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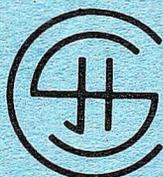
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The Poet and the Tycoon:
The Relationship Between
A. M. Klein and
Samuel Bronfman*

ADAM G. FUERSTENBERG

Résumé

Adam G. Fuerstenberg fait dans ce document une étude très approfondie des rapports qui ont uni A. M. Klein et Samuel Bronfman: Par le titre même du document, l'auteur semble déjà nous poser une question et soulever notre intérêt. En effet, de quelle manière un poète plaidant au nom d'un idéal peut-il arriver à s'entendre avec celui que l'auteur qualifie d'un être exceptionnel, d'un renard. Comment S. Bronfman a-t-il su s'allier ce qui lui faisait selon l'auteur de cette étude le plus défaut? C'est-à dire l'éloquence nécessaire afin de réaliser un idéal commun, l'unité de la communauté juive du Canada à une époque où toutes les portes semblaient devoir se fermer aux Juifs venant d'Europe Centrale et d'ailleurs.

Rarement, on a pu assister à une heureuse fusion entre un industriel par excellence pour qui toutes ses entreprises semblaient passer avant tout mais qui dans le fond avait une impulsion et un élan gauches ou plutôt peu adroits lorsqu'il s'agissait d'exprimer ses préoccupations pour la cause Juive, la Communauté Juive du Canada et Israël. A. M. Klein fut à cet égard son conseiller et son porte-parole en maintes occasions. Il fut celui qui alla jusqu'à rédiger de façon complète et détaillée les états financiers de la Seagram's C^o, S. Bronfman désireux de savoir par le menu détail tout ce qui se passait. Les heurts et les frictions ne manquèrent pas entre ces deux êtres *entiers* et c'est sur ce qualificatif qu'il y a tout lieu de s'arrêter.

S. Bronfman apprécia A. Klein non pour sa plume ou pour son talent d'écrivain, mais parce que ce dernier fut au même titre que lui, aussi fougueux et exigeant à sa façon. Et cette confrontation de deux tempéraments totalement opposés trouva un dénominateur commun dans la lutte commune qui les unit et permit de donner un essor au Congrès Juif Canadien, à la Communauté et

* Presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Jewish Historical Society, Learned Societies Conference, Halifax, June 1981.

enfin de défendre la position d'Israël.

Any relationship between two men who achieve eminence in widely disparate fields is worth exploring. When such a collaboration also has an effect on a whole community it not only becomes interesting history but may tell us something about the character and the development of that community and the direction in which it is heading.

The relationship between A. M. Klein, one of the greatest Canadian poets, and Samuel Bronfman, one of the most successful Canadian industrialists, provides a fascinating study of how the artist and the tycoon can collaborate when they feel that their community is seriously threatened. An examination of their relationship will also give us a fuller appreciation of the debt the Jewish community and the wider Canadian public owe these two exceptional men.

Of special interest to the literary historian, however, is the effect which Klein's involvement with Bronfman had on the poet. Thus Irving Layton, for example, could claim at the 1974 Klein Symposium at the University of Ottawa that the poet's work for Bronfman depressed Klein and taxed his spirit, eventually contributing to his mental breakdown and abandonment of literature and society while at the height of his powers and still only in his mid-forties, and that it added "a severe limitation to his final stature as a poet."¹ However, a history of their collaboration will show that the concerns which drew Klein to work with Bronfman – especially their "Yiddishkeit" and their Zionism – were also at the root of some of the poet's best work.

Although Klein began working for Bronfman in 1939, the two men must already have known each other from their earlier work on behalf of Zionist causes. While Klein was still at McGill University Saul Hayes arranged for Klein to be a summer tour guide on the Seagram sponsored Montreal Tourist Bureau Bus.² It is very likely that Bronfman, who tended to get involved in every detail of his business enterprises even when they grew huge and incredibly complex,³ met the young, even then impressively articulate Klein.

Temperament apart, the disparity was also great in their social status and achievement in public affairs when the two began their collaboration.⁴ Klein was still a struggling lawyer trying to support his mother, his wife and a recently arrived baby. In contrast, Bronfman had already established himself as a powerful industrialist. He had actively headed or substantially contributed to campaigns for the Jewish General Hospital, the Y.M.-Y.W.H.A. (in which his wife Saydie was also active from the early 1920's when the Bronfmans

had first settled in Montreal), various Jewish schools, B'nai Brith and, most notably, had led the Zionist Organization of Canada's United Palestine Appeal successfully for a number of years. He was also the President of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of Montreal.⁵ Early in 1938 he had taken control of the most important committee of a rapidly reviving Canadian Jewish Congress. This was the Co-ordinating Committee for Refugees, later – during the war – to become the more embracing United Jewish Refugees and War Relief Agencies. From its founding at the end of World War I until these increasingly alarming years preceding World War II, the Congress itself had not fulfilled the dream of its founders to serve as a Jewish parliament and the unified voice of Canadian Jewry. Now the gathering storm in Europe and its developing echoes in Canada stimulated a demand for the revival of the Congress. Klein certainly was aware of this revival and its implications and, as will be seen, deliberately decided to join it by working for Bronfman. In a hand-written notation on the margin of a typescript of a history of those years, written by Klein as the Congress' tribute to Bronfman, he notes that "1934 witnessed the rebirth of the Congress as a result of the advent of the Nazi Party to power."⁶ It was Bronfman's direct involvement in 1938 and accession to the Presidency in January, 1939 that turned Congress into an effective and powerful organization by attracting to its ranks a younger "native born, English-speaking generation." Bronfman realized that the shifting of power to the younger generation of leaders without creating divisive conflict could only be accomplished by building a bridge to the older, more "Yiddish" leadership.⁷ Bronfman himself provided that bridge on the organizational side, as Klein did on the intellectual and cultural side. As one commentator observed, Klein "transferred the close rapport between the Yiddish writer and the community into the English-speaking world he addressed."⁸

However, for Klein involvement with Bronfman raised some questions. The industrialist, while now an eminent and powerful Jewish communal figure, was still controversial as a result of his alleged activities during the time of Prohibition. Furthermore, he was a capitalist, the epitome of a free enterprise businessman, while Klein was ideologically a committed socialist whose writing in the years immediately preceding their meeting increasingly reflected the influence of the intellectual left. In a series of satires such as "Diary of Abraham Segal, Poet", and "Barricade Smith: His Speeches", he momentarily drew away from the Jewish-inspired poems which had first drawn attention to him, to attack the traditional targets of Marxists – the banks, the bosses and the police. Miriam Waddington has characterized these radical poems as inspired by Marxian economics and the songs of such revolutionary Yiddish poets as Abraham Reisen and Morris Rosenfield whose

works were “militant and revolutionary ballads which urged the Jewish worker to struggle for better conditions”.⁹ The depression and his precarious law practice made him particularly sensitive to the deprivation around him and in these satires he lashed out at the perceived causes. For instance, in “Diary of Abraham Segal, Poet” he describes the educated white collar proletariat struggling to survive, its cultural pretensions shattered by abject poverty and the drudgery of waking each day to the noise of a “dollar clock” and going to work for a “swag-bellied boss” who

Gloats o'er his shillings, byzants, ducats, smiles
At gaunt clerks, their nockandros flat on stools,
With borrowed quills in hired tomes accounting
His profits . . .¹⁰

The disillusionment even extends to Zionist ideology when Klein has his character exclaim, after discussing his brother's communism,

. . . my uncle says
Herzl will turn the Jews, now moles, to larks;
My cousin, amiable, believes them both,
Serving a beard of Herzlian-Marxian growth.
And as for me, unlike the ancient bards,
My idols have been shattered into shards. (*C.P.*, p. 87)

The outburst is especially revealing because of the autobiographical echoes in the poem's title. The Montreal poet J. I. Segal was an important mentor and friend who was indeed eking out a precarious living and Klein may have identified strongly with him. The immediacy of Depression poverty may also have led Klein to momentarily despair at the Zionist and ideological divisions in the community.

Again the companion poem, “The Soirée of Velvel Kleinberger” also from 1932, details the hunger and poverty of a labourer in the clothing factories, presumably of Montreal, who

. . . after days in dusty factories
Among machines that manufacture madness (*C.P.*, P. 90)

finds only momentary relief in gambling and “French whores”. Even in “Barricade Smith: His Speeches”, “The most revolutionary of all Klein's radical poems”¹¹ published as late as 1938 (although likely written earlier) when Klein was about to revive his Jewish communal activities under Bronfman's leadership, he stridently calls on the victims to recognize their exploitation:

The maestros have you, have you on the hip!
They gloat: they hold you ready for the take:
. . .
Sucker, you stand no choice; the cars are nicked,
The factory, believe you me, is one clip joint;
The sadness is you know not you are licked,

Comes from the cleaners, you have missed the point. (*C.P.*, P. 104)

So much, then, for the differences between these two men. And yet at the end of 1938, Klein was suddenly offered the editorship of the weekly *Canadian Jewish Chronicle* and he immediately accepted the post. Thus began his service as editor and as Bronfman's advisor and the earnest collaboration of the poet and the tycoon. What made Klein dramatically shift his allegiance from intellectual radicalism back to Jewish concerns and a willingness to work with Bronfman, the mighty capitalist? The answer can be found in Klein's perception of the world-wide threat to Jewry and his personal encounter with a local version of Nazism. As a consequence, by 1939, contacts with his marxist fellow writers became strained and he stopped writing radical literature because "concern over the fate of European Jewry was beginning to dominate all of his political thinking".¹² We can see this already in a poem, "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage", almost contemporary with "Barricade Smith: His Speeches", whose protagonist, the universal Jewish refugee everywhere refused asylum, cries out in weary anguish.

For they have all been shut and barred, and triple-locked
The gates of refuge, the asylum doors;
And in no place beneath the sun may I –
On pilgrimage towards my own wide tomb –
Sit down to rest my bones, and count my sores. (*C.P.*, 114)

Exactly at this time Bronfman's Co-ordinating Committee for Refugees was beginning the ten year struggle to open those "gates of refuge" in Canada against almost insurmountable obstacles. An army of unemployed, fearful of competition for scarce jobs, and a rising tide of Nazi-inspired anti-Semitic propaganda which successfully equated Jews with communism, made it almost impossible to change the immigration policy of an unsympathetic, perhaps mildly anti-Semitic, government.¹³ It was a time in Canada when Henri Bourassa in a respected newspaper like *Le Devoir* could justify Nazi aggression in Czechoslovakia while condemning the feeble attempts at the Evian Conference to help the victims,¹⁴ or when a Jewish tennis club felt it was necessary to accept the visible anti-Semitism of exclusion from the Toronto Tennis League to avoid "stirring up a backlash that could endanger their own security".¹⁵ No wonder Klein was ready to accept Bronfman's vigorous leadership; whatever their differences they were united in their concern for the Jewish people.

When Klein began working for Bronfman, he had already achieved a certain prominence as a talented public speaker in his capacity of student president of the Canadian Young Judea Federation and editor of its publication, the *Judean*. Also, even as he was achieving wide recognition for his early poetry in Jewish and non-Jewish periodicals "his prose writing (on Jewish concerns)

was being appreciated by the Jewish community and its institutions.”¹⁶

Then, after graduation from law school at the University of Montreal he had further national prominence as Educational Director of the Zionist Organization of Canada and as editor of its monthly magazine the *Canadian Zionist*. It is very likely that he first came to Bronfman’s serious attention as a result of these activities.

However, early in 1937 he had given up these peripheral positions and moved to Rouyn, in Northern Quebec, to set up a law practice with his friend and fellow student Max Garmaise. Only a year later, just as the practice was beginning to develop, Klein suddenly returned to Montreal. The ostensible reason was devotion to his elderly mother, who had remained in Montreal and was suffering from the separation, but a more likely reason was the political situation as it was developing in Europe and in Canada, particularly Quebec. Klein was becoming increasingly alarmed at the plight of Jewry in Europe, especially the Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria, and at the rising tide of anti-Semitism in Canada.¹⁷ He had watched with increasing trepidation the early successes of the Nazis, because he was more aware of the potential danger than those around him busy trying to survive the depression. As early as the summer of 1934 his best friend and former fellow student at Baron Byng High School and McGill, David Lewis, touring through Germany as a Rhodes Scholar, described to him in a long letter the effects the Nazis were already having.¹⁸ Closer to home, right in Rouyn, Klein and Garmaise had had a minor legal skirmish with Jean Tissot,¹⁹ the recently appointed police chief, who had earlier been a sort of “gauleiter” for Adrien Arcand in the Hull-Ottawa area. Tissot had recently lost a celebrated slander suit brought against him by the Zionist leader and prominent Ottawa merchant, A. J. Frieman, whom he had scurrilously attacked in Arcand’s anti-Semitic *Le Patriote*.²⁰ Suddenly Klein found himself, a lawyer in a small town, in frequent confrontation with one of the most prominent leaders of the growing fascist menace in Canada.

This, then, was the situation at the end of 1938 when Klein was suddenly offered the editorship of the weekly *Canadian Jewish Chronicle*, the most important Jewish publication in English in Canada. He responded immediately and we can see why. His first signed editorial was a rousing condemnation of the recent “Kristallnacht.” Clearly he accepted the editorship of the *Chronicle* for the same reason he – an avowed socialist – was prepared to work so closely with an arch-capitalist like Bronfman.

The gathering storm around his people and the urgent need for Jewish unity took precedence for Klein over his socialism or any ideological or political divisions that had pre-occupied the different Zionist and non-Zionist factions in

the community.²¹ The *Chronicle* gave him a valuable and prominent platform from which to sound the warning and the call for unity, and as Bronfman's speech writer and adviser, he hoped to share the latter's "immense influence on social and political affairs."²²

It is quite possible that Bronfman, through either Saul Hayes, at the time director of Bronfman's Refugee Committee, or H. M. Caiserman, one of the founders and longtime secretary of Canadian Jewish Congress, had something to do with Klein's appointment. Both these men knew and admired the poet. In fact, five years earlier Caiserman had devoted an ecstatic chapter to the young Klein in his book on Yiddish poets even though Klein was not writing in Yiddish, calling him so permeated with "Yiddishkeit" that he was the most Yiddish of Jewish-English poets in Canada ("er is mer eider alle andere Yiddish-englische dichter in Canada der Yiddishter dichter zwishen ze").²³ As we shall see this "Yiddishkeit" was probably an important bond between the poet and Bronfman. In any case Caiserman, working intensely with Bronfman at the end of 1938 in preparation for the latter's accession to the presidency of Canadian Jewish Congress, had close ties to the *Kanader Adler* (*The Canadian Eagle*), the influential Montreal Yiddish daily, and to its publisher, H. Wolofsky, who was also the publisher of the *Chronicle*. Bronfman was a substantial supporter of both as he was of Jewish periodicals in other Canadian centers, realizing their importance in unifying the Jewish community.²⁴ Moreover, Klein had already written for both papers and thus a suggestion from Bronfman to Caiserman or to the publisher directly, or on Caiserman's own initiative, would have made eminent sense to Wolofsky. Whatever the reasons behind Klein's appointment, in the poet's mind his two functions, as Bronfman's adviser and editor, were intimately connected in the service of the goal he shared with Bronfman – the unity of Canadian Jewry – for as one critic has observed "Klein made his journal an effective unifying agent in the cultural life of the Jewish community, constantly helping to keep alive the past and to improve knowledge of contemporary endeavours."²⁵

These, then, were the external conditions which, in a sense, brought the two together just as Canadian Jewry was to face its most challenging decade as a maturing community. Externally there were already masses of Jewish refugees, "the tragically unwanted people everywhere, including Canada",²⁶ clamouring for succour, while internally an ideologically divided Jewish community, still reeling from the effects of the Depression, seemed powerless to act. And hanging over everything, like a storm about to break, was the imminence of an impending World War. In his history of that period Klein recalled the fearfully agitated convention at the end of January, 1939 at which Bronfman took command of the Canadian Jewish Congress. As the delegates

gathered “that fateful January weekend”, he wrote, there was a sense of premonition that the accumulated challenges of the past decade, “like time bombs, were waiting, buzzing to explode.”²⁷ What was needed was “a man endowed at once with vision to see the ultimate, and practicality to undertake the immediate.”²⁸ Such a man in Klein’s view was Bronfman who “from the very first day of his assumption of office, set himself the task of achieving Canadian Jewish unity.”²⁹

But Bronfman was not an easy man to work for, or with. An impatient, abrasive personality, he had the self-made man’s mix of absolute assertiveness and aggressive insecurity. A classic workaholic, he was a hard taskmaster who was often so unpredictable that he could terrify his assistants. Once set in a certain direction he was stubborn and, if thwarted, would unleash a violent temper and a stream of shocking profanity.³⁰ It is hard to imagine a personality more different from that of the usually gentle, almost prim, and always articulate Klein. Yet Klein was one of the few people, other than Bronfman’s wife Saidye, who was never exposed to or the target of any such outburst. Quite the contrary, the poet elicited an unusual gentleness and consideration from the industrialist so that other collaborators sometimes benefited from Bronfman’s control of his temper in the presence of Klein.³¹

What “chemistry” produced this result? The answer, if there is one, probably lies in some fundamental things the two men shared rather than their obvious differences. Firstly, the two men shared an admiration for and a commitment to excellence in their respective fields. Both in his business and in his communal enterprises Bronfman had a genius for recognizing and harnessing talent and even eliciting fierce loyalty from his lieutenants.³² It unquestionably helps to explain his spectacular success. He obviously recognized something superior in Klein and responded to it and not just on the level which some observers have characterized as a kind of ignorant admiration for Klein’s ability to use “big words.”³³ How well he actually knew Klein’s work it is hard to establish, but it would be wrong to think of him as completely unlearned. Although Bronfman had no formal schooling after the age of 15 because he had to help his father, he had a good religious and Yiddish education from the Rabbi-teacher his father had brought along to Canada from Bessarabia. Moreover, he was insatiably curious and he appears to have had the ability, almost by a kind of osmosis, to absorb a great deal from around him,³⁴ and this provided a kind of alternative to formal education. For instance, he liked Victorian poetry and was able to apparently quote “endless quatrains from Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*.”³⁵

Secondly, he shared with the poet a very strict Orthodox upbringing and although, like Klein, he had lapsed from its observance, still maintained a

fierce loyalty to its traditions and an instinctive commitment to the Jewish nationalism it engendered.³⁶ In fact, both men frequently credited their upbringing and parental influence, especially their stubbornly pious fathers, for their own commitments to communal service. Thus Bronfman recalled at the 25th anniversary tribute to his brother Allan's work for the Jewish General Hospital that the roots of the brothers' philanthropy was their parents' teaching "by example." No matter how difficult their early years in Canada, he remembered, "my parents never forgot their relatives overseas, but ever came to their aid." Perhaps this explains Bronfman's special concern for Jewish refugees.

