Domestic Affairs

It was painfully clear in 1980 that Canadians—numbering 24 million—had a stronger sense of regional than national identity. Historically, centrifugal forces have made themselves felt most strongly in Canadian life during times of economic uncertainty, and 1980 was such a time. The uncertainty stemmed from poor growth prospects within Canada and the United States. Douglas D. Peters, chief economist for the Toronto Dominion Bank, termed the economic outlook "quite discouraging." "Canada," he noted, "is currently in its worst recession since 1954." The consumer price index rose by one full percentage point to 10.1 per cent—the highest since 1975, when the government introduced wage and price controls. There were 800,000 Canadians unemployed, 120,000 on welfare, and about 3 million living below the poverty line.

In February Joe Clark's Conservative party, espousing the view of Canada as a "community of communities," was defeated in the general election by Pierre Trudeau's Liberal party. In May the Parti Québécois' sovereignty-association option was decisively rejected by Quebec voters. Emboldened by these successes, Prime Minister Trudeau undertook constitutional and energy initiatives designed to assert the primacy of the federal government. However, the provinces launched court challenges against these initiatives; moreover, they greeted the federal government's advertising campaigns with publicity blasts of their own. As a result, Canada's governments squabbled more in 1980 than at any time in the country's history.

Foreign Relations

While Canada's role in spiriting six U.S. diplomats out of Iran generated an enormous amount of goodwill toward Canada in the United States, it was not translated into progress in official relations between the two countries. Among the troublesome events of the year were the following: the U.S. Senate failed to ratify an east coast fisheries treaty signed with Canada in early 1978; the United States retaliated against Canada for a 1976 tax law which prevented Canadians from claiming tax deductions for advertising appearing on American television stations; a Canadian call to alter an automobile pact with the United States fell mainly on deaf ears; New York State passed a law restricting Canadian exports to the state;
and the U.S. Congress ignored Canadian objections and voted additional funds for a controversial North Dakota water project which had the potential of polluting Manitoba waters.

The news, however, was not all bad. The U.S. government cleared away roadblocks to the long-delayed Alaska natural gas pipeline, which was to run through Canada and would create thousands of jobs. In addition, the touchy problem involving tuna fishing rights on the west coast was solved.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

The Jewish population of Canada in 1980 was estimated at 308,000. Leading Jewish centers were Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Ottawa.

According to statistics released by the Jewish Immigrant Aid Service (JIAS), 1,238 Soviet Jewish immigrants arrived in Canada between January and June, and were dispersed to 27 communities throughout the country: 18 Ontario towns received 606 immigrants; Calgary and Edmonton in Alberta received 314; Quebec City and Montreal in Quebec, 68; Saskatoon and Regina in Saskatchewan received 59; Halifax in Nova Scotia, 5; Winnipeg in Manitoba, 117; and Vancouver in British Columbia, 69.

Communal Activities

A record number of participants attended the 19th plenary assembly of the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), held in Toronto. Registered delegates totalled 1,112, while observers numbered better than 250, constituting a 30 per cent increase over the 18th plenary. There were more than 200 youth delegates, again more than ever, largely because of subsidies provided through the federal government’s leadership training grant program. Officers elected for the coming year were: Irwin Cotler, president; Monroe Abbey, honorary president; Sol Kanee, chairman of the board of governors; and Sam Filer, chairman of the national executive.

Following the referendum in Quebec, the Canadian Jewish News editorialized:

We congratulate the Canadians who live in Quebec who wisely turned down the sovereignty-association option in favor of “renewed federalism” in a united Canada. The No victory was a clear indication that despite the difference in their heritage, the people of Quebec regard all of Canada as their home and want to live in harmony with all of their fellow Canadians.

However, the 40 per cent who voted Yes comprise a major factor in the future of Quebec and Canada, and whatever accommodation is required to discourage the separatist feeling further must become a matter of priority for the federal and the ten provincial governments.
While the search goes on for a solution to Canada's constitutional problems, perhaps it's time for our Jewish leadership and particularly the Canadian Jewish Congress to take a long, hard look at the Jewish position in this matter.

Officially, CJC declared its impartiality in "political" matters and therefore did not voice an official view of the referendum—even though the vast majority of Quebec Jews voted No. The question that bothers many is whether a threat to break up our country is just a political matter. Surely the possible demise of Canada deserved more concern than mere impartiality.

The belief that rejection of sovereignty-association in the referendum would stem the flow of young Jews out of Quebec was probably "wishful thinking," according to George Kantrowitz, research director of the Allied Jewish Community Services. He reported on a 1977 study of anglophone junior college and university students which showed that 45 per cent of Jewish students in their last year of studies planned to leave Quebec, as compared with 12 per cent among non-Jews. Jewish junior college students also showed greater inclination to leave Quebec—31 per cent as compared with 17 per cent of non-Jews. Only 20 per cent of the total contemplating leaving thought they would eventually return to Quebec.

Mounting inflation and a drop in the amount of money raised in the 1980 United Jewish Appeal (UJA) campaign would have considerable impact on the allocation of funds to local agencies, said Toronto Jewish Congress (TJC) president Wilfred Posluns. "Israel is still the main thrust of the UJA campaign," Poslun stated. "We can't siphon off any funds that should rightly go there. It's really a no-win contest. We all suffer when there isn't enough to go around."

CJC set up a committee co-chaired by Morley Globerman of Winnipeg and David Attis of Moncton to study the needs of Jews living in smaller communities. Stan Urman, assistant national executive director of CJC, explained: "I believe it is crucial that the needs of Jews living in small, often isolated, communities be taken seriously. These people are the vanguard in the fight against assimilation and intermarriage and are therefore entitled to all the moral and financial support we can possibly give them."

Accusations which led to the establishment of a committee to review Jewish Family and Child Service (JFCS) foster care placements were found to be "essentially unwarranted and groundless," according to a report released in 1980. The report, based on a two-year study carried out jointly by representatives of JFCS and TJC, stated: "JFCS . . . has functioned effectively within its charge . . . as the exclusive agency responsible for placement of children who cannot live with their families and for representing the Jewish community's vested interests for the protection of its children." It was emphasized that since 1978 no Jewish child had been placed in a non-Jewish foster home.

Cheers broke out among the 1,000 delegates to the B'nai B'rith international convention when President Jack Spitzer announced that Canadian B'nai B'rith district 22 would be accorded full international status.
Former inmates of Canadian internment camps, which housed some 2,000 male German and Austrian Jewish refugees shipped to Canada from Great Britain during World War II, held a 40th anniversary get-together in Montreal.

Community Relations

John Ross Taylor, leader of the Western Guard, went to jail for a year, and his party was fined $5,000, for continuing to preach racial hatred by telephone.

When Edmonton's Beth Sholom synagogue was burned to the ground, there were fears in the Jewish community that this marked the beginning of an antisemitic campaign. There were no further incidents, however.

Radio stations looking for controversy on their hot-line shows were giving too much publicity to the Ku Klux Klan, according to Rabbi Jordan Pearlson, national chairman of the joint community relations committee of CJC and B'nai Brith. Pearlson called this a "debasement" of freedom of speech.

In Saskatoon a Jewish community delegation presented a brief to the board of education, stating its opposition to the introduction of "Christian Ethics" into the school program. A supporting brief was submitted by the Saskatchewan Association on Human Rights.

After consulting with famed war-criminal hunter Simon Wiesenthal, Canadian solicitor-general Robert Kaplan stated that he was convinced that "solid evidence of war criminal activity on the part of certain Canadian residents could be obtained." He told the Canadian Jewish News, however, that "contrary to some reports, we are not ready to prosecute. The Canadian government is in no position now to take any action." Kaplan pledged that the government would act as quickly as possible to set up a special inter-departmental cabinet committee to study the options available for action against war criminals resident in Canada.

In a strongly-worded resolution, the House of Commons sharply condemned terrorist attacks on French Jews. The text of the resolution was read to 500 members of the Toronto Jewish community who gathered in a display of solidarity with the Jews of France.

