

Canada

Domestic Affairs

CANADA REACHED THE END OF 1979 with its promise and potential unfulfilled. The influential Economic Council of Canada titled its annual survey "Two Cheers for the Eighties," and listed a number of "disquieting elements" affecting the current and future economic well-being of the country. Canada was also plagued by political uncertainty; just nine months after the last divisive national election, in which the Conservatives took power for the first time in 16 years, there was to be another round of voting. Prime Minister Joe Clark's minority government fell in December 1979, after introducing one of the most austere budgets in recent times. It was the third shortest government in Canada's 113-year history.

There were the usual regional disputes that characterized Canada's brand of fractious federalism. In Quebec the ruling separatist Parti Québécois scheduled a referendum for the spring of 1980 on its plan, as yet ill-defined, for simultaneous provincial sovereignty and economic association with Canada. The French-speaking province was also beset by economic out-migration to the West and a cautious investment climate created by the provincial government's move to expropriate the General Dynamics Corporation's holdings in Asbestos Corporation. A smoldering feud between Alberta and Ontario over the price of oil also awaited resolution.

Foreign Relations

Little was accomplished by the short-lived Clark government in the area of foreign affairs. It did receive high marks for its liberal policy with regard to the admission of Cambodian "boat people." The prime minister attended the Tokyo economic summit and the Commonwealth meeting in Lusaka. On such issues as Afghanistan, the trouble in Iran, and the Olympic games in Moscow, the government followed the lead of the United States.

A well-advertised foreign policy initiative proved to be a major blunder for the Clark government. During the election campaign, Clark had called for the transfer of the Canadian embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, thus granting implicit recognition to Israeli sovereignty over the entire holy city. The Arab countries, of course, were furious, and one, Iraq, temporarily stopped oil exports to Canada.

When Clark came into office, he backed down from his earlier stand. The *Canadian Jewish News* editorialized:

Canada and Israel have enjoyed a warm and most cordial relationship ever since the birth of the Jewish state, and we are confident this bond will not be weakened by the embassy incident. The roots of that friendship run deep and will not be severed by the Canadian government's belated discovery of basic Middle East realities . . . The larger community should not fault Canadian Jewry for wanting to see Jerusalem recognized by Canada as Israel's capital. We are unshaken in our belief that support for recognition of Jerusalem's status as Israel's capital is a just and legitimate cause.

Clark went so far as to state that Canada was prepared to consider the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the official spokesman for the Palestinians. He made it clear, however, that Ottawa would deal with the PLO only if it accepted Israel's right to exist and renounced terrorism.

In the 1979 political campaign, Clark had declared that he would enact tough anti-boycott legislation to make certain that Canadian Jews were not victimized by discriminatory contracts. However, the proposed anti-boycott bill was dropped from the government's legislative agenda.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Jewish population of Canada in 1979 was estimated at 305,000. Leading Jewish centers were Toronto (120,000); Montreal (100,000); Winnipeg (18,000); Vancouver (14,000); and Ottawa (8,500).

Community Relations

Antisemitic graffiti were smeared on the walls of York University's tunnel system connecting various buildings on campus. The culprits were not caught.

A cartoon strip with obvious antisemitic overtones, which appeared in the *Canadian Travel Courier*, a Maclean-Hunter publication, aroused anger in the Jewish community, and brought a swift apology from the publisher. Amnesty International Canada suspended distribution of an educational pamphlet, *Human Rights Past and Present*, which was considered offensive by the joint community relations committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) and B'nai B'rith. One paragraph in the pamphlet had equated the Nazi genocide of Jews with Israeli actions in the Middle East. CJC and B'nai B'rith protested to the Metropolitan Toronto Police Association about articles appearing in the latter's organizational bulletin which reflected negatively on Jews, blacks, and Roman Catholics.

The remarks attributed to Pierre Elliott Trudeau, leader of the opposition and immediate past prime minister, that Canadian Jews had "opened the way to growing antisemitism" by making their views known on matters related to Israel and anti-boycott legislation, were viewed with concern by CJC and B'nai B'rith. Rabbi Jordan Pearlson, speaking on behalf of the two organizations, stated: "The Jewish community of Canada understands that matters of principle must often be expressed at cost. To express what we believe to be a danger to all Canadians is regarded by the Jewish community as a Canadian duty as well as a specifically Jewish obligation."

The fascist Nationalist party failed to become an official Ontario political organization when the Ontario Commission on Election Finances rejected its application for registration. Approval of the application would have entitled the party to have its name on the election ballot and to collect tax-exempt contributions. Donald Andrews, the Nationalist leader, was released on parole after serving ten months of a two-year prison term for possession of explosives and conspiracy.

