began writing her. They included requests that she write their friends, relatives and girlfriends in the United States, as well as internees in the other camps. (Internees could receive unlimited amounts of mail, but could only write two, censored, letters a week). A military investigation of this inci-

dent reviewed the diary of one of the guilty internees.

We also got very friendly with a few soldiers, especially with Barney Hensen, our corporal, who often brought us food from his kitchen. He was a special pal of ours . . . and did a lot for us. So once he brought us a bottle of Rum, once a few bottles of beer.¹³⁴

As a result the authorities intercepted all mail to the Hensens, and decided to arrest Winkie. To their surprise they discovered she was only sixteen years old. Using Winkie as a witness they then proceeded to prosecute her father. He had violated the *Defence of Canada Regulations* prohibiting the “illicit transmission of messages into or out of Internment Camps”. Unfortunately, the results of this case are not available. This incident reflects the fact that the military brass had not altered their perceptions of the interned refugees one iota, while the authorities in daily contact with them had.

For the interned refugees activity meant sanity and freedom from worry, and they knew it. That their plight was a difficult one to bear was known to all but the authorities. Another example of this was the censorship of a Christmas letter sent by Senator Carine Wilson and Constance Hayward, both representing the National Committee on Refugees. This committee had been created in December 1938 by representatives of the Presbyterian Church, the United Church, the Church of England, the Catholic Women’s League, the National Council of Women and the Y.M. and Y.W.C.A.s. The letter stated:

We would like them to know that our thoughts go out to all those who are making great sacrifices for the cause of freedom. We would like them to know that we understand how the exigencies of war have required of them, in particular, an unusual form of sacrifice. We pray that right will triumph and that all who are maligned will be vindicated.¹³⁵

This passage was deleted from the letter by Colonel Stethem, who angrily retorted that:

The majority of persons in the camps will go to have no interest in the present life and death struggle in which we are engaged. They are self-centred and would not turn a hand to help along a British victory, and the claim that they are refugees from Nazi oppression has, they feel, placed them in a position where they can do or demand anything. Encouraging this feeling is extremely harmful to them as it prevents them from trying to help themselves. This does not of course, apply to all, but it does to the majority.¹³⁶

Thus, with little moral reinforcement, the refugees were kept in an isolated position for their first year in Canada.

Canada would have preferred to ignore the refugees. But they, and their friends, made trouble. This minor appeasement of moving them into four easily monitored camps was not to work for long. Blaming the British government could no longer hold up once it became clear that it was Canada that was standing in the way of release. For a year the government was able to play this game, but for no longer.

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Jewish Religious Leadership In Winnipeg 1900 to 1963¹

HARVEY H. HERSTEIN

Résumé

Dans cet article Harvey H. Herstein décrit le rôle joué par plusieurs rabbins dans le développement de la communauté juive de Winnipeg.

L'auteur commence d'abord par Rabin Israel Isaac Kahanovitch. D'origine polonaise, il avait étudié à Grodno et Slobodka et il avait été ordonné rabin à vingt ans. Après un bref séjour en Angleterre, il alla aux États Unis et en 1907 il accepta de venir à Winnipeg et de devenir le Rabin de la congrégation Beth Jacob.

Il organisa bientôt un "kashruth" qui engendra de l'hostilité de la part de certains bouchers juifs qui demandèrent l'aide de leur propre Rabin. En 1915 la communauté juive accepta les deux Rabbins et se déclara en faveur de leur payer un salaire régulier. Rabin Kahanovitch était considéré comme le chef spirituel de la communauté juive de Fort William à Victoria. Tous semblaient accepter son autorité sauf un groupe de jeunes radicaux de tendance socialiste.

Il fonda une école juive qui fut complétée en 1913 et en 1915 il commença le travail pour créer le "Congrès Juif" qui cependant vit le jour à Montreal en 1919. Les trois Rabbins de Winnipeg furent élus et Rabin Kahanovitch était le principal représentant.

Il fut un des premiers à se déclarer en faveur du mouvement zioniste et il incita les juifs à travailler pour leur communauté. Quoi qu'il fût un des représentants de la vieille école orthodoxe il faut admettre qu'il avait aussi une grande connaissance de son nouveau milieu et de son temps.

Depuis 1913 la Congrégation Shaarey Zedek était connue comme le bastion d'un judaïsme moins orthodoxe. Les rabbins jouaient un rôle différent de ceux d'autres petites synagogues qui, elles, restaient fidèles à la vieille interprétation de la religion juive. Ces rabbins devinrent entre autre des agents de relations publiques, parce qu'ils se dédièrent à dissoudre l'impression que les juifs, à cause de leurs convictions religieuses, n'étaient pas de bons canadiens.

Un de ces rabbins étaient Rabin Herbert J. Samuel. Après avoir servi la

congrégation juive de Swansea dans le Galles de 1906 à 1914, il accepta de faire partie de la congrégation Shaarey Zedek de Winnipeg. Ce Rabin fut très actif dans plusieurs domaines. Avec Rabin Kahanovitch il siégeait sur le Congrès juif.

Rabin Samuel fut remplacé par Rabin Solomon Frank qui s'occupa de la congrégation jusqu'à 1947. Rabin Frank devint bientôt le vrai porte-parole de la communauté juive. Ce Rabin apporta plusieurs innovations à sa communauté juive et il appuya surtout la construction d'une nouvelle synagogue. Il quitta Winnipeg en 1947 pour devenir Rabin à Montreal. Il fut remplacé par Rabin Milton Aron qui avait fait ses études aux États Unis où en 1950 il recut son Doctorat de l'Université d'Indiana. Ce Rabin continua le travail entrepris par ses prédécesseurs et en 1959 la congrégation put obtenir une école régulière qui comprenait aussi une maternelle. Certains cours étaient donnés le jour et autres le soir. Les enseignants venaient d'Israel.

En 1952 Rabin Arthur Chiel devint le chef spirituel de Rosh Pina Synagogue sur l'avenue Matheson. Ce Rabin avait un fort intérêt pour l'histoire juive et en 1955 il publia son premier livre *Jewish Experience in Early Manitoba* et en 1961 il publia son deuxième livre *The Jews in Manitoba*.

Rabin Abraham Kravetz a aussi joué un rôle très important dans le développement de la communauté juive de Winnipeg. Un de ses buts principaux était de promouvoir l'éducation juive.

En guise de conclusion on peut dire que ces rabbins ont été non seulement des chefs spirituels mais qu'ils ont joué aussi un rôle très important comme administrateurs et comme promoteurs de la cause juive.

Any study of Jewish religious leadership in Winnipeg, indeed in all of Western Canada, cannot be contemplated without considerable space being devoted to the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Israel Isaac Kahanovitch. Born in Grodno, Poland, on October 8, 1872, he studied in the *yeshiva* at Grodno and Slobodka, and was ordained as rabbi in his twentieth year. He settled in Suwalk, and soon became rabbi in one of the synagogues. In 1896 he married Rachel Kleiman. In Suwalk he took part in communal affairs, and was particularly active in the Zionist movement at a time when orthodox Jews had not fully accepted that idea.

After the Kishinev pogrom, he went to England and then in 1906, came

as rabbi to Scranton, Pennsylvania. In 1907, he moved to Winnipeg which offered him the pioneering spirit that was lacking in Scranton.

At the time, the Jewish community in Winnipeg numbered 5,000. In the North End - north of the CPR main line tracks - several small orthodox synagogues had been established. None had a spiritual leader and the need for an ordained rabbi was apparent. The situation was brought to a head by the laxity in *kashruth*, and a move was made to hire a rabbi. Several came and stayed a few weeks, but none seemed to satisfy the various cliques in the split community. It was at this point that Beth Jacob Congregation, the largest in the North End, brought in Rabbi Kahanovitch.²

In the summer of 1907, he delivered his first sermon, at the Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, before a very critical audience. He made a deep impression upon his listeners; indeed, so great was the impact, that to his second sermon, also at Shaarey Zedek, came those who would never have gone to a synagogue. Representatives of six congregations unanimously decided to hire him as rabbi.

He soon organized the *kashruth* which had been in a chaotic condition. A *Vaad Haschita* was founded, consisting of prominent Jews in the community. The *Vaad* looked after the *schochtim* and paid their salaries, rather than individual butchers controlling their own *shochet*. A *mashgiach* was hired to check on the butcher shops.

The efforts of the rabbi were not welcome in all quarters. The butchers resented rabbinical control.³ The consumers grumbled about the high cost of *kosher* meat. Some were dissatisfied with the inadequacy of the supervision of *kashruth*. The conflict led to a price war, and the *Vaad Hashchita* was openly defied. The butchers brought in their own rabbi, Rabbi Jacob Gorodski, in 1912,⁴ and the rivalry intensified in the religious community.

Peace on the rabbinical front came in September, 1915. The community was to recognize both rabbis and to guarantee a minimum salary to both, though more to Rabbi Kahanovitch. Also, since Gorodski was the younger one, he was to go to Rabbi Kahanovitch's house as an expression of peace. This he did on September 16, 1915.⁵

But the peace proved to be only an armistice; the *kashruth* conflict flared up sporadically in later years. As late as 1932, a group of dissident butchers brought in its own rabbi and formed the Congregation Beth Yehuda.⁶ It was not till 1946 that the Jewish Welfare Fund of Winnipeg took over the supervision of *kosher* meat.⁷

There was no doubt that Rabbi Kahanovitch gained the stature of chief

rabbi, and on April 6, 1914, the idea of such recognition was welcomed by all congregations. He was recognized as chief rabbi by almost all Jews in Winnipeg and in the widely dispersed settlements in Western Canada; indeed, as head of Jewish life from Fort William to Victoria. Concerned with problems in the Jewish communities, he visited many of these on numerous occasions.

He became the clearing house for rabbis, *shochtim* and teachers for the smaller communities in the West. In truth, he made the post of the rabbinite, as it had been in the past, one of leadership in the community. His house was a place for the unfortunate and the troubled - he was almost a "guidance clinic" where many found advice, aid and encouragement.

Of course, not all in the community were religious or submitted to Rabbi Kahanovitch's spiritual leadership. The young radical socialist groups, the non-religious and the anti-religious elements carried on their activities,⁴ many of which were frowned upon by the chief rabbi. The best example of this was the hostility displayed by the religious element and the rabbis, including Rabbi Kahanovitch, towards the Jewish Radical school - the forerunner of the I.L. Peretz School - when it was founded in 1914.⁹ Veiled threats of excommunication and open advice to parents not to send their children to the "godless" school were heard in the Winnipeg Jewish community. As the years went by, however, Rabbi Kahanovitch became worldly enough to feel at home with all factions. "Live and let live" seemed to have become his motto.

Aside from the regular duties of a spiritual leader, Rabbi Kahanovitch was involved in a multitude of communal, cultural and educational activities. He was instrumental in the creation of the Talmud Torah as an important educational institution in the Winnipeg community. It was because of his efforts that the B'nai Zion Hebrew School¹⁰ evolved into the Talmud Torah.

It was not too long after his arrival in Winnipeg that he saw the opportunity of creating a Hebrew educational institution. Because of his efforts and his driving force he was able to enlist the aid of almost all factions of the community in supporting the erection of a new building to house a large Talmud Torah. This was in 1911,¹¹ and after considerable difficulties the building was finally completed in the spring of 1913, at the corner of Flora Avenue and Charles Street. It was a spacious two-storey building with classrooms, two meeting halls and an auditorium which also served as a place of worship. The Talmud Torah¹² became the heart of the Win-

nipeg Jewish community.

The rabbi saw to it that collection boxes were placed in Jewish homes to help pay teachers' salaries!

Another sphere of activity in which he immersed himself was the creation of the Canadian Jewish Congress. The initial movement in Winnipeg began with a meeting on September 5, 1915. It was a disappointing affair - only a few turned out. The three rabbis, Sandheim, Gorodski and Kahanovitch, were on the committee. A unanimous resolution was passed favouring the calling together of a "Jewish Congress" by democratic means.

At a subsequent meeting, 2,000 people packed the Talmud Torah hall. Rabbi Kahanovitch made an impassioned speech and called upon Winnipeg Jews to take an important part in the historical Congress movement.¹³

Although the Congress did not come into being until March 19, 1919, at a meeting in Montreal, the seeds were sown in Winnipeg, and Rabbi Kahanovitch was one of the initiators and a constant worker.

In the election of delegates to the Congress, held on March 2, 1919, the three Winnipeg rabbis were elected. Rabbi Kahanovitch topped the list, receiving the highest number of votes.¹⁴ Reports of the Congress meeting in Montreal, state: "Rabbi Kahanovitch drew great attention through his progressive speech."¹⁵ Also, "Rabbi Kahanovitch enthused the radicals and confused the orthodox."¹⁶

His Zionist activities went back to his early years in Suwalk, Poland, when he embraced Zionism long before most orthodox Jews. In Winnipeg, he found among the early pioneers *Bilu* men ("O House of Jacob, come and let us go"), forerunners of Zionists, who never managed to get to Palestine. He worked with them in the cause of Zionism, to build a community in the diaspora to be spiritually linked with Palestine, and to help in the building of Palestine as a national home for Jews.

It was Zionism that aroused his interest in the B'nai Zion Hebrew School - operated by Zionists - to develop it into a modern Talmud Torah where Mizrahi Zionism (religious Zionism) has been the orientation ever since.

Thumbing through the pages of Winnipeg's Yiddish press, Rabbi Kahanovitch's name appears very often in conjunction with Zionist activities. At the 12th Zionist convention, held in Ottawa in 1912, he was elected Vice President of the Zionist Federation.¹⁷ At a circumcision ceremony at the house of a prominent Zionist in 1911, the Rabbi appealed

for donations to the Jewish National Fund.¹⁸ A good sum was collected. It was here that the idea of a Jewish National Fund Golden Book for Winnipeg, to record donations on similar occasions, was born. The Golden Book was also to be the chronicle of activities in the Winnipeg Jewish community. This project was entrusted to a special committee, with Rabbi Kahanovitch as chairman.

Rabbi Kahanovitch was deeply involved in many communal activities. In his fiery speeches he urged his listeners to also plunge themselves into communal work. At a time when Winnipeg Jewish institutions and causes were financed with nickels and dimes donated by local Jews, he could be seen on Sunday morning going on house-to-house collections for all causes.

Because of his reputation, an item appeared on Sept. 6, 1912, and was repeated later on:

Dr. Herbert M. Rosenberg asked to announce that he is willing to treat the poor free of charge if they present to him a note from Rabbi Kahanovitch . . .¹⁹

The offer was gladly accepted.

When, during World War I, Winnipeg Jewry were helping their oppressed brethren in Europe, it was felt that the South End Jews, the wealthier element in the Jewish community, generally did not participate in this work.²⁰ After many appeals in the Yiddish press had failed to influence the South Enders, a committee of prominent Jews, including the Chief Rabbi, went directly to the South End to solicit funds.²¹ Eventually, by 1916, all sections of the population shouldered the burden of relief for the European Jews. The prestige of Rabbi Kahanovitch no doubt helped greatly in bringing about this unity of effort.

He was very active in the founding of the Old Folks Home and the Jewish Orphanage. On the occasion of laying the corner stone of the Orphanage on August 10, 1919, the Rabbi addressed the gathering:

Brothers and sisters. The orphans have no fathers or mothers. All of you are their fathers and mothers. You must see to it that they have a home. You must see to it that they have enough to eat. You must see to it that they have the things they need because they all are your children. Give as much as you can, because this institution which is being built will serve not only our own orphans but also those unfortunate orphans who are overseas.²²

These words, the paper reported, moved many to tears.

In 1921, when the teachers of the Talmud Torah were in dispute with

the administration, in either a strike or a lockout, Rabbi Kahanovitch intervened to bring peace between the teachers and the administration. Due to his efforts a settlement was arrived at.²³

Mrs. Sophie Helman, one of Rabbi Kahanovitch's daughters wrote of her father: "Our home was the scene of many an arbitration between people in business or in other fields and he always acted wisely and justly."²⁴

Relative to what Mrs. Helman wrote, I wish to mention an episode in which my late father was involved. His friend (we will call him Mr. C), an anarchist, was in financial dispute with his business partner, and a court action seemed the only solution. But the case never reached the court. Instead the dispute was submitted for a *din Torah* (rabbinical decision) by Rabbi Kahanovitch. The business quarrel was resolved, to the mutual satisfaction of both parties, through arbitration at the dining room table in the Rabbi's house. My father was Mr. C's adviser in the arbitration proceedings. I remember my father's remarks to my mother: "A klieger durchgetribener Yid is der Rov" (The Rabbi is a clever astute Jew").

The significance of this episode is the fact that an anti-religious anarchist, who regarded rabbis as "parasites" and "tools of the capitalists", had such high regard for Rabbi Kahanovitch's wisdom that he was anxious to submit the dispute to the Rabbi and to accept his verdict. It is indeed an appropriate commentary upon the Rabbi's stature in the Winnipeg Jewish community.

Another episode in which a member of my family was concerned was related to me by my uncle, Mr. Philip (Fishel) Herstein, the first principal of the Calgary I.L. Peretz School and now a resident of Philadelphia:

When we founded the I.L. Peretz School in Calgary in August 1928, it seemed as we had invaded the local Jewish community. Children were enrolled by parents who were dissatisfied with the education offered by the local Talmud Torah. The Talmud Torah leaders, with their religious leader, Rabbi Smolensky, became fearful lest their prestige was sagging. A struggle against us unfolded. They could find no fault with us since the children liked the Peretz School from the first day they enrolled. The Talmud Torah people accused us of breaking the unity and harmony of the Calgary Jewish community.

At the time, Rabbi Kahanovitch was passing through Calgary. The Talmud Torah leaders used this opportunity to have a *mishpot* judgement . . . with the Peretz School. In our circle we joked that they were going to ask for a judgement upon the "kashruth" of the Yiddishist Peretz School!

One afternoon, a good number of Jews came to the synagogue. It promised to be very interesting; the “destroyers” of unity were to face their accusers. It is noteworthy to mention that in the invitation to the Peretz School it was specified that I, the principal, was not to attend the hearing. The Peretz School rejected this, and I was allowed to attend but not to take part in the discussion.

The Talmud Torah representatives levelled their charges against us. We presented our case. The climax came when Rabbi Kahanovitch began to deliver his judgement. He adjusted his skull-cap, stroked his flowing beard and spoke slowly, like one of the sages of old:

“You have objections to the content taught in the Peretz School? You are mistaken. In the Winnipeg Peretz School the children are educated in the Jewish spirit. In Winnipeg, the Peretz School and Talmud Torah are on the verge of union. Do not hinder the Peretz School; they are doing good work.”

In this manner spoke the Rabbi, citing scriptures, admonishing and asking for a cessation of accusations. He called for an end to the warfare carried on against the Peretz School.

The Talmud Torah representatives were dismayed. They expected the Rabbi to condemn the Peretz School. Instead of this, Rabbi Kahanovitch praised the Yiddish school.

A prominent leader of the Peretz School later asked me if I was aware of an impending union of the Peretz School and the Talmud Torah in Winnipeg. There is no doubt that there was no foundation to this. In his intervention in the dispute in Calgary, the Rabbi followed Jewish ethics, namely, that for the sake of peace, especially within a community, it is permissible to bend the truth somewhat! It seems to me that the wise Rabbi was guided by this precept.²⁵

In summing up Rabbi Kahanovitch’s role in Jewish religious life in western Canada, it may be said that for almost forty years he was a vital factor in local and national Jewish life. He was a representative of the old established orthodox Judaism, but he also had a deep understanding of the spirit of the time. He attained the stature of chief rabbi and was accepted as such in western Canada. He lived through turbulent times in the Jewish community and he tried to steer a course which would avoid deep schisms within the various segments of Jewish life. Although he was only partially successful, he did his utmost to bring peace to the Jewish community.

Now to consider the spiritual leaders of progressive Judaism in Winnipeg, who conducted services in English and stressed a different decorum within the synagogue. Beginning in the South End,²⁶ their rabbis were graduates from rabbinical seminaries, and the congregations were traditional. Later, with the founding of the new Rosh Pina Congregation,²⁷ Jews in the North End followed this modern trend.

The Shaarey Zedek, ever since 1913, had been the bastion of this trend in Judaism. Their rabbis, it seemed, served a different function that did the rabbis of the smaller orthodox synagogues in the North End. These modern rabbis became public relations men to present a different image of the Winnipeg Jews in the community at large. They deliberately attempted to dispel the gentile's pre-conceived notion of a "typical" Jew, by trying to convince them that, although they were committed Jews they nevertheless behaved like and felt like other Canadians. It should be stressed that it was perhaps a necessary function that they performed in their day. They were instrumental in bringing about the realization that Jews were capable of being full-fledged Canadians. The Shaarey Zedeks incidentally, catered to their own youth, born and raised in Canada, who were alienated from their parents' Eastern European way of life.

