CANADIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JOURNAL

SOCIETE DE L'HISTOIRE JUIVE CANADIENNE

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 1

וְהִפַּדְתָּ לִבְנֶךָ

STAV 5749

FALL 1988 AUTOMNE 1988

The Journal of the Canadian Jewish Historical Society is published semi-annually in April and October.

Annual subscription to the Journal is $8.00 per year for individuals. An institutional subscription is $20.00, which includes 3 copies of each issue.

The Journal welcomes submissions for publication. All articles must be typed, double spaced, and fully documented and sent for consideration to Dr. Stephen Speisman, Editor, c/o Canadian Jewish Congress, Ontario Region, 4600 Bathurst Street, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada, M2R 3V2.

The Canadian Jewish Historical Society disclaims responsibility for statements of fact or of opinion made by contributors.

PRINTED IN CANADA
SUMNER PRESS 1988
COVER DESIGN BY SARA SHAW

ISSN 0702-9233

Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal
Societe de l'Histoire Juive Canadienne

VOLUME 10 FALL 1988 NUMBER 1

PAGE

The publication
of this issue
has been made
possible by
a grant from the
Oscar Yolles
Foundation
Toronto,
and from the
Canadian Jewish
Congress

The Church of England In Canada and the Jewish Plight During the Nazi Era 1933-1945

ALAN DAVIES and MARILYN F. NEFSKY

In a previous article,[1] we examined the alleged silence of the United Church of Canada in the face of Jewish suffering in Europe and the refugee crisis as a footnote to Irving Abella and Harold Troper's important study *None is Too Many*. This article is an examination of the attitudes and actions of the Anglican communion (or the Church of England in Canada, as it was then known) during the same period. Were Canadian Anglicans better or worse than their United Church brethren, or were they much the same? Did antisemitism and nativism hold the bishops, priests and laity of this highly 'Anglo-Saxon' denomination in thrall, or did they respond to the growing crisis of European Jewry with sympathy and demands for rescue? Were, as Abella and Troper believe,[2] only a few "highly-placed" Anglicans in Canada interested in the burning moral issue of the hour, or were these select individuals less isolated in their efforts to melt the hardness-of-heart of the King government and its bureaucracy than the authors of *None is Too Many* suppose? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to reconstruct as closely as possible (a) contemporary Anglican views of Jews and Judaism (b) Anglican responses to the rise of fascism and militarism in Europe (c) Anglican responses to Nazi antisemitism and persecution (d) Anglican responses to the refugee situation. The material is fairly plentiful in each case.

Anglicans, Jews and Judaism

It is scarcely surprising to find the traces of patristic theology about Jews and Judaism among the adherents of a largely conservative Christian tradition, even when the turmoil of the age was beginning to discredit old ideas and prejudices. Christianity was seen as the true religion, Jesus was the true messiah, the Pharisaic ancestors of modern Judaism were seen as

legalistic, merciless and blind, and the religion that they spawned was regarded as nothing more than a "monstrous creation of human ingenuity . . . a system from which the light of God and the love of God had been shut out."[3] Such, it seems safe to assume, was the state of conventional Anglican opinion not only in the pre-war era but also during the war, when the editors of *The Canadian Churchman* felt no qualms about republishing a sermon on the "danger" of Pharisaism as the religion "which crucified Christ".[4] By 1943, information with respect to the true state of affairs in Nazi-occupied Europe was seeping through to the North American press,[5] but the death camps did not usually constitute a reason for refraining from denouncing the Pharisees in religious columns. Obviously, no connection was made between the latter and twentieth-century Jews. In keeping with these triumphalistic assumptions, moreover, the church throughout the entire period pursued its time-honoured task of Jewish evangelization, an enterprise far more dear to the hearts of Anglicans (especially evangelical Anglicans) than to their United Church cousins, who seemed to lack this particular fixation. Hence, the Church of England in Canada maintained active Jewish missions in Toronto and Montreal, staffing the latter with ordained converts whose progress reports were carefully filed in diocesan journals. On the other hand, these proselytizing activities were usually accompanied by a high degree of empathy toward Jewish immigrants as well as a passionate dislike of antisemitism and antisemites, both in Europe and in Canada. Indeed, as the evidence of a mounting Nazi campaign against the Jews accumulated in the press, the church intermingled its calls for a renewed evangelism among Canadian Jews with ringing denunciations of their German persecutors. In 1938, for example, the Archbishop of Toronto, who was also the primate of Canada, managed to combine these themes in a Good Friday pastoral letter:

> The return of Good Friday reminds us once more of the debt which we owe the Jews, and of our responsibility to share with them . . . that which we have ourselves found in Jesus Christ. The presence in the world today of all that is meant by the term 'anti-Semitism' and its consequences, gives to the Jews a new claim upon our sympathies. As people who profess and call ourselves Christians we have witnessed with horror and regret the sufferings and injustices which have been done to them. This distress also lends urgency to the need of evangelism among them . . .[6]

Naively, it was imagined in this and similar declarations that conversion was not merely the cure for the alleged spiritual problems suffered by Jews, but for their material problems as well, especially the menace of antisemitism. As early as 1935, the report of the Montreal Jewish Mission drew attention to German "Neo-paganism" in order to underscore its guiding philosophy that "Christ alone is the final solution" (the choice of this term was more unfortunate than the author of the report could have

realized) as far as Jews are concerned, and that they should seize the present opportunity to align themselves with the true people of God.[7] Interestingly, those Anglicans, such as the Rev. F.J. Nicholson,[8] who involved themselves directly in Jewish missions, also seem to have studied the history and character of antisemitism, including the nefarious role played by past Christian ecclesiastics and princes; as a consequence, they were more sensitive than most churchmen to contemporary persecutions, and more eager to come to the assistance of Hitler's victims. Nevertheless, the philosemitic Nicholson was totally unable to tear himself away from the anti-Jewish theology of the Christian ages, since to have done so would surely have destroyed the *raison d'être* for his own missionary activities in Toronto. "Christianity", he wrote, "must be presented as the crown and completion of Judaism . . . [for] any special privileges and blessings promised to them [the Jews] were inherited by the New Israel, the Church of Christ, when the Old Israel rejected Him."[9] However, sincere in their 'anti-antisemitism', the Anglican priests still wished to abolish Judaism. Ironically, this was also the goal of the antisemites whom they opposed.

Despite the diocesan missions, not all Anglicans were obsessed with converting Jews, or even wedded to this notion in the least. Largely, one suspects, as a result of the influence of the British Anglican scholar James Parkes, famous for his studies of both antisemitism and the relationship between Judaism and Christianity,[10] a less patristic view of the former religion occasionally strayed into various church publications, especially in book review columns. Parkes, who visited Canada in both 1933 and 1938, engaged in what can only be described as a concerted exercise in consciousness-raising.[11] His efforts were not in vain. "If Christians are apt to believe that Judaism as a religion has shot its bolt and has degenerated into a simple technique for maintaining the racial solidarity of Jews," a Parkes-inspired reviewer of a new book entitled *Common Ground* by Morris S. Lazaron wrote in 1938, "they may be startled to find here a devotion to religious principles coupled with a recognition of the constant expansion of the idea of divine revelation which may make them impatient with too many of the narrow views of God so often found in Christian literature."[12] The following year saw the promotion of four short writings by Parkes in *The Canadian Churchman*, including his essay "Judaism and Christianity" with its unconventional interpretation of the two religions as equal and mutually complementary,[13] When the same journal published C. E. Silcox's eloquent appeal for a spiritual rapprochement between Jews and Christians based on the British theologian's novel concept of a "dual revelation" — the

revelation to the community (Judaism) and the revelation to the individual (Christianity) — in 1941,[14] the patristic grip on Anglicanism was at least partially broken. While still a minority opinion, and while obviously prompted by the Nazi assault against Christianity as well as Judaism, the emphasis on a Jewish-Christian 'common ground' in scripture, ethics and spirituality was more than a passing fad. It was destined to survive the war, and to set the stage for the inter-religious dialogues of our day. Silcox, of course, was not an Anglican, but his voice was in tune with a growing willingness among liberally-minded Anglicans to deepen their understanding of Judaism as an authentic biblical faith in its own right, rather than a fossilized relic of the first century. Not surprisingly, this willingness was encouraged by a moral revulsion towards the accelerating crimes of the Third Reich.

Anglicans, fascists and fascism

Anglicans, like the members of other churches, felt the tremors of the great social crisis of the Depression era and feared an impending catastrophe. Suddenly, both capitalism and democracy were threatened, and more radical systems acquired a certain public attraction. Even more than the United Church, however, the Church of England in Canada was passionately attached to the imperial connection, and therefore to British ideas and institutions — the very core of the Anglo-Saxon racial and spiritual heritage. Since political democracy was regarded as indigenous to the latter, no true Anglican could easily turn to non-democratic ideologies without betraying both his Anglicanism and his essential (if derivative) 'Englishness'. Even though "our old system has been seriously weakened," declared the Bishop of Montreal (John C. Farthing) in 1933, and even though some Canadians "are anxious to throw over the existing order of things, and are willing to try Socialism, Communism, Fascism, Hitlerism, or any other . . . We Anglo-Saxons will never consent to the loss of our liberty."[15] These words can be regarded as characteristic of the Anglican response to the rise of totalitarianism throughout the entire pre-war and war periods, especially to the National Socialist variant of fascism. Indeed, the "menace of fascism" was detected by the Anglican press virtually from the moment of its inception, and, in spite of the Anglo-Saxon 'love' of democracy — fascist methods suited the "truculent German bully" rather than the "English sportsman" — the menace was almost as great in Britain (and Canada) as in Germany.[16] As far as Canada was concerned, the appearance of various fascist movements in both the English and French sections of the country did not pass unnoticed, notably Adrien Arcand's National Social Christian Party

(Le Parti National Social Chrétien) in Quebec; it drew the fire of Bishop Farthing for its unChristian and unBritish plank of antisemitism as well as for its insurrectionist ambitions.[17] Eternal vigilance was necessary if democracy was to survive. When the Italian-Abyssinian crisis erupted in 1935, an initial admiration for Mussolini as the man who had "saved Italy" was replaced by a sense of profound alarm in the pages of *The Canadian Churchman* at the new threat to world peace and the international order symbolized by the (democratic) League of Nations. "We must think of the Italian nation as drunk with the wine of war, made forcibly drunk by its own government, not of its own choice.[18] The fact that Italy was angry at Britain as a result of the latter nation's opposition to his imperial dreams did not help the Duce's reputation in Canadian Anglican eyes. He was now one with Hitler. "Fascism, whether it is under the form of the paganism of Nazi Germany, or the ruthless militarism of Italy, as seen in the rape of Ethiopia, culminating in the appalling massacre of Addis Ababa, which will go down as one of the most inhuman in history, and as the darkest blot on our modern civilization, is everywhere the negation of all for which Christ stands."[19] Not quite the darkest blot on modern civilization, however. That honour, as the church was later to realize, was reserved for the destruction of the European Jews. When the Italians started to imitate German Jew-baiting, Anglican disillusionment with Italy's so-called 'saviour' was complete.[20]

In the case of Nazi Germany, although the brutal and sinister side of the National Socialist revolution was evident to Anglican observers from the beginning, a curious tendency to distinguish between the Führer and his followers also appeared in Anglican literature. "What we have to fear . . . is not Hitler himself, but some of the wild men behind him, the sadistic perverts, the nationalist-maniacs, the bull-headed young men who want excitement at all costs, whom Hitler himself no doubt has considerable trouble in controlling.[21] In retrospect, this blindness is not so surprising, since many Germans shared it, and since their ruler was a consummate actor who had mastered many parts. In Canada, at any rate, Hitler was never idealized, at least not in Christian circles; in fact, his leadership cult was usually distrusted and, as the powerful sermon "Follow Me" (1938) by the Rev. W. J. Gilling of Trinity College, Toronto, demonstrates, occasionally analyzed with merciless clarity.[22] Nevertheless, not everyone prior to the war was willing to believe that Hitler *really* was as evil as he seemed to be, and as a growing body of evidence suggested that he must be; Germany, after all was a great nation, and great nations do not readily allow themselves to be controlled by monsters. The Führer, consequently, was only a somewhat

overwrought German nationalist — according to the Very Rev. W. R. Inge, he was explained by Fichte, the father of German nationalism, exactly as Mussolini was explained by Mazzini, the father of Italian nationalism[23] —who allowed his emotions and actions to go too far. Furthermore, the resurgence of German nationalism after 1918 was more the fault of the victorious allies, especially the French, than it was the fault of the Germans themselves.[24] Hence, by implication, neither Hitler nor the Germans should be blamed too much. While this point of view was not universal, it was not without its supporters. The Right Rev. A. C. Headlam, for example, an English bishop remembered for his pro-German (and seemingly anti-Jewish) sentiments throughout the pre-war period,[25] was cited in *The Canadian Churchman* as follows:

> We all condemn the folly and violence of the attacks upon the Jews in Germany, and the violence with which the members of the Socialist and Communist parties are being treated, but to both Jews and Socialists some words of warning are necessary. Many Jews were responsible . . . for the violence of the Russian Communists; many Jews have helped to inspire the violence of the Socialist communities. . . . So in the same way our English Socialists at present are violent in their attacks upon Germany, and are proposing to boycott German goods. . . . It is they who first of all made the appeal to violence. . . . If it is legitimate for the Socialist or Communist to employ force to carry out a revolution, it is equally legitimate for a Nazi.[26]

If, in other words, Hitler has been unkind to others, his victims have thoroughly deserved their blows.

Antisemitism and persecution

On September 20, 1934, the Lower House of the General Synod of the Church of England in Canada passed a resolution on the persecution of the German Jews in which, "the Upper House concurring", the full measure of Anglican sympathy for the Jewish plight was expressed in unequivocal terms.[27] The Upper House did concur, and Act. No. 85 came into being. In this manner, the assembled Anglicans recorded their antipathy to Nazi Germany and the Aryan laws and other anti-Jewish measures that had been sweeping the Third Reich since its inauguration; at the same time, they chose this moment to express their gratitude for the many Jewish contributions to civilization as well as for the Hebrew scriptures themselves, without which Christianity could never have been born. Jesus, after all, was a Jew, and ill-treatment of his people "after the flesh" was necessarily abhorrent to his followers. Such denunciations of Nazi policy grew more common and more strident in the Anglican press and elsewhere as the decade unfolded. On January 23, 1936, for example, when Hitler's regime was "on its best behaviour owing to the Olympic games", the editor of *The Canadian Churchman* asserted that it was "high time that the public opinion of the

world was aroused at the condition of the Jews in Germany'', pointing to their ''pitiable'' and ''doomed'' situation.[28]

> It is being made increasingly difficult for Jews and 'Non-Aryans' in Germany to sustain life. Condemned to segregation within the four corners of the legal and social Ghetto which has now closed upon them, they are increasingly prevented from earning their living. Indeed more than half of the Jews remaining in Germany have already been deprived of their livelihood. In many parts of the country there is a systematic attempt at starvation of the Jewish population . . .[29]

Once the Olympics were over, the editor reported, the Jews expected a new terror, not without reason. Krystallnacht (Nov. 9-10, 1938) confirmed this expectation, and focused Anglican attention on the dangers of antisemitism in a closer fashion. These dangers were not only evident in Germany; they also existed in Canada, as the appearance of ''venomous'' anti-Jewish literature on the home front certainly demonstrated.[30] Germany, however, was the source of the evil.

