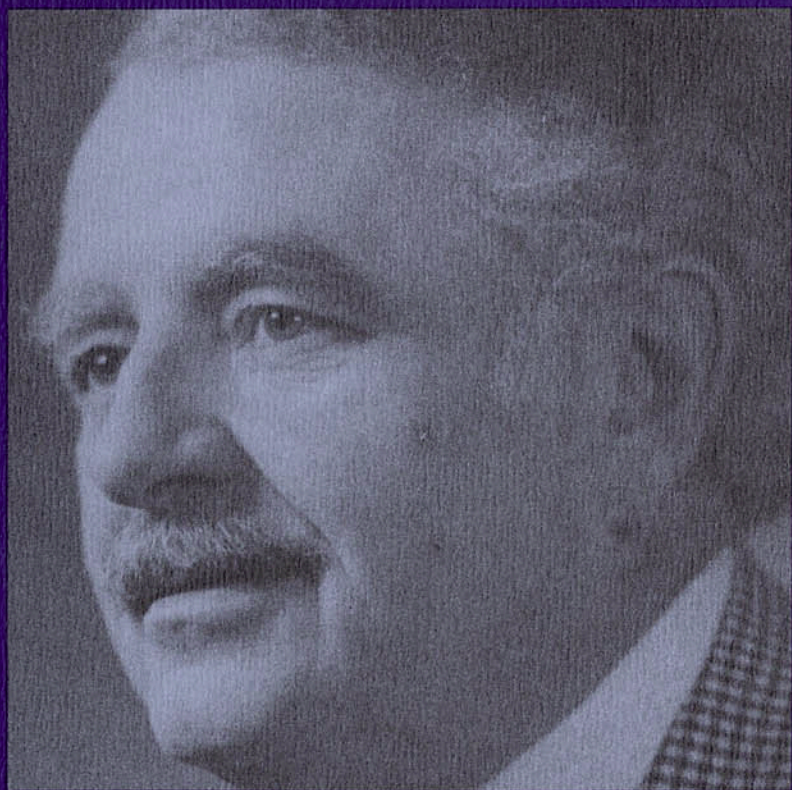


THE JEWS



IN CANADA

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Canada's Ethnic Groups

Canadian Historical Association

ISBN 0-88798-104-6 *Canada's Ethnic Groups*
ISSN 1483-9504 *Canada's Ethnic Groups*
(print)
ISSN 1715-8605 *Canada's Ethnic Groups*
(Online)

CANADA'S ETHNIC GROUPS

Published by the Canadian Historical Association with the support of the
Multiculturalism Program, Government of Canada.

Ottawa, 1984

Booklet No. 7

Printed by Keystone Printing & Lithographing Ltd., Saint John, N.B.

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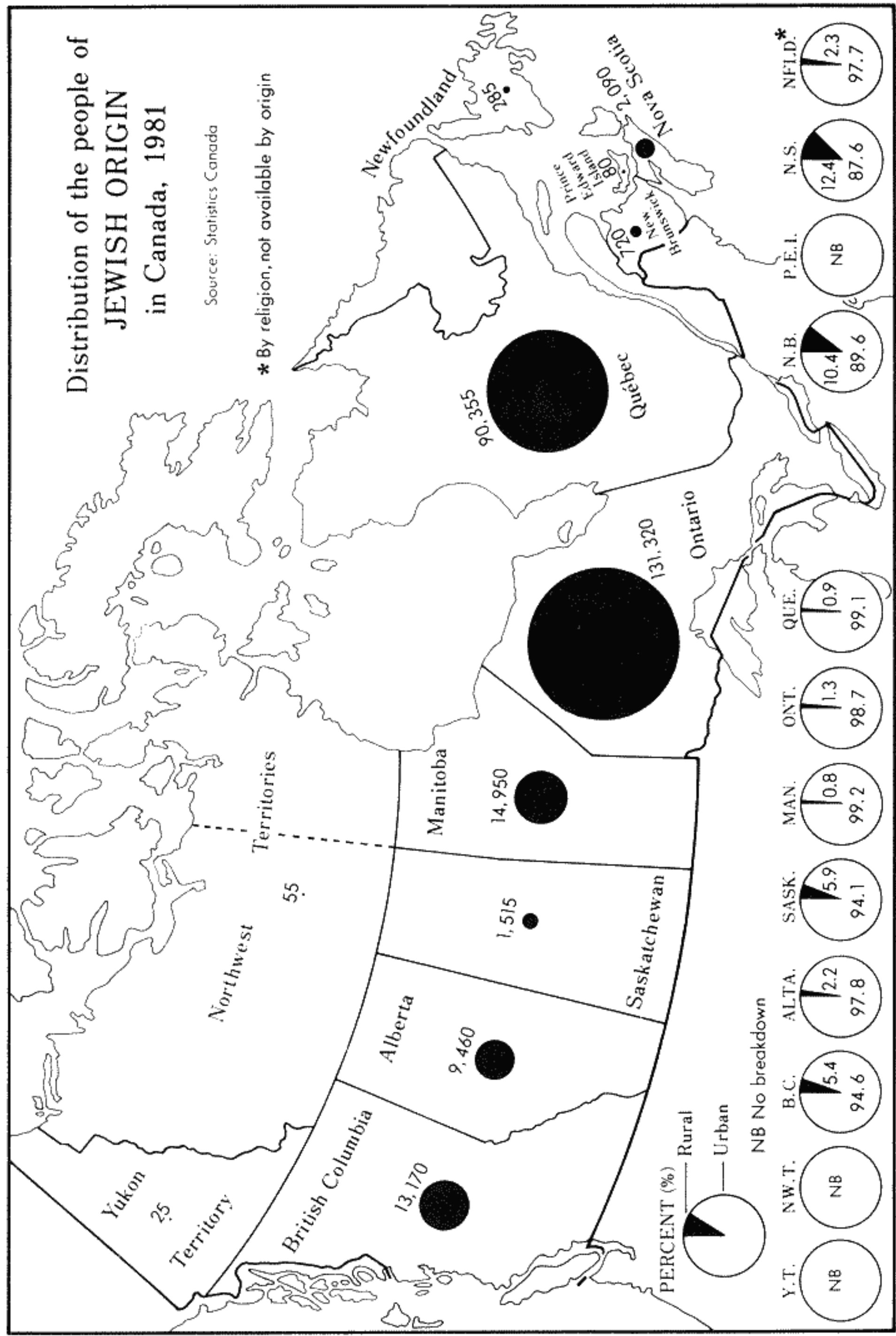
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Distribution of the people of JEWISH ORIGIN in Canada, 1981