We find Rabbi Sandheim (he later changed his name to Samuel) speaking in the Central Congregational Church, in 1915,²⁸ to acquaint non-Jews with Russian oppression of Jews even during the war, in spite of the fact that tens of thousands of Russian Jews were fighting for their fatherland. In retrospect, it must be stated that Rabbi Samuel's address made many non-Jews, who were perhaps unaware of Russian persecution of Jews, conscious of the excesses committed.

Rabbi Herbert J. Samuel (formerly Sandheim) was born in Glasgow, Scotland, on October 13, 1882. He was educated in England and was minister to the Hebrew Congregation at Swansea, Wales, from 1906 to 1914, when he came to the Shaarey Zedek in March of that year. He was a member of the Winnipeg Ministerial Association, and in 1924 was elected chaplain of the Canadian Club.

Rabbi Samuel was active in relief work for Jewish war sufferers during World War I. Together with Rabbi Kahanovitch, he was one of the initiators of the Congress movement.²⁹ He was also very active in the B'nai Brith and for a time was its President. During his term as spiritual leader of the Shaarey Zedek, from 1914 to 1926, he introduced several innovations; such as Friday evening services, and in 1915 a Sunday School where Sunday morning Bible classes were conducted in English for the

children of its members. The Sunday School was an instantaneous success, and in 1918 closing exercises were held for 150 children.³⁰

Rabbi Solomon Frank came to Winnipeg in 1926 and served the Shaarey Zedek Congregation till 1947.³¹ He was born in New York in 1900. He took degrees in Science and Law, and then was ordained at Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati. Prior to his call to the Shaarey Zedek, he served at Beth Zion and Beth David synagogues in Buffalo, New York.

There is no doubt that he became a very notable spokesman for the Winnipeg Jewish community. On numerous occasions he addressed Christian gathering and congregations. He was an eloquent speaker, and his widespread activities in many organizations marked him as the spokesman of local Jewry. At one time he was president of the League of Nations Society in Winnipeg, and this position further enhanced his reputation in the non-Jewish community.

His activities in Jewish organizations were numerous indeed. To mention but a few; he was vice-president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, an active member of the Zionist organization, president of the B'nai Brith and chaplain of the General Monash Branch of the Canadian Legion. In his congregation he widened the educational activities of the Sunday school, organized a choir for the synagogue and was involved in the building committee to relocate the Shaarey Zedek from Dagmar Street to its present location on Wellington Crescent. A new building was necessary to serve the increasing membership which was concentrated in the South End.³² Because of World War II, the plans for the building were postponed, and when the new building was erected,³³ Rabbi Frank had already left the Shaarey Zedek to accept a call to the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in Montreal, in 1947.

In 1947, Rabbi Milton Aron became the spiritual leader of the Shaarey Zedek.³⁴ He was born in Trenton, New Jersey on April 18, 1917. He was a graduate from the University of Chicago (BA, 1935), and ordained as a rabbi at Hebrew Theological College, Chicago, in 1940. In 1950 he received his Doctor of Divinity degree from the University of Indiana. In World War II he served in the U.S. Air Force as chaplain.

During his stay in Winnipeg, the new Shaarey Zedek synagogue was completed. Basically, he continued the work of his predecessors. He too was active in many communal organizations and was considered an ambassador of goodwill to the Christian community.

In the new synagogue, evening classes were held three times a week. Later, the Sunday School was abandoned in favour of a new type of

Jewish education.³⁵ Increased student enrolment led to the construction of a school building, separate from the synagogue.³⁶ The school, later named Ramah School, inaugurated a day school program in 1959. Israeli teachers were recruited³⁷ to teach conversational Hebrew. Enrolment increased and the school operated a nursery school, kindergarten, a day school and evening school.

Together with Rabbi Abraham Kravetz, Rabbi Aron was instrumental in founding Maimonides College, planned as an institute of higher learning. He left Winnipeg in 1966.

In 1952, Rabbi Arthur Chiel became the spiritual leader of Winnipeg's newly erected Rosh Pina Synagogue on Matheson Avenue, on the location of the former Jewish Orphanage. In addition to his work as rabbi of his congregation, he immersed himself in activities similar to those of the rabbis of the Shaarey Zedek. During his tenure of office, the Rosh Pina Hebrew School was started and grew into an institution comprised of a nursery school, kindergarten and evening school.

Rabbi Chiel's contribution while in Winnipeg, has been summarized by his successor, Rabbi Shalom Rappaport, as follows:

Rabbi Chiel resided in Winnipeg from 1949 to 1957 and during that period of time he made a vital and tremendous contribution to the development of several aspects of Jewish community life in this city . . . He came here first to become the Director of B'nai Brith Hillel Foundation at the University of Manitoba. Within his first year he was quite instrumental in launching a successful effort which led to the establishment of the department of Judaic Studies at the University where he was named as assistant professor. In 1952 he helped to bring back to life in Winnipeg the name of Rosh Pina Congregation. Rabbi Chiel served here as the spiritual leader . . . until 1957. (Rabbi Chiel is now spiritual leader of Congregation B'nai Jacob in Woodbridge, Connecticut).

During this period he developed an active interest in Canadian Jewish history and particularly in the history of the Jews in . . . Manitoba. In 1955 he published his first book, *Jewish Experience in Early Manitoba*, and in 1961 the University of Toronto Press published his second volume, *The Jews in Manitoba*, a social history. For this book he received the H.M. Caiserman Award from Canadian Jewish Congress.³⁸

This paper would be incomplete if it did not deal with the contributions of an eminent personality, Rabbi Abraham Kravetz.³⁹ He was born in

Kinishin, near Bialystok, Poland, in 1914 and studied at the *yeshiva* at Grodno. He served in the Polish army as chaplain, and at the end of World War II was assistant Chief Rabbi of Poland. It was his fate to live through the Hitler era, often hiding in Christian homes, thus able to survive the holocaust. Between 1944 and 1946 he was Chief Rabbi in Lodz, Poland.

It is significant that Rabbi Kravetz came to Winnipeg in 1949 as principal of the Talmud Torah, because it was in the field of education that he made his greatest impact. It was only a year later that he was recognized as Chief Rabbi in Winnipeg.

He played a decisive role in the physical expansion of the Talmud Torah⁴⁰ and in the extension of Hebrew education to high school and university levels. It was he who attracted a group of devoted workers who put forth great efforts for the Talmud Torah. It was they who injected into the Talmud Torah a vitality that had been lacking for many years. They plunged themselves into fund raising, instituting improved methods of instruction, elevating Hebrew to a position of a spoken language and placing it at the heart of the school curriculum. In all these activities, Rabbi Kravetz's guiding hand was evident. He drew in a younger element, many of them graduates of the Talmud Torah, who had previously not associated themselves with the school. Under his guidance, they assumed responsibilities and went forward to many achievements.

Rabbi Kravetz spearheaded the establishment, in the South End, of the River Heights branch of the Talmud Torah - the Herzlia Academy. It was through his efforts that the Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate was founded - a day school offering regular public school classes from grades seven to twelve as well as Jewish studies. Through his indefatigable effort as well, Maimonides College, an institution of advanced Jewish studies, was established in 1950.

At the time of his death in 1962, at the early age of forty-eight, he was Chief Rabbi of Winnipeg, spiritual leader of the Talmud Torah and Ashkenazi synagogues, principal of the Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate and president of Maimonides College. He was also in the midst of planning a secular liberal arts Jewish community-sponsored college at the University of Manitoba - a project that, as yet, had not gone beyond this stage.

Of Rabbi Kravetz it may be said that he was energetic; he attracted suitable people, especially younger people, to the many activities around the Talmud Torah. He demanded much but he also offered much. In tribute to him, this was written:

The advancement of Jewish education was his overriding aim in life. He dreamed of creating in Winnipeg a Hebrew, religious and scholarly centre to replace at least one of those destroyed in Europe.⁴¹

Maimonides College, he hoped, would evolve into a sectarian affiliate of the University of Manitoba, and this college was to be one of those centres.

Summarizing the activities of the modern rabbis, it may be stated that they served a new type of Jewish religion, different from that brought over by the early pioneers from Eastern Europe. These rabbis tended to serve the social needs of their congregations; they were directors of their synagogues, social organizers, preachers and at times teachers in their schools. It was expected of these rabbis to be eloquent speakers - in fact, their rhetorical ability was often the measure of their success. To some, these functions seemed to be irrelevant to the position of rabbi. But in all fairness it should be stated that these modern rabbis adapted to the changing Judaism in North America. It seems that they offered their congregations what they wanted - leadership.

Whatever their religious philosophy, liberal or orthodox, all rabbis discussed in this paper, aside from serving their congregations, devoted much of their talent, energy and effort to Jewish education. They all regarded that aspect of Jewish life as the necessary foundation and cohesive force that would insure the existence of a flourishing Jewish Community in Winnipeg.

FOOTNOTES

1. This article is based on a paper presented by Mr. Herstein to the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada in Winnipeg on February 10, 1971. Much of the information in this paper came from the bound volumes of the *Israelite Press*, Winnipeg's Yiddish newspaper. These volumes were made available by Mr. Harold Margolis of Kromar Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, and are now available at the Winnipeg Jewish Public Library.
2. A.D. Hart (ed.), *The Jew in Canada* (Toronto: Jewish Publications Ltd., 1926), p. 154; also, Arthur A. Chiel, *The Jew in Manitoba* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), p. 86.
3. A. Osovsky, The Year 1911 in *The Israelite*, August 1, 1912, pp. 4-5.
4. *The Israelite*, Oct. 10, 1912, p. 8.
5. *The Israelite Press*, Sept. 17, 1915.
6. Harvey H. Herstein, *The Growth of the Winnipeg Jewish Community and the Evolution of its Educational Institutions* (unpublished master's thesis, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, 1964) p. 31.
7. A.A. Chiel, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
8. I. Gurevitch, "Yiddishe Yugend and Education," *The Canadian Israelite*, July 25, 1912. This article expressed the views of the Yiddisher Yugend Farein, a literary and

