

Zelda Abramson

**From Rags to Comfort: Women Holocaust
Survivors Rebuilding Lives in Montreal, 1947-1958**

You wonder how these guys ... made so much money, because they had no education ... I think the perseverance, the ambition of some guys, the cleverness ... they were shrewd; they made money. You look at them and they couldn't put the two letters on the paper but they made millions of dollars...
-Leeba¹

Malka² and her husband, Henyk, both born in Poland, survived the war years in numerous concentration camps. Very shortly after the war ended they went to Sweden where Henyk started working as a furrier. They had begun to settle and rebuild their lives and home in Sweden when their first son was born. However, Malka's sister immigrated to Montreal in 1950. Malka could not fathom living apart from her sister and followed her to Canada. When she and Henyk arrived in Montreal in 1951, her sister had arranged a room for their family of three. Henyk found work quickly as a furrier and Malka took care of their son and home. In their first year they moved to another room before they were able to rent their own flat. And then a second son was born. Henyk became self-employed, worked long days and, very quickly, was earning a good wage. Within ten years of their arrival in Montreal they had purchased their own home. Both sons went to university; one became a lawyer, the other an engineer.

Malka and Henyk's story appears to have many of the stereotypical markings of the settlement experiences of Holocaust survivors. It captures the transition from poor new immigrant to successful or at least comfortable Canadian. Many of the benchmarks that signify success are present: hard work, purchasing a home, and education of their children.³ Such narratives, however, are often rooted in hegemonic notions of success that focus on male actors (men as breadwinners), and as such they efface women survivors' stories and obscure the role women played in the new immigrants' struggles to build new lives. This paper pays particular attention to the dailiness of women survivors' lives, and is part of a larger research project that emphasizes everyday lived-experiences of Holocaust survivors in Montreal. Based on more than 60 interviews and Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS) case files,⁴ and largely shaped by a feminist standpoint methodology that explicates social and cultural phenomena,⁵ I argue that research that focuses on female actors (homemakers) offers a more nuanced understanding of the rags to comfort narrative of survivors who settled in Montreal post-World War II. A focus on women's stories demonstrates that there are a multitude of economic and non-economic determinants that build successful family and community lives. To frame my argument I draw on Patricia Hill Collins⁶ theory of motherwork and Bettina Aptheker's⁷ conceptualization of dailiness and making do. I show how the choices, preferences, strategies and actions of women survivors helped their families' transition from poverty to economic and social success. This research differs from previous Canadian studies on Holocaust survivors⁸ in that it provides an overarching understanding of the dailiness of women survivors'

lives,⁹ and offers a multi-layered understanding of this success story.

Holocaust Survivors Post-genocide

Research on Holocaust survivors post-genocide has focused largely on: 1) the survivor's individual, psychological and economic adjustments; 2) the relationship between the new-immigrant survivors and the various established Jewish communities into which they were resettled; and 3) the role of the state and social institutions in matters of settlement.¹⁰ The studies that focus on family-life are in relation to memory,¹¹ trauma,¹² and, more recently, resilience.¹³ Since the late 1980s the literature shifted to a different understanding of survivors that emphasizes "the adaptive potential and strengths of survivors and their families."¹⁴ Cohen argues that the second-generation literature on intergenerational transmission of trauma "does little to validate survivors' post-war achievements, and especially does not do enough to acknowledge and praise their resilience and efforts in rebuilding a life for themselves and their children."¹⁵ Similarly, Giberovitch's work focuses on the strengths and coping skills survivors portray in light of this adverse physical and psychological effects of the Holocaust.¹⁶

Research on survivors' settlement experiences is less extensive than that of their psychological adjustment, and is largely from Israel¹⁷ and the United States.¹⁸ In Canada few studies examine the settlement experiences of Holocaust survivors. In 1989, Jean Miriam Gerber's¹⁹ master's thesis looked at the settlement experiences of survivors in Vancouver between 1947 and 1970. Gerber argues that the Vancouver Jewish community welcomed the survivors who became well-integrated into the "patterns established by the host Jewish group."²⁰ However, the Vancouver Jewish community both before and after World War II was very small and received only 2.2% of survivor immigrants to Canada. Bialystok's research, drawing on data from the Toronto and Winnipeg communities, focuses on the established Jewish community's reaction of distancing itself from the survivors, although it does not address the daily lives of the survivors' settlement experiences from their own perspective.²¹ More recently, Goldberg's²² doctoral dissertation shows the postwar adaptation of survivors who settled in either Canadian urban centres or in small communities. Her research probes the differing factors such as "intra-ethnic relationships, economic and social conditions, gender, work, age, and faith" as well as the roles of the Jewish community and Jewish social agencies in the "acculturation and absorption processes"²³ of survivors.

Montreal is a particularly important case study because it received the majority (56%)²⁴ of survivors who came to Canada, even though "the majority of immigrants of other ethnic origins settled in Ontario" at the time.²⁵ Yet, there are few studies that capture the experiences of survivors who settled in Montreal. Giberovitch's research focuses on community associations, known as *landsmanschaftn* (societies of Jewish

immigrants who originally come from the same geographic region) that “served as adaptive mechanisms to a new and strange society.”²⁶ These associations provided a structure for survivors to be able “to re-establish surrogate families, mourn their monumental losses, and preserve the cultural heritage of their destroyed communities.”²⁷ Sheftel’s and Zembrzycki’s²⁸ research looks at child survivors who settled in Montreal, paying particular attention the children’s engagement with both “formal” (examples being the YMHA and the Jewish Public Library) and “informal social worlds” (such as the newly established New World Club).²⁹ These were spaces where the young survivors “forged relationships that would last a lifetime and found employment that would sustain them and their families throughout their years in Montreal.”³⁰ These studies, however, examine individual aspects of settlement and not settlement experiences more broadly. I look to the everyday lives of women for a more comprehensive understanding of the post-genocide experiences of survivors in Montreal.