Klein's debt to his mother and father, whose passing when Klein was still in college affected the poet profoundly, is lovingly expressed in much of his poetry, especially in his poem, "Autobiographical":

My mother, blessing candles, Sabbath-flamed
 Queenly in her Warsovian perruque;
 My father pickabacking me to bed
 To tell tall tales about the Baal Shem Tov—
 Letting me curl his beard.
 Oh memory of unsurpassing love
 Love leading a brave child
 Through childhood's ogred corridors unfear'd: (*C.P.*, 272)

or in the more tradition indebted "Psalm XXXVI: A Psalm Touching Genealogy" where he describes how his father and ancestors dwell in his veins and eavesdrop at his ear:

They circle, as with Torahs, round my skull,
 In exit and in entrance all day pull
 The latches of my heart, descent and rise —
 And there look generations through my eyes. (*C.P.*, 234)

Thirdly, on a personal level, both men derived from large, warm and loyal, even though at times quarrelsome, families. They shared an idyllic domesticity with a deep commitment to family life, and both had a certain severe, magisterial, even authoritarian manner in dealing with people.³⁸

Finally, perhaps the most important quality they shared in their work for the Jewish community was their "Yiddishkeit". Bronfman, who, like Klein, had a deep feeling for his roots and — unlike many first generation Canadians — retained them, was fluent in and loved Yiddish as did Klein. J. B. Salsberg, no friend of Bronfman's in those days, recalls that Bronfman in spite of his wealth even then, "was nevertheless closer to the people, the Yiddish-speaking masses, than were his predecessors in the presidency of Congress."³⁹ It was obviously part of his effectiveness in uniting the Jewish community for he was, in spite of his money — a "folksmensch" who, as one observer expressed it, knew instinctively how to deal with a "Yiddishen Oilim" (a

Jewish gathering) and it was this same quality in Klein, this “folkishness while retaining his vast scholarship” that likely appealed to Bronfman and made it possible for these different men to work together.⁴⁰

What was the nature of their collaboration? There is no question that the two men liked and respected each other as individuals⁴¹ and it appears they worked very well together. In spite of the popular impression that Klein was simply Bronfman’s speech and letter writer, with the poet composing and Bronfman simply mouthing the results publicly, in reality his work for the industrialist was much more varied and extensive.

From the start Klein advised Bronfman on political developments in Canada and the world as they affected Canadian Jews, world Jewry, and the Yishuv and later, Israel. As early as August, 1939 the poet could write to a friend that “one of the things which I am doing for Mr. Bronfman is keeping him *au courant* with press reactions to all things Jewish, particularly as it impinges upon Congress work in all its ramifications.”⁴² Bronfman considered Klein’s help, although it was not a full-time job, important enough to install Klein in an office at Seagram’s headquarters even though the poet’s law office was only a few blocks south.⁴³ Klein apparently had ready access to Bronfman’s office so that the latter could instantly draw on his talents rather than, as at first, having Saul Hayes “contract” tasks, although this procedure continued concurrently with the more direct one. Bronfman greatly admired Klein’s ability to communicate both as public speaker and writer and he also valued his advice on Jewish matters.⁴⁴ Klein’s heightened awareness and concern, and sensitivity, to what was happening during those momentous years and his ability to draw on his knowledge of history and his store of Latin, English, French, Hebrew and Yiddish literature provided Bronfman with the perspective and depth he knew he lacked.

Professor Ben Lappin, a professional with the Canadian Jewish Congress in Toronto during those years and executive director of Central Region from 1948 to 1958, who had frequent occasion to observe the close collaboration, explains that the industrialist had such “*derech erez*”, such respect, and was so “uncritically appreciative” of the speeches the poet composed for him, because he “loved to read manuscripts prepared by a great artist like Klein.”⁴⁵ Occasionally this would lead to awkward or even humorous moments when Bronfman, unable to sustain the flights of eloquence prepared for him by Klein, would falter in the delivery.⁴⁶ But he didn’t resent Klein for it and treated him with consideration and respect.

Advice and speechwriting were not the only tasks. Frequently Klein himself would be the eloquent speaker on behalf of causes dear to Bronfman, especially the plight of Jewish refugees and the survival of Israel which were

concerns they obviously shared. On some of these occasions Bronfman would proudly introduce Klein and would note with admiration that with speakers like Klein Canadians didn't need visiting fund-raising stars.⁴⁷ Particularly notable occasions were the North American speaking engagements Klein undertook for the U.J.A. as a result of his tour of Europe, North Africa and Israel on which he had been sent by Bronfman and the C.J.C. in 1949. Not only was Klein extremely effective on this particular fund-raising assignment, but as is well known the notes he made on his journey and used for his speeches became the basis for his critically acclaimed Zionist novel *The Second Scroll*.⁴⁸

Klein also did some direct public relations work for Seagram's – in fact, he was paid his retainer through the public relations department.⁴⁹ Often this meant editing or writing the annual report of the company because Bronfman took his public responsibilities as head of Seagram's very seriously and insisted that the report be far more than a balance sheet.⁵⁰ It would frequently feature a long essay on broad issues of the time such as the results of a prestigious Seagrams sponsored symposium on the future, or the history and significance of Canada's north written by Pierre Berton. In such cases Klein had the responsibility for editing this material and making certain that it fulfilled Bronfman's intentions.

Ordinarily this was a routine task, but Bronfman was extremely sensitive about his own image and that of his enterprises and this sometimes placed Klein in embarrassing positions. The most notable example occurred in 1941 when Bronfman decided, at the nadir of Allied and Canadian fortunes in the War, to boost morale by sponsoring a book length history of Canada with a strong emphasis on its glorious future. The writer approached was Stephen Leacock, then in his seventies, retired and – in spite of the humour of such works as *Nonsense Novels* and *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* – still a crotchety imperialist, a white supremacist, and not too fond of the Jewish immigrants clamouring to enter Canada. Only eleven years earlier on a widely circulated political tract, *Economic Prosperity in the British Empire*, he could argue for billion dollar subsidies to induce “white” immigration to Canada from the British Isles, but people from European “alien countries” were not under consideration and did not fit the scheme because when the British race were available these others were only “a second best choice” and in his view this second best choice had already “badly damaged” the Canadian West.⁵¹ For him their learning English and legally become British subjects did not make them truly British. “A few such people can easily be absorbed”, he wrote.

A little dose of them may even, by variation, do good, like a minute dose of poison on

a medicine. But if you get enough of them, you get absorbed yourself . . .

I am not saying that we should absolutely shut out and deter the European foreigner, as we should and do shut out the Oriental. But we should in no way facilitate his coming.⁵²

Whose idea it was to offer the task to Leacock it is difficult to determine. It couldn't have been Klein who, having been Leacock's student at McGill,⁵³ was certainly familiar with his views and their implication for the Congress' efforts to open the gates. In one drawn out effort by the Congress, after endless submissions, delegations, and presentations only a thousand Jewish war orphans were admitted.⁵⁴ Perhaps it was felt that Leacock had mellowed, but Klein found himself, late in 1941, in a nutcracker between Leacock and Bronfman (who spent a great deal of time on the project)⁵⁵ as he was forced to do a massive editing job so that the history would not offend most of the non-British descended Canadians, especially in Quebec. The book eventually came out under the title *Canada—The Foundations of its Future* and was distributed free to over 160,000 people including – under a special cover – every notable in Canada, the U.S. and Britain, even including – here is catholicity indeed – Jack Benny and Haile Selassie!⁵⁶ Klein not only composed Bronfman's preface for the book but also the many personal dedications that Bronfman included for the important recipients.⁵⁷

Among the many gems Klein deleted were critical references to Sir Wilfred Laurier, constant reminders of the defeat of the French Canadians, and to their being “priest-ridden”, and the following admonition on immigration: “We dare not again adventure on calling in all the mongrels of unredeemed Europe.”⁵⁸ Klein was not, however, successful in removing passages referring to the “Asiatic peril” although he tried to get them “toned down a little”.⁵⁹ In fact, the offending passages remained essentially intact.⁶⁰

So delicate were the negotiations for the deletions that they took almost two months. Apparently it was too awkward or sensitive a mission for Klein so one of the Seagram lawyers – not Jewish of course – was saddled with the responsibility and after a series of meetings with the author got him to agree to most of the changes which Klein had suggested.⁶¹

Another area of strain in their relationship – especially when it related to Seagram public relations work rather than Jewish concerns – involved their different political ideologies. As a committed socialist and a member of the C.C.F. Klein was a nationalist and a protectionist. Quite understandably Bronfman was a continentalist on economic policy and while he was a proud Canadian, his business interests and his gratitude to the U.S. for its leadership in World War II and its subsequent support of Israel, made him a natural ally of C.D. Howe's continentalist policies and of the Liberal Party in Canada. Furthermore, under Taschereau in Quebec and federally, in contrast to R. B.

Bennett's flirtations with Adrien Arcand and other neo-fascist movements of the 1930's,⁶² the Liberal Party had a much better record on Jewish questions than the Conservatives.

Although he was cautious enough to contribute to the coffers of the Progressive Conservative Party in the time honoured fashion of all the major Canadian corporations, he and his lieutenants in his business and Jewish enterprises, men like Lazarus Phillips and Saul Hayes, were much more comfortable dealing with Mackenzie King's, St. Laurent's and Pearson's cabinet ministers and senior civil servants. It is thus not surprising that Bronfman felt betrayed by the lack of an appointment to the Senate.⁶³ As the recognized head of the Jewish community, a major business figure, and one of the most substantial backers of the Liberal Party he was entitled to this honour far more than most of the tired bag men and party hacks who were regularly appointed.

Nevertheless when in 1944 Klein accepted the C.C.F nomination in the predominantly Jewish riding of Cartier in Montreal for the expected 1945 election Bronfman couldn't have been pleased. Particularly disturbing to him was the possibility that Klein would split the vote and allow Fred Rose, the communist, to win. Rose did win but Klein had withdrawn soon after his nomination. Perhaps Bronfman had prevailed on him to do so, sweetening the argument with the assurance of gaining for Klein a position in the English Department at McGill. In a diary entry during April, 1944, the month of his actual nomination, Klein notes that Bronfman:

Hypocritically expressed fear lest his Liberal association be marred by my running C.C.F. Assured me that I would prefer professorship at McGill to House of Commons seat.⁶⁴

Bronfman did secure for Klein a three-year Visiting Lectureship at McGill against some resistance. It is hard to believe that only Bronfman's importance as a donor, his personal negotiation with the Principal, and his offer to pay Klein's salary, secured the position for one of Canada's foremost poets. Such occasions must have reminded the two that their Jewishness was a bond that political differences could not destroy. It also illustrates in a particular instance one of Bronfman's services to the Canadian Jewish community, the opening up of the older Canadian universities – which maintained an unofficial quota against Jewish students, especially in medical schools – to Jewish faculty and students.

Klein did become a serious candidate for the C.C.F. in 1949 in the same riding and lost, in spite of his personal popularity, because of the earlier scandal surrounding Fred Rose and the Liberal's support of Israel. Klein's candidates didn't seem to strain the relationship since Bronfman sent him on the tour to Europe, North Africa and Israel soon afterwards, perhaps as a thoughtful consolation for Klein's disappointment at his defeat.

Probably the most fruitful part of their collaboration on behalf of Jewish causes involved Klein's editorship of the *Canadian Jewish Chronicle*. In its weekly issues he editorialized on or highlighted in special features the Jewish efforts and concerns in which he was involved with Bronfman. David Rome has noted the importance of the close relationship between Klein's work for Bronfman and his editorship.

It is not too much to say that in this capacity [of editor] as well as through his association with the Canadian Jewish Congress and its president, Mr. Samuel Bronfman, Klein became the eloquent spokesman of the Canadian Jewish Community during many eventful years.....

To a large extent they [the editorials] were devoted to the theme of those years – the growing menace of the Nazi idea and of Nazi power. Klein's response to each development was as eloquent, forceful and logical as any word can be against brutality. . . . Probably never in Canadian journalism was English poetry invoked so freely and so naturally in comment on current political events.⁶⁵

In highlighting these concerns he would often consult Bronfman, especially for those issues of the paper appearing before major Jewish holidays like Purim, Passover or Rosh Hashana, when the preacher in Klein would emerge and he would draw telling parallels between previous occasions of Jewish peril and current events.⁶⁶ Thus in one of his letters to Bronfman in 1941 Klein includes "a Passover message for the Anglo-Jewish press of Canada" for Bronfman's perusal and concludes:

I have confined myself to emphasizing the parallel between the events which gave rise to our Passover celebration and the events through which we are living today – and may these, too, have the same happy conclusion.⁶⁷

Clearly Klein respected Bronfman's judgements on such matters and was not averse to learning from Bronfman, just as the latter learned from him. For instance in a series of little epigrammatic pieces, some even attributable to Bronfman, which Klein collected or composed as a probable aid in Bronfman's or his own addresses, on such diverse topics as "of how to look at your fellowman", "of poverty", "of flexibility", "of the complete man", etc., the poet would often note Bronfman's comments on the subjects. Under one headed "of old age" the poet writes that "of the longevity of the tortoise, Mr. B. opines that it might be due to this creature's exemplary practice of moderation: he goes slow, but he gets there." Under another headed "of ambition" Klein notes Bronfman's comment on first seeing the Rockies, "These are very big mountains. But there must be bigger – Where?" by way of illustrating Bronfman's view that "it is not ambition which is to be avoided like a vice; it is low ambitions which are so to be shunned."⁶⁸ And in a letter to Bronfman in January, 1944 regarding a French translation of Leacock's book he writes:

I still recall how concerned you were during the editing of the English version, that noth-

ing should appear in the book which might offend anybody's feelings; it is a tribute to your influence and a sense of human relations that when the book was finally published, it elicited unanimous approval.⁶⁹

Evidently their collaboration was not only fruitful but not nearly as one-sided as public perception would have it. They were useful to each other, not just in the narrowest sense, and this helps explain their bond.

What effects did their association have on the community and the men themselves? As was seen Klein helped Bronfman, through his poetry and his polemics in the *Chronicle*, to fashion and maintain that Canadian unity so necessary during those difficult years. Bronfman achieved that unity by providing for the Jews of Canada an organizational bridge between the religious and social cohesion they knew from the old country – its “Yiddishkeit” – and the necessity to adapt rapidly and efficiently to the changing demands of an English-speaking generation in Canada. Klein helped greatly in this process and for his particular niche in this effort as he may have been the ideal person.

But he was only one in a large group of talented associates who helped Bronfmann realize these goals during a period which, because of Bronfman's success in attracting younger leaders, one observer has characterized as “a kind of golden age of Canadian Jewish Congress.”⁷⁰ Very likely then Bronfman, who operated on many levels in pursuit of his aims, would have succeeded even without Klein. Nevertheless Klein's contribution was certainly not minimal and he may have been correct in feeling, towards the end of the period especially, that his contribution was not being adequately appreciated or properly recognized. In his own way Klein, like Bronfman, was ambitious and craved recognition and power and thus suffered from this perceived slight. His relationship with Bronfman both fed and aggravated this feeling and may have contributed to his sense that his was a buried voice, the drowned poet of “Portrait of the Poet as Landscape”, who

makes of his status as zero a rich garland,
a halo of his anonymity,
and lives alone, and in his secret shines
like phosphorus. At the bottom of the sea. (*C.P.*, p. 335)

On the one hand his close association with the industrialist gave him a kind of indirect power and even a kind of “vulgar fame”, but his too close identification with Bronfman may have exaggerated his increasing sense of personal failure when he would come to realize that he was, after all, not Bronfman.⁷¹

There is no doubt that at times Klein chafed in his role as Bronfman's assistant. In a diary entry referring to the final banquet of the U.J.A. campaign of 1942 at which one of his sonnets was featured on the souvenir program, he refers to himself as a “poet parsleyate to a menu” and bitterly adds:

Actually the sonnet was written only to avoid the sickening prose called for . . . But

that I should write it at all. It is a humiliation only a philanthropic world makes possible.⁷²

Perhaps more significantly revealing of his state of mind are some lines in Section III of an early version of “Portrait of the Poet as Landscape” which Klein omitted in *The Rocking Chair and Other Poems*. After characterizing the loneliness of the neglected poet as a “shelved Lycidas” who is “not dead, but only ignored” he writes:

However, for bread and the occasional show,
he finds him, *kindler of copy*, daily at desk.