- cultural club organized in 1911 with the main objective to establish a Yiddish school.
9. For the curriculum and objectives of the I.L. Peretz School: Survey Committee on Jewish Education, *A Study of Jewish Education in Winnipeg* (Winnipeg: Jewish Welfare Fund of Winnipeg, 1963), pp. 23-25.
For the history and development of this school: Harvey H. Herstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-122.
 10. A Zionist oriented school which found itself financially incapable of catering to the educational needs of the growing Jewish school population. Chiel, *op. cit.*, p. 98.
 11. H. E. Wilder, *The One Hundreth Anniversary Souvenir of Jewish Emancipation in Canada* (Winnipeg: The Israelite Press, 1932), p. 31. At a public meeting on April 9, 1911, it was decided to build a school immediately.
 12. For the curriculum and objectives of the Talmud Torah: *Survey Committee on Jewish Education, op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.
For the history and development of this school: Herstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-88.
 13. *The Israelite Press* reports about the Sept. 19, 1915 meeting. Speakers represented all shades of opinions: Rev. Sandheim of the Shaarey Zedek, the chairman, and Rabbis Kahanovitch and Gorodski, the religious; M. Abramson, the school trustee, the socialists; I. Pearlman, the National Labour Committee, a Zionist-socialist group; Marcus Hyman, who spoke in English, labour groups.
 14. *Ibid.*, March 4, 1919. Rabbi Kahanovitch obtained 2673 votes.
 15. *Ibid.*, March 21, 1919.
 16. *Ibid.*, April 11, 1919. A report by H. E. Wilder.
 17. *The Israelite*, July 4, 1912.
 18. A. Osovsky, "A New Union" *The Israelite*, August 8, 1912, p. 5.
 19. *The Canadian Israelite*, Sept. 6, 1912.
 20. I. Hestrin, "Passing by" ("Dedicated to those with thick pocket books and narrow hearts"), *The Israelite*, Oct. 29, 1914.
 21. *Ibid.*, Nov. 9, 1914.
 22. *The Israelite Press*, Aug. 12, 1919.
 23. Herstein, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
 24. Sophie Helman, "The Rabbi at Home and in Western Canada," *The Western Jewish News*, Centennial edition, Winnipeg, 1970, p. 16.
 25. This account was sent to the author by his uncle and was written in Yiddish. The translation was done by the author.
 26. In the first three decades of this century, South End Jews lived in an area now considered central Winnipeg. More recently, the term South End has been used to refer to the part of Winnipeg south of the Assiniboine River, known as River Heights.
 27. *Winnipeg Rosh Pina Congregation, 1892-1952*, Dedication Volume. In 1952, the new synagogue was completed on Matheson Avenue. The new congregation took over the partial assets of the old Rosh Pina and perpetuated the name of the older congregation.
 28. *The Israelite*, Oct. 7, 1915.
 29. See footnote 13.
 30. *The Israelite Press*, June 27, 1918.
 31. *Shaarey Zedek Synagogue: Years of Service 1889-1959* (Winnipeg .1959..).
 32. For the location of the South End refer to footnote 26.
 33. The edifice was completed in 1950, on Wellington Crescent and Academy Road.
 34. Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, *op. cit.*
 35. For the curriculum and objectives of the Shaarey Zedek school: Survey Committee on Jewish Education, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.
For the history and development of this school: Herstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-138.

36. The building was completed in 1956, at the corner of Lanark Avenue and Grant Street.
37. The *Ivrit B'Ivrit* method was used, patterned after the model school of the Hebrew University of Beth Karen in Jerusalem. *The Israelite Press*, Aug. 7, 1959.
38. Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, *Second Annual Publication (A Selection of Papers Presented in 1969-70)*, Winnipeg, April, 1972.
39. Eli Gottesman (ed.), *Who's Who in Canadian Jewry* (Montreal: Jewish Institute of Higher Research, Central Rabbinical Seminary, 1964) p. 91. Also in *Talmud Torah Golden Jubilee Journal: 1907-1957* (Winnipeg: 1957).
40. A new building was completed in 1952 at Matheson Avenue and Power Street. In 1954, an addition was erected to accommodate the increased enrolment.
41. Survey Committee on Jewish Education, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

Enter The Jew

EVELYN MILLER

Résumé

Dans cet article Evelyn Miller décrit l'apport économique et culturel apporté par les juifs qui ont habité la Province de Québec. Elle nous donne d'abord des détails sur la situation politique et économique en Nouvelle France et elle fait remonter l'arrivée de plusieurs hommes d'affaires juifs au commencement de la colonie.

L'auteur commence ainsi à décrire la vie de Aaron Hart, qui avait choisi de vivre à Trois Rivières, et d'autres juifs qui n'avaient aucune difficulté à s'insérer dans la société canadienne et à devenir parfaitement bilingues. Des articles dans les journaux de l'époque attestent que ces juifs étaient acceptés sur le plan social et par les Anglais et par les Français.

L'écrivain décrit la variété des activités choisies par les juifs de cette période lointaine. Elle nous montre aussi comment ils vivaient et elle nous parle de leurs préoccupations et de leur façon d'élever les enfants. Tout le long de l'article nous retrouvons les descendants des familles qui étaient présentes dans la colonie dès son commencement. Nous suivons ainsi leurs activités, leurs intérêts et leur contribution à l'épanouissement de cette province. L'auteur souligne à tout moment que ces juifs ne perdaient pas de vue leurs principes religieux et qu'ils s'efforçaient de promouvoir l'établissement de synagogues et d'écoles juives.

Evelyn Miller conclut son article en attirant notre attention sur le fait que la société juive de nos jours peut être très fière du travail fait par ses prédécesseurs, hommes et femmes, qui ont su donner aux juifs des droits fondamentaux dans ce pays et qui ont su se faire respecter et s'affirmer.

For many years there had been war along the borders separating the colonies of the English and the French. From the Maritimes to the Mississippi Valley military expeditions and Indian raids had been the common experience, while English fur traders and settlers constantly encroached on the rich lands of the West, lands originally explored and claimed by New France.¹ Each new incursion was countered by the construction of

another fort, which soon, in many cases, was transformed into yet one more fur trading post.² Now this far-flung territory was placing an intolerable strain on the supplies of an economy faltering under the corruption of the Grand Societe and insufficient aid from France.³ The long years of jockeying for the dominant position in this vast new continent were almost over.

September 8, 1760—and Montreal, French Canada's last stronghold—surrendered. Now, for the first time since Cardinal Richelieu's ruling of 1627,⁴ French and English, Catholic and Protestant—and Jew—mingled in Canada. The French group was a self-contained, strongly cohesive society divided into the three classes of aristocrat and higher clergy, bourgeois townsman and *habitant*. The English consisted of army officers and government officials to administer the new territory, soldiers and merchants and traders from the English colonies below the border, come to explore the possibilities of this newly opened frontier. The latter were accustomed to a much greater freedom and fuller participation in the managing of their affairs; indeed the struggle to ensure even greater autonomy was less than a generation away. They were used to English civil and commercial law,⁵ which varied greatly from French jurisprudence with its basis in private rights granted under the seigneurial system and emphasizing family affairs.⁶ These newcomers were the men who would lay the foundations for a new and different Canada.

The earliest Protestant settlers were predominantly English, Scots and Irish, ex-soldiers, merchants and ambitious young men, many from overseas, who sought the opportunities offered in this newly-opened territory.⁷ Among them were several Jewish traders. Indeed, Chapman Abrahams and Aaron Hart arrived *with* the English armies, the former as a supplier to General Haldimand,⁸ the latter as Commissary Officer to General Amherst's army.⁹

Aaron Hart's rank, incidentally, has been long a subject of discussion, as it is known that at this period no Jew could hold a commission in the regular British army, though they could—and did—in the militia. But the Commissariat was a special case. Corresponding to today's Quartermasters Corps, it was not directly a part of the army establishment. Rather, the responsibility for providing sufficient food and forage for the army was given to a civilian, who would organise a group capable of providing the required provisions. The individual heading this group would be given a military title and permission to wear a uniform, enabling him to act as liason between the army and the civil authorities and allow-

ing him the necessary authority to commandeer civilian aid.¹⁰

This, then, was the reason behind rank and gorget granted to Aaron Hart. A miniature of the gentleman, in full military uniform, which was pointed about this time, may be seen in the McCord Museum. It shows a pleasant and surprisingly delicate-looking young man, considering his length of service and responsibility.

Between 1760 and 1763 these Jewish colonists and their families, numbering less than a score, settled in Montreal, Three Rivers and Quebec. A few later returned to New York or Philadelphia but the dozen or so who remained became, literally, the founders of to-day's Jewish community. Because their descendents became an integral part of the community, the Harts, Davids, Solomons, Franks and Hays, together with the later Judah and Joseph arrivals, are considered the fathers of Jewish settlement in Canada. They founded the first synagogue,¹¹ which followed the Sephardic form of service, as did all the North American synagogues.

There still remain many gaps in our knowledge but we do know that Hart was a former member of the German Legion, who came to America with Colonel Haldimand and Colonel Bouquet in the early 1750's.¹² He settled in Three Rivers, entered the fur, grain and lumber trades, established a general store and soon began to purchase property, first in Three Rivers and then in the surrounding districts.¹³

Levy Solomons and Ezkiel Solomons, who were probably cousins, were fur traders and Levy Solomons also had been a civilian purveyor to the army.¹⁴ Benjamin Lyons was another purveyor who entered the fur trade,¹⁵ as did the previously mentioned Chapman Abrahams.¹⁶ Lazarus David, originally from Swansea, Wales,¹⁷ opened a general store stocked with local items and goods imported from England. Samuel Jacobs, a merchant and army purveyor, settled in St. Denis, Quebec¹⁸ and, like Hyam Myers of Quebec City, maintained a close connection with the merchants in New York, Philadelphia and Rhode Island.¹⁹ Abraham Franks, Andrew Hays, Simon Levy, all came from families established below the border for two or three generations²⁰ and, through their familial and business ties, formed part of the loosely woven commercial network of the time.²¹

Several of the original settlers and their descendants, as well as a few of the later newcomers, would become large landowners, merchants and fur traders. As today, however, the majority were small shop-keepers, agents or salesmen or notaries, with the addition of the more unusual trades of

auctioneer and innkeeper.

An interesting fact is that all these new settlers, both English and Jewish, became bilingual in a very short time. All notices and advertisements in the *Quebec Gazette* were, of course, in both French and English, published in parallel columns, but correspondence in French was received by Aaron Hart from some of his customers²² and notarial deeds and other legal notices were always in French if that was the language of the other party.

Synagogues of that time, and their contributions to their new country shaped the destiny of these first, tiny Jewish communities and laid the foundations on which was built the Canadian Jewish community we know today.