If Jesus lived in Germany
And plied His craft today,
Doing His Honest carpentry
In His own perfect way,
Oh! would he find his workshop wrecked
By some mad Nordic crew —
His windows labelled: ''Men, beware!
Within there works a Jew''[31]

Thus inspired, it was not difficult for latter-day Canadian disciples of the Jewish carpenter to deplore the victimization of their saviour's earthly ''brothers'' at ''Nordic'' hands. When the Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land (Manitoba) denounced the latest pogroms in November, 1938, while pledging itself to assist Jewish fugitives who managed to escape Hitler,[32] its members probably had this image in mind. Characteristically, the denunciation was accompanied by a pious hope that these Jews would discover their place of spiritual refuge in the Christian church.[33]

As the world moved inexorably toward a clash of the titans, the Anglican preoccupation with the crimes of the German state toward both Jews and Christians (the church struggle was also the object of constant concern) acquired a more passionate tone. On February 23, 1939, the front cover of *The Canadian Churchman* featured in bold print a call for its readers to pray for the ''Jews of all lands'' — the ''stunned, desperate, tortured victims of demonic hate'' many of whom were being ''slowly starved out of existence''.[34] Antisemitism, the editors declared, is inherently unChristian, and anathema to a religious community that has inherited the ethical and

spiritual insights of ancient Israel.[35] At least, it should be anathema, but, as the readership was earlier reminded,[36] the deepest tragedy of the European situation resided in the fact that so many European Christians were contaminated with the same disease as the National Socialists, and had actually assisted the persecutors in their pernicious task.

Once war was declared, Anglican ecclesiastics, filled with patriotic as well as moral zeal, lost no opportunity to awaken the Canadian Christian conscience to a realization of the true depths of the Jewish plight. Particularly energetic in this regard was the Rev. C. J. Lamb of Merritton, Ontario, who, as Jews were being deported and ghettoized in eastern Europe as a prelude to their systematic destruction, called not merely for food, clothing and medical supplies (presumably he had some kind of airlift in mind) but also for the admission of Hitler's victims *en masse* to Canada: ''We have plenty of 'Lebensraum' ''.[37]

Intimations of the destruction itself and all of its horrors started to appear in the Anglican press as well as in other ecclesiastical channels almost as soon as the fires of Auschwitz began to burn in the terrible year of 1942. Cyril Garbett, the Archbishop of York, warned English Anglicans of ''cruelties and atrocities'' in Poland ''so ghastly'' as to defy belief, and his words were reprinted in *The Canadian Churchman* on September 10th.[38] William Temple, the Archbishop of Canterbury, described ''an eruption of evil [such] as the world has not seen for centuries'' at a public meeting in Albert Hall, London, and an account of his speech also found its way into the same paper on December 24th. According to the Anglican primate, the ''fury of the Nazi evil'' was concentrated so much on the Jews that ''it was hard to resist the conclusion that there was a settled purpose to exterminate them.''

> ''What else'', said Dr. Temple, ''is the explanation of recent occurrences in France? At first it seemed possible to explain the German demand for the surrender of Jewish refugees in unoccupied France as due to a need for additional labour-power; for at first only men of working age were demanded. Later, women were claimed, with the option of leaving their children, . . . not expecting ever to see them again. . . . But now the children also are being deported, from two years old and upwards. . . . Dr. Temple said that there was every reason to fear that a large proportion of those who were being deported were destined for the ghastly ghetto in Eastern Galicia, where thousands of Jews have already perished. He claimed that the Government should do whatever was possible for their relief.[39]

This report reveals that the Christian world outside of Europe was not left uninformed by its leaders and journalists concerning the real nature of Hitler's 'Final Solution', although, because the evidence did indeed defy belief, as Archbishop Garbett declared, there was undoubtedly a considerable reluctance on the part of many Anglicans (and others) to believe it.

Nevertheless, even in 1942, for those with ears to hear and eyes to see, it was becoming more and more difficult to resist Archbishop Temple's conclusion.

Further reports on events in Europe continued to be published on a regular basis throughout 1943. Once again, the British archbishops publicly condemned the Nazi policy of "cold-blooded extermination" and appealed to the British as well as to the Dominion governments to offer sanctuary within the empire to all who might still be rescued from the European hell.[40] In Canada, the Ven. A. P. Gower-Rees, Rector of St. George's Church, Archdeacon of Montreal and one of the communion's more distinguished preachers, uttered these words at an interfaith rally in the same city (May 28th):

> Friends, at the moment . . . revelations have brought home to us the horror of Nazi rule. . . . The greatest crime in history is now being perpetrated — the murder of a nation and the deliberate extermination of Jews, particularly throughout Europe. It is not possible to give a correct estimation of the extent of the fiendish operations of the Nazis. But you have already been told . . . that no less than two million out of 3½ million of Polish Jews have been done to death. The remainder seemed doomed to torture and death. . . . This is a horror unprecedented in the history of the whole world. It is a blood bath on a gigantic scale, to which no parallel can be found.[41]

Like the British bishops, the Canadian archdeacon concluded his speech with a call for rescue and sanctuary.[42] To what extent these sentiments were echoed in Anglican pulpits throughout Canada cannot now be determined; Gower-Rees, however, was probably not alone. Some indication of popular support for exhortations of this kind can be found in occasional synodical resolutions during the same period. The Diocese of Niagara, for example, in response to a ringing denunciation of the "unspeakable and inhuman treatment" suffered by the European Jews,[43] decreed (May, 1943) (a) that antisemitism is "contrary to natural justice, incompatible with the Christian doctrine of man, and a denial of the Gospel" (b) that "every possible step ought to be taken at once to rescue from massacre the Jews in enemy and enemy occupied countries" (c) that Canada should offer sanctuary to "Jewish and other refugees".[44] Apparently, the information from Europe had not fallen entirely on deaf ears in Anglican parishes in Canada. This does not mean, of course, that everyone accepted the reports at face value — the Holocaust was still the object of much public skepticism — but it certainly means that the church was neither kept in ignorance of the truth nor indifferent to it.

The refugee crisis

Largely as a result of the massive unemployment of the Depression, Canada was scarcely in a pro-immigrant, not to mention a pro-refugee, mood

during the Nazi era across the ocean. Nativist feelings, moreover, were intense in both the English and French segments of the country, and a fear of revolution was in the air, boding ill for cultural, religious and ethnic aliens from eastern Europe — the assumed home of all radicalism — who sought admission to the Dominion of the north. It was into this climate that the refugee crisis erupted. For the Church of England in Canada, with its Anglo-Saxon roots and its fervent imperial loyalties, the suggestion that Canada should suddenly open its doors to masses of non-Anglo-Saxon, non-British, non-Christian and frequently destitute strangers constituted a moral test of no small proportions. How did the Anglicans respond? Certainly, they were not without the typical apprehensions of the age. Immigration, according to one expert, if it is permitted at all, cannot be allowed on an indiscriminate basis; national (and doubtless racial) origin, is important since there is a "Gresham's law of population — cheap men . . . drive out dear men."[45] While this restatement of Gresham's law was never endorsed by the church, or even regarded as morally acceptable doctrine, a decided preference for immigrants of British stock — indeed, an anxiety concerning the consequences of a decline in the ratio of British to non-British immigrants — is clearly present in the various recommendations of Anglican officialdom throughout the pre-war period. In 1933, for example, the 'English-speaking' churches were urged to form a council on British migration in order to persuade the British government of their "united and unwavering in their desire . . . to have more and yet more British people settled in Canada."[46] In 1937, a renewed effort to encourage a higher number of British settlers in light of their "disturbing" recent decline in relation to European, especially south European, immigrants was approved.[47] Moreover, "vigilance" on the part of the Department of Immigration was urged to make certain that a "proper proportion" of the newcomers were British:[48] an echo of the spirit of F. C. Blair, the *bête noire* of the Jewish refugees,[49] although the context was hardly the same. Two years later, however, the Anglican watchdogs had second thoughts.

> That British immigration in greater numbers is desired by our Church people goes almost without saying, but your Executive believes that there are many evidences that Mid-and Northern European immigrants may and will become first class citizens, upholding our political, moral and religious ideals. The necessity laid upon our Anglo-Saxon people is to extend neighbourliness and friendship to these peoples and to see to it that . . . decent economic conditions of living are made available to them.[50]

The church, in the final analysis, was far more interested in the preservation of British institutions and ideals than in the preservation of British racial hegemony. In Anglican eyes, therefore, the Anglo-Saxon *idea*

took precedence over Anglo-Saxon *blood*, and, as the church fathers were starting to realize, the latter guaranteed nothing. The 'New Canadians' had the proper virtues and some Anglo-Saxons —notably the leaders of the Canadian communist party —actually had subersive tendencies.[51]

This debate over immigration policy, which, on a deeper level, was really a struggle against nativism, served to clarify Anglican attitudes as the refugee emergency mounted during the twelve years of Nazi rule, reaching a crescendo in the European nightmare of the holocaust. Refugees, of course, are not ordinary immigrants, and the niceties of ordinary immigration policy with its carefully calculated quotas do not or should not apply. By 1936, the implications of this distinction as far as Jews were concerned were starting to dawn on Canadian Christendom, including its Anglican segment; together, representatives of the major non-Roman Catholic churches drew up a manifesto on the subject in response to James G. McDonald's public letter on the German situation (January 15th, 1936) in which he announced his resignation as the League of Nations' high commissioner for refugees. It not only protested against the treatment meted out to Jews and 'non-Aryan' Christians, but also declared that further silence on the part of the Canadian churches was now impossible: neither sympathy for Germany's problems nor a fear of international complications nor a fear of stirring anti-semitism in Canada nor doubts concerning the truth of the allegations against Hitler could justify bridled tongues any longer.[52] Furthermore, the time had come for deeds as well as words: '. . . should the flow of exiles from Germany not cease, we feel that Canada should share with other countries the responsibility of providing a haven for at least a reasonable number of selected refugees.''[53] A 'reasonable number' was hardly a call for out and out rescue, and the word 'selected' was ambiguous; nevertheless, the manifesto embodied a new sensitivity to the Jewish plight, and a new willingness to apply pressure on the Canadian government by means of public opinion. As an example of this willingness, the Anglican Council for Social Services passed a resolution at its meeting in Quebec City in September, 1938, urging the Canadian government to ''continue to explore the possibilities for the Immigration [sic] of selected groups of Jewish people and non-Aryan Christians from Austria and Germany, so far as is possible and desirable, and . . . (to) assume a share of the responsibility of finding a home for these unfortunate victims of political aggression.''[54] When, moreover, the King government did *not* seem to listen to these and similar exhortations, the fact did not pass unnoticed. In December, 1938, *The Montreal Churchman* republished an article from the Australian *Church*

Standard attacking the Australian government for dragging its feet in an identical manner to Canada: the implication was obvious:

> What is in the Government's mind is not clear, but we are somewhat perturbed by reading from time to time of what seem to be special measures directed against Jewish immigrants. . . . The desperate plight of European refugees should give them a prior claim . . . we may express our regret that signs of anti-Jewish sentiments are becoming apparent in certain quarters.[55]

Did Australia also have its F. C. Blair? Like their Australian cousins, some Canadian Anglicans at least were becoming suspicious.

Perhaps for this reason, the church intensified its efforts in 1939, relying heavily on the lobbying skills of the Rev. W. W. Judd, General Secretary of the Social Service Council, a member of the newly formed Canadian National Committee on Refugees and Victims of Political persecution, and, like the Rev. C. E. Silcox of the United Church, a man on a personal crusade. As soon as his mandate was made clear,[56] he devoted himself energetically to his task.

> Your General Secretary joined with representatives of other Canadian-wide groups under the auspices of the League of Nations Society in Canada to face the problem. . . . They have waited upon the Government at least three times. His Grace, Archbishop Roper [of Ottawa], as well as the General Secretary represented our Church on those occasions. . . . The matter is one of deep-set prejudice in the mind of most people . . . Suffice it further to say that we believe that we should express our sympathy in deeds on Christian and humanitarian grounds and also as a democratic reply to the challenge of 'totalitarian' persecution. . . . Our Church has done its best to awaken the public conscience to this most baffling and prejudiced problem.[57]

Not only ecclesiastical emissaries such as Dr. Judd but the Anglican press did what it could to move public [and political] opinion in the right direction. In an editorial commentary on a speech by Conrad Hoffman, General Secretary of the International Missionary Council's Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, entitled "The German Refugees", *The Canadian Churchman* pointed out that in the past great refugee movements have often brought unanticipated benefits to their countries of refuge —Spanish Jews, French Huguenots, English pilgrims, United Empire Loyalists, etc. — and that, if the European Jews are admitted to Canada, they might bring similar gifts.[58] Self-interest, however, cannot be the motivating factor, for a "truly Christian nation" has a moral obligation to heed their cries for help regardless, and to heed them with all the resources at its command.[59] Hoffman himself pulled out all the stops:

> It is high time that as Christians who have protested so much against Hitler's anti-Semitism [we] should now come to the aid of the many victims thereof. Christians must play the role of the Good Samaritan in this emergency or be justly accused of being as the high priest or the Levite. . . . Six millions of people in Europe to-day are unwanted because by the accident of birth or inheritance they have Jewish blood. What is to become

of them? Christendom must give the answer.[60]

Although Judd believed in the Good Samaritan principle as fervently as Hoffman, he was also a realist who understood that governments are not usually susceptible to altruistic appeals unless they are tempered by a few quite non-altruistic considerations. "We have to deal with the children of this world", he wrote, and sometimes they are wiser than the children of light. "In this instance, if we can get the Canadian Government . . . to open the door even a few inches we shall do well and we shall be helping some of these sorrowful peoples. A demand at this time for a wide open door would in the end help to seal it fast."[61] Clearly, he knew with whom and with what he was dealing! At the same time, he urged the church and its clergy to struggle against "narrowness, selfishness and race prejudice" in Canada and in its own ranks;[62] otherwise, there was little chance of accomplishing anything.

Some of the narrowness, selfishness and race prejudice found sensational public expression in an anti-immigrant (and refugee) petition bearing 127,364 signatures sponsored by the nationalistic St. Jean Baptiste Society of Quebec and presented to the House of Commons by Wilfrid Lacroix M.P. early in 1939. To a prime minister obsessed with national unity and the fortunes of his party in French Canada, the political message was perfectly clear. To his Anglican critics, however, the matter appeared in an entirely different light: "If ever there was a time when Canada could give a Christian lead to the world, if ever there was a time when our leaders in Parliament might forget differences and forget votes and think of people made in God's image and come together in opening our doors to the persecuted, surely that time is now."[63] More of the narrowness, selfishness and meanness found expression when the King government refused to allow the desperate Jewish passengers on the liner St. Louis — the notorious 'Voyage of the Damned' — to land on Canadian soil in June of the same year. "What must our warm-hearted King and Queen . . . be thinking as they read of that shipload of persecuted Jewry being sent back to Germany, and then recall the vast open spaces of the Canada they have just seen and, we believe, have learned to love?", wrote a correspondent to *The Canadian Churchman* on June 15th.[64] That he was not alone in his sentiments is demonstrated by the spate of offers from many parts of Canada to adopt refugee families that followed this incident, including at least one from a Toronto congregation,[65] perhaps prompted by a pro-refugee resolution of the local diocesan synod.[66] The government, however, rejected these applications. "Have we the courage", asked the Rev. C. J. Lamb, to "let down our prejudice and admit at least

as many refugees as we can or are willing to come''?

