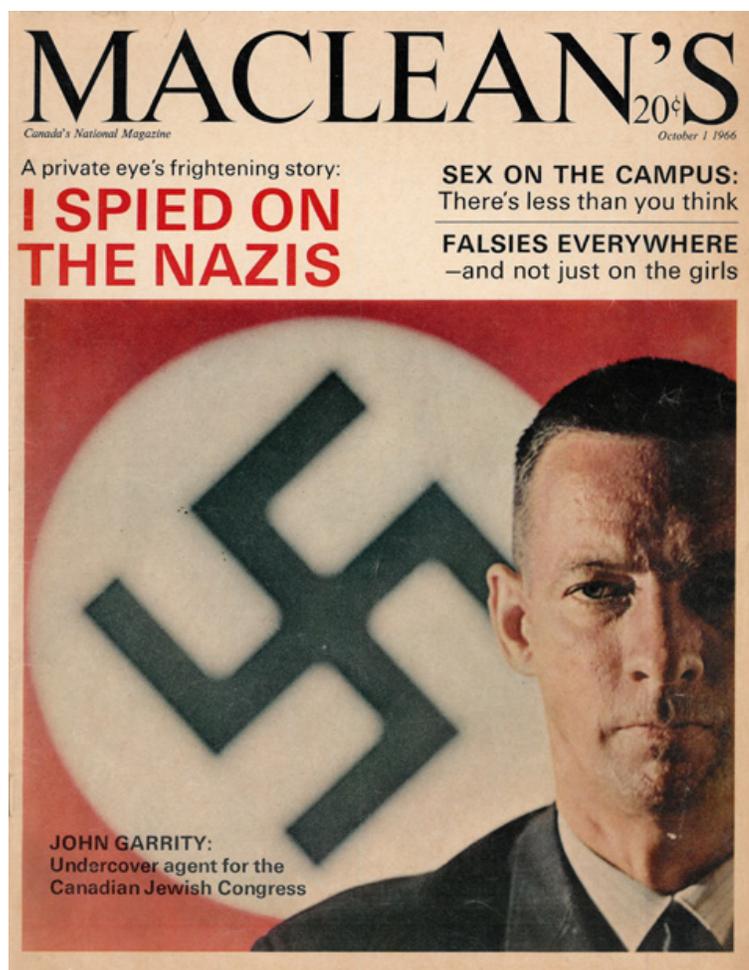


Janice Rosen

*Archives Director, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives / Archives juives
canadiennes Alex Dworkin*

Traces of the 1960s in the Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives



Canadian Jewish Congress on a *Maclean's* magazine cover, October 1966.

When I think of the archival records from the 1960s at the Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives, the first image that pops into my head is that of a *Maclean's* magazine cover from October 1966 with the headline “I Spied On The Nazis”, featuring John Garrity’s article, “Undercover agent for the Canadian Jewish Congress”.

The Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) archival records of the 1960s echo the drama and activism implied in this headline. There are files concerning discrimination and hate speech in general, as well as Canadian Nazis in particular. One can trace CJC’s views on Canada’s exploration of Bilingualism and Biculturalism, and its rising involvement in postwar restitution and in remembrance of the Holocaust. In this decade CJC became involved in new aspects of migration and human rights, as immigration from Morocco increased and Soviet Jewry issues began to loom larger. The Canada Israel Committee also shows up often in the CJC records of the 1960s. Reacting to the American boycott of Cuba after the Missile Crisis, a covert project of aid to Cuban Jews was set in motion. Meanwhile, on the local level, the papers of the Quebec Region office show a concern with voting rights for Jews within Montreal’s Protestant school system, and an interest in the creation of a school for newly immigrated Francophone Jews.

Other organizational documents of this decade echo many of these themes from different perspectives. The ADCJArchives houses administrative and case files from Jewish Immigrant Aid Services which profoundly enhance the narrative of CJC's involvement in the Sephardic Jewish migration. Reactions to political developments in Israel and in particular to the events of the Six Day War are reflected through the papers of Zionist organizations. For instance, a (now digitally converted) reel-to-reel recording gives access to the famous 1961 Yaacov Herzog/Arnold Toynbee debate at Hillel House in Montreal. Visual documents from a few years later show how the World's Fair in Montreal, "Expo 67", provided a way for Canadian Jews to illustrate Jewish principles through the Pavilion of Judaism and express their pride for Israel through visits to the Israeli Pavilion. The 1960s activities of various Holocaust survivor groups can also be researched through records donated by a Survivor association and through information on survivor organizations collected by scholar and social worker Myra Giberovitch.

The sub-headings of the *Maclean's* magazine cover, reflecting concerns with societal patterns and gender issues, evoke other aspects of the ADCJArchives' institutional collections from the 1960s. Women's organizations such as B'nai Brith Women, Na'amat, and the National Council of Jewish Women mirror the changing times through their minutes, scrapbooks, publications, and programs of activities. Synagogue bulletins and rabbis' sermons also reflect current events, and modifications in synagogue policies hint at the effects of widespread social change. An original and largely untapped resource for historians can be found in our vast collection of Drummond Photo Studio negatives taken at weddings, bar-mitzvahs, and community events. These tens of thousands of images are a window into the changing customs and fashions of the 1960s. The Montreal Vaad Ha'Ir/ Jewish Community Council records of the 1960s can also be studied for evidence of social change through their minutes, arbitration court files, and their files on issues such as *kashruth* (kosher certification) and conversion.



1960s customs and fashions at a Levine family Bar-Mitzvah, Montreal 1961. Drummond Photo Inc. collection.

Archival collections of individuals can be mined for cultural change content as well. The ADCJArchives houses a variety of papers from community and political-minded individuals active in the 1960s, such as politician Sheila Finestone, Zionist activists Neri and Bernard Bloomfield, and abortion clinic founder Dr. Henry Morgentaler. Cultural and intellectual currents can be charted from a variety of sources, ranging from the course notes and research activities of Rabbi David Feuerwerker of the University of Montreal, to Yiddish-penned diaries and literary commentary by Montreal small business owner Sarah Mindes.

In the 1960s, that era when “the times were a-changing,” we see the start of developments and patterns that resonate in Canadian Jewish society today, half a century later.