Zionism and Israel

The Canada-Israel Committee issued the following statement in response to the Stanfield report on Canada-Mideast relations, which was prepared while the Clark government was still in power:

The officers and directors of the Canada-Israel Committee have now concluded a preliminary assessment of the final installment of the Stanfield report. Having done so, we have observed that many of the interpretations and conclusions found in the report run contrary to the views of the Jewish community of Canada as represented by the CIC. For example, we do not support Canadian recognition of the PLO, nor do we favor a process of creeping legitimization of that organization as a manifest in a policy of "broadening of contacts."
In addition, we do not accept the report’s approach in regard to the application of the Arab boycott in Canada. We continue to believe that the application of the Arab boycott constitutes a flagrant case of foreign interference into the Canadian marketplace. Moreover, it represents a fundamental violation of Canadian civil liberties as these pertain to both corporate and individual rights.

Pierre Trudeau, upon becoming prime minister, toured the Middle East. In a significant remark in Cairo, he held open the possibility that Canada might move toward recognition of the PLO as the main spokesman for the Palestinians. “There is no dialogue between the PLO and Canada at the present moment,” he said, placing the emphasis on the last four words. At the same time he declared that such a dialogue should not “destroy our friendship with Israel.”

Israel’s exports to Canada in 1979 totalled $56.3 million. Israel imported Canadian goods to the tune of $109.8 million. A large soft drink company in western Canada announced plans to invest close to $10 million in Israel’s food processing industry. There was also the news that a Toronto company was negotiating to buy Israeli power-generating equipment worth $500,000. Finally, Elscint, an Israeli enterprise, launched a campaign to sell its CAT scanner to Canadian hospitals.

Despite bad weather, more than 17,000 people took in the music, displays, and shows arranged by the Canadian Zionist Federation for Israel Day at Ontario Place in Toronto.

A Canadian Christian group, composed of 52 choir members of the Glad Tidings church in Vancouver, made a two-week tour of Israel. The church, as part of the Jewish National Fund’s Galil Canada project, was seeking to raise $1,000,000 from Pentecostal Christians in Canada and the United States in order to sponsor a new kibbutz in the holy land. To date, $850,000 had been raised.

A prominent Toronto lawyer and community leader, Alvin Rosenberg, met with Israeli officials in the hope of gaining final approval for a $700 million water canal and hydro-electric project that would extend from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea. Rosenberg had already lined up a 60-member investment syndicate that was willing to guarantee one billion dollars capitalization for the project.

Soviet Jewry

Canadian chemist Gerhard Hertzberg, a Nobel laureate, spoke at a well-attended rally at the Soviet embassy in Ottawa protesting the forced exile of Andrei Sakharov. The rally was organized by the Canadian Committee for Soviet Jewry, and was the first ever held on behalf of a non-Jewish dissident.

A study published by CJC, giving detailed case histories of almost 500 Jews who had been refused the right to leave the Soviet Union, was presented to the review conference on security and co-operation in Europe held in Madrid.

A student-led Hanukkah rally in honor of Soviet Jews took place at Hyde Park in Vancouver.
In Ottawa a midnight vigil on behalf of Soviet Jewry was maintained throughout the year in front of the Soviet embassy. The vigil was initiated by the Jewish Student Union of Ottawa, and included participants from the University of Ottawa, Algonquin College, and Carleton University.

More than 800 members of the Toronto Jewish community gathered at Beth Tzedec synagogue to celebrate a symbolic third seder in solidarity with Soviet Jews. A program depicting the suffering of the prisoners of conscience and "refuseniks" was presented. Peter C. Newman, editor-in-chief of *Maclean's*, delivered a moving account of his visit with "refuseniks" in Moscow.

**Holocaust Observances**

A capacity crowd of 1,000 people filled the hall of the Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem synagogue in Montreal for the 1980 Holocaust Day commemoration, sponsored by CJC's Holocaust remembrance committee, Quebec region. A standing-room-only audience of more than 2,000 filled the Shaarei Shomayim synagogue in Toronto for a similar event.