> The horror of the plight of the refugees was emphasized a month ago when a shipload of 907 homeless and despairing people, driven from their country by the Nazis, were refused a haven in South America. For three weeks they went from port to port, and because no nation in the so-called generous West was willing to receive them, were in danger of being dumped again on German soil.[67]

Unfortunately, neither the nation as a whole nor its leadership had the courage. Both, therefore, but the latter in particular, earned the indictment of the Canadian Quaker G. Raymond Booth, published at the end of 1939 in *The Canadian Churchman*: ''Between Nazism which drives them [Jewish Children] forth and a certain kind of Canadianism which seeks to bar their coming there isn't much to choose from morally.''[68] Apparently, the Anglican editors concurred.

When the wrong kind of Canadianism showed no signs of diminishing, a sense of profound disappointment at the failure of the pro-refugee forces to change the government's mind manifested itself in church reports and during the war years. In 1940, for example, the executive committee of the Council for Social Service deplored the fact that a lack of public support had prevented the rescue of more than a limited number of Hitler's ''victims''; only those who could ''amply pay their way'' had found admission into Canada.[69] Once again, the Synod of the Diocese of Toronto approved a motion urging the federal government to do its part in alleviating the crisis, as the ''Motherland'' (Britain) was already staggering under a heavy burden, and could not absorb large numbers of destitute aliens unassisted.[70] In any case, the ''plight of the refugees ought to call forth the streams of Christian sympathy and love, and should break down the many barriers of Canadian national selfishness.''[71] That is certainly what ought to have happened, but, as the readers of *The Canadian Churchman* were soon informed (by Raymond Booth), it was not what actually *was* happening.[72] Instead, Canada was second only to Soviet Russia in its anti-refugee intransigence: a remarkable feat for a so-called 'Christian' nation, and one of which the Anglican leadership clearly was not proud. In 1941, and in each subsequent year, The Council for Social Service pleaded for a more open policy as the crisis deepened and grew more sinister. Why could not the government be more generous?

> At the present moment [1943] there are some 10,000 to 15,000 [Jewish refugees, mostly children] in Portugal who have escaped over the Pyrenees. . . . Those rescued make room for more to escape from conquered countries. Every one rescued is a life saved. There is here a challenge for humanity's sake, for sweet charity's sake. These today, are among the offended ''little ones'' of the world for whom Christ spoke.[72]

The pathos of this situation also excited the sympathy of the 1943 meeting

of the General Synod, which collectively resolved to "earnestly entreat" the King government to offer immediate sanctuary to the objects of persecution, especially those stranded in Portugal, without regard to "race, creed or condition", and to facilitate their entry by suspending the immigration laws in light of the exigencies of the hour.[74] Similar resolutions were passed during the same year by two diocesan synods (Niagara and Rupert's Land).[75] Although, by this time, if Robert W. Ross is correct,[76] most of the details of the Final Solution had found their way into the western press, and were certainly known to the western leaders — including, one surmises, the Canadian prime minister —, not even the national assembly of a major Canadian denomination managed to prick the public conscience to any significant degree. The church was merely one more voice crying in the wilderness.

Conclusion

No one can now reconstruct the era in its entirety, and it is simply impossible to know to what extent the plight of the European Jews was mentioned, or not mentioned, in the innumerable sermons, parish newsletters and other organs of the Anglican communion in Canada from the years 1933 to 1945. Probably, as Abella and Troper allege, the majority of Anglicans like the majority of Canadians were not particularly moved by the pro-refugee appeals to which they were subjected, at least, not sufficiently moved in order to instigate a public outcry. Probably also, Anglicanism was infected with some measure of antisemitism — most Christian churches were, especially at that time, although there is no real evidence to support this assertion in the official records and journals that constitute the main source materials of this article. Certainly, neither in England or Canada did the Church of England possess an arch-antisemitic propagandist such as the American Catholic priest Fr. Charles Coughlin, whose radio tirades against the Jews, incidently, were heard regularly on Canadian soil; Bishop Headlam was hardly an Anglican equivalent. Indeed, the Anglican interest in Jewish missions, fostered by a few priests of Jewish extraction (Rev. Morris Kaminsky, Rev. E. S. Greenbaum), created a special sensitivity to antisemitism, since it kept the church in close touch with the ills and torments of modern Jewry which the missionaries heard at first hand. Like the German pietists of the previous century, moreover, the Anglican pietists who wished to convert Jews to Christianity could not abide racial doctrines that seemed to strike at the foundations of biblical faith. While they were Christian triumphalists, and frequently also scriptural literalists, there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of their love for the Jewish people. However, not all

Anglicans by any means shared this kind of special concern; most, in common with the Laodiceans in *Revelation*, were neither 'hot nor cold' but somewhere in between.

Nevertheless, it does not follow that the Church of England in Canada was silent in the face of the persecutions that ravaged European Jewry during the Nazi era. Nor did only a few highly placed Anglicans speak out; church journalists, ordinary priests and laymen, diocesan and national synods as well as some bishops and archbishops made their voices heard. The church press was particularly vigorous, even if its contributors did not always read events correctly and thereby drew the wrong conclusions. One forms the impression of a community that sought to rise above its own innate prejudices in the name of a universal justice, and, while this judgment must be qualified by the apparent fact that most of the church like most of the country was overcome with inertia, the record is not as bad as Abella and Troper suggest. If a religious community is identified with its leaders and officers, the Anglicans were far from silent; indeed, they were surprisingly vocal, especially once the fires of imperial patriotism were kindled and German totalitarianism was defined as the mortal foe of Anglo-Saxon democracy. To save the Jews was to save the honour of the empire and the principles of the Christian faith. This blend of British loyalty and Christian humanitarianism was a compelling force in Canadian Anglicanism during this period in western history, and not to be underestimated or treated lightly. It had its parallel in the United Church, as well as in other Canadian denominations (as, for example, when Silcox urged Canadians to welcome their king and queen in 1939 by demonstrating that the "spirit of British fair-play" was "still alive" in this Dominion by our answer to the challenge of the refugees"),[77] but it was especially potent among the Anglicans. For this reason, the Church of England in Canada cannot be compared unfavourably to the United Church of Canada with respect to the Jewish refugee crisis; neither church did as much as it could and should have done, but neither church was as inert as it might have been. Morally speaking, both were more creditable than the elected government and parliament of their country.

NOTES

1. "The United Church and the Jewish Plight During the Nazi Era 1933-1945", *Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal* (Vol. 8/no. 2/Fall 1984) pp. 55-71.
2. Irving Abella & Harold Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe* 1933-1948, Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1982, p. 51.
3. Rev. C. B. Mortlock, "The Christian Revolution", *The Canadian Churchman* (December 3, 1936) p. 691.
4. Rev. F. D. V. Narborough, "The Danger of Pharisaism", *The Canadian Churchman*

(February 11, 1943) p. 83.

5. Robert W. Ross, *So It Was True: The American Protestant Press and Nazi Persecution of the Jews*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980, p. 163.
6. *Mission to the Jews*, Missionary Society of the Church of Canada, Good Friday, 1938.
7. "Report of the Montreal Jewish Mission", *Diocese of Montreal Synod Journal* (April, 1935) p. 100.
8. Superintendent of the Toronto Diocesan Mission to the Jews.
9. Rev. F. J. Nicholson, "The Christian Approach to the Jew", *The Canadian Churchman* (April 11, 1935) p. 228.
10. E.g., *Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* (1934); *The Jew in the Medieval Community* (1937), etc.
11. Cf. James Parkes, *Voyage of Discoveries*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1969, pp. 108, 151. Writing about his 1938 visit, Parkes notes that, while lecturing on antisemitism, he tried to persuade the Canadian authorities to open their doors more widely to professional refugees from Nazi Germany." (p. 151) His pleas, unfortunately, fell on deaf ears as far as the government was concerned, but he clearly made a significant impression on his fellow (Canadian) Anglicans.
12. C.E.S., "Book Reviews", *Social Welfare* (September, 1938(p. 25.
13. C. J. Lamb, "The Book Shelf", *The Canadian Churchman* (March 16, 1939) p. 174.
14. Rev. Claris E. Silcox, "The Church and Anti-Semitism", *The Canadian Churchman* (February 6, 1941) p. 86. Both Christians and Jews are therefore discovering through a common peril a common ground. . . . And out of this comradeship in arms, there should develop a new understanding and perhaps the groundwork of a new *modus vivendi*.
15. "Bishop's Message", *The Canadian Churchman* (August 1933) p. 1.
16. "London Letter", *The Canadian Churchman* (August 2, 1934) pp. 461-462.
17. "At Montreal Synod", *The Canadian Churchman* (May 12, 1938) p. 301.
18. "London Letter", *The Canadian Churchman* (October 10, 1935) p. 581.
19. "Enemies of Christianity", *The Canadian Churchman* (May 13, 1937) p. 294. The words cited are from Bishop Farthing's annual charge to the Synod of Montreal.
20. See "Racialism in Italy", *The Montreal Churchman* (October, 1938) p. 16.
21. "London Letter", *The Canadian Churchman* (May 20, 1937) p. 308.
22. Rev. W. J. Gilling, "Follow Me", *The Canadian Churchman* (December 8, 1938) p. 711.

The preacher dwelt on the theme of deification, describing Hilter as a "Man-God" whose worship required a blood sacrifice like the Aztec deity of Montezuma, and with the same inhuman results. Instead of Aztec temples, however, prison cells and concentration camps supplied the sacrificial altars o the modern Nazi cult. Gilling concluded his sermon (delivered before a conference of Anglican youth) with a plea to follow Jesus, the better Führer.

> "Who," says the teacher to young German children, "in these days most reminds us of Jesus — through his love of humble people and his readiness for self-sacrifice?" And the answer is, "The Fuehrer". . . . Thus we see apostacy rampant —paganism would perhaps be the more accurate word. . . . And this modern apostacy is accompanied by, and enforced by, persecution — persecution comparable in extent and remorselessness to anything which the past has to deplore."

23. Very Rev. W. R. Inge, "Substitutes for Religion", *The Canadian Churchman* (May 7, 1936) p. 292. Inge, the Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, England, takes pains to point out that he is neither a fascist nor a Nazi, and does not approve of antisemitism.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Headlam, who was chairman of the Church of England's Council on Foreign Relations, was extremely hostile to the German anti-Nazi Confessing Church. See Ronald C. D. Jasper, *George Bell: Bishop of Chicester*, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 219.
26. "Holy Church Throughout the World", *The Canadian Churchman* (October 19, 1933) p. 631.
27. *Journal of Proceedings*, 13th Session (moved by Dr. Abbott-Smith, seconded by Mr. T. Mortimer) p. 117.

"It depreciates as being a denial of the principles of Christianity, and therefore abhorrent to Christian people, the 'ill-treatment of the Jews' . . . by nations, communities or individuals on account of their race or religion."

28. "A Chat with the Editor", *The Canadian Churchman* (January 23, 1936) p. 50.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Editor's Note, "When Judaism is Blasphemed", *Social Welfare* (September, 1935) p. 23.
31. Dorothy M. Barter Snow, "He Was a Jew", *The Canadian Churchman* (March 5, 1936) p. 152.
32. *Diocese of Rupert's Land Synod Journal*, 52nd Session (November, 1938) p. 18.
"We have been distressed during the last few years because of the injustice and persecution meted out to God's ancient people. The situation in Europe as it affects the Jews at the present time is desperate. . . . We shall do what we can to forward any movement which has for its object the supplying of the bodily needs of Jewish and other fugitives and finding them a place on earth where they can live in peace and enjoy the freedom which is rightly theirs."
33. *Ibid.*
34. *The Canadian Churchman* (February 23, 1939) p. 113.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Conrad Hoffman, "The German Refugees", *The Canadian Churchman* (January 26, 1939) p. 55.
"What is so tragic is that wherever anti-Semitism breaks out, members of the Christian Churches, clergy as well as laity. . . . become involved and ofttimes are actually the moving spirits behind it."
37. Rev. C. J. Lamb, "How Long, O Lord!", *The Canadian Churchman* (April 17, 1941) p. 249.
38. "From Over and Across", *The Canadian Churchman* (September 10, 1942) p. 509.
"By wholesale massacre, torture and starvation the Nazis are deliberately exterminating this brave nation."
39. "Too Horrible to Think About", *The Canadian Churchman* (December 24, 1942) p. 754.
40. "The Empire as Refuge from Massacre", *The Canadian Churchman* (February 25, 1943) p. 121.
41. *Religion Pleads the Cause of Refugees* (May 28, 1943) p. 7.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Diocese of Niagara Synod Journal*, 69th Session (May, 1943) p. 33.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38. (M44 moved by the Rev. G. M. W. Smith, seconded by the Rev. D. J. Curzon.) A copy of this resolution was forwarded to Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King.
45. John A. Cormie, "Immigration, No Remedy!", *Social Welfare* (September, 1936) p. 99.
46. *18th Annual Report*, The Council for Social Service of the Church of England in Canada, 1933, p. 9.
47. *22nd Annual Report*, The Council for Social Service of the Church of England in Canada, 1937, p. 8.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
49. Abella & Troper, *op. cit., passim.*
50. *24th Annual Report*, The Council for Social Service of the Church of England in Canada, 1939, p. 17.
51. *Ibid.*
52. "Canadian Christians and German Refugees", *Social Welfare* (March, 1936) p. 25.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
54. "Anglican Action on the Refugee's, *Social Welfare* (Winter, 1939) p. 64.
55. "The Refugees", *The Montreal Churchman* (December, 1938) p. 4.
56. See minutes of the Executive Committee of the Council for Social Service (December 14, 1938) p. 1.
57. *24th Annual Report*, The Council for Social Service of the Church of England in Canada,

1939, pp. 18019.

58. "A Chat with the Editor", *The Canadian Churchman* (February 2, 1939) p. 66.
59. *Ibid.*
60. "The German Refugees", *The Canadian Churchman* (February 2, 1939) p. 71.
61. "Letters to the Editor", *The Canadian Churchman* (February 23, 1939) p. 121.
62. *Ibid.*
63. "A Chat with the Editor", *The Canadian Churchman* (March 2, 1939) p. 130.
64. W. F. Ambrose, "Letters to the Editor", *The Canadian Churchman* (June 15, 1939) p. 378. The letter written by W. F. Ambrose was originally entitled "The Wandering Jews".
65. *The Canadian Churchman* (July 13, 1939) pp. 428-429. See, for example, "Refugee Children in Canada" and "Refugee Family Wanted" in *The Canadian Churchman* (July 13, 1939) pp. 428-429.
66. 87th Session. *Diocese of Toronto Synod Journal (May-June, 1939) p. 105. (Moved by Mr. F. Andrew Brewin, seconded by Mr. Hugh Jones.)*

"That this Synod urges the Canadian Government to take steps to assist in relieving the intolerable conditions of European refugees and victims of persecution, by permitting the admission, and organizing the settlement in Canada of some of those most fitted to fit into Canadian life, and expresses is [sic] willingness to co-operate in arranging temporary hospitality or the adoption of children as required."

67. *Rev. C. J. Lamb,* "Have We the Courage?", *The Canadian Churchman* (July 27, 1939) p. 442.
68. G. Raymond Booth, "The Holy Innocents, 1939", *The Canadian Churchman* (December 21, 1939) p. 734.
69. *25th Annual Report*, The Council for Social Service of the Church of England in Canada, 1940, p. 10.
70. 88th Session, *Diocese of Toronto Synod Journal* (May 9, 1940) p. 75. (Moved by Professor E. A. Dale, seconded by Canon T. S. Boyle).