Perhaps here it would be opportune to explain the reason for the Sephardic rite being the only one in use in North America. In 1654 the Dutch colonies in South America were recaptured by the Portuguese, and the Jews, many of whose families had fled from Portugal to Holland or had cast aside their Marrano covering, now had to move once more. Special arrangements were made with the Portuguese authorities to allow the Jews time to leave and then began the island-hopping up through the Caribbean, to Curacao, St. Thomas and the other islands. A small group eventually arrived in New Amsterdam where, to the dismay of the Governor, Peter Stuyvesant, the Jews were permitted to remain, mainly because of pressure brought to bear by the Dutch West Indies Company, many of whose large shareholders were Jews.

These first Jews to arrive in what later became New York City founded the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, according to the ritual with which they were familiar. The synagogues in Newport and later, in Philadelphia, Charleston, Savannah and Richmond, all used the Sephardic form of prayer,¹³ even though a number of their members were Ashkenazim. So it was natural that when the Jewish colonists founded the first synagogue in Lower Canada they should follow the same pattern, particularly as many had been and some still were members of "Shearith Israel" in New York. In fact, it was to their sister congregation in New York and the mother congregation in London that the Montreal synagogue turned whenever advice or aid was needed.

Little notice has been given so far to the presence of Jews in the fur trade but indications are it was far more important than their numbers suggest. Aaron Hart was connected with Nicholas Montour, a member of

the first North West Company,²⁴ Levy Solomons is mentioned as one of two traders who escaped being killed in an Indian attack en route to Detroit²⁵ while Ezekiel Solomons' escape from the Indians who held him prisoner after their attack on Michilimackinac is chronicled in Irving Katz's *Beth-El Story*.²⁶

Myer Michaels was a member of the Beaver Club,²⁷ which required each member to have spent at least one winter in the "upper country." A document relating to the Hudson Bay Company's debt to David David's estate²⁸ and the papers of Jacob Franks show their large interests in the fur trade.²⁹ Samuel Judah, a cousin and later brother-in-law of Aaron Hart, was also a large fur trader. Unfortunately, nearly all the documents for his part in the fur trade were burned with other Hart family papers by his great grandnephew, Lewis Hart.³⁰

Regarding the previously mentioned Ezekiel Solomons perhaps a few additional facts may be of some interest. In a well researched book *The Fur Trade*³¹ it is stated that Ezekiel Solomons was a partner in a loose federation of fur traders referred to as "The Pedlars." This group ranged as far west as Saskatchewan, near the Hudson Bay Company's trading post of Cumberland House, and among the partners were such well known names as Alexander McKenzie, Simon McTavish and Charles Grant, all later to become partners in the legendary North West Company.³² Ezekiel Solomons remained in Michilimackinac after the Treaty of 1783, which placed Mackinac within the borders of the United States. As a result, in 1964 the Senate of the State of Michigan introduced a resolution proclaiming Ezekiel Solomons as the first Jewish settler in Michigan, and the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan presented the Mackinac Island State Commission with an historic marker to place on the site where Michigan's first Jewish settler had traded³³ - an honour indeed for one of the founding members of the Portuguese Congregation in Montreal.

A member of the Jacob Franks family, though not connected with the trade, lived an equally interesting, though less financially successful life. John Franks, believed to be a brother of Abraham Franks, our original settler, became a chimney overseer and inspector in Quebec. After several years he moved to Montreal and in 1781 bought two lots of land on the slope of St. Louis. Here he installed an open-air pleasure garden, modelled after the famous Vauxhall and Ranelagh Gardens in London, where one could sip refreshments in a garden setting while listening to musicians and viewing juggling or other acts of entertainment. Unfortunately, this was not a paying proposition and in 1788 the property was

seized, to be purchased a year later by Richard Dillon, later proprietor of Dillon's Hotel. After he too failed, the property was sold to Joseph Frobisher, one of the wealthiest of the North West Company's fur traders. Frobisher built his estate "Beaver Hall" on the site,³⁴ situated opposite and just below the location of the present Bell Telephone Company's head office. Meanwhile, Franks returned to Quebec where he became Fire Superintendent and organised a series of annual balls or assemblies³⁵ which became a feature of the winter social life of the city. As a footnote regarding Vauxhall Gardens, in the mid-nineteenth century two French gentlemen opened a similar type of establishment in the east end of the city, called Sohmer Park, modelled on John Franks venture. They were more successful and the park remained in existence and provided pleasure to two or three generations of Montrealers.

Jews were also involved in early Canadian banking. David David was one of the founding shareholders and a Director of the Bank of Montreal.³⁶ The Hart Bank in Three Rivers was founded in 1835 by Moses Hart to help overcome the shortage of specie which so constricted trade at that time. It was dissolved at his death in 1852, when all debts were settled and the depositors' accounts paid and closed.³⁷ In a later generation, Abraham Joseph of Quebec was a founding Director of La Banque Provinciale and later president of the Stadacona Bank;³⁸ in Montreal his brother, J.H. Joseph, was a founder of the Union Bank and an original stockholder in the Bank of British North America. In addition to his involvement in banking, Jacob H. Joseph was associated with several of the early railroad companies, with the first company to connect Canada and the United States by telegraph and with the company which laid the first trans-Atlantic cable, as well as being president of several other companies.³⁹

Another brother, Jesse Joseph, was also a prominent member of the Montreal business community. He was president of several companies, including the Montreal Gas Company and the Montreal Street Railroad Company forerunner of the present Metropolitan Transportation Company of Montreal.⁴⁰ As we have seen, the Jews integrated very well into the economic life of their new country. But what of the social and all important religious aspects of life for the Jew in Canada?

In the main, social relationships were cordial, as evidenced by various entries in contemporary diaries, in correspondence and by invitations to official functions found in several collections of private papers. Samuel David's diary frequently refers to dances, dinners and assemblies given by

either French or English hosts, at which he was a guest.⁴¹ From Aaron Hart on, many of the Hart family were Masons and M.J. Hays played an important role in the dedication ceremonies for the new Freemason's Hall in 1846.⁴² Eleazar David acted as steward for the Bachelors' Ball while A.P. Hart's mare was entered in the first King's Plate race held in Canada - and won.⁴³ Abraham Joseph's diary for January, 1842 contains several references to a smart new sleigh built to his order in which he several times takes the local belle for a drive⁴⁴ and at a later date, the Josephs and de Solas attended many official functions and were frequent guests at private affairs.⁴⁵

But despite the constant business and social mingling and though there was a degree of assimilation and intermarriage, the majority of the Jewish community maintained a strict adherence to their religion. In 1768, just eight years after the first arrival, the Portuguese Congregation "Shearith Israel" was formed. Ten years later, the minutes record the decision to erect a building,⁴⁶ signed by almost all the first Jewish settlers.

Though Aaron Hart's name was not included in the original synagogue deeds, the practices of Judaism were very important to him. A letter written to his son Moses in 1786 tells him if he can't come home for Pesach, to go to New York to keep the Holiday there.⁴⁷ At a somewhat later date Hart and his family supported a synagogue and made available a burying ground for all the Jewish residents of Three Rivers.⁴⁸ Aaron Hart's nephew, Henry Joseph, who lived in Berthier, learned the laws of *shechita* in order to ensure kosher meat for his family;⁴⁹ the funeral eulogy for his wife, Rachel Solomons Joseph, describes in some detail the orthodox observance which prevailed in her household.⁵⁰

Until 1838, religious education was the responsibility of the home, though the boys might be sent away for a few years to receive their education, religious and secular, from a Hebrew teacher, not always, alas, competent. There are several letters from Aaron Hart to his son Ezekiel, at that time working in New York, criticising the quality of the Hebrew teaching being received by Aaron's two youngest sons, Benjamin and Alexander. These young boys were sent to school first in Philadelphia and then in New York.⁵¹ However, when the congregation was able, after 1838, to support a minister, it was agreed a more formal Hebrew education would be preferable. In 1845 Reverend David Piza agreed to extend his engagement for one more year, provided he be allowed "to keep a school for education of Jewish children without charge" and that he attend them four days a week, at least three hours a day.⁵² As for the girls'

education, they learned their “3 R’s” at various small private schools, often with the addition of drawing, dancing and needlework lessons, the last learned at the convent.⁵³

As the second generation reached maturity, their place in the community broadened. David and Samuel David became important merchants, supplying goods for the fur trade,⁵⁴ as did their brother Moses, in Sandwich, Upper Canada. Levy Solomon Jr. and his brother Benjamin owned a tobacco and snuff factory and sold imported delicacies as well.⁵⁵ The Solomon’s factory was located on Notre Dame Street near Molson’s Brewery and in 1815 the following advertisement for the firm appeared in the *Montreal Herald*: “Fresh chocolate 5000 pounds Cardwell and Solomons best Albany Chocolate. Part just received, the remainder daily expected from LaPrairie. L. & B. Solomons & Co.” Before Victoria Bridge was built, LaPrairie was the entry point for all goods coming from the United States or from the South shore. Every piece of merchandise, every vegetable, every bale of hay had to be brought to Montreal across the St. Lawrence, by boat in summer or by carts travelling the “ice roads” in winter.

Henry Joseph had large shipping interests, and chartered ships to carry cargoes between Canada and England; he also provided cargo space on ships plying the Great Lakes, in which goods were carried to the fur trading stations.⁵⁶ In the cholera epidemic of 1832, both Henry Joseph and one of his sons were among the victims. Accounts written by Arthur Wellington Hart to his uncle, Moses, give some idea of the helplessness felt during such an outbreak. June 14, 1832:

“Cholera is frightful. 50-60 deaths since yesterday morning. Viger’s brother, Gravel and many others and Mr. Ross of the English Church is dying.”

and again on June 26:

“The cholera epidemic has taken 1270 up to Friday night. We are panic struck.”⁵⁷

The Harts, who were landowners and successful merchants, became the first Jews to enter politics.⁵⁸ The story of Ezekiel Hart’s election to the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada is well known. When he was first elected as member for Three Rivers in 1807, objections were raised in the House because of the manner in which he took the Oath of Office. Re-elected for the session of 1808-09, objections again were raised, this time because of Hart’s religion, and these continued till the end of the session. In October, 1809, he sought election once more. This time, Hart was defea-

ted, marking his permanent withdrawal from politics.⁵⁹

A generation later, Ezekiel's son, Samuel Becancour, Samuel's uncle, Benjamin Hart, and Moses Judah Hays revived the question of Jewish civil rights. In June 1830, Samuel Becancour Hart's name was placed on the list for Commissioners of the Peace, District of Three Rivers. Later, however, it was withdrawn on the grounds that he was ineligible, as Jews could not take the Oath of Qualification. A petition was presented by the Jews to the Legislative Assembly on January 31, 1831, requesting they "be allowed to hold public office and be given the same privileges as other citizens."⁶⁰ This was followed by a petition by S.B. Hart requesting the same privileges, which outlined his family history in and contributions to Lower Canada.⁶¹

The petition by the Jewish community was sent to a grievance committee of the House and the resulting bill entitled "An Act to declare persons possessing the Jewish religion entitled to all the Rights and privileges of the other subjects of His Majesty in this Province" was passed on March 31, 1831. The bill was then sent to His Majesty for Royal Assent, was received on April 12, 1832 and in June was proclaimed in Quebec by the Governor, Lord Aylmer.⁶² Known officially as 1st William IV Chap 57, it is more often referred to as the Magna Carta of Canadian Jews.

