Review of the Year

OTHER COUNTRIES
Canada

National Affairs

The federal political scene in 1998 was stable under the Liberal majority government elected in 1997, with the opposition remaining fragmented. Generally Canada did well economically during the year. GDP growth was moderate but steady, unemployment finally began to trend downward toward 8 percent, and inflation hovered around 1 percent. The main economic problem was the precipitous drop in the dollar, which declined by about 10 percent against its U.S. counterpart during the summer and fall. Canada was elected to a two-year term on the United Nations Security Council, beginning in 1999.

Government policy toward immigrants and refugees continued to be a serious concern of the Jewish community for several reasons—the prospect of Jewish immigration from the former Soviet Union, the problem of refugees from Israel, and general humanitarian issues. Among the recommendations of a federal government report released in March was one that would require new immigrants to speak at least one of the country’s two official languages, English and French. Jewish groups, recognizing that most Jews who want to come to Canada speak neither language, expressed great concern. B’nai Brith Canada (BBC) went so far as to claim that the proposals were designed to discourage immigration and were unfair. In contrast, the Quebec offices of Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS) and Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) viewed the report with greater balance. Other controversial proposals included separate statutes for immigrants and refugees, eliminating the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), and taking appeals out of the hands of the Federal Court and assigning them to civil servants. The proposals had not been enacted by the end of the year.

An ongoing dispute between Canada and Israel over the question of whether an immigrant from Israel can claim refugee status appeared to be cooling off as the number of such applicants diminished. The acceptance rate of claimants from Israel dropped from 50 percent in 1994 to 4 percent in 1997, when only 46 refugee claimants from Israel were accepted. Most were accepted in Montreal, where there is allegedly more sympathy for such claims, despite the vigorous arguments of Israeli officials that there is no persecution in Israel. Since 1989 most such cases have involved former Soviet citizens who immigrated to Israel under the Law of Return and then subsequently claimed that they had suffered perse-
Canadian Jews were generally pleased with an August Supreme Court of Canada ruling that unilateral Quebec secession would be unconstitutional and contrary to international law. The decision, on a reference from the government in the wake of the narrowly defeated 1995 Quebec referendum on independence, was endorsed by most Jewish groups, which enthusiastically support the maintenance of a united Canada. However, the Court went beyond the government's request and held that, should the Quebec separatists obtain a clear majority on a question of secession, the federal government and the other provinces would be obligated to negotiate the terms of such secession. The ruling leaves the future of the country in question so long as the separatist Parti Québécois (PQ) governs Quebec. Prof. Bruce Elman, who teaches law at the University of Alberta, called on Canadian Jews to "take this as a call to action" and reach out to other minority communities with similar federalist views by building on the Court's recognition that the protection of minority rights is central. Elman pointed out that minorities generally fare better in federal states and face serious problems in times of political upheaval, thereby reaffirming a key reason for Jewish opposition to Quebec's secession.

Elections

Several elections were held during the year, the most important of which was the Quebec provincial election on November 30, in which the Parti Québécois won a new mandate with a comfortable majority in the National Assembly, even though the opposition Liberals won a plurality of the popular vote. The PQ victory created the possibility of yet another referendum on independence within the next few years, even though ardent for a new vote was diminished by the PQ's relatively disappointing showing in the election. B'nai Brith Canada's Quebec regional director Robert Libman contended that the PQ "will not be able to muster the popularity needed for a referendum" and saw the outcome as "a very positive development" because he expects the PQ to face so many difficult challenges during the next four years. Still, the PQ remained committed to what it calls "sovereignty," and Premier Lucien Bouchard reaffirmed his party's intention to proceed when "winning conditions" exist. Among those elected to the National Assembly were Liberals Lawrence Bergman and Russell Copeman, with the former chalk ing up the largest victory margin of any candidate in the province.

Incumbent Montreal mayor Pierre Bourque defeated challenger Jacques Duchesneau, who had promised that he would be able to obtain investments of $500 million for the city from the "Jewish and anglophone communities." Duchesneau later backtracked, but he did claim to have held meetings with some Jewish developers and business people regarding ways to improve the investment climate. Two key city councillors on the Bourque team, Saulie Zajdel and Gerry Weiner,
were appointed to the powerful Executive Committee of the city. Other successful Jewish candidates for the council were Marvin Rotrand and Michael Appelbaum. Irving Adessky was reelected mayor of Hampstead, and Robert Libman won his first term as mayor in Cote St. Luc.

Israel and the Middle East

As a result of the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement, which went into effect at the beginning of 1997, trade between the two countries surged, with an increase of about 40 percent from 1996 to 1997 to a level of $440 million (U.S.). Most of the increase involved Israeli importation of goods made in Canada, particularly in the high tech sector. Several Canadian companies also invested in or acquired Israeli firms or won major contracts for work in Israel.

Air Canada inaugurated nonstop flights from Toronto and Montreal to Tel Aviv in May, thereby ending El Al's monopoly and ushering in an era of increased competition.

Ontario premier Mike Harris visited Israel with an entourage of government officials and business people in October. Since most of the bilateral trade between the two countries involved Ontario, the visit had particular economic significance. Harris pointed that out, noting that "the peace process offers substantial business opportunities in the Middle East." In Jerusalem he was met by protesters objecting to the plans for the Trans-Israel Highway, a toll road that is being built by an Ontario company.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry, under pressure from the Ministry of Finance, announced in May the intended closure of several overseas missions, including the Israeli consulate general in Montreal. This sparked an outcry in the local Jewish community, which is sensitive to any symbolic downgrading of Quebec's place in Canada and of its own importance. In response, the Foreign Ministry put the decision on hold for an indefinite period while trying to sort out its budgetary problems. Community leaders promised to maintain the pressure on behalf of the consulate.