The Western Guard party was ordered by Canada's first human rights tribunal to cease using the telephone to transmit hate messages. The tribunal met after complaints were lodged with the Canadian Human Rights Commission by the Canadian Holocaust Remembrance Association, the Toronto Zionist Council, and others.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission, concluding a six-month investigation, ruled that a controversial contract between Bell Canada Limited and the Saudi Arabian government did not discriminate against Canadian Jews. Windsor-West MP Herb Gray and the Consumers Association of Canada had requested the investigation after a Bell contract was found to contain a clause requiring the company to abide by the customs and traditions of Saudi Arabia.

G. Emmett Carter, Roman Catholic archbishop of Toronto, issued an unusual pre-Easter message devoted to Catholic relations with the Jewish people. He examined the Jewish origins of Christianity, referred to "heretical" attempts throughout history to de-Judaize the Christian faith, and dwelt upon Christian responsibility for the Holocaust.

Zionism and Israel

The Canada-Israel Committee (CIC), in a major reorganization effort designed to bolster its effectiveness, moved its national headquarters from Montreal to Ottawa and increased representation on its governing administrative committee. Henceforth, all policy decisions would require unanimous agreement by the constituent organizations (CJC, Canadian Zionist Federation (CZF), and B'nai B'rith) comprising CIC, which represented the organized Jewish community on all matters concerning Canada-Israel affairs. CIC national director Myer Bick announced his resignation; associate national director Howard Stanislawski was expected to do

likewise in the near future. In an interview, National Chairman Harold Buchwald disclosed that CIC's annual budget would be reduced by some ten per cent.

CZF announced formation of an Israel affairs committee whose first task would be a media and grassroots campaign to push for Canada's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

A record crowd of over 30,000 gathered in Toronto to celebrate Israel's 31st birthday. The festivities included excerpts from the Broadway show *Golda*, a photographic exhibit, "Jerusalem, Keeping the Past Alive," and an Israeli fashion show.

Canadian agriculture minister Eugene Whelan and his Israeli counterpart Ariel Sharon signed an agreement in Jerusalem for the exchange of agricultural scientists and the development of joint agricultural research projects.

Due to disappointing sales, Wardair decided to cancel its projected weekly charter flights to Israel. Asher Rahav, director of the Israel tourist office in Canada, voiced regret at the decision. In his view, Wardair had acted too hastily in cancelling the flights.

Soviet Jewry

Irwin H. Gold, executive vice president of the Toronto Jewish Congress (TJC), indicated that close to 3,000 Soviet Jews had been aided by Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS) in Toronto during the past few years. The agency handled an average of 25 families per month. To assist in job placement, JIAS and the Jewish Vocational Service co-sponsored several important training programs.

Israel Zalmanson, released by Soviet authorities in 1978 after serving eight years in a prison camp, visited Toronto on October 6-7. The annual Simchat Torah rally on behalf of Soviet Jews took place under the joint sponsorship of the Committee for Soviet Jewry (CSJ) and the Jewish Students' Union-Hillel; approximately 1,000 young people participated.

In Montreal, CSJ and the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry co-sponsored a successful Simchat Torah rally; more than 1,200 people were present.

The Canadian Lawyers and Jurists for Soviet Jewry honored Arthur Maloney, Q.C., former ombudsman of Ontario Province. Maloney reported on his recent visit to the Soviet Union, which he had made in the company of Justice Emmett Hall and Brian Goodman.

Holocaust Observances

Canada's first memorial to the Holocaust, the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Center, was opened to the public in October. Hundreds openly wept in the Spanish-Portuguese synagogue in Montreal as they sang the "Al Moleh Rachamim" for the six million dead. The commemorative ceremony, organized by the Association of

Survivors of Nazi Oppression, marked the deposition of an urn of ashes at the Holocaust Memorial Center.

The 25th year of Holocaust remembrance services in Toronto forsook speeches for prose, poetry, and song. Organized by Rabbi Dov Shapiro, chairman of TJC's Holocaust remembrance committee, the dramatic presentation took place in the Beth Emeth sanctuary before more than 3,000 people.

A symposium, "Crisis in Teaching the Holocaust," was held before an overflow audience at Toronto's Shaarei Shomayim synagogue.

Religion

After 40 years of operation, Terminal Beef, Canada's largest single supplier of kosher meat, ceased operation. In recent years the plant had supplied more than a third of the kosher beef available in Toronto and Montreal. The *Canadian Jewish News* commented editorially: "Shutdowns of kosher slaughterhouses signal a possible crisis for Canadian Jews. The ramifications are unpleasant to contemplate: a scarcity of supply; a possible rise in prices; and the concentration of supply in fewer and fewer hands. In the long-term, these could discourage younger families—and our senior citizens—from following *kashrut* in their homes, where Judaism begins. With the community already buffeted by assimilation, inter-marriage, and missionary predations, the scarcity of kosher meat is just one problem we do not need."

Minister of Consumer Affairs Allan Lawrence and Ontario MPP David Rotenberg were presented with a brief by Montreal and Toronto rabbinic leaders outlining steps needed to curtail misrepresentations of *kashrut* by butcher shops.

The Rabbinate Sepharade du Quebec, the umbrella organization of the 14 Sephardic congregations in Montreal, sent a brief to a provincial government commission requesting legal measures to prevent Jewish couples from obtaining a civil divorce before a religious divorce had been granted. The reason for the request, according to Sephardic chief rabbi David Sabbah, was to better protect the rights of Jewish women.

Mayor Nolan Filiatrault closed the door to further negotiations on a separate municipal status for the hasidic Tasher settlement in Boisbriand, Quebec. The hasidim had been conducting talks with the town and the Quebec government for over a year, and their struggle had attracted the attention of the media across Canada.

A delegation of four leading Toronto Orthodox rabbis met with Roy McMurtry, solicitor general of Ontario, David Rotenberg, MPP, and the chief coroner of Ontario to discuss recently passed legislation calling for the retention of the pituitary gland during a coroner's autopsy. The delegation received assurances that the gland, used to treat pituitary dwarfism, would not be removed if the family of the deceased raised any objection.

Nearly 3,000 delegates attended the joint biennial assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, making it one of the largest meetings of Jews ever held in Canada. Highlights of the convention included addresses by Shimon Peres and Rabbi Alexander Schindler, and presentation of Eisendrath awards to Arthur Goldberg, Supreme Court chief justice Bora Laskin, and Rabbi Samuel Cook, former director of the National Federation of Temple Youth.

A proposal by Schindler that children of non-Jewish mothers in mixed marriages be accepted as Jews resulted in controversy. Orthodox spokesmen were quick to dismiss the idea. Rabbi Harvey Fields, spiritual leader of Holy Blossom temple and chairman of the Toronto Association of Reform Rabbis, stated that it was "irresponsible" of Schindler to raise the issue without dealing with its implications for "Jewish family life, education, and the synagogue."

An assertion by Albert Goldberg, director of the local Israel Aliyah Center, that Jewish community life in Toronto was on the decline, and that even Orthodox groups had accepted the Christian definition of Judaism, came under varying degrees of attack by communal and rabbinic leaders. Goldberg stated in an interview that although the Toronto community was one of the strongest in North America, it had no future. He explained:

You can't live a full Jewish life in the Diaspora, and neither can you guarantee that your descendants will be Jews. If you want to remain a Jew, you have to live in Israel . . . At least half of Toronto's Jews are uninvolved in community affairs. On the university campus, the situation is worse. The younger generation is not attracted to membership in any of the Jewish groups.

Asked to comment on Goldberg's observations, Phil Givens, national president of CZF, characterized them as sweeping generalizations without supporting evidence. "I'm always astonished by people who come into the community for a short time and become experts on long-term trends," Givens stated. Rabbi Gunther Plaut, national president of CJC, argued that while "it's probably true that young people are not attracted to membership in organizations, . . . that doesn't mean there's no Jewish consciousness among our youth . . . Goldberg's assumption that Jews perceive Judaism through Christian eyes is wrong and out of date."

Jewish Education

While a larger percentage of children in Toronto than anywhere else in North America were receiving some form of Jewish education, Jewish educators in that city were not pleased with the existing situation. Approximately 5,100 students attended eight Jewish day schools on the elementary level, but only about a third that number were enrolled in Jewish day high schools. Furthermore, 50 per cent of young Jews in Toronto received no Jewish education at all. Rabbi Irwin E. Witty, director of the Board of Jewish Education, commented: "Today, when Jewish youth

confront such a wide variety of religious alternatives and lifestyles, the choices are overwhelming and confusing." He called for a maximization of Jewish knowledge, and criticized parents who allowed their children to drop their Jewish studies.

Montreal's Jewish school system, with approximately 6,000 children registered in 14 elementary schools and eight high schools, recorded its first drop in enrollment in three years. After more than two years of negotiations with the Association of Jewish Day Schools, the Quebec government agreed to restore an 80 per cent subsidy for all elementary grades. In accordance with government demands, French instruction in the elementary schools increased to 12 hours per week, and was scheduled to rise to 14 hours over the next two years.

Rabbi Benjamin Friedberg of Toronto's Beth Tzedec congregation told the *Canadian Jewish News* that pressure should be brought to bear on the government of Ontario to provide funds for Jewish education. Friedberg said, "In the type of Canadian mosaic that all levels of government wish to preserve, significant assistance to Jewish schools in Ontario would be eminently fair."