Source: Statistics Canada

* By religion, not available by origin



THE JEWS IN CANADA

1 — The Backgrounds of Canadian Jewish Immigrants

No discussion of the Jews in Canada can avoid the issue of whether they really ought to be described as an ethnic group, since there have always been census and immigration authorities, social commentators and Jews themselves who have defined Jewishness as primarily a religious identity. The founders of the Toronto and Montreal Jewish communities clearly considered themselves "Englishmen" who professed the Hebrew faith, and government authorities implicitly accepted this by conferring the status of race or nationality only upon the East European Jews who began immigrating to Canada in the 1880s. With the rise of Zionism and particularly with the establishment of the State of Israel, Jewish immigrants and their descendants have identified much more strongly with the Holy Land than with their actual place of origin. Thus, religion aside, it has become difficult to label even this secular consciousness ethnic in the normal sense of that word. Finally, the term ethnic usually implies a single set of observable characteristics. But Jews arriving in Canada have not shared the same language or country of origin, have varied greatly in physical appearance and social customs, and have even brought very different expressions of the religious tradition binding them to other Jews.

This is not to suggest that the argument is entirely one-sided. The Canadian Jewish community is largely a product of immigration which occurred between 1880 and 1930, when the overwhelming majority of arrivals did share a common language (Yiddish), a common geographic if not political origin (eastern Europe) and a common form of religious expression (Ashkenazi Orthodoxy). Neither they, nor their former hosts, nor the Canadians who received them considered these Jews to be of the same "race" or nationality as non-Jews in the same countries. This observation applies equally to later Jewish immigrants such as Holocaust survivors and refugees from Moslem countries. Moreover, despite diverse origins, the Canadian Jewish community has become more homogeneous over time — in fact more homogeneous than its American counterpart.

The problem of establishing the background of Jewish immigrants is complicated by the fact that in many cases their countries of last residence or citizenship do not represent their true origins. For example, many Jews who came to Canada from Roumania, Austria-Hungary or post-World War I Poland had earlier fled Czarist Russia, and most "Roumanian" refugees of the early 1920s were victims of a terrible Ukrainian pogrom in 1919. In more recent times, North African Jews have settled in Canada after living in France or Israel; Iraqi and Russian Jews have also arrived via Israel. Finally, for most countries of origin two backgrounds must be considered, the society as a whole and its Jewish component. The reasons for Jewish emigration and the formative influences on those who departed were seldom identical to the experiences of non-Jews leaving the same countries.

In 1881, Canadian Jews numbered slightly less than 3,000. The vast majority evidently considered themselves British by national origin and Jewish only by faith, since only 667 declared their origin to be "Hebrew". The majority of

Jewish immigrants had indeed come from Britain in a trickle which began shortly after the British Conquest of 1760 and accelerated slightly after 1840. The first Canadian Jews were not refugees from religious prejudice or economic deprivation; most were merchants who came in search of commercial opportunity and many pursued further gain in the United States while others retired back to Britain. Those who remained were joined by a slightly more diverse group in the middle of the nineteenth century including a fair number of partially anglicized Jews who had originally fled to Britain from persecution in Lithuania and Germany. Only in the 1870s did Canada begin receiving east European Jews directly or through the United States. The 500 or so who came during this decade constituted the first recognizable group of immigrants. Although their numbers were small compared to the wave of east European Jews soon to follow, they played a significant part in determining the future character of the Canadian Jewish community.

While the very first congregation, the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in Montreal, was Sephardic, almost all other Canadian synagogues were Ashkenazi and Orthodox by 1881. Sephardic literally means Spanish while Ashkenazi means German, and the two traditions of worship stem from cultural rather than theological differences. Sephardim had customs, mores and a form of Hebrew which evolved under Muslim Arab influence in North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula and were carried to Italy, France, Britain and elsewhere by Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal at the end of the fifteenth century. The Ashkenazi tradition developed in central and eastern Europe, and divided into Orthodox, Conservative and Reform camps during the nineteenth century. A product of the German enlightenment, Reform Judaism involved the westernization of worship and a belief that ethical teaching rather than strict adherence to ritual was the essence of Jewish existence. Conservatism sought a middle way between Orthodox and Reform philosophies. In marked contrast to the American Jewish community, which had received a huge wave of Reform Jews from Germany around the middle of the century, the early Canadian Jewish establishment found it easier to understand and sympathize with the later east European immigrants than did its American counterpart. In Canada the newcomers were gradually absorbed into a single community, class and other distinctions notwithstanding. In the United States, the socially dominant Reformists were highly assimilationist and for a long time anti-Zionist, and their leadership was strongly resisted by Orthodox and even Conservative immigrants.

Between 1881 and 1921 the number of Jews in Canada jumped to more than 125,000. Directly or indirectly, the vast majority had come from a part of the Russian Empire known as the Pale of Settlement. The Pale was established in the 1790s in order to prevent the migration of Polish and White Russian Jews eastward into the heartland of Russia. Economic forces had been encouraging eastward movement for some time, but now there was a threat of a mass migration arising from the partition of Poland which placed its eastern provinces (and with them over 1,000,000 Jews) under Russian control. The Pale included fifteen western and southwestern Russian provinces, ten Polish provinces, and eventually several Ukrainian and Lithuanian provinces. Exemptions permitting Jews to live outside the Pale were few and temporary, while within

the Pale, special edicts restricted their residence to towns and cities, barred them from many occupations, and imposed quotas on their education. They suffered punitive taxation and a system of military conscription which took their sons away permanently in childhood. Periods of so-called liberalization, such as the early years of Czar Alexander II's reign, merely represented temporary confidence that Jews could be successfully "Russified" if permitted a degree of opportunity and integration.