In 1833 Samuel Becancour's name again appeared on the List for Commissioners and again he accepted. There still remained some official doubt as to whether he could qualify because of the wording of the Oath of Abjuration which contained the words "on true faith of a Christian." Finally, after much correspondence, S.B. Hart sent a notarised statement to the government which claimed he had complied with all the requirements for office and took up his duties as Justice of the Peace for the district.⁶³

However, Benjamin Hart and Moses J. Hays, whose names had been included in the List for the District of Montreal, were advised by their legal counsel, Aaron Philip Hart, that legally they could not accept the office so long as this phrase was contained in the oath. In February 1834 a special committee of the Legislative Assembly heard evidence on this point, with the result that an amendment was requested whereby the phrase could be omitted in specific cases. For several reasons no immediate action was taken, but on August 5, 1837 Queen Victoria signed the commissions appointing Benjamin Hart and Moses J. Hayes Justices of the Peace.⁶⁴ In 1841, an act was passed which included this amendment, with the additional proviso that the law applied to naturalised subjects as

well as to the native-born.⁶⁵ Surely this first charter of human rights was not an inconsiderable achievement by a Jewish population which numbered no more than 137 persons in the whole of Canada.⁶⁶

You have already heard of Moses Judah Hays in connection with the Masons and for his efforts to obtain civil rights for all Canadian Jews. A son of the pioneer settler Andrew Hays and his wife Abigail, or Branny, Hays, in many ways Moses Judah was a remarkable man. He was an active Mason from an early age, and, as treasurer of the Portuguese Congregation, was placed in charge of erecting the new synagogue on Chenneville Street.⁶⁷ A founding stockholder of the Bank of Montreal, Hays was the proprietor of the Montreal Waterworks Company, which he purchased from the original owners in 1832 and operated till it was purchased by the City in 1845.⁶⁸ M.J. Hays owned a building near Bonsecours Street on the top of which he built a reservoir, the lower floors housing municipal offices. During one of the Council meetings, this reservoir overflowed,⁶⁹ a situation which definitely placed a damper on the proceedings.

One of Montreal's better known hotels was Hays House, with the Hays Theatre built as an extension onto the back of the hotel. Erected in 1848 by M.J. Hays, it was situated on the north east corner of Dalhousie Square, the theatre extending from Champs de Mars Street to Notre Dame.⁷⁰

In 1849, when the Parliament buildings in Montreal were burned, Moses Judah Hays offered Parliament the use of Hays House. The offer was accepted and the end of the 1848-49 session was held in Hays' hotel, after which Parliament removed to Kingston.⁷¹

Like so many other landmarks, in 1852 Hays House and theatre fell victim to one of Montreal's periodic fires, but the drop curtain of the theatre, which depicted Windsor Castle from a ruin in the foreground, was saved and later graced the stage of the Theatre Royal on Cote Street. As a footnote, the McCord Museum has a watercolour by James Duncan, depicting the burning of Hays House and Theatre.⁷²

M.J. Hays became Chief of Police in 1845, and in his official capacity he was responsible for helping to care for the victims of the typhus or "ship fever" epidemic which was brought to Montreal by the Irish immigrants who had contracted it on shipboard, where it had spread with terrifying rapidity in the crowded quarters of the steerage.⁷³ Moses Judah later became Superintendent of Police - the equivalent of a Justice of the Peace - and, when that office was abolished in 1854, he became Police

Commissioner, an office he held until his death in 1861.

The third generation witnessed the entrance of the Jews into the legal and medical professions, as well as continuing the previous generations' activities in the militia forces of the country. Indeed, from 1760 on, through the American invasion of Canada in 1775-76,⁷⁴ the War of 1812,⁷⁵ the Rebellion of 1837-38⁷⁶ and the Fenian Raids of the 1860's and 1870,⁷⁷ Jews played an active role in defending the country of which they felt so much a part.

Jewish entrance into the legal profession began when Aaron Ezekiel, son of Ezekiel Hart, was granted a license to practice in 1824.⁷⁸ He was followed by several other Hart and David family members as well as by Gershom Joseph, who became the first Jewish Q.C.⁷⁹

In 1835 Frederick Weber Hart, son of Benjamin Hart, became the first Jewish doctor to graduate from McGill,⁸⁰ while his cousin and fellow student, Aaron Hart David, after taking his preliminary courses at McGill, finished his studies at Edinburgh. He then returned to Montreal where he had a distinguished career, climaxing his many activities by becoming a founder, and later dean, of Bishop's College Medical School. On March 9, 1871, Dr. David was appointed professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine and gave his opening lecture on October 4th in rented rooms, situated at the corner of McGill and Notre Dame Streets. At the Medical School's first convocation, in the spring of 1872, all faculty members, including Dr. David, received the degree of DCL, *honoris causa*. He continued to hold the chair of the Theory and Practice of Medicine until November 1, 1880 when, as Professor Emeritus, he delivered his last lecture.

In addition to his medical practice and teaching duties, Dr. David was a trustee of the Portuguese Congregation for many years and a member of the Natural History Society of Montreal. As well, he served as attending physician for the Montreal Hebrew Philanthropic Society and its successor, the Young Mens' Hebrew Benevolent Society.⁸¹

In the same year that Dr. David retired, the Governors' Minutes of McGill University record the appointment of Lewis Hart, great grandson of Aaron Hart, as lecturer on the Theory and Practice of Notarial Deeds and Proceedings. He was the first notary to be appointed to McGill's Law Faculty, in a position created for him.⁸² Despite its small size, the Jewish community played a distinguished part in the legal and medical circles of the day.

Indeed, the second the third quarters of the nineteenth century were

a burgeoning time for the Jewish community, despite the setback suffered by the Portuguese Congregation between the years 1825 to 1838. In 1824 the land on which the first synagogue stood had reverted to the estate of David David and the Sifrei Torahs and other synagogue furnishings had been given to Benjamin Hart and M.J. Hays for safekeeping.⁸³ During the time in which there was no synagogue, Benjamin Hart had held services in a small wooden building in the garden of his home on St. Helen and Recollet Streets.⁸⁴ Correspondence between Mr. Hart and other members of the community concerning the renewal of the synagogue show him to have been a stern believer in strict observance of the Sephardic ritual.⁸⁵

From 1832 to 1828 the community was engaged in raising funds for a new building and in September, 1838 the revived Portuguese Congregation dedicated the Chenneville Street synagogue.⁸⁶ The first Hazan was the Rev. David Piza, who returned to London in 1845. He was succeeded by the twenty-one year old Rev. Abraham de Sola who, within a year, became widely known in both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities for his sermons and public addresses.⁸⁷ In 1847 the Montreal Hebrew Philanthropic Society was formed, in large part due to his efforts⁸⁸ - the first Jewish charitable organisation founded in this city.

First appointed lecturer and then professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature at McGill,⁸⁹ Hazan Abraham de Sola was also a member of the Natural History Society of Montreal⁹⁰ and a prolific speaker and author, whose subjects ranged from "The Sanatory Institutions of the Hebrews" to the "History of the Jews in Poland" to "The Study of Natural Science", an address given before the Natural History Society on the occasion of Prince Arthur's visit in 1870. In 1858, McGill conferred on Rev. Abraham de Sola the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws,⁹¹ "the first time a Jewish minister had received this title either in America or in England."⁹²

Nor was Jewish education neglected during this period. Rev. David Piza had given Hebrew lessons but, after Rev. Abraham de Sola's arrival, a Sunday school was instituted⁹³ and in 1853, the year following his marriage, a full time Jewish day school was opened in the Hazan's home. Among the subjects taught were "English and 6 other languages, Mathetics (sic), Bookkeeping (sic) and Geography." Boarding could be arranged and there was a special Hebrew class for girls. "Fees were \$24 to \$40 per annum plus an extra charge for dancing painting and other accomplishments."⁹⁴

During this same mid-century period, a second synagogue was founded, which followed the Ashkenazi form of service. In 1846, the Congregation

of the English, German and Polish Jews began meeting in rented rooms and in May 1860 the Congregation dedicated its first synagogue building.⁹⁵ This same era saw the formation of the Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society, which received its charter in 1870. The society's incorporation was undertaken by Lewish Hart and Gershom Joseph.⁹⁶ The first test for the Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society came during the 1880's when refugees from Eastern Europe began to arrive in Montreal.⁹⁷ The efforts of a combined Jewish-Christian Committee⁹⁸ and a short-lived Jewish Immigrant Aid Society were unsuccessful in providing sufficient financial aid to support the newcomers. The magnitude of the task all but overwhelmed the society. Finally, in desperation, they turned to Baron Maurice de Hirsch, and in 1890 the Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society received a generous grant.⁹⁹ In gratitude, they decided to change the society's name to the Baron de Hirsch Institute and to use the funds "for the purpose of educating the poor children and to establish a sheltering home for immigrants and orphans."¹⁰⁰ In association with the Jewish Colonisation Association, for several years the Baron de Hirsch Institute helped to implement plans for settling immigrants in farm colonies in Western Canada - many of which flourished until well into this century.¹⁰¹ Though its many activities changed with the years, the Baron de Hirsch Institute is still an important constituent society of today's Allied Jewish Community Services.

In 1882, Montreal Jewry suffered the double loss of Dr. Abraham de Sola and of Dr. Aaron Hart David.¹⁰² The death of these two community leaders marked the end of an era and the curtain was raised on a new scene. As the century drew to a close, an ever increasing stream of families fleeing the pogroms of Roumania and Russia sought refuge in Canada.

These men and women brought a new outlook and different traditions, and it was they and their children who shaped the Jewish community we know today. But the foundations on which they built were solidly laid, the rights won those still enjoyed today. We can be proud indeed of our Canadian Jewish heritage.