For mongers and martment he swinks it, writing
their war-whoops, hailing their heroes, thrust
to his task: *Pirouette, pica; triumph, o'twelve-point!*
Throw the sword to the scales, proud asterisk!

Scop of the sales-force, bard of their booty, he offers
to shoddy his shrilling, his gusto for gussets, to zippers his zest.

With housewives he's homes, and pally with paters, a kingsman
A con man, he butters his bosses, he jumps at their jests.⁷³

He seems to be admonishing himself here for “selling out” the poet’s true inner voice for material security, a view he elaborated on a number of occasions in the *Chronicle*, most notably in an essay entitled “The Usurper” where he sarcastically explains that he has found the “mismaid”, the vanished poet, “in an advertising agency, a copywriter!” whose skill “had degenerated among the easy ephemera he daily created.”⁷⁴

The fact is, however, that Klein’s sense of not having fulfilled his poetic talents had deeper roots than the occasional drudgery of working for Bronfman. Very early in his work Klein felt the traditional conflict between pursuing the public and the private voice, between writing poetry for his people and writing it for his own, or art’s sake. In an editorial about Picasso he summarized that conflict. If the artist caters, Klein wrote,

to what his audience expect from him, he is thereby deemed not to be an artist, but a *mere graphologist in public relations*; if he sticks to his bent and paints as his own mind conceives and his own eye sees, he is dubbed peculiar, erratic, even surrealist. When, moreover, the artist labours to please an audience that is itself divided in taste, he is well on the way to *developing a case of multiple fragmented schizophrenia*.⁷⁵ (Italics mine)

The tragically prophetic reference to mental illness as a consequence of the artist’s inability to reconcile contradictory ambitions may not be completely accidental here. Klein had long been obsessed with the biblical character of Joseph as a symbol of the persecuted artist or poet and he very early identified personally with that figure.⁷⁶ Somehow these two tendencies – fragmentation and persecution – seem to combine in the last part of his productive life. Klein referred to his dread of mental breakdown in a number of poems, most notably in the very personal “Psalm XXII: A Prayer of Abraham, Against Madness” dating well before any possible pressures that can be imputed to his re-

lationship with Bronfman, where he begs for physical disability or death rather than the loss of his mind's capacities:

O, I have seen these touched ones –
Their fallow looks, their barren eyes –
For whom have perished all the suns
And vanished all fertilities;
Who, docile, sit within their cells
Like weeds, within a stagnant pool.
Not these can serve Thee. Lord, if such
The stumbling that awaits my path –
Grant me Thy grace, thy mortal touch,
The full death – quiver of Thy wrath! (*C.P.*, p. 223)

It may be, as some suggest, that the lack of adequate recognition, his sense of disappointment in his public career – as lawyer, publicist, Joyce-scholar, politician, novelist, even the evanescence of his oratorical triumphs⁷⁷ – all contributed to a tendency already there. It may be his Joycean experiments with “the use of language as a means of discovery” of new realities in the last part of his poetic career,⁷⁸ or his possible awareness in the 1950's “that his entire literary enterprise (based on the poet as a public figure who unrolled our culture from his scroll) was going against the forces of change that had taken hold of his community and Canadian Jewry” in their shifts from the downtown ghettos to the “country club” suburbs,⁷⁹ also added to that tendency. However, to the extent that Klein's communal or artistic work may have contributed to his breakdown – always a risky speculation – it is more likely to have been his imagined perception of having failed “to have poetry effective in the world of affairs, and in this way to bring that empirical world into closer accord with his imaginary vision of it”⁸⁰ which produced his illness rather than the drudgery of work for Bronfman or any would be confusion of identities with the industrialist.

There is no doubt that the two men had more than just a working relationship and that Klein – whatever his hidden feelings about material poverty in comparison to Bronfman – enjoyed their friendship.⁸¹ Bronfman's view of that friendship may best be illustrated by a personal letter he wrote to Klein on March 18, 1941, immediately after Klein attended a 50th birthday dinner tendered Bronfman at the Montefiore Club. One need not doubt the honesty of the sentiments – even if the industrialist may have had help in its composition – since there was no reason other than genuine gratitude for its expression. “My Dear Abe,” he writes:

I am sure that you know how much I appreciate your ever readiness to be helpful from time to time when I seek your counsel and assistance on matters of mutual interest to us in relation to communal matters. It does not require a formal letter of acknowledgement from me to tell you how I feel, but on the occasion of my fiftieth birthday you have shown such a deep interest and been so cooperative throughout that I cannot refrain from writing

you this note which comes from the heart.

There were a number of close friends on the committee of arrangements who were active in connection with all that was involved . . . and they undoubtedly all contributed . . . whilst you were not officially a member of the committee I know of no one who contributed more than you to make the occasion one which I will live long in my memory. And so in saying thanks to you, I couple it with the warmest expression of friendship and deep regard, and want to say at the same time what a pleasure it has been for me to learn to know intimately a man of such depth of thought, intellect and character as I have found you."⁸²

Nor was Bronfman insensitive to Klein's anomalous position in their relationship – on one level an equal, but on another level an employee – and he tried to overcome its occasionally embarrassing effects. Thus, in a note dated several days later, Klein thanks Bronfman for his letter and the accompanying cheque ("overwhelmingly generous") which he notes Bronfman was thoughtful to separate from the letter so as not to embarrass Klein or to detract from the genuineness of the sentiments in the letter.⁸³

In retrospect it is amazing how right Bronfman was in his judgement and sentiment about Klein; the irony is that Klein somehow ignored, disbelieved, or forgot this admiration and regard when it might have helped him avoid the tragic slippage into his private hell. Certainly, Bronfman didn't fail him. As the first of Klein's biographers noted in 1959, "It is ironic that among the few friends who persistently stood by Abe Klein, was Samuel Bronfman, the tycoon. To this day," he wrote, "A. M. Klein, poet, socialist, and idealist is on the payroll of Distillers Limited."⁸⁴ Can many of his critics and former literary friends – suddenly re-discovering him now that it is too late – claim as much? What is not in doubt is that the collaboration between Bronfman and Klein contributed to the maturing unity of Canada's Jews.

The fact is that whatever the personal shortcomings of the two men, the Jewish community of Canada owes a substantial part of its present vitality and self-confident creativity to these exceptional individuals – to one for his industrial, philanthropic and communal leadership and to the other for the highest literary and poetic expression of the community's heritage and ideals.

NOTES

1. Gary Gaddes, "A. M. Klein—Restorer of Magic and Light," *The Globe and Mail*, (August 3, 1974) 29. See also Seymour Maine, ed., *The A. M. Klein Symposium*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press 1975).
2. Saul Hayes, "Notes for November 7th Meeting at the Jewish Public Library and Film Showing of A. M. Klein," Klein Folder, Canadian Jewish Congress Archives, Montreal, 1.
3. Peter C. Newman, *Bronfman Dynasty* (Toronto: Seal Books 1978), 29,
4. Klein was a part-time employee of Seagram's but was kept on an annual retainer until his death, perhaps receiving additional sums for special tasks. The exact amounts are part of the restricted information in the Klein Papers of the Public Archives of Canada, and thus Klein's financial dependence on Bronfman remains conjecture.

5. A. M. Klein, *A History of Canadian Jewish Congress During the War Years*, (Public Archives of Canada, Klein Papers), vol 35, p. 7.
6. A. M. Klein, *The Decisive Years*, (Public Archives of Canada, Klein Papers), vol. 19, Ms. 9269.
7. J. B. Salsberg, "How Sam Bronfman brought Hayes into Congress," *Canadian Jewish News* (February 7, 198), 4.
8. Ben Lappin, "The Receding World of Abraham Klein," *Viewpoints*, II 4 (Spring, 1981), 19.
9. Miriam Waddington, *A. M. Klein: Studies in Canadian Literature* (Toronto: The Copp Clark Publishing Co. 1970), 51-52.
10. A. M. Klein, *The Collected Poems of A. M. Klein*, Ed. Miriam Waddington (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited 1974), 86. Except where noted otherwise all subsequent references to Klein's poetry are to this edition and marked *C.P.*
11. Waddington, p. 46.
12. Usher Caplan, "A. M. Klein: An Introduction," Unpublished PhD. Dissertation, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1976, p. 67.
13. Gerald E. Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press 1977) p. 54 and p. 55.
14. Lita-Rose Betcherman, *The Swastika and the Maple Leaf* (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside 1975), 131.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
16. David Rome, *Jews in Canadian Literature: A Bibliography* (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress and the Jewish Public Library 1962), 40.
17. Caplan, p.66.
18. Letter from David Lewis to A. M. Klein, July 17, 1934, Klein Papers, Public Archives of Canada, vol. 1, Ms. 000135.
19. Letter from A. M. Klein to Max Klein to Max Garmaise, March 14, 1938, Klein Papers, Public Archives of Canada, vol. 3, Ms. 001794.
20. Betcherman, p. 91 and p. 142.
21. Salsberg, p. 4.
22. Caplan, p. 85.
23. H. M. Caiserman-Vital, *Yiddishe Dichter in Kanade* (Jewish Poets in Canada) (Montreal: The Eagle Publishing Co. 1934), 167.
24. Interview with Ben Lappin, Toronto, May 15, 1981, Cassette Tape, Central Region Archives, Toronto Canadian Jewish Congress.
25. G. K. Fisher, *In Search of Jerusalem* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press 1975), 2.
26. Salsberg, p. 4.
27. Klein, *A History of Canadian Jewish Congress During the War Years*, Vol. 35, p. 5.
28. Klein, *The Decisive Years*, vol. 19, Ms. 9616.
29. *Ibid.*, Ms. 9454.
30. Newman, p. 19.
31. Lappin, "Interview"
32. Newman, p. 20.
33. Hayes, "Notes for November 7th Meeting at the Jewish Public Library and Film Showing of A. M. Klein", p. 2.
34. Newman, p. 29.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

37. Klein Papers, vol. 19, Ms. 9949.
38. Caplan, p. 259.
39. Salsberg, p. 4.
40. Lappin, "Interview".
41. Caplan, p. 259.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
44. Lappin, "Interview".
45. *Ibid.*
46. Lappin, "The Receding World of Abraham Klein," p. 19.
47. Lappin, "Interview".
48. Caplan, p. 214.
49. E. E. Palnick, *A. M. Klein: A Biographical Study*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, 1959, CH. V, p. 15.
50. Saul Hayes, "The Bronfman 'Dynasty': A Friend's Reminiscence," *Viewpoints*, X, 2 (Spring, 1979), 47.
51. Stephen Leacock, *Economic Prosperity in the British Empire* (Toronto: The MacMillan Co. 1930), p. 195.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
53. Klein Papers, vol. 1, Ms. 000157.
54. *Ibid.*, Vol. 19, Ms. 9276.
55. Hayes, "The Bronfman 'Dynasty': A Friend's Reminiscence," p. 47.
56. *Ibid.*, vol. 22, Ms. 20658 - Ms. 20700.
57. Caplan, p. 116.
58. Klein Papers, vol. 22, Ms. 20668 - Ms. 20679.
59. *Ibid.*
60. Stephen Leacock, *Canada: The Foundations of Its Future* (Montreal: Privately printed for the House of Seagram 1941), 209.
61. Memo from R. T. Ferguson to A. M. Klein, October 24, 1941, Klein Papers, vol. 22, Ms. 20689.
62. Betcherman, p. 42.
63. Newman, p. 52.
64. Caplan, p. 124.
65. Rome, pp. 43-44.
66. Caplan, p. 83.
67. Letter from A. M. Klein to Samuel Bronfman, March 24, 1941, Klein Papers, vol. 1, Ms. 000140.
68. Klein Papers, vol. 26, Ms. 23507 and Ms. 23509.
69. Letter from A. M. Klein to Samuel Bronfman, January 20, 1944, Klein Papers, Mg. 30, vol. 1, Ms. 0002525.
70. Lappin, "Interview".
71. Caplan, pp. 259-260. Caplan attributes part of this speculation to David Rome.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
73. Waddington p. 104. The writer is indebted to Professor Waddington for pointing to the possible connection between these lines and Klein's feelings about his work for Bronfman.
74. A. M. Klein, "The Usurper," *Canadian Jewish Chronicle* (January 14, 1949), 4. See also Caplan, p. 118.

75. A. M. Klein, "Poor Pablo Picasso," *Canadian Jewish Chronicle* (April 3, 1953), 3.
76. Caplan, p. 262.
77. Hayes, "Notes For November 7th Meeting At The Jewish Public Library and Film Showing of A. M. Klein," p. 4.
78. Waddington, p. 114.
79. Lappin, "The Receding World of Abraham Klein," pp. 19-20.
80. Waddington, p. 106.
81. Hayes, "Notes For November 7th Meeting At The Jewish Public Library and Film Showing of A. M. Klein," p. 5.
82. Letter from Samuel Bronfman to A. M. Klein, March 18, 1941. Klein Papers, vol. 1, Ms. 000139.
83. Letter from A. M. Klein to Samuel Bronfman, March 24, 1941. Klein Papers, vol. 1, Ms. 000140.
84. Palnick, CH. V, p. 15.

A Meshamud* at the University of Toronto**

MEL STARKMAN

Résumé

L'histoire de l'épanouissement intellectuel, universitaire et culturel d'Ontario.* Il en est ainsi de Jacob Maier Hirschfelder, Juif présumément né en Allemagne qui se convertit à l'Anglicanisme et enseigna à l'Université de Toronto au cours de la second moitié du 19^e siècle. Cet article s'insère dans une tentative visant à sauver de l'oubi ou presque un professeur d'Ontario. Dans ce document, Mel Starkman débattrà des données biographiques qu'il est possible de procurer, des oeuvres de Jacob Maier Hirschfelder ainsi que du legs fait au judaïsme par M. Hirschfelder par le biais de ses oeuvres.

Il faut noter que l'obscurité qui entoure Jacob Maier Hirschfelder ne fait qu'augmenter l'intérêt des archivistes, des historiens et des érudits qui se sont penchés sur l'énigme qui entourait sa vie. D'aucuns prétendent qu'il fut Juif avant la lettre (i.e. David Rome du C.J.C.) d'autres pensent qu'il fut un opportuniste, une personne qui se défendit comme il se doit et qui sut s'entourer de protections et accéder à des sphères élevées de la société.

Le fait est qu'il vécut comme un être universel, par son savoir par son apport à l'humanité, par sa connaissance du genre humain, mais et aussi c'est là ce qui retient l'attention des érudits d'aujourd'hui; était-il Juif par ses écrits, par sa pensée ou par les deux? Une autre question se pose également: l'être universel et qui prête le concours de ses connaissances au genre humain a-t-il donc besoin d'être étiqueté de Juif? Le fait n'est pas là tout en y étant. Cette énigme de la nature que fut Jacob Maier Hirschfelder a vécu en force de la Nature et c'est là à peu près tout ce qui se dégage de la recherche faite par Mel Starkman.

The history of the intellectual, academic, and cultural flowering of Ontario has not as yet rescued many individuals from obscurity. One such figure is

* convert from Judaism

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Jacob Maier Hirschfelder, purportedly a German-born Jew, who converted to Anglicanism and taught at the University of Toronto in the second half of the nineteenth century. This article is part of an attempt to rescue a very interesting Ontario teacher from near oblivion. It will discuss what concrete biographical details are extant, his published works, and the legacy of Judaism in this apparent convert from Judaism as determined through his published works.

Jacob Maier Hirschfelder taught Hebrew and Oriental languages at the University of Toronto for forty-five years from 1843 to 1888. To attain such a position he had earlier converted from the religion of his ancestors. After forty-five years of arduous and distinguished service, Hirschfelder made little impression on the University, on the city of Toronto, and not surprisingly, on his erstwhile co-religionists in the nascent Toronto Jewish community. Hirschfelder was and continues to be an enigmatic and elusive figure. There is doubt even that he was born a German Jew and the possibility exists that he came from and was educated in Poland. Those interested in Canadian Jewish history have bandied this minor problem back and forth over the years.

Many questions arise when considering Hirschfelder in his intellectual, social, and religious milieu, in the context of Canadian Higher Education and in the development of Biblical Studies in Canada. Most of these questions will only be touched tangentially here.