Jewish community leaders sharply criticized the government when it voted in July in favor of a United Nations resolution that upgraded the status of the Palestinian delegation. Canada's UN ambassador, Robert Fowler, claimed that the resolution "will permit the Palestinian delegation to better participate in the work of the United Nations." The CIC reacted negatively, questioning whether Canada's traditional evenhandedness still existed.

Canada also came in for sharp criticism for allegedly harboring Middle Eastern terrorists. Yehudit Barsky, an American authority on Arab terrorist groups, asserted during an October visit that Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and Hamas carried out activities in Canada with relative impunity, mainly through fund raising, recruitment, and public relations activities. She claimed that terrorists regarded Canada as a hospitable place for such operations because of a lack of tight sur-
veillance. Her views corroborated statements made to a Senate committee in June by Ward Elcock, director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), who pointed out that terrorist groups had found numerous ways to take advantage of Canada’s lax procedures in order to build up their infrastructures. CIC research director David Goldberg supported an initiative by Solicitor-General Andy Scott to establish a legal basis for stripping fronts for terrorist groups of their charitable status. However, there was considerable cabinet opposition to the move. Minister of Revenue Herb Dhaliwal, for example, claimed that he saw no evidence of terrorist fronts raising funds under the guise of charitable activities.

In a follow-up to the bungled 1997 Israeli spy caper in Jordan, the Security Intelligence Review Committee found that CSIS was not involved in any way in the use of forged Canadian passports by Israeli agents or the plot to assassinate Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal.

Israel and Canada signed an agreement in June to construct a Regional Rehabilitation Center in Africa for victims of land mines. International Cooperation Minister Diane Marleau also announced that Canada would donate $600 million from its Peacebuilding Fund to several projects and institutions that work to foster understanding and cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians and other Arabs.

In May Israel asked Canada to consider admitting ten men—six Iraqis, two Syrians, and two Iranians—who had been incarcerated in Israel for several years for entering that country illegally. Although Israel did not consider them to be enemies, neither did it want to allow them to stay in Israel. It considered them dissidents, not criminals, and turned to Canada as a country with a reputation for welcoming refugees, contending that the men would face persecution were they to return to their respective homelands.

The Canadian International Development Agency committed $3 million over three years to McGill University to help bring Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian students to participate in the Middle East Program in Civil Society and Peace Making. Program director James Torczyner, a social work professor at McGill, expressed the hope that the students would return to their homelands after a year in Canada as “ambassadors for peace,” trained in the latest methods of promoting social justice and peaceful cooperation between peoples. In a June statement, Minister for International Cooperation Marleau praised the project for its “potential to make an important contribution to peace in the Middle East.” The first cohort of 12 students arrived in the fall of 1998.

**Anti-Semitism and Racism**

Ernst Zundel, controversial for his active Holocaust-denial activities, was now embroiled in procedures relating to his attempt to gain Canadian citizenship after a lengthy period of residency in the country. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service had already determined that Zundel was a security risk, which would be grounds for denial of his application. When that finding came under
consideration by the Security Intelligence Review Committee, Zundel challenged the impartiality of the SIRC. A lower court agreed with him, the Federal Court of Appeal reversed that decision, and in April the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the appeals court. Thus the SIRC was free to proceed, allowing the possibility that he might even be deported at some point. Meanwhile Zundel also faced a tribunal of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, which was assessing whether his "Zundelsite" on the World Wide Web promoted hatred against Jews. His challenge regarding the impartiality of one of the tribunal's members was rejected in June.

Also in June, Zundel announced plans to hold a news conference in the parliamentary press room in Ottawa. An outraged House of Commons quickly passed a unanimous resolution barring him from the premises for the remainder of the session. Government House leader Don Boudria explained that "Ernst Zundel doesn't belong in the temple of understanding and tolerance and democracy." Subsequently Zundel's lawyer, Douglas Christie, who has represented a number of anti-Semites, was also banned. Zundel responded, in November, by filing a lawsuit claiming that his constitutional right to free speech had been abridged; he named Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, all the parliamentary parties and their leaders, several specific MPs, and Canadian Jewish Congress and its president, Moshe Ronen, as defendants, for treating him as "a national pariah who should not be allowed into the precincts of Parliament." Ronen, acknowledging his role in alerting the politicians to Zundel's plan, responded by threatening a counter-suit.

In another legal action, the anti-Semitic former teacher Malcolm Ross won a judgment of $7,500 in April in a New Brunswick defamation suit against cartoonist and illustrator Josh Beutel. At a professional workshop in 1993, Beutel had presented a talk about the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, in which he used an illustration that depicted Ross as a Nazi and compared his views to those of Nazi German leaders. Judge Paul Creaghan of Court of Queen's Bench ruled that although Ross was indeed an anti-Semite and racist, there was no evidence that he was a Nazi. Beutel announced that he would appeal the judgment.

Doug Collins, the Vancouver area journalist who successfully contested a charge of anti-Semitism last year, faced a new human rights complaint filed by a representative of BBC. Harry Abrams charged that Collins had incited hatred against Jews and other minorities through his many columns in the North Shore News and the Daily Victorian. In his representation to the British Columbia Human Rights Commission, Abrams asserted that Collins had engaged in Holocaust denial and had made allegations about Jewish conspiracies. In its February 1999 decision, the tribunal ruled that Collins's columns were likely to expose Jews to religious hatred or contempt and ordered him to pay Abrams $2,000. He was also told to cease publishing anti-Semitic statements.

There were several incidents of anti-Semitic vandalism during the year. However, one apparent event proved to be misleading. There were two arson attacks on synagogues in London, Ontario, on a single day in February, but the man ar-
rested for the crimes turned out to be Jewish, and was subsequently cleared. The fire damage to the two synagogues was minimal.