Over 1,000 copies of a select bibliography on the Holocaust, prepared by Jill Hertzman, were sent to public school libraries throughout Ontario. TJC's Holocaust remembrance committee sponsored this project.

**Religion**

Twenty-eight couples walked down the aisle of Adas Israel synagogue in Hamilton, Ontario, in a mass wedding of Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union. It was the third year in succession that such a ceremony was held.

Rabbi Harvey Fields, of Toronto's Holy Blossom temple, called upon the Reform movement to act vigorously to meet the challenges of the day. He stated: "Shouldn't we be facing up to the fracturing of our Jewish families, the collapse of the home as the generating source of Jewish identity and celebration? Shouldn't we be confronting the waning of Jewish practice, the loss of *shabbat* and festivals, the erosion of Jewish consciousness, the hodge-podge we call Jewish education, the drifting away of our college youth, the needs of our growing legion of singles, the confusion of our young adults? Are these not the desperate areas where we require a transfusion of enlightenment, direction, and energy?"

The National Tripartite Liaison Committee, an ecumenical group composed of representatives of the Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and CJC, devoted its annual meeting in Montreal to the subject of "Religious Values in a Secular Society." Rabbi Eugene Borowitz, editor of *Sh'ma* in New York, and André Naud, professor of theology at the University of Montreal, served as keynote speakers. An award for distinguished service in the area of Christian-Jewish relations was presented to Moe Seidman, chairman of CJC's national religious department.
Jewish Education

The Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education, which was established after protracted negotiations, assumed direct control of the budgets of four Jewish day schools. Day and supplementary school enrollments in metropolitan Toronto increased markedly in 1980. There were 11,840 children between the ages of 4 and 18 enrolled in all Jewish schools; 6,295 were registered in ten elementary day schools and five day high schools, and 5,545 in 32 supplementary schools.

The Association of Jewish Day Schools asked the Quebec government to increase its funding of general studies in Jewish schools from 80 per cent to 100 per cent. By the 1979-1980 school year there were 23 hours of French instruction per week in the Jewish schools; almost all general studies, except for English and, in some schools, math, were being taught in French.

Jewish Culture

During the year CJC was awarded a number of government grants for various projects. These included: $8,875 to assist in the production of a film tracing Canadian Jewish history, with particular emphasis on the role played by CJC; $17,575 to conduct leadership training seminars for youth across Canada and to subsidize their attendance at the CJC plenary assembly; and $24,000 to develop Hebrew and English texts on Canadian Jewish history for junior high school students.

Work was being carried out on a project, funded by the Canada Council, to publish the complete prose and poetry works of the late A.M. Klein, Canadian Jewry’s poet laureate.

In Montreal the weekly Kanader Adler received a $7,000 grant from the Levesque government as part of its multicultural program.

Edmond Y. Lipsitz, CJC’s director of education and culture, received a $7,750 federal multiculturalism grant to develop a project “Audio Tutorial Hebrew Learning Aids.”

The highly successful Toronto Jewish book fair featured the world premiere of The Man Who Hid Anne Frank, a film by award-winning Harry Rasky.

As part of Ottawa’s Jewish book month, almost 3,000 people took part in the various activities that included a talk by Chaim Potok and a performance of A Bintel Brief by Dora Wasserman’s Yiddish Theatre Group.

Image Before My Eyes,” an exhibit of Jewish life in Poland before the Holocaust, prepared by the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research in New York, was brought to Winnipeg by the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada. It was displayed for several months at the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature.

Maureen Forrester’s world premiere performance of Oskar Morawetz’s “Psalm 22” was a highlight of the Jewish concert season in Toronto.

At a time when the organized Jewish community was moving to take over Jewish weeklies, a privately owned weekly, Jewish Star, was launched in Calgary.
Publications


The first Jewish private detective in Canadian fiction appears in *The Suicide Murders* by Howard Engel.


Joe Rosenblatt added to his reputation as one of Canada's finest poets by publishing *Tommy Fry and the Ant Colony* and *The Sleeping Lady.*

*Piece Work* by Mona Adilman is a book of poems.