". . . the Synod of the Diocese of Toronto respectfully urges the Government of the Dominion of Canada to welcome to this country a large number of selected refugees."

71. *Ibid.*, Appendix A, p. 183.
72. "Toronto", *The Canadian Churchman* (May 30, 1940) p. 350.

"Mr. Raymond Booth . . . said the numbers are infinitesimally small compared with what they could and should be. . . . Canada," he said, "is the second on the list of civilized countries in the world giving the least offer of help and assistance to the refugees from Naziism."

73. *28th Annual Report*, The Council for Social Service of the Church of England in Canada, 1943, p. 27. Abella and Troper, *op. cit.*, p. 150 which refers to the large proportions of Jews among the Portuguese refugees, many of whom were children.
74. *Journal of Proceedings*, 15th Session (Moved by Dr. Cartwright, seconded by Senator A. K. Hugesson) p. 39.
75. See the *Diocese of Niagara Synod Journal* (May, 1943) p. 38, and the *Diocese of Rupert's Land Synod Journal* (November, 1943) p. 35, for pro-refugee resolutions. The Diocese of Niagara Synod moved: '. . . that every possible step ought to be taken at once to rescue from massacre the Jews in enemy and enemy occupied countries" (May, 1943) p. 38; and the Diocese of Rupert's Land Synod's resolution: that "we urge upon our Dominion Government to give sympathetic consideration to the plea that Canada should play her part in affording the sanctuary needed by these people." (November, 1943) p. 35.
76. Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
77. Claris E. Silcox, *The Challenge of Anti-Semitism to Democracy*, Toronto: The Committee on Jewish Gentile Relationships (January, 1939) p. 16.

Volunteers for a Dream

RACHEL SCHLESINGER

In the 1960's the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan, focused attention on a new wave of feminists. Women were better educated, worked outside the home for pay, and fewer women became involved in volunteer organizations. Several years ago, this writer, armed with an audio-tape recorder, visited women who had been active in Canadian Hadassah-WIZO, on the local and national level, during the years 1937-1947. At the time of the interviews in 1983 all were still active in the organization and in the Jewish community.

I wish to thank Toronto Hadassah WIZO for making available their archives of the *Reporter Magazine* for the years 1937-1945. The women with whom I spoke, (Gert Kronick, Mattie Rotenberg, Lil Levy) spent hours with me, and I appreciate their willingness to share their reminiscences with me, and allow me to understand how they joined together to mold an organization that gave women a strong voice, a feeling of sisterhood, and a sense of accomplishment. It goes without saying that there are many such women, and a variety of organizations in Canada that record a parallel history. I chose to interview these women as part of this organization because I had a special bond with them, I admired them, and I count myself as a member of this organization.

All the excerpts from the *Reporter Magazine* were written by the editor, Mattie Rotenberg, during the years 1937-1947.

The women in my generation, post 1960's, did not invent concepts such as "sisterhood", or "support groups". We learned these ways of working together for a cause from our mothers and their organization. They fought for causes, not only in labour unions or in conflict situations, but also within the establishment.

Background

"The healing of the Daughter of my People" is both the masthead of the magazine published by Hadassah-WIZO in Toronto, and the slogan of the Hadassah organization, founded in 1917 by Henrietta Szold. This paper will

look at the organization, the women, and the articles printed by the organization in the *Reporter* in the years 1937-1945.

How did it all begin? Hadassah-WIZO (H.W.) officially began in Toronto in 1917. In 1921 the organization became a Federation in World WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization). Zionist organizations began in Toronto much earlier, as did women's involvement in Zionism.

"Zionism was one ideology which fostered relative unity as early as the turn of the century, drawing together not only the generations and the various groups of Eastern Europeans, but to a degree the recent arrivals and the old community as well . . . It was Zionism which provided the first organizational link between Jewish communities across Canada."[1]

The first women's Zionist organization in Canada was the *Daughters of Zion* club formed in Toronto, in September, 1900. The members were about fifteen years old at the time, and held the first meeting at the home of Ida Lewis (Siegel)[2] It was remarkable that a Zionist group met in Toronto as early as 1900 since the first World Zionist Congress had been held in Basel only three years earlier. The very term 'Zionism' was new to the vocabulary of the Jews of the world.

At the turn of this century many agreed that the only place for Jews was in their own state, and that this State must be Palestine. So, amidst the pogroms of Eastern Europe, the idea, and the process, Zionism, began.

An early step was raising money to buy tracts of land in Palestine, and the Daughters of Zion concentrated their fundraising on this. They went from door to door to sell *shekels*.[3] The money that was raised was sent to the Jewish National Fund, to buy land in Palestine.

The girls in the Daughters of Zion soon found that they had more in common than fund-raising, and their next step was to get a club room in which to meet on a regular basis. Friendships grew, and they broadened their range of activities. Other Zionist girls' and women's groups that formed at the turn of the century were *The Herzl Girls*, which grew out of a Sunday school class at the West End Sunday School led by Ida Lewis Siegel, and the *Bnot Zion Kadimah*. The latter group was the first organization in Toronto to institute the practice of collecting for the National Fund (J.N.F.) at Jewish weddings and other celebrations. The methods were varied, but all of these groups devoted their energies towards raising money to buy land in Palestine. When Hadassah was formally organized in 1917, these groups joined the larger organization, either retaining their own name, or joined the *Central Chapter* of Hadassah in Toronto.

In March, 1917, there was great excitement in the circles of Women's

Zionist groups; they were to receive a visit from Henrietta Szold, the founder of American Hadassah. G. K. recalls:

> "The meeting was held at the home of my mother, and I know exactly how many attended — 65, because I was sent to buy 65 new cups and saucers for the meeting."[5]

After hearing Miss Szold speak, it was decided to form additional chapters in Toronto. It is interesting to note that this enthusiasm to form an organization working towards a Jewish homeland in Palestine came before the Balfour Declation, which declared that "His Majesty's government views with favor the founding of a national home for the Jews in Palestine."[6] The movement grew quickly in all parts of Canada. By 1919 the chapters in various parts of Ontario held the first regional conference for groups from Toronto, Hamilton, Windsor, London and Brantford. This meeting was really the first Hadassah convention.

In January, 1919 the 16th convention of the Zionist Organization was held in Toronto. At this time there was an urgent appeal made to help the homeless and destitute Jews living in Palestine. A fund was created called Helping Hands, and Mrs. A. J. Freiman of Ottawa headed this massive effort. The contacts that she made with communities throughout the country launched Hadassah as a Dominion wide movement.[7]

In 1921 members of thirty chapters across the country were devoting their energies to such projects as a Girls' Domestic and Agricultural Science School at Nahalal, the Jewish National Fund, Palestine orphanages and child centres as well as a nurses' training school. The women sent aid to the haluzim (pioneers), established a tubercular centre at Safed, and supported a convalescent home.[8] By 1921 there were about 300 members of Hadassah in Toronto, divided into chapters.

In 1920, after the Armistice and the beginning of peace, the first attempt was made to bring together all the Zionist groups that had been cut off by the Great War. This first post war Zionist conference was held in London, England. Rebecca Sieff, eldest daughter of Michael Marks (founder of Marks and Spencer) decided to call together all the women who had been working in Zionist groups. She sent out letters and cables, and the word spread to many countries that this conference was of special interest to women. In July, 1920, steps were taken to establish the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO). The first meeting was held in London, and Mrs. Sieff was elected president. The women who attended resolved to "promote the health and welfare of women and children in Palestine, and to undertake to carry out specific work in the reconstruction of the country."[8] Wizo saw its' task . . . as two-fold, . . . in the diaspora and in Israel . . ."[10] At the time when

women were getting the vote in Canada, the founders of WIZO were deeply conscious of their responsibilities towards the future of their people, a future that was to be rebuilt in Israel while at the same time maintaining a Jewish life in all the countries of the diaspora.

In 1921 Vera and Chaim Weizmann[11] made their first trip to the United States and Canada, and at this time Mrs. Weizmann persuaded Canadian Hadassah to become a part of the new WIZO. As part of this organization Canadian women joined a large sisterhood, an international link that united women in more than 65 countries.

In 1927 the organization in Canada celebrated its' tenth anniversary. In a Jubilee Yearbook the achievements of Toronto Hadassah were listed:

> '. . . (Toronto) had a great many firsts, such as the first Bazaar. The significant feature of the Hadassah movement in Toronto is that it has taken a large number of women away from a continuous round of household and personal considerations and has made them aware of their relation to the group of which they are members. It has fired them with the desire to contribute their share towards the welfare of their People, both in the realm of the reconstruction of Palestine and in the field of communal work.''[12]

The Reporter

As Hadassah WIZO grew in Toronto, the organization began to publish the *Reporter*, as a method of keeping contact with all the membership. As a former editor, I note that the magazine has undergone many changes over the years, both in format and context. An examination of the editorials in the *Reporter* for a ten year period, 1937-1947 will provide insight into what the organization was officially doing and saying during the war years. Through the editorials issues were raised, and women were called to action.

A glance at the *Reporter* published each month in Toronto during this period, chronicles Hadassah-WIZO's (H.W.) official position, the aims, goals, dreams and ideals of the organization. Each issue contained an opening editorial, announcements of meetings and programs, and an update on projects carried out by the chapters. The years 1937-1947 were years of growing awareness of death, destruction, and finally rebirth. The women who were active in Toronto H.W. during these years had to meet challenges for which they were not really prepared. Conditions were extra-ordinary, and there was no real set of rules. The organization did have certain aims and aspirations:

1. to extend material and moral support to Canadian Jewish women and to the people of Israel.
2. to assist the needy and indigenous population of Palestine by sponsoring health, education and social welfare services for women and children from day care and creches to clubs, vocational training and guidance

centers.

3. to strengthen and perpetuate Jewish identity, and to encourage Jewish and Hebrew culture in Canada.
4. to cooperate with other organizations in the promotion of the Canadian ideals of democracy, human dignity, freedom, justice, and the pursuit of peace . . .[13]

How did the women and the organization strive to meet their objectives, their aims, during the period under discussion? There is a saying in Hebrew, "Ain Breyra" (there is no alternative), and that describes the situation of the time. People and nations went beyond acceptable human behaviour, both in brutality and in bravery. It is only today that the full details of those times are being made public, as records are being released. In the *Canadian Historical Review* Abella and Troper chronicle the situation in Canada regarding Jewish refugees coming into Canada during the years from 1933-39 in their article The Line Must Be Drawn Somewhere.[14] They depict the attitude of official Canada that Jews were not welcome.

The mood of the country was no secret, especially to the Jews within her borders. It is important to be aware of the attitudes of the country at the time in order to fully understand what was officially happening within the ranks of Jewish organizations.

Many felt that they were powerless in the broad framework of Canadian politics to lobby effectively for admittance of Jews from the war-torn countries. Their very impotence affected the policies of their organizations. The "establishment" numbers were afraid to 'rock the boat', afraid to bring out the latent anti-semitism at home by working for the Jews abroad. At the same time, they had to take some action, the world conditions were such that women, they decided, had no alternative. If Jews could not be brought into Canada, then Hadassah-WIZO women had alternative goals — they could, and did, pour their energies, and their money into general war work, and specifically, into child rescue operations, into **Youth Aliyah**.

Youth Aliyah refers to a massive child rescue operation that was begun in 1936 by a German woman, Reche Freier. 'Aliyah' is a term that means "to go up", and is used when Jews are called up to read from the Torah on a Sabbath in the Synagogue. This term came to mean more than a spiritual going up, it also was used in a physical sense, to go up to the Land of Israel. Through Youth Aliyah, Reche Freier hoped to save children from Germany and Europe and send them to live in Palestine, in children's villages. Gradually other organizations in Canada, Jewish and non-Jewish joined in this effort, all under the umbrella of H.W. The work of rescuing children

became a main part of the work of H.W. Women joined the organization in the late 1930's in order to be a part of this effort. L.L. remembers:

> Youth Aliyah had just begun, Reche Freier came to Toronto and Rose Dunkelman had a big meeting at her home. After the meeting I went up to Rose, said I was very impressed, and wanted to do something — so she said, 'come join Hadassah'. I did, and we started to have dinners to get funds for Youth Aliyah. I even got the unions to donate for this.[15]

Not everyone in the community supported this effort. There were tensions within the community; people felt that this project would take something away from the local community. "There are only so many peanuts, and if you take some away, there won't be enough left for those of us at home".[16] These feelings prompted the editorial of the *Reporter* to state in January, 1939;

> the whole refugee situation has laid bare the moral bankruptcy of our civilization — a civilization where human values are low in the scale, where property investments, interest, and political considerations far outweigh the regard for human life. Even in our community there is evidence of this distortion of values . . . Toronto Hadassah is collecting for Youth Aliyah. In comparison with Jews in other lands we live in freedom, comfort. Yet some infection must be drying up the channels of pity in Jewish life when Jewish fathers who could, with a stroke of a pen lift a child from hopelessness to happiness have failed to do so.[17]

The women were frustrated in their relief efforts. Yet while the men in the community advised keeping a low profile, thus leading to inaction, the women went to work. The women did not rely on the men, but did their own fund-raising. In Toronto, in 1939 the chapters began a new plan for raising Youth Aliyah funds; they devised a 'minyan'.[18] In Judaism a minyan refers to the ten men needed for a quorum during religious services. The H.W. minyan consisted of groups of ten women, each paying 36¢ per week. By 1942 reports began to come to Canada of the incredible rescues; children who walked for years from Poland, Rumania and Hungary to Teheran, children who were saved. Youth Aliyah work changed over the years, but it is still a major part of H.W. activity.

There is a story that Rose Dunkelman sent in her money for Youth Aliyah each month, without the knowledge of her husband. Any account of the beginnings of Hadassah in Toronto includes Rose Dunkelman. She was born in 1889, and died in 1949. She married in 1910 and had five children. After the First World War in addition to her many volunteer activities she and her husband founded the *Jewish Standard* and she was the managing editor. In recognition for her many activities she was presented with a Coronation Medal at the time of the Coronation of King George VI, May 12, 1937.[19]

Another major part of H.W. work during these years was of course, devoted to the general war effort. Through the pages of the *Reporter* we learn

of the scope of these activities, similar in many ways to those of other organizations, yet with a difference.

> How often have you, Hadassah member, said to yourself, What can I do to help the war effort? . . . Hadassah has stepped forward and offers you the opportunity to serve . . . Red Cross knitting, money for blankets . . . clothes for refugee children in England, contributions for ambulances . . . socks for men serving in mine sweepers . . . and now Canadian Hadassah has made itself responsible for a ward of thirty beds, completely equipped, at the Canadian Red Cross hospital in England. And in addition, Canadian Hadassah will erect and completely equip a hospital unit of 60 beds in Nahalal (Palestine) as a service to Empire troops in the East. (October, 1940)

The difference in war work was that Toronto Hadassah women worked not only for the Empire, but for Palestine. Canadians had a clear cut idea of what the fighting was for. The forces of good, the allies, were poised against the forces of evil, the axis. Canadians knew that their government was behind them, that the Commonwealth and England, the mother country, was one fighting unit against the Axis. For Jews, and for women in organizations such as Hadassah there was also another front to this war.