Scholars such as John Moir, Stewart McCullough and Frederick Winnett, in their research on Biblical Studies in Canada and the Department of Near Eastern Studies in the University of Toronto have recently opened the books on Hirschfelder.¹ Previously there has been no more than a few lines on him, short biographical dictionary entries and one brief journalistic piece.² A picture of him and his significance is beginning to emerge, a picture obscured by the lack of contemporary documentary materials. The historians of the University of Toronto have mentioned him only in passing.³

David Rome, until recently the Archivist of the Canadian Jewish Congress in Montreal, called Hirschfelder the "First Jewish Professor in Canada."⁴ Rome does not indicate that Hirschfelder was a convert. Apparently Benjamin Sack in his *History of the Jews in Canada* used the Rome article as his source on Hirschfelder,⁵ at least according to Dr. Isidore Goldstick, a prominent Jewish resident of London, Ontario, and a scholar in his own right. Dr. Goldstick disagreed strongly with Rome's contention that Hirschfelder was born Jewish.⁶ To derive Hirschfelder's Jewishness from his name alone was a very tenuous piece of information to go on.⁷ Sack further indicated that Hirschfelder "emerged" from the "tiny nucleus" of Toronto Jewry.⁸ This is misleading since Hirschfelder came to Toronto already a convert. Rome, in cor-

respondence with Goldstick, affirmed his belief that Hirschfelder was of Jewish origin “with profound Jewish interest, and that no flow of baptismal water – possibly endured in the profound spiritual conviction that the peace of an Upper Canadian professorship is desirable – quenched his proud Jewishness or his love of Hebrew and of Torah.”⁹ Further, Stephen Speisman, in his recent *The Jews of Toronto, A History to 1937* wrote that Hirschfelder “was highly respected in his position . . . and he moved socially in the upper stratum of Toronto Christian society.”¹⁰ This statement needs to be somewhat attenuated as will be seen below.

Biographical data on Hirschfelder has indicated that he was born in Baden-Baden, Germany. Nowhere does Hirschfelder himself admit to that, though he did call himself a native of Germany. It is unlikely that Hirschfelder was born in Baden-Baden if he was originally Jewish. The town council was vehemently anti-semitic and Jews were not permitted to live there until 1861.¹¹ Nothing is known of his family background, his upbringing, his education, or, most important, his conversion. He claimed to have been a graduate of the University of Heidelberg and advertised himself as such as early as 1841 in the *Toronto Patriot*.¹² Later he also claimed to be the graduate of an institution whose name translates into English as the Oriental School at Eslinger.¹³ The University of Heidelberg does not have his name on its matriculation rolls.¹⁴ This is not conclusive for he could have attended and missed being on the rolls according to some particular status or under another name. It is difficult to find where the Oriental School at Eslinger was as the English translation does not readily convert to German. It was as yet impossible to uncover where and if there was such a school and whether Hirschfelder did attend there.

So we have a problem. Was Hirschfelder a fraud, a self-educated scholar, who pawned himself off on the academic community at a time when knowledge of and study of grammatical Hebrew and Oriental Languages was at an early stage in Upper Canada? He might have been prevaricating about his background, but his knowledge was sure. He was adept in some eleven cognate languages as well as Latin, Greek German and possibly Polish.

Hirschfelder arrived in Quebec in 1837 and lived either in Montreal or Quebec City. He stayed in Lower Canada till 1842, but so far I have found little of him other than he married a “Montreal belle,” Marjory Anne Smith. There is a piece of evidence indicating that he converted on this side of the Atlantic before he came to Toronto.¹⁵ In his application of March 13, 1843 to the Council of the University of King’s College he indicated that

the last six years of my life, have been exclusively devoted in giving instruction in the Sacred Language, Syriac, as well as in the German, my vernacular tongue.¹⁶

That he was a tutor in Upper Canada College is sufficient evidence to indicate he had converted to Anglicanism since an affirming Jew would not have been accorded a position there. That he had taught for six years already means that he had begun teaching at the age of eighteen or nineteen. This is somewhat young to have had the educational background he claimed from Germany; unlikely, but not impossible. To have such a thorough background as he exhibited would tally more with the possibility that he had a Yeshivah education in Poland.

Apparently Hirschfelder was in Toronto in 1841, likely to test the waters before moving entirely to a new city. He advertised in the *Toronto Patriot* of August 8, 1841, offering to give private instruction in Hebrew and German. Applications were to be made at Messrs. J. & J. Mead's Music Salon, and at Messrs. Rowsell's Book Store on King Street. By 1842 he was permanently in Toronto, tutoring at Upper Canada College, although this is not reflected in the admittedly incomplete Upper Canada College records. He tutored in Hebrew and German and derived his stipend entirely from fees paid by his students.

He and his wife (called Fanny) became good friends with the John Howard family of High Park fame.¹⁷ Some of their friends included the Bescobbys, the Rowsells, Larratt Smith, and possibly Dr. Henry Scadding among others. The Howards and their friends, including the Hirschfelders, moved in a second level social circle in Toronto, below that of what might be called the legatees of the Family Compact group. From the Howard Diaries we learn that the Hirschfelders eventually had a family of nine children. We also learn that Hirschfelder was a horticulturalist of some ability and that he played the oboe and the flute. Benjamin Sack wrote that Hirschfelder "won great popularity in intellectual circles in Toronto."¹⁸ While this is possible, how Sack determined this is not evident.

In the Larratt Smith journal of Thursday, July 14, 1842 we find that on the previous evening Dr. Sewell and Hirschfelder had been at the Smith home and

had a great fiddling contest; Sewell and I played our violins and Hirschfelder the flute. Afterwards we plowed down to a small party at the Rodenhursts where we had a merry time, myself the most lively.¹⁹

In the Scadding Diaries we find that Scadding went to Hirschfelder's and Baron de Fleur was there, as well as Dr. McCaul. They had some fine music according to Scadding.²⁰ So we learn that our Hebrew tutor was somewhat of a bon vivant in the cultural circles of early Victorian Toronto. Would that there were more diaries of the period extant since a total lack of private papers makes our search for the real Hirschfelder very incomplete.

It must have been while he was tutoring at Upper Canada College that Hirschfelder began to memorialize the authorities for a position at King's College. It is highly likely that Hirschfelder moved to Toronto with the object of getting a position at King's College when it began. Hirschfelder was friendly with the masters at Upper Canada College and together with a number of them signed a petition to allow the portrait of John McCaul to be hung in the Public Room of Upper Canada College.²¹ John McCaul had just moved from being the Principal of Upper Canada College to Vice-President and Professor of Classical Literature and Belles-lettres and Logic at the University of King's College. Hirschfelder signed the petition "I. HERSCHFELDER." Had he undergone a name change or what else would account for the singular way of signing his name so differently than he had in 1841 and would in later years. Perhaps someone signed for him.

In January of 1843 Hirschfelder sent what appears to be his first application to King's College. In part it reads

I therefore humbly beg that your Honourable Council will allow me to give lectures on that Language [Hebrew] in Dr. Beavan's room, without whose consent I would not have taken the liberty of either presenting this Memorial, or of mentioning his name. Should your Honourable Council accede to my petition, I may mention that I should be satisfied with whatever rate of terms Your Honourable Council may think proper to fix, and shall expect of course, to look to no one, but the pupils for the payment of fees.²²

A second application followed on March 13, 1843.²³ Again there was the hesitant tone and the putting of his case totally at the mercies of the Council. Allowance has to be made, of course, for the Victorian style of letter writing and official correspondence particularly when asking for the granting of favours, but did not his credentials, his abilities, and his experience allow himself to put himself forward more positively? His initial willingness to accept fees as his total remuneration would come back to haunt him in future years when he made application to have his salary raised and to be accorded a full professorship, a position commensurate with the responsibilities he carried. His second application included the request to teach German.

Finally Hirschfelder was granted the position of tutor.²⁴ The University took advantage of his meek and obsequious approach and continued to take advantage of him though he became decidedly less obsequious and tried through Governmental authorities to have his position improved. His professional colleagues received several hundred pounds sterling annually while Hirschfelder's income from fees in the first five years of his teaching was only £ 200.²⁵ He was treated as an appendage to the professoriate in a fashion similar to de Sola at McGill.

His classes were apparently highly successful. When the secularized University of Toronto was being created in 1849, Hirschfelder again applied for

the Professorship.²⁶ A Chair of Hebrew had been first on the list of future Professorships in a Council Statute recommended in October 1844.²⁷ Bishop Strachan provided Hirschfelder with a letter of reference when Hirschfelder indicated he was thinking of trying his luck elsewhere. Hirschfelder sent a copy of this letter of reference to Robert Baldwin, the Attorney-General of Canada West, and the political force behind the secularization of the University. Strachan, in his letter, did not specifically recommend a Professorship though he was very positive in his appraisal of Hirschfelder as a Churchman and as a teacher.²⁸

By the 1851 session at the University of Toronto, nearly half of the students at the University of Toronto were taking Hebrew. Several of the denominational colleges were sending their students to Hirschfelder. At the secularized University and after 1853 at the newly created University College Hirschfelder continued to teach until 1888, never being accorded the title of Professor he wanted and continued to petition for. In 1850 he was styled a Lecturer with a salary of £100 per annum, but a reduction of fees from £2 to £1 per student in order to attract enrolment from the various Toronto theological Colleges.

Hirschfelder was extremely loathe to appear before any committee that would evaluate his qualifications in the process of determining his request for a Professorship or a raise in salary. He brought forth various arguments of greater or lesser validity, mostly the latter. Who would be qualified to judge his credentials? His former students? Wouldn't that be demeaning? Who else knew his subjects sufficiently? If a younger colleague sat in judgement over him how would he then relate to this colleague who had exercised authority over him?²⁹ Was it stubborn pride or did he fear close examination of his background and education? Once he had achieved a professorship he would not have henceforth have been subject to investigation. That he must have devoutly wished for.

In 1863 his original application (perhaps his testimonials) was brought forward from the Bursar's records by a committee of the University College Council.³⁰ These testimonials, if that is what they were, have not been found since and the College Council report, which is available, indicated that the original fee arrangement was substantially sufficient.³¹ There was a running argument between the College Council and Hirschfelder in that the Council wanted him to lower his fees in the expectation that he would attract more students. He argued that once he lowered his fees he would't be able to raise them again if the extra influx of students never came. Besides, at this time, he was probably overburdened with the number of students he had. Just a couple of years after this he had to drop Arabic and Samaritan from the curriculum.³² Did he have too much on his plate or was there a lack of interest

among the students? One suspects the former.

Thus, in 1863 he had neither his salary raised nor his status upgraded. In addition to his teaching duties he was able to do a fair amount of publishing. This is a tribute to his tireless efforts and in this he began a tradition in the Department of Near Eastern Literature at the University of Toronto, a tradition of publishing even though overburdened with classroom and administrative responsibilities. At least his successor Dr. McCurdy followed in the same practice of extensive teaching and extensive publication.

Over the years Hirschfelder issued a number of publications. Given the lack of personal papers perhaps we can elicit some insight into Hirschfelder by a consideration of his published writings.

In 1845, just two years after he had joined King's College, Hirschfelder produced a 95 page textbook or handbook *A Key To German Conversation*. The work was dedicated to the Rev. John McCaul, then the Vice-President of the University of King's College. The work was intended for students of German who did not have the opportunity of hearing the vernacular. Hirschfelder provided a series of familiar conversations and some grammatical rules. In the preface he states of the student “. . . should he only committ to memory six sentences a day, this alone would enable him, in the space of a year, to converse freely in the language.”³³

In about 1855 he produced a 37 page pamphlet *An Essay on the Spirit and Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry*. This work became a textbook in his second year Hebrew classes and also in Albert College.³⁴ Previously he had been using the text by Lowth. In this essay he expressed an abiding love for the magnificence of Hebrew poetry in the Old Testament. This work of his was evidently a labour of love. He traced the origin of poetry in the spirit and history of the Hebrew people, their “natural taste for music” the wondrous geography of the Holy Land, the Temple and its cult. All these furnished “inexhaustible sources from which the most sublime poetic images might be drawn.” Ranging over and quoting from the whole of the Old Testament he in particular analyzes the Book of Job, the Psalms, the Book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the works attributed to Moses, David and Solomon. Besides recounting at length the narrative of Job he analyzes the religious dimensions of this crucial Old Testament work. Hirschfelder was a pious, conservative Christian; as Strachan said, a good Churchman. He insisted on the revealed truth of the Old Testament. However his writing, while occasionally slipping into pedantic antiquarianism, is usually pitched at an interesting level of philological scholarship. What he was saying could be paraphrased as follows: approach the Bible with reverence and, if your bent is to analyze, do so with sound, painstaking, scholarly discipline. Problems are there to be sol-

ved, not glossed over by simplistic or effete, sophisticated rationalizations. The long tradition of careful Jewish and Christian scholarship precluded slipshod textual contradictions, which contradictions, critical writers of the time were so wont to expose and expound upon.

Hirschfelder was not a modern scientific scholar if we accept the semantics of the modern academic discipline. He dealt with the text and not the context. His wide reading is shown by quotations from a great many authorities. Hirschfelder shows a knowledge of comparative methodology, an excellent philological sense and adeptness in a great many languages.

He was without question a conservative in theology and in his general approach. This can be seen in the following, being comments on Bayley and Goethe. Satan and the Lord are discussing Job. In a footnote Hirschfelder wrote

The scene in Heaven has been imitated by Bayley, in his "Festus," and by Goethe in the "Prologue to Faust." It is much to be regretted that a subject like this, where the Deity takes such a prominent part, should ever have been made subservient to the secular drama; but it becomes still more reprehensible when the author so forgets himself as to employ language irreverent and disrespectful to the Deity, such as Goethe puts in the mouth of his ideal demon. Its wit may please some, but its coarseness cannot fail to disgust.³⁶

Hirschfelder also discoursed at length on customs and practices in Old Testament times. Nowhere does he discuss the so-called Wellhausian School of Higher Biblical Criticism, but he is well aware of it and adamant against all such efforts, at least in their conclusions and possible biases, if not the scholarly effort and the concern. Modern scholarship has radically separated theological from critical questions, but on the level of popular parlance Higher Criticism is defended or rejected largely depending on the chosen frame of reference or unconscious bias of the student.

Hirschfelder writes a great deal about the mechanics of poetry as they are manifested in the inspiration of the Old Testament. He adumbrates the core of poetry as follows,

The sacred Hebrew muse . . . maintaining her primitive simplicity, lays down no arbitrary rules of versification with which to fetter the genius of the poet; she requires of her votary neither more or less than that he should find himself in that state of excited and exalted feeling which is necessary to the production of all genuine poetry, and possess the power of delineating his emotions with truth and vigour.³⁷

Among the analytical devices Hirschfelder discusses are Synonymous Parallelism, Antithetic Parallelism, and Synthetic Parallelism.

In 1863 Hirschfelder produced a longer work of 215 pages, *The Scriptures Defended: Being a Reply to Bishop Colenso's Book on the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua*. Hirschfelder's was only one of a number of pamphlets that appeared in Canada West critical of the effort of the Bishop of Natal. Con-

verts to Christianity like Hirschfelder, Bishop Hellmuth of Huron, and Charles Freshman seem to have been particularly prolific in the controversy as it manifested itself in the province.

Bishop Colenso was an eminent mathematician and dignitary of the Church of England. In the process of producing a vernacular text of the Old Testament for a native group in South Africa (the Hottentots) Colenso claimed to have found variations, contradictions, impossibilities, and absurdities. In the *Leader* of November 20, 1863 the editor states that Colenso's book surpasses *Essays and Reviews* in presumption and boldness. Hirschfelder leapt into print in the columns of the *Leader* seemingly even before he has a copy of Colenso's book. He must have been going by what he read in British and Canadian newspapers or journals. The flavour of Hirschfelder's criticism can be seen from the following:

I must confess that I could hardly bring myself to believe that any one who called himself a Christian could possibly have given expression to such views as are set forth in the book which simply reduce the writings of Moses to the level of the extravagant tales of the impostor Mohammed.³⁸

Comparative religion handled in a tolerant manner was not the fashion of the day. Hirschfelder does admit that his chosen adversary is worthy of respect as misguided as he is. Colenso did argue that the Old Testament still contained "all things necessary for salvation."³⁹ Hirschfelder adverted to the "mushroom" growth of Colenso's ideas. Apparently Colenso started on his researches as late as 1851. Hirschfelder used an old Rabbinic maxim warning wise men to be careful of their words, lest the disciples who came after them discover the place of bitter waters (i.e. false doctrines).⁴⁰ Hirschfelder was incredulous at how this English Divine found contradictions when the mass of Jewish and Christian scholars over the ages found no evidence contradicting the original revelatory nature of the Old Testament.

We can hear the Christian in Hirschfelder speaking as he argued that if Christ believed that the Pentateuch came from Moses how can anyone deny that this was so. When Colenso used the term "story of the Exodus" Hirschfelder was particularly exercised as he would be by the term "the story of England" or "the story of the Peninsular War."⁴¹

After the series of articles appeared in the *Leader* Hirschfelder collected them, added further arguments and notes and produced the book. His effort was favourably reviewed in the *Christian Guardian*.

We much like the spirit of candour and good will with which the author treats the erratic Bishop, and we think every one will admit that he has given a sufficient answer to the arithmetical critic. It is a matter of satisfaction that Colenso's book has received so many, and such complete refutations, and that Canada has produced one so valuable as this.⁴²

Hirschfelder wrote that he intended to produce a second volume on Colenso,

but there is no evidence of that second work.

Hirschfelder's book on Colenso was a pure piece of polemics, somewhat of a trial to read. A glance at the index gives an idea of the range of topics, from the esoteric to the picayune, with a preponderance of the latter. It attests to the change in reading habits that such a series of articles would not today appear in a popular newspaper.