The Ontario court of appeals upheld a ruling that the Associated Hebrew Schools in North York, suburban Toronto, could not set up a publicly supported Jewish school with mandatory religious courses. The Associated Hebrew Schools had sought to join the public school system while retaining its traditional approach to Jewish education.

Jewish Culture

The Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada's exhibition, "A Journey into our Heritage," was extremely well received during its showing at the National Archives of Canada. More than 15,000 people in Winnipeg viewed "Shalom Square—Israeli Pavilion," a cultural display sponsored by CZF and the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada.

The Nephesh Theatre Group's production of *Children of Night* completed a two-week run at the Warehouse Theatre in Winnipeg. The play, written by Gordon Wiseman, featured Paul Kligman as Dr. Janusz Korczak, benefactor of orphans in the Warsaw Ghetto, who died along with many of the children under his care in a Nazi concentration camp. Discussion sessions followed those performances attended by Jewish school students.

The second National Conference on Yiddish, held in October at the Shaar Ha-shomayim synagogue in Montreal, attracted more than 2,000 delegates and guests from Canada, the United States, Australia, and Israel. Several thousand people also attended the Yiddish Festival of Theatre and Song in Montreal.

Publications

The Public Archives of Canada published *A Guide to the Sources for the Study of Canadian Jewry*, prepared by Lawrence F. Tapper.

Journalist and historian Abe Arnold of Winnipeg received CJC's Caiserman Award for *Jewish Life in Canada*, illustrated by the late William Kurelek.

Stephen Speisman's *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937* was widely praised.

Shlomo Birnbaum's *Yiddish, a Survey and a Grammar*, the first such work written in English, was hailed upon publication.

Rabbi Yitzhok Oelbaum of Toronto published his fourth book of responsa.

Two volumes dealing with aspects of the Holocaust are Elizer Szchory's *Night in Day* and Leon Kahn's *No Time to Mourn*.

In *Diasporas*, young poet Seymour Mayne exudes Jewish pride.

Rabbi Joseph Carmi's *Who's After the Rabbi?* is an autobiographical novel dealing with the problems of a rabbi in a small Wisconsin community.

Shirley Faessler's first novel, *Everything in the Window*, a study of Jewish life in Toronto, received favorable reviews. Faessler is the author of many short stories.

Naim Kattan's *Paris Interlude* is about the coming of age of a young Iraqi Jew.

Peretz Miransky, a Toronto-based Yiddish poet and writer, was awarded a \$5,000 federal multicultural grant to complete his book of Yiddish fables, *Between Smiles and Tears*.

Personalia

Joseph Kates, computer scientist and former chairman of the Science Council of Canada, was named chancellor of the University of Waterloo. Jack R. London was appointed dean of the faculty of law at the University of Manitoba.

June Tarshis Bernhard was the first woman to be named a judge in the criminal division of Ontario's provincial court. Elevated to chief justice of the British Columbia court of appeal was Charles Nemetz. The appointment of Nathan Nurgetz to the Canadian Senate made him the sixth Jewish member of that body; the others were David A. Croll, Carl Goldenberg, Sidney Buckwold, Jack Marshall, and Jack Austin.

Among those awarded the Order of Canada were Aba Bayefsky, noted artist on the faculty of Ontario Art College; Jack Diamond, Vancouver meat packer involved in numerous civic ventures; Alexander Brott, founder of the McGill Symphony Orchestra; Reuben Cohen, Q.C., Moncton, New Brunswick lawyer and business executive; Joseph Cohen, chief justice of the British Columbia Supreme Court; Reva Gerstein, prominent psychologist and former president of the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada; Barbara Frum, well-known radio and television journalist; Belle Shenkman, prominent promoter of Canadian talent in the arts; and Ethel Stark, music teacher and distinguished orchestra leader.

The prestigious Nicholas M. and Hedy J. Munk Geriatric Award was presented to Melvyn J. Ball, associate professor of pathology at the University of Western Ontario, for his work on brain failure.

Rabbi Gunther Plaut, national president of CJC, was named winner of the Ben Sadowski Award for exceptional service to the Jewish community.

Victor Goldbloom resigned his national assembly seat in the Quebec legislature to become president of the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews.

Among Canadian personalities who died in 1979 were Shlomo Perla (67), a founder of Betar; David A. Corne (78), founder and publisher of the *Western Jewish News* of Winnipeg; Samuel Rajzman (89), a leader of the Treblinka concentration camp uprising; Morris Surdin (65), composer and conductor with the CBC for more than 40 years; Samuel Granatstein (73), long-time leader of the Toronto Jewish community; Sam Yuchtman (69), Toronto radio impresario; Richard E. Dwor (68), widely known for his inter-faith activities in the Niagara peninsula; Rabbi Arthur Brodey, former executive director of Canadian Women's ORT; and Sheila Henig, concert pianist.

BERNARD BASKIN