Motherwork, Dailiness and Making Do

Most survivors who came to Canada arrived with little or no money and few material goods.³¹ The expectation for men was to provide for the family financially, and the expectation for women was responsibility over the family-life and home-life, often under difficult conditions. Two prominent Montreal studies illustrate the strategies low-income mothers used to ensure the daily survival of their families. First, Bettina Bradbury’s³² research focuses on working-class families in late 1800s industrialized Montreal, highlighting the pivotal role of married women “outside the formal economy.”³³ Though the majority of these women worked inside the home only, their work began well before the wage earners left for work and continued long after their return in the evenings. Thus, the role of women was to transform “the wages of other into sustenance and shelter” through daily cleaning, laundry, shopping, and cooking.³⁴ Larger families meant more work for the woman as she needed to find creative ways to stretch the low wages further. Second, Denyse Baillargeon’s research draws on thirty interviews with married women during the Depression in Montreal to identify the important role women’s work in the home played to ensure their families’ survival.³⁵ Baillargeon highlights the importance of looking beyond the “principal breadwinner’s occupation,” namely the man’s, to fully understand the material conditions of the family.³⁶ The basic family needs were met within the home: women made do and found a way to sustain the family even in times of lost income. For example, women in Baillargeon’s study forged relationships with friends and families to provide mutual support. Chores – laundry, ironing, sewing – were either exchanged or done collectively; and together the women “absorbed the impact of the Depression.”³⁷

Both Bradbury and Baillargeon's studies use the analytical framework of "making do" by which to understand the creative strategies employed by low-income mothers living in Montreal to make do with very little. However, survivors who arrived in Canada were a unique group.³⁸ In addition to the typical immigrant struggles such as language, low income, and vocational retraining, they were victims of war atrocities.³⁹ In fact, there are many parallels between the daily lived experiences of post-war survivor families and those of African American families. Holocaust survivors, like African Americans, were victims of prejudice, violence, torture, dehumanization, and incarceration, all underpinned by long-lasting psychological trauma. Although survivors spanned all social economic classes before the war, many young survivors' (and most were young) material, and cultural, and social capital (networks and connections)⁴⁰ were erased and destroyed through genocide. I therefore turn to the experiences of African American women to frame this research theoretically.

Bettina Aptheker's⁴¹ conceptualization of 'dailiness' and making do, and Patricia Hill Collins'⁴² theory of motherwork provide the contexts in which to understand the role survivor mothers played in their families' successful integration into the Montreal community. First, Bettina Aptheker⁴³ theorizes the lives of African American women through "dailiness" and "making do." Her research addresses how "[b]lack women create their own destiny, carve their own way through the sludge of a racist and sexist world, and set their own standards of value and self-worth."⁴⁴ For Aptheker, the dailiness of women's lives refers to "the patterns women create and the meanings women invent each day and over time as a result of their labors..."⁴⁵ The daily lives of women are fragmented in terms of the different tasks they perform: meals, laundry, childcare, etc. Women's role requires flexibility to accommodate and adjust to changes out of their control. The task of women becomes to "make do," to ensure the family's life is well protected. Aptheker defines "making do" as an active act of agency that requires intuitiveness, strength, creativity, and resourcefulness, and 'dailiness' as a process. The ways women create meaning to their daily lives, according to Aptheker, are to develop deep relationships with friends, family and children, to be involved in the community, and "a belief in life."⁴⁶

Second, Patricia Hill Collins⁴⁷ argues that the idealized white middle-class notion of mothering presents "a dichotomous split" between public and private responsibilities, when in fact the experiences of racial ethnic women demonstrate that the two are intertwined.⁴⁸ She is critical of feminist theories that view motherhood as biological destiny, and instead favours a universal understanding of motherhood with multiple standpoints. Collins' starting point is the lives of African American mothers. She theorizes motherhood in relation to social reproduction or "motherwork;" an array of "activities that encompass women's unpaid and paid reproductive labor within families, communities, kin networks, and informal and formal local economies."⁴⁹ These activities provide basics such as food and clothing, emotional support for the

wage-earner husband, and ensure the psychological and physical survival of the children, which African American mothers cannot take for granted. Collins argues that motherwork comprises the interconnection between “individual survival, empowerment, and identity” and “group survival, empowerment, and identity.”⁵⁰ Thus, motherwork is a form of activism mothers practice in the dailiness of their lives.

Methods

The research presented in this paper is shaped by feminist standpoint methodology that challenges conventional positivist research for viewing the world from the vantage point of men.⁵¹ Such research categorizes subject matters that are relevant to the lives of men – those who manage and control – and that have little meaning for those who are managed and controlled.⁵² The starting point of social inquiry, according to standpoint theory, is through an exploration of the dailiness of women’s lives in relation to their social, political, economic and historical contexts,⁵³ with each individual occupying a “standpoint” that produces many and varying perspectives of the “relations of ruling.” The institution of education is one example of “the ruling apparatus.”⁵⁴ Griffith and Smith⁵⁵ examined the social organization of mothering in their focus on mothers’ “work” experiences in relation to their children’s schooling.⁵⁶ They found that mothering is shaped by the ways schools are organized: dropping off and picking up children and the work mothers do at home to prepare children for their school day. The intent of their analysis was “to disclose a social organization implied but not spoken of... presupposed but not explicit.”⁵⁷ Similarly, Harding argues that research that begins from the “dailiness” of women’s lives offers a better “understand[ing] how and why social and cultural phenomena have taken the forms in which they appear to us.”⁵⁸

This research is informed by interviews with more than 60 men, women and children (19) survivors who arrived in Montreal between 1947 and 1958. Their ages at the time of the interviews ranged from 72 to 99 years. Approximately 60% of the survivors I interviewed were women. I also interviewed 8 children of survivors (second generation) who were born immediately after the War. I was interested to understand, from a child’s perspective, their impressions of immigrant life and especially their integration into the public school system.

The sample,⁵⁹ although not representative, captures the unique and diverse nature of this group of immigrants. Though they were not homogenous, they shared one common characteristic: they had survived the war. Some were deeply religious, others were atheists; some came from cities, others from rural areas (the *shtetl*); and even their coping strategies, differed from person to person. As was the case with most survivors, the men and women I interviewed arrived in Canada with no or very little money.⁶⁰ Each interview lasted three hours, on average (with a range of 1.5 to 6 hours).

In addition to the interviews, I examined many hundreds of Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS)⁶¹ individual case files of immigrants who settled in Montreal between 1948 and 1958. This period covers three waves of post-Holocaust Jewish immigration: The first took place between 1947 and 1950 and was mainly refugees admitted through the labour schemes organized by the Canadian Overseas Garment Commission and the Canadian Jewish Congress⁶² (it also included 1 000 war orphans⁶³). The second wave was from 1951 to 1954 and included many immigrants who settled in Israel immediately after the war and who were sponsored by Jews in Canada who had arrived in the first wave. The third wave of immigration consisted mainly of refugees who escaped Hungary and Poland beginning in 1956.⁶⁴

Each interview was transcribed and analysed. Codes and categories were identified and organized into broader themes or concepts.⁶⁵ Two prevalent analytic concepts emerged from the research data: 1) “dailiness,” which includes themes of settlement, housing, financial contributions either through budgeting, unpaid and paid work, and education; and 2) “motherwork,” which includes themes of organizing and maintaining the home and family life, taking care of the physical and emotional needs of children, feeding the family, supporting husbands, making do, resourcefulness, and creativity (individual agency).

The interviewees are referred to by their first name. Pseudonyms were assigned to each interviewee because a number of interviewees asked for such confidentiality. Data from the case files are referred to as Mr. or Mrs. A or B or C, etc., in the order they are presented. For reasons of confidentiality, files are referred to by the Archival series only.⁶⁶ I chose particular quotations from interviews and case files because each one represents the key themes that emerged from the data overall and because they capture the multiple and pivotal roles mothers played in building new lives for their respective families.