In 1978, Hirschfelder published a 39 page pamphlet on a question of legal exegesis: *A Wife to Her Sister: Being a treatise in which the question, so long and warmly discussed, whether marriage with a deceased wife's sister is prohibited, under the Mosaic Law, is, in a clear and precise manner, placed before the English reader.* This work was based on the passage in Leviticus xviii, 18 "and thou shalt not take a wife to her sister to cause jealousy or enmity . . . in her life time." Hirschfelder marshalled the arguments and scholarly interpretations in a cool, judicious manner and left it up to the reader to decide. Again he strikes a blow against the then prevailing bent to critical analysis. Scripture is "its own interpreter."

We do not generally lay so much stress upon the opinion of commentators – especially as orthodoxy is not always the order in our days – but rather place our chief reliance upon the use of words in Scripture.⁴³

Hirschfelder was averse to the then prevalent practice of treating emendations and interpolations in the traditional text of the Old Testament as evidence of the less than revelatory quality of the text.

But nothing tends to sharpen the mind so much as difficulties.

for the greater they are, the more active is the mind to find a way to overcome them.⁴⁴

Is this not a scientific approach? Apparently not. It is still textual, not form or contextual analysis. Modern scholarship relates the message to the medium.

In 1874 there appeared *The Creation*⁴⁵ followed in 1876 by *The Immortality of the Soul*.⁴⁶ Most of Hirschfelder's articles first appeared in the *Leader*. Following such an appearance, a pamphlet or larger publication ensued. Hirschfelder dealt for a long period of time with the printers and publishers Rowsell and Hutchison. He also ventured into self-publishing.

The final publication that Hirschfelder produced was his two volume work the *Biblical Espositor and People's Commentary*. This was Hirschfelder's *magnum opus* and appeared in the form of a journal he personally issued, as well as handling the subscription details. It seems that the writing was completed before he began to issue the journal. Each journal issue was printed with the same number of pages, (20), and the beginning and the end would come arbitrarily according to the page number and not the content.

Hirschfelder writes with a balanced fervour and can be a delight to read ex-

cept when he deals with minute trivia. Yet this too can be interesting if time and patience permit. This was the last of Hirschfelder's publications and seems to coincide with his retirement from the University of Toronto in 1888. He lived for fourteen more years and one wonders if there were any other unpublished manuscripts. It would be a distinct pleasure to read more of his informative, intellectually stimulating, and poetically adorned prose.

Did his erstwhile co-religionists know of and read his works? One would hope so. Hirschfelder seems to have found himself in a difficult position – a “Meshumed” unacceptable both to himself and the fledgling Jewish community he rejected and a barely tolerated member of the Anglican community of Toronto, both High and Low. He was one of the oldest parishioners of St. Paul's Anglican on Bloor St. and a friend of the Wycliffe Low Church group. In the Jubilee Volume of Wycliffe, Hirschfelder is mentioned as being unable to attend upon the opening of the first Wycliffe College building.⁴⁷ City directories in the 1880's even have him listed as teaching at Wycliffe, while some Calendars of Wycliffe and also Knox College indicate his teaching at those respective institutions.⁴⁸ These entries probably simply indicate that Wycliffe and Knox were sending their students to Hirschfelder for his Hebrew and other offerings.

While some of Hirschfelder's smaller works testify to his continuing Jewish interests, it is his largest work, the *Biblical Expositor and People's Commentary* that provides the most substantial evidence of the living legacy of his heritage continuing despite his conversion. While it is true that many Protestant scholars dug deeply into the Jewish tradition in the nineteenth century, Hirschfelder was decidedly not writing as one newly discovering a rich heritage. Rather it was a heritage he was intimately familiar with and one that he was not willing intellectually to depart from. A swift glance at the index to volume one reflects the comprehensiveness of his Jewish interests, which he wanted to share with his readers.

Hirschfelder was likely precisely what he represented himself as being, a good low to broad Anglican communicant who fructified his writings with what he remembered and continued to study of his origins. His library included “the celebrated 18 volumes and a number of interesting Jewish works.”⁴⁹ The 18 volumes were most likely the Talmud. Given a total lack of papers it is impossible to pin down his psychological state and to answer the speculation that calls itself forth. Are we dealing with an Upper Canadian Marrano?

Hirschfelder indicated that he used Talmudic canons or rules of criticism. He referred at times to the Rabbinic injunction from *Pirke Avoth* (Ethics of the Fathers). Rabbi Abtalion said.

Be cautious in your words, ye wise men, lest ye fall into a great error, and ye reveal a place of pernicious waters, and the disciples that come after you drink of it and die, and the name of heaven becomes thereby profaned.⁵⁰

This seems to be Hirschfelder's own translation and it reads well compared with other translations I have seen. Would a Christian scholar, however well versed in the Jewish tradition, have been wont to use this particular injunction to those handling the sacred texts. Certainly Hirschfelder used the occasional christological expression, but he far more often was wont to employ Jewish maxims as that quoted. To Hirschfelder a Biblical critic should pursue his work in a fashion analogous to a medical doctor, even more so.

The surgeon, by his unskillfulness, inflicts a serious loss upon one person only, but who can tell the unspeakable evil that every ONE careless interpretation of an important passage of Scripture may not be productive of.⁵¹

Unfortunately Hirschfelder was not more "scholarly" or "scientific" in his publications. He did not footnote his works so it is difficult, without close textual analysis, to determine when he was using Talmudic or other traditional and modern sources. He was well steeped in a number of ancient, classical, and contemporary sources. These included the Roman (Pliny) tradition, the French (Marquis Beavoir) tradition, Josephus, the German and English schools and others. There is a distinct polymathic aspect to Hirschfelder as the range of his reading and interests were extraordinarily wide and included the field of psychiatry as it applied to the Bible.

While writing on the Book of Daniel he attempted to verify the historicity of the text wherein it deals with Nebuchadnessar being depicted as eating grass. Critics of the Old Testament fastened upon this incident to deny the literal truth of the narrative of Daniel or allegorized the specific text. Quoting psychiatric authorities of the nineteenth century like Lauret and Griesinger, Hirschfelder essayed a proof of the correctness of the text indicating that the Babylonian King was afflicted with lycanthropy, an illness wherein the victim feels that he has been turned into an animal, most often a wolf. So he could literally have been trying to eat grass. In conclusion Hirschfelder wrote:

It must now be apparent to every unbiased reader, what ignorance or unbelief has asserted to be impossible, psychology and physics have attested to be perfectly natural, and of common occurrence; and that the teaching of these sources, so far from weighing against the truth of the scripture narrative, on the contrary affords the strongest testimony to its reality.⁵²

Hirschfelder manifested a traditional, normative, Jewish position when he inveighed against the allegorical mode of interpretation of the Old Testament as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar. Hirschfelder referred more to the Church Father Origen than to Philo. As Hirschfelder put it, allegorical interpretations were unnecessary, not necessarily wrong-headed. Origen had "a great pas-

sion for allegorizing.’’

Whenever the slightest difficulty occurred, he [Origen] at once magnified it, so that he might have an opportunity to give his own fanciful interpretation.⁵³

Thinking men of this enlightened age, look for something more substantial than a mere flimsy allegorical exposition, and if modern writers prefer their doubts to Origen’s far-fetched allegorical explanation, which make Nebuchadnezzar to mean LUCIFER and the King’s affliction to denote LUCIFER’S fall from heaven, there are few who could blame them for doing so.⁵⁴

Hirschfelder’s conservatism could have derived from his Jewish background or his adopted Anglicanism. As had others, he pointed to Spinoza as the father of rationalism. To deny the literal truth of the Old Testament was to open the door to scepticism. Spinoza, according to Hirschfelder, did not doubt the Old Testament till after the age of fifteen when he began to evolve his new philosophy and then applied it to the Old Testament finding apparent contradictions. To Hirschfelder it was axiomatic that a new theory, however spurious, would tend to spread widely even as table-rapping did in the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ We are witnessing the same phenomenon today, as pseudoscience displaces science in the popular mind and even in some university courses. The rotten, not cut out, like cancer, tends to grow unchecked. Hirschfelder tried to live up to principles of biblical criticism “equally scientific as the investigations in the other branches of learning.”⁵⁶

There was definitely an enlightened thrust to Hirschfelder’s conservatism. It is interesting to speculate as to how much Hirschfelder was in touch with and influenced by the *WISSENSCHAFT DES JUDENTUMS* in Germany. Nothing of this was specifically mentioned by Hirschfelder. But he was not the hidebound conservative that some of his more polemical pieces seem to indicate or as his successor at the University of Toronto noted. Hirschfelder understood critical to mean a thorough examination of a subject in which all that could be said either for or against would be carefully considered.

To pass judgement upon any question by merely glancing at what may be said against it, is like condemning a person upon hearing only the accusation, without paying any attention to the rebutting evidence.⁵⁷

While rejecting what he called the RATIONALISTIC SCHOOL or THE SCHOOL OF NEWER CRITICISM, Hirschfelder did not deny that certain human errors were possible in the setting down of the Old Testament.

But whilst strenuously upholding the genuineness of the books of the Old Testament, I would not be understood to deny that some INTERPOLATIONS have found their way into the sacred text.⁵⁸

Later scribes were wont to make marginal notations, which subsequent scribes incorporated into the body of the text. Translation into other languages, the various Targums, created a great many more problems, problems

which are still with us today and have fostered many marvellous editions of the Old Testament in a variety of languages underpinned by a vast body of scholarship and research.

Another isomorphism to Jewish concerns was Hirschfelder's bent to push back the authorship of the Old Testament as far as possible. That authorship was a concern to him and that dates were important indicates that he was neither a fundamentalist nor a biblicist, but a scholar working with what he considered to be a divinely inspired, but human document. He wrote at length of the antiquity of the Book of Job among others, including the Book of Daniel with sidelights on the etiology or musical instruments.

Hirschfelder continually returned to the Book of Job. He felt that Job was the most ancient document that has come down to us. He noted that of all the livestock that Job had and lost there was no mention of horses. Horses were well known in the time of David and Solomon. By this argument, as tenuous as it was and is, there was an indication of the antiquity of the Book of Job.⁵⁹ Horses are also mentioned in Miriam's song, which some Christian scholars have considered as one of the oldest parts of the Old Testament. So Job precedes strata on the Pentateuch as such.

Hirschfelder had a profound respect for the Masoretes and the Masoretic Tradition. The purpose of the Masorah (Hebrew for tradition) was to safeguard the integrity of the sacred text of the Bible according to the Hebrew tradition. A standard text of the exact canon was probably extant before 200 B.C.E. Yet for some time there existed diverse manuscripts. The labour over the exact text took the Masoretes centuries of effort. They divided the books, sections, paragraphs, verses, and clauses. They also fixed the spelling, pronunciation, and the cantillation. The Masoretes finished their work in about 800 C.E. Of this punctillious effort Hirschfelder wrote.

It is, therefore, impossible to conceive how a spurious book could have found its way into the Hebrew Scriptures among a people displaying such a high degree of veneration for the sacred text.⁶⁰

Hirschfelder occasionally criticized the ancient forebears of his erstwhile co-religionists. He did this in a mild manner, just as would some scholar from within the fold. He cites the oft-quoted lines from Isaiah, noting the stiff-neckedness of the Jews.

The ox knoweth his owner
And the ass his master's crib
But Israel does not know his master
My people doth not consider.⁶¹

Nowhere does Hirschfelder write as if he were trying to convert Jews, which practice was wide-spread among Gentiles of the time, especially by those who had converted themselves. Hirschfelder was totally silent about himself in his

published works. Further, in no way did he identify with local or international Jewry (Klal Yisroel) on any issue. He wrote as an avid Churchman, but out of a special tradition, a tradition of which he wrote with ardour, but which he does not specify as his own. At the end of his long introduction to volume one of the *Biblical Expositor* he paid homage to the ardency of the Jewish people for education even in the Middle Ages “when ignorance and superstition reigned supreme amongst most nations, the literary talent was particularly brilliant among the Jews.”⁶²

Hirschfelder saw the Jews frequently being depicted as departing from their revealed traditions. Thus all the laws were a barrier or a fence to keep the Jews within the fold. That the Jews were wont to behave badly was an accepted fact in Christian lore. But the degree to which the commentator fixed and fixes on the tendency of the Jews to stray from the traditional path is as much a comment on the commentator as it is on the Jewish people. There seems also to be a relationship between the adherence to the value of Jewish values and the proclivity to denial of the historicity of the Old Testament. Hirschfelder valued Jewish values. But, were the Jews more prone to idolatry arising from stiff-neckedness. The convert Hirschfelder wrote:

How much more frequently the Israelites would have sunk into hethenism had these barriers not existed it is impossible to discern.⁶³

He adverted to the incorrigibility of the Jews indicating they often turned back to idolatry. He and others compared the Jews to a she-camel, a legendary “stiff-necked” denizen of the desert.⁶⁴ Many traditional and less than traditional Jewish writers were and are critical of the lapses from religiosity of the Jews so Hirschfelder’s comments provide little insight into his attitude other than that he was fairer to the Jewish people than many another convert. His audience was obviously Gentile and to this audience Hirschfelder brought the lore of the Jewish tradition, particularly Jewish scholarship through the ages. Markedly missing from his writing was any effort to detail the persecutions suffered by Jews over the ages, persecutions resulting in barriers between the religions, barriers beyond theological differences and disputations. These barriers brought bloodshed and led ultimately, in good part, to the Holocaust wherein conversion was no protection from persecution.

Hirschfelder argued at great length that Hebrew was the original language of mankind. These arguments are interesting, but assessable only by a trained linguist. He cited the many ellisions in the language testifying to the infancy of the Hebrew language even as a child speaks in incomplete sentences. According to Hirschfelder, Hebrew had only two tenses for the verbs. The preterite expresses both the present and the past.

. . . until critics can produce a language more simple in its structure and more childlike

in its expressions than the one in which Moses wrote, I must hold to the opinion that Hebrew was the original language.⁶⁵

Sanskrit, according to Hirschfelder, has a neuter gender and its structure “betrays a development and state of high culture, such as one would hardly expect to find in a language claiming to be the primitive language of mankind.”⁶⁶

Hirschfelder also contended that the Mosaic account of creation was the original account and all other Eastern and Near Eastern accounts derived from it. Modern theories have turned this around indicating that the Hebrew account emerged from and was conditioned by the Mesopotamian milieu.

The Isaiah question is a key to how deeply Hirschfelder’s conversion took. Nowhere in his treatment of Isaiah did Hirschfelder refer to the predictions supposedly embedded in Isaiah of the coming of Christ. He did refer to the “prophetic insight of events in the future,”⁶⁷ but these were not tied by Hirschfelder to the rise of Christianity. To Hirschfelder there was only one Isaiah and he vehemently denied a second let alone a third Isaiah whose later writings vitiated the prophecies in Isaiah.

Two suns in one sky were as incredible as two such flaming phenomena as Isaiah, NO!⁶⁸

Apparently Hirschfelder’s polymathism stopped short of realization that modern astronomy is aware of other solar systems that can boast two or more suns in one sky. To Hirschfelder the judgement of the “rationalists” as to there being more than one Isaiah “is determined not by their scholarship, but by the prepossession of their disbelief.”⁶⁹

Hirschfelder discussed and paid high respect to many Rabbinic figures including the Tannaim, the Amoraim and later Jewish teachers. He raised some questions about a few. For instance he doubted the authorship ascribed to one rabbi Rabbah ben Machmani of the fourth century C.E. of the work *Midrash Bereshith Rabbah*⁷⁰ Rashi’s work he praised highly, noting that his commentary was the first Hebrew book published in the new medium of print, but then Hirschfelder wrote that the work was thought by some to be Jarchi’s, not Rashi’s.⁷¹ He explicated at length on the wide and variegated interests of the Jews in the Diasporah singling out medicine and Maimonides for special attention. Hebrew philology, according to Hirschfelder, was a later offshoot of biblical study beginning in the tenth century C.E.⁷² Hirschfelder indicated that many of the modern philologists could learn much from earlier practitioners of the discipline such as Saadia Gaon, the first Hebrew grammarian.⁷³ He also wrote of Rabbi Judah ben Koreish, who he put forward as the first known writer who entered on the investigation of the comparison of languages.⁷⁴

In writing of these figures and topics as well as many others, Hirschfelder was bringing to his audience a sympathetic exposition of important scholar/

teachers in the Hebrew literary tradition. He wrote that he would have discoursed even further on any particular topic and others, but he was afraid he was boring his audience.⁷⁵ What motivated him to relate to his Gentile audience all that he was relating to them, even describing ritualistic practices of the Jews such as the wearing of phylacteries?⁷⁶ Did his audience have a great interest in getting clear, unbiased information on the Jewish tradition?

There are several, at least, wider themes and questions of interest possibly elucidating historical problems of *sui generis* import and/or didactic to our present condition. I will elaborate on a few of those here.

Since there were few Jews in Toronto until the 1880's, with the influx of East European immigrants, there did not develop any early inter-group relationships deriving from a clash of cultures. So attitudes can only be studied from personal, individual, anecdotal materials inadequate for making socio-historical generalizations. Toronto Christians, of whatever denomination, probably regarded Jews according to stereotypes derived from literature and in particular from their religious upbringing, attenuated, if at all, by personal contact with individual Jews. There is no evidence of group hostility to the small Jewish community of Toronto. To use Hirschfelder as a barometer of Gentile reactions to Jews is difficult, given the dearth of personal papers and the fact that he was a convert. But there is ample evidence that he was discriminated against. Had he been born a Christian he would not have been meted out the same treatment, would have been accorded his Professorship and would not so easily been lost in the memory of Toronto and in particular the University he served for forty-five years. It is worthy of note that in the very same Order-in-Council that noted Hirschfelder's retirement and \$1,000 retirement allowance his successor McCurdy was given the Professorship. We also have to take into account Hirschfelder's alleged Germanic background as a possible causative factor in how he was regarded and treated. Toronto was a British city.

Rev. Andrew Baird, in his diary, called Hirschfelder the "Rabbi." This surely denoted respect indicating that Baird considered Hirschfelder as "my teacher." Would Baird have called a Gentile Old Testament lecturer "Rabbi?" Not likely. Obviously some of Hirschfelder's students were aware of the Jewish antecedence of their teacher.

In the history of the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Toronto, Professors McCullough and Winnett conclude in a second draft of their brief history thusly:

Academically his prime importance is that with all due recognition of Hirschfelder's pioneer work, it was McCurdy who gave to Oriental Studies in the University of Toronto a structure and a tradition that were to shape the Oriental Department throughout the twentieth century.⁷⁷

There seems to be a slight element of Whiggishness in the McCullough/Winnett paper, i.e. the idea that history evolves in a more progressive direction as time unfolds. As McCurdy changed or established the structure and traditions of the Orientals program he superseded the value of the work of his predecessor. McCurdy is the “father” of Oriental Studies at the University of Toronto, Hirschfelder the less distinguished precursor, the “enigma.” To some extent it was Hirschfelder’s consciously contrived elusiveness that garnered for him the dubious distinction of being that enigma.

Professor John S. Moir, in a draft chapter of his *History of Biblical Studies in Canada* writes:

Throughout this first half-century of biblical studies in Canada when Hebrew and related languages were taught under an older and conservative dispensation – largely uninfluenced by the ferment that was building in Germany and passing to Britain and the United States – the name of Jacob Maier Hirschfelder stands out mainly because of his long association with the University of Toronto.

Yes, Hirschfelder was a conservative and yes, he was uninfluenced by the ferment of higher criticism, but he was aware of it, rejecting it in terms that have to be evaluated in the context of the contemporary and Canadian *Zeitgeist*. Again we must be wary of applying the Whiggish model of history, progress, ever progress, as reason unfolds and science begins to replace religion as the underpinning noumena of society. The *Zeitgeist* did not yet demand that a fetish be made of the scientific approach. It is sad that all that can be said of Hirschfelder is that he is noteworthy merely because of his length of tenure. In conversation Professor Moir has indicated to me that Hirschfelder’s role is taking on further significance in his (Moir’s) work. Apparently Hirschfelder trained his students to be highly adept in the linguistic aspect of their studies and, as a matter of fact, began the tradition which is still characteristic at the University of Toronto programme that linguistic excellence is the foundation of further studies.

Moir further states:

It is noteworthy that Hirschfelder at Toronto was working in a supposedly secular institution, not a religiously affiliated college or seminary, yet this intermixing of biblical and profane subjects was accepted as natural and even normal by most contemporaries thanks to the uncritical and largely uncriticized fusion of religion with national life.⁸⁰

This fusion was beginning to come apart. It is interesting to speculate on what Hirschfelder’s stance would have been had he been active a generation later. I suspect he would have been as avowedly conservative as ever, but just as willing to give consideration to the opposing views and evidence.

There are many more aspects that could be commented on, but I will conclude borrowing John Moir’s phrase, describing the early years of biblical studies in Canada, i.e. that it had achieved an “Honourable Place”, by saying

that Jacob Maier Hirschfelder achieved an honourable place in the history of biblical studies in Canada. To achieve this without gainsaying or denigrating the intellectual traditions of his birthright makes him a notable figure in the early history of the Jewish community of Canada.

NOTES

1. Professor John Moir is writing a History of Biblical Studies in Canada. He kindly provided me with a copy of the first draft of the opening chapter entitled "An Honourable Place." Professors F. V. Winnett and S. McCullough have written a paper entitled "History of Near Eastern Studies (formerly Oriental Languages) in the University of Toronto." The first draft of this paper is in the files of Professor R. S. Harris who is writing the history of the University of Toronto from 1906 on. The second draft of this paper, having much more information on Hirschfelder, is available in the University of Toronto Archives. (UTA)
2. W. S. Wallace, ed., *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. 2 vols. Toronto, MacMillan, 1963.
H. J. Morgan, ed., *Canadian Men and Women of the Time. A Handbook of Canadian Biography*. Toronto, Briggs, 1912.
David Rome, "First Jewish Professor in Canada," Reprinted from *The Toronto Daily Hebrew Journal*, UTA, People File, folder on J. M. Hirschfelder. Originally appeared on the English page of *The Toronto Daily Hebrew Journal*, December 12, 1940.
3. W. J. Alexander, ed., *The University of Toronto and its Colleges, 1827-1906*. Toronto, The University Library, 1906.
W. S. Wallace, *The University of Toronto, 1827-1927*. Toronto, The University of Toronto Press, 1927.
4. Rome, *op. cit.*
5. Benjamin Sack, *History of the Jews in Canada. From the Earliest Beginnings to the Present Day*. Montreal, Canadian Jewish Congress. 1945. Printed by Woodward Press. Inc. Montreal, p. 117.
6. Isidore Goldstick to Saul Hayes, September 27, 1956. Dr. Goldstick file of the Jewish Canadiana Collection at the Jewish Public Library of Montreal. (JPL)
7. *Ibid*, Goldstick to Rome, October 8, 1956.
8. Sack, *op. cit.* p. 117.
9. Rome to Goldstick, *op. cit.* October 1, 1956.
10. Stephen Speisman, *The Jews of Toronto, A History to 1937*, Toronto, McClelland & Stewart Ltd. 1979. p. 15.
11. Correspondence to the author from Dr. Jonathan Sperber, Archivist, Leo Baeck Institute, New York.
12. *Toronto Patriot*, August 8, 1841.
13. J. G. Hodgins, ed., *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, 28 vols.* Toronto, Warwick Bros. and Rutter, 1894-1910. Vol. 1, 1850, p. 134. (DH)
14. Correspondence to the author from the University of Hiedelberg.
15. Evelyn Miller, an Archivist in Montreal, formerly with the JPL, has written the author that she has seen a memo by Benjamin Hart dated October 7, 1837 in the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives. This memo mentions a Hirschfelder (no initials) as not being at shul on Saturday. If this is Jacob Maier then it is evident that he converted on this side of the Atlantic.
16. University of King's College records, (K.C.) UTA, A-70-0024 Board of Governors. General Letter Book 2, p.252. Copy in DH, Vol. iv, p. 276.

17. The John Howard Diaries are in the Baldwin Room of the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library. (BB) Shirley Morris is editing the Diaries and kindly alerted me to the large number of references to the Hirschfelder family in the Diaries. There is also an earlier compendium by Shirley McManus providing an entry to the Diaries.
18. Sack, *op. cit.* p. 117.
19. Mary Larratt Smith, *Young Mr. Smith in Upper Canada*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1980. p.79. Rachel Grover of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library kindly alerted me to this entry.
20. E. J. Hathaway, *Jesse Ketchum and His Times*. McClelland & Stewart, 1929. p.286. A check on the reference in the Scadding Diaries failed to turn up the specific quote on the cited page.
21. UTA, A-72-0500.
22. K.C. *op. cit.* Footnote 16.
23. *Ibid*,
24. *Ibid*,
25. Moir, p. 32, Footnote 1.
26. K.C. *op. cit.* April 9, 1849. See also DH, vol. viii for paraphrase of letter.
27. DH, *op. cit.* Vol. 5, October 5, 1844, p. 144-145.
28. Hirschfelder to Baldwin, Attorney-General, Canada West, August 27, 1849, 6 pp. enclosing copy of letter of reference. Baldwin Collection, BR.
29. See for example UTA, A-68-0002, January 10, 1881. David Rudkin, the Archivist of the University of Toronto originally alerted me to this letter and the importance of this accession.
30. *Ibid*, Neither in the Senate Minutes nor in DH was it noted that Hirschfelder's Testimonials were brought forward to the University College Council. UTA, A-72-0005, Box 6, 1843, folder 1. There is an old marker indicated "Mr. H's application removed, to be brought forward 18/10/[63]." Perhaps there were no Testimonials as such but only the extant letter of application and if this were so it further throws doubt on Hirschfelder's claimed education since such a background would have lent itself to the compiling of Testimonials.
31. University College Council Memorandum, 3pp., enclosed with a communication from Registrar J. W. Morris of the University of Toronto to the Hon. C. Alieyn, Provincial Secretary, April 8, 1859. Public Archives of Canada, (PAC) R.G. 5 C 1 Vol. 598 File 23 of 1859.
32. Calendars, University of Toronto and University College.
33. J. M. Hirschfelder, *A Key to German Conversation*. Toronto, H. & W. Rowsell, 1845. p. v-vi.
34. Moir, *op. cit.* p. 33.
35. J. M. Hirschfelder, *An Essay on the Spirit and Characteristics of Hebrew Poetry*, 1855 p. 1
36. *Ibid*, p. 6.
37. *Ibid*, p. 28.
38. J. M. Hirschfelder, *The Scriptures Defended; Being a Reply to Bishop Colenso's Book on the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua*. Toronto, Henry Rowsell, 1863. p. v-vi.
39. *Ibid*, p. v.
40. *Ibid*, p. vii.
41. *Ibid*, p.
42. *Christian Guardian*, June 24, 1863, p. 102, c6.
43. J. M. Hirschfelder, *A Wife to Her Sister: Being a treatise in which the questions so long and warmly discussed, whether marriage with a deceased wife's sister is prohibited under the Mosaic law, is, in a clear and precise manner, placed before the English reader*. Toronto, Rowsell & Hutchison, 1878, 39pp. p. 8.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
45. J. M. Hirschfelder, *The Creation Being Two Lectures on the Mosaic Account of the Creation as Recorded in Genesis I*. Toronto, Howsell & Hutchison, 1874. 75pp.
46. J. M. Hirschfelder, *The Immortality of the Soul Being a Critical Investigation of the Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul as set forth in the Old Testament*. Toronto, Rowell & Hutchison, 1876. 58pp.
47. The Jubilee Volume of Wycliffe College. Toronto, Printed by the University of Toronto Press, 1927. p. 62.
48. Polk's City Directory, 1886. Also McCullough to Harris letter August 1977. Additions and corrections for the draft history of the Department of Near Eastern Studies. Files of R. S. Harris.
49. The Andrew Baird Papers, Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Archives United Church of Canada. Baird's Journal 1875-1876. p.29. Rev. Baird was a student of Hirschfelder's. Apparently the Talmud was published at that time in a 18 volume edition.
50. J. M. Hirschfelder, *Biblical Expositor and People's Commentary*. Toronto, Rowsell & Hutchison, 2 vol., 1882-1885. Vol. 1, 315 pp., Vol. 2, 611 pp. Vol. 1, p. lxiii.
51. *Ibid.*, p. lxiv.
52. *Ibid.*, p. xxviii.
53. *Ibid.*, p. xxii.
54. *Ibid.*, p. xxxii-xxxiii.
55. *Ibid.*, p. cxix.
56. *Ibid.*, p. cxx.
57. *Ibid.*, p. viii.
58. *Ibid.*, p. lxxvii.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
61. *Ibid.*, p. xc.
62. *Ibid.*, p. cxii-cxiii.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 278.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 279.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 288.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 271-2.
77. Winnett and McCullough, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
79. Moir, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

In the Beginning: A Brief History of Jews in Atlantic Canada*

M. M. LAZAR and SHEVA MEDJUCK

Résumé

Pour comprendre jusqu'à quel point la vie juive et l'histoire des Juifs du Canada Atlantique sont importants, M. M. Lazar et Sheva Medjuck ont fait une étude qui porte sur quatre provinces du Canada Atlantique respectivement:

le Nouveau Brunswick
la Nouvelle-Ecosse
l'Ile du Prince Edouard et enfin
Terre-Neuve

Dans ce document, les auteurs ont tenté de cerner les problèmes propres à chacune des provinces cernant de près la vie de chacune des communautés juives; la moins viable étant celle de l'Ile du Prince Edouard. Bien que les auteurs se soient conformés avec rigueur à l'exactitude des découvertes telles qu'établies, leur but principal fut de transmettre la dynamique de la vie Juive dans chacune des 4 provinces de l'Atlantique.

L'héritage des Juifs dans la Région a été profondément altéré par le manque systématique de données historiques. "Nous pensons que notre travail constitue une première étape importante afin de comprendre le passé "de déclarer les auteurs du document. On ne peut plus prétendre à une "présumée histoire", notre histoire.

Ainsi dans cette étude les auteurs ont donc tenté de se rapprocher de ce que C. Wright Mills nommait: "l'imagination du sociologique" qui permet à tout le monde "de saisir l'histoire et la biographie de même que les relations entre les deux au sein de la société . . ." L'étude très importante et détaillée en tout point donne à ce document une valeur sans précédent, si l'on tient compte surtout de l'ampleur du sujet, les quatre provinces, de sa nature, de son objec-

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tif et de son but: informer et renseigner sur le passé d'une façon précise et rigoureuse.

Introduction

It has been suggested that sociologists should become more historically oriented, and that historians should make greater use of insights, conceptualizations and techniques developed by sociologists. Those holding such a view invite a collaboration of these approaches, proposing that sociology bolster itself with depth through the broad sweep of historical development, and that history arm itself with the illumination of sociological analysis.¹

No other group lends itself more readily than do Jews to this sort of collaborative research. Jews certainly do not lack a sense of collective history and, at the same time, they do not lack a sense of collective sociological consciousness. This shared awareness of the tensions and dynamics of Jewish historical and contemporary existence is a key hallmark of Jewish identity. We have a fervor for trying to understand our current situation, at least in part, in terms of our history. This understanding becomes particularly important in those places that are thought of as being relatively open and hospitable (perhaps seductive is a more appropriate word). Canada is generally thought of as being a relatively open society and the history of the development of Jewish communities in the country is generally spoken of in terms of its openness. With a few exceptions, the description of the unfolding of Canada's Jewish communities typically speaks of success at being able to be both Canadian and Jewish at the same time.

Whether or not this perception accurately reflects the realities of the Jewish experience in Canada may be open to debate. However, it is evident that the development of the large Jewish communities in Quebec, Ontario and Western Canada has been different than that of the smaller communities in general and Atlantic Canada in particular. To understand the latter's present and continuing survival, it is imperative to appreciate the unique histories of these communities.

New Brunswick

One of the factors that re-inforces the general feeling of British unilingualism in Atlantic Canada, is the large influx of United Empire Loyalists into the region after 1783. Although numerically outnumbered by the French Acadian population, their dominance clearly made itself felt. This pattern of majority-minority relations is reflected in the history of Jews in New

Brunswick.

It is possible to document Jewish settlement there as far back as 1781 by a land grant that was given to a Mr. A. Shepard.² Unfortunately, no further information is available on Mr. Shepard. It is, therefore, more common to trace Jewish settlement to Solomon Hart, who came to Saint John with his family in 1856. Two years later Hart was joined by his brother-in-law, Nathan Green and his family. Green was the sole Canadian agent in Canada for the American Tobacco Company and just prior to Confederation was honoured by the city by being given the Freedom of the City. The two families, totalling fifteen, formed the nucleus of the Saint John Jewish community. This small group of Jews maintained a strong religious identity as Jews by looking to Boston as a religious centre, remaining strictly Orthodox by importing goods from there. These pioneer Jews in Saint John were not a harassed people, or escapees from Europe, but a family group from England.

It took over twenty years for Saint John to recruit further Jewish settlers, Abraham and Israel Isaacs, who arrive in 1878. In 1879 Saint John was the first Maritime centre to have Yom Kippur services. The story of this first High Holiday celebration has clearly become one of the favourite tales of New Brunswick Jews because it provides an indication of the strength of Jewish identity despite the lack of any of the more typical communal supports. In 1879 there were eight adult males in Saint John. Together with a Jewish salesman from Montreal and a Baal Tefilah (cantor) imported from Boston, the requisite ten men for a minyan were available. Preparation was made by importing a Torah scroll and a *shofar* from Boston. Unfortunately, these plans came apart when the Montreal salesman had to return before the Holy Days. Undaunted, Solomon Hart combed the registers of Saint John hotels looking for Jewish sounding names. In a small Saint John hotel he found a Jew who was waiting to sail to Boston for the High Holidays. The Jew was greeted with "you are Elijah Hanavi" (Elijah the prophet) in reference to the legend that the Prophet Elijah returned to earth at one time to form a minyan and, thus, this Jew was cajoled into staying in Saint John.³ The High Holy Days were thus celebrated for the first time in Maritime Canada. Saint John Jews were also pioneers in other Jewish matters. Saint John erected the first permanent cemetery, called the Hart-Green cemetery, in 1880. It served all of New Brunswick communities until the 1930s. The first Jewish marriage in the Maritimes was also held in Saint John, with a rabbi from Boston officiating (1882).