Ecole Maimonides in Ottawa, a French immersion day school, suffered more serious damage, estimated at about $70,000, from an October fire. (A previous arson attack was made on the school in 1994.) Despite the fire’s proximity to Yom Kippur, the police were not treating it as a hate crime. Another Yom Kippur incident occurred in suburban Montreal, where a private home was invaded by vandals who caused thousands of dollars in damages and scrawled anti-Semitic slogans on the walls. In Toronto a fire set on Sukkot at the Bloor Jewish Community Center caused about $10,000 in damage. Both incidents were classified by the police as hate crimes.

Jewish cemeteries were also targets of attacks. In August, 43 monuments were knocked over in Montreal’s Back River Cemetery, though it was unclear whether the motivation was anti-Semitic. In comparison, vandalism in the Jewish cemetery in St. Catharines, Ontario, clearly reflected racist attitudes. In April, two cousins vandalized the cemetery in separate incidents. The first, Warren Soles, 20, who was charged with toppling or damaging 43 tombstones and other acts, had neo-Nazi affiliations. He pleaded guilty in July to several of the counts against him and later apologized in court. In November he was sentenced to 10 months in jail and fined $4,000. His older cousin, Warren Youmans, desecrated fewer graves and was charged with 11 counts of the same crime.

Nation of Islam speaker Don Muhammad, in a June speech in a Toronto mosque, questioned the historical accuracy of six million Jewish deaths in the Holocaust and asserted that wealthy Jews promote war to enrich themselves. Muhammad was denounced by senior figures in the United Church and the Anglican Church. CJC requested a police investigation of the mosque on the grounds that Muhammad may have acted in violation of the anti-hate laws.

British Columbia racist Eileen Pressler won a lawsuit in June against an antiracism activist, despite being labeled by the judge as a “missionary for anti-Semitism and pro-white racism.” She and her husband had sued a professor and the television station on whose program the professor claimed that a property owned by the Presslers was intended for right-wing military purposes and not as a retirement home. Even though the judge accused the Presslers of promoting hatred and racism, he found that they had been defamed and awarded damages.

In August a Montreal Internet service provider shut down the anti-Semitic Web site of Aryan Nationalist Quebecers as soon as it was informed of its existence by the Canadian Jewish News. The Simon Wiesenthal Center’s Canadian representative had also focused attention on the French-language hate material.

**Nazi War Criminals**

Legal proceedings continued against several of the 15 alleged war criminals named by the government. The government sought to strip them of their citi-
zenship (if they had acquired it) on the grounds that they obtained it fraudulently by concealing their past, and then to deport them.

In two cases the government lost. Peteris Vitols was allowed to retain his citizenship after Federal Court judge William McKeown ruled in September that Vitols did not lie about his activities in a Latvian police battalion at the time that he immigrated to Canada. Despite the fact that people with his background were supposed to have been excluded as a matter of policy, many were admitted at the discretion of the immigration officer. Officials of Jewish organizations were shocked by the decision, but Paul Vickery, head of the War Crimes Unit, tried to assure them that the Vitols case was not a precedent. In particular, the judge believed him when he denied personally being involved in atrocities, even though his admitted membership in the suspect organization should have barred his entry automatically.

Another accused man who won in court was Johann Dueck. Judge Marc Noel of Federal Court found in December that he did not gain admission through fraud or misrepresentation. He accepted the accused’s contention that he was simply an interpreter in Ukraine and not a member of a police unit.

The Federal Court hearing on Vladimir Katriuk, which culminated in July after several months of sporadic testimony, focused on whether immigration officers had ever asked about his wartime activities, which included participation in a Ukrainian SS battalion notorious for its involvement in mass killings of Jews and other civilians. Unfortunately, his original application for admission to Canada was destroyed decades ago during a general housecleaning by the government, thus making it difficult to answer Katriuk’s vehement denials that he had been asked the key questions. A judgment was expected in January 1999.

Mamertas Rolland Maciukas decided to drop efforts to resist the government’s citizenship case against him. Thus he was stripped of his citizenship by the cabinet and left the country in April. In February a judge of the Federal Court found that Wasily Bogutin had lied about his wartime activities; his citizenship was removed in July and the government initiated deportation hearings in the fall.

A new accused war criminal was added to the list in July. Ludwig Nebel of St. Catharines, Ontario, was accused of lying about his membership in the Austrian Nazi party when he applied to immigrate to Canada. Since he never obtained citizenship, the proceedings against him were for deportation. The government accused Nebel of belonging to the SA and then the SS and commanding troops that turned Polish Jews over to the Gestapo. In the case against Helmut Oberlander, his lawyer claimed that government policy was to exclude only “major offenders” and that he was not one. His case was still pending as the year ended. A former Nazi collaborator from France, Louis Robin, was found to be living in Vancouver in June. He had been convicted in France after the war but then escaped and came to Canada, where he had not drawn any attention. The government sought information from France before deciding whether to act.

In an article in the Canadian Jewish News (January 1998), former war crimes
prosecutor Arnold Fradkin analyzed the difficulties in proving such charges, which revolve around alleged lies at the time of application for immigration and/or citizenship. In most cases, the government cannot introduce into evidence the actual immigration forms with the false information written on them, because the forms from 40 or 50 years ago have been destroyed or discarded. Further, testimony by the security officers who administered the forms and verified the information may not be possible if the officers in question are dead or unable to testify. Thus the time factor is a crucial one, because of the advancing age not only of defendants but also of key witnesses.

After allegations in 1997 of anti-Semitic attitudes among officials of the War Crimes Unit of the Justice Department, Osgoode Hall Law School professor John McCamus investigated the situation and issued a report in March. He found no evidence of anti-Semitism in the unit. William Hobson, another former war crimes unit head, and Arnold Fradkin, who worked under him, criticized the report on both substantive and methodological grounds. They were in turn criticized by McCamus for persisting in advancing allegations that he found to be without merit.

In July the government announced a major increase in funding for war crimes prosecutions. The allocation for the unit focusing on the Nazi era would be $12 million over three years, double the previous annual appropriation. For the same period, about $30 million would be spent on cases involving allegations of more recent war crimes violations. The war crimes unit is now expected to mount an additional 14 cases involving alleged Nazi collaborators, doubling the number of cases launched since the intensification of its efforts in 1995. The government also proposed Criminal Code amendments to overcome some of the legal obstacles to criminal prosecution that emerged from the Imre Finta case, which ended in 1994 with Finta’s acquittal. Speaking on behalf of BBC, David Matas contended that “the lack of resources was a major cause of serious delay in the commencement of proceedings against suspected war criminals.” The increased commitment to pursuing war criminals was lauded by Neal Sher in a Montreal speech in August. The American consultant to the War Crimes Unit said that the group had become more aggressive and had a better staff and improved attitude. In fact, he added, “I wouldn’t be on board if the Canadian government was not serious.”

The Departments of Justice and Citizenship of the federal government issued a report in July entitled “Canada’s War Crimes Program.” Since the 1987 Deschênes Report called for action against Nazi war criminals residing in Canada, 1,571 possible suspects had been investigated. Only 15 cases had been launched, with another 14 in the pipeline. Another 75 cases remained active. The rest of the files were either inactive or closed.

**Holocaust-Related Matters**

Plans to add a Holocaust gallery to the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa were shelved after veterans’ groups forcefully objected because they did not want to
see the museum's focus diffused. Instead attention shifted to the possibility of constructing a separate Holocaust museum in the nation's capital, even though that would be a more costly option. Jewish community organizations were divided over the preferred solution, especially since the Museum of Civilization, which encompasses the War Museum, had not consulted them when formulating the original plan. Both B'nai Brith Canada and Canadian Jewish Congress supported a free-standing facility, while the Jewish War Veterans wanted a gallery in the War Museum. In February the Museum of Civilization formally decided that the Holocaust Museum would be separate, possibly in an existing building, with funding still uncertain.

The settlement with the Swiss banks in 1997 produced about $2.5 million (U.S.) for needy Canadian Holocaust survivors. In a March announcement, CJC national executive director Jack Silverstone indicated that individual compensation packages would range from $200 to $1,000, according to procedures worked out with survivor groups and local federations. He also expressed dissatisfaction with the amount that was made available. Another agreement, this time with Germany, will bring compensation from Germany to about 1,000 survivors in Canada, most of whom had been confined in various kinds of camps that had not qualified under previous agreements. Others who were previously denied compensation according to income criteria were also included in the July agreement.

There were seven Canadian representatives, including Irving Abella and Rochelle Wilner, at the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets in December. The purpose of the conference was to establish procedures for the return of looted art works and for the payment of insurance policies.

The Ontario legislature passed a law in December mandating the observance of Holocaust Memorial Day each year on Yom Hashoah.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

Results from the 1996 mid-decade census created some confusion about the total Jewish population because there was no question on religion, only one on ethnicity. In the 1991 decennial census there were questions about both religion and ethnicity, which allowed for detailed analysis of the country's Jewish population. Normally, there are some Jews who identify themselves as Jewish when asked a religion question but as something other than Jewish in response to an ethnicity question. Hence relying only on ethnicity data understates the Jewish population. McGill University professor James Torczyner, who analyzed the 1991 data in detail, argued that the 1996 data should not be taken too seriously as an indication of a trend because an accurate count requires both ethnicity and religion data. In contrast, Prof. Robert Brym of the University of Toronto contended that the community should be concerned that in 1996 more Jews listed multiple ethnic origins, which he interprets as a weakening of ties to the community.
Moreover, he pointed out, in 1991, as in previous censuses, there were more Jews by ethnicity than by religion. These developments suggest to him that assimilation is growing.

The following table illustrates Brym's concerns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Jewish Only</th>
<th>Jewish and Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>351,705</td>
<td>195,810</td>
<td>155,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>369,565</td>
<td>245,840</td>
<td>123,725</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data show a marked shift from people who identify only Jewish ethnicity to those who include Jewish along with one or more other ethnic backgrounds. It should be pointed out that some people who list a Jewish ethnic background may have converted to another religion. Torczyner, who excluded such people from his count, calculated that in 1991 there were 356,315 Jews in the country.

Using the 1996 ethnic data, the major concentrations of Jewish population were Ontario (191,445), Quebec (92,390), British Columbia (30,700), Manitoba (14,955), and Alberta (14,415).

A study by Jay Brodbar, director of research at UJA Federation in Toronto, shows that Toronto, with about 175,000 Jews, is now the 11th largest Diaspora Jewish community. The fast-growing community doubled in size in 25 years, with the most dramatic growth coming in the York region, just north of Metro Toronto. That area, including towns such as Markham, Richmond Hill, and Thornhill, now has over 50,000 Jews. The Toronto community has benefited from an influx of newcomers, some 30,000 between 1981 and 1991, with about half being immigrants and half migrants from other parts of Canada. Most of the latter group simply moved from smaller cities in Ontario to the Toronto area. The immigrants came primarily from the former Soviet Union, Israel, and South Africa. Brodbar also reported that only 9 percent of Toronto Jews were married to someone who was not born Jewish.

Communal Affairs

Historian Irving Abella inaugurated his J. Richard Sheff Chair for the Study of Canadian Jewry at York University with a lecture in September in which he compared the Canadian and American Jewish communities. In his view, things are better than ever for Canadian Jews, who are "arguably the most affluent, integrated community in the country." Canada's policy of cultural diversity has enabled the community to differentiate itself from its American counterpart, making it a more traditional, more unified community. Other differences include a far larger proportion of Holocaust survivors and their children, a lower intermarriage rate, a greater degree of Zionist commitment, a higher proportion of Orthodox identification, more generous charitable giving, more speaking of Hebrew and Yiddish, and higher levels of participation in Jewish day schools.
The place and the prospects of Jews in Quebec continued to be a preoccupation of the Montreal community. Montreal's Federation CJA held a public conference in March, "Directions 2000," another attempt to chart the community's future. McGill University's principal, Bernard Shapiro, told the audience that Montreal's Jews should accept French "not as a language of oppression, but as a language of opportunity." He added that "if our community is to have the vibrant and exciting future that I believe is within our grasp, we cannot just live on the legacy of the past." In various panel discussions, speakers reflected both optimistic and pessimistic scenarios for Montreal Jewry, comparing the increasing vitality of the francophone Jews and the benefits of Montreal life with the despair and frustration that induce young anglophone Jews to depart the city.

On the subject of rapprochement between Jews and Québécois, separatist journalist Josee Legault told the conference that "we have to break down suspicions . . . and show that sovereignists are not bloodthirsty xenophobes and that Jews have deep roots here however they vote." Toward that end a meeting took place at the National Assembly in Quebec City, also in March, between Jewish community leaders and provincial politicians and government officials. The featured event was the screening of a documentary by Ina Fichman about relations between Quebec Jews and the francophone majority entitled _Towards a Promised Land_. In a speech that evening, Premier Lucien Bouchard praised the film for showing the way toward constructive dialogue between the two groups.

The Canadian Jewish Congress held its 25th Plenary Assembly in Winnipeg in May. Incoming president Moshe Ronen, the youngest in the organization's history at age 39, promised "to speak out boldly" on the range of issues confronting Canadian Jewry and to "strengthen Jewish communal cohesion."

In a move parallel to what occurred earlier in the United States, the Council of Jewish Federations and United Israel Appeal merged in July. The new body, known as UIA Federation Canada, will combine governance, coordination, fund raising, and liaison with Israel, functioning on behalf of Canada's ten communities with federations as well as smaller, unfederated communities. It will also have a key role in allocating funds raised in the annual campaigns across the country between local, national, and overseas needs. The proportion of funds sent overseas, primarily to Israel, was a continuing source of debate in the light of increasing demand for local services.

At the February annual meeting of the Communaute Sépharade du Quebec (CSQ) in Montreal, incoming president Moise Amselem outlined his policy priorities, including better relations with Ashkenazi community institutions, promoting Jewish education, increasing Sephardic donations to the Combined Jewish Appeal, meeting the social welfare needs of local Sephardim, firming ties with Israel, attending to the needs of youth, and promoting unity within the community.

The Montreal community's planning for a new campus for various Jewish agencies and institutions picked up steam. By the end of the year the estimated cost had risen to about $30 million, up from the original $23 million, but there
wrote also several new commitments from governments and additional construction plans as well. The governments of Canada, Quebec, and Montreal donated $1.3 million each, with the rest coming from donations by private individuals and corporations. By year end, nearly all the money had been raised, and construction plans for 1999 were at an advanced stage. The project will join the CJA Federation Building, Golden Age Association, YM-YWHA, and Saidye Bronfman Center for the Arts on a campus that will be defined physically by new construction, renovation, and landscaping. Organizations that will relocate to the campus include the Quebec Regions of CJC and CIC, the Communauté Sépharade du Québec, the Canadian Zionist Federation, and the Israel Aliyah Center. In the words of CJA Federation president Stan Plotnick, the new campus “will be the ultimate reaffirmation by the Montreal Jewish community of its commitment to its future in Montreal and the confidence we have for the stability, and hopefully even growth, of our community.”

Ottawa was also in the process of building a campus, which is anchored by the new Soloway Jewish Community Center in the Ages Family Building, which opened in September. The new edifice features health, leisure, and meeting facilities as well as offices. Another addition to the campus is the Ottawa Jewish Archives, which opened a month later. In Toronto the downtown Bloor JCC decided to undertake a major renovation project in order to expand its facilities. The $5 million campaign will cover the cost of the construction, retire existing debt, and provide an endowment for future programming in the facility.

The crash of Swissair 111 off Halifax in September posed challenges to that city’s small Jewish community because there were about 20 Jewish victims. Local rabbis were mobilized to counsel the victims’ families, a hevrah kadishah was set up to handle remains that were recovered, and hospitality was offered to relatives who visited the crash site. The Atlantic Jewish Council (AJC) invited an Israeli forensics expert and rabbi to assist in resolving halakhic issues related to the identification of bodies. Additional rabbis from Israel and the United States were brought in to deal with proper burial procedures. A memorial service was held at Beth Israel Synagogue, and AJC chaplain Rabbi David Ellis and other community leaders participated in an ecumenical service near the crash site.

The government of Quebec gave $820,000 to a Lubavitch group to help establish a $3-million community center for French-speaking Jews, especially youth, in the Montreal suburb of Cote St. Luc. Robert Perreault, the provincial minister responsible for Montreal, said that the new grant was in response “to the ever-growing needs of the members of the Sephardi community of Cote St. Luc.” The new Beth Chabad immediately faced opposition from residents of the predominantly Jewish town who felt that its presence would add significantly to traffic and congestion. The required zoning changes were in doubt at the time the project was announced in October.