In 1939 The Malcolm MacDonald White Paper on Palestine was issued.[21] It was unbelievable to the Jewish people around the world that at a time when only the doors of the death camps were open to them, the British would seal off Palestine. The Jewish soldiers in Palestine fought bravely in the British forces against the axis, as if there was no White Paper, and they fought the British as if there was no war. The children that were rescued by Youth Aliyah often had to be smuggled into the country. Hadassah women in Canada continued to raise funds to rescue children, knowing that they would have to be brought into Palestine illegally. Other countries would not accept Jews either. In Canada 1,000 certificates were issued to rescue children, but as the politicians argued, the children perished in the death camps and after the war, when Canada finally was willing to admit orphans, only 600 could be found to bring to Canada.[22]

Canadian Hadassah women, part of the Dominion, raised funds for all aspects of Palestine relief in spite of the British White Paper. The Hadassah woman was affluent, part of the Establishment, but she was also politically aware, and often took real action before her prudent husband. While her husband held private debates she went from door to door, organized fund raising projects, and worked for an unpopular cause. She didn't wait until it was politically sound to act, she just acted.

In February, 1942, the *Reporter* put out a special issue highlighting the achievements of the organization over 25 years.[23] Involvement in war work and in activities in Palestine were featured in this issue.

> Jewish Palestine is providing the Empire with a trusty ally and with considerable war

potential both in men and materials . . . Fifteen thousand Jews are serving in various British units . . . we too are proud of our contributions. By special request of the Rt. Hon. Malcolm MacDonald, High Commissioner in Canada for the United Kingdom, we provide funds for the purchase of an Aircraft Ambulance for Palestine, we furnish a ward in the Sara Delano Roosevelt Memorial Nursing Home for the bombed children in England . . . we establish and support soldier's clubs and huts in Palestine, and provision of comforts for the British and Empire forces in Palestine. We provide financial assistance to the wives, children, and other dependents of Palestine soldiers serving with the British forces in the East . . . and creches and other necessary services for the children of soldiers whose wives are engaged in war work . . . We also support two mobile canteens, one for England through the Canadian Red Cross, and one for Palestine.[24]

While women the world over were working in some measure for the war effort, the Hadassah woman worked in addition for her people because . . .

Jews are not the only ones who are suffering . . . but each one of these others has a government to speak for it . . . and the hope for a national restoration after the war . . . Listen to the rollcall of the United Nations, the name of Zion is not there. And yet our men and women are fighting . . . Palestine must be established as the National Home for the Jewish People.[25] (May, 1943)

Education

Through the pages of the *"Reporter"* we learn that in addition to the demands made by the war effort and Youth Aliyah activities, there were also concerns closer to home. Education was a theme that appeared frequently. "The dedicated member, the one who will work, had to be educated, has to know what she is working for." Courses, seminars, book reviews, special lectures, reading lists, program ideas, all appeared frequently in the pages of the *"Reporter"*. In March, 1939 the *Reporter* stressed the "need for Jewish education, and repeated the theme in 1945:

We cannot be inactive or indifferent in this war of the mind, we cannot let our ideals slumber. Unless we keep our ideals alive, they perish, and if we allow them to perish, we will have lost the war even though we won every battle. It has been said that it is easier to die for our ideals than to live by them . . . The ideals for which we fought, Truth, Peace, Freedom, and Brotherly love, these are the basic principles of Judaism. Enough people died for them. It is our part to study them, to know them, and to live by them.[26] (February, 1945)

In the issues of the *Reporter* that came out after the war this theme continues — a Jewish woman has to be an educated woman. Study groups, formal and informal, were an important part of each chapter. Realistically, however, the educational aspects of the program did not reach, or did not appeal to the total membership. Some of the women interviewed stated clearly that this was not their area of interest. They were Zionists, yes, and fundraisers, but did not spend time on the educational program per se.[27] As in all organizations, the official policies and the content of the organ, the *"Reporter"*, did not apply to the total membership because each woman joined, and remained in the organization for a variety of reasons, unique in importance to each individual.

Membership

Each organization needs to renew its membership, and Hadassah in Toronto, used the pages of the *''Reporter''* as one way to appeal for new members yearly.

Woman joined the organization for a variety of reasons. An older woman interviewed joined because . . . ''my husband told me to.''[28] Another, to be part of Youth Aliyah,[29] while the third woman, said that ''. . . it was the thing to do. My mother-in-law was a member, my sister and sister-in-law as well. The question wasn't to join or not, it was which chapter would I join.''[30]

In the early years the organization remained small, by choice. The woman interviewed all agreed that this was an elite organization. You were invited to join, you had to be a somebody or married to a somebody. You may have been asked to join, perhaps by Rose Dunkelman, and then it was important to be in the right chapter. The War years brought about a great change in this view of membership. Instead of an exclusive group with a narrow power base, a base that played musical chairs with all the positions of importance, the War years saw the beginnings of a real democratic organization.

The forces that drew women into Hadassah were similar to the forces that brought women in general into volunteer service organizations. The idea that women should expand their motherly roles into society as a whole, and for the benefit of their religion, was universally acceptable at this time. These ideals were most important in the Jewish ethic, which taught that women had a unique role, and that they were responsible for the welfare of others. Zionist groups were not new, and it was natural that a certain segment of Jewish women would join them; these groups combined the ideals of general women's groups with the specific goal of Zionism and brought the women together under an ideological and religious roof into Hadassah. In a sense the Zionist groups were a distant cousin to the missionary groups that flourished during the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Hadassah's main projects and concerns were with families, children, religion, women and medical concerns. Their ''State'' was both Palestine and Canada.

In a sense, women joined not for social and cultural purposes alone but were organized to exert moral pressure on those people and institutions that could change society.

Hadassah members (pre-World War 2), were typical of their sisters in other organizations. They were women who could afford to join, both in terms of availability of household help, and in terms of not having to work. Indeed many of these women could not work due to social pressures. The women had the time, the ability, and the skills needed to function in this

organization. In turn they were given a sense of being involved in something useful, they learned skills, leadership techniques, and obtained educational benefits. The chapter provided a network of friends, and it put the member in contact with the outside world.

Many of the members of H.W. needed the organization as much as the organization needed them. "I had graduated as a trained social worker, but I was discouraged from ever entering the job market. My mother-in-law wouldn't hear of it. A married woman just didn't work."[31]

Hadassah-WIZO's membership expanded, and changed both during, and especially right after the Second World War, both numerically, and in terms of its social and economic components. In addition, there were now new immigrants in the organization. Chapters conducted their meetings in Yiddish once again, and in Polish, Hungarian and French.

Before the War, an editorial tried to define the kind of woman who should be a part of Toronto Hadassah.

> Hadassah membership consists of women who believe in Zionism . . . women are the reason for male Zionists . . . Most men are Zionists by marriage, but every woman is a Zionist at heart. We know that each member will awaken the heart of a mother, daughter, sister or friend, and make her realize that by being a member of Hadassah, with its fine ideal of democracy, loyalty and liberty, that she is being true to the ideals of womanhood.[32]

By October, 1938, the tone of the membership appeals took on the mantle of war-time language. The title of the editorial was "Spiritual conscription," and it stated that all Jewish women must join the ranks of all Zionist men and women . . .

> we cannot believe that the conscience of the world is dead . . . we must recruit our own armies . . . armies of peace. We have no brass bands no government regulations to swell our ranks . . . our conscription is spiritual. Her conscious loyalty to our historic tradition, her determination to range herself on the side of morality and justice, these on the forces we rely on to bring every Jewish woman into the ranks of Hadassah.[33]

A year later, October, 1939, the question raised in the *Reporter* dealt not only with membership, but also with citizenship;

> . . . women have failed as democratic citizens insofar as they have not taken the trouble to equip themselves to face responsibility which citizenship entails . . . Both as women and as Jews we have had a long and hard struggle for equal rights as citizens. If this hard won position is not to be lost, we must assume with seriousness and sincerity our responsibilities as Jews and as citizens.[34]

The organization in Toronto was depicting women who had all the traditional values of their society, a society that divided men's and women's lives into two spheres. The member was told that she could be a modern woman, have a career, and in Palestine (if not in Canada) works the fields as an agronomist, work hand in hand to build a new country. Women in

Toronto could participate, from the sidelines, cheering on with their fund-raising projects the *Halutzim*, the pioneers, who were actually in Palestine.

The war-time issues of the *Reporter* reflected the propaganda that was associated with the times. It was necessary to call the women to their tasks, and to inform them as well as inspire. There was no instant television to bring the world into the living room. It linked the member to the world, it bound them to Palestine, and it articulated dreams for the future.

The Women

Three women were interviewed on tape to broaden the understanding of the women and the organization during the decade in question, a decade that saw an organization gear up for a war effort, and then use its increased membership to fight for its new land, Israel. Who were the women in the organization at this time? The majority were Canadian born, middle and upper class, educated, some spoke Yiddish, most were affiliated Jews, and many of the chapters still retained the original members who had formed the organization twenty years before. They considered themselves above the 'greeners', the new immigrants who spoke only Yiddish and who came mainly from the working class and socialist backgrounds of Eastern Europe.

G.R., the oldest member interviewed, remembers mainly the early, formative years. She remembers the friendship of organizing events in the kitchen, while eating Rose Dunkelman's cream puffs. In her time, the fund-raising events were personal, each woman was directly involved. Her mother and friends, for example, got material donated, this they sewed with the machines in her father's shop into aprons, and G.K. and her friends sold them. The social aspects of each chapter were important in her time.

> '. . . *Rose* chapter was nice, but *Naomi* was, 'eppiss' nicer. The women were younger . . . soon the chapters became cliques. We lost members from *Rose* chapter, they tried to get into *Naomi*, couldn't so went to *Miryam*. I was a member of *Rose*. It had one president for twenty years. Some of the members of the chapter couldn't even read or write English. The chapter began at Rose Dunkelman's house, she got hundreds of members with her cream puffs.''[35]

Mrs. K married in 1912 and joined her chapter that same year. In the 1930's she and her family actually went to live in Palestine, one of the few committed Zionists to do so at that time. They returned to Canada before the War. Many of her memories are selective, she remembers positive aspects of early Hadassah life, but the details are often vague. (She died in October, 1985 and was greatly mourned in the Toronto community — who recognized that she was indeed a pioneer, and a model of how women were involved in Jewish community life).

The editorials quoted in this paper were written, for the most part by M.R. who was the editor of the *Reporter* for the period in question. Mrs. R. entered Hadassah in the same way that most women go into a volunteer organization . . . "it was just one of those things that everyone did. I was married in 1924, my sister belonged to *Scopus* chapter, so I joined." M.R. always put her home and family before any organizational commitments. She has five children, and ran a traditional, orthodox religious household. Her educational background was not typical. She was the first woman to receive a Ph.D. from the University of Toronto in physics in the late 1920's. When she couldn't find the kind of education she wanted for her children she was involved in organizing the first Jewish Day School in Toronto, Hillcrest Progressive School. In addition to teaching at the University of Toronto during the war years, and her Hadassah activities, she also did daily broadcasts for the C.B.C. After the war she represented Canada at the first meeting at the United Nations Organization on the Status of Women's Commissions convened by Eleanor Roosevelt.

Each woman looks for different things in an organization, and makes her own contributions to her group. "I was active, but I never was a common soldier. I was busy doing other things than fund-raising," L.L. said in her interview that ". . . M.R. was considered the intellectual. Her area was education and she did this well." It was a stroke of good fortune for Hadassah-WIZO in Toronto to have such an eloquent spokeswoman as editor of their magazine. She set the tone of the official policy that each and every member could read, and absorb in the monthly *Reporter*.

Each woman who was interviewed was asked about the relations between Hadassah and other organizations in Toronto at the time. L.L. felt that the women who belonged to other Zionist groups such as Pioneer Women came from a different group. "They were all newcomers who spoke Yiddish and who moved in different circles." M.R. had a few words to say about the National Council of Jewish Women . . .

> "it was not the right organization for me to join. There was outright war between Hadassah and Council. Council was then run by "die Deutchen" (Germans) and they were adamantly opposed to anything Zionist . . . they fought it as late as 1939."[36]

The women who were interviewed all were part of the elite, they were women in positions of power and influence in the organization. Between them they had held most of the posts on the Toronto and National executive. When asked about their perceptions of the 'typical' Hadassah woman of the era their answers were similar.

> "There were all kinds, first generation as well as new immigrants. The chapters became

more than just a chapter, it was also a social life. If one was sick, the others helped — it was a source of mutual help. The chapter filled a big part in the lives of the women. Certain chapters had the reputation of being above the others, socially it was hard to get into these chapters. People would recruit their friends and relations." (M.R.)[37]

L.L. was the third, and youngest woman interviewed. She joined the organization in 1936, answering a call for help in the work of Youth Aliyah. In common with M.R. she was professionally educated before her marriage, with an M.S.W. from the School of Social Work of the University of Toronto. She never worked for pay after her marriage, so devoted her time and energies to volunteer organizations such as Hadassah. When asked about the organization she said:

"Hadassah has to be most marvelous organization in the world. It has always fascinated me that after all, in those days we didn't travel to Israel, or Palestine, it was too distant. I marvel at the fact that we could get all those women to work for an ideal. We had to manufacture our own inspiration. There wasn't the feeling that we had to work to fulfill ourselves, you could do this by being a volunteer. Everyone who came into the organization gained, they gained skills, and self-confidence."[38]

The Hadassah-WIZO organization in Toronto in the 1980's is very different from that of 30-40 years ago. It retains most of the fund-raising projects, and has added many more. Its education program is expanded, but still appeals to only a fraction of the membership. The older members remember the difficult days of the War, and the founding of the State. The newer members were not even born when Israel became a reality. The sense of urgency, the sense of participating in history is different today. Today's organization also has to manufacture inspiration. The member may be a professional woman who devotes some, not all of her time to volunteer work. She can call a caterer to prepare for a function, and might have difficulty understanding a time when an organization grew by the cream puffs in a wealthy woman's kitchen.

In difficult times there are special people who bring out the best in individuals, and in an organization. Yesterday's Hadassah woman was a volunteer for a dream, today's member works hard to make the dream a reality.

NOTES

1. Stephen A. Speisman, *The Jews of Toronto: A history to 1937* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1979) p. 200
2. Hadassah Organization of Canada, *Jubilee Book, 1917-1927* (Montreal, 1927) pp. 101-104.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Taped interview, Gert. Kronick, 1979.
6. Balfour Declaration — written by Lord Balfour, the foreign minister, to Lord Rothchild saying, in part, that Great Britain would view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish People. (Balfour Declaration was signed, November 2, 1917).