Following the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, anti-semitism became an important political instrument for reactionary forces struggling to maintain a dying medieval order. Hundreds of existing anti-Jewish regulations were suddenly and brutally enforced, leading, for example, to the overnight expulsion of over 10,000 Jews previously allowed to settle in Moscow. The May Laws of 1882 imposed entirely new hardships, transforming the Pale into a seething, overcrowded mass of Jewish poverty. Worst of all were the pogroms, attacks on Jewish life and property systematically incited by the Russian government. Nearly 200 such local uprisings left 100,000 Jews homeless in 1881-82 alone, and in the early 1900s there was a climactic wave which included the infamous Kishineff massacre. Undoubtedly such an onslaught would have been difficult to orchestrate in the absence of centuries old religious prejudice and stereotypes of Jews as parasites, the latter arising from the economic functions to which they were restricted such as petty trading and managing the estates of Russian landlords. But official motives were far more immediate: Jews were the most convenient scapegoats for a crumbling political and religious order fighting desperately against revolutionary forces. Because Russia, unlike west and central European societies where anti-semitism flared in the late nineteenth century, lacked a lower middle class which actually perceived Jews as obstacles to its own advancement, government officials were forced to incite violent hostility themselves. They went to such extremes as the accusation of ritual murder, and while continuing to invoke nationalism as a justification for the repression of Jews, they dropped the pretence of wishing to assimilate them. Officials now spoke of eliminating Russian Jewry through murder, starvation and forced emigration.

The eighteenth-century partitions of Poland also added substantially to the Jewish populations of Austria-Hungary and Prussia, through the acquisition of Galicia and Posen respectively. The Jews of Posen found Prussian rule comparatively mild and, like other Prussian Jews, had little reason to join the late nineteenth-century migration. Although Austro-Hungarian Jews suffered some religious, economic and civil disabilities similar to their Russian brethren, their position generally improved until the 1870s. Unfortunately, they too then became scapegoats for a variety of tensions, and in Galicia they collided with a new, aspiring Polish bourgeoisie. There were no pogroms, however, and Galicia was often the initial destination for Russian refugees. The re-emigration of the latter combined with economic pressure to produce the high rate of Jewish emigration to the west visible after the 1880s. Roumania, whose heavily Jewish province of Moldavia connected Galicia with Bessarabia, the southwestern corner of the Pale, also contributed large numbers to the Jewish exodus from eastern Europe. Formerly under Turkish rule, Roumania was forced by west European powers to make promises of Jewish emancipation in exchange for its own independence in the middle of the nineteenth century. But Roumania

closely resembled Russia in most vital respects, and while there were no organized pogroms, the severe disabilities piled on the Jews after independence were obviously designed to force their departure.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the postwar reconstitution of Poland destroyed the Pale as a legal entity, but World War I was nevertheless catastrophic for East European Jewry. Forming the core of the Eastern Front, Galicia and the Polish provinces were devastated by the German and Russian armies. Even though 300,000 Jews served in the Czar's army, 600,000 civilians were driven from the Pale into the Russian interior in 1915, and a million more might have shared the same fate but for the speed of the German invasion. Russian Jews naturally welcomed the overthrow of the Czar and supported Kerensky's provisional government (March — November 1917), but even the socialists among them were extremely wary of Bolshevism. There were prominent Jewish Bolsheviks and the new regime did outlaw anti-semitism, but even that caused Jews great difficulty. It made them prime targets of counter-revolutionary armies in the Ukraine, where more than 100,000 Jews died in the pogroms which accompanied the civil war of 1918-20. As many as 250,000 East European Jewish civilians were slaughtered, or starved or frozen to death between 1914 and 1920. Those who survived were totally impoverished, and there seemed no possibility of re-establishing any basis for Jewish economic life, despite the end of official discrimination. Emigration continued at a high level until 1930, when western countries closed their borders because of the Great Depression.

For those Jews who did not join this postwar exodus from eastern Europe, prospects did temporarily brighten in the middle and later 1920s. However, the deeply-rooted anti-semitism of many newly independent nationalities eventually reasserted itself, and Soviet Jews gained little from being equal subjects of Stalinist tyranny. Still, it was "civilized" Germany to the west which carried out the final destruction of European Jewry during World War II. Although Hitler's intentions were unmistakable from the day he became Chancellor in 1933, very few German Jews were accepted as refugees by other western countries, including Canada.

After belatedly permitting a wave of "Displaced Persons" to enter after 1948, Canada has not received large concentrations of Jews from any particular region. Although nearly 7,000 Hungarian Jews came following the 1956 revolt, and about 8,000 Russian Jews have found their way here (often via Israel), the largest group have been North African and Middle Eastern "Sephardim". In most cases they too fled their homes. The North Africans, primarily Moroccans but also Tunisians and Algerians, feared for their safety following a decolonization in the 1950s and early 1960s and came either directly or following settlement in France or Israel. Thanks to the active sympathy of the Montreal Jewish community, Canada was second only to Israel in receiving Moroccan Jews. By the early 1970s Montreal had more than 11,000 North African Jews with another three or four thousand in Toronto and other centres. In Arab countries, Jews had been second class but tolerated citizens under Islamic law, and able to achieve some measure of prosperity. After Israel's successful War of Independence, however, they became targets for revenge and scapegoats for the defeat of Arab armies. The vast majority of these immigrants lived first in Israel and did not arrive in Canada until the 1960s.