A sample study of the 6,000 Hassidim in the Montreal suburb of Outremont, carried out by Morton Weinfeld and Randall Schnoor of McGill University and Charles Shahar of Federation CJA, found that over 40 percent of the commu-
nity were at or below the government poverty line. There was a high level of unemployment, with only 62 percent of men 18-65 years of age being employed full time. Moreover, the younger hassidic men were not being educated adequately for the work force, with over half having a high-school diploma or less.

Israel-Related Matters

Canadian Jews joined enthusiastically in celebrations of Israel's 50th Independence Day. Major events were held in most communities of any size. Thousands of people participated in Toronto and Montreal. In addition, the Canadian National Exhibition, held annually in Toronto in the late summer, featured an "Israel at 50" pavilion, sponsored by 175 Jewish community organizations. It had as its feature attraction a mosaic floor from a fifth-century synagogue in the Galilee that was discovered in 1994.

A "musical extravaganza" to honor Israel's 50th anniversary was held at Montreal's Place des Arts in November. "Journeys Through 5,000 Years," which told the history of the Jewish people through music, featured a symphony orchestra and several choirs. It was directed by Judith Lechter.

There was considerable interest in the work of Israel's Ne'emarn Commission and the issue of religious pluralism in the Jewish state. Representatives of the three main streams of Diaspora Judaism in Canada welcomed the attempt by the Ne'emarn Commission to resolve the issue of conversions in Israel, while at the same time expressing the concerns of their own movements about possible outcomes. When Israel's Chief Rabbinical Council indicated its unwillingness to accept major recommendations by the commission, the response from the various sectors of the Canadian rabbinate was predictable. Reform and Conservative rabbis expressed disappointment at the lost opportunity to create some unity around the process of conversion and the apparent disregard for the situation of Diaspora Jews. Orthodox rabbis tended to defend their Israeli counterparts for upholding a commitment to traditional Jewish law. However, two Orthodox rabbis, Reuben Poupko of Montreal and Reuven Bulka of Ottawa, voiced concern that divisive issues such as conversion were endangering Jewish unity.

El Al's Canadian manager, Moshe Shamai, said in April that Air Canada's new nonstop service was having an unfavorable impact on his airline and called on Canadian Jews to demonstrate continued loyalty to El Al, which had maintained the route alone for decades. Arguing that the route had not been profitable but had been kept in operation out of a sense of obligation to the community, Shamai suggested that it was time for the community to reciprocate.

Religion

The visit of Israel's Sephardic chief rabbi, Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron, to Canada in January was a major event for Sephardim in the Montreal and Toronto areas. In his remarks to a Montreal audience at an event hosted by the Grand Rabbinat
du Quebec, the chief rabbi stressed the values of the centrality of the Land of Israel and the unity of the Jewish people. He spoke out forcefully against internal divisions that threaten Jewish unity. Rabbi Bakshi-Doron also visited the Sephardic Kehilla Center in the Toronto suburb of Thornhill.

A survey of Conservative synagogues across Canada, conducted by Howard Gontovnick of Concordia University, found that they had moved a considerable distance in the direction of the egalitarianism that now characterized most of their American counterparts. For example, over half offered aliyot to women and nearly half counted women in a minyan. Clearly there was a trend toward greater ritual participation by females, though the extent varied considerably from one synagogue to the next. There was currently one female Conservative rabbi in the country.

In an effort to foster Jewish unity, five Montreal synagogues joined together for hakafot on the night of Simhat Torah. Reconstructionist, Conservative, and Orthodox congregations converged on the street in front of Congregation Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem in suburban Cote St. Luc. Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz of that congregation saw the event as an opportunity to demonstrate how love for Torah and for fellow Jews can promote Jewish unity.

Education

Day schools in both Toronto and Montreal faced funding problems. In Toronto, the continued refusal of the provincial government to provide assistance placed a heavy burden of scholarship subsidies on the federation. The scholarships now amounted to over $6 million annually and about half of the federation's budget for local needs was now spent on education. Montreal schools, which had benefited from Quebec government funding for three decades, found the level of support to be declining due to pressures on the provincial budget. Furthermore, a decision by the provincial authorities on income taxes ended the partial deductibility of tuition fees, thereby raising the net cost to families by a significant amount. An increase in immigrant children requiring scholarships also contributed to the pressure on community resources. One school, College Hillel, nearly folded but was bailed out with help from Federation CJA and the CSQ.

Concordia University in Montreal established an Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies, endowed by Charles and Andrea Bronfman and Seagram's. The institute will combine traditional scholarly functions with a community internship program. McGill University received two endowments for Jewish studies, from the family of the late Jack Cummings and from Leanor and Alvin Segal. The funds will be used to staff two new professorships in the field. McGill's Jewish Teacher Training Program was reinvigorated by the renewal of community funding, after a seven-year hiatus. Sen. Jerry and Carole Grafstein established a chair in medieval Jewish studies at the University of Toronto.
Community and Intergroup Relations

A Montreal kosher food importer challenged federal nutritional labeling regulations on the grounds that banning offending products from entry (these were chiefly Passover foods) had the effect of violating constitutional guarantees of religious freedom. In an appeal of the importer’s conviction on ten counts of violating the Food and Drug Act, attorney Paul Nadler argued that the unavailability of such Passover products would “make it extremely difficult” for Jews to practice a central aspect of their religion. However, Quebec Superior Court judge Pierre Pinard did not accept the argument and upheld the conviction in October.

In a Montreal case, residents of a condominium development were not allowed to erect sukkot—temporary “booths” for the weeklong festival of Tabernacles—on their balconies in 1997 or 1998. A Superior Court judge issued a permanent injunction against the sukkot in June after hearing expert testimony from Rabbis B. Barry Levy and Moise Ohana on whether building one’s own sukkah was a religious obligation. The case was under appeal.

