Review of the Year

OTHER COUNTRIES
After narrowly surviving the 1995 Quebec referendum on independence, Canada enjoyed increasing economic performance and political stability during 1996 and 1997. Still, the specter of another referendum before the turn of the century lurked in the background and influenced governmental actions at both the federal and provincial levels. Economically, growth was good, the high unemployment rate dropped to below 10 percent, and inflation was minimal.

A federal election was held on June 2, 1997. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien’s Liberals returned to power, albeit with a reduced majority in the House of Commons, 155 of the 301 seats. The Reform Party, led by Preston Manning, achieved Official Opposition status for the first time with 61 seats, while the Bloc Québécois (BQ) dropped to 44. The Progressive Conservatives and New Democrats recovered somewhat from their disastrous performances in 1993, winning 21 and 20 seats, respectively.

Five Jews, including three newcomers, were elected as Liberal MPs: Herb Gray and Elinor Caplan in Ontario; Sheila Finestone, Raymonde Falco, and Jacques Saada in Quebec. Falco and Saada are both Francophones who were born in France and Tunisia, respectively. Gray, the most senior MP, was appointed deputy prime minister, the first Jew to reach that position. Elinor Caplan’s former seat in the Ontario legislature was filled in a by-election by her son David. In Quebec, Howard Galganov ran as an independent for the House of Commons in Sheila Finestone’s district, but did not really threaten her incumbency. Galganov was an outspoken antiseparatist (see below).

Among the issues of greatest salience to Canadian Jews were the preservation of national unity, rapid progress in actions against accused war criminals, social issues, and foreign policy in the Middle East. Although conservative commentators David Frum and Hugh Segal, speaking at the Toronto Jewish Book Fair in November 1996, had exhorted Jews to vote more conservatively because of the importance of tradition and values, Jewish voters appeared to persist in their longstanding support for the Liberal Party. Jews and other federalists took some comfort from the fact that the Bloc Québécois received only 38 percent of the vote in Quebec, suggesting a decline in support for secession.
In November 1997 Reform’s Manning confronted his party’s image problem with Jews and other minorities in an address to Montreal’s Jewish Business Network. He pledged to insure that racists and anti-Semites would be excluded from the party. Also in November, former Quebec premier Jacques Parizeau elaborated on his remarks on the night of the October 1995 referendum, when he had blamed the defeat on “money and the ethnic vote.” In a speech in Calgary, he specifically named the Greek, Italian, and Jewish minorities in Quebