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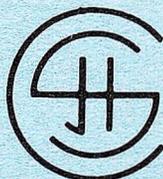
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The Apprenticeship of an Executive Director: M.A. Solkin, A.J. Paull, and the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society of Canada*

JACK LIPINSKY

Lipinsky examine la création et le développement de la Société d'Entre-Aide pour les Immigrants Juifs (S.A.I.J.) à Toronto.

Quand le parti conservateur de R. B. Bennett introduit une législation qui rendra l'immigration des Juifs quasiment impossible, le S.A.I.J. de Toronto était sur le point de disparaître. Mais, A. J. Paull, l'administrateur national du S.A.I.J. était résolu à le ressusciter. Il avait déjà réussi à rendre le bureau central de Montréal plus efficace et il engagea Maurice Solkin pour faire de même à Toronto.

Paull devint le mentor de Solkin et il surveilla ses activités de près. Bien qu'il ait eu des problèmes de temps en temps, les deux devinrent des amis intimes et Solkin utilisa les méthodes de Paull efficacement. Après avoir révivifié le S.A.I.J. de Toronto, Solkin succéda à Paull dans la position de l'administrateur national du S.A.I.J. A fut dans ce poste qu'il conjuga les efforts pour aider les réfugiés de l'holocauste.

The first Canadian Jewish Congress was founded amidst Zionist euphoria over the Balfour Declaration, concern for the future of Russian and Polish Jewry, and in the belief that Jewish lobbying at the Versailles Conference would lead to the creation of a Jewish state. Many hoped that Congress would also help bring organizational leadership to Canadian Jewry and to the Jewish communities of Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg. Unfortunately, these hopes came to nothing: by 1921 Palestine was under a British Mandate, the Congress was moribund, and the surge of war-inspired Canadian Jewish unity that was the basis for Congress' founding had dissipated.¹

*Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Jewish Historical Society, Learned Societies' Conference, Montreal, June 2 & 3, 1985

But the stillborn Congress left a legacy of great importance: it created the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society (JIAS), which was responsible for maximizing Jewish immigration to Canada and minimizing the depredations of middlemen who charged exorbitant sums and were often unable to obtain the permits they promised. Although JIAS was unable to completely drive the ticket agents, influence peddlars, and lawyers who specialized in obtaining permits out of business, by 1925 it had achieved enough market penetration in Montreal to lower permit prices considerably. JIAS began to attract more attention from Canadian Jewry after it successfully negotiated for the admission of at least 5,000 Russian and Romanian Jews in 1922-23 by guaranteeing that they would not become public charges. As a result of these negotiations, the Department of Immigration recognized JIAS as *de facto* representative of Canadian Jewry in the field of immigration. This meant that the while JIAS had no control over immigration policy, it received about 3,000 permits per year through an informal secret arrangement with the Department.²

Increased government regulation of immigration also increased JIAS' clientele. By the mid-1920s, a series of orders-in-council amending the Immigration Act of 1919 made Jewish immigration into Canada a difficult, complex, and time consuming process. The vast majority of Jewish immigrants could only be admitted by special permits which were issued by the Minister and approved by the Cabinet. Few families who wished to admit their loved ones into Canada had the expertise to deal with the Department of Immigration independently (neither could most of the ticket agents) which further increased JIAS's business.³

The head office of JIAS, like that of the then moribund Congress, was in Montreal. JIAS committees were responsible for carrying out the Society's work in Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and at the ports of Halifax and Quebec City. On paper JIAS was the only nationally organized Jewish organization, but in reality, the head office had minimal control over its local affiliates in other cities. By 1927 the Toronto branch had lost its independence and affiliated itself with the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies in an effort to obtain enough funds to maintain a tenuous existence.⁴

When it was founded in 1920, the Toronto branch was known as "The Emergency Jewish Immigrant Aid Committee". Its leadership was shared between prosperous Polish and Russian *ba'alei batim* who had immigrated before the War and were affiliated with the Goel Tzedec Congregation, and prominent lay and spiritual leaders of the Holy Blossom Temple. Rabbi Barnett Brickner of Holy Blossom, President of the Branch from 1923 to 1925, believed that it was Toronto JIAS' duty to find jobs for the immigrants and to help them inte-

grate into the community. Dr. Abraham Brodey, scion of a prominent Holy Blossom family, succeeded Brickner as President and held office until 1940. He believed that “the rush of immigration had subsided” and it was essential that immigrant aid be organized in a more formal and permanent manner. He therefore reorganized the office and formally affiliated the Toronto group with National JIAS.⁵

Under his administration, Toronto JIAS was kept busy trying to screen prospective sponsors for the 1,170 permits allocated to them by the Department of Immigration in 1925-26. An Educational Committee chaired by the eminent Yiddish journalist and historian Abraham Rhinewhine (who had served as the Toronto office’s first President) helped immigrants study for their citizenship papers. In January 1926, Brodey ordered that a JIAS delegation meet every train carrying Jewish immigrants, thus inaugurating a policy that would endure for over thirty years. Toronto JIAS was a beehive of activity in mid-1926; it was hardpressed to keep up with the flood of up to fifty personal interviews per day. The office seemed to be a great success.⁶

But appearances were deceiving, as Brodey and his Board discovered when they were suddenly accused of charging up to \$125 for each permit they obtained. The JIAS prided itself on charging only a nominal membership fee to those applicants who could afford to pay; its existence was based on the belief that no needy applicant be refused a permit for financial reasons. After an investigation in June 1926 they discovered that a prominent lawyer had appropriated over half JIAS’ quota of permits for himself. These permits, which were signed by JIAS Executive Director S.B. Haltrecht, were indeed being sold at the rumored prices. The Board could do nothing when presented with this *fait accompli*; any attempt to publicly refute the charges would only, as Brodey ruefully observed, “undermine our own organization” because JIAS did not want to jeopardize its flow of permits from the Department of Immigration.⁷

Thus JIAS found its reputation tarnished at a crucial time, for on 3 January 1927 PC #534 was applied to Jewish immigration. This amendment to the Immigration Act ostensibly made it easier for families to be reunited in Canada after one member had been legally admitted. But the Department of Immigration was determined to use PC #534 to reassert their control over every bureaucratic nuance of Jewish immigration; JIAS was therefore stripped of its quota of permits and the Jewish immigration business was left to attorneys, MPs, steamship agents, and political hacks who generally equated permits with votes and profits.⁸

This change in government policy combined with the rumors of expensive permits all but destroyed the Toronto JIAS office. The office was only begin-

ning to attain some sense of identity and communal recognition by 1926 and preliminary plans for a membership campaign were just getting under way. But scarcely two weeks after PD #534 was applied to Jewish immigration, some members of the Toronto Board questioned the need for the continued existence of the office. By March 1927 business had dropped alarmingly: the bulk of the immigration business was going to steamship agents and lawyers with whom JIAS found itself increasingly unable to compete. By September, JIAS was running out of money and the office was only able to survive by surrendering a good measure of its autonomy and affiliating with the Holy Blossom-dominated Federation of Jewish Philanthropies. This led to an exodus of the immigrant members from the JIAS board and left Brodey and his fellow Holy Blossomites in control of the Executive and Toronto JIAS' future. The new leadership compounded the Society's weakness by their passive attitude to immigrant aid. They waited for immigrants to come to them, did not advertise their services, nor did they attempt to compete with the Yiddish-speaking steamship agents by selling Polish and Russian remittance orders, sending parcels to Poland, or by helping with U.S. visa cases.⁹

This organizational passivity had a stultifying effect on even the most ardent of JIAS' supporters. In December 1927 the Board decided to postpone its membership drive because most of the Board believed that few Jews knew what JIAS was or what it did. Soon the Toronto JIAS office was little more than a Sunday morning "immigration clinic" presided over by Brodey. The good Doctor came into the office at 10 a.m. to help some people apply for citizenship and perhaps to answer a few "elementary questions" about the admissibility of certain family members into Canada. By 2 p.m. he was ready to close up, well satisfied that he had done his share. The administrative work of the office had dwindled to the point that a part time secretary was able to run it easily.¹⁰

In 1930 R.B. Bennett's Conservatives took power and introduced new orders in council that made it almost impossible for Jews to enter Canada. Toronto JIAS, already weak, became little more than a letterhead. No Board meetings at all were held in 1932 or 1933; and the majority of the trickle of Jews who immigrated to Canada and came to Toronto came through the efforts of steamship agents. With its patron organization, the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, in serious financial difficulties because of the Depression the disappearance of Toronto JIAS seemed inevitable.¹¹

But A.J. Paull, the Executive Director of JIAS, was determined to resuscitate and revitalize the Toronto office. He certainly had the credentials to do it. This handsome and dynamic individual had been recruited from the Paris headquarters of HICEM (a union of European and American Jewish immigration

societies) in 1927 to replace S.B. Haltrecht. In addition to his considerable experience as a professional immigrant agency administrator, Paull was a superb letter writer, motivator, and organizer. He placed special emphasis, in contrast to most other Jewish organizations of the time, on systematizing and professionalizing office procedures. Nothing was too trivial for his eagle eye as it roved through the office to ensure that all was functioning at peak efficiency. His enthusiasm rejuvenated the Head Office; National JIAS President Benjamin Robinson happily observed that “it is a well known fact that the destiny of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society of Canada is in very competent hands with Mr. Paull as its Executive Director.”¹²

Once the Head Office was operating efficiently, Paull turned his attention to Toronto. He hoped to revitalize the Toronto JIAS office but encountered stiff opposition from Brodey, who believed that there was no need to establish an office independent of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies that would directly compete against ticket agents unless Toronto Jewry “clamoured” for it, and even then, only if the office would “pay for itself.” For two years, Paull and Robinson vainly attempted to convince Brodey that Jewish immigration required a more activist stance. Finally, in March 1935, Paull threatened to use his power as Executive Director and open the office under his own administration with or without Brodey’s approval. Brodey capitulated rather grudgingly; his Executive only contributed \$200 per month for what they believed was an initial six month trial period. This left most of the burden on the already financially hardpressed JIAS Head Office, which had to absorb all expenses not covered by the Toronto subsidy.¹³

But there is good reason to suspect that Paull was pleased with this agreement despite the expense involved. He realized that the intransigence of Brodey and his Executive might well make it difficult for him to recreate the Toronto office in the image of Montreal. Yet there was a chance; Brodey had been forced to concede that the Toronto office would be run as a branch of Head Office and that “Mr. Paull is to have entire charge of it and its staff.” Paull had also forced Brodey to accept the idea that JIAS was in competition with the steamship agents, and therefore it was essential that the Toronto office enter the remittance business which provided the first contact with most clients. Nonetheless, Paull realized that it would be difficult to impose his ideas on Toronto from his desk in Montreal. He needed to hire an Executive Secretary who possessed unquestioned personal and organizational loyalty, a command of English, Yiddish, Russian and Polish; a person full of zeal, energy, persistence, and tact; a person who would serve as an exemplar of the “Paull system”; a person capable of making the office a success and thus winning the confidence of the skept-

tical Brodey and his Board.¹⁴

Paull therefore placed advertisements in the Jewish press, and soon had a number of candidates. The most impressive was a 35 year old Rumanian immigrant named Maurice Solkin who was serving as Secretary of the Folks Farein. Solkin had been a ticket agent in Rumania, and worked in the same capacity for Mr. Joseph Graner in Toronto. Mr. Graner was also the President of the Folks Farein, and it was through his influence that Solkin obtained his position with that organization. His position was a good one, but Solkin was an ambitious man, and he jumped at the chance to run the Toronto JIAS office. Paull officially hired him on 4 April 1935, less than two weeks before the scheduled opening of the office.¹⁵

If Solkin was under the misapprehension that he had been hired for his experience in immigrant work, it was soon dispelled by the daily deluge of directions he received from Paull. The Executive Director believed that Solkin "has the makings of a good Secretary but lacks entirely in experience" and knew that National JIAS' reputation in Toronto depended on a successful and efficient independent office. Paull was determined to ensure that his lengthy battle to persuade Brodey to accept the idea of an aggressive Toronto office would not be in vain. This meant that Solkin would operate as Paull's agent; everything he did would reflect, and reflect on, the Executive Director. In practical terms this left Solkin with little room to manoeuvre between Paull in Montreal and Brodey in Toronto; both men viewed the success or failure of the Toronto office as a vindication of their theories.¹⁶

Paull took no chances; he sent veteran organizer Samuel Kaplan to Toronto to supervise the preparations for the new office and to remain in charge until Solkin officially took up his position on 17 April. He also minced no words in telling the former ticket agent that his new job required him "to eliminate as much as possible the profit motive from Jewish immigrant aid work, and bring by all means at our disposal our people to our Society so that we may minister to their needs." Solkin was instructed to compete directly with the agents in naturalizations, remittances, and visa cases and win back JIAS' former monopoly over permit applications.¹⁷

This was easier said than done. Brodey had never favoured open competition with the agents and his attitude was not about to change. Even before the office opened, he began to express doubts about getting involved in such a "delicate problem". But Paull was not interested in these complaints; when Kaplan left for Toronto on 10 April he was instructed to immediately begin handling remittances at the same prices that prevailed in Montreal. Kaplan also publicized the opening of the office in the *Yiddische Zhurnal* and addressed the leaders of many

landsmanschaften. Obviously his advance work was successful; the first day of business on 14 April attracted 62 people, most of who came to do business. Even Brodey was impressed.¹⁸

The steamship agents were also impressed — by the inroads that the upstart agency was making into their very profitable remittance business. On 2 May a delegation of them, which included Solkin's former employer, begged the local JIAS Executive to leave the remittance business. Most of the Executive was sympathetic, but Solkin and Brodey (whose admiration for Solkin was increasing daily) managed to convince them that "the remittance business is a logical outgrowth of our general activities." Nonetheless, the majority of the Executive decided that it was best to compromise with the agents, and voted to refrain from "aggressive competition with the agents . . . and cessation of further advertising of our remittance business"¹⁹

This brought on Solkin's first crisis, and he proved his loyalty to Paull and to JIAS' principles. Paull had already convinced Solkin of the moral superiority of JIAS' crusade against all those who profited off helpless immigrants and their families, and thus Solkin was not interested in any sort of compromise with the agents. He cautioned them by noting that while the meeting had gone on record as favoring a cessation of remittance advertising, "no final decision has been made", and the final decision was in Paull's hands. Solkin then wrote to Paull, and correctly observed that "our willingness to give in to the agents' demand may create a dangerous precedent." Paull agreed with his pupil that "any compromise at the present time with the steamship agents would be fatal to the existence of our Toronto branch" and overruled the Toronto Board.²⁰

With the agents hurt but by no means defeated, and the office clientele expanding steadily despite ferocious competition, Solkin had more time to turn to his primary task: establishing the Toronto office's reputation in the community, gaining financial support through a membership drive, and routinizing and streamlining office procedure to ensure that the agency could compete with the agents in all areas. Solkin was aware of his inexperience, and he turned to his mentor Paull for advice. Naturally, Paull was delighted to dispense this, and through a stream of correspondence he introduced Solkin to bookkeeping, public relations, fundraising, and office procedure. Nothing was too mundane for Paull if it could help Solkin run the office more efficiently. Paull was pleased with Solkin's acknowledgement of his inexperience and willingness to learn, because it allowed him to mold Solkin in his own bureaucratic image.²¹

But it would be misleading to assume that Paull's ultimate aim was to turn Solkin into an inflexible bureaucrat. Paull stressed procedure throughout his association with Solkin because he believed that the key attribute of an effective

office manager was the ability to give and comply with instructions and established procedures at all times. These ideas were certainly not novel; at this time many Jewish communal organizations were professionalizing their office structures. But Paull's methodology of instruction was brilliantly novel — he consciously set himself up as Solkin's role model! This allowed Paull to imbue his colleague with the deep sense of dedication to JIAS' principles that underlay Paull's passion for orderly administration. Solkin was trained to believe that everything he did, no matter how mundane, not only contributed to the material success of the Toronto office, but helped JIAS fulfill "our duty to the wanderer, whether he is on our shores or whether he is coming."²²

Solkin was eager to ensure the success of the Toronto office and worked tirelessly to begin a membership drive, publicize the existence of the office, and expand the remittance business. His lengthy letters to Paull were often phrased like an eager schoolboy's; Paull replied in the same vein, using a combination of praise and criticism to guide Solkin. This technique was very effective, as Paull discovered in early August 1935 when the auditors discovered that the Toronto bank accounts would not balance because Solkin had not followed instructions. When Solkin scrambled to find the reason for these difficulties, Paull bluntly informed him: "there will always be discrepancies when you don't comply with instructions" and prodded Solkin still further by noting that the audit could not be completed until the books were reconciled. A contrite Solkin abjectly admitted his guilt and, like the prize pupil who makes a foolish error, promised "that this will *NOT* happen in the future." As if this were not enough, he then blurted out: "I am really sorry to have caused you so much inconvenience, but now that I got to the root of it, the problem, it just will not occur again."²³

When a shocked Brodey read this correspondence, he indignantly demanded that Paull treat Solkin "with greater diplomacy." Brodey accused Paull of attempting to "exhort him (Solkin) to greater things by such critical methods" when he really had no "real cause for complaint". But Brodey misunderstood Paull's methodology; and Paull wasted little time and fewer words in setting him straight: "If Mr. Solkin were in the Montreal office and if he were guilty of omissions, mistakes, or somewhat lax in certain respects he would be taken to task, as he has been in the last few months through correspondence." Paull then summed up his theory of management by observing: "I am not interested at all in the glory of my position as executive director. With me it is rather a matter of having a coordinated organization with . . . trained personnel throughout the country." He strongly suggested that Brodey and his Executive confine themselves to matters of policy, and leave all other matters to "the Ex-

ecutive Director who knows what is good for the Society by virtue of the fact that he has been devoting his entire time and intelligence to the work of the Society.’²⁴

It is therefore not surprising that Paull, pleased with Solkin’s apology but still angry that the books still did not balance, shrugged off Brodey’s letter and returned to the attack. Solkin was now informed that his “manner of advising us of the disposition of monies is unsatisfactory.” Like any good teacher, Paull then provided a corrective for his chastened pupil: Solkin was given a supply of forms that had been prepared especially for him by the auditors to ensure that he did not make any more errors. In addition, he was to be taken to Montreal for a few days, presumably to see the “Paull method” at first hand and learn how to apply it to his own work.²⁵

Paull and Solkin had not seen each other since Paull had come to Toronto in late March 1935 to interview Solkin for his position. Their reunion was a great personal and professional success; Solkin stayed in Paull’s house, and Paull used this more intimate setting to establish a personal friendship with Solkin, and to persuade him to reexamine the books and eliminate all irregularities. Solkin’s visit to JIAS headquarters allowed him to personally observe his mentor’s punctiliousness and the efficiency of Head Office. This experience confirmed Solkin’s respect and admiration for Paull, who he now extolled as “the guiding power of our Organization.” He was now even more convinced that Paull’s constant demands were designed to help him make the Toronto office as efficient as Montreal’s. He therefore returned to his post full of organizational enthusiasm, and threw himself into a complete audit of all bank deposits made since the opening of the office. Within a day he had corrected all discrepancies, and the auditors were satisfied that they could proceed with their audit. Paull was very appreciative of this “extra effort”, and from this point on, his letters to Solkin grew warmer as the two men became closer both professionally and personally.²⁶

Solkin certainly required Paull’s help in developing and honing his administrative skills. But he needed no help when it came to organizational politics because of his instinctive mastery of organizational diplomacy. He had displayed this skill when the steamship agents had demanded that JIAS terminate its remittance business, and he would once again use it to convince his reluctant Executive to continue subsidizing the Toronto office

As business increased, the Toronto Executive became increasingly reluctant about paying the \$200 per month subsidy towards its operation. Brodey wanted the office to be financially self-sufficient after its six month “trial period” so that he could be more independent of Montreal. Paull refused for financial and

administrative reasons. He had no intention of relinquishing any measure of administrative control over an office that had only been revived because of Montreal's money and his expertise. Solkin was given the task of playing a "subtle and clever game" and inducing the Executive to place the Toronto office on a better financial footing.²⁷

Solkin did his best, but with immigration at a stand-still, it was difficult to build up a sustained interest in JIAS. The office's business decreased, and cutthroat competition in the remittance business was the order of the day. People were not anxious to become members of JIAS at a time when Solkin was instructed that "it may not be good policy to give the people too much hope" when they applied for the admission of a relative. The return of King's Liberals to power in October 1935 stirred optimism among Canadian Jews, but by February 1936 it was clear that the Liberals would pursue the same immigration policy as their Tory predecessors.²⁸

But Paull and JIAS President Robinson were realists: they knew that their organization faced formidable odds in attempting to coax permits out of Ottawa and in trying to waken "hibernating" Toronto Jewry to the presence of JIAS. The leaders of JIAS realized that as long as the gates to Canada remained all but closed, the majority of Canadian Jewry would regard immigration with a resigned torpor based on their feelings of helplessness in the face of growing catastrophe. In light of these conditions, and in spite of the Toronto Executive's paltry subsidy, Solkin had done well just to keep the office going. His efforts were recognized in late January 1936 by Robinson, who praised him for the "zealous and able manner" in which he conducted the office's affairs, gave him a raise, and informed Solkin that Brodey was a great admirer of his work. Solkin predictably replied that "it is Mr. Paull and Dr. Brodey to whom credit is really due" and reaffirmed his desire to emulate Paull by "raising the JIAS in Toronto to a degree of efficiency and popularity as high as that attained by our office in Montreal."²⁹

Solkin's failure to completely fulfill this pledge was certainly not due to lack of effort. Throughout 1936 he networked with American consular officials and Canadian immigration officials based in Toronto in an effort to remind them of the existence of JIAS. These efforts were well received; but as long as the Department of Immigration refused to admit Jews *en masse*, they were little more than good public relations work. Solkin was more successful in attracting more remittance clients by offering cheap rates and the opportunity to remit old clothing to relatives in Poland. This latter endeavor, for which JIAS held a monopoly, proved to be very successful in attracting clients. But JIAS, because of its philanthropic nature, made very little money through remittances. These

small successes helped the Toronto office maintain its clientele despite poor prospects for immigration, a weak economy, and poor financial backing. Solkin continued to soldier on despite the odds; by late 1936 he was once again attempting to launch a membership drive. Solkin called a General Meeting for 27 December, and made sure that those who spoke denounced the Board for its poor public relations work and demanded that the Board accept all those who volunteered their services and organize to accept new members efficiently.³⁰

Solkin spent much of 1937 trying to put the Toronto office on a more secure financial footing. His relationship with Paull was now that of trusted associate, confidante, and advisor; but Solkin always deferred to Paull and never lost his almost reverent respect for him. Both men attempted to find a reliable source of operating funds, and ultimately Solkin was instrumental in funnelling the dissent first expressed at the 1936 General Meeting into action. After a considerable amount of work, he was able to attract members of the Toronto community representing organizations as diverse as the Folks Farein, the Toronto Hebrew Burial Society, Bnai Brith, Holy Blossom and Geol Tzedec onto the Board. Many of these men such as Ben Forer, Dr. John Adkins, and Maurice Ezrin, would become the backbone of a revitalized Executive. These men made it their business to volunteer to work in the office, to process cases, to attract visits, to speak about what JIAS was doing, and so raised the image of JIAS to new heights.³¹

The effects were immediate. Though requests for permits remained at their low level, the remittance business increased, and a large market in U.S. visa and immigration cases appeared. Even more satisfying for Solkin was the fact that by the end of March 1937, 75 new members had joined the organization. It appeared as though Toronto JIAS' first membership drive since its inception would be a great success. This success occasioned the move to new quarters, which were formally dedicated in late March at the height of a very successful Passover remittance season. The much larger office, at street level at the intersection of Spadina and College in the heart of Jewish Toronto, attracted a huge chunk of the remittance business away from the agents. Not only did the amount of remittances total almost \$20,000 (double the 1936 figure), but the average remittance increased from \$13.94 in 1936 to \$18.14 in 1937, and the clientele increased by 40%.³²

The success of the Toronto office was apparent to the organizers of the United Jewish Welfare Fund (UJWF) of Toronto. This new organization was being set up in early 1937 to replace the Depression-weakened Federation of Jewish Philanthropies. The UJWF's mandate required it to organize, administer, and coordinate a fundraising campaign that would meet the needs of all par-

icipating educational, cultural, and social services in the Jewish community. They offered Toronto JIAS an allocation of \$1,000 if JIAS would agree not to run a separate financial campaign. Paull gave Solkin full power to handle the matter as he saw fit; his faith in his pupil's political savvy proved well founded — JIAS was given the allocation they desired along with one Vice-Presidency and two seats on the Executive Board.³³

But even though Solkin had proved to be an apt pupil and had become an excellent executive, Paull never relaxed his vigilance. He refused to tolerate even the slightest deviance from accepted office practice that might threaten his working relationship with his subordinate. Paull's eagle eye missed nothing: when he received a letter about a topic usually handled by Solkin that bore Brodey's signature, he correctly surmised that Solkin had taken a leave of absence without prior permission. He wasted no time in arraigning and interrogating the Toronto President, demanding to know where Solkin was and why he was absent. Hadn't Solkin learned anything yet, demanded Paull, "I thought our Toronto staff understood that they were under the direct jurisdiction of the Head Office, and the least that this office could expect is to be kept informed."³⁴

Solkin, ever eager to please Paull, was bitterly wounded by this attack and explained that he had been ill for some time and was forced to rest to avoid complete collapse. Predictably, all he received in reply was yet another lecture on professionalism in the workplace. "Moses is Moses, but business is business," replied Paull, "the fault is entirely at your end." He then preceeded to remind Solkin that "I never absented myself from the office and my duties without advising my President . . . on several occasions I had to forego a vacation at a given time because he could not spare time to watch the office." If Solkin wished to become a successful administrator then he had to accept these hardships as part "of the discipline that one must maintain if you want the organization's usefulness unimpaired."³⁵

This exchange revealed that Paull the teacher had taught his prize pupil Solkin all that he could. The final step was up to Solkin: now that he had the intellectual and administrative skills, would he accept upon himself the discipline, zeal for administrative order, and organizational loyalty that characterized his mentor?

The answer was not long in coming. In mid-October 1937 Paull suddenly tendered his resignation. He admitted privately to Solkin that "I couldn't take it any longer. Between the Jewish public and the gov't officials and consular offices, my nerves were going to pieces." Everyone connected with JIAS hoped that Paull would change his mind, but when he did not, Brodey and the

Toronto Board urged that the position go to Solkin, citing his “thorough knowledge of the work, his very successful handling of the local cases, and his ability to gain the friendship and goodwill of the local officials.” Robinson was greatly impressed by this unsolicited praise, and later admitted that the Toronto Executive’s support was the key factor in the decision to hire Solkin as Executive Director. Paull also had suggested Solkin’s name “from the very beginning.”³⁶

In his new position Solkin soon proved that his apprenticeship had ended. He remained Executive Director until 1954 and presided over JIAS’s desperate efforts to rescue as many Jews as possible from the jaws of death. After the war, he directed the vast growth of JIAS, which assumed responsibility for the thousands of Jewish refugees who entered Canada. Throughout his career, he sought to teach his subordinates through the same method that Paull had trained him, and instill in them the Paullian passion for administrative excellence and personal discipline mingled with deep reverence for the goals of JIAS.

In fact, Solkin’s relationship with Mendel Kraicer, his successor as Toronto Executive Secretary, was an exact parallel of his own relationship with Paull. Solkin’s letters to Kraicer sounded like Paull’s; especially on one occasion when Kraicer was lax in keeping Solkin informed about events in Toronto:

I am at a perfect loss to understand why not a single word has been received from you. . . . Busy as you may be, you should still be able to find a few minutes to scribble a few lines and keep me informed. . . . I have not too much time to spare on repeated reminders about things you are supposed to do.³⁷

The apprentice had become a master craftsman; JIAS was in good hands.

FOOTNOTES

The author would like to express his thanks to Mr. Gordon Kaufman, former National Executive Vice-President of JIAS, for granting him access to the JIAS Papers in Toronto and Montreal.

Abbreviations

JIAS(M) — Jewish Immigrant Aid Society of Canada Papers, Canadian Jewish Congress Archives, Montreal.

JIAS(T) — Jewish Immigrant Aid Society of Canada Papers, JIAS Toronto Office.

1. Stephen A. Speisman. *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), p. 268-72
2. Simon Belkin. *Through Narrow Gates*. (Montreal: Eagle, 1966), Chapter XII
3. For a discussion of immigration laws and their effect see Irving Abella and Harold Troper. *None Is Too Many* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1982), p. 5-6; for a wider perspective, Gerald Dirks. *Canada’s Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* (Montreal: Queen’s-McGill University Press, 1977)
4. Speisman. *Jews of Toronto*. p. 272
5. Belkin. *Narrow Gates*. Appendix 10, p. 222; JIAS(T). *Minutes*. 24 November 1925; JIAS(T). *Report for 1926*. Members of Goel Tzedek (the synagogue of the upwardly mobile immigrants) included Rabbi Julius Siegel, Second Vice President of the Toronto Branch and Elias Pullan. On Rabbi Siegel see Speisman. *Jews of Toronto*. p. 225

6. JIAS(T). *Report of the Society*, September 1926
7. JIAS(T). *Minutes*. 7 June 1926. The secret agreement or "unwritten quota" with the Government is discussed in Belkin. *Narrow Gates*. p. 154-55
8. *ibid.*, p. 148-55 for a revealing discussion
9. JIAS(T). *Minutes*. 11 January 1927, 21 September 1927, 22 November 1927
10. JIAS(T). *Minutes*. 7 December 1927; Confidential Interview; JIAS(T). *Minutes*. 6 April 1931
11. There are no records of meetings extant, and in 1933 Robinson wrote about "reviving the Branch in Toronto." JIAS(T). File 10A. B. Robinson to A. Brodey, 21 January 1933
12. For biographical details of Paull, see Zvi Cohen. *Canadian Jewry*. (Montreal: Canadian Jewish Historical Publishing, 1933), p. 153; JIAS(T). File 10A. B. Robinson to A. Brodey, 21 January 1933
13. JIAS(T). File 10A. B. Robinson to A. Brodey, 20 February 1933; *ibid.*, A. Brodey to B. Robinson, 21 February 1933
14. JIAS(M). File 4082. "Our Mutual Responsibilities." March 1935
15. *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 4 April 1935; surprisingly, Solkin did not speak Polish, Miss Tobie Taback, who served in the Toronto JIAS office for over forty years, handled Polish translations. I am indebted to Ms. Cindy Solkin, Mr. Solkin's granddaughter, for this information.
16. *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to A. Brodey, 16 August 1935
17. *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 4 April 1935
18. *ibid.*, M.A. Solkin to A.J. Paull, 8 April 1935; *ibid.*, S. Kaplan to A.J. Paull, 14 April 1935
20. *ibid.*, M.A. Solkin to A. Wise, 3 May 1935; *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin to A. Wise, 3 May 1935; *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 4 May 1935
21. In May 1935, business quadrupled, see JIAS(T). *Monthly Reports*. April and May 1935; Competition was still ferocious, but JIAS was winning out by undercutting the agents. JIAS(M). File 4082. M.A. Solkin to A.J. Paull, 13 May 1935; A good example of Paull's penchant for detail being absorbed by Solkin occurred when the Toronto Secretary queried Paull about the minutiae of filing procedures. Paull answered: "I think it will be alright to keep all naturalization cases in one file, but there should be a separate file for each individual immigration case." JIAS(M). File 4082. A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin. 2 August 1935
22. *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to A. Brodey, 16 August 1935; *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to A. Brodey, 8 May 1935
23. *ibid.*, M.A. Solkin to A.J. Paull, 13 May 1935; for examples of this student-teacher relationship see JIAS(M). File 4082, M.A. Solkin, 12 August 1935, M.A. Solkin to A.J. Paull, 15 August 1935
24. *ibid.*, A. Brodey to A.J. Paull, 15 August 1935; *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to A. Brodey, 16 August 1935
25. *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 19 August 1935; *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 20 August 1935
26. *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to A. Brodey, 28 March 1935; letters indicate that Solkin was in Montreal from 25-30 August, during which time Samuel Kaplan was dispatched to oversee the Toronto office because Paull was meticulous in ensuring that the office would never be left without a senior person left in charge. See JIAS(M). File 4082. A.J. Paull to S. Kaplan. 23 August 1935, A.J. Paull to A. Brodey, 26 August 1935, S. Kaplan to A.J. Paull, 30 August 1935. In June 1936 Solkin returned to Montreal for yet another training session. JIAS(M). File 4082. T. Taback to M.A. Solkin, 2 June 1936; *ibid.*, M.A. Solkin to A.J. Paull 6 September 1935; *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 9 September 1935; *ibid.*, M.A. Solkin to A.J. Paull, 28 September 1935
27. *ibid.*, M.A. Solkin to A.J. Paull, 12 September 1935; A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 16 September 1935
28. *ibid.*, M.A. Solkin to S. Kaplan, 25 October 1935; JIAS(T). *Monthly Reports*. October, November 1935; JIAS(M), A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 16 December 1935; Abella and

- Troper. *None*. p. 14-15; Belkin. *Narrow Gates* p. 173-74, Appendix #8; JIAS(M). File 4082. M.A. Solkin to A.J. Paull 19 December 1935; *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 24 December 1935
29. *ibid.*, B. Robinson, 24 January 1936; *ibid.*, M.A. Solkin to B. Robinson, 29 January 1936
30. *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 11 November 1936; *ibid.*, M.A. Solkin to A.J. Paull, 16 December 1936; JIAS(T). *Minutes of the General Meeting Held at the Labour Lyceum on 27 December 1936*
31. For an example of the more equal relationship between the two, see JIAS(M). File 4082. M.A. Solkin to A.J. Paull, 24 March 1937 and A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 26 March 1937; JIAS(T). *Minutes* 19 January 1937, 16 February 1937, 28 February 1937
32. JIAS(T). *Monthly Reports*. January, February, March 1937; JIAS(M). File 4082. A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 11 February 1937; *ibid.*, M.A. Solkin to A.J. Paull, 24 March 1937; JIAS(T). *Minutes*. 7 March 1937; about \$4,000 in Passover remittances were handled in 1937, *ibid.*, *Monthly Reports*. February, March 1936, February, March 1937
33. JIAS(M). File 4082. A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 1 July 1937. It is worth noting that even though Solkin was now much more independent of Paull and had a free hand in most local decisions, his attitude to Paull had not changed. In the above quoted letter, Paull had complimented Solkin's negotiating work: "I read your letter . . . and cannot add anything to what has already been said and done." Solkin replied: "I am exceedingly glad to hear you are satisfied." JIAS(M). File 4082. M.A. Solkin to A.J. Paull, 2 July 1937
34. *ibid.*, A. Brodey to A.J. Paull, 5 July 1937; *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to A. Brodey, 7 July 1937
35. *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 13 July 1937
36. *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 25 October 1937; *ibid.*, A. Brodey to B. Robinson, 23 October 1937; *ibid.*, B. Robinson to A. Brodey, 30 October 1937; *ibid.*, B. Robinson to A. Brodey, 11 November 1937; *ibid.*, A.J. Paull to M.A. Solkin, 12 November 1937
37. *ibid.*, M.A. Solkin to M. Kraicer, 16 September 1943

Canada and the Middle East Question at the United Nations*

JULIEN BAUER

Dans le domaine politique en général et dans les relations internationales en particulier, l'opinion publique est influencée plutôt par les sentiments et perceptions que par les faits. Cette étude examinera comment quelques mythes ont influencé la perception du gouvernement canadien vis-à-vis le Moyen-Orient et, en conséquence, comment la politique canadienne envers le Moyen-Orient a été influencée. De plus en plus, la politique extérieure du Canada est subordonnée à l'économie politique. Selon Bauer, cela même le gouvernement à placer les affaires avant les principes.

In the sphere of politics in general and international relations in particular, people are moved as much, if not even more, by feelings, emotions, and perceptions than they are by facts. This phenomenon is not related only to regular citizens but also to decision-makers. Access to more information does not prevent decision-makers from going through the process of classifying this information within intellectual categories. Therefore the perception decision-makers have of the reality is of utmost importance, to the point of superceding reality itself, in their formulation of policy.

This paper will study a specific case of how perception affects policy, of how a few myths have influenced the perception the Canadian government has of the Middle East and therefore have affected Canadian policy towards the Middle East.

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The two myths

Canadian perception follows two myths. The first one is what we will call the Lawrence of Arabia myth.

According to the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*¹, there is a specific entity, the Arab World, whose heroic Revolt against the Turks, entitles it to dominate certain regions. However this Arab revolt is a relatively minor event and not a turning point in history or even in the First World War. More specifically, the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* has upheld to the level of dogma the myth of the Arab World. This notion is both imperialistic, racist and false. It is a remnant of a time when imperialism and racism were not questioned and where the notions of “Christian World” or “Yellow World” were used. Nowadays only the concept of “Arab World” is still in use. It is a deliberate confusion with various forms of reality, such as Arab culture, Arab language, and Arab civilization.

To speak of the Arab World, is to forget the existence of many minorities who live within the confines of this “World”. To name but a few, these minorities, present in most Arab states, run from the Berbers in North Africa to Assyrians in Syria, from Druzes in Lebanon and Syria to Copts in Egypt, from Kurds in Iraq to Circassians in Jordan².

Contributing to the complexity of the definition is the frequent confusion between Arab and Moslem. The notion of “Umma”, the Arab-Moslem nation, is deeply rooted in Arab philosophy. It is a vision where all the faithful belong to the same religio-ethnic group. Except in the times of Mohammed and in the following years, the “Umma” has not been a political reality. The Arab-Moslem World is not a monolithic entity. Even the Arab League is not a creation from Arab countries but the child of British imperialism³.

The mere fact that Western public opinion is surprised by inter Arab wars, be it in Yemen, between Algiers and Morocco, or Libya and Egypt . . . show the power of the Lawrence of Arabia myth. History is replete with inter-Christian and inter-European wars and the fact does not shock; why should rivalries between Arabs be treated differently if not for the perception of a mythical “Arab World”?

The myth of “the Arab World”, its unity, the ineluctable supremacy of Arabs on the whole of Middle East and North Africa have been and are being expanded by numerous books, articles, conferences, etc.

Another basic myth is the depolitization of political problems, their “technicalisation”, as if difficult choices could be avoided and scientific and technical solutions found.

According to Lucien Mehl, the decision making process goes through three

stages: axiology, uncertainty and calculation⁴. The first one is a philosophical choice, a choice between values, the essence of politics. Uncertainty means that decision-makers, influenced by their values, hope that their decision will be the best one but having non guarantee. Only in the last stage can decision-makers calculate the costs and benefits of a decision and the probable consequences of their actions.

Experts know better. This is the case for calculation. It is also the case of uncertainty. The goal of science and technics is to enhance the field of reasoning, of calculation at the expense of uncertainty. The myth appears when experts pretend they can calculate values.

In that vein, the decision-making process avoids the difficult choices, the ones about values, and insists on the possibility of non political, neutral, pseudo-scientific, secure approaches. Philosophy and politics give place to economy, commerce, accounting where politicians feel secure because of their non-controversial character. Civil servants who used to be legal experts are more and more economists, econometrists, accountants and the like, diplomats become salesmen.

The myth of depolitization shuns ideologies, labelled as secondary, old fashioned notions such as law, justice, freedom, democracy in favor of commercial contracts, whatever the conditions and the consequences.

The refusal by the Canadian Government to tackle the issue of the Arab boycott not only against Israel — which is not a Canadian problem - but also against Canadian companies dealing with Israel or Canadian companies with Jewish interests - which are or should be Canadian problems - is a good case of the influence of the myth that business is the supreme value.

Canadian votes at the United Nations: an evaluation

As a country, Canada shares a few basic values with a small group of so-called Western countries, the liberal democracies. Belonging to this group are the United States, Canada, a few Latin American countries, Western Europe, Israel, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and a few countries from Asia. This club prefers democracies to dictatorships, negotiations to wars, international law to aggression. This basic philosophy is the origin of the support provided, in different measures, by democracies to Israel who is under attack from an unholy coalition of rightwing and leftwing dictatorships, for whom force takes precedence over law both in their internal and international policies. Democratic countries have followed a consistent pattern since the November 29, 1947 vote on the partition of Palestine to the 242 and 338 resolutions establishing a

framework for an eventual peace in the Middle East⁵.

Amongst democracies, and specifically the United States, the United Kingdom and France, Canada presents an original case. The external policy of Canada is a relatively recent one (after World War II); it follows a liberal philosophy; it stresses its participation with the Western alliance and at the same time wishes to distance itself from its mighty neighbour south of the border. Dealing with Middle Eastern countries, Canada suffers a double handicap: it lacks experienced specialists and good contacts in the area. On the other hand, Canada benefits from its relative inexperience. Contrary to the United States and more so than Great Britain and France, Canada does not have a long tradition à la Foreign Office or à la Quai d'Orsay, with its diplomats selected from a very restricted milieu, its racist tendencies and its arabist lobby.

Canada's votes at the United Nations follow three negative principles: not to condone the resolution linking Zionism and racism⁶, not to condemn the Camp David Accords between Egypt, Israel and the United States, not to attack the resolutions 242 and 338.

Although Canada's votes follow the above principles, they have nevertheless shown an evolution, beginning in 1973 and accelerating recently. This evolution is a mixture of the Lawrence of Arabia myth and the commercial one with the result of restraining the basic values of the Canadian position.

Two manifestations of this evolution have to be distinguished: one is the evolution of a policy parallel to the change in problems. For instance, when Canada recognizes the rights of the Arab Palestinians, it does not display an original position but merely follows a general trend, including the recognition of these rights by Israel in the Camp David Accords. Another kind of evolution is that when faced with the same resolutions in the same context, Canada's votes slip from a no vote to an abstention or even a positive vote. This evolution is taking place as the United Nations resolutions, particularly the General Assembly ones, are becoming more and more delirious and are in total contradiction with the three Canadian principles: they do link Zionism and racism, they do condemn the Camp David Accords and they do violate the resolution 242 and 338. For instance Jerusalem has been completely cut off from Israel and the Jewish People. According to the United Nations, it is not under Israeli sovereignty, including West Jerusalem, and has received, in English, a new name, Jerusalem - Al Kuds, thus emphasizing the exclusive Arab-Moslem character of Jerusalem.

In some cases, Canada maintains its affirmed policy and continues being one of the very few nations voting against anti-Israel resolutions. For instance, every year Canada refuses to vote for a global condemnation of Israel. When a

resolution calls for even more United Nations resources spent for the promotion of the PLO⁷, Canada registers a negative vote. When a resolution calls for a solution of the Middle East problems with stringent attacks against Israel⁸, Canada votes against.

The shift occurs when the resolutions, albeit anti-Israel, are not using excessively inflammatory terms and neither directly and explicitly refer to the equation between Zionism and racism nor directly and explicitly attack the Camp David Accords and resolutions 242 and 338. An example is the resolution emanating from the Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People⁹ that regularly condemns Israel. Since its inception in 1975, Canada had voted against but switched to abstention in 1980 because “the Committee belongs to the United Nations machinery”.

A similar shift appeared towards the resolution dealing with “Assistance to the Palestinian People” in cooperation with the P.L.O.; the Canada position went from a no to abstention and in 1982 to a yes vote.

There are even cases of erratic votes where naiveté seems to be the main explanation. For instance, in 1982, Canada condemned Israel for “plundering the Palestinian cultural heritage”, i.e. taking documents and files from the Palestine Research Centre in Beirut, an intellectual and intelligence branch of the P.L.O.. It seems that the word “culture” was enough to attract a positive vote. One year later, when the facts became known and the documents had been returned by Israel, Canada abstained.

In summary, when the same resolution is repeated over and over, every year, and does not quote explicitly the three basic anti-Israel attacks Canada objects to, there is a discernible drift towards acquiescence.

In its perception of the Middle East, Canada is not alone at the United Nations. It shares this view with a few countries who are forming a small unofficial group at the United Nations. These states are all Western, they share a similar philosophy and similar goals, they want to defend democracy without being linked too closely to the United States, they are conscious of their limited status in the world of super-powers and they are influenced by the Lawrence of Arabia and the depolitization myths. This group includes Canada, Australia, New-Zealand, Austria and Scandinavian countries. They try to vote along the same line to be “in good company”¹⁰.

Between a rational policy and a political mood

When confronted with resolutions dealing with the Middle-East situation, the Canadian delegation at the United Nations has only a limited margin of

manoeuvre. It participates in the decision making process but the ultimate responsibility is with the Department of External Affairs and, more broadly, with the Canadian Government. The Canadian delegation is therefore a spokesman for the Canadian Government and not a policy formulator.

The Canadian view of the Middle East presents three dimensions: 1) a respect for peaceful international relations, as embodied in some way by the United Nations; 2) a policy of promoting justice and peace, in the case of the Middle East a rejection of the "Zionism is racism" resolution, an appreciation of the Camp David Accords and a reference to resolutions 242 and 338; 3) a belief in the beneficial economic results for Canada of any shift towards Arab countries' position.

The first element induces Canada to give credit to the United Nations system even when it obviously does not work. Canada is thus torn between its liberal policy and its pro United Nations standing.

The second element should present a logical way to understand Canadian votes: resolutions calling for war or against peace, resolutions violating the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter, resolutions violating the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter, resolutions discriminating against a member state or a people are usually rejected. But there is a tendency to shift from rejection to abstention when the link with discrimination and anti-peace efforts are not clear cut.

As far as the third element, the preeminence of economic interests, is concerned, it is a rationalization of moves going against the two first elements, Canadian vote becoming an introduction to economic gains.

But underlying the Canadian Government perception of the Middle East is the personality of the Prime Minister who was in office for sixteen years, Pierre-Elliott Trudeau. A liberal, a proponent of a rational way of doing politics, he instigated and embodied change in Canadian policy. From a position of resisting pressure to have Canada toe the line, the anti-Israel line of the United Nations, he went to a kind of sentimentality devoided of analysis. The steadfastness was shown when Canada refused to allow P.L.O. representatives to attend the Habitat Conference in Vancouver, even if that meant cancelling the Conference in Canada. The lack of analysis was apparent in a June 1982 letter to the Prime Minister of Israel, Menahem Begin, written, according to the media, in Madrid, far from civil servants and political councillors. This letter "deplored and condemned as heinous acts terrorism against Israel or any country", proceeded to condemn the Israeli intervention in Lebanon for "feeding violence and hate in the Middle East" and concluded by the affirmation that "terrorist acts should stop". It was a mixture of platitudes, of selective indig-

nation, of lack of any study of the problem in order to find a solution. This sentimentality, uncharacteristic of P.-E. Trudeau, was either genuine or an excuse for a policy of appeasement towards terrorism, a contradiction with the official Government policy.

Another example of lack of rationality was furnished by the Denis Arcand episode. During summer 1982, Arcand, the Canadian Ambassador in Beirut, became a media star by condemning "urbi et orbi" Israel. This behavior was in contradiction to diplomatic rules and the duty of reserve of every civil servant.

The mere fact that Mr. Arcand was not immediately called to order by his superiors, although the system is centralized, leads to serious questions: who is in charge, the Canadian Government or the media, the elected officials of the country or civil servants in search of publicity.

Conclusion

For the Canadian Government, foreign policy is more and more an appendix to economic policy. In the same view, the Middle East is a side-issue in Canadian international relations, the foci of interest being the United States, the Common Market and the Pacific Rim.

The absence of traditions, the weakening of values, and of philosophy, except a mercantile one, lead the Government more and more to place business ahead of principles.

At the United Nations, sounding board for dictatorships (alas, the majority of the members) and spreading well of antisemitism, the situation for the few democratic delegations is not a comfortable one. This makes even more remarkable the courage of a handful of countries, including Canada, who refuse to submit to the lynch atmosphere prevailing at the United Nations when the terms "Israel" or "Jews" are uttered.

During the last few years, we have witnessed a policy of small steps which do not portend a complete reversal on the Middle East issue but an ongoing erosion when confronted with the forces of hate.

This erosion will probably continue as the new Conservative Government is also under the influence of the myths. Moreover the Conservative Government receives a minimal Jewish input. Western Canada has a large amount of Conservative forces who are, to say the least, unsympathetic towards Jewish concerns. Quebec and Ontario, but mostly Quebec, have voted Conservative whereas Jewish voters have kept their support for the Liberal party. Jewish voters have therefore a limited access to the new Government.

The myths influencing the Canadian policy towards the Middle-East will

continue to flourish: the “Arab World”, the insatiable Arab market. Reinforcing the myths is sheer ignorance. For many Canadians, including those in influential positions, all immigrants from Arab countries are Arab and therefore anti-Israel (when in fact many immigrants from Lebanon are Christian and many immigrants from Egypt are Copts), Israel is a citrus exporting country (when in fact it is an advanced technological society) . . . These basic facts, and many others, are not presented to Canadian public opinion and are not always taught at University level, therefore preparing new generations of intellectually handicapped persons believing they are experts on Middle-Eastern issues.

For Canadians, dispelling the influence of myths, being aware of facts and disseminating them within the Government decision-making process is the best way to contribute to the forces of peace.

NOTES

1. The *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* was written by T.E. Lawrence from 1919 to 1921, privately published in 1921 and publicly in 1927. The book has brought to its author an instant celebrity. This is the more peculiar when one reads a book full of contradictions, presenting a definition of Arabs according to British imperial interests, containing many surprising assertions.

In a bold sentence, Lawrence affirms that “the Arab is by nature continent” (p. 30), then lauds homosexuality and later writes about brothels! According to Lawrence “a first difficulty of the Arab movement was to say who the Arabs were”; he then proceeds by giving a definition closely knit to the British imperial interests: “The Arabic-speaking areas of Asia were a rough parallelogram. The northern side ran from Alexandretta on the Mediterranean, across Mesopotamia eastward to the Tigris. The south side was the edge of the Indian Ocean, from Aden to Muscat. On the west it was bounded by the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, and the Red Sea to Aden. On the east by the Tigris, and the Persian Gulf to Muscat. This square of land, formed the homeland of our Semites, in which no foreign race had kept a permanent footing”. This map coincides closely with the colonial aspirations of the United Kingdom. Egypt and Sudan, not being in Asia and already under British control are not within the definition. Nor are North African countries, under French or Spanish control. As for the “no foreign race had kept a permanent footing” it is a negation of non-Arab peoples.

Later on, Lawrence asserts that “Semites had sometimes pushed outside this area, and themselves been drowned in the outer world. Egypt, Algiers, Morocco, Malta, Sicily, Spain, Cilicia and France absorbed and obliterated Semitic colonies”. Are we to understand that there is no difference between Morocco and Spain or between Algiers and France?

No less surprising is the prophetic tone of Lawrence: “One such wave (i.e. spiritual wave against material goods), and not the least, I raised and rolled before the breath of an idea, till it reached its crest, and toppled over and fell at Damascus. The wash of that wave, thrown back by the resistance of vested things, will provide the matter of the following wave, when in fullness of time the sea shall be raised once more” (p. 43).

2. For a partial list of minorities in the Middle-East see “Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria: A Table”, in *Middle-East Review*, vol. IX, no. 1, Fall 1976, pp. 60-69.
3. The Arab League was founded in Cairo on March 22, 1945 under the auspices of the British Government.
4. Lucien Mehl, *L'informatique, la connaissance et l'action*, Paris, 1968.

5. Resolution 242, adopted by the Security Council on November 22, 1967, affirms that the “establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle-East” is based on withdrawal of Israeli forces and termination of belligerency, as well as respect for the right of every state in the area “to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.”
6. Resolution 3339, adopted by the General Assembly, on November 10, 1975.
7. 38th General Assembly of the United Nations, Autumn 1983.
8. *ibid.*
9. Note the terminology used: at the United Nations only Palestinian Arabs have inalienable rights; no other group, including those whose very life is in danger, is entitled to such a United Nations treatment.
10. Pierre Deniger, M.P. and member of the Canadian delegation to the Thirty Eighth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Anatomy of A Failed Strike The T. Eaton Co. Lockout of Cloakmakers-1912

SUSAN GELMAN

Introduction

Le 14 Février, 1912, soixante cinq fabricants de manteaux employés dans le département J-4 de la manufacture de la compagnie T. Eaton, furent fermés dehors à cause de leurs refus de coudre les doublures dans les manteaux en utilisant de nouvelles machines, sans une hausse des salaires. En l'espace de deux semaines, le nombre de grévistes augmenta de huit cents fabricants de manteaux et ouvriers vêtement employés à la manufacture de Toronto. La majorité de ces derniers fut des tableurs juives européens qui formaient le corps principal de la nouvelle Union de Fabricants de Manteaux, Local 14. Le soutien pour la grève fut obtenu de l'Union Internationale d'Ouvrières Vêtement et du Conseil de Métiers et Travail de Toronto (C.M.T.T.) qui donnèrent aux fabricants de manteaux la position de délégué pour la première fois. Sous l'influence du C.M.T.T. et la presse travailliste, la grève gagna de l'élan et les fabricants jouèrent un rôle important dans la lutte des classes contre la compagnie Eaton et ses habitudes monopolisatrices. Pendant quelque temps, il sembla que la grève réussirait à dépasser les différences ethniques au sein de la classe ouvrière de Toronto. Mais, lorsqu'il devint évident que la grève fut perdue, le C.M.T.T. et la presse travailliste retirèrent leur appui pour les grévistes, et les mêmes individus qu'ils avaient tenté protéger au début furent maintenant les étrangers qu'ils considérèrent responsables de plusieurs des problèmes dans la manufacture.

On February 14, 1912, sixty-five cloakmakers employed in department J-4 at The T. Eaton Co. factory in Toronto were locked out for objecting to sewing linings into cloaks with the use of new machines, without an increase in wages. Within two weeks there were an additional 800 cloakmakers and garment

workers employed at the Toronto factory on strike.¹ The majority of those on strike were East European Jewish tailors, who formed the main body of the fledgling Cloakmakers Union Local 14. Support for the strike was drawn from the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Toronto District Trades and Labour Council (T.D.L.C.), who offered the Cloakmakers delegate status for the first time. Under the influence of the T.D.L.C. and the labour press, the strike gained momentum and the cloakmakers became important in the 'class struggle' against Eaton's and its monopolistic practices. It appeared for a while that the strike would serve to cut across ethnic lines within the Toronto working class. But as it became evident that the strike was lost, the T.D.L.C. and the labour press withdrew its support from the strikers; and the very individuals they initially sought to protect were the foreigners they now saw as responsible for many of the problems in the factory.

I

In the early years of the 20th century, the Cloakmakers Union was, in effect, a Jewish union. It had grown out of the close-knit immigrant community of 'The Ward'. The Ward, which commonly designated the streets between Queen, College, Yonge streets, and University Ave.² comprised a common living and working environment for this growing Jewish working class. These streets housed many new garment industries as well as the Eaton factory. At that time, those employed in the garment industry in Toronto were predominately Jewish tailors. "No other ethnic group dominated a single industry the way the Jews dominated the garment industry . . ."³ Most of these Jewish tailors were immigrants who had recently arrived from eastern Europe. They had provided an available source of labour for the growing ready-made clothing industry. In 1911, 80% of those employed at Eaton's were Jewish tailors, mostly men.⁴ During these early years of the Cloakmakers Union the majority of its members were drawn from the Eaton factory.⁵

It was within this atmosphere that the Cloakmakers Union was founded in September 1909. The new union was the work of 14 young tailors who worked in Toronto's garment industry. Like most of the East European Jewish population of The Ward, these young cloakmakers had grown up in Czarist Russia. But unlike the mass of working-class Jews, these young unionists were socialists. They had a 'revolutionary spirit' from the pre-communist days of Russia that had led to the failed 1905 revolution.⁶ By 1880 the majority of Jews in Russia had been confined to the small towns and villages of 'The Pale'. Most lived a religiously orthodox life, earning their living as artisans; many indeed, as tailors. Few were concerned with the political problems of the wider society.

But a handful of Marxist and socialist intellectual Jews had experienced life outside the *shtetl*. When they immigrated to Canada, they brought with them their socialist, often radical, ideas. Although most of the Jews they sought to represent were not inclined to hold socialist ideas, the union served as one of the stabilizing forces within the community.

The first meetings of this new union were held in the home of Udel Cohen on Simcoe Street. As the union grew, meetings took place in the Zionist Hall under the first chairman, S. Koldofsky. Membership in the union was open to all who worked in the process of manufacturing cloaks; operators, finishers, pressers and cutters.⁷ In 1911, the Cloakmakers Union joined the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (I.L.G.W.U.) becoming Local 14. In many ways the Toronto Cloakmakers Union paralleled the I.L.G.W.U. Both unions had similar immigrant and ethnic origins. Like its Canadian counterpart, the American based I.L.G.W.U. was a Jewish union originated by cloakmakers. Joining the I.L.G.W.U. and in turn the American Federation of Labour (A.F.L.) gave the Toronto Cloakmakers union a greater sense of identity within the larger society.⁸

The early history of the I.L.G.W.U. was marked by constant struggles between radical socialist and conservative trade unionists. This was to a large degree influenced by the radical International Workers of the World (I.W.W.) in major cities such as Montreal, Cleveland, Chicago and St. Louis. But by 1910, amalgamation with the A.F.L. served to moderate these radical elements within the I.L.G.W.U. The presidency of Abraham Rosenberg also provided a strong stabilizing and conservative influence for the I.L.G.W.U. It was under Rosenberg's guidance that all the locals within the I.L.G.W.U. were placed under strong central control. But regardless, the I.L.G.W.U. was to remain the most radical element in the A.F.L. The success of the 1910 New York general strike was evidence of this radical element. The New York Cloakmakers' strike lasted ten weeks and ended successfully. The outcome was The Protocol of Peace. Although it was only in effect until 1915, The Protocol of Peace was the first collective agreement to be reached in the ready-made clothing manufacturing industry.⁹ It was the success of this strike which urged the Toronto Cloakmakers to join the I.L.G.W.U.¹⁰

Within a year of the amalgamation of the I.L.G.W.U. and the Cloakmakers, Rosenberg expressed concern for the radical influence he saw rising within Local 14. Just prior to the Eaton strike, Rosenberg was quoted as saying, in reference to the Toronto union, that:

The Union is now strong and vigorous despite internal disharmony of a temporary nature, due to some militant spirits, who are however, cooling down and becoming more practical

...¹¹

It was during this time that a “rebellious faction”¹² was noted within the Cloakmakers Union. The chairman, Koldofsky, was forced to give up his position, whereupon the next chairman, Gordon, quickly relinquished his seat in favour of a Montreal friend of his by the name of Lapidus.¹³ Lapidus became the business agent for the Toronto local, and it was he who provided much of the influence behind the 1912 Eaton strike.

The strike at the Eaton factory was typical of a trend of unrest from 1901-1916 within seasonal industries. During these years, clothing industries experienced the highest number of strikes in Canada next to the building and metal trades.¹⁴ In Ontario alone there were 195 strikes, fifty-nine of which involved firms in the garment industry.¹⁵ Poor weekly wages and the high rate of seasonal unemployment were common in the ready-made clothing industry, such that many of these workers were impoverished during these years before the war. Earnings on a weekly basis were not enough to maintain a decent standard of living over a year.¹⁶ The weeks of unemployment hence left most workers without any income and no public or private financial protection.

Strikes were legal, but management was not forced to negotiate. Eaton’s attitude in denying any voice to the cloakmakers’ committee was evidence of the lack of worker strength and union recognition. There were no laws to protect the collective rights of employees even to approach management to protest wages and conditions without fear of reprisals. This left employees vulnerable to the whims of management. The firing of cloakmakers by Eaton’s was a common method of union-breaking and was especially easy for a company as secure in its position within the manufacturing industry as was Eaton’s.

The Toronto Eaton factory was one of the largest employers of cloakmakers and garment workers in the years just prior to World War I. Union sources indicate that there were approximately twelve hundred hand tailors employed in the Eaton Toronto factory just prior to the strike.¹⁷ In the Eaton’s 1915 catalogue the company claimed to employ several thousand in the Toronto factory, which had been built in the late 19th century.¹⁹ Factories in Hamilton, Montreal and Winnipeg were built soon afterwards. Within 15 years of its beginning,²⁰ the Toronto factory was producing a full line of women’s and men’s clothing, as well as fur garments and some household and farm items.²¹ Eaton’s was by then the largest single factory retail outlet in the city selling ready-made clothing.²² During these unstable economic times The T. Eaton Co. boasted that: “all garments are made in our factories;” therefore, they maintained, “we save you the middleman’s profits.”²³

In 1911, Eaton was reported to be constantly expanding its factory. Essential

to this expansion was an ever-increasing mechanization. Mechanization within the ready-made clothing industry in Toronto was increasing the ability of this highly competitive industry to meet the needs of the expanding market. An article in *The Home Journal*, describing the Toronto Eaton factory in 1908, emphasizes Eaton's role within this competitive market for ready-made clothing:

There are some 211 machines at work here, all working at high speed and turning out ready-made garments at a price which defies competition from the home worker. Very few women, in fact, bother nowadays making this class of garment when they can purchase them for a very little more than the cost of material alone.²⁴

This rise of these mechanized factories brought with it many of the same sweatshop problems within a new set of circumstances. The new emphasis upon business efficiency and industrial growth gave birth to an increasingly rigid work environment. A volatile situation was generated by low wages, lack of worker rights and strenuous working conditions. An Eaton worker who had taken part in the strike recalls this situation in his reasons for the events of 1912:

The strike was for conditions of course-prices-we didn't make enough-them days you were nothing but a machine, what they give you, you got to take it, you got to take it . . . if you don't . . . Them days you got to be in five minutes to eight, inside because then the door is closed and you needed a pass to go in. There is the door manager in the office there, you come in to have a pass to get back to the job, and to go out, and ask for a pass to get in again. And naturally you got to tell them why you got to go out and what you got to do and if it is a satisfactory answer they give you a pass to get out. You couldn't get out; the doors are closed, and as far as prices were concerned . . . got to take it . . . could not object . . . this is what you get. This is why we decided to go on strike.²⁵

II

The initial lockout and ensuing strike had clearly occurred because of a demand by the cloakmakers over wages. The issue was not the employment of the new machines, but that this new work was demanded of the cloakmakers without an increase in their rate of pay. In addition, the finishers, who traditionally had done this work, were threatened with unemployment. In a statement to the press, Lapidus stated that the strike was a result of "a change in the system . . . whereby men operators had been called upon to extra work which did not bring them extra pay."²⁶ The Department of Labour reported that the lockout and strike was due to "a straight demand for more wages to enable the operators to meet the ever increasing cost of living."²⁷

A week prior to the lockout the cloakmakers had been requested to perform the new job; at that time a committee headed by Saul Gold met with the management of the Cloak department. This meeting did not result in any communication from company management. The issue came to a head the Wednesday of

the lockout when the cloakmakers were presented with an ultimatum to take on the extra work or leave the premises. The operators requested an hour to discuss the issue but within ten minutes they were escorted off the job by police.²⁸

The evening of the lockout was the scene of a mass meeting at the Labor Temple. Fifteen hundred Eaton employees and members of the Cloakmakers Union gathered in what was described in the newspapers as a militant atmosphere,²⁹ to discuss the next step in establishing their position. Under the direction of Lapidus, cloak and garment workers were appealed to in both Yiddish and English. Lapidus emphasized that the new system would certainly result in the finishers' losing their jobs.³⁰ Lapidus was crucial in motivating the workers who were still on the job to strike. A resolution was unanimously passed that the remaining employees would protest in a body directly to Eaton's management against the lockout. In addition they proposed that a sitdown strike be conducted, similar to the one Lapidus described he had taken part in, in England. A union member recalled that:

The following meeting dealt with the same issue. This time there was an order from the firm that work be started or those involved would be ousted by the police. It was decided that when the department J-4 employees were ousted the other three departments would walk out in sympathy. The following morning we were all out on strike.³¹

Lapidus clearly condoned militant action. In a statement to the press, he stressed the fact that any strike was a long hard violent struggle of “. . . possible arrests, broken heads, hunger and privation . . .”³²

On the morning of February 15, 1912, over 500 cloakmakers ceased work at the Eaton factory in a sympathy strike with the original sixty-five locked-out cloakmakers. Within an hour after the start of the day the striking workers were escorted out of the Louisa Street entrance to the factory by two police inspectors, only to be met by two or three dozen more officers and two mounted police. The police had been slowly gathering over the morning in anticipation of a confrontation. But there was none. The workers quietly marched through the streets of The Ward to the Labor Temple on Church Street. On March 1 the number of workers on strike increased again; many were garment workers, members of The United Garment Workers Union (U.G.W.). The total number of Eaton's employees now on strike totalled 882.³³ The garment workers had joined the strike when the U.G.W. Toronto General Organizer H.D. Rosenbaum's request for a settlement to the strike had been denied.³⁴ A Special Committee of striking Cloakmakers-Local 14 and Pressers Local 92 of the I.L.G.W.U. was formed to negotiate the strike. Their terms were clear: They refused to return to work until the locked-out cloakmakers were rehired.³⁵

The major spokesman for Eaton's was its company manager, W.G. Dean.

From the onset of the lockout Dean stated that the cloakmakers were discharged for refusing to do the extra work that they felt would put the finishers out of work. He claimed that the new system to be employed would not leave any workers, especially the finishers, out of a job. Dean maintained that there “always had been a shortage of hand sewers . . . and having extra workers free would eliminate girls from working overtime at night.”³⁶ He further claimed that the issue of the strike could not be wages or general conditions, for these workers, the majority of whom were Jews, were the best paid in the business: “The average weekly wage for these six months has been \$17.80 . . .” for a five day week that did not include Saturday or late hours on Friday.³⁷ John Craig Eaton, in a statement to the press, clearly denied any legal right of the union to interfere between the company and its employees. The company, he stated, refused to be dictated to by the employees who were striking out of fear of the union. Factory hours, wages and working conditions were good, Eaton continued; therefore, the employees had no complaints. All those out, he stated, would not be rehired.

. . . Rather than do that we will shut down our factories. We can afford to do so and will . . . When the men concerned are making good wages, have good hours, are working in a fine clean factory with excellent light, what more do they want?³⁸

The strikers showed great collectivity of action: marches and mass meetings were held continually to keep the issue before public concern. They marched from The Labor Temple to the ‘big store’ (Eaton’s retail store) to collect their last pay cheques.³⁹ Twenty-four-hour pickets were set up in front of Eaton’s⁴⁰ to distribute hand bills,⁴¹ while police were assigned by the City to guard the building.⁴² Although there was a wide range of support among the cloakmakers and garment workers from the strike, there was an undercurrent of disapproval because of fear of unemployment. Many sought factory jobs elsewhere in the city and in the United States. On the whole activities were peaceful, but there were isolated incidents of violence between strikers and strike-breakers. Union meetings were often disturbed and minor street fights were reported to have broken out occasionally. In one incident reported to have come before Magistrate Denison of the police court, fines were kept to a minimum and the charges reduced from disorderly conduct to the use of the word “scab”. Denison clearly expressed the fact that it was the use of the word “scab” that disturbed him the greatest.⁴³

The Toronto District Labor Council (T.D.L.C.) voted unanimously to give the cloakmakers delegate status to aid them in their struggle against Eaton’s.⁴⁴ Through the efforts of the T.D.L.C. the strikers received small financial contributions. Money also came in from other unions outside the city and the pro-

vince because of this connection with the T.D.L.C.⁴⁵ Fifty men were assigned by the T.D.L.C. to organize a street collection. They were able to collect \$50.00 in one afternoon before being stopped by the police for illegally collecting money.⁴⁶

The cloakmakers received a weekly strike pay from the I.L.G.W.U. at the rate of \$3.00 for single men and \$5.00 for married. This was later increased to \$8.00 and \$10.00 respectively.⁴⁷ Support from the I.L.G.W.U. went considerably beyond financial. Abraham Rosenberg, president of the I.L.G.W.U., appeared in Toronto early in the strike⁴⁸ to organize activities. Josephine Gacey, International Organizer for the I.L.G.W.U.⁴⁹ and Gertrude Barnum, Special Organizer for the Cloakmakers,⁵⁰ also acted closely with the strikers and the T.L.D.C. Barnum worked to extend The Protocol of Peace, which would ensure the settlement of labour disputes through conciliation between a committee of workers and management. If a settlement could not be reached, then a board of arbitration would be consulted. Although Barnum supported peaceful means of settling strikes, she also condoned militant action. As she explained to a women's club meeting, when a decision could not be reached, further direct action was called for ". . . that will make our civil war look like a football game!"

The strike-breaking efforts of Eaton's both extended the sympathy strike and widened the involvement of the I.L.G.W.U. and other union activity. On February 27, 1912, eighty cloak and garment workers at the Montreal Eaton factory on St. Catherine Street went out in a sympathy strike. The strike was in objection to work being sent from the Toronto Eaton factory to the Montreal factory.⁵² Under the direction of Rosenberg, and the Montreal I.L.G.W.U. local organizer, Rosenfield, a strike committee was formed in Montreal to help settle the Toronto strike. The Montreal Eaton factory employed close to 12,000⁵³ workers; and according to the strike reports filed with the Department of Labour, the action of these eighty workers did not affect the productivity of the factory.⁵⁴ Eaton refused to negotiate with the strike committee either over the Toronto or the Montreal incident, and new employees were hired by the company.⁵⁵

Within a few weeks after the Montreal strike it became apparent to the garment workers in Hamilton, that several factories there, not owned by Eaton's were doing the unfinished work from the Toronto Eaton factory. Local 256 of the U.G.W. supported these garment workers' claim that they had been unknowingly doing this extra work. On behalf of the striking Toronto workers Rosenbaum requested that the Hamilton local take action in protest. A mass meeting was held where Rosenbaum, Barnum and James Simpson,⁵⁶ addressed

the garment workers. A resolution was passed to inform all Hamilton clothing manufacturers that a sympathy strike would result should any further Eaton work be brought in.⁵⁷ In contrast to the Montreal situation, the Hamilton workers played it safe. They hesitated before calling a strike, and settled for warning their employers first, rather than joining their “comrades”⁵⁸ by striking.

III

The Toronto lockout and strike generated considerable debate, so much so that it would be remembered as the “most prolonged and bitter struggle the union was ever engaged in.”⁵⁹ Because the cloakmakers and garment workers were fighting The T. Eaton Co., one of the largest retail and manufacturing chains in the country, the strike would become a major battle in the ‘class struggle’ for union recognition. In a statement to the press, Lapidus maintained that he was not out to break Eaton’s, for it would be a hard job; but even if the strike failed they would have shown Eaton’s that they meant business.⁶⁰ With this common enemy, Eaton’s, it was only natural that the T.D.L.C. and the Cloakmakers should join forces. The involvement of the T.D.L.C. and the backing of the labor press served to widen the scope of the strike.

The strike would not only be fought in the Labor Temple and in the streets but also in the labour press. Eaton’s refusal to negotiate and their use of police in dealing with the strikers became a vivid opportunity for the labour press to use the company as a symbol of exploitative industrial capitalism. *The Labor News* and *The Lance* conducted an attack not only against The T. Eaton Co. but also against John Craig Eaton himself. He was identified as “the most disappointing figure in Toronto’s commercial and industrial life to-day . . .”⁶¹ Past Toronto strikers were drawn upon to discredit his labour practices and his attitude towards the working class. Eaton’s philanthropic gestures towards the city were labelled false because of his refusal to close the store on Labour Day. He was clearly pictured as a hypocritical patriot. The nation was called upon to join in with the T.D.L.C. to fight this oppression.⁶² Eaton was satirized as the “King of Canada” who like all czars would be dethroned.⁶³ Support for the cloakmakers was called for in this “. . . first strong battle for justice . . .”⁶⁴ against the Eaton monopoly.

The labour press also considered themselves as the voice of reason and the conscience of the strike. *The Labor News* and *The Industrial Banner* saw themselves as the only true friend of labour and the free voice of the press.⁶⁵ It was claimed that the dailies were suppressing news reports of the strike while continuing to run Eaton’s large daily advertisement.⁶⁶ Support for the strike was seen to diverge between the labor papers and the dailies. The daily press had

handled the strike casually and neutrally, although there was once incident of criticism against the strikers' motives. *The Toronto Star* accused the strikers of not knowing why they went on strike and of using the incident at the factory as an excuse to start trouble.⁶⁷ In the March 1 issue of *The Labor News*, a statement by Lapidus appeared which seemed to address this accusation. He was quoted as saying that: "The Cloak Makers' [sic] Union has no intention of calling a strike at the T. Eaton Co. and neither have we been looking for an opportunity to pick a quarrel."⁶⁸

The issue of the lockout and strike dominated the T.D.L.C. meetings during the months of February and March. This had become an important issue in the "general working class movement of the city".⁶⁹ In a motion before the house, Eaton was placed on the "unfair list for running sweatshops and using the police to deal with the strikers who had been unjustly locked-out."⁷⁰ A letter was sent to the Chief of Police to protest their involvement in capitalist oppression.⁷¹ The daily press was condemned for denying the free flow of news, and the Council put themselves on record as preferring no press to one which backs a capitalist exploiter.⁷²

On March 7 a lengthy resolution was passed by the T.D.L.C. clearly stating the terms of the strike against Eaton's. The strike was declared "a protest against the introduction of an entirely new process of work in a department, without a conference with the employees of the department."⁷³ It further stated that there had been no discussion with the employees on any of the following matters:

- 1) the possibility of doing the work by the new method
- 2) The amount of extra work entailed
- 3) the just recompense for such extra work

The council had outlined the reasons for the strike against Eaton's more clearly, but with different emphasis than the Cloakmakers Strike Committee had previously done.

As the strike lengthened, collective action became more pronounced. Under the direction of Barnum, the T.D.L.C. endorsed a general boycott not only of the Eaton Co. but of all employers sympathetic to Eaton's as well. Barnum had made clear to the T.D.L.C. the importance of educating the people in general sympathy with the strikers.⁷⁵ Shortly thereafter, the T.D.L.C. appointed a permanent publicity officer for the strike.⁷⁶ Under the initiative of A.J. Stevenson, Secretary of the T.D.L.C. and Joe Simpson, a delegate, it was brought to the Council's attention that the striking cloakmakers were suffering from starvation because of the length of the strike. After a three-hour discussion of the issue, the Council agreed to donate \$50.00 to partially fund a mass meeting to

aid the strikers. The entire meeting would not be funded, for as delegate Sanderson stated, and the Council agreed: "The committee had already incurred too much expense".⁷⁷ The meeting would serve the purpose that Barnum wanted, though, to keep the issue of union recognition alive before the public eye.

On March 20, over 3,000 men, women and children gathered at Massey Hall. This was the largest such meeting to attract public attention for the strikers. Attendance was reported to be largely "foreign"; speeches were delivered in both Yiddish and English. The platform was taken several times by leading labour figures, Gertrude Barnum, Joseph Gibbon of the Street Railway Men's Union, J. Doggett and Andrew Miller of the Carpenters Union to name a few. When Rosenbaum of the G.W.U. took the podium, militancy was incited in the crowd. He addressed those present on the urgency of full union recognition in preventing lockouts and strikes such as those in which the cloakmakers and garment workers were engaged. The community was urged to stand by the Eaton boycott as the only means to let their voices be heard above Eaton's refusal to arbitrate.⁷⁸

The following Saturday, March 23, public attention was drawn to the strike. Under the direction of Barnum and the Strike Committee, two large parades were held. In the morning, 300 children from the ages of six to twelve were driven in drays and pleasure vans throughout the streets of The Ward near the Eaton factory. Waving brightly coloured banners and streamers they appealed to public sympathy for support of the strikers.⁷⁹ Later that day, over 2,000 men, women and children appeared again on these downtown streets. Accompanied by eight mounted police,⁸⁰ the marchers followed the streets from The Labor Temple, passing the Eaton factory to Spadina Ave., along Spadina to College St. and back to The Labor Temple. They were not met entirely with approval from the onlooking crowd who scoffed as well as cheered.⁸¹

The Strike Committee, with the aid of the T.D.L.C. and Gertrude Barnum, organized a city-wide boycott of Eaton's retail trade. Strikers called on Jewish homes that were spotted receiving Eaton's deliveries to support the strike.⁸² *The Lance* reported in early March that the boycott of the Eaton retail trade had been successful among the Jewish population. The paper claimed that a substantial number of customers had transferred their business to Simpson's.⁸³ A former striker, however, recalled that door to door solicitation for the boycott was anything but well received.⁸⁴ But the Jewish community made considerable attempts to aid the strikers financially. The Associated Hebrew Charities distributed food and several Jewish women's organizations conducted street collections for the strike fund until they were stopped by the City.⁸⁵

The first meeting with Eaton's held on behalf of the strikers was initiated by The Strike Committee through the Jewish community. Committee representatives B. Fliegel, S. Gold and A. Nessenovitz requested that Magistrate Cohen⁸⁶ and Rabbi Jacobs⁸⁷ meet with Eaton's. The Committee wanted Eaton's approached with a proposal requesting them to rehire all the locked-out and striking workers. This meeting did not resolve anything. The Eaton representative stated that the company would accept applications through regular channels. But the Strike Committee felt that this was not a guarantee that the original locked-out cloakmakers would be rehired. In their statement to The Strike Committee, Magistrate Cohen and Rabbi Jacobs suggested that the strikers "withdraw all the malicious and uncalled for statements which had been circulated regarding the T. Eaton Company".⁸⁸ The strikers were further advised to act "as right and honourable men", and hence they would be assured that Eaton's would give them "fair and just treatment".⁸⁹ They further stated that The Strike Committee had denied that any of the strikers were involved in the campaign to slander Eaton's and had maintained that they would publicly absolve themselves from any part in this aspect of the strike if they could be assured that all of the locked-out and striking workers would be rehired. Magistrate Cohen and Rabbi Jacobs could not do this.⁹⁰ Within a few days the Strike Committee under the supervision of the T.D.L.C. denied any claim that they had revealed to Magistrate Cohen and Rabbi Jacobs that they had not been involved in the slanderous remarks against John Craig Eaton. To deny any connection with this campaign, they stated, would be "dishonourable to our friends".⁹¹ It was apparent that an issue of contention between the T.D.L.C. and the Strike Committee had been stumbled upon.

The Strike Committee's report had accompanied a second statement by the T.D.L.C. Referring to the failed efforts of the Strike Committee under the guidance of Cohen and Jacobs to settle with Eaton, the T.D.L.C. called for a continuation of the boycott against the company. They also requested donations to aid the strikers. A T.D.L.C. statement signed by S. Lass, Treasurer and Jas. Stevenson, Secretary, brought out new information regarding the Eaton factory and the strike. Eaton was not the all-caring employer he claimed to be, stated the T.D.L.C. There was evidence that the factory was run under poor conditions, where the employees worked long hours at low wages. Young children of fourteen were required to work at starvation wages from 8 a.m. until 9 in the evening. Washrooms were poor and lockers for personal items were not provided, so that workers could not protect their clothing from those of the common immigrant.

Wraps from all sort and conditions of homes are to-day hanging packed together so that

vermin and disease from the miserable homes of immigrants are passed on to the clothing of the most delicate daughter of refined parents. It is quite plain that Mr. J.C. Eaton is not the sort of King who can do no wrong.⁹²

Poor working conditions and the problem of the foreign worker mixing with other workers was a new aspect of the strike. This issue appeared several times in *The Lance*. The distinction between the foreign worker and the Canadian worker was appearing as a new issue. In an issue of *The Lance* one week prior to the statement issued by the T.D.L.C., an article appeared which drew attention to the foreign identity of the strikers. It was claimed that women and children, especially, were required to work long hours at low wages by the Eaton Co. During the busy season children were required to work from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m. Working conditions at the factory were less than adequate, neither lockers nor cloak rooms were provided. Cloaks and umbrellas were piled together in unsanitary conditions, the belongings of girls from all sorts of homes hanging closely together.⁹³ It was further noted that a public slogan had been passing that the strike was “only a strike of Jews”.⁹⁴ This had succeeded in eliminating sympathetic strike support from the “Gentile cloakmakers”, but not from the trade unionists who stood by the strikers fully.⁹⁵ The issue was again picked up by *The Lance* in May when they noted that the Eaton Boycott had failed. This they claimed was self-evident, for Toronto labour would not cease to patronize Eaton’s merely because foreigners had called a strike. Failure of the strike was attributed to the fact that “. . . the foreign agitator has few friends in Canadian labour circles.”⁹⁶

On April 11 Lapidus was approached by the Eaton Co. to discuss the possibility of arranging for the employees to return to work. Upon the approval of The Strike Committee, Lapidus and Rosenbaum met with an Eaton executive and manager. Four consecutive meetings took place on April 11, 15, 16 and 17, but an agreement was never reached. The terms presented to Eaton’s by the Strike Committee were endorsed by the T.D.L.C. First, the Committee demanded that the cloakmakers would return to work only if they were not obligated to sew the linings by machine and secondly, that all the strikers would have to be rehired, by application if necessary. The Eaton management apparently agreed to these terms, and even suggested that an adjustment bureau could be established to work out grievances. The Committee then arranged for the workers to return to work. But the Eaton representative returned to the meeting on April 17 declining any agreement previously made. He denied that he had any authority to act on behalf of the company, even to the extent of discussion of the strike or the strikers’ return to work.

The Strike Committee was treated in the same manner as Magistrate Cohen and Rabbi Jacobs had been. Apparently, not all of the Eaton management was

totally against some form of settlement with the strikers. With this second refusal of Eaton's to negotiate the strikers met and voted to continue the strike by a vote of 766 to 963.⁹⁷ In a report published by the T.D.L.C., they stated that the majority chose to "remain out and support the action of their leaders."⁹⁸ *The Toronto Star* had hastily and unofficially reported on April 17 that the strike had ended on satisfactory terms.⁹⁹ This was far from the truth.

The labour press' campaign against Eaton's took up increased momentum when a scandal broke that proved to be in the interest of the strike. Private detectives working in England for a "secret committee" revealed to James Simpson that the T. Eaton Co. was advertising for strike-breakers. Eaton's had run a series of advertisements in newspapers in Leeds and Wales for factory machinists and hand sewers. Tailors were wanted to work on mantles, blouses, costumes and men's clothing in Canada. The advertisement promised that passage to Canada would be advanced.¹⁰⁰ Evidence was found that an agent for Eaton's had left Yorkshire with workers bound for Canada under signed contract. *The Labor News*, which first broke the story, printed copies of a cable sent by P.M. Draper, Secretary Treasurer of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada to J. Ramsay MacDonald leader of the British Labour Party. Draper was informing MacDonald of the Eaton advertisements and requesting his help in stopping the importation of strike-breakers. MacDonald cabled in return, assuring Draper that the strike in Toronto was public knowledge in England, and if possible, the workers would be prevented from leaving for Canada.¹⁰¹

In May *The Lance* picked up the issue again, printing a letter sent by Draper to the Department of Immigration. Draper was requesting that Mr. Scott, the Superintendent of Immigration, act to ensure that no strike-breakers entered Canada. Scott replied that he had already acted upon the matter of possible strike-breakers arriving from England. But regardless, immigrants could not be stopped unless there was definite proof that they were under contract to work for The Eaton Co. The mere fact that a strike was in progress was not enough evidence for the Department of Immigration to act.¹⁰² *The Lance* reiterated this seemingly futile effort on the part of organized labour to fight Eaton as evidence that the company had lost the fight. For if they had to resort to seeking strike-breakers in England then labour was rallying closer to the cause.¹⁰³

The strike attracted little of its usual attention after mid-April. Public meetings and marches ceased; support from the T.D.L.C. and the labour press appeared to be dropping off. The I.L.G.W.U. however, continued to support the strikers by donating approximately \$2,000 to the strike fund in May and June.¹⁰⁴ In June, as well, the I.L.G.W.U. lent its support to the failing cause of the strike by holding its international conference in Toronto.¹⁰⁵ *The Industrial*

Banner made one last statement regarding the strike. They claimed that the boycott against Eaton's was successful since thousands of catalogues were continually being returned to the company from all across Canada. This was proof, they stated, that organized labour would continue to support the strike against Eaton's, who would be undercut by business rivals.¹⁰⁶

The strike was never officially settled. Some of the workers were rehired but most did not return to work at Eaton's. A small number were re-employed each month from May to August when the number reached 100 and then settled down to 77. In July, Dean wrote to Coats, editor of *The Labour Gazette*, in reply to the government's inquiry as to whether the company was rehiring the strikers. Dean answered that they were receiving constant applications from strikers to return to work, but most were refused since the company had met their quota of such workers.¹⁰⁷

Conclusion

Despite all efforts, little had been done to break Eaton's determination not to settle the strike. The T. Eaton Co. had clearly set out to break the union and to blacklist all those involved in the lockout and strike. Backing by the T.D.L.C. had not prevented the strikers from being rehired by Eaton's; this was already predetermined by the very fact of the strike. The cloakmakers and the T.D.L.C. had joined on a common ground: the fight for union recognition. The involvement of the T.D.L.C. and the labour press gave the strike greater momentum in this fight against Eaton's, a large symbol of exploitive industrial capitalism. But under the influence of the T.D.L.C., wage demands became a secondary issue to the employment of the new machines. As it became apparent that the strike was lost, it was increasingly evident that the cloakmakers were backed by the T.D.L.C. and the labour press to a large degree only because the former's fight was against Eaton's. The T.D.L.C. and the labour press came to confuse the identity of the cloakmakers and the place of the foreign worker in the strike. They were now uncertain if the foreigner belonged to the ranks of the working class or not. The actions of cloakmakers and the garment workers had not been enough to cut across ethnic lines within the working class of pre-World I Toronto.

Postscript

The Cloakmakers were to hold bitter memories of the 1912 strike. The strike against Eaton's had lasted twenty weeks and the strikers had put in a hard fight. In recollections of the strike written years later some cloakmakers recalled that although they had lost the strike, it had not ended in favour of Eaton's.¹⁰⁸ The

cloakmakers claim that they had won in the long run. Many of the cloakmakers who were left unemployed as a result of the strike founded new needle trades businesses in Toronto.¹⁰⁹ As a result, Eaton's business was so greatly affected by the strike, that it would never again experience the large share of the ready-made garment manufacturing industry that it had had prior to the strike.

Thus the monopoly of the T. Eaton Co. in the Ladies' garment manufacturing industry was broken, to the point where after time the Eaton Co. gave up its independent production of garments.¹¹⁰

For the Cloakmakers Union, this was their legacy.

FOOTNOTES

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Appendix

The following is an attempt to verify or dispute the union's claims regarding the effect of the strike on Eaton's share of the ready-made garment industry in Toronto. This quantitative analysis looks at the assessed business values for firms I could identify as garment manufacturers in the year 1910, 1911, 1912 and 1913. This data is presented to indicate a growth pattern in the

manufacturing of ready-made clothing in the years surrounding the strike. My intention is to show what proportion of the ready-made garment industry Eaton shared in each of the four years, what proportion of the garment industry other firms had, how this changed over the time period, and, lastly to see if changes in Eaton's business assessed value, either a loss or gain, were reflected in a loss or gain in the other firms in the industry.

In collecting the data I followed a procedure which relied on using both the city directories and the assessment rolls for Toronto. Both the directories and assessment rolls were consulted for one year ahead of the year in which I was working. Since the directories were published in January or February, the information they contain actually reflects the year before the cover date. In the case of the assessment rolls, the information is taken in either July or August of the year prior to that which it will form the base of taxation. The businesses listed in four categories in the directory were then collected, that being: cloak manufacturers, clothing wholesale and manufacturers, gentlemen's furnishings and wholesale and ladies wear manufacturing. Since some of the listings were ambiguous and included tailors, retailers and wholesalers who were not manufacturers, the next two steps would eliminate many firms which were not manufacturers. The firms were then checked against the alphabetical listing in the directory, and then located in the assessment rolls. I did not collect data on retailers, tailors, merchants tailors, agents or wholesalers. The objective was to locate clothing manufacturers, firms who produced ready-made clothing, including coats, for men, women, and children, as well as novelty or sundry items such as ties, but not millinery or shoes.

The actual number of manufacturing firms considered in this study are shown in Table I. The top figures in each category represent the final number determined as manufacturing firms. The bottom figures however, represent the actual number of manufacturing firms that could be located in the assessment rolls. Some businesses that were determined to be manufacturers were not located in the assessment rolls. This lack of information is a source of error in the total business assessment figures provided in Table III. It should be noted, however, that the directory listings were used to determine the total number of businesses in each category as presented in Table I.

The total number of manufacturing firms as presented in Table I show a general pattern of increase over the four years. The growth in the number of firms was progressive, where an almost equal number were added to the total in each year. Most of the categories, as shown in Table I, experienced the bulk of their growth during the two years from 1910 to 1911 and 1912 to 1913. Ladies wear manufacturing however, was one exception, which in fact fol-

lowed the reverse trend. The year 1911 to 1912 saw this category's greatest increase from 26 to 40, an increase which totally contributed to that year's growth. Cloak manufacturing saw its greatest increase in total number of firms from 1912 to 1913 where it picked up after two years of slower growth. Table II show that the number of cloak manufacturers which grew by 46.1% and 47% in the years 1910 to 1911 and 1912 to 1913 experienced the highest rate of growth of any of the categories over all the years. The year 1910 to 1911 experienced the highest proportional increase in the total number of businesses over each of these years with a growth rate of 27.1%. However, this rate of increase was not as great in the following two years where it is noted as 16% for 1911 to 1912 and 14.9% for 1912 to 1913.

In conjunction with Table I, Table III shows that the total assessed business values for all manufacturing firms increased. The steady growth of this increase is reflected in Figure II. However, although these values grew, they did so at a slower rate each year after 1911. As noted in Table IV the total values from 1910 to 1911 grew at a rate of 29.4% whereas this growth decreased proportionally from 1911 to 1912 to 12.1% and 17.9% from 1912 to 1913. The largest growth rate in each manufacturing category was experienced from 1910 to 1911 and 1912 to 1913, with the exception again in ladies wear manufacturing. This category grew by 52.5% from 1911 to 1912 after a slower rate of growth of 3% from 1910 to 1911 only to be followed again from 1912 to 1913 by a slower rate of 7.6%. There appears to be some correlation between an increase in the number of firms and the pattern of increase in the growth rate.

The assessed business value for the T. Eaton Co. declined from 1912 to 1913 from \$145,125 to \$123,750. As further shown in Table III this decline occurred after three years of increases from \$94,470 to \$128,145 and \$145,124 from 1910 to 1912. Table IV indicates that although the assessed business values for the Eaton factory had increased the rate of this growth was decreasing from 1911. From 1910 to 1911 Eaton had grown at a rate of 35.6% whereas from 1911 to 1912 the percentage growth was only 13.2% and 14% from 1912 to 1913. Table I indicates that in the first three years of the study Eaton's assessed business value for the factory was at least 16 - 17% of the total assessed business values for all manufacturing firms considered in this study. In 1913 this proportion dropped to 12.9%.