Saint John was clearly on its way to becoming somewhat of a centre (albeit on a small scale and in a limited way) of Jewish life in New Brunswick. The Jewish community, however small (in the 1891 census only 34 Jews were

listed as living in Saint John), seemed willing and able to mobilize. Thus, for example, when Jews (as well as other immigrants) were turned away by a bigoted Immigration Officer, the community organized the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Saint John which served all immigrants who appealed for help. "This was the first organization of its kind in Canada to consider its work more a social duty than a philanthropic enterprise."⁴ Newcomers were met at the boat and taken to homes where they were clothed, fed and cared for until their future plans were decided. Every family was a member and paid weekly dues. Again, the organizational drive of Saint John Jews is seen in their successful campaign to build a synagogue by 1898 when Ahavath Achim synagogue was built, at a cost of \$10,000. Funds were donated not only by local Jews but also by Jews from Boston and New York as well as by some Christians. This helped to fulfill the cultural and religious needs of the community. The first permanent rabbi was Rabbi Tobkin. With the arrival of the Rabbi, regular services were held in various halls around the city until the synagogue was completed. The organization of the Daughters of Israel of Saint John, N.B., was formed in 1900, not only as a charitable organization but also for studying Judaic questions and for sociability. While Saint John Jews looked first to Boston and then to Montreal for aid, they quickly recognized the need to establish their own Jewish institutions in order to guarantee and enhance the survival of their Jewish identity.

The close of the century witnessed an exodus of Jews from Europe which brought immigrants to Saint John. Without benefit of English, and often unskilled, many of them earned their livings by peddling. Jews rarely got jobs with non-Jews. It appears that Saint John had a committee which designated places for immigrants to peddle. After peddling for a while, many Jews were able to open their own businesses.

A second synagogue, known as the Hazen Avenue synagogue, developed around 1908. This *schul* was also known as the "Deutche" *schul*. The community split because of different socio-economic and educational backgrounds. One group consisted of families from one village in Russia, who were not very well educated. The second group consisted of immigrants from Austria, Germany and England, as well as educated Russians. The two groups could not agree and thus broke into two *schuls*. After twelve years the synagogues amalgamated. A Calvin Church was purchased and the Shaarer Zedek congregation was established. Saint John had approximately 250 families during this period.

Since most Jewish businesses were in the same area (i.e., Main Street) and many Jews lived above their stores or in the near vicinity, an additional small chapel was opened on Main Street, where minyans were held three times a

day. This was a favourite meeting place in the early twenties. Thus, Saint John boasted three synagogues at one point in its history.

During the 1920s many Jewish organizations were established in Saint John, such as Young Judea (1925) and Junior Hadassah (which grew out of the Young Judea girls' group). In fact, the first meeting of Maritime Young Judea was held in Saint John. Men's groups consisted of Habonim (1925/26) and later B'nai B'rith. The community was always strongly Zionist, as many of the early Eastern European immigrants brought a strong sense of Zionism with them to Saint John. There was also a Young Men's Hebrew Association (1920) which even purchased its own building. (Jews were not allowed, at that time, to join the YMCA). Although there was an attempt to establish a Jewish Old Age Home, the idea died because of lack of support. Like many other communities during World War II Saint John established a community centre for the servicemen. The Saint John HIAS was also active, meeting boats of immigrants as they arrived in Saint John harbour. Speakers came to Saint John to speak about Zionism and plays were put on in Yiddish. An annual ball was supported by the YMHA.

Most Saint John Jews whom we interviewed expressed the feeling that anti-semitism has declined significantly from the earlier years. Many related stories of the difficulty of Jews getting jobs with non-Jews in the early years. In some cases jobs were lost when it was discovered that the employee was Jewish. Few felt that this problem still exists. Social clubs are now open (although in many areas this was quite recent) and Jewish-Gentile relationships have been greatly enhanced.

Our informants in Saint John more than anywhere else indicate a pessimism about the continuation of their community. There are no young people moving in and no children remaining. The community is an old one and seems to lack a spirit of togetherness. A strong community of 250 families has shrunk to about 60-65 families. Where Saint John used to have three kosher butchers it now has none. Daughters of Israel, Ladies Aid and other "help" organizations have died out. The YMHA closed its doors, Hadassah and Sisterhood have been combined, Habonim died out and the B'nai B'rith is not very active. Only 12 children remain in *cheder*. Most Saint John Jews feel that only immigration can help save their community.

The second largest Jewish community in New Brunswick was Moncton. Moncton's Jewish history is documented by Michael M. Baig in a paper entitled "The Folklore of Moncton Jewry". Jewish immigration to Moncton was somewhat atypical in that twenty-two families from Durbonne, Lithuania, settled in Moncton. The men arrived first and established themselves and then sent for their wives and children in Europe (a fairly common practice among

Jews and other immigrant settlers in the region). These Durbonners, as they were called, formed a very cohesive community. They all settled on the same street in Moncton. By 1909 the Jewish community was large enough to hire its first rabbi. Soon, the community of Moncton also felt the need for a synagogue. Here the community had a much more difficult time than Saint John. As Michael Baig narrates:

Plans were made to build a synagogue. Each member paid (from 1914) 10¢ a week and by 1924, enough money was amassed to purchase land. In that year, Jake Marks and Sam Borenstein bought the land, upon which our present synagogue stands, at an auction sale, for the sum of \$650. Steadman Street was then the choicest street in Moncton, and many of the non-Jewish residents strongly objected to building a synagogue on their street. The bidding went as high as \$650 because non-Jewish people were bidding on the land in order to prevent Jews from building their synagogue on this site. After the synagogue was built, many put their homes up for sale, and some Jewish people bought them.⁵

These obstacles, however, did not destroy the resolve of Moncton Jews and the construction of the synagogue began in 1926. Four years later, with only twenty Jewish families in Moncton, the synagogue building was completed.

The role of the Jewish women of Moncton in the construction of this synagogue was critical. It seems that in the fall of 1925 the Jewish women decided to do something about having a synagogue built in Moncton. They established a Ladies Auxiliary and each woman gave a dollar as membership. Twenty-one women comprised this group. The women pledged to pay twenty-five cents a week to the Auxiliary and to seek pledges from other women. They also had card parties, raffles, tag days (apparently they took all children out of school to help sell tags). These women raised a considerable sum of money. For example, cancelled cheques indicate a \$1,500. contribution for the mortgage, another of \$700., another of \$400., etc. This Ladies Auxiliary later became the Lillian Freeman Chapter of Hadassah. At the same time, (1930), Moncton bought land for its own cemetery.

A sense of solidarity among the Jews of Moncton is evidenced nowhere better than in their response during and immediately after World War II. Moncton Jews readily welcomed the thousands of Jewish airmen stationed in Moncton. After the war, when trains would pass through Moncton with Jewish immigrants on their way west, members of the Jewish community would meet the trains, often in the middle of the night, attending to any of their immediate needs. Thus, with only minimal supports, and often under adverse conditions, the Moncton Jewish community survived and grew.

Jews in Moncton, like their counterparts elsewhere, have penetrated many of the host society's institutions. They have become, for example, lawyers, doctors and university professors. Michael M. Baig served as Mayor of Moncton for two terms. However, an incident in the late 1970s suggests that

there still remains undercurrents of anti-semitism among members of the non-Jewish community. When a school teacher in Moncton published a book that was blatantly anti-semitic, members of the Jewish community attempted to take action. However, not only were they unsuccessful in removing this book from all local bookstores, but they also were unable to convince the school board that an investigation should be conducted to see whether or not this schoolteacher's conduct in the classroom reflected his anti-semitic attitudes. The government's reaction (or rather the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission's reaction) was only somewhat less disappointing. A complaint was filed with the Commission and after an "investigation" it was decided that the Commission could do nothing, except request that the teacher's classroom situation be monitored.⁶ Rosenberg's conclusion that "Although the Jewish community in Moncton is hardly a major one, its presence reflects the growing acceptance of minorities in Canada's mosaic"⁷ may seem to be acceptable in principle. Unfortunately, incidents such as this serve to qualify this kind of optimism.

The Moncton Jewish community appears to have reason to be optimistic about its future. It is one of the few communities that has experienced growth in its Jewish population with an influx of young Jewish people attracted to the expanding government and university sectors. Moncton is now the second largest Jewish community in Atlantic Canada with about 140 families. This has served to rejuvenate the community.

The Jewish community in Fredericton is more recent than Moncton or Saint John. The first Jewish family arrived around 1912. These early immigrants often peddled because they spoke no English, could not read or write and had no trade. Some reported difficulties in getting jobs with non-Jews. By 1925 Fredericton organized Young Judaea. The congregation was incorporated in March, 1929; however, a synagogue was not built in Fredericton until 1934 and the cemetery was not purchased until 1943. Before the construction of the synagogue, the Jewish community of Fredericton hired the Orange Hall in order to conduct services. By 1936 the congregation was established with a Sisterhood and Hadassah. Later a Habonim Lodge was started, which was replaced by the B'nai B'rith. Like Saint John, the Fredericton Jewish community was strongly Zionist. Their Zionist feelings came with the immigrants from Europe. Initially there was no Hebrew school but boys would go to the teacher's home for lessons. Girls did not usually receive formal Hebrew training at this time.

The Fredericton Jewish community consisted of a few large founding families. This meant that the community was very close, as most Fredericton Jews were related. This was reinforced because they tended to live in the

same area of town.

During World War II about two thousand Jews were interned at Ripples, New Brunswick (1941). About five hundred of them went on a hunger strike demanding kosher food. The Fredericton community helped provide kosher food and other comforts to the internees as well as visiting them periodically. Unlike the communities of Saint John and Moncton, few servicemen were stationed in the area, thus the Fredericton Jewish community was not as active in providing services during the War. Also since few immigrants passed through Fredericton, they did not need to mobilize to assist these immigrants as both Moncton and Saint John did.

The Jews of Fredericton appear to have co-existed in somewhat greater harmony with their non-Jewish neighbours. There does not seem to be any written records of the Jewish experience in Fredericton to suggest any kind of serious problems. Some of the older members of the community, however, do remember growing up being called names and beaten, and having difficulty finding jobs. Most, however, note that things have changed. The University of New Brunswick (unlike Dalhousie) was not known to discriminate against Jews. In discussion with Jews in Fredericton, they stress how proud they are of the relationship they have with their non-Jewish neighbours.

Much smaller Jewish communities also developed in Dalhousie and Bathurst. The Bathurst Jewish community, in fact, was able to support a Hebrew school teacher. The community also had a Torah Scroll and services were held in Bathurst on a periodic basis. Unfortunately, the community became too small to support even this minimal level of activity as Bathurst Jews migrated to larger communities. A concrete indication that the Bathurst Jewish community was no longer viable, was the donation of their Torah Scroll to the Moncton community.

Jews were found in other even smaller centres as well. Thus, for example, a number of Jewish families settled in Edmundston, New Brunswick where they generally became retail merchants. Although few in number they managed for a while to conduct Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur services. They rented a Masonic Lodge and hired someone to conduct the services. Families from outlying areas came to participate. While it was difficult to provide systematic Jewish education for the children, male children were often shipped out to study for their Bar Mitzvah and, occasionally, teachers were brought in from Montreal.

Nova Scotia

The development of the Jewish community in Nova Scotia followed a different pattern than in other parts of North America. The beginnings of a

Jewish community were laid two hundred and thirty years ago. This initial community survived for several generations, disappeared by the 1820s and then re-established itself in the last third of the nineteenth century. The first Jewish settlers arrived in Halifax shortly after its establishment in 1749. By 1752 there were approximately thirty Jews in Halifax (1.5 percent of the population of the town). Land was even set aside for a Jewish cemetery, near the intersection of what is now Brunswick Street and Spring Garden Road. By 1758 it was decided to use one common cemetery for the town, and the site of the Jewish cemetery was taken over for a Workhouse.

What may well be the earliest remaining document written by a Jew in Canada, the will of Isaac Levy,⁸ is a product of this period. Among the executors named in his will were his partner, Nathan Nathans, and Isaac Judah (whose signature on the will is both in English and Hebrew). Levy was originally from Cucksam, Germany, but, like most of these early Jewish settlers, came to Halifax from the American colonies.

The American Revolution had a major effect on the Jewish population of the colony. Many Jewish settlers returned to the American colonies to fight against Britain and others returned to Britain. However, not all left the colony and a number remained after the revolution. While the records are somewhat scanty, there are a number of “notable” exceptions documenting the continued presence of Jews during and after the revolution.

For example, Nathan Nathans (Isaac Levy’s partner) remained a resident of Halifax from approximately 1750 until his death in November, 1778. He is best remembered for the celebration of the “Festival of St. Aspinquid” held at his home from the early 1770s on the Northwest Arm, seven days after the new moon in May. This seemed to be a rather festive occasion with elegant dinners and toasts to the King and Queen, the Prince of Wales, the Governor of the colony, fishing and agriculture, the memory of St. Aspinquid (Grand Sachem of all North America) and to the chiefs of the twelve tribes who were allies of the British.⁹

Samuel Hart, another exception, arrived from New York in the early 1780s to establish a general mercantile, coastal trade and ships’ chandlers firm. Hart became rather wealthy. He purchased Maroon Hall, an estate with one thousand acres in Preston, on the Dartmouth side. This was an area in which the elite of the colony maintained their country homes and he “entertained there on a kingly scale”.¹⁰ In the early 1790s, Hart became active in politics, and he represented the township of Liverpool in the House of Assembly from 1793 to 1799. He appears to have been the first Jew to serve in a British Legislative body. However, it does appear that he took the oath of office which included the phrase “one true faith as a Christian”. In addition, all four of his

children were christened at St. Paul's Church in Halifax.¹¹

Outside of Halifax, the story of Jewish settlement during the eighteenth century is subject to some speculation. One apocryphal story deals with the settlement of Little Tancook Island in the mid-1790s. According to the tale, Little Tancook was settled in 1796 by several Dutch Jewish families. These families quickly assimilated into the dominate non-Jewish population. It has been suggested that many of those whose family name is Levy in this area are descended from these early settlers. This has not been (and perhaps cannot be) substantiated. More likely, at least some of the Levys in this part of Nova Scotia, are descended from Nathaniel Levy, who was in Halifax by 1759. Apparently, after his first wife died in 1771, he moved to Chester, where he married again in 1773 to Susannah Tufts. They had four children, before he died in May, 1787, at Chester. One of his sons, Gershom, married Catherine Barbara Graves in 1796. They had three sons before he died in 1801 at Chester. Two of the sons, David (b. 1797) and Nathan (b. 1798) settled in Tancook Island during the early 19th century. It has been suggested that Nathaniel Levy was the son of Nathan Levy, a Jewish merchant who was in Philadelphia in 1746.¹² It may be that Nathaniel Levy was in the colony to oversee the interests of the firm Levy and Frank of Philadelphia, one of the firms that provided the new colony with supplies and credit.¹³

From 1824 to 1861, there are no figures available on the Jewish population of Nova Scotia. However, in 1861, there were at least three Jews in Halifax and by the 1880s, a Jewish community had re-established itself in Nova Scotia. By 1901 there were 449 Jews in the province. The Jewish population increased to 1,360 by 1911 and to 2,161 by 1921. For the next fifty years the Jewish population fluctuated from a low of 1,348 in 1941 to a high of 2,535 in 1971.

Between 1895 and 1915 synagogues were established first in Halifax and then in Glace Bay (the first in Cape Breton), New Waterford, Sydney and Yarmouth. There is even some suggestion that a synagogue existed in Windsor for a short time. David Ben-Gurion mentions, in a letter to his wife Paula, that members of the Jewish Legion went to pray every Saturday in the synagogue while they were being trained in Windsor.¹⁴ The first Halifax synagogue was established in time for the first Jewish wedding in Nova Scotia between Sarah Cohen and Harry Glube on February 19, 1895. With the establishment of synagogues (generally following the establishment of cemeteries) the developing Jewish communities were provided with the beginnings of institutional support mechanisms for the maintenance of both religious and ethnic identities; something that was lacking for those first Jewish settlers in the eighteenth century.

The resurgence of Jewish life in Nova Scotia during this period affected the various small Jewish communities of the province, but its most significant affect was felt in Cape Breton and in Halifax. For most of this century, Halifax has served as the centre of the Jewish population of Nova Scotia. It has been the largest single Jewish community in the province since 1911 and since 1961 more than half of the province's Jewish population were living in the metropolitan area. Few Canadian Jews realize how important a role Halifax played, as it was the first contact point with Canada for many Jewish immigrants. The port was, until the advent of large-scale commercial air travel, one of the major debarkation points for Jewish immigrants heading to other parts of Canada (as was the case with one parent of each of the authors). For most, it was off the ship and onto the train, with contact in the port limited at best to a quick meeting with a representative from the Halifax Jewish community. However, for some the experience of arriving in Canada via Halifax was different. For example, Rabbi Aron Horowitz recalls arriving in Halifax in 1926, just before the last days of *Succot*. Since he would not travel to join his family in Winnipeg until after the holiday, arrangements were made for him to spend *Shmini Atzeret - Simchat Torah* in Halifax. His memories of the holiday (his first experiences with a Jewish community in Canada) include the brawl which broke out in the synagogue on Simchat Torah during the Hakafot, to which the police were summoned.¹⁵

The experiences of other immigrants were, however, more positive. For example, the first executive director of the Atlantic Jewish Council recalled arriving in Halifax in 1946 as a very young child, with his parents and brothers, after surviving the Holocaust, being met by members of the Jewish community and being provided with food (particularly with oranges) for the trip to Edmonton. The importance of Halifax as the centre of Jewish communal affairs in Nova Scotia was accentuated by events in Europe prior to World War II, the war itself, and the post-war period. In the late 1930s, Jewish refugees were brought to Halifax. Some settled in Halifax, while others moved to larger urban centres in Quebec and Ontario. During this pre-war period attempts were also made to settle a number of refugees as farmers in the rural areas of the province, particularly in the Annapolis Valley.