II — Jewish Immigration from Eastern Europe, 1880-1914

Statistical breakdowns of Jewish immigration to Canada after 1881 into Russian, Polish, Roumanian and Austrian categories are neither meaningful nor important. Borders changed, people moved more than once, and the statisticians themselves were not consistent: many Jews counted as Russian in the 1911 census were considered Polish in that of 1931. For all practical purposes, east European Jewry was a single, identifiable nationality which lived under similar and increasingly intolerable conditions. Few of the early refugees had likely ever heard of Canada, much less imagined it would be their final destination. Even the Alliance Israélite Universelle, a west European organization called into service when Jews fled the first pogroms and the May laws, looked almost exclusively to the United States. However, in 1881 Alexander Galt, Canadian High Commissioner in London, attended one of the meetings organized by the Alliance to protest Russian policy and saw advantages for Canada in accepting some of the refugees. The Canadian Government was embarking on a policy of promoting immigration, and he was informed that the Jews were well-educated and possessed a variety of occupational skills. Moreover, there were Jewish philanthropists willing to pay their transportation and Canadian Jews ready to help settle them on arrival. As a result, Canada's Jewish population leapt from 2443 to 6501 during the 1880s.

The pattern of the 1880s was repeated on a larger scale in the following decade. The Moscow expulsions and other edicts shattered any hope that the persecutions of 1881-82 would be temporary in their severity. West European Jews abandoned their initial fear of "encouraging" emigration by assisting refugees, and did their best to apportion the new flood among their own countries, the Americas and Palestine. Once again Canada was not foremost in anyone's mind, but Canadian Jews — "establishment" and recent arrivals alike — were ambitious. The former had in fact been much more positive and humane in their attitude than their American counterparts during the 1880s, and when they learned that French financier Baron Maurice de Hirsch had committed millions for the settlement of Russian Jews in the United States, Montreal's Hebrew Benevolent Society obtained a substantial grant for its own immigrant aid work. The very last years of the century also saw an upsurge in Roumanian and Austro-Hungarian Jewish immigration, so that despite substantial re-migration to the United States, there were over 16,000 Jews in Canada by 1901.

The majority of the early Jewish refugees settled in the existing Jewish population centres of Montreal and Toronto, especially the former since many landed there and a Benevolent Association already existed to help them. By 1901 more than 7,000 lived in Montreal, 3,000 in Toronto and 1,300 in Winnipeg. The majority were extremely poor; men, women and children were mercilessly exploited in the "sweat shop" industries and most lived in slum conditions. Tragically, their employers were usually Jewish — "great philanthropists, but only during the annual meeting of the Baron de Hirsch Institute". Still, the freedom from legal discrimination and physical harassment, the ability to recreate or modify Jewish life and institutions and the realization that poverty was partially a result of their willingness to receive more and more of their brethren combined to make this existence vastly preferable to that which they had fled.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, over 68,000 Jews arrived in Canada and about 12,000 emigrated to the U.S.A., leaving a total population of 75,000. There were several reasons for this massive influx. During the Laurier Boom, virtually all able-bodied or young Europeans were considered an economic asset by Canadian authorities and overall immigration was so heavy that the Jewish component scarcely rose as a proportion. Among Jews, Canada graduated to the status of a chosen destination. Earlier immigrants who had established themselves now sent for immediate family members, and they were followed by other relations and neighbours. The importance of this factor is suggested by the number of small synagogues and landsmanschaften (fraternal societies) founded by immigrants from the same district. However, the fact that Jews were now participating in a general east European migration to North America should not obscure the continuing element of compulsion. The "foot-wanderers" who drew attention to the plight of Roumanian Jews by emigrating on foot in 1898 set off a mass exodus, of whom 7,000 were directed to Canada by the Jewish Colonization Association. In Russia the Kishineff pogrom and those which followed defeat in the Japanese war sent thousands more Jewish refugees in Canada's direction. Nor did the tide diminish as the Czarist regime headed toward its final collapse; another 26,000 Jews from Russia alone entered Canada from 1910 until the outbreak of World War I, by which time the total number of Jewish Canadians surpassed 120,000.

Patterns of settlement established earlier were reinforced. The 1911 census found over 55,000 Jews concentrated in Montreal (27,948), Toronto (18,237) and Winnipeg (9,023), and another 6,000 in Ottawa, Hamilton, Vancouver, Saint John and Edmonton. But despite the marked tendency of immigrants to settle in the existing Jewish population centres, much attention and effort were devoted throughout the prewar period to the possibility of establishing Jewish agricultural colonies in the west. Jewish leaders recognized that this emphasis was in harmony with official Canadian priorities, whereas the congregation of poor immigrants in the cities could prove an embarrassment and an insupportable burden to the existing Jewish communities. Many European Jewish leaders were anxious to demonstrate that Jews could farm successfully once permitted to own and work the land; some even considered occupation of the land as the key to the rehabilitation of Jewish society. While few of the refugees themselves might be so idealistic, they could certainly enjoy the prospect of owning their own land and be reassured by the opportunity of maintaining familiar customs in a Jewish colony.

Unfortunately, idealism and enthusiasm ran ahead of practicality: the premature dispatch of nearly 1300 Jews westward in 1882 turned into a nightmare when they reached Winnipeg, and the first organized colony of New Jerusalem near Moosomin (eastern Saskatchewan) fell victim to lack of organization and agricultural experience. Some later colonies in Saskatchewan and Alberta were more successful, especially Hirsch, Edenbridge and Sonnenfeld, but Jewish farmers would never account for more than a tiny proportion of the Canadian Jewish population. When they did reside in the rural west, Jews more often became storekeepers and tradesmen, exercising familiar skills and using their knowledge of East European languages to link non-Jewish immigrants with the English speaking society. Even when successful, Jewish

TABLE I: JEWISH IMMIGRATION TO CANADA

	Total Jewish* Immigrants	% of Total Canadian Immigration
1891 - 1900	9,000 (est)	3
1901 - 1910	68,176*	4
1911 - 1920	73,960*	4
1921 - 1930	44,810*	4
1931 - 1940	5,071	3
1941 - 1950	24,393	5
1951 - 1960	38,023	2
1961 - 1965	11,992**	2
TOTAL 275,425		

*Figure adjusted from official data by demographer Louis Rosenberg to account for Jews crossing from the United States (excluded from government figures until 1926).