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Notes On Some Of The First Jews West Of Ontario

DAVID ROME

Résumé

Très peu a été écrit à propos des habitants juifs de Victoria qui, autour des années 1858, avaient su créer une communauté juive de la même ampleur que celle de Montreal. La synagogue que ces habitants avaient bâtie et le centre qui s'était créé autour d'elle disparurent vers 1871.

Quelle était l'origine de ces habitants juifs? L'auteur de cet article décrit les péripéties de ceux qui avaient remonté le Fraser et le sort qui les attendait.

David Rome termine son article en soulignant que le meurtre de trois habitants juifs a été décrit par Alan Sullivan dans le roman *Cariboo Road*.

The story of Jews in Western Canada began explosively in 1858, in Victoria, exactly a century after Jews first came to Quebec in 1759. Trading adventurers, miners, bankers, talmudic scholars, *shochtim*—they came up the coast from San Francisco, to settle in Victoria and in Hope and Cayoosh and Berkerville. A remarkable and considerable community arose, second only to Montreal, and infinitely more colourful and ram-bunctious, with Jewish instincts and traditions unaffected by the sea voyage around Cape Horn or across the Isthmus of Panama. Any Jewish community would take pride in such colourful founders.¹

A certain amount has been written about several of the first Jews to settle west of Windsor.² But they are largely unknown to Canadian Jewish readers, for they had no issue, that is directly. The community they established and the synagogue they erected—probably the oldest in Canada today—virtually came to an end as suddenly as it was founded, in 1871. On that date, most likely, it ceased to be the second largest community in the nation,³ and Toronto has never been threatened by Victoria since.

On the other hand, the small community that has arisen in Victoria during the last century does not consider itself a continuation of the Fraser

River gold rush development.

Some of the first Jewish migrants to the colony of Vancouver Island did not set foot on its soil. Eugene L. Denney, one of the founders and librarian of the San Francisco Hebrew Young Men's Literary Society, came to Victoria and was ascending the Fraser in May 1858 with four other men in a canoe when it overturned. He was drowned.⁴

German-born Isaac Rosenbaum, 28, of the firm of Rosenbaum and Van Allen, came to Victoria from California by the steamer *Cortez* to set up a branch of his books and stationary business such as they were operating at Stockton, California.⁵ The *Cortez* lay in Esquimalt harbour while the sailboat *Alcatraz* was carrying its passengers to Victoria. As the *Alcatraz* rounded McCaulay's Point at the entrance to the harbour it capsized; 14 of its 42 passengers drowned, including Rosenbaum. Someone recovered a journal kept by Rosenbaum and sent it on anonymously to Rosenbaum's partner at Stockton.

These episodes are a reminder of the hazards of pioneer life shared by Jews in the west. There are others.

Morris Price⁶ had come to the colony in 1859. By 1861 he was well established, with property in Victoria, New Westminster and in Cayoosh.

Cayoosh was not the safest place in the colony as far as the menace of Indian massacre was concerned. It was an Indian village and a wayside town on the route to the gold fields. The Indians were treacherous and openly hostile, and white men were always on the *qui vive* for signs of war or uprising.

On February 3, 1861 a resident of Cayoosh wrote to the newspapers of the colony (in the New Westminster *British Columbian*, and the Victoria *Colonist* of February 14):

"A brutal and horrible murder was committed in our midst here on the night of the 1st inst., on the person of Mr. M. Price, a storekeeper of this place. The discovery of the deed has caused a great sensation among the peaceable inhabitants of Cayoosh Flat. Mr. Price being a very peaceable and inoffensive man, having no enemy has seemingly caused the crime to appear tenfold worse. He was found on the morning of the 2nd inst., lying on his back with his throat cut from ear to ear."

The body of the Jewish pioneer was cared for by his brethren of the A.F. & A.M. at Cayoosh until May 6, when it was brought to eternal rest in Victoria. The newspapers of the colony reported:

"The body of this unfortunate man who was so cruelly murdered at

Cayoosh three months ago was yesterday interred in the Jewish portion of the Church Reserve. The corpse, inclosed in a handsome coffin, was placed in a hearse and preceded by the Victoria lodge, No. 1085, of Free and Accepted Masons. A number of friends of the deceased followed the hearse. On arriving at the cemetery, the usual Masonic ceremonies were held, after which the burial service of the Hebrew Church was performed. The remains were then lowered to their last resting place. The whole ceremony was a very impressive one, and excited much apparent emotion in the breasts of many of the participants who had long known and respected their deceased brother. This is the first Jew interred in the Hebrew cemetery of this city.”⁸

The tombstone on Grave No. One of the Hebrew cemetery bears the inscription, “In memory of Morris Price, murdered in Cayoosh, B.C., May 5, (sic), 1861. Born in Prussia.”

The Indians who had committed the murder were caught immediately, with marks of blood still upon one of them. They were executed after trial before Judge Begbie.

The Price tragedy was not unique in Victoria history. The following year, in the summer of 1862, the city was shocked by what its historian W. W. Walkem called “The Massacre of the Jews.” “Dutchy” Harris Lewin, also a pioneer of 1858, and Russian-born David Sokoloski were engaged in packing merchandise to the Cariboo interior. The two Jews met on their way to Quesnel Forks after they had sold their wares at the gold mines at Keithley Creek. They decided to travel together, in the company of a packer, Charles Rouchier. Lewin had \$12,000 on him, the other smaller sums.

A contemporary report tells us that they “had reached the bridge over the North Fork of Quesnelle at 5 o’clock on the afternoon of the 26th, where they rested and partook of refreshments. Here, on the lower or new trail being wet, they were advised to take the old or mountain trail, which is always dry, but on account of its being more lengthy, has fallen into disuse this year. The victims announced their intention of following the advice, whereupon the three strangers who had travelled with them immediately left the house and, preceeding towards the north fork by the mountain trail, were soon out of sight. The three men, who were dommed never to reach their destination, shortly after left in the same direction and were never seen alive again. Stiff and cold, their

mutilated remains were discovered in the bush a short distance from the road, two days thereafter, ample time having been afforded in the meantime for the perpetrators to escape with the gold robbed from the murdered men. . .

“On reaching a point about three miles from the bridge, it would appear they were set upon by the three men before alluded to, murdered and robbed not only of their treasure but of their watches and jewelry and even their hats. Each man had received three shots, and from the direction they entered it would appear the villains had been secreted on the lower or left hand side of the trail, and at a concerted signal fired simultaneously, each taking his man down, and each firing a second or third shot.

“When the party who went the mountain trail reached a point about three miles out from the bridge, (those searching for them) detected blood and other indications of a suspicious character. Discovering three trails seemingly made by dragging bodies over the ground leading down the hill in the direction of the North River, they followed. At a distance of about 150 yards they discovered the three bodies of the murdered men. . .

“The people appointed one from amongst themselves to act in that capacity (as coroner) when, a jury being chosen, an inquest was duly held.

“The actions of the peaceful populace of the district has gone down into the legal history of the province as characteristic of the most constructive and orderly acts of almost intuitive, popular administration, in marked contrast to the frequent violent acts of “mass justice” on the frontier further south.

“A public meeting was held at the town of the Forks of the Quesnelle on the 29th of July, at which all the inhabitants of the town and vicinity were present. Rev. A. Browning was unanimously elected Chairman and Samuel Goldstone (an active member of the colony’s Jewish community), Secretary. The Chairman stated that a dreadful murder of three esteemed citizens had been committed in our midst; and, as there was no magistrate or any other authority in the place or neighbourhood to assist in the search of, and pursuit after the murderers, it became necessary for every inhabitant of the country to empower somebody to act in this matter with the least possible delay, and he felt no doubt His Excellency the Governor would sanction and approve any measures which might be deemed

necessary in the premises.

“Mr. Griffin moved, and Mr. Harris seconded, that “the chairman and the secretary of this meeting have the power to adopt such measures as in their judgement may appear necessary for the speedy apprehension of the murderers, and that the residents of the Forks of Quesnelle and vicinity pledge themselves to assist each other in carrying out measures this meeting may adopt. That we have reason to believe that the murderers are making their escape, and are on their way out to the country, and in the absence of any officer of the law, deem it advisable to take the responsibility upon ourselves to arrest all suspicious persons, and call upon the Government to bear us out in our acts and to defray whatever expenses may be incurred.

“In the absence of all officers empowered with the necessary authority to issue a warrant for the arrest of suspected parties, at the time when one of the most atrocious murders has been committed upon three respectable traders and packers immediately in the vicinity of this place, we propose to dispatch four armed men in pursuit of the supposed murderers, who, we have from circumstantial evidence every reason to believe, have left for the lower country, and with due vigilance can be taken. And furthermore resolved, that a reward of three thousand dollars be offered for the apprehension of the murderers. The above reward, in case of refusal by the Government, to be paid by the citizens of Cariboo.”⁹

At the time the press reported that Isidore Braverman (a native of Pieschen, Germany) went to the interior to bring back the body of his partner Lewin from the Forks for proper interment in Victoria.

Braverman was deeply interested in Jewish custom and ritual and was for years an active officer of the congregation until his passing in 1905. He had served as cantor during the High Holy Day services in 1868. If we can find no record of such interment in the island city, it certainly was not for want of care by Mr. Braverman.¹⁰

At the time, the murders were a great sensation. But the guilty were not apprehended and the interest faded. It was not until years later that Mr. Walkem resolved the mystery.¹¹ He recalls, “The fact that they carried this gold dust with must have been known to others on the creek.”

“One notorious thug was noticed by me hanging around the camp. His name was Cross-Road Jack, an immigrant from across the line, and for whom a large reward was offered by the United States authorities.”

“It was a cold sharp morning, the day they left Antler, and the snow was light and crisp. They must have proceeded without seeing anybody or without interruption as far as the lower side of Camp Mitchell’s Bridge when they were set upon by three highwaymen. . .

The killers were subsequently arrested on the American side for the murders, and found their way to the scaffold. The little Irishman was the last executed in Montana, and when in prison, prior to going to the scaffold, he confessed to the murder of the others already mentioned, and stated that about \$8,000 were lying cached behind a log on the trail, and they are lying there still for so far no one has found them.”

The tragedy found its way into British Columbia fiction. We read in Alan Sullivan’s *Cariboo Road* (Nelson, n.d.) the following conversation between Judge Begbie and Constable Simmons in Richfield,

“ ‘What’s the trouble now, Simmons?’

“ ‘Murder, sir. Murder and attempted robbery.’

“ ‘Michael Trupp again?’