The war years placed a strain on the resources of the community. Halifax was a major jumping-off point for Europe. Many thousands of Jewish service personnel came through Halifax, yet with some help from the Canadian Jewish Congress, the community was able to provide for the needs of these transient Jews. A Jewish Servicemen's Centre was established which provided kosher food, social events and other services for Jewish military personnel.



Figure 1: Reception of Jewish Immigrants at Canadian Immigration, Halifax, probably late 1930's. (Photo courtesy of the Atlantic Jewish Council)

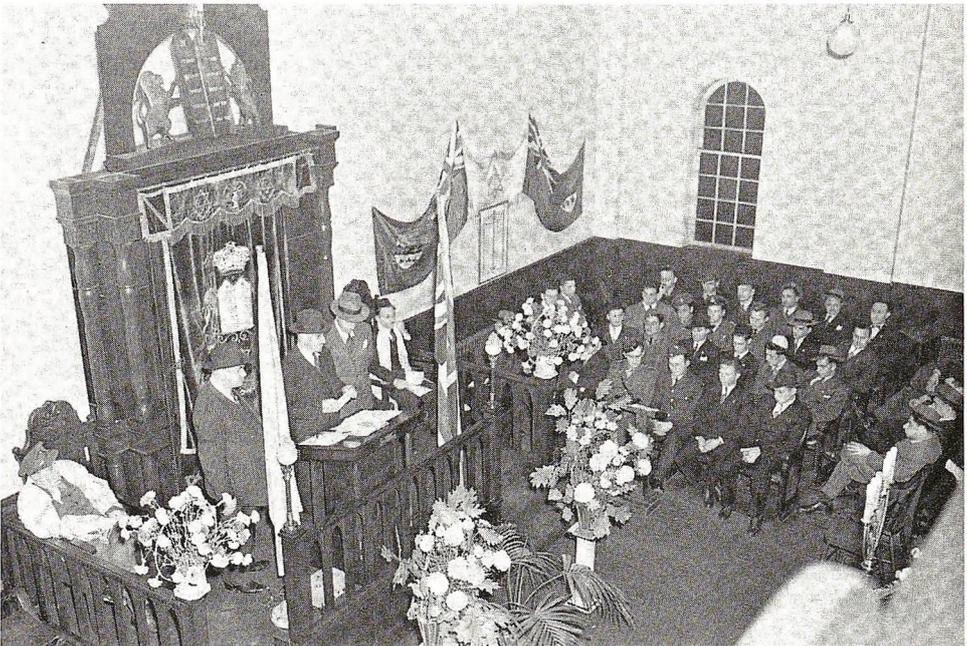


Figure 2: The Jewish community welcomes Halifax returnees from war service. (Photo courtesy of the Atlantic Jewish Council)



Figure 3: Maritime Y.M.H.A. Convention, St. John, New Brunswick, 1946. (Photo courtesy of Atlantic Jewish Council)



Figure 4: Judaeen Convention, Fredericton, c. 1949. (Photo courtesy of Atlantic Jewish Council)

After the war, Halifax became the major port of entry for Jewish displaced persons. From late 1945 to 1951, numerous ships were met; immigration difficulties overcome; people housed temporarily; and finally boarded on trains west for settlement primarily in western Canada.

An area of significant Jewish settlement in Nova Scotia was Cape Breton. The development of the Jewish community there is interesting as it grew rapidly and declined almost as rapidly. In 1901, there were 162 Jews in Cape Breton, by 1931 the Jewish population had increased to 900 (the Halifax Jewish community during the same thirty-year period grew from 585 to 785), and by 1941 it had increased to 939, (its high point). The Jewish population of Cape Breton started to decline after 1941 and by 1951 there were fewer Jews in Cape Breton (806) than there had been in 1921 (889).

To the outsider, Cape Breton appears to be a single entity. This image is one that is particularly applied to the Jewish community of the island. Yet we are in fact dealing with four very distinct Jewish communities, that differed in a number of ways and were quite aware of their differences; Glace Bay, New Waterford, Sydney and Whitney Pier.¹⁶

Glace Bay may be considered the oldest organized community on Cape Breton. Jewish settlers began arriving in the 1890s. Many came as a result of advertisements placed in European papers by the coal company in Glace Bay. The company was soliciting mine workers by offering free passage to Canada in return for work in the mines. Few of the Jewish immigrants worked in the mines for any length of time. Most became peddlers and then moved into retail businesses near the mines where their competition was the "company stores".

There were fifteen Jewish families in the community when the first synagogue in Cape Breton was built in 1902, although it was incorporated in 1901, the same year as the town. Previous to the building of the synagogue the High Holidays were celebrated by either renting a hall or gathering in the home of a member of the community. The importance placed on the building of the synagogue by the Jews in Glace Bay can be measured in a number of ways; the best indicator, however, can be seen by the contribution of funds by some families even before they bought their own homes.

The community continued to grow. In 1905 an active Ladies Aid group was formed, in 1919 the first Hadassah chapter was started, and shortly after a Habonim Lodge began. By 1921 Glace Bay's Jewish community numbered 441 individuals, or 110 families. It was then decided that a Talmud Torah building was needed in addition to the synagogue.

With the arrival of the first professional Hebrew teacher in 1912, regular classes had been held either in homes or in the synagogue. The Talmud Torah

was completed in 1926 and became the centre for all social and community events. One of the results of this was increased rivalry between Glace Bay and Sydney, which saw the Talmud Torah/Community Centre as competition for the YMHA that had been established in the early 1920s in Sydney.

During this period the Glace Bay Jewish community “flowered”. A Yiddish theatre group formed and later developed into an English language Jewish theatre group. A Young Women’s Hebrew Club began, as well as a Young Judean group. In 1937, a Young Israel group was established for boys aged 13 to 19. Unlike the Young Judeans, which was Zionist in focus, the Young Israel group was religious/Jewish in orientation. It drew many male members away from the Judeans and became a key youth group in Glace Bay. The Young Israel group disbanded after its founding rabbi left the community, and the Young Judean group became the central youth group once again. As well, during this period, a number of sports teams developed that competed against non-Jewish teams.

For a period of approximately thirty-five years, the Jewish community appeared to move from strength to strength. Unfortunately a declining population predetermined the declining future of the community. Until the mid 1970s, a Hebrew School for the young people of the community was maintained but at present there are far too few children in the community to continue a separate school. The few children that are Hebrew school age are now taken to Sydney. The Jewish population continues to decline and it does not appear that there will be any turnaround in this trend in the future.

The first Jewish immigrants in New Waterford came in the early 1900s because of opportunities resulting from the coal industry. About ten families settled in the community at the same time, comprising the first organized Jewish community in the town. Most of the men started as peddlers, as had been the situation in Glace Bay, then moved into retail businesses.

The synagogue was built in 1922, with a Talmud Torah and residence for a rabbi in the same building. Before the completion of the synagogue, Jews travelled either to Sydney or Glace Bay for services or rented a hall and imported a rabbi or cantor. The building became the centre for social, cultural and community activities. The late 1920s and early 1930s saw the establishment of a Hadassah chapter and a Young Judean group. It was suggested by one of our informants that Zionism was introduced into the community “with the establishment of the Sons of Israel Congregation and accepted by everyone, before the independence of Israel”. Unfortunately, there was little migration into New Waterford (its Jewish population peaked at 99 in 1941). After World War II, Jews began to leave as the economic base of the general community began to decline with the closing of the mines. This out-migration has

continued, and one result has been that the synagogue had to be sold in 1967. The remaining families joined synagogues in either Glace Bay or Sydney.

The history of the Jewish community in Sydney is the history of two communities, Sydney itself and Whitney Pier. The first Jews to arrive in Sydney during the late 1890s and early 1900s, settled in that part of the city known as Whitney Pier. For the most part they were Russians escaping pogroms. While they came to Sydney because of the growing steel industry, few Jewish immigrants worked in the mills. Rather they became peddlers and then moved into retail businesses.

A synagogue was built in the "Pier" in 1913. Included within the building was a Talmud Torah. Prior to the establishment of the synagogue and before there were enough families in Sydney, men were brought in from Glace Bay to form a minyan. The synagogue was the centre of social and cultural activities until the establishment of a YMHA several years later, at which time social activities shifted to the Y.

Around this time a Ladies Aid society (later to be renamed the Ladies Auxiliary) was formed to aid in the settlement of immigrants. An interesting sidelight to these activities took place immediately after World War I when orphans from Europe and, surprisingly, New York were brought to Sydney.

As the Jewish population of Sydney (including the "Pier") grew during the first third of the century (from 22 in 1901 to 425 in 1931), Jewish communal activities increased. A B'nai B'rith lodge was started in 1923 and, the same year saw the establishment of a Young Judean chapter. Hadassah became active in the early 1920s, following a visit from the president of Hadassah in Canada who, according to one of our informants, "convinced the women of the need for Hadassah". By 1933 there were two chapters. While Zionist activities were present with the arrival of the first immigrants, it became much more popular after the Balfour Declaration. From the early 1920s on, Zionist speakers came to the community, primarily from Montreal, and according to one of our informants, "even from the Habonim Lodge in Glace Bay". While there has not been a great aliyah from Sydney (as is the case for Atlantic Canada in general), there has been a steady aliyah that goes back before Israel's liberation. For example, Lionel Druker, one of the few Canadian officers to serve in the Haganah during Israel's War for Independence (and founder of Sightseeing Bus Ltd. in Israel) is from Sydney.

By the mid 1920s many Jewish families were moving out of the "Pier" into Sydney proper. During this period a second synagogue was established in Sydney. While both synagogues were initially Orthodox, the synagogue in Sydney gradually became conservative. In the 1930s mixed seating was adopted and by the 1930s the synagogue was using Conservative siddurim.¹⁷

The movement of Jews out of the "Pier" into Sydney proper continued during the 1950s. As a result, the synagogue in Sydney grew in membership, while Agudath Israel in the Pier declined. At present the Sons of Israel congregation in Sydney proper is the only synagogue in Cape Breton that has a full-time rabbi. It is clear that the activities of the Jewish population of Cape Breton are now concentrated in Sydney.

Several things become evident after reading the records and speaking to key informants about Cape Breton. First, while there seems to have never been any major overt anti-semitism in Cape Breton, all of our informants indicate that undercurrents of anti-semitism were always present. Jews were denied membership in some of the local service clubs in Cape Breton for many years. They were denied membership in at least one country club, and as a result, joined with some non-Jews to start another country club. A Jewish teacher was docked pay for taking time off for the High Holidays. It was believed that Jews could not get jobs at some banks during the 1920s and 30s (and even later). During the depression, tensions between Jews and non-Jews increased, particularly during strikes. During one strike in Glace Bay, the windows of some Jewish homes were smashed. Nevertheless, during this strike Jewish merchants extended full credit to their customers, most of whom were strikers, and their stores were not damaged, though the strikers did burn down the company stores. Secondly, all of our informants indicate that tensions, competition and jealousy characterized the relationships between the various Jewish communities in Cape Breton. This was the case most particularly during the growth period of the four communities when they were competing for members and, perhaps, for the role as the centre of Jewish activity and life in Cape Breton. The present situation is one in which Sydney has become the Jewish service centre for Cape Breton, and, as a result, tensions between the communities seem to have been reduced.

Finally, all of our informants indicate that Jewish life was better in the past. The communities were better organized and integrated. They socialized with one another much more extensively than is the case now at least in part, as several indicated, because they were not "comfortable" socializing with non-Jews. There was a degree of activity that they feel is no longer present. Our informants point to the movement away from Cape Breton of the young people as being at the root of this internal decline.

The Jews in Nova Scotia appear to have been relatively well integrated and accepted into the larger community. There have been Jewish mayors in both Halifax and Dartmouth as well as in smaller communities. There have been Jewish judges in the provincial court system. There have been Jewish members of the Legislative Assembly. Jews have served on the Board of Gover-

nors of many of the universities of the province. As well, there have been prominent physicians, lawyers, engineers, accountants, university professors and business people.

Yet at the same time there has been some overt evidence (as well as undercurrents) of anti-semitism in Nova Scotia as well as New Brunswick. During the period between the two wars, the '*Protocols of Zion*' appeared in the province. Pro-Nazi groups had some support during this period. Until relatively recently, Jews were excluded from some of the more "exclusive" clubs in the province. While provincial universities have generally been open to Jewish students, certain faculties have not been (though oddly enough the faculties of Medicine and Law at Dalhousie seem to have always been open to Jewish students). More recently one of the professional faculties at a university in Nova Scotia was accused of not hiring Jewish faculty, either full-time or adjunct positions. The case is being fought out and fought-over. What is interesting about this particular episode is that the particular faculty does not, apparently, discriminate against Jewish students. As well, anti-semitic literature is still circulated periodically through the province.

The future of a viable Jewish community in Nova Scotia appears to be problematic. The continued shift of population out of the small communities is a trend that will most likely not be reversed. Some of the smaller Jewish communities seem destined to continue to decline and eventually disappear. The future of the Jewish community of Halifax, and to a lesser extent Sydney, is somewhat less doubtful. Both are relatively large, though the Jewish community of Halifax is the only one that is undergoing any sort of visible growth.

Prince Edward Island

There is a very curious story about Jewish settlement on Prince Edward Island. In a report made by Colonel David Dunbar, dated August 25, 1732, he claims that at Louisburg there were "six French men-of-war full of Jews, to settle the Island of St. John's [that is, Prince Edward Island] in Bay Verte", and the French settlers there "would supply that new intended settlement with bread, corn and live cattle, if not prevented".¹⁸ Obviously, if this story is true, nothing came of this attempt at Jewish settlement, as the first recorded Jewish settler on Prince Edward Island arrived at the turn of this century.

Originally, Prince Edward Island was a Proprietary Colony, with absentee landlords. As a result, group settlements became the initially dominant pattern of colonization. Conversely, settlement by single individuals or families, whether Jewish or Gentile, was not encouraged.¹⁹

The province has only a handful of Jewish families, most of whom arrived

after the 1920s. There has been no organized Jewish life on the Island itself. Those Jewish families that have wished to participate in some form of Jewish organizational life have had to look to the communities of Moncton, Halifax or Montreal. What appears to be the first public religious worship during the High Holy Days was held in 1975, using a Torah Scroll and Shofar loaned to the community by a synagogue in Halifax. The services were not repeated. The Jewish community of Prince Edward Island is the least viable in Atlantic Canada.

Newfoundland

The history of the Jewish community of Newfoundland, like much else about that island province, is spoken of in terms of “firsts”. Labrador was claimed for England in 1677 by Joseph de la Penha, a Jewish merchant-adventurer from Holland. Twenty years later, he was granted title to Labrador after rescuing William III from a sinking ship. While he never availed himself of the grant, this may be thought of as the first officially documented case of Jewish contact or influence in what was to become Canada.²⁰

Footnotes

1. P.Y. Medding, *From Assimilation to Group Survival* (New York: Hart Publishing Company, 1969) p. XI
2. Land Grant Papers, Nova Scotia Public Archives
3. Stuart Rosenberg, *The Jewish Community in Canada*, Vol. 1 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1970) p. 111
4. B.G. Sack, *History of the Jews in Canada*, Vol. 1 (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Congress, 1945) p. 229
5. Michael Baig, *The Folklore of Moncton Jewry*, Mss., N.D.
6. *Shalom*, Vol. 4, No. 2, November, 1978, pp. 21-23
7. Rosenberg, op. cit., p. 110
8. Halifax County Probates, Will Book I, 1750, p. 11
9. C. Bruce Fergusson, “Jewish Communities in Nova Scotia”, *Journal of Education*, Vol. II, No. 1, October, 1961, p. 46
10. Thomas H. Raddall, *Halifax: Warden of the North* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1971) p. 133
11. Halifax County Probates, Will Book III, 1793, p. 371
12. Private communication, Terrence Punch, 1981
13. Fergusson, op. cit., p. 46
14. David Ben-Gurion, *Letters to Paula* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971) p. 4
15. Aron Horowitz, *Striking Roots* (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1979) p. 7
16. While Whitney Pier is a part of Sydney politically, there exists a sense of the distinctiveness in the “Pier”. This feeling pervaded even into the Jewish community.
17. Several of our informants have suggested that this move away from Orthodoxy to Conservatism is, at least in part, the source of some of the tensions that have existed between Sydney and the “Pier”.

18. Public Record Office, Board of Trade, Nova Scotia, Vol. VII, E29
19. Jan Goeb, *The Maritime Jewish Community* (Halifax: Jewish Historical Society, N.D.) p. 31
20. Sack, *op. cit.*, p. 47-49
21. Private communication, Cyril Byrne, 1981
22. Goeb, *op. cit.*, p. 31
23. C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Grove Press, 1961) p. 6

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