7. Hadassah Organization of Canada, *Jubilee Book, 1917-1927*, "Helping Hand Fund", p. 139.
8. *Ibid.* p. 138.
9. *Ibid.* p. 140.
10. World Wizo, *Aims* (Jerusalem 1957).
11. Weitzmann discovered an explosive that helped England win World War I. He lobbied for the passage of the Balfour Declaration (Encyclopedia Judaica, v.4, 1971) p. 104.
12. Esther Waterman (ed.) *Golden Jubilee* (Montreal, Eagle Publishing Co. 1967) p. 37.
13. World WIZO, *Aims*, (Jerusalem, 1957).
14. I. Abella, H. Troper, "The Line Must be Drawn Somewhere: Canada and the Jewish Refugee, *Canadian Historical Review*, V. LX. No. 2 (June, 1979).
15. Taped interview, Lil. Levy.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Reporter*, (Toronto, Hadassah, January, 1937) p. 2.
18. Hadassah Organization of Canada, *Jubilee Book*, 1917-1927.
19. Interview, Mattie. Rotenberg, about Rose Dunkelman. Any account of the beginnings of Hadassah in Toronto includes the work of Rose Dunkelman. She was born in 1889 and died in 1949. She married in 1919 and had five children. After the First World War, in addition to her many volunteer committments she and her husband founded *The Jewish Standard*, and she was managing editor. In recognition for her many activities she was presented with a Coronation Medal at the time of the Coronation of King George VI, May, 1937. (*Jubilee Book, 1917-1927*).
20. *Reporter* (Toronto, Hadassah, October, 1940) p. 2.
21. *Encyclopedia Judaica*. (Jerusalem, Keter Publishing Company, 1971) v. 16, pp. 482-485.
22. Taped interview, Roberta Marcus, one of the children brought to Canada after the war under this scheme.
23. *Reporter* (Toronto, Hadassah, February, 1942) p. 2.
24. *Ibid.* (January, 1944) p. 2.
25. *Ibid.* (May, 1943) p. 2.
26. *Ibid.* (February, 1945) p. 2.
27. Taped interview, Lil. Levy.
28. Taped interview, Gert. Kronick (1979).
29. Taped interview, Lil. Levy.
30. Taped interview, Mattie Rotenberg.
31. Taped interview, Lil. Levy.
32. *Reporter* (Toronto, Hadassah, October, 1937) p. 2.
33. *Ibid.* (February, 1938) p. 2.
34. *Ibid.* (October, 1939) p. 2.
35. Taped interview, Gert Kronick.
36. Taped interview, Mattie Rotenberg.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Taped interview, Lil. Levy.

Bringing Order to Chaos, the centralization of Jewish Education in Toronto

HARVEY A. RABEN

"The history of Jewish Education, like the history of the Jewish peoples is a story of continuity through change. In its struggle for self-preservation, the Jewish people found the ability to adjust as necessary as the power to conserve. In fact adjustment was often the means by which the end, group preservation, was attained."[1]

Jewish communal leaders in North America sensed by the first decade of the 20th century that the largely decentralized and often fragmented nature of Jewish life was unable to deal with the large numbers of immigrants arriving and demanding help and services. If the reality of Jewish autonomy in Poland was a distant and primarily nostalgic memory, some form of old world communal authority had become more desirable than the haphazard and often competing forces that vied for Jewish leadership authority.

In the United States, the most noteworthy effort at centralization was made in New York City in what has come to be known as the Kehillah experiment. Under its aegis in 1909-1910 a survey of Jewish education was undertaken by Professor M. Kaplan of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and Dr. Bernard Cronson, a New York public school principal. They reported that "the demand for Jewish education was comparatively small and the means available to satisfy even this small demand are far too inadequate to meet it".[2]

They reported that the main forms of Jewish education available were (1) the Talmud Torah (2) institutional schools (3) congregational schools (4) Sunday schools (5) the Heder, and (6) private tutors. Of the estimated 200,000 Jewish children of school-age not more than 42,000 or 21% were attending some form of Jewish education. This dismal picture was followed by a call for a central organization established by the New York Kehilla to oversee and organize Jewish education efforts.

On October 1, 1910, the Bureau of Jewish Education of the Jewish Community of New York was established. "Concerns which had led to the forming of the Kehilla, notably a charge by New York's Police

Commissioner Theodore A. Gingham that 50 percent of New York City's criminal classes were Jews, also played a role in the activation of the Bureau''.[3] It was widely believed in non-Jewish circles and to some extent by Jews, that Jewish young people were hanging around, open targets for trouble. The Jewish schools would hopefully make a positive incursion into this problem.

The work and accomplishments of the Bureau of Jewish Education in New York City were varied and many, largely due to the leadership of Dr. Samson Benderly, generally acknowledged as the creator of modern Jewish education in America.

The founding of this central bureau marked the beginning of communal responsibility for Jewish education, a concept previously unaccepted for any but the poorest in Jewish society.

It is difficult to say whether so many of the subsequent achievements of the New York Bureau would have been possible without the special talents of Dr. Benderly. Because he came not from Eastern Europe, but Israel (then Palestine) and had a secular education in a university in the United States, he had a rather unique background for the American Jewish community.[4] His contact with John Dewey and the progressives at Columbia University encouraged him to modernize technique in the classroom and bring ''science'' to Jewish education.

All of the central bureaus for Jewish education that developed in other North American centres, including Toronto, were indebted to the model of the New York BJE. ''In the course of its existence (1910-1941), the Bureau under Benderly pioneered in putting forth contracts for teachers . . . in laying down and enforcing certification requirements, in promoting *ivrith-b'ivirith* (the teaching of Hebrew subjects in Hebrew) methods as a widely recognized practice; in stressing community responsibility for Jewish education; in evolving forms of Camping experiences for children . . ., in using audio-visual aids in classroom instruction; in creating the Hebrew High School; in founding the Circle of Jewish Children and the League of Jewish Youth, and in forming the Jewish Parents Association (*Elternverband*) of New York.[5]

Benderly's lasting influence on a national scale came from his influence on a group of young men who decided to make Jewish education their career not because they could do nothing else but because they were inspired by him to commit themselves to the continuance of their community.

In the late 1930's and early 40's the New York BJE was under fire by the increasing denomination of American Jewish life. Reform synagogues found the BJE schools and approach too Orthodox and Zionistic. From the opposite

side of the religious spectrum, religiously orthodox segments accused the central agency of being too secular by not using Hebrew as a religious textual language, and by incorporating educational methods that differed from the Jewish European models and followed a philosophy found in the general school system of the United States.

The New York BJE epitomized a continuing process of adaptation in a new environment. For its time, this bureau represented a semblance of order and respectability for Jewish education in the United States. It was not, however, the only model of organization for Jewish education in North America. The models that evolved in subsequent years and in other communities borrowed to some extent from the ideas pioneered in the New York experiment.

Jewish Education in Toronto

The New York experience provides a context into which the Jewish education situation in Toronto can be better understood.

Jewish schooling in Toronto began as a congregational undertaking. Toronto's Holy Blossom had a Sunday school by 1900. With greater Eastern European immigration came the models of the old country; the *Heder*, the *Talmud Torah*, and the private teacher. Primary records of the early *Heder* schools have not survived and what remains is largely second hand reminiscence and folklore. Louis Rosenberg in his demographic studies of Canada's Jews estimated that in the late 1920's nearly 20% of Jewish pupils were receiving their training at home by private teachers.[6]

Like the *Heder*, the *Talmud Torah* was an importation from Europe. The first Talmud Torah appeared in Toronto in 1907 on Simcoe Street after which it was known. The spiritual founder of this school was Rabbi Jacob Gordon. A graduate of the Valozhin Yeshiva, he brought the spirit of the *Heder Meteukhan* (modern Heder) combined with Lithunian Jewry's commitment to study to Toronto. This made the Talmud Torah less a charitable institution for the poor and orphaned than a respectable center for Jewish education in Toronto.

Efforts to form a communal Talmud Torah prior to 1907 had not born fruit. Although unprecedented cooperation between Anglicized elements from Holy Blossom and newly arrived Eastern Europeans had evolved, the spark and the funds necessary to truly mount such a venture did not materialize.[7]

No secular subjects were taught at the Simcoe Street school, following the pattern of similar supplementary programs in the United States. Children, of course, were enrolled in the universal and compulsory public school system. The teachers in the *Talmud Torah* were traditional, but emphasized modern Hebrew and Zionism. There was a healthy respect for Jewish subjects beyond

the traditional fare such as modern Hebrew literature and Jewish history as well as strong encouragement to be loyal "to one's adopted land".[8]

The Simcoe Street Talmud Torah had been intended to serve the entire East European Jewish community. Because it had been invented by Lithuanian and Russian Jews, however, a split eventually developed. At first the Rabbi of the Galician Jewish community requested separate classes for his charges. Later, however, these students withdrew over the issue of modern Hebrew as the language of instruction rather than Yiddish. An attempt to start a separate school never materialized and the students were left to the less qualified private teachers who taught in Yiddish.

These intra-ethnic rivalries in the Jewish community continued. By 1915, the Polish part of Toronto Jewry was large enough to form its own *Talmud Torah*. Surprising the detractors in the community, the school succeeded to the extent that it had to move twice in three years because it lacked space for its students. The D'Arcy Street Talmud Torah, or Eitz Chaim, as it was officially known, was a successful Orthodox alternative to the 'modernist' Simcoe Street school. Yet, this split at a time when community education dollars were scarce would later hurt both schools. Eitz Chaim's permanent presence signaled the end of any hopes for a unified traditional Jewish school program.

In 1911, prior to the formation of the Eitz Chaim Talmud Torah, the secularists in the community formed the Jewish National Radical School. Its founders came from various parts of the left political spectrum. Their common bonds lay in their identification with the working class, secularism, and belief in maintaining Jewish culture through the Yiddish language. These schools attracted many students from the poorest parts of the community because low tuition fees were charged. By 1913, there were 300 students attending.

Given the tuition policy, and lacking a well-to-do constituency to draw upon, the school went bankrupt in 1916. The I.L. Peretz Workmen's Circle agreed to take over the school in that same year. By 1917 with revived Zionist activity generated by the Balfour Declaration, the Labour Zionists and Territorialists withdrew from the Bundist Workmen's Circle and created their own school.

The unending battle between secularists and traditionalists had by 1912 provoked the synagogues (e.g. Goel Tzedec, Holy Blossom) to consider reorganizing their own schools to maintain their own student body and meet the challenge of Christian missionaries.

The Jewish Times, a local Toronto newspaper, reported that the Simcoe

Street Talmud Torah facility was in poor condition, leaving "a most unpleasant impression". Intense Jewish education in this setting could not draw enough students nor convince enough parents that it was worth the tuition charged. It appeared at this juncture that neither parents nor synagogues were prepared to support the struggling Talmud Torah as a central communal institution for Jewish education in Toronto. The Toronto Jewish community lacked the maturity to mount such a program. The majority of Toronto's Jews were in no economic position to contribute heavily to the Talmud Torah's upkeep. Community organization was a secondary priority. It might be argued, however, that the general fractiousness between different community groups retarded the development of coordinated Jewish education developing in other Canadian centres such as Winnipeg and Calgary.

By 1937 there were at least ten Jewish supplementary schools functioning in Toronto. The first known survey of Jewish education in the city was conducted by the Education and Culture Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Central Region. The survey found that of the estimated 7254 Jewish children between the ages of 5 and 14 some 3,500 were receiving some Jewish education (48%). This percentage was higher than most other North American cities of similar or larger size.[9] No single or obvious factor explains this situation. It suggests, however, that the Toronto Jewish community, at an early point in its development recognized the importance of Jewish education in its new setting.

The most popular form of school was the supplementary weekday afternoon institution. The schools ranged in ideology from orthodox to secular and operated six to 10 hours per week after public school hours. Some were synagogue affiliated, others were independent bodies established by parents and volunteers. About 14% were enrolled in congregational Sunday Schools and less than 2% were attending the single all-day school which was mainly pre-school oriented.[10]

Of the existing schools four were Orthodox. The Brunswick Avenue Talmud Torah (formerly Simcoe Street, later known as the Toronto Hebrew Free School), Eitz Chaim Talmud Torah, Euclid Avenue Talmud Torah, and the Torath Chaim Yeshiva. Four of the schools professed a "secular-culturalist" approach: the I.L. Peretz-Workmen's Circle School, the Jewish National Workers Alliance School, the Morris Winchefsky School, and the Borochov School. Several Sunday Schools were functioning most notably Holy Blossom, Goel Tzedec, and Adath Israel. The Hillcrest Progressive School, the single Jewish "parochial school" of this period

combined modern methodologies with an integrated curriculum of Jewish and general studies. This school was not community supported.

During the depression the financial strains felt by the community and therefore by the schools caused severe financial hardship. In 1936, the Toronto Hebrew Free School (Brunswick Ave.) suspended operations for a few months. But the fate of Jewish education was not unusual. Almost all communal institutions suffered under the difficult economic climate.

The formation of the United Jewish Welfare Fund in 1937 and its acceptance of the various communal schools into its funded family marked a major change in Toronto's attitude toward communal responsibility for Jewish education. Prior to 1938, schools had each by itself carried on a valiant struggle for existence. The formation of a single funding agency to collect for all the schools meant that ideally Jewish families with children in schools would no longer be harassed by door to door fund raisers. More important by controlling the purse strings the Welfare Fund leadership might exert some control over the activities and planning priorities of the schools.

From 1939 to 1949, the United Jewish Welfare Fund made annual allocations to the subsidized schools,[11] through a sub-committee of the Welfare Fund Executive responsible for community education and culture. This subcommittee was designated as Division II, and it acted as a sort of budget and finance committee for school requests. To this group yearly budgetary submissions and emergency financial assistance were presented.[12] Division II's membership was divided equally between school representatives and community-at-large representatives. The operations of the Division were handled by community volunteers. There was no paid professional educator with knowledge of the real educational requirements of the schools to advise the committee. The early demands on these laymen may have been manageable, but by 1943 there was a request by Welfare Fund members for a survey of Jewish education in Toronto in order that the funds at their disposal might be properly distributed.

The survey was undertaken in 1943 by the local Canadian Jewish Congress Education and Culture Committee but its findings never reached the executive committee of the United Jewish Welfare Fund.[13] Its enrollment findings were an enrollment drop for 1943 of 12.8% or 463 pupils. The survey, however, noted an overall drop in the number of schoolage children from 8,770 to 7,145 or 18.5%. Therefore, including estimates of private tutoring, between 40-50% of the children eligible for Jewish education in any one year were receiving instruction in 1943.[14]

By the end of World War II discussions surrounding Jewish education

focused on upkeep of facilities, teacher salaries, and the ever increasing financial demands of the various schools. Some of the schools were requiring more and more physical repair overunning budgets. New schools had been established which demanded community support. This created an especially competitive atmosphere in which schools and individuals were pitted against one another. The Division II apparatus, while representative of school interests, lacked vision objectivity, and the time to initiate a proper planning. In September of 1945 Mr. E.E. Gelber, a powerful figure in Toronto Jewish life, requested a "central planning body for Jewish educational programs" be established.[15]

Priorities were shifting within the community. The shock of the Holocaust plus intense politicking for a Jewish national homeland in Palestine forced local issues to a "back burner". It was anticipated that new Jewish immigration to Canada, would require a Jewish education component as well as increased social services. Representatives of Division II of the Welfare Fund brought forth their budget recommendations on February 22, 1946. Nearly every school was operating on a deficit basis. Eitz Chaim was seriously in arrears, unable to meet its teacher salary payments. The secular-culturalists were complaining of over-crowding and the need for new facilities.

There was immediate concern over the teacher situation. Teacher employment conditions were described as chaotic. Laymen argued over how to improve the status of the Jewish teaching profession and the problems of attracting people of a higher caliber to the field.[16]

By November 1946 the Welfare Fund Executive recommended that a survey of Jewish education in Toronto be done by an outside expert. Executive Committee discussions mentioned specifically, the formation of a "Central Agency in the field of Jewish Education vested with authority for planning and supervision.[17] To substantiate this need for a central agency, examples were brought of unplanned and perhaps more importantly unauthorized growth. The creation of a Bureau of Jewish Education in Winnipeg was cited as a possible model for Toronto. This new survey would be more comprehensive in scope going beyond the statistics of 1937 and 1943 to an evaluation of curriculum and school programs. Indicative of UJWF attitudes toward previous CJC efforts in this area was the apparent disregard of the earlier education surveys done in Toronto.