“ ‘Yes, sir. Three Jews on their way to buy gold. They had a bankroll that would choke a horse, and camped this side of the Forks in a two-man tent.’

FOOTNOTES

1. *The First Two Years, A Record of the Jewish Pioneers on Canada’s Pacific Coast, 1858-60*, Montreal; n.d.
2. “The Adventures of Morris Moss,” in *Jewish Western Bulletin*, July 11, 1935; “David Belasco, One of the First Jews to Come to B.C.,” in *Vancouver Province*, Feb. 1, 1941; “First Days of the Oppenheimers in B.C.,” in *Jewish Western Bulletin*, Aug. 16, 1957 and March 14, 1958.
3. *Early British Columbia Jewry; A Reconstructed ‘Census*, in University of Calgary *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, June 1971, pp. 57-62.
4. San Francisco *Gleaner*, June 25, 1858.
5. Rudolph Glantz. *Jews of California*, p. 59 citing *Mariposa Democrat*, Sept. 24 and Oct. 8, 1857; “Canadian Notes of Long Ago,” in *Canadian Jewish Chronicle*, Sept. 19, 1952; *Victoria Gazette*, June 25 and 30, Aug. 2 and Sept. 4, 1858; *Gleaner*, Aug. 6, 1858.
6. W. Walkem, “Murdered by Indians,” in *Daily Hebrew Journal*, Jan. 6, 1941.
7. *Stories of Early British Columbia*. Vancouver, *News Advertiser*, 1914. pp. 281-82.
8. *Colonist*, May 7, 1861.
9. W. Walkem, *op cit*.
10. Congregation Emanuel, *Records*.
11. “Stories of Early British Columbia,” *Vancouver News Advertiser*, 1914, pp. 281-82.

Book Review

DUAL ALLEGIANCE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY BEN DUNKELMAN

Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976

Reviewed by EUGENE ROTHMAN

Résumé

Peut-on être fidèle à deux idéaux? Voici la question que Ben Dunkelman se pose dans son livre *Dual Allegiance*.

Dunkelman qui est le fils d'un riche homme d'affaires juif de Toronto, a commencé ses études au Upper Canada College de cette ville, mais c'est surtout le sport qui semble l'intéresser d'abord. L'atmosphère de sa maison qui est un des centres zionistes de Toronto semble pousser le jeune Dunkelman à développer un grand intérêt pour ses origines et à l'âge de 18 ans il devient *shomer* de Tel Asher en Palestine.

Est-il possible d'être juif et Canadien en même temps? Bien sûr, répond Dunkelman. Pendant la Guerre d'Indépendance il a le moyen de se distinguer particulièrement et tout semble faire croire qu'il a désormais choisi de rester en Palestine où de grandes honneurs l'attendent. Pourtant les obligations envers sa famille le poussent à quitter ce pays et à rentrer au Canada.

La vie et les actions de Ben Dunkelman nous montrent qu'on peut, en effet, être fidèle à deux idéaux car l'un ne semble pas remplacer l'autre mais plutôt le compléter.

The twelve year old son of a close friend was asked a few years ago where he would be if Israel and Canada were at war with each other. "Where would I be?" responded this eerie throwback to the dark ghettos of an earlier age, "in prison, of course!"

A colleague recently faced a similar question when asked during a public lecture how he could reconcile his deep loyalty to Canada and to Israel. He replied with an imaginative metaphor drawn from the social sciences: Man is a creature who plays overlapping roles - parent, child, sibling, mate, in-law, breadwinner, friend, lover. . . . Life is the continuous process of reconciling these roles. The Jewish scholar went on to say that

membership in communities, whether local, regional, ethnic, religious, social or national, involved similar overlaps which had to be accommodated. However, any community that demanded absolute loyalty to the exclusion of all others was tyrannical.

The dilemma of competing loyalties is neither new nor is it unique. *Dual Allegiance*, the title of Ben Dunkelman's autobiography, is yet another - perhaps more concrete - attempt to resolve the question.

Dunkelman, the son of a wealthy Jewish businessman from Toronto and a mother who apparently dominated her family as she did her social circle, at first glance seems an unlikely figure to raise such complex issues. In an age when the immigrant children of the 1920's faced the twin hardships of poverty and acculturation, Dunkelman spent his time moving between lavish homes to equally exclusive schools such as Upper Canada College. Sports dominated his early life, and education was a minor consideration.

Ben Dunkelman was raised in a warm Jewish home which was a centre of Zionist activity in Toronto. Yet suddenly at age eighteen, he found himself a *shomer* .guard. . watching over the young settlement of Tel Asher in Palestine and exchanging blows with a local Arab villager. The inevitable question is what was he doing there: ". . . I should have been at school preparing for university or for the family business instead of fighting for my life in the dust of a Jewish settlement in the heart of Palestine. . ." (p. 1).

But the incongruity of the hockey player at Tel Asher is not that startling. As an adult he was able to articulate the lessons learned during childhood from figures such as Weizman and Shmaryahu Levin: "I was simultaneously, a Canadian and a Jew, and neither as a child nor as an adult did I find any conflict between the two." (p. 14).

Apparently Ben Dunkelman has had the unusual ability of intuitively attracting complex situations and then either resolving them with characteristic bluntness or simply brushing aside their implications. Throughout his life he has played contradictory roles which might have overwhelmed another man. At one and the same time he is the rich boy from Upper Canada College who is a *shomer* at Tel Asher, a decorated officer of the Queen's Own Rifles during World War II who refused command of the 1st Battalion because he is a civilian at heart, and, then, a major military figure in Israel's War of Independence who eventually returns to the quiet life of business in Toronto. Dunkelman plays each role with equal vigour.

It is during the year that Dunkelman spends fighting in the 1948 War of Independence that the polarities of his life become most clearly apparent. Much of *Dual Allegiance* is devoted to this period, which Dunkelman obviously feels is the highlight of his life.

Dunkelman, a major in the Canadian Army and with an impressive wartime record, was enlisted by Lady Lorna Wingate, the widow of Orde Wingate, to help the efforts of the Haganah in North America. As Chairman of the Haganah in Canada, Dunkelman recruited Jewish veterans to serve as volunteers in Palestine. He himself returned to Palestine in March 1948 to participate in the fighting that had already begun in anticipation of the end of the British Mandate in May. The units in which he served or which he led saw some of the fiercest battles of the war and his comrades-at-arms, such as Haim Laskov, Yitzhak Rabin, Arele Yariv, were among its most important commanders.

At first Dunkelman served with the Harel Brigade on the Jerusalem front, participating in Operation Nachshon to relieve Jerusalem. While stationed there he undertook tasks such as the organisation of formal logistics and planning that were so foreign to the informal Jewish army, which had evolved out of the camaraderie of small kibbutz-based units. Eventually Dunkelman planned the break-out from encircled Jerusalem and travelled in the first jeep to reach the coast, circumventing the main road blocked by the Arab Legion at Latrun. This later became the "Burma Road" that enabled New Jerusalem to remain in Jewish hands.

Dunkelman, who had established a close relationship with David Ben Gurion, then was offered the position of Co-Chief of Staff of the newly formed 7th Brigade. However, because of his experience with mortars, he instead requested and received unusually wide powers to supervise the production and distribution of mortars and the training of their crews.

From July 1948 until April 1949 Dunkelman was the Commander of the 7th Brigade that was credited with the conquest of the Galilee. With great efficiency, and with a brusqueness that often encountered the opposition of subordinates as well as senior officers, he quickly reorganised the Brigade into an effective fighting force. The results were gratifying to the Commander who spoke only broken Hebrew. Within days of his taking command the Brigade occupied Shafa Amr, a key town in the Galilee, with minimum loss. This was done with the assistance of Druze villagers who had been enlisted by Dunkelman against the advice of *Shai*, the Haganah's intelligence service. Forty-eight hours later, on July 16, Nazareth, the centre of the Lower Galilee, was occupied after a highly un-

orthodox campaign, without major casualties, any damage to the city or harm to its inhabitants.

The Brigade's last major battle was Operation Hiram which cleared the Central Galilee of enemy troops and brought Israel's forces to the Lebanese border. Within thirty-six hours, the unusual tactics that characterised Dunkelman's campaigns resulted in the destruction of Kaukji's army of irregulars, the capture of large quantities of arms and ammunition and the occupation of most of Israel's northern region. This was done with the loss of only three men!

As the war drew to a close, Ben Gurion offered Dunkelman the position of Commander of Israel's Armoured Corps. But again he returned to civilian life and attempted to establish himself in Israel. However, faced with pressures from his family, fading business prospects in Israel and the pull of ties in Toronto, Dunkelman eventually returned to Canada, where he remained.

To return to the dilemma posed at the outset: was Ben Dunkelman any more successful in coping with his dual allegiance than the twelve year old or the social scientist? Dunkelman himself asks a similar question and concludes that ". . . my life has been incomplete . . . I am not a citizen of that other country I have cherished and defended." (p. 325). And yet "This shuttling to and fro, physically and in spirit, has given my life an additional dimension. My dual allegiance has given me the pleasure of two lives." (p. 326).

I doubt whether there is a definitive answer to the question of dual allegiance and whether such loyalties must necessarily compete with each other. Still, I must give Ben Dunkelman full marks for having tried his best. He also wrote a fascinating story.

CONTRIBUTORS

PAULA JEAN DRAPER — is a doctoral student at the University of Toronto.

HARVEY H. HERSTEIN — is co-author of *Challenge and Survival; the History of Canada* (Prentice-Hall), a Canadian history text for high schools. His master's thesis *The Growth of the Winnipeg Jewish Community and the Evolution of its Educational Institutions* was published in part in *Transactions* of the Manitoba Historical Society, 1965-1966. He teaches history at St. Johns' High School, Winnipeg, and was a founder of the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada.

EVELYN MILLER — formerly Archivist of the Jewish Public Library, Montreal, has written extensively on the Jewish community of Quebec. Her articles have appeared in the *Transactions* of the Jewish Historical Society of England, the *American Sephardi*, and the *Jewish Book Annual*.

DAVID ROME — is National Archivist of the Canadian Jewish Congress and a lecturer in Religion at Concordia University, Montreal. He is Editor of the *Canadian Jewish Archives*. He is presently working on a history of the Jews in Canada.

EUGENE ROTHMAN — is Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion at Carleton University, specializing in Jewish and Middle Eastern history. He is Academic Director of the Canada-Israel Foundation for Academic Exchanges. He has published articles in *Midstream*, and is currently working on a political history of the Red Sea region during the 1960's and 70's.

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