Maccabi Canada won a four-year fight with Revenue Canada to maintain its tax-exempt status as a registered Canadian amateur athletic association. The government had claimed that because it served Jews primarily it did not provide “a public benefit to Canadians in general.” A panel of the Federal Court of Appeal found, however, that the statute imposed a geographic and not a demographic requirement.

In a path-breaking report, “Bearing Faithful Witness: United Church-Jewish Relations Today,” Canada’s largest Protestant denomination calls for a new era in interfaith connections. In particular it urges a new interpretation of the Bible to avoid anti-Jewish stereotyping and recognition that Christian denial of Jesus’ Jewishness contributed to pogroms, the Holocaust, the refusal to admit refugees, and “other horrors against the Jewish people.” On behalf of CJC, Rabbi Reuven Bulka hailed the report as “a tremendous achievement.”

Relations with messianic movements were strained in both Montreal and Toronto. In the former, tensions between Lubavitch students and Christian messianists were high because of a proselytizing campaign aimed at immigrant Russian Jews. The Hassidic students demonstrated and protested in front of the store in a Jewish area that houses the messianic congregation. In June a young Lubavitcher was charged by police with uttering a threat in connection with the protests.

In several Toronto suburbs some 5,000 copies of a publication called Messianic Times were distributed to Jewish homes in August. It was designed to look like a Jewish community newspaper and urged Jews to worship Jesus as the messiah. The incident reflected the intensification of messianic activity in the area, which now had two such congregations. In an effort to counter the proselytizers, Jews for Judaism, a counter-missionary group, opened a resource center in a store next to the City of David messianic congregation in a shopping mall in the suburb of Thornhill. Jewish organizations also put pressure on the landlord to cancel the
messianists’ lease on the grounds that the congregation was masquerading as a synagogue.

Culture

In June Bryna Wasserman, who succeeded her mother Dora as director of Montreal’s Yiddish Theater in 1996, took over, in addition, the English theater program of Montreal’s Saidye Bronfman Center for the Arts. In November she took a troupe of 36 from the Yiddish Theater to Vienna for a week to perform On 2nd Avenue and The Dybbuk at the Rabenhof Theater. The tour was sponsored in part by the Canadian government.

A play about the Judenrat in the Lodz Ghetto premiered at the Bathurst Jewish Community Center in Toronto in December. Suffer the Children by Maurice Breslow explores some of the ethical dilemmas faced by officials of the Judenrat.

Toronto documentary filmmakers Elliott Halpern and Simcha Jacobovici continued their productive collaboration. Among their new films released during the year was Quest for the Lost Tribes, about possible contemporary descendants of the missing tribes of Israel. Ina Fichman’s film Towards a Promised Land examines the complexities of the evolving relationship between Quebec Jews and the majority French-speaking Quebecois. Fichman contrasts the anti-Semitism that infected Quebec society in the past with much greater opportunities for Jewish integration now. The film was shown on Vision TV in January and in Quebec in March. Eric Scott had completed most of the work on Je Me Souvien, a film based on Esther Delisle’s controversial book The Traitor and the Jew, but was unable to obtain needed funds from either of the two major French-language television networks in Quebec to finish the project. Scott does not shy away from the bitter dispute about the extent to which anti-Semitism and Quebec nationalism were closely intertwined in the 1930s and 1940s. He asserts that “anti-Semites in Quebec were not society’s cranks. They were French Canada’s leading scholars, church leaders, politicians and professors.”

Some 40 films were screened at the Toronto Jewish Film Festival in May. There was also an Israel Film Festival at the Art Gallery of Ontario in October, sponsored by Cinematheque Ontario.

An exhibition from the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America was on display during the summer at Quebec’s Musée des Religions in Nicolet. Entitled “Kehillat Ha-Kodesh/Creating the Sacred Community,” it consisted of rare books, manuscripts, and documents.

The Canadian War Museum in Ottawa presented an exhibition in its temporary Holocaust Gallery from January through September. “Reflections on the Holocaust: The Art of Aba Bayefsky” consisted of about 50 of the artist’s works based on his experience as a war artist.

The Quebec government contributed $230,000 toward the renovation of the his-
histor Bagg Street Synagogue in the area of Montreal that was popular with Jewish immigrants during the first half of the 20th century. It is the oldest synagogue in continuous use in the city.

A rare and priceless collection of Yiddish books and manuscripts was displayed for the first time at the McGill University Library during the winter. Described by curator Goldie Sigal as "one of the finest single private libraries of modern Yiddish literature in the world," the exhibit of "A Garment Worker's Legacy: The Joe Fishstein Collection of Yiddish Poetry" displayed works not readily available elsewhere.

CBC Radio ran a five-part series on Israeli authors in February and March entitled "Writing a Nation: Israel at 50." The philosopher Emil Fackenheim was the subject of a five-part documentary on Vision TV in May and June.

**Publications**

In a departure from his usual fiction writing, Mordecai Richler published *Belling the Cat*, a collection of essays on politics, literature, and other topics. Among his subjects are two of Canada's most prominent Jewish families, the Bronfmans and the Reichmanns.


Esther Delisle continued her exposé of less attractive aspects of Quebec history in *Myths, Memories, and Lies: Quebec's Intelligentsia and the Fascist Tempation 1939-1960*, in which she documents the pro-Nazi sympathies of key members of Quebec's elite during the crucial war period. Other new nonfiction works on Canada included Gerald Tulchinsky's thorough and perceptive history of Canadian Jewry during the last half century, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community*; Lois Sweet's *Religion in Canada's Schools; Who Speaks for Canada? Words That Shape a Country*, edited by Morton Weinfield and Desmond Morton; Peter C. Newman's study of economic power, including the rise of a Jewish business elite, *Titans: How the New Canadian Establishment Seized Power*; Lesley Marrus Barsky's *From Generation to Generation: A History of Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital*; and *The Jews of Montreal and Their Judaisms: A Voyage of Discovery* by MacKay Smith.