In March of 1947, the mechanisms for initiating a survey of Jewish education were put into motion. Confronted from all sides with issues that required "immediate response" Division II representatives were unable to

keep pace. The survey sub-committee was formed to hire a ''surveyor'' and work out the details of the study. Individuals appointed to the committee included representatives from both the Welfare Fund and Canadian Jewish Congress.[18]

On December 11, 1948 it was reported to the Executive Committee that Dr. Uriah Z. Engelman of the American Association of Jewish Education had been engaged to do the survey at a fee of approximately $2000.[19] This survey went further than any other in assessing the needs of Jewish education in the community. Dr. Engelman visited every school, reviewed budgets, enrollment, administrative functioning, and teacher salaries. A preliminary report submitted July 21, 1948 states as a first priority the ''need of a Central Agency for Jewish Education.''[20]

Dr. Engelman focused on three issues he saw as deficient in the Toronto case. He maintained that each school saw itself as a central organization with little or no contact with other schools. He argued that there was no Jewish school system ''in the community sense of the term''. Further, Engelman stated that existing schools operated without central coordination and frequently duplicated programs and competed for the same students with one another. He viewed this as obviously counter productive because only one-half of the eligible Jewish children were being reached and on the secondary school level the enrollments were negligible. His final point emphasized the lack of a ''coordinated program of promotion of Jewish education on a community wide basis.''[21]

To solve these and other problems Engelman proposed the Central Agency concept. This move to centralize control was greeted positively by Welfare Fund leadership for several reasons none of them necessarily having anything to do with the improved education orientation of Engelman.

Firstly such an organization would provide a formal control mechanism over school actions by a central community organization. The Division II set up had responded to school demands but lacked the authority to engage in planning and truly controlling action. The Welfare Fund leaders also desired to bring fiscal order to the community's schools. Events of the previous forty years in Toronto had brought bankruptcy and near bankruptcy to a number of institutions. There was also the desire to use the central agency for fiscal restraint on the schools whose budgets had been growing steadily since the war. It was at that time fashionable in the United States to have a local Bureau of Jewish Education. Perhaps, Toronto was eager to join the majority of North American Jewish communities, in this regard. Lastly, there was a strong desire among some members of the Welfare Fund executive board to

diminish the frequency and often predominance of Jewish education matters on their agendas. The Executive leadership were not all negative to Jewish education, but the social service requirements for new immigrants and the struggle for Israel needed more time than had been allotted. A central agency in charge of education would, they hoped, take the load off.

Perhaps sensing the preoccupations of his audience, Engelman in his report addressed educational issues first. The central agency would "plan, promote, coordinate, support, guide and help finance all the educational institutions in the community."[22] The kind of centralization Engelman recommended, however, was not uniformity but a unity in diversity. This philosophy of Jewish educational organization was popular at the time as the path of least resistance, although it was only one among several possible models. An idealistic "framework within which all creative elements working in the field of Jewish education could function effectively"[23] was imagined.

This central agency concept assumed that the Jewish community at large had at least as much stake in the success of Jewish education as did parents, congregations and organizations. This assumption would allow the community to impose a partnership upon the schools which meant, as Engelman saw it, the right to exert control on the schools. In a community where school independence and competition had been institutionalized since 1907, this contention would likely be contested.

The role of the community was outlined in thirteen points, none obviously contentious. The functions of the central agency were described in terms of service. Only by implication, did the report focus on topics that one might assume required improvement in one or more schools. Areas mentioned included registration, record keeping, sanitary standards, supervision, and new educational materials. While he was painting an idealized picture of what might be, Engelman made recommendations beyond the formal school, following the lead of the New York Bureau 30 years earlier. Youth and adult education were mentioned. Parent education and a communal Parent Association were also recommended.

The role and importance of the teacher was recognized. Professionalism and standards were stressed with an emphasis on introducing new methodologies to the Canadian Jewish school. The central agency would also be required to act as a public relations agency for Jewish education. Finally Engelman recommended that this central agency supervise all Jewish education in the Province of Ontario as well as Toronto. For this, additional staff would be required.

Only as the final point did Engelman raise the issue of financial support to schools. He commended the community for taking responsibility in financing all types of Jewish schools. He criticized, however, the methods employed in allocating funds. "If anything, these methods penalize the schools which would aim at maintaining or raising its standards by engaging qualified teachers, or by attempting to grade satisfactorily the children, or by offering better supervision."[24]

Engelman's study discovered that per capita grants were allotted without any "rational" criteria ranging from $23. per pupil to $86. per pupil. To drive home his point he cited one school with the highest per capita grant had the lowest record for average length of stay of the children in the school and the qualifications of teachers. A review of requests made to the Welfare Fund directly indicate that those who "yelled the longest and loudest" were the winners. All parties concerned did not greet the prospect of a central agency with joy. The school representatives were pacified by having their deficits retired by the Welfare Fund.[25] Teachers distrusted the emphasis and impact of standards, but lacked the political clout to change the process.[28]

Although minor adjustments were made in the mandate of this central agency, the Bureau of Jewish Education was established in late 1949. Both the United Jewish Welfare Fund and Canadian Jewish Congress Central Region agreed and approved the formation of the Bureau. On November 1, 1949, Dr. Joseph Diamond became the founding Director. Mr. Sam Posluns, who had acted as lay chairman of the Engelman survey became its first president.

In Jewish literature, there is a saying "Eyn Navi b'iyro," (No one is a prophet in his own city). The establishment of a Central Bureau of Jewish Education had taken more than thirty-five years since the initial call of Barnet Stone, a Galican clothing manufacturer active with the Goel Tzedec congregation, to form a "united Board of Education." It was only when a communal professional, unfamiliar with Toronto and Canada, would call forth the necessary data that a centralized organizing and planning body for Jewish education in Toronto would be established.

The formation of a Bureau complete with professional director was a function of necessity. It was hoped that it would put a disorderly house in order. The Bureau also marked a new level of maturity for Toronto Jewry in which it was envisaged that normally competitive elements might work together for the benefit of all.

In a general sense it marked another stage in the Jewish story of adapting to new lands and cultures. As the general education system had found it

more efficient to centralize operations, so the Jewish community perceived the same thing. In Canada, prior to World War II the predominant ideology in education was one of Anglo-conformity.[27] The role of the Jewish school during this period was cultural maintenance. That such a variety of Jewish schooling could be created in this atmosphere is directly attributable to historical precedents for such schooling in previous diaspora communities. As other ethnic communities in Canada struggle to maintain ethnic school attendance past the second generation, Jewish schooling in Toronto continues to grow.[28] Other ethnic groups have had to create, for the first time, schools to perpetuate their identity. The Jewish community had only to adapt existing models. The Bureau of Jewish Education in Toronto is an example of taking the kehilla model from Europe, learning from central agency models in the United States, and fitting it to the Canadian milieu.

The evolution of the Board of Jewish Education continues thirty-five years later. Its growth and importance is demonstrated by a multi-million dollar budget and the more than 30 schools that affiliate with it.[29]

NOTES

1. Gamoran, Emanuel; *Changing Conceptions in Jewish Education*, MacMillan & Co. New York, 1924, p.1.
2. Ben-Horin, Meir "From the Turn of the Century, *A History of Jewish Education in the United States,* ed. Pilch, Judah, 1969 (AAJE) p. 67-70.
3. *Ibid*, p. 71.
4. See Nathan H. Winter, *Jewish Education in a Pluralistic Society*, New York, 1966.
5. Op.cit. Ben Horin, M. p. 74.
6. The Heder was a one room "school" overseen by an individual who taught the rudiments of Jewish knowledge sometimes to individual children, sometimes to a small group. The Talmud Torah in Europe had been a community run school for orphans and the children of poor families. The private teacher or 'melamed' was, in North America, usually an individual who trained boys in basic Hebrew reading for Bar Mitzvah often for lack of skills to do other work. See also Hart, A.D. *The Jew in Canada*, Jewish Publication Ltd., Montreal/Toronto, 1926.
7. Speisman, Stephen, *The Jews of Toronto*, Toronto, MacLelland & Stewart, 1979, p. 169.
8. *Ibid*, p. 172.
9. Op.Cit. Ben-Horin, pp. 82-83.
10. Zweig, David Norman, Jewish Education in Canada, unpublished MA Thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1948; the figures he used are stated to be taken from the report. The remaining percentage were in private home tutorials.
11. At this time, this referred to weekday afternoon schools meeting 4 or 5 days a week. Congregational Sunday School like Holy Blossom were not subsidized.
12. Interview with Mrs. Florence Rosichan (ne. Huttner) second executive director of the United Jewish Welfare Fund of Toronto, December 29, 1984. There were Divisions in the Welfare Fund: 1) Community Services/Community Chest (e.g. Jewish Family and Child Service, Home for the Aged, Jewish Vocational service, etc.); 2) Educational and Cultural Services; 3) Canadian Jewish Congress; 4) Overseas Services and Relief; 5) Non-Local Agencies (e.g. Canadian Friends of Hebrew University).
13. Inspection of UJWF minutes for 1943 shows no mention of this report nor was Ms. Huttner

Rosichan familiar with it.

14. Op.cit. Zweig.
15. Minutes of United Jewish Welfare Fund, Sept. 1945 Ontario Jewish Archives, Toronto TJC/CJC.
16. Minutes of UJWF Executive Committee, February 22, 1946. Ontario Jewish Archives, Toronto/TJC/CJC.
17. Minutes of UJWF Executive Meeting November 1946; Ontario Jewish Archives, Toronto/TJC/CJC/
18. Representatives included S.J. Granatstein, E.E. Gelber, J.I. Oelbaum, and Sam Posluns.
19. It later turned out to cost more than this figure, the yearly salary of a Jewish teacher in the system.
20. From "Recommendations of Preliminary Report on Survey on Jewish Education in Toronto" July 21, 1948 by Dr. U.Z. Engelman, Ontario Jewish Archives.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.* p.a.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid*, p. 6.
25. Interview with Sam Posluns, April, 1953.
26. Interviews with Jack Burke, Dr. L. Jacober, Summer, 1985.
27. In 1950 there were 3,768 students enrolled in Jewish schools in Toronto, in 1967, 9,200, and in 1984 over 13,000. Information from booklet, "Eighteenth Anniversary of the BJE" 1949-19967. Appreciation to Dr. J. Diamond for copy.
28. Harney, P. and Troper, H., *Immigrants*, (Toronto), pp. 109-113.
29. Information from the Board of Jewish Education of Metro Toronto, 1984.

The Jews and the Public Education System: The Students' Strike over the "Flag Fight" in Toronto after the First World War[1]

SHMUEL SHAMAI

Introduction

This essay deals with an historical incident regarding public education and Jews in Toronto. It focuses on a specific incident which took place in December 1918 and January 1919 in the public schools in Toronto. In order to understand this topic there is a need to be aware of other situations external to the school system. Education does not exist in a void, but rather it is a part, though an important part, of the wider society. Therefore, the early beginnings of Canadian and Toronto Jewry must be examined.

Historical Background

Between 1881 and 1921 the Jewish population in Canada increased from 2,393 to 126,196 and the Toronto Jewish population increased from 534 to 34,377. The Jews were emigrating from anti-Semitic violence in Eastern Europe. These immigrants "were far less assimilationist in orientation than were their predecessors . . . (Thus) the earlier era of the rapidly assimilating Canadian Jew came abruptly to an end"[2].

The large influx of the East European Jews led to increasing overt anti-semitism, while the old Jewish community in Toronto was trying its best to integrate with the dominant Anglo-Canadian society. However, most of the Jews lived in their own area, "The Ward", and did not feel daily anti-semitism[3].

During the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century the prevailing ideology throughout Canada was assimilation. The education system in Toronto was no exception[4]. At the turn of the century in Toronto:

> The Queen, the Bible and clean fingernails were the three great symbols of the time. Ida (Siegal) remembers that certain (teachers) women who were cranks insisted on children bringing New Testaments to school. "One day she and some classmates were to be strapped for not having their Bible the day before . . . The feeling against (the

immigrants) showed itself in . . . brutal form in the efforts of schools, community workers and Protestant missions to convert and Canadianize the children . . . The children were regarded as capable of salvation and assimilation''[5].

This aggressive assimilation strategy in Canada is well reported and documented including the school system[6]. The ''Flag Fight'' is another example of this. It was a very emotional and vocal dispute, but it has become a forgotten story and this paper tries to bring back this dramatic story to the public domain.

The ''Flag Fight''

At the end of World War I in at least six elementary schools in Toronto there arose a conflict regarding Jewish students and the Jewish flag. The story of the conflict is sketchy and the main sources of information are the reports in *The Evening Telegram* and the *Hebrew Journal* which supply sometimes contradictory details. According to the *Evening Telegram* on December, 18, 1918 twenty Jewish boys in Miss Hagarty's class of King Edward School went on strike because ''Miss Hagarty would not allow them to put up their Zion flag among the flags of the allies''[7]. The striking boys complained to the Chief Inspector and to the Mayor (Mr. Church). However, the boys were ''turned down'' and were advised to go back to class. Moreover, the chief inspector, Mr. Cowley who was approached on this matter by the boys said: ''I told them that they were simply truants in being out of school . . . for no legitimate reason''[8]. The animosity around this matter seems to be high as is evident from the parents' intervention which followed. Two days later on Friday, 20.12. 1918, the parents joined their children. ''The striking boys with several irate parents, attended the King Edward School closing (for Christmas) with the intention of further pushing the matter . . . the boys were out to 'fight'[9]''.

Two trustees who were present, backed the strikers' demand and were sorry for ignoring their Jewishness and promised the boys that the Jewish flag ''will also be placed in the group containing the Irish Flag, the flag of New Zealand, Australia and others which are not in the regular allies group''[10]. In return the Jewish students and their parents, agreed to cancel their complaint letter to the ''Hebrew Journal'' which was already prepared, and were asked to apologize to their teachers and principal[11]. However, the *Hebrew Journal* credited its intervention for the strikers' victory[12].

This report is solely based on the *Evening Telegram*, one of the major daily newspapers in Toronto. The *Hebrew Journal* was the only Jewish daily newspaper at the time in Toronto and the reports in the *Evening Telegram* had been described by it[13] as incitement against the Jews. The teacher, Miss Hagarty had been described in a sarcastic way as ''someone who does not

love Jews very much''[14]. When she decorated the classroom for Christmas she did not put up the Jewish flag. According to the students she refused to put it up in spite of their requests and protests and even insulted them by saying that the Jews were worse than the Germans[15]. These accusations took place at the Board of Education level[16] and were directed mainly to the Chief Inspector[17]. The accusations were denied by the teacher, who said that the reason for refusing the Jewish flag was disciplinary[18]. The publicity of this incident led to public pressure. The strikers got the backing of the Board of Education, and even the Mayor supported their case and put up in his office a Jewish flag[19]. However the Jewish reaction was sporadic. One of the parents personally protested to the Board and the ''Hebrew Journal'' among others protested too. The protest was uncordinated and that led the Zionist organizations, B'nai Zionism and the Zion Council, to take the lead in protesting as far as the federal level. The protest was intensified by the anti-semitic reports of the *Evening Telegram* concerning both the ''flag incident'' and the ''newspaper incident''[20].