The other three categories considered in the ready-made garment manufacturing industry shared over 80% of the assessed business value during all years of this study. This is not a test for Eaton's monopoly of the manufacturing trade, but it does indicate that throughout this period these manufacturing firms which grew from 59 to 10 were worth over 80% of the

value of the total manufacturing industry. The sub-total of the assessed business values of the firms without including Eaton's, as shown in Table IV, increased at a smaller rate than Eaton's did until 1912 to 1913.

Figure II indicates the drop in Eaton's total assessed business value. All information so far points to the fact that Eaton's manufacturing establishment had decreased in its total business value after 1912. It is likely that the strike and boycott could have affected this, since such a decline in business value would take a year to be revealed by these records. Another proof which points to the strike as affecting an alteration in the business values is an obvious change in distribution in the business assessments. Figure I show that while the total business assessments grew over this period, the sub-total, which is the total business assessments minus Eaton's assessment also grew. Therefore, although Eaton's assessed value was declining as has been shown, and is explicit in Figure II, the remainder of the manufacturing firms grew. What Figure I is indicating is that the slack in business which the decline in the Eaton's value indicates, was in turn probably taken up by the other manufacturing firms, since their assessed business values retained a stable share of the overall. Therefore, Eaton's decline did not affect the overall assessment which continued to increase at the same rate as it had in previous years.

Evidence presented in the assessed business values for these manufacturing firms considered indicates that while in the year after the strike the total number of firms were not increased except in cloak manufacturing, there is no indication of a co-relation between this pattern and the strike year; since the overall trend had been towards an increase in the number of manufacturing firms over the entire four year period. This trend is also reflected in the general pattern of increase in the total business assessments for all firms with and without Eaton's assessed value. What does indicate that the strike could possibly have had an effect on business is Eaton's drastic decline in business value after 1912. All evidence points to the fact that this decline was exceptional and not part of an overall trend of growth experienced during these years from 1910-1913.

Examining the business assessments taken for clothing manufacturers, including Eaton, during the years from 1910 to 1913 indicates that the Eaton Co. did experience a lower business assessment in the year after the strike. Without access to the Eaton Co. employee files it is not possible to verify the fate of the unemployed cloakmakers and garment workers.* Research on the

* The T. Eaton Co. Archives is open to the public for research. Only catalogues, pictures and the general information files, which include press statements, and newspaper articles are open to the public. Access to business files and employees records (if they still exist) is closed.

number of manufacturing firms in Toronto, however, indicates that there was an increase during this time. An examination of the manufacturing firms does indicate a steady increase in the total assessed business values that Eaton does not share in after 1912. Therefore, the strike does not appear to have had an effect on the general increase in the number of manufacturing firms and their overall business value. But the assessed business value of these firms does retain their overall share of the total value, while Eaton suffered a decline. These results do not point to an effective boycott campaign against Eaton in the year of the strike.

**Total Number of Businesses in Each Year
From Assessment Rolls and Directory**

	1910	1911	1912	1913
Cloak Manf. Total Number	13	19	17	25
Total Located	12	17	16	23
Clothing Manf. Total Number	23	30	30	36
*Total Located	18	25	22	20
Ladies Wear M. Total Number	23	26	40	39
Total Located	21	21	28	29
Total Number	59	75	87	100
Total Located	51	63	66	72

*Includes Men's clothing.

Table I

**Percentage Growth by Number of Total Firms
By Category and Year**

		1910-1911	1911-1912	1912-1913
Cloak Manf.		46.1	10.5	47
*Clothing Mf.		30.4	0	20
Ladies Wear Mf.		13	15.3	2.5
Total Located		27.1	16	14.9

*Includes Men's Clothing

Table II

**Total Assessed Business Value
In Dollars
By Year and Category**

	1910	1911	1912	1913
Cloak Manufacturing	135,671	179,854	180,028	300,768
*Clothing Manufacturing	141,490	234,576	210,329	235,375
Ladies Wear Manufacturing	187,296	181,112	276,353	297,504
Sub-Total	464,457	595,542	666,710	833,647
T. Eaton Co.	94,470	128,145	145,125	123,750
Total	558,927	723,686	811,835	957,397

*Includes Men's Clothing

Table III

**Percentage Growth of
Total Assessed Business Value**

		1910-1911	1911-1912	1912-1913
Cloak Manufacturing		32.5	.09	67
*Clothing Manufacturing		65.7	-10.3	11.9
Ladies Wear Manufacturing		-3.3	52.5	7.6
Sub-Total		28.2	11.9	25
T. Eaton Co.		35.6	13.2	-14.7
Total		29.4	12.1	17.9

*Includes Men's Clothing

Table IV

Source: Assessment Rolls, Toronto, 1911-1914.

**Total Assessed Business Value
Each Category As A Percentage of Each Year's Total**

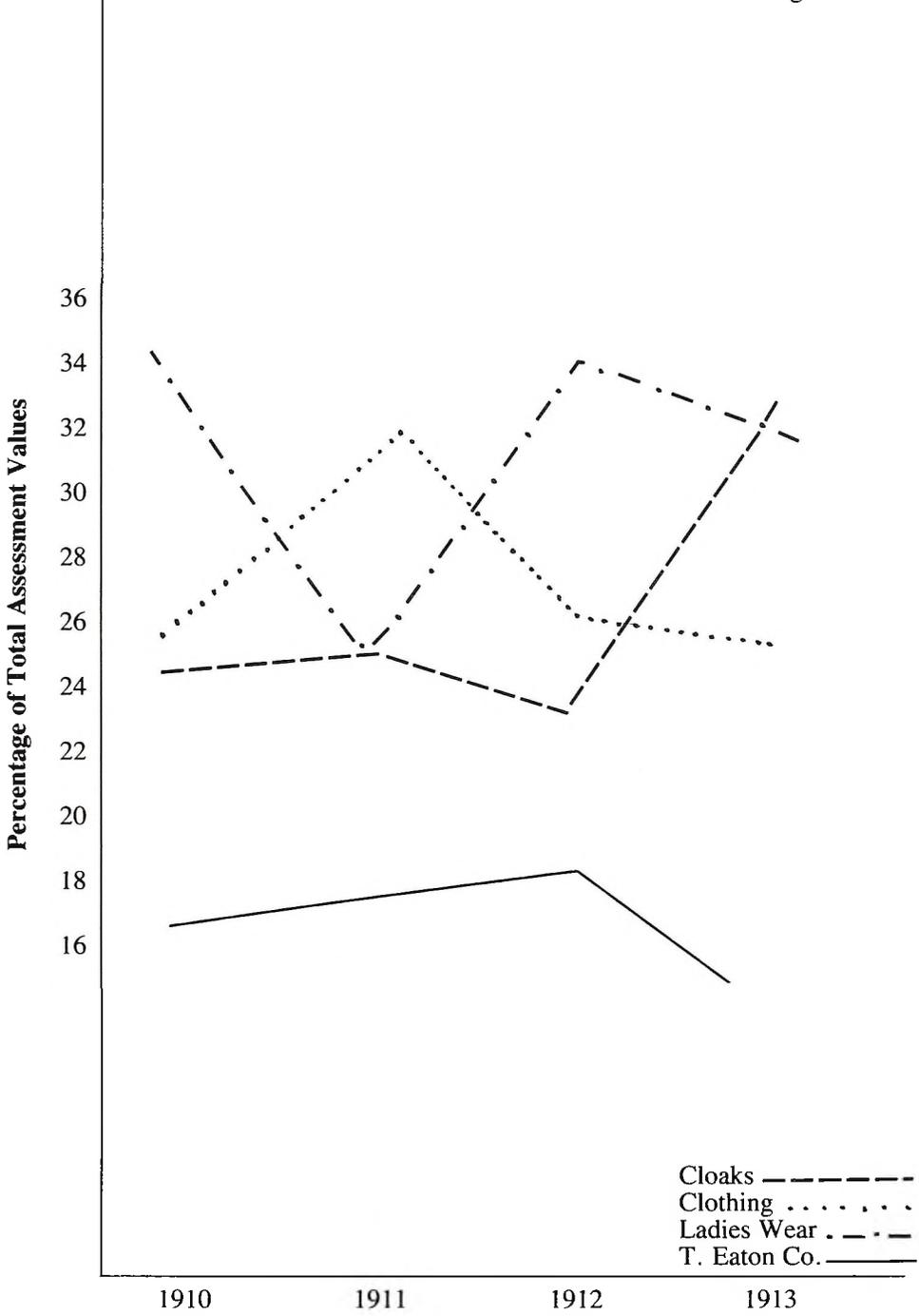
	1910	1911	1912	1913
Cloak Manufacturing	24.3	24.9	22.2	31.4
*Clothing Manufacturing	25.3	32.4	25.9	24.5
Ladies Wear Manufacturing	33.5	25.0	34.0	31.0
Sub-Total	83.0	82.2	82.1	87.0
T. Eaton Co.	16.9	17.7	17.9	12.9

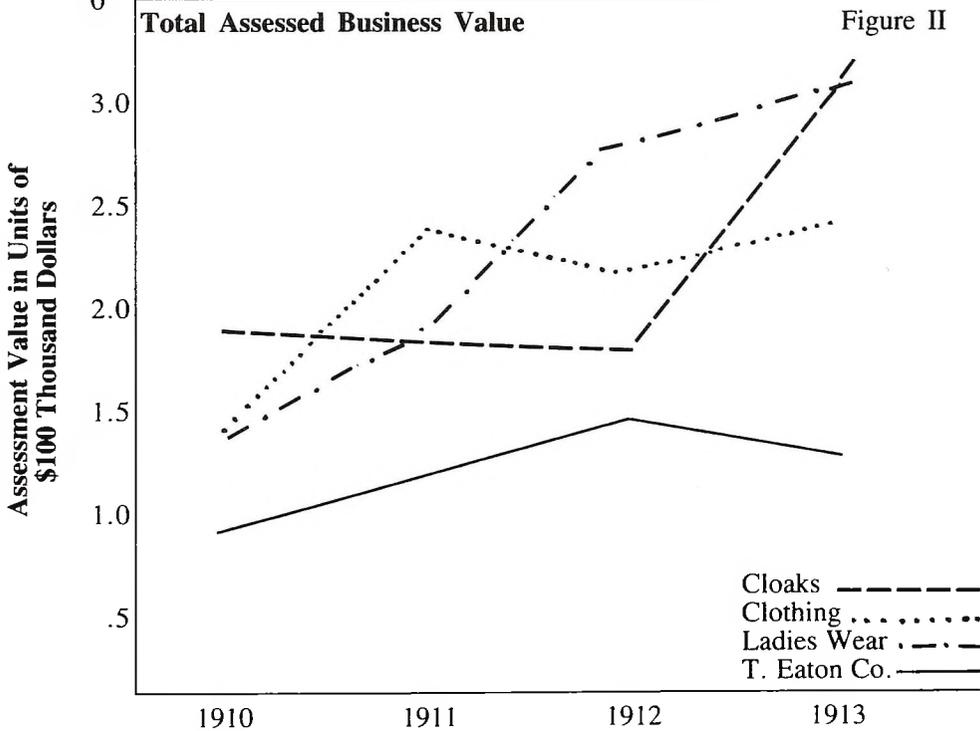
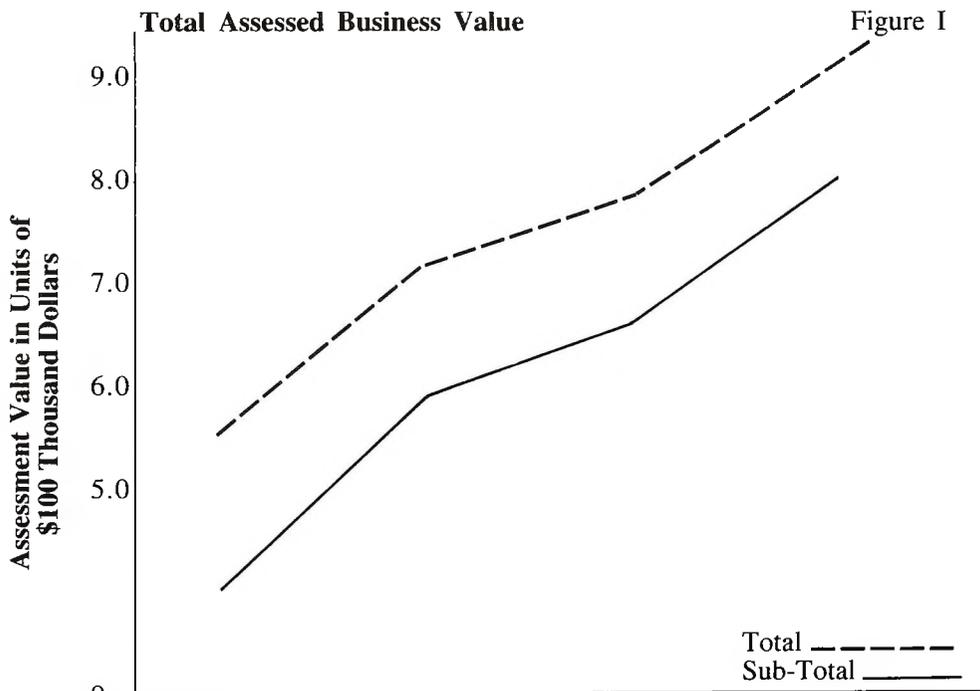
*Includes Men's Clothing

Table V

Total Assessed Business Value

Figure III





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