Arriving in Montreal: The Early Days

Anna’s story captures the interview accounts of survivors’ first arrival in Canada.⁶⁷ Although the specific details vary by interviewee, the overarching themes are similar. Anna and her mother, Toba, were the only ones from their family who survived the war, which they did in hiding. Anna’s family lived near Vilna, which was part of Poland pre-World War II and is now, and has been historically, Lithuania. Her father was a pharmacist and her mother was a trained midwife. “The reason I’m here,” Anna tells, “is because [of] my mother. I was saved only because my mother saved me, and she saved me only because she was a midwife.” During the war, one of the families whose baby Toba delivered hid Anna and her mother. After the war Anna and Toba travelled to Lodz where Toba met a Polish man whose wife and child perished in the Holocaust. He and Toba married. “A lot of people were getting married very

quickly, not knowing each other well enough,” according to Anna. In Lodz, no one did much of anything, “because it was transient. There was a lot of uncertainty... So we lived there, not all that long.”

Desperate to leave Poland, the family believed the only option was to go to Palestine illegally: “In order to get to Israel you had to get to Italy. And in order to go to Italy you can’t just go from Poland to Italy, you have to go through Austria, so we went to Austria.” In Austria, they were placed in a Displaced Persons (DP) camp. Toba was pregnant, and this meant they could no longer go to Israel because it would involve “a lot of walking up the Alps and down the Alps to [first] go to Italy.” This she could not do. Toba decided she wanted to go to Montreal because she had family there. At this time Canada had opened its immigrant quotas through various work schemes. Her father applied through the Tailor Scheme, although “he had never been a tailor in his life.” Anna was 15 when she arrived in Montreal in September 1948 with her mother, step-father and her two-year-old sister.

Housing was the first obstacle immigrants confronted upon their arrival. Montreal, as was the case throughout Canada, experienced a severe housing shortage beginning during the Depression. The housing crisis was exacerbated during the War years by a large influx of labourers from rural Quebec employed in war-related industries, as well as by a rationing of building materials that limited any new residential construction.⁶⁸ With tens of thousands of new migrants arriving in Montreal from 1947 onward,⁶⁹ few housing options were available.⁷⁰ Part of JIAS’ responsibility was the daunting task of housing those new Jewish immigrants who were sponsored under the various work schemes.⁷¹ As an interim solution, when needed, JIAS accommodated the immigrants in a hostel outside of Montreal until such time that individual housing was secured. Anna believes they stayed in one such hostel for about one week. When they arrived in Montreal they were met by a JIAS representative who took them, Anna tells, to “this place [on Clark Street], and we have one room for the four of us [which] was not very clean.”

Available rentals were so limited that whole families had no choice but to rent a single room in a flat with supposed kitchen and bath privileges. Difficult living conditions was a constant theme in the JIAS case files:⁷²

Mr. [A] told worker that he had been having a good deal of trouble with his landlord.

[The landlord] is also an immigrant and according to Mr. [A] very egotistical. The two

families do not get along at all. The room is bare and Mr. [A] feels that they are paying too much for it. Also Mr. [A] added the landlord seems extremely annoyed at the [A] family when they make use of the kitchen and the bathroom.

Similar stories appear in the interviews. Irena⁷³ entered Canada as a Domestic in 1948. Her fiancé joined her a year later and they married in Montreal. Irena and her husband rented a room on Esplanade for forty dollars a month. Irena tells that although her rent included the use of the kitchen, she “wasn’t allowed to keep in the kitchen a pot or a plate.” From time to time, when her brother joined them for dinner, the landlady charged her extra rent for the additional gas used when cooking.

Several families boarding together was difficult. Rooms were too small for families of four or five. Family B, for example, had two children aged 17 and 12. They arrived in Montreal in 1949 and received a room with one double bed and one single bed. Though the family wanted to move, the social worker warned this may be difficult as “there were no rooms available as several new transports had arrived during the past few weeks.”⁷⁴ To make matters worse, many landlords refused to rent to families with children. When Irena learned she was pregnant, her Jewish landlady “almost threw her out...She didn’t want a child in the house, a baby in her house ...she says you have to move.” Irena had no choice but to move:

So we got this place, a room, on Hutchison ... there was a widow, and she had like this double parlour room and bedroom ... So she rented us her bedroom and she went in the double parlour ... And we lived in this bedroom and my daughter was born.

Rachel⁷⁵ also shares the challenges of families with children finding accommodation. Rachel spent the War years with her mother, Bronia, in Russian labour camps. Bronia remarried after the War and Rachel was fifteen years old when her family of five arrived in Canada on 14 February 1951. They intended to go to Winnipeg but found themselves in Montreal due to her mother becoming very ill on their trip across the Atlantic to Halifax. When they disembarked the train at Windsor Station in Montreal, Rachel’s mother was instructed by a physician at the station’s clinic that she would have to regain her health before continuing the train ride to Winnipeg. They decided to stay in Montreal. They rented a room from a childless couple on a street called City Hall. Rachel tells: “It just was so terrible, they couldn’t tolerate having these kids running around... And life became very difficult for us to live there in that room, so we found another place on Hutchison near Saint-Joseph, with a Jewish family.” They were able to rent a double parlour and another small room, with use of the kitchen and the one bathroom. The water was heated and baths were permitted once a week.

It was common for the new immigrants to move from room to room three or four times in their first two years in Montreal. Tamar,⁷⁶ who was five years old when her family of four arrived in 1948, said, “We [first] lived on Clark Street then moved and we moved and then moved; you are always moving forward.” The newcomers ultimately wanted their own flats, which were difficult to find and often unaffordable. As such, JIAS received numerous requests for housing loans to cover the initial costs

associated with renting a flat:

Mr. & Mrs. [B] complained constantly that it was impossible for them to remain in a room with a family of three children. The landlady, also a new-comer, was the only one who had wanted to accommodate them. However, since there were people in her own family, she became rather insistent that they move. It therefore became imperative that they secure a house of their own at 4246 St. Dominique, renting at \$50.00 per month, available if the furniture was purchased from the previous tenant. After this matter had been thoroughly investigated by one of our directors, our agency initiated the [B]s in securing a loan from the Hebrew Free Loan for \$400.00 to help in the purchase of this furniture. The [Bs] have taken in a couple and one child from who they receive \$35.00 per month.⁷⁷

The “housing loan” that covered the cost of furniture was more commonly known as *schlissel gelt* (key money). Houses were advertised in the Canadian Jewish paper, according to Rachel.⁷⁸ She remembers going to a flat on Waverly with her mother. Asking for key money was not allowed, however. Instead, the prospective tenant had no choice but to purchase the old furniture in the flat: “Of course, nobody wanted that furniture; it was junk. They couldn’t understand why we weren’t grateful for having this broken sofa.”