Harry Gutkin published *Journey Into Our Heritage: The Story of the Jewish People in the Canadian West.*

In *Yesterday’s Doctor* Sam Peikoff, who had a long and distinguished career as a family physician and surgeon in Winnipeg, depicts his many-sided activities.

In *Striking Roots* Rabbi Aron Horowitz describes a half-century of service to Jewish education, mostly in western Canada.

Personalia

In the federal election Bob Kaplan of Toronto achieved an easy victory. In Windsor West, Herb Gray scored a solid win. Simma Holt, the outspoken journalist, was defeated in Vancouver-Kingsway. In Winnipeg-North, David Orlikow easily triumphed. David Berger won by a wide margin in Montreal-Laurier.

Among those awarded the Order of Canada were Ethel Stark, celebrated conductor, concert violinist, and founder of the Montreal Women's Symphony Orchestra; Ray D. Wolfe, prominent Toronto community worker; Louis Siminovitch of Toronto, eminent geneticist; Kalmen Kaplansky, founder and first executive director of the Jewish Labor Committee in Canada; Murray Adaskin, of Victoria, B.C., a composer who has taught in several Canadian universities; and Lazar Peters, executive director of the Montreal Guild of Dress Manufacturers.

Bernard Shapiro, whose brother Harold was president of the University of Michigan, was appointed director of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Appointed to the presidency of Ryerson Polytechnical Institute was 37-year-old Brian Segal, associate professor of social work at Carleton University in Ottawa.

A Winnipeg lawyer, Lyle Smorden, was elected president of the Bar Association of Manitoba.

Harvey Webber of Sydney, Nova Scotia was chosen as "Atlantic Canadian of the Year" by *Atlantic Insight,* a Halifax publication, and *Inflight,* the magazine of Eastern Provincial Airways.

Stephen Speisman, TJC archivist, won the Toronto Book Award for *The Jews of Toronto—A History to 1937.*
Mirial Small of Toronto was elected president of Hadassah-Wizo of Canada at the organization's 28th biennial convention, held in Vancouver.

Marjorie Blankstein and Ruth Druxerman were co-honorees at the annual dinner held by the Jewish National Fund in Winnipeg. Rose Wolfe was similarly honored by the Jewish National Fund in Toronto.

Canada obtained its first full-time woman rabbi when Joan Friedman was appointed assistant rabbi of Holy Blossom temple in Toronto.

Renowned Yiddish novelist, poet, and essayist Chaim Grade received the Marilyn Finkler Memorial Award in art and literature, presented by the Israel Frankel Jewish Public Library of Toronto.

David Rome, archivist at CJC headquarters in Montreal, received the Caiserman Award for 1980, in recognition of his extensive publications listing available materials on Canadian Jewish history and literature.

Among Canadian personalities who died in 1980 were Saul Hayes (73), Canadian Jewry's most distinguished communal worker, who served for many years as executive vice president of CJC; Allan Bronfman (84), philanthropist, communal worker, and one of the founders of the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University; Joseph Wolinsky (94), prominent industrialist and financier, noted for his support of Jewish education in Canada and Israel; Max Freedman (65), native of western Canada, famous as a correspondent and broadcaster; Nacham Selchen (83), Winnipeg pioneer and self-taught intellectual, who helped mold Jewish secular culture in western Canada; Abraham Shkop (84), of Toronto, well-known Jewish educator and communal worker; Florence Freedlander Cohen (86), founder and editor of the Canadian Jewish Review; Sarah Rosenfeld (86), one of the founders of the Associated Hebrew Day School of Toronto; Isadore Levinter (82), the first Jewish barrister to be elected a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada, the legal profession's governing and disciplinary body; Philip Goldman (69), active in many Jewish community organizations and president of the Toronto branch of the Canadian Associates of Ben Gurion University; Bernard Figler (80), Montreal author, community executive, and social worker; Dov (Bernard) Joseph (80), Israeli political leader, born and reared in Montreal; and Archie Bennett, journalist and community worker.

BERNARD BASKIN