When school resumed after the New Year break in January, 1919 the promise was not kept and the Jewish flag was not placed[21]. However, the unrest among the Jewish students spread to other public schools. On January 8, 1918 strikes were reported in Ryerson and Orde Street School[22] in Manning Avenue School in Elizabeth Street Schools[23] and also in Victoria Street School: ''the schoolboys strike of Miss Hagarty's room at King Edward School was duplicated when a large number from Miss Sophia Cooper's class at Victoria Street School took French leave[24], because their flag was not placed among the allies[25]. Again the boys went to the Chief Inspector, the Chairman of the Toronto Board of Education and the Mayor. All of them declined to meet the boys. Their school principal even said that he was unaware of the strike and their teacher refused any comment.

This ongoing struggle and its scope is only hinted at in the *Evening Telegram* reports. For instance, Mr. Connely, the Chief Inspector commented in regard to King Edward school's strikers: ''They came to me *again*''. The Principal of Victoria Street School commented in regard to his school boys' strike: ''It may be the *same* old story of the flag *again*'' [emphasis added]. And one of the trustees commented in regard to Victoria Street strike ''The Chief Inspector should take this matter up once and for all and settle it . . . We can't have this sort of thing going on''[26]. Moreover, the *Evening Telegram* referred to the Victoria School strike in this way: ''again the school boys' strike was duplicated''. The large scope of these strikes led The *Hebrew Journal*[27] to call for stopping these strikes from

becoming a daily practice. The unrest which was connected to this struggle, was very high and the *Hebrew Journal* called in its editorial on two consecutive days[28] for a peaceful solution and more parental guidance.[29] The fear of spreading of the unrest might have been one of the factors which led to the trustees intervention in favour of the strikers in December, 1918. But the most important factor was the timing of the first strike, just three weeks before the election to the Board of Education and City Council. Both trustees (Brown and Boulton) came in second place out of three candidates in their Wards in the January the 1st 1919 election[30] (in each ward two were elected). The two trustees were accused directly by another trustee of playing politics with the Jews and using the flag dispute to get Jewish votes. The two trustees had threatened to resign from the Board. They denied that they sold their ''souls for a Jewish vote''[31] and stated that: ''We endeavored to win over these Jewish boys to support their teacher above all things''[32]. These changes took place one week *after* the elections and the deal with the strikers took place one week *before* the election. Nevertheless, the meeting on January, 8, 1919 took place in the management committee of Toronto Board of Education[33]. The committee received a letter from the principal of King Edward school asking for guidance[34] and a communication from The Canadian Jewish Publishing Company (which was the Hebrew Journal's publisher) regarding the students' and parents' concerns[35]. Thus, it is apparent that the broken deal led the strikers and their parents to complain to the Jewish newspaper. The complaint was not dealt with (for technical reasons) and the committee decided: that no flag other than the British flag be displayed on any of our buildings or in any of our classrooms[36].

This decision got mixed reactions. On the mainstream side it was applauded in two editorials of *The Evening Telegram*. One reason given was that ''the Jewish flag was also the emblem of Austro-German Hebrews''[37], and that ''the home or the synagogue, not the Public school, is the place for the flag of Zion''[38]. On the Jewish side[39] it was labelled as a stupid decision, but an expected one due to the fact that there was not even one Jewish trustee in the Board[40]. The *Hebrew Journal*[41] even called on the Jewish Community before the election to vote for a Jewish candidate to the Board to prevent the anti-Jewish decisions.

The other daily newspapers did not mention the dispute at all[42]. That fact is even more striking because the *Toronto Star Weekly* reported on the six schools' concerns, as was mentioned before. The most striking report is the one on King Edward school from 23.3. 1919[43] only three months after the strike. The report on Miss Hagarty's class, in which the first strike had started

supplies background information and detailed account of the class activities. However, the flag dispute which had made this class very famous was totally ignored.

In this climate of refusal to recognize Jewish symbols and of ignoring their struggles the Jewish students were going through the public schools.

Conclusion

The history of the Jews and assimilation into public education, influenced and was influenced by both sides: Jews and non-Jews. The Jews were a main force to fight assimilation, which also affected Jewish education, and became one of the forces that resulted in the establishment of Jewish evening schools in the beginning of this century, and the Jewish day schools since the 1940's.

The story of the flag fights is unusual in the history of the public school system in Toronto and may be even in Canada. A strike is an extreme measure to be used by students and their parents. The ''re-discovery'' of this strike and struggle is not unique to Toronto. Students strikes were ''rediscovered'' also in Britain on a national scale:

> The most dramatic and subversive act of resistance to schooling was the pupils' strike . . . This form of pupil protest was a collective response to severe provocation by teachers or education committees and was characterized by demonstrations and meetings to enlist both the support of children in neighbouring schools and parental sympathy and to encourage solidarity . . . However, because such strikes were a source of acute embarrassment to teachers and education authorities, they were often conveniently forgotten and omitted from . . . committee minutes and official school histories[44].

The British strikers were treated in a similar manner to the Jewish-Torontonian strikers. On the one side they were called ''truants''[45] and pushed aside and ignored (e.g.: The Principal of King Edward school ''was quite unaware that the boys were out''[46]). On the other side they were perceived to be a threat to the social order of the society (e.g. ''Jewish Flag to Rule Instead Of British?'')[47]

The situation of a schooling system which is and was dominated by Christian beliefs but which includes non-Christian sub-ordinate groups and purports to be a *public* system was the setting of these fights. All the ''other'' sub-ordinate groups were supposed to ''melt'' into the culture and assimilate. However, this policy failed in regard to ethnic and religious groups which refused to be melted or be assimilated. One of the very ''stubborn'' groups was the Jews, who are among the highest ethnic retainer groups. The fights in the schools reflected tensions which existed outside of the schools. The ''flag fight'' also spilled out of the schools; the city politicians and the Jewish organizations and parents were active in this dispute. The media played a very active part in the dispute, mainly by reporting in a very biased manner, but also by not reporting and ignoring the

dispute.

Since this dispute took place almost seven decades have passed. Toronto and Canada have changed drastically and the current national banner is "multiculturalism"[48]. However, the Jewish community is still concerned with the schools "because of the efforts, covert and all too frequently overt, which they have experienced to convert them"[49]. Thus, this 'little local difficulty' contains important evidence for a different history of communities of schooling and contemporary Canadian Societies. It demonstrates that "the Public" and the "Public schools" are in their history and present forms transferring a very specific context which excludes as well as includes. For example, *current* "Ontario education regulations require all public elementary schools to devote two 30-minute periods a week to religious education"[50]. The provisions of the Ontario Government "puts our public schools in the position of being officially in favour of the Christian interpretation of the Scriptures . . . The teacher is obliged to teach the controversial doctrine of the divinity of Jesus as though it were a matter of incontrovertible fact"[51]. Again, the Public school system serves a specific public, and not everyone can be seen or heard there[52].

NOTES

1. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** I would like to thank Mr. B. Gershenzon for his very useful help in translating the Yiddish newspaper clippings. I would also like to thank Dr. S. Speisman for his helpful assistance with the Archival material.
2. Kallen, E., *Spanning the Generations*. A Study in Jewish Identity, Don Mills, Ontario, Logman Canada, 1977. (p. 41).
3. Speisman, S.A., *The Jews of Toronto — A History to 1937*. Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1979.
4. Jaenen, C.J., "Minority Group Schooling and Canadian National Unity", *The Journal of Educational Though*. 7 (2) (1973) (pp. 81-9).
5. *Toronto Board of Education. We are all Immigrants to this Place to this Place*. Toronto, 1976.
6. Jaenen, C.J., "Minority Group Schooling and Canadian National Unity", *The Journal of Educational Thought*. 7 (2) 1973 (pp. 81-89).
7. *The Evening Telegram*, "School Boys Strike Ended" (21.12.1918). (p. 26).
8. *The Evening Telegram*, "Is Jewish Flag to Rule instead of British?" 8.1.1919. (p. 22).
9. *The Evening Telegram*, "School Boys Strike Ended" (21.12.1918). (p. 26).
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *The Hebrew Journal*, "The Jewish Strikers Won". (22.12.1918).
13. *The Evening Telegram*, "Bolshevism in Schools? Idea Riles Trustees" (9.1.1919). (p. 20).
14. *The Hebrew Journal*, "Jewish Boys are Striking because of the Jewish Flag". (20.12.1918). (Yiddish)
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. *The Evening Telegram*, "Jewish Flag of Zion". (23.12.1918). (p. 18).

18. *The Hebrew Journal*, "Jewish Boys are Striking because of the Jewish Flag". (20.12.1918).
19. *The Hebrew Journal*, "The Jewish Strikers Won". (22.12.1918).
20. *The Hebrew Journal*, "Zionist organizations are taking care of the Jewish Flag Incident". (23.12.1918).
21. *The Hebrew Journal*, "The Parents have to be Responsible to the Defence of the Jewish Flag". (9.1.1919).
22. *Ibid.*
23. *The Hebrew Journal*, "Don't Declare Hasty Strike". (8.1.1919).
24. Illegal leave.
25. *The Evening Telegram*, "Is Jewish Flag to Rule instead of British?" (8.1.1919). (p. 22).
26. *Ibid.*
27. *The Hebrew Journal*, "Don't Declare Hasty Strike". (8.1.1919).
28. *Ibid.*, and *The Hebrew Journal*, "The Parents have to be Responsible to the Defence of the Jewish Flag". (9.11.1919).
29. The six schools which were reported in the two newspapers as being involved in these strikes, were all located in and around the "Ward" (the downtown area in Toronto in which the Jewish immigrants were living in this period) and had prominent Jewish population. According to the *Toronto Star Weekly's* reports about these schools the King Edward School "nearly half the pupils are Jewish extraction" (*Toronto Star Weekly* [23.3.1919] "King Edward School has 175 names on Honor Roll"), and also in Manning Avenue School half of the pupils were reported to be Jewish (*Toronto Star Weekly* [10.11.1917] "Manning Avenue School a Model of Efficiency: Pupils are taught to do Research Work"). The report about Victoria Street school (*Toronto Star Weekly* [18.5.1919] "Victoria Street School Building is oldest in City — Was Built in 1855") stated that "seventy-five per cent are today little Jewish boys and girls from the Ward". In Ryerson school were 75 percent Jews (*Toronto Star Weekly*, [11.11.1916] "Ryerson School Doing Wonderful Work for Social Betterment of Pupils of Foreign Origin"). The report about Orde Street School stated that "the big majority of the children attending the school . . . are Hebrews" (*Toronto Star Weekly* [9.12.1916] "Open Air Classes for Tubercular Children Distinctive Feature of Orde Street School"). The *Toronto Star Weekly* ([9.6.1917] "Hester How School Carries on Program Laid Down by Five Women Whose Name it Bears".) reported that in Elizabeth Street School (or Hester How school) "the children are almost entirely of Hebrew percentage".
30. *Toronto Daily Star*, "Board of Education". (1.1.1919).
31. *The Evening Telegram*, "Bolshevism in Schools? Idea Riles Trustees" (9.1.1919). (p. 20).
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Toronto Board of Education*, "Management Committee Minutes (item #17). (8.1.1919).
34. *The Hebrew Journal*, "Canada has Only one Flag and no other Flags will be put up in the Public Schools". (10.1.1919).
35. *Toronto Board of Education*, *"We are all Immigrant to this Place*. Toronto. (1976).
36. *Ibid.*
37. *The Evening Telegram*, "The Flag of Zion". (16.1.1919).
38. *The Evening Telegram*, "Public School is no Place for Religious Emblem." The Jewish-Zionist flag was labelled as a religious emblems by the newspaper. However, the Jews who promoted it all around the world including Toronto stressed its *national* aspect. (18.1.1919).
39. *The Hebrew Journal*, "The Crime is of Both Sides". (10.1.1919).
40. *Ibid.*
41. *The Hebrew Journal*, "Two Cases of Influences and their Lesson." (27.12.1918).
42. Pennacchio, L.G. (1983) "The Defence of Identity: Ida Siegel and the Jews of Toronto versus the Assimilation Attempts of the Public School and Its Allies, 1900-1920". Paper

prepared for ''The History of Women and Education in Canada'', Ontario Institute of Studies in Education.

43. (*Toronto Star Weekly*, ''King Edward School has 175 names on Honor Roll''.) (23.3.1919).
44. Humphries, S., *Hooligans or Rebels?*. Oxford; Basil Blackwell, (1981) (p. 91).
45. Marson, D., *Children Strikes in 1911*. Oxford: History Workshop Pamphlets, (1973). (p. 29).
46. *The Evening Telegram*, ''Is Jewish Flag to Rule instead of British?''. (8.1.1919). (p. 22).
47. *Ibid*; and see also Humphries, S., *Hooligans or Rebels?*. Oxford; Basil Blackwell. (1981).
48. Palmer, H., ''Reluctant Hosts: Anglo Canadian Views of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century''. In *Multiculturalism as State Policy*. Second Canadian Conference on Multiculturalism, (1977). (pp. 81-110).
49. The Ontario Jewish Association for Equity in Education. Submission to the Commission of Inquiry into the Role and Status of Private Schools in Ontario, Toronto. (1984) (p. 9).
50. *Globe and Mail*, ''Norton asked to Drop Religious Teaching Rules''. 18.3.1985. (p. M1).
51. *Canadian Civil Liberties Association*, Submittion to the Minister of Education. (14.3.1985), (p. 2).
52. Corrigan, P. (1986) ''In/Forming Schooling''. In D. Livingston (ed.) *Critical Pedagogy and Cultural Power*, Begin and Garrey (forthcoming).

CONTRIBUTORS

ALAN T. DAVIES is Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Victoria College, University of Toronto.

MARILYN NEFSKY is Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, University of Lethbridge, Alberta.

HARVEY RABEN is Director of the Toledo (Ohio) Board of Jewish Education.

RACHEL SCHLESINGER teaches in the Division of Social Science at York University, Toronto.

SHMUEL SHAMMAI is on the faculty of the Golan Research Institute in Qazrin, Israel.

The following is a list of members who have become Patrons and Sponsors of the Canadian Jewish Historical Society. Those Patrons and Sponsors whose notification arrived subsequent to publication will be included in the next issue.

PATRONS

Mr. & Mrs. David Azrieli
Allan & Lucy Bronfman Family Foundation
Mr. Charles Bronfman
Marjorie and Gerald Bronfman Foundation
Mrs. Saidye Bronfman
The Samuel & Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation
Mr. Milton Harris
Mr. & Mrs. J.A. Lyone Heppner
Mr. I.C. Pollack
Sumner Press

SPONSORS

Freda Baron
Senator & Mrs. Sidney L. Buckwold
Mrs. M. Cherniak
Judge Maxwell Cohen
Dr. & Mrs. Robert B. Disenhouse
Judge & Mrs. Darrell Draper
Mr. Bert Godfrey
Mr. Syd Greenstein
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Gutkin
Jr. Jacob Kosoy
Lazare's Furs Limited
Mr. Irving Matlow
Mr. & Mrs. Sydney Morris
The Pascal Family Foundation
Mr. Joel Pinsky
Mr. Azriel Presma
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Schaeffer
Rabbi Erwin Schild
Dr. Harold N. Seagall
Rabbi Wilfred Shuchat
Mr. Herbert Siblin
Mrs. Sadie Stren
Mrs. Ruth Tannenbaum
Mr. Henry Trachtenberg
Mr. Philip F. Vineberg
Mrs. Eudelle Wall
Mr. Floyd Zalev