Other new works of nonfiction included *In Search of Jewish Community: Jewish Identity in Germany and Austria, 1918–1933* by Derek Penslar; *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: Patterns, Problems, Possibilities* by Neil Caplan and Laura Zittrain Eisenberg; Lionel Steiman's *Paths to Genocide: Antisemitism in Western*
History: Creating the Jewish Future, edited by Michael Brown and Bernard Light-
man; Tehilla Le-David: Poemes de David Ben Hassine, le chantre du judaisme marocain by Andre Elbaz and Ephraim Hazan; Kenneth Green’s The Jewish Writ-
ings of Leo Strauss; The Rhetoric of the Babylonian Talmud: Its Social Meaning and Context by Jack Lightstone; and Dawn of the Promised Land by Ben Wicks.

Several works on the Holocaust appeared: No Time to Die: A Holocaust Sur-
vivor’s Story by Karl-Georg Roessler; L’Abus de Confiance by Jean-Jacques Fraenkel; The Fallacy of Race and the Shoah by Naomi Kramer and Ronald Headlance; A Nation on Trial: The Goldhagen Thesis and Historical Truth, edited by Norman Finkelstein and Ruth Bettina Birn; Carved in Stone by Manny Drukier; Emery Rodan’s 111 Main Street: Life in Hungary During the War; and Arthur Schaller’s 100 Cigarettes and a Bottle of Vodka.

Religious literature included Mourning a Baby by Rabbi Yamin Levy and Le sens de l’Exil by Rabbi David Sabbah.

Elaine Kalman Naves won the Canadian Literary Award for Hair, a collection of essays about her Hungarian childhood. Toronto Jewish Book Awards went to Naves; Regine Robin; Isabel Vincent; Romer Karsh; Vera Schiff; Alan Davies and Marilyn Nefsky; Carol Matas; Rosalie Sharp, Irving Abella and Edwin Goodman; Elizabeth Greene; Martin Lockshin; Simcha Simchovitch; and Carol Rose.

Personalia

A number of Jews were appointed to the Order of Canada. Companion: Reva Appleby Gerstein; Officers: Charles Dubin, Eva Kushner, Martin Goldfarb, and Henry Mintzberg; Members: Edgar Gold, Sheila Bashay Goldbloom, Rickey Kanee Schachter, and Irving Schwartz. The Order of Ontario was awarded to Bluma Appel, Ydessa Hendeles, and Marvelle Koffler.

Mel Cappe was appointed Clerk of the Privy Council, the highest civil service post in the country. Historian Jack Granatstein assumed the directorship of the Canadian War Museum, while Matthew Teitelbaum took a similar position at the Art Gallery of Ontario. In the music field, Pinchas Zukerman was appointed music director of the National Arts Center Orchestra, and Yoav Talmi became the conductor of the Orchestre Symphonique du Quebec. Mark Wainberg was selected as president-elect of the International AIDS Society. Norman Spector left his post as publisher of the Jerusalem Post to become a columnist for the Toronto Globe and Mail. Dr. Samuel Freedman won the Prix Armand Frappier, Quebec’s highest recognition for lifetime scientific achievement. Mordecai Rich-
ler was awarded the Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction by the Quebec Society for the Promotion of English Language Literature for Barney’s Version. Joseph Schwarz won the James H. Stack Award of the American Chemical Society. Yid-
dish Theater director Dora Wasserman was awarded the Prix Hommage by the Académie québécoise du théâtre in recognition of her lifetime achievements.

Avraham Niznik was appointed chief rabbi of Montreal. Among new presi-
dents of community organizations are Lawrence Hart at B'nai Brith Canada, Joey Steiner at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Moshe Ronen at Canadian Jewish Congress, Harvey Wolfe at UIA Federation Canada, David Vineberg at CJA in Vancouver, and Judah Castiel at the Fédération Sépharade du Canada. Brian Morris is the new chairman of the Canada-Israel Committee.

Members of the community who died this year included community leader Joe Ain, in January, aged 85; arts benefactor Arthur Gelber, in January, aged 82; Chief Rabbi of Montreal Pinchas Hirschprung, in January, aged 87; former MP David Orlikow, in January, aged 79; J.B. Salsberg, Yiddishist and former politician, journalist, and community activist, in February, aged 95; film company executive Harvey Greenberg, in February, aged 61; songwriter Alex Kramer, in February, aged 94; businessman and community activist Morris Goldberg, in March, aged 84; Amnon Ajzensztadt, author, lecturer, and Holocaust survivor, in March, aged 78; Maxwell Cohen, distinguished legal scholar, dean, judge, and public servant, in March, aged 88; congregational rabbi Harold Lerner, in April, aged 72; Antonia Robinson, longtime activist and former president of the National Council of Jewish Women, in April, aged 102; scholar and teacher Rabbi Wolf Gordon, in May, aged 86; government official and community leader Gerald Berger, in July, aged 60; businessman and inventor Frank Roberts, in August, aged 68; organizational leader Bertha Dermer, in August, aged 83; photographer Sylvia Schwartz, in August, aged 83; author and book collector Lawrence Lande, in August, aged 91; Louis Rasminsky, former governor of the Bank of Canada, in September, aged 90; Sheila Freedman, adviser to Jewish students at McMaster University, in October, aged 55; businessman Harold Cummings, in October, aged 80; Yiddish journalist and community leader Max Wolofsky, in October, aged 93; artist Eric Wesselow, in October, aged 87; poet, novelist, and organizational executive Nahum Ravel, in October, aged 75; and journalist and newspaper executive Lou Miller, in December, aged 70.

HAROLD M. WALLER