Single families on their own generally could not afford the monthly rent for a flat. Rooms were often rented to boarders to make ends meet, as was the case for the B family. Irena was able to take over the flat when the widow from whom she rented a room moved out. She took over the double parlour and rented out the room she and her family previous occupied, thus taking on the role of “landlady.” Taking care of boarders was typically tasked to the woman.⁷⁹ Tamar says that in addition to her family of three, her mother’s two brothers lived with them, and they rented out a room to a boarder. When the boarder was male, the mother of the household would often take responsibility for their cooking, cleaning and laundry. The rent received from the boarders reduced substantially their monthly housing cost. However, the additional work of the landlady was not viewed as waged labour, but as part of the many daily tasks of mothers.

Home Life

After two decades of social, political and economic turbulence due to the Depression and the Second World War, social workers specializing in family matters in both the United States and Canada encouraged hegemonic middle class values as the key to normal family life.⁸⁰ This notion of ‘normal family life’ included clear and defined gender roles for all Canadians. In Iacovetta’s research on postwar immigrants in Canada, she explains: “Ideally wives were perceived to be happy homemakers fulfill-

ing their destiny to create a loving and stable home for a hardworking husband and children.”⁸¹ The assumption here is that men “were assigned economic dominance and final authority,” as they were the ones who “supported a household of dependents.”⁸² Such views permeated all aspects of society – wealthy, poor, unemployed; and informed social welfare agencies policies.⁸³ JIAS was no exception.⁸⁴

The social work case file of the C family provides insight into the different gender role expectations (and judgments) agency workers held for men and for women: whereas men were mainly responsible for finding work, women were expected to take care of the home, their husbands, and their children’s needs. Mr. C arrived in Canada under the DP Furrier scheme, although he was trained as a tailor:⁸⁵

Upon arrival the [Cs] were noted to be an intelligent though tense couple. This was particularly noted in Mr. [Cs] anxiety about securing employment. He told worker that he had some experience as a tailor but was not familiar with the methods used in Canada, nor did he ever work on an electric sewing machine ... It was explained in the first instance that the industry was aware of the inexperience as well as the difference in method and tempo to which the European worker was accustomed. Worker also indicated that the industry had signed a written contract to the effect that they would employ all furriers from overseas for at least one year. Mr. C, thus having the opportunity to discuss his own feelings in this matter, and with our assurance, was able to accept referral to the Furrier Commission. He had been employed two weeks after arrival but his earnings were quite low. It was therefore necessary to assist the [Cs] with second month’s rental...Mr. [C] hoped in time that his earnings would be sufficient for him to manage without agency assistance.

Mrs. [C] was an adequate housewife. She appeared more cheerful and more hopeful about the future than her husband. The child... seemed to be a very playful little girl, who was well cared for by her mother. Mrs. [C] felt reasonably sure that her husband would be doing well in the near future and gave him the necessary support which he required.

In addition to capturing the division of gender roles, the case write-up above addresses the stress surrounding work. The first six months in Montreal was very challenging for most families. Rachel’s father, a trained tailor, found work right away in the fur business. Because he did not “know the fur business...he was paid less and only earned 25 dollars a week,” an amount insufficient for the family to live on. They were unable to receive financial assistance for which they would otherwise qualify because JIAS, “wouldn’t have anything to do with us because we belong to Winnipeg” (Recall Rachel’s family was destined to go to Winnipeg). After the rent was paid “there was hardly anything left;” her mother would make do by stretching one meal into three.⁸⁶

The only thing that we lived on was bread, and eggs, and milk. So, in the morning my mother would make the soft-boiled eggs, and for lunch it would be hard-boiled eggs, and for supper it would be scrambled eggs.

It was not always easy for men to find and keep jobs. The case files identified some of the obstacles newcomers confronted: the machinery skills tailors acquired in Europe did not always transfer easily to the machines used in Canada; many factory jobs were precarious and layoffs were frequent during what was known as the “slack season;” and many younger immigrants arrived in Canada with “no previous skills or trade and lacked knowledge of the English language.”⁸⁷ For families to manage financially, women survivors had no choice but to contribute financially to the household to augment their husbands’ low wages, in addition to taking care of the home. Boundaries between work and home life quickly became blurred for many Jewish immigrant women. To ensure the wellbeing of the family paid work often became part of their dailiness.

Paid Work

Finding work outside the home presented many practical and psychological challenges for women. Women with very young aged children needed childcare,⁸⁸ which was neither readily-accessible nor affordable. Towards the end of 1949, the Canadian Jewish Congress commissioned a survey to study “the problem of settling the Jewish displaced persons.”⁸⁹ Childcare was raised as a concern, given that the only feasibility for these immigrants was at “Neighbourhood House” which was able to care for “25 pre-school immigrant children for half days.”⁹⁰ The report noted that although “the standards of care are good... all-day services are required for a much larger group of children to enable the mothers to go to work in order to supplement the fathers’ inadequate wages.”⁹¹ The daycare problem persisted. More than three years later most women were still unable to access daycare. Social workers repeatedly expressed frustrations with the lack of childcare services, as is captured in the case of Mrs. D:⁹²

December 17, 1952. Mrs. [D] in office. She was very desirous of working but cannot do so unless child is placed in nursery. Worker explained that these facilities are not available at present. Upon hearing this, Mrs. [D] felt very frustrated because her husband’s earnings would hardly be sufficient to support the family properly.

The lack of childcare resources dictated the daily organization of the mother’s life.⁹³ The work-childcare solution for many of these women was to do piecework in their homes, and there were more opportunities for work at home should a sewing machine be available. Bronia,⁹⁴ a trained seamstress, bought a sewing machine with refund money she received for the family’s train tickets to Winnipeg. Finding work to take home from a factory was relatively easy but the work itself was difficult and

the pay was shockingly low. Leib,⁹⁵ a Hungarian refugee, was more emphatic in his description of his wife's homework: Not only were the wages exploitative, the conditions of work were extremely harsh. His wife, who needed to be home to take care of their son, had some dressmaking experience and "found a Jewish guy, an old Canadian" who contracted out work. She received nine cents for every coat lining completed, but was criticized for the quality of her work: "That's no good, I don't pay for this, I don't pay for this." According to Leib, this was a form of "slavery."

Another of the women I interviewed, Frayda,⁹⁶ spent most of the war years in a Lithuanian ghetto. She had a three year-old-son and her sister had a child of same age. In 1952 they both did piecework in their homes. One day a factory foreman made a house-call and was unimpressed that they worked in the presence of "snotty children with dirty hands." He gave the women an ultimatum: the work would be done in the factory or not at all. Not working was not an option for either woman. The sisters' solution was to share one job between them: each week they alternated between going to work and providing childcare for both children. This type of arrangement was unusual and likely only possible because they were sisters. It was difficult, if not impossible, for mothers with preschool children and no extended family – which was the case for most survivors – to work outside the home. Naomi,⁹⁷ who arrived in Montreal in 1948 from Poland, explains:

There was no daycare whatsoever. You could not ask a friend to take care of your child in the same way you can ask your sister or your mother. Everyone was so overworked and so overwhelmed.

With school-age children⁹⁸ the childcare barrier was mostly removed. Bronia⁹⁹ continued working at home for approximately another year until her youngest son started school, at which time she began work in a factory. However, working outside the home brought new challenges for the family and placed extra responsibilities on the older children, especially the daughters. Rebecca¹⁰⁰ was six when her family arrived in Canada in 1951: "My mother worked all day. I was a latchkey at seven. I had a younger brother – he was four; I was seven and I looked after him after school." Another child, Karen,¹⁰¹ was ten years old when her parents emigrated from Hungary. Although Karen's mother, Sara¹⁰², organized the home-life, Karen provided "support in the background." Sara would call with instructions for dinner: "Karen, can you put on the potato to boil? ... By the time [her parents] came home" dinner was ready. Merna¹⁰³ recalls her home responsibilities as a nine-year-old:

I was helping out, you know, with the cooking and helping out with the cleaning. My mother prepared the meals but I helped out with some of it because she was busy helping my father with the family income. So that was difficult in addition to going to school and taking care of my brother. I became very responsible at a very young age, you know, but it was like all of

us worked together as a family unit.

Collins explains that this type of mother-child work relationship “closely ties the mothering experiences to wider political and economic issues. Children learn to see their work and that of their mother’s not as isolated from wider society, but as essential to their family’s survival.”¹⁰⁴

There were instances of women as the sole wage-earners if their husbands were unable to find work either because of illness or if could not find work in their trade. For example, the E family of three arrived in Montreal in 1951.¹⁰⁵ Mr. E was in need of surgery and unable to work. This meant that Mrs. E, a skilled seamstress, had to “undertake work at home,” where she could care for her husband and child. The social worker wrote, “During our contact with the E family, it seemed that Mr. E appeared to be rather overwhelmed by his illness, and by the completely new surroundings. Mrs. E appeared to accept the situation on a more realistic basis and was able to make some adjustment.”¹⁰⁶

Gita’s¹⁰⁷ story illustrates similarly what Collins¹⁰⁸ refers to as the intertwining of public and private responsibilities. Gita was seven years old when she, her brother, and parents arrived in Canada in 1951. Her mother and father escaped from Poland as the war began and spent the war years in Siberia. Gita’s father was trained in steel metal-work but could not find related employment because it “was a French trade, and for a whole year he didn’t work when we were here.” Instead, her mother worked in factory as an operator earning 18 dollars a week. After the children were in bed and the house was in order, Gita’s mother would sit at the sewing machine until 11 or 12 o’clock at night, either doing piecework or sewing for private customers. In addition to being the primary breadwinner, she was responsible for all the children’s meals, as during the post-war period there were no school lunch programs in Montreal. To save on streetcar fare for the two kilometres between home and work, Gita’s mother “would walk every day to work and come home to give me lunch, because I was only seven, and then walk back to Mount Royal to work, then come home at night.”

Women’s wages were substantially lower than those of men. Very few women received wages greater than 18 dollars per week, while a very low wage for a man was 20 dollars. JIAS offered help to families with low income, which was less than 26 dollars per week for a family of four. Anna’s family’s JIAS case file shows that her father’s “salary of \$26.00 was not enough to support his family of four thus, the agency supplemented with further maintenance.” A family’s wage of 35 dollars, “in accordance with [JIAS’s] budget, was sufficient for the family to maintain itself.”¹⁰⁹

In addition to their daily tasks of caring for the children and maintaining the household, there were numerous stories of women helping with their husband’s paid work. For many of the interviewees to whom I asked “Did you/your wife/ your

mother work?" the answer was often "no." Merna¹¹⁰ said her mother did not work; she "worked as a homemaker." Her father was a tailor and brought home work every day. He bought a sewing machine for her mother. Merna said, "my mother would sew during the day when I was at school," and then they sewed together in the evening. Because Merna's father was paid by piecework, her mother's work increased his production. "The more he produced...the more money he made," yet such work by women was not recognized as "paid work." Ironically, such invisible work had its benefit. The family would earn more money for the woman's work under the guise of the man's production than she would have received as a hired pieceworker.

There were many examples of women supporting their husband's work. Malka¹¹¹ helped her husband sew linings into fur coats in the evenings or in her spare time. "This was not only about money," but also about providing emotional support and building his confidence: "I didn't want that he should feel that he can't make a living, you understand?"¹¹² Rayna,¹¹³ a Hungarian woman who lived in Paris after the war, arrived in Canada with her husband and four-year-old daughter in 1955. Her husband, trained in leather manufacturing in Paris, started a leather coat business shortly after they arrived. At first, their shop was in their home: The showroom was in the front of the house and at the back was a room for tailoring and two small rooms where they lived. "In the beginning I did everything. You know, I was helping my husband, I was making the papers, the office work... I was even modelling the leather coats." Both Malka and Rayna's work contributed greatly to the economic sustainability of their family but it went unrecognized as such, even to themselves. Supporting their husbands' paid work was but one activity of women survivors' motherwork.

Survivors' Motherwork

The Montreal survivors settled primarily in two adjoining neighbourhoods: Mile End and the Plateau, which centred around the Jewish Public Library, the Young Men's Hebrew Association and Fletcher's Field¹¹⁴ (at the base of Mount Royal). These became points of gathering for the immigrants. They would meet people they knew from the "old country" as well as forge new friendships. Gita¹¹⁵ tells that "everybody was a cousin and an aunt, because we had none," and there would be weekly gatherings at each other's homes." On Sundays, especially in summer, they either went to the Mountain or "walked up and down Park Avenue." They created *landsmanshaftn* which provided kinship support and social events, such as dances.¹¹⁶ A rich social life emerged among the immigrants, but on a day-to-day basis, the immigrant survivor mother managed the dailiness of her family's life with little, if any, outside help.

The literature on mothers making do in low-income families reveals that parents and siblings played a pivotal supportive role, especially in times of crisis.¹¹⁷ It was common for extended families to create informal exchange systems of goods and labour, as well as to provide "advice and company."¹¹⁸ This was not the case for the

survivor families, as most couples arrived in Montreal newly-married and with very young children. According to Naomi¹¹⁹ there was nowhere to turn for help. All her friends and neighbours were in a similar predicament; their husbands left for work early and came home late. Although the established Jewish community provided some financial and cultural support, mainly through JIAS, they offered “nothing” on a day-to-day basis, says Naomi. Leeba¹²⁰ also expressed that “the general feeling was that we don’t get any help. You help yourself.”¹²¹

The survivor mothers also resolved day-to-day tensions that arose from families trying to make do on low wages. This meant a complex juggling of the financial needs of the family and the physical, emotional, and social needs of the children. The F family arrived in Montreal in January 1949. Mr. F found work right away, but his weekly earnings were low. Even though their daughter was in school all day, Mrs. F told the caseworker that although “she would like to work to supplement the family’s income,” taking care of her daughter during lunch was a problem. Mrs. F explained that her daughter was a “nervous child [and she] would not eat if her mother were not home when she returned from school.” Although her daughter “liked school very much she felt a little ill at ease and ‘on the outside’ because she could not speak English well.” She would need to find an afterschool program and be assured that her child felt safe before she could consider finding work.¹²²

Toba¹²³ also felt she needed to boost the family’s income, but her Polish nursing degree was not recognized in Canada and she had no other work skills. She told their JIAS social worker that even if she could find work, she first needed “to set their house in order.”¹²⁴ A second child born after the war had not yet started school, and her 15-year-old daughter Anna needed help with her education. Toba found a creative solution that allowed her to stay at home and help the family financially: She bartered free accommodation for the family in exchange for caring for an elderly woman recently incapacitated by a stroke. Although Toba “was taken advantage [of],” dollar for dollar, this arrangement freed the part of Anna’s father’s salary that was previously set aside for rent. Furthermore, their housing conditions improved vastly once they moved from a one-room rental to a flat.

Numerous case file entries capture the ways survivor women managed their homes, especially around money. When a caseworker asked Mr. G how his family was managing, given his low income, he answered: “all seemed well with them... his wife was managing unusually well on his small pay which he brought her. ... Worker put in a word of admiration for her as well.” The caseworker noted that Mrs. G “seemed in a sense to be the leader of the family.”¹²⁵ Such observations were also present in the interviews; the women were often responsible for the financial management of the household.¹²⁶ Each Friday the husband would come home, give his wife a pocket-size brown envelope with his weekly earnings, and the woman would budget accordingly to make sure the family and home were well taken care of. Hannah¹²⁷ remembers

that even though both parents worked full-time, her mother did everything. Her mother was “the strong one.” These stories illustrate that managing the men’s salaries, done mostly by women, was as fundamental to the success of the family as was the men’s paid work.

The importance of children’s education was a recurring theme in both the interviews and the case files. Typically, mothers were responsible for overseeing their children’s education, and they and their husbands viewed their children’s education as a pathway to a successful future. Although most immigrant families sent their children to public schools (under the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal),¹²⁸ some mothers such as Malka¹²⁹ and Ita¹³⁰ were resolute that their children attend a private school. Malka wanted her son to have a Hebrew and Yiddish education, but her husband was unsupportive initially because all their friends’ children went to public school and the cost of parochial school was expensive – eight dollars a month (Recall that \$35.00 per month was sufficient for a family to sustain itself.¹³¹). Dubious of the quality of public school education, Malka said, “No, he has to go. I’m gonna go clean the houses but he has to go.” Ita too believed that the public education system was inadequate. She registered her daughter in a private school and was able to pay its cost by providing home childcare.

Helping children enter the school system proved difficult, especially for older children. Entries in the case files occasionally showed mothers conveying concerns to the social worker that their teenage children preferred factory work over school. In addition to anxieties about fitting into the Canadian high school culture, their children argued that the family would benefit from the additional income.¹³² For teenagers who wanted to pursue an education, the options were not straightforward. As a 15-year-old with relatively few years of formal education, Anna asked herself: “What was I going to do? At fifteen I’m going to start high school?”¹³³ The JIAS social worker felt she was too mature for high school. Believing that Anna would be a good teacher in the Jewish school system, as she was fluent in Yiddish and English, the social worker suggested Anna forego high school to enrol in the Jewish Teachers’ Seminary.¹³⁴ Anna and her mother, Toba, met with the principal of the Seminary. Although Anna had the necessary language skills, was too young to qualify. She had to be at least sixteen. Toba, however, did not take “no” for an answer. She convinced the principal to accept Anna into the Seminary. He told Toba he would not be able to offer Anna the fifty-dollar monthly stipend given to students of the Seminary, to which Toba countered: “Doesn’t matter, she doesn’t need a stipend. Keep her here until Hanukkah, until December, and if you think she is too young by December, she will leave.” After the interview Toba told her daughter, “Now it’s in your hands.” And Anna did succeed. Toba’s intervention or motherwork was a form of activism. She knew that if she did not challenge the bureaucracy of the educational system, her daughter’s future career opportunities could be truncated. In fact, from January onward Anna indeed received the fifty-dollar monthly stipend. To Anna’s surprise,

however, her mother asked that she hand over the monthly cheques. As Anna recounts, though, “when I got married she gave me back all the money, ’cause she put it away.”

The first day of school for younger children was fraught with anxiety for both mothers and children. Merna’s¹³⁵ experience is from the standpoint of a seven-year-old. Her family arrived in Montreal shortly after the school year started. She recalls her first few months in Grade One as terribly stressful and humiliating, largely because she could not speak English: “When I came here I remember myself walking along the walls, wanting to become invisible: ‘Don’t notice me, please don’t notice me.’” Every morning her mother would walk her to school, and, sensing Merna’s sadness, she would have tears in her eyes. The anxieties surrounding separation generally were short-lived. There were, however, numerous challenges mothers confronted in navigating their children’s schooling and home life. Helping children with schoolwork was both a priority and a frustration for most mothers, given their low proficiency in English. While children learned English within a couple of months of their arrival, it took much longer for their mothers, whose daily lives offered limited exposure to English.¹³⁶ Merna’s mother, for instance, believed “getting an education was really important,” although without English, she herself would not be able to help her children with their homework. This motivated her to attend night classes in English; in part for herself but mainly to learn to read the Dick, Jane, and Sally reader that Merna was required to read. But, not all immigrant women went to English classes. In fact, most women I interviewed who had young children said this was not an option for them. Hannah’s¹³⁷ mother worked full-time, and although her father went to English class in the evenings, her mother did not: “I guess she worked and then she had to be home. I mean, somebody had to be home.” She “basically learned English at work.”

Collins argues that “women’s motherwork for individual and community survival has been essential.”¹³⁸ However, such motherwork costs the woman her “individual autonomy and ... individual growth for the benefit of the group.”¹³⁹ Such sacrifices were reported in the interviews. For some, there was a reluctance to accept the gendered division of labour. Malka,¹⁴⁰ for instance, was eager to attend evening English classes because she was “very anxious” that her English was “not good” and also because she saw this as an opportunity to socialize, which her home life did not allow for. Though at the end of the day their child was bathed, fed, and cleaned, Malka’s husband “couldn’t stand it that [their son] was crying. Every time he told me, ‘you have a child. A mother has to be home.’” Instead of the evening classes, Malka taught herself English with the help of her four-year-old son. She asked him to translate words from English to Yiddish, and at all times Malka carried a notebook in which she recorded the words she learned from her son.

Naomi¹⁴¹ says she was never well-suited for homemaking. She grew up in Warsaw in a highly cultured and politicized middle-class family. She always assumed she would go to university and have a career. Naomi was seventeen years old when the war broke and spent the war years incarcerated in the Soviet Union. After the war she settled in Łódź, Poland, where she met her future husband, who, through buying and selling, “made enough money to live very well.” Naomi worked as a secretary for the government while trying to complete her high school, taking courses in chemistry and physics. In 1948, they had opportunity to immigrate to Canada. Naomi became pregnant shortly after they arrived in Montreal, quashing any immediate hopes for an education and a profession. She remembers the constant frustration of being a homemaker: “I did not enjoy staying home but there was nothing I could do.” She waited anxiously for her husband to return from work at the end of the day so she could leave the house to engage in some semblance of intellectual and cultural life. Naomi’s choices, as was the case for the women survivors generally, were framed by structural limitations such as state policies and services that provided inadequate daycare services.¹⁴² Naomi describes a hierarchy of family care in which mother survivors created opportunities first for their children and only then for themselves. Only once all three children were in school did Naomi pursue a college education.

Conclusion

Most Holocaust survivors who arrived in Montreal came with families and little money, if any. Yet, within ten years, most survivors in Montreal were able to buy a home, were not wanting for food or clothing, and, within twenty-five years, the majority of their children had a post-secondary education with many becoming professionals.¹⁴³ The concepts of dailiness and motherwork help broaden our understanding of the multifarious ways Holocaust survivors rebuilt their lives. For women survivors, motherwork not only included daily chores of feeding the family, raising children, cleaning the home, and supporting their husbands but also meant navigating the social, political, and economic contexts that shaped daily decision-making. Their daily actions (individual agency) were determined by what made sense at any particular moment. This meant creativity, flexibility, and resourcefulness, be it working for pay either in or out of the home, helping with their husbands’ paid work without having their contributions recognized as work, challenging institutional decision-making to ensure future opportunities for their children, or “choosing” not to work or delaying work because of family priorities. These actions were carried out with little if any support because most families had no relatives from whom to ask for help, while the established Jewish community provided no such day-to-day support. In spite of obstacles and frustrations, the survivor mothers created both stability and new opportunities to move the lives of their families forward from rags to comfort.

- 1**
Leeba, Interview with Author, 15 October 2012.
- 2**
Malka, Interview with Author, 1 November 2011.
- 3**
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- 4**
"JIAS Social Service Case Files." 1948-1975, JIAS Series E. CJCCC National Archive.
- 5**
See Dorothy E. Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, Northeastern Series in Feminist Theory (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987); Harding, Sandra G., *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); Patricia Hill Collins, "Gender, Black Feminism, and Black Political Economy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 568 (2000): 41–53; Sandra Harding and Kathryn Norberg, "New Feminist Approaches to Social Science Methodologies: An Introduction," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30. 4 (2005): 2009–2015.
- 6**
Patricia Hill Collins, "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood," in *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*, eds. Grace Chang, Linda Rennie Forcey, and Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Perspectives on Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 45–65.
- 7**
Bettina Aptheker, *Tapestries of Life: Women's Work, Women's Consciousness, and the Meaning of Daily Experience* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989).
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- 9**
For example, Giberovitch's research focuses on *landsmanschaft* in Montreal. Sheftel and Zembrzycki study the social life of the orphans who settled in Montreal. Although Goldberg's research spans many aspects of daily life, her research is not specific to the survivors who settled in Montreal.
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Morton Weinfeld, "Research on Holocaust Survivors in Canada," *Canadian Jewish Studies* 4–5 (1996-1997): 138–41.
- 11**
Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994); Michael S. Roth, *The Ironist's Cage: Memory, Trauma, and the Construction of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Eva Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust*, 1st ed. (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).
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Joost Meerloo, "Delayed Mourning in Victims of Extermination Camps," in *Massive Psychic Trauma*, ed. Henry Krystal (New York, International Universities Press, 1969); Aaron Hass, *The Aftermath: Living with the Holocaust*

(Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Abraham Sagi-Schwartz et al., "Attachment and Traumatic Stress in Female Holocaust Child Survivors and Their Daughters," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 160.6 (2003): 1086-92.

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Terry L. Brink, ed., *Holocaust Survivors' Mental Health* (Binghamton, New York: Haworth Press, 1994); Henry Feingold, *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995); Helmreich, "The Impact of Holocaust Survivors on American Society: A Socio-Cultural Portrait," 14; Dorothy Rabinowitz, *New Lives: Survivors of the Holocaust Living in America*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf, 1976); Beth B. Cohen, *Case Closed: Holocaust Survivors in Postwar America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007).

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Ibid., 10.

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Louis Rosenberg, *Changing Needs of the Jewish Community*, Canadian Jewish Congress. Bureau of Social and Economic Research. Research Papers, Series A, no.4 (Montreal: Bureau of Social and Economic Research, Canadian Jewish Congress, 1958), 1.

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Sheftel and Zembrzycki, "We Started Over Again, We Were Young," 27

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30

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31

Joseph Kage, "A Helping Hand to the Newcomer," *JIAS Record*, October 1948, CJCCC National Archive.

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Ibid., 218.

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Kage, "Know the New Canadian," 2.

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Aptheker, *Tapestries of Life: Women's Work, Women's Consciousness, and the Meaning of Daily Experience*.

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Ibid., 61.

45

Ibid., 39.

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Ibid., 73.

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Patricia Hill Collins, "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood," 45–65.

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Ibid., 46.

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Patricia Hill Collins, *From Black Power to Hip Hop: Racism, Nationalism, and Feminism, Politics, History, and Social Change* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 131.

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Patricia Hill Collins, "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood," 47.

51

Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic*; Collins, "Gender, Black Feminism, and Black Political Economy"; Harding and Norberg, "New Feminist Approaches to Social Science Methodologies."

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Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic*.

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Ibid., 105.

54

Ibid., 160.

55

Griffith, Alison I. and Smith, Dorothy E., "Constructing Cultural Knowledge: Mothering as Discourse," in *Women and Education: A Canadian Perspective*, eds. Jane S. Gaskell and McLaren, Arlene (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1987), 87–103.