**Government ceased recording ethnic origin of immigrants in 1965. Official records indicate 15,414 immigrants whose last country of permanent residence was *Israel* between 1963 and 1976. Jewish sources estimate the arrival of 8,000 Russian Jews in the 1970s, and place the total Israeli population in Canada above 22,000.

TABLE II: PEOPLE OF JEWISH ORIGIN
AND FAITH IN CANADA

(and % of Canadian population)

	Origin	Faith
1871	125 (---)	1,233 (.03)
1881	667 (.02)	2,443 (.06)
1891	n.r.	6,501 (.13)
1901	16,131 (.30)	16,493 (.31)
1911	76,199 (1.1)	74,760 (1.0)
1921	126,196 (1.5)	125,445 (1.4)
1931	156,726 (1.5)	155,766 (1.5)
1941	170,241 (1.5)	168,585 (1.5)
1951	181,670 (1.3)	204,836 (1.4)
1961	173,344 (1.0)*	245,368 (1.4)
1971	296,945 (1.4)	276,025 (1.3)
1981	264,025 (1.1)**	296,425 (1.2)

*Attributed by Jewish spokesmen to biased questioning. Census Division agreed that in 1971 it would consider 97% of those professing Jewish faith as being of Jewish ethnic origin.

**Excludes respondents who listed Jewish among multiple origins.

farmers became apprehensive about their children's continued attachment to the faith and had them educated in larger centres — with predictable consequences. Finally, the problems created by overproduction during World War I and the recession of the early 1920s caused many farmers, Jews included, to give up agriculture soon afterwards.

The east European Jews who came to Canada during the half-century following 1881 had varied occupational backgrounds, ideological and political orientations, and even religious practices and attitudes. Because many restrictions were inconsistently applied, perhaps 40 percent of Russian Jews lived outside the cities and towns of the Pale. Few were farmers; most were petty traders struggling for a livelihood in the villages — the "shtetl". Among those in the urban areas there were considerable differences in wealth and clear class lines. Because Jews had been banished from more attractive economic activities in and outside the Pale, many of them had invested their capital in textiles, leather and other manufacturing industries which created and exploited a substantial Jewish proletariat. Between these workers and their employers stood a mass of "independent" merchants and artisans who were being driven steadily toward poverty by fierce competition and restricted opportunity. While their disabilities as Jews were central to the ideology and politics of all, these conditions could hardly produce a consensus. Jewish capitalists naturally longed for liberal regimes which would both free them from discrimination and remove obstacles to economic development generally. Socialism, imported from western Europe by Jewish intellectuals after the 1860s, had a natural constituency among the workers. Many of the latter, however, came to doubt whether classic Marxism would respect Jews as a nationality, and the workers' movement which finally attracted a mass following was the Bund, dedicated to the "special interests of Jewish workers". Bund socialism's major competitor became Zionism, which despaired of Jewish emancipation under any kind of regime in eastern Europe and considered the repossession of their biblical homeland as Jews' only hope for national rehabilitation and freedom.

Despite the almost universal adherence to Orthodox Judaism in eastern Europe, religious life was also far from uniform. The abolition of the Kahal (internal Jewish governing authority sanctioned by the state), and the course of the Hasidic (revivalist) and Haskalah (secularist) movements varied from place to place in their effect on religious authority and observance. Hevras (mutual aid societies) might or might not be linked to the synagogue; the quality and practical utility of local education depended on local attitudes, resources and the competence and dedication of the teacher. And every community had its own ideas and customs concerning synagogue prayer, ritual and decorum.

Jewish immigration after 1900 was especially significant not only because of its volume, but also because the most recent arrivals, particularly the Russian Jews who left following the Revolution of 1905, carried with them the latest ideological and cultural developments in the Pale. Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg all acquired the entire spectrum of Jewish political radicalism. The Arbeiter Ring (Workmen's Circle), a North American working class Jewish fraternal organization, housed Marxist internationalists or "Bundists", Labour Zionists (Poale Zion) and even anarchists. Differing philosophies of Jewish education also had their proponents, and very quickly their schools as well.

Some taught a religious and others a secular definition of Jewish identity; some favoured Hebrew and others Yiddish as the vehicle of modern Jewish culture.

Despite this diversity, an underlying consensus did exist. As socialists, members of the Arbeiter Ring stood together on practical issues related to the betterment of Jewish workers. There were very few assimilationists among the east European immigrants, even though this position was common among revolutionaries in the Old Country. In fact, they had little interest in the partial integration achieved by members of the original Jewish communities of Montreal and Toronto, probably because on the basis of past experience, they did not believe that Jews would ever be accepted as equals by Gentile society. Their segregation in Montreal's St. Lawrence-Main district, "the Ward" in Toronto and a section of Winnipeg's "North End", and the very success of their own arrangements for charity and mutual aid made them comfortable in a recreation of self-reliant "shtetl" life. It was the anglicized Jews who had to adjust if they wished to remain leaders and spokesmen for the greatly enlarged Jewish community. Already immigrants were showing resentment towards the Victorian condescension which accompanied establishment philanthropy, challenging elite control of schools and synagogues, and even accepting responsibility for immigrant aid on the national level. While most aspired to economic advancement and accepted the need for a "Canadian" education in order to achieve it, they would not abandon their literary, theatrical and similar cultural attachments.

III — 'Through Narrow Gates': Jewish Immigration and the Formation of a National Community 1914-1939

Almost all Jewish immigrants to Canada between 1914 and 1920 came via the United States prior to America's entry into the War, and almost as many Jews migrated in the opposite direction. At the close of the war, Canadian immigration policy underwent changes which prevented a return to prewar levels. The fundamental shift was from economic to ethnic criteria in judging the desirability of an immigrant. Immigration officials would now be concerned with designating the nationalities eligible for admission rather than excluding people who were undesirable as individuals. Initially, the government presumed that Canada's manpower needs would be satisfied by admitting only Anglo-Saxons from the United States and Britain; others would be admitted only if they were farmers, domestics or the wives or children of legal immigrants. When this policy produced shortages of business for transportation companies and of labour for resource industries, the Immigration Department developed three categories for non-Anglo-Saxons. North Europeans ("Nordic" races) were "preferred" and granted virtually free access; southern and eastern Europeans ("Slavic") were "non-preferred" and had to meet the former occupational or family requirement, although in reality companies freely imported them for other occupations; all others could be admitted only by individual government permit. Since most non-whites were already excluded by a variety of previous regulations, Italian immigration was declining anyway, and there was little demand for entry from remaining European groups, the permit system discriminated primarily against Jews from non-preferred countries. Jews born in the British Empire, the U.S.A. or preferred countries were not similarly affected.

Fortunately, a large number of Jewish refugees from the Ukrainian pogroms made it to Canada before the permit system came into effect, mostly via Roumania. Thereafter, the Department restricted its permits virtually to immediate families of earlier arrivals and to the beneficiaries of special political interventions. Some immigration officials and agents acted so zealously to exclude other Jews that one hesitates to attribute their malice solely to the anti-semitic prejudices of Canadian society as a whole. Whatever degree of personal bigotry was involved, the result was a limited flow of about 4,000 Jewish immigrants per year from 1923 to 1931. Jews were not singled out when the Government closed the gates against all but British and American immigrants because of economic conditions in 1931. However, it is fairly clear that Canada's failure to make an exception for genuine refugees from Nazi Germany after 1933 followed naturally from the malice which pervaded the formulation and administration of its immigration policy. Only 4,000 were admitted between 1933 and 1939, a record which compares most unfavorably with that of other countries in the Western Hemisphere. Thus, most of the highly educated and westernized German Jews found in Canada after the War were people who, along with their east European brethren, miraculously survived the Holocaust.

The Canadian Jewish community of the 1930s was unquestionably a community in transition: 43.85 percent of Canadian Jews were native born in 1931. Although many of the native born were children, there was an even greater number of young adults who were born abroad but had grown up in Canada. Despite barriers of prejudice, including the infamous Jewish quotas in professional schools and restrictive covenants in housing, Jews were rapidly breaking out of their urban shtetls occupationally, residentially, and even socially and politically. Their range of community institutions was becoming more complete, less preoccupied with the absorption of immigrants, and somewhat larger and more centralized at the gradual expense of the landsmanschaften and ideological factions. The Depression and the German refugee question accelerated the growth of Jewish institutions during the 1930s, and also expanded Jewish political awareness and involvement.

Adult immigrants appear to have recreated the Jewish occupational structure of Eastern Europe: those who brought skills as artisans and in business were able to apply them fairly quickly in Canada. A shift away from semi-skilled and unskilled occupations, particularly in clothing and textile manufacturing, and towards clerical and sales positions, is evident among immigrants who arrived before 1911 and becomes virtually complete among the Canadian-born. The proportion of Jewish women in the work force, which was below the Canadian average in 1921, jumped far above all other ethnic groups in 1931 (22.21 percent of those more than ten years old, or 14,365 women). It is difficult to tell whether female employment was simply the continuation of an old world survival instinct, or a conscious strategy for advancement in Canada. However, the occupational pattern is similar to the men's: immigrants in manufacturing, native born in clerical and sales and even certain professions. Women from both groups participated in "merchandizing", probably in family businesses, although very few married Jewish women remained in the work force past the age of 30.

Canadian Jews clearly considered education to be a crucial vehicle of ad-

vancement. While Jewish communities supported a variety of their own educational institutions, the rate of Jewish attendance at public high schools stood far above the average. Jewish university attendance also began climbing steadily, especially in the faculties of medicine, law, dentistry and pharmacy. In 1935-36, over 14 percent of Canadian medical students (436) and 17 percent of dental students (73) were Jewish — and numerous qualified applicants were likely rejected because of formal and informal quotas. At least in Montreal and Toronto, there were interesting differences between the types of Jewish education received by boys and girls. Far fewer girls than boys attended Jewish schools at all, and those who did were more likely to be placed in secular Yiddish classes whereas most boys studied in religiously-oriented Hebrew schools. Although this pattern can only represent a continuation of the old world tradition that prayer and religious study were the prerogative and duty of males, the attitude evidently did not extend to education in general since Jewish girls attended public schools in almost the same proportion as boys. There is no denying that traditional Judaism gave women a subservient role. Yet it would be dangerous to conclude that Canadian Jewish women suffered greater subordination in their everyday lives than did women of other faiths and origins.

Synagogues also reflected changes in the Canadian Jewish community. Although the vast majority remained Orthodox, new Conservative and Reform congregations did appear. Orthodox congregations themselves built larger synagogues at new locations and began to resemble Conservative institutions in their focus on sabbath and holiday rather than daily services, a more rigorous decorum, sermons in English and visible philanthropic endeavours. All this was related to currents in Western Judaism generally, but the more immediate causes were the entry of many east European immigrants into the Canadian Jewish middle class and their determination to hold the allegiance of the younger, more Canadianized generation. The liberalization was most pronounced in Toronto, which, thanks to superior economic opportunity, was overtaking Montreal as the leading Jewish population centre. Still, the crossing of east Europeans from working class "downtown" to middle class "uptown" in Montreal was equally evident. Those who remained downtown fought a pitched battle in the late 1920s to get a separate, state-supported Jewish school system, while the establishment merely sought equality within the Protestant system. But even the working class congregations underwent some changes, generally becoming larger and more firmly established. In western Canada, rabbis and synagogues surrendered a degree of their autonomy to the authority of a Chief Rabbi, Israel Kahanovitch, in hopes of overcoming problems of size and isolation. His energy, tolerance and diplomatic skill permitted a surprising degree of cohesion and an impressive rate of survival for small Jewish communities outside Winnipeg.

Despite religious, ideological and class differences among Jews in the three major centres, their leaders achieved a fair degree of co-operation in educational, welfare and cultural endeavours. Inevitably the question of national co-ordination of Jewish organizational efforts arose, and the Canadian Jewish Congress was established in 1919 in response to the postwar refugee crisis. The Congress did succeed in founding a national Immigrant Aid Society, but otherwise lay moribund for more than a decade. This was due in large measure to the

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF CANADIAN JEWS* BY REGION

	Total number (and percentage)						
	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	B.C.	Territories	
1871	48 (.01)	549 (.05)	636 (.04)	- (-)	100 (.28)	-	-
1881	87 (.01)	989 (.07)	1,245 (.06)	31 (.05)	104 (.23)	-	-
1891	105 (.01)	2,703 (.18)	2,540 (.12)	791** (.52)	277 (.28)	85 (.09)	
1901	861 (.10)	7,607 (.46)	5,337 (.24)	1,729 (.41)	543 (.30)	296 (.63)	
1911	2,419 (.26)	30,648 (1.53)	27,015 (1.07)	14,293 (1.08)	1,265 (.32)	79 (.66)	
1921	3,425 (.34)	47,977 (2.03)	47,798 (1.63)	25,291 (1.29)	1,696 (.32)	14 (.11)	
1931	3,328 (.33)	60,087 (2.09)	62,383 (1.82)	28,179 (1.20)	2,743 (.40)	6 (.04)	
1941	3,538 (.31)	66,277 (1.99)	69,875 (1.84)	27,192 (1.12)	3,350 (.41)	9 (.05)	
1951	3,383 (.20)	73,019 (1.80)	74,920 (1.63)	25,477 (1.00)	4,858 (.42)	13 (.05)	
1961	2,726 (.14)	74,677 (1.42)	65,280 (1.05)	25,538 (.80)	5,113 (.31)	10 (.03)	
1971	3,985 (.19)	115,990 (1.92)	135,195 (1.76)	29,525 (.83)	12,175 (.56)	65 (.12)	
1981***	3,175 (.14)	90,355 (1.42)	131,320 (1.50)	25,925 (.62)	13,170 (.50)	80 (.10)	

* Defined by religion from 1871 to 1891, and on the Prairies and in the Territories in 1901 and 1911 as well. Subsequently defined by national or ethnic origin.

** Manitoba only

*** Excludes people declaring multiple origins

organizational strength of the various Zionist parties, which had been growing since the beginning of the century. Among socialists, Poale Zion prevailed over its anti-Zionist rivals. The orthodox Mizrachi and the secular but non-socialist groups (eventually united as the Zionist Organization of Canada) followed Poale in offering social and educational services as well as the dream of a Jewish homeland to their members. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 made fulfilment of the dream seem possible in the foreseeable future. Only in the 1930s did Canadian Jews feel strongly the need for a national organization not primarily concerned with Zionism. This came undoubtedly in reaction to the rise of Hitler in Germany and of organized anti-semitism in Canada, especially in Montreal where a segment of the French Canadian elite tolerated or even encouraged it. Still, the revived Congress failed to unite Canadian Jews or to get results in the one area where a consensus existed among them: gaining entry for refugees from Nazism. Its strategy of quiet diplomacy, of working through the three Jewish Members of Parliament, achieved no softening whatsoever of Canadian policy or the attitudes of immigration officials. Not until after World War II was the Canadian Jewish Congress widely accepted and respected as the national and international voice of the community. By then, significantly, many divisive forces within the Jewish community were on the wane: Zionist party battles were transferred to a real political arena, the state of Israel; postwar prosperity and the accelerated movement of Jews into the middle-class shrank the constituency of labour radicals; many Jewish communists themselves were disillusioned by revelations of Soviet anti-semitism; virtually all education and welfare agencies in the big cities belonged to community-wide federations, some of which grew so strong that they rivalled the Congress as local spokesmen. Conversely, with anti-semitism discredited by the Nazi Holocaust, the Congress found itself more readily accepted by Canadian governments and society generally. Its right to lobby in defense of Jewish interests became legitimate, and the sorry days of approaching hostile authorities through "shatdlonim" (Jewish political go-betweens) seemed over.

IV — Jewish Identity In Contemporary Canada

Postwar affluence and acceptance were not always received as unmixed blessings by those concerned about maintaining Jewish identity and cohesion in Canada. Many assumed that anti-semitic prejudices and barriers constituted an important "boundary maintenance mechanism" (a label one jargon-crazed social scientist applied even to pogroms). Others believed that Canada's Jewish community, one generation younger than its American counterpart, was destined to experience the same high rates of assimilation already recorded south of the border. There were indeed some signs of this. Inter-marriage and apostasy, both very rare among Canadian Jews before World War II, did increase and were justly regarded as the tip of an iceberg. Formal abandonment of the faith was the most extreme form of resignation from Judaism and the Jewish Community, but many more young Jews exhibited the same tendency less dramatically by refusing to join or attend synagogues and by ceasing to observe Kashruth (Jewish dietary laws and rituals). Nor was religiosity alone involved. It is common for the children and grandchildren of immigrants to reject their original culture as a needless obstacle to acceptance and advancement. In the particular circumstances following World War II, moreover, being "modern"

meant being "universal" rather than "parochial" in one's outlook. Even within the organized Jewish community some saw disturbing signs: the "watering down" of Jewish education, the decline of Yiddish as a vehicle of Jewish culture, organizational efforts devoted exclusively to fundraising or serving as the stage for the attainment of personal status. Jewish leaders reacted very strongly to the 1961 census, in which a quarter of those giving "Jewish" as their religion declined to designate it as their ethnic origin as well.

However, the direst prophecies have not been realized. The level of assimilation in Canada never reached American levels, probably for several reasons. Proportionally, Canadian Jewry was reinforced after the War with a much larger influx of new immigrants, some of whom have renewed religious observance, traditional Jewish education and the awareness other Jews have of their own immigrant origins. Francophone Jews, by choosing to maintain their own language rather than blend in with the Anglophone Montreal community, have given an entirely new dimension to Canadian Jewish life. They have established a modern sephardic presence, and built social and cultural bridges to Quebec's francophone majority. Despite initial tensions, they seem to have won acceptance from anglophone Jews and in turn agreed to participate in the organizational structure of the wider Jewish community. The comparatively high degree of centralization of Canadian Jews in Montreal and Toronto has also permitted greater cohesion than in the United States: the Canadian community can be more quickly and effectively mobilized. Differences between the Canadian and American "host" societies have also been significant. It is true that the contrast between the Canadian "mosaic" and the American "melting pot" has been grossly exaggerated in terms of the actual experiences of Canadian immigrants. But Canada's long tradition of French-English duality has served as a sort of ideological underpinning for the more recent deference to multiculturalism. It is not "unCanadian", but rather quite legitimate, to wear one's "limited identity" proudly.

Local Jewish communities have used prosperity to give themselves a high degree of what sociologists call "institutional completeness". The network of Jewish educational, cultural, welfare, recreational, community service and religious institutions provides powerful support to the maintenance of Jewish identity, even in smaller centres. Education is a particularly striking case. Jewish communities have used their own resources and growing public support for the idea of heritage education to establish and expand both private Jewish day schools and Hebrew programmes in public schools. It may therefore be possible to recover some of the learning and identification which slipped away during the height of universalist feeling in the 1950s and early 60s. Recent interest in Canadian Jewish history by both scholars and amateurs further indicates a desire to strengthen links with the past.

In their efforts to maintain a strong sense of identity, Canadian Jews enjoy one clear advantage over members of most other ethnic groups of European origin. For these non-visible minorities, identity consists primarily of the memories, language and customs of the former homeland. Even without a conscious rejection of their past, subsequent generations may have difficulty appreciating the relevance of these traditions to their lives in Canada. Canadian Jews, however, have in addition to their religion two major contemporary ele-

ments sustaining their identity and internal cohesion. One is the Holocaust, which speaks to all Jews whether they are survivors, children of survivors, or descendants of those who escaped from Europe "in time". The six million deaths confer a sacred obligation not to accord Hitler any posthumous victories. The second element is the state of Israel, for whose security and well-being most Canadian Jews accept great responsibility, and which provides a modern culture very different from that of the shtetl as an object of study and attachment. Both of these factors have increased in importance during recent years but not, from a Jewish viewpoint, for particularly happy reasons. Until the late 1960s the world appeared to share Jews' assumption that the Holocaust was unique in its horror and a permanent testament to the evil of anti-semitism. And Israel was the darling of western liberal opinion. Then came evidence that new generations perceived the Holocaust as just another atrocity in the history of man's depravity. By the 1970s, Jews faced assertions that the Holocaust was a hoax, commemorations which made Jews "one of many groups" persecuted by the Nazis, and comparisons between Israeli military operations and Nazi exterminations which they understandably considered malicious and obscene. Israel became the villain of the Middle East conflict, at least in the United Nations, the western media and in many academic circles. These developments clearly inspired a new sense of isolation, but also one of determination and solidarity within the Canadian Jewish community.

Suggestions for Further Reading

A much more comprehensive guide to further reading appears in Gerald Tulchinsky's "Recent Developments in Canadian Jewish Historiography", *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 1982. The East European origins of Canadian Jewish immigrants are well described in Howard Morley Sachar, *The Course of Modern Jewish History* (New York, 1977). A definitive history of Canadian Jews has not yet appeared. Rabbi Stuart Rosenberg's *The Jewish Community in Canada* (Montreal/Toronto, 1970) is informative but is uncritical and lacks analysis. While far more selective, *Jews: An Account of their Experience in Canada* (Toronto, 1980) by Erna Paris provides a better sense of historical development. *Canada's Jews* (Montreal, 1939) by Louis Rosenberg is an exhaustive and insightful demographic analysis based largely on 1931 census data. Other worthwhile studies of Jewish immigration and initial settlement include Simon Belkin, *Through Narrow Gates* (Montreal, 1966), Joseph Kage, *With Faith and Thanksgiving* (Montreal, 1962) and Harry Gutkin, *Journey into our Heritage* (Toronto, 1980). Stephen Speisman's *The Jews of Toronto* (Toronto, 1979) is an impressive scholarly treatment of that community's institutional development to 1937. Still, the best known portrayal of the Jewish immigrant experience is a novel, Adele Wiseman's *The Sacrifice* (Toronto, 1956).

The worst suspicions of Jewish leaders about Canadian immigration and refugee policy between the world wars were confirmed in I. Abella and H. Troper, *None is too many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948* (Toronto, 1982). A valuable general study of Canadian anti-semitism in the 1930s is *The Swastika and the Maple Leaf* (Toronto, 1975), by Lita-Rose Betcherman. *The Canadian Jewish Mosaic* (Toronto, 1981), edited by M. Weinfeld, W. Shaffir and I. Cotler, is a fine collection of articles on the contemporary community. The Jews of Atlantic Canada and of francophone Quebec, hidden Jewish poverty, feminism and recent Jewish experiences with political action, to name several topics neglected in this pamphlet, receive informative treatment. Ongoing research in Canadian Jewish history is reflected in the semi-annual *Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, where professional and amateurs effectively combine their talents and interests.



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