- 56**
Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic*.
- 57**
Ibid.
- 58**
Sandra G. Harding, *Whose Science?, 131*.
- 59**
I began this project with a list of 12 interviewees whose names came from three different sources: the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre; a social worker working with survivors; and, as a daughter of Holocaust survivors, I was connected within the survivor community. With each interview, the sample snowballed.
- 60**
See Kage, "Immigration and Social Service."
- 61**
"JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E," 1948-1975, CJCCC National Archive. JIAS services were available to the "newcomer" only for their first six months in Canada.
- 62**
Irving M. Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1982).
- 63**
Beginning in 1947, the Canadian government allowed 1000 Jewish war orphans under the age of 18 to immigrate to Canada. See Fraidie Martz, *Open Your Hearts: The Story of the Jewish War Orphans in Canada* (Montreal: Véhicule Press; Niagara Falls, NY, 1996).
- 64**
Rosenberg, *The Demography of the Jewish Community in Canada*; *ibid*.
- 65**
For inductive coding see Kathy Charmaz, "Grounded Theory," in *Approaches to Qualitative Research: A Reader on Theory and Practice*, eds. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy (New York; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2004), 496-521.
- 66**
"JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E," 1948-1975.
- 67**
Anna, Interview with Author, 11 April, 2013.
- 68**
William Weintraub, *City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and '50s* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1996).
- 69**
For breakdown of numbers see Rosenberg, *Changing Needs of the Jewish Community*.
- 70**
Weintraub, *City Unique*.
- 71**
Kage, "Immigration and Social Service."
- 72**
"JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E."
- 73**
Irena, Interview with Author, November 1, 2012.
- 74**
"JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E."
- 75**
Rachel, Interview 25 April 2013.
- 76**
Tamar, Interview with Author, 17 April 2014.
- 77**
"JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E."
- 78**
Although the interviewee did not state the name of the newspaper, it was most likely the Yiddish daily newspaper, *Der Keneder Adler* [Jewish Daily Eagle], which was founded in 1907. <http://www.jewishpubliclibrary.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Newspapers-of-Jewish-Montreal.pdf>
- 79**
Women's role as landlady was discussed in many interviews.
- 80**
Franca Iacovetta, "Making New Canadians: Social Workers, Women, and the Reshaping of Immigrant Families," in *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s*, eds. Franca Iacovetta, Paula Draper, and Robert Ventresca

(Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 482–513.

81
Ibid., 491.

82
Ibid., 491.

83
Ibid., 490–91.

84
Similar findings were reported in Goldberg's research. Goldberg, "We Were Called Greenies: Holocaust Survivors in Postwar Canada."

85
"JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E."

86
Rachel, Interview with Author, 25 April 2013.

87
"JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E."

88
Similar findings were reported in Frager and Patrias' research on women workers in Canada from the late 19th century until World War II. Most working-class married women did not work because what they would earn would not sufficiently cover the costs of childcare and the commute to and from work. Furthermore, the wife's work was needed in the household "to stretch the male breadwinners' wages to cover as much as possible." At times, the women would earn extra money by taking in homework, but bringing work into the home with small children was challenging in terms of finding available space in rooms that were already cramped. Ruth A. Frager, *Discounted Labour: Women Workers in Canada, 1870–1939*, Themes in Canadian Social History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

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Mary Palevsky, "Report on Survey of Jewish Refugee Settlement in Canada for the Canadian Jewish Congress" (JCC, October 1949), CJCCC National Archives.

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Ibid., 21.

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Ibid., 21.

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"JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E."

93
For a broader discussion on how institutions impact the organization of women's daily life see Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic*; Griffith, Alison I. and Smith, Dorothy E., "Constructing Cultural Knowledge: Mothering as Discourse."

94
Bronia is Rachel's mother in, Rachel, Interview with Author, 25 April 2013.

95
Leib, Interview with Author, 9 October 2012.

96
Frayda, 4 November 2013.

97
Naomi, Interview with Author, 24 March 2011.

98
There were very few school-age children in the first wave of immigration to Canada, the years between 1947 and 1950.

99
Anna, Interview with Author, 11 April 2013.

100
Rebecca, Interview with Author, 14 May 2014.

101
Karen, Interview with Author, 27 October 2012.

102
Sara, Interview with Author, 27 October 2012.

103
Merna, Interview with Author, 7 November 2012.

104
Collins, "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood," 51.

105
"JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E."

106
Ibid.

107

Gita, Interview with Author, 7 November 2013.

108

Collins, "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood."

109

"JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E."

110

Merna, Interview with Author, 7 November 2012.

111

Malka, Interview with Author, 1 November 2011.

112

Women providing similar types of emotional support to their husbands is reported in Baillargeon, *Making Do: Women, Family, and Home in Montreal during the Great Depression*.

113

Rayna, Interview with Author, 11 October 2012.

114

Fletcher's Field has been renamed to Parc Jeanne-Mance.

115

Gita, Interview with Author, 7 November 2013.

116

For more information on *landsmanshaftn*, see Giberovitch, "The Contributions of Holocaust Survivors to Montreal Jewish Communal Life."

117

See Aptheker, *Tapestries of Life Women's Work, Women's Consciousness, and the Meaning of Daily Experience*; Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal*; Collins, "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood;" Baillargeon, *Making Do Women, Family, and Home in Montreal during the Great Depression*.

118

Baillargeon, *Making Do: Women, Family, and Home in Montreal during the Great Depression*, 154.

119

Naomi, Interview with Author, 24 March 2011.

120

Leeba, Interview with Author, 15 October 2012.

121

A consistent theme in all but two interviews was the overarching feeling that the established Jewish community treated the survivors with disdain. See Bialystok, *Delayed Impact the Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community*.

122

"JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E."

123

Toba is Anna's mother in, Anna, Interview with Author, 11 April 2013.

124

I was able to locate Anna's family's JIAS case file in "JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E."

125

Ibid.

126

Baillargeon found that half her informants reported a similar pattern of men turning over their pay to the wife who would manage the money. See Baillargeon, *Making Do Women, Family, and Home in Montreal during the Great Depression*, 102.

127

Hannah, Interview with Author, 17 April 2014.

128

For an interesting study on the patterns of Jewish children's registration in Montreal's public school see Louis Rosenberg, *Jewish Children in the Protestant Schools of Greater Montreal in the Period from 1878 to 1958: A Statistical Study*, Research Papers (Canadian Jewish Congress. Bureau of Social and Economic Research). Series E; No. 1 (Montreal: Bureau of Social and Economic Research, Canadian Jewish Congress, 1959).

129

Malka, Interview with Author, 1 November 2011.

130

Ita, Interview with Author 4 November 2013.

131

"JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E."

132

"JIAS Social Service Case Files. JIAS Series E."

133

Anna, Interview with Author, 11 April 2013.

134

The Seminary was the training college for teachers in the Jewish parochial school system. It was established by the Canadian Jewish Congress.

135

Merna, Interview with Author, 7 November 2012.

136

For a discussion of Yiddish language and culture in postwar Montreal see Rebecca Margolis, *Jewish Roots, Canadian Soil: Yiddish Culture in Montreal, 1905-1945*, McGill-Queen's Studies in Ethnic History; 28 (Montreal ; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011).

137

Hannah, Interview with Author, 17 April 2014.

138

Collins, "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood," 50.

139

Ibid., 50.

140

Malka, Interview with Author, 1 November 2011.

141

Naomi, Interview with Author, 24 March 2011.

142

For a broader discussion on the challenges of accessing childcare in postwar Montreal see Goldberg, "We Were Called Greenies: Holocaust Survivors in Postwar Canada;" Palevsky, *Report on Survey of Jewish Refugee Settlement in Canada for the Canadian Jewish Congress*.

143

Weinfeld, "Canadian Jewry: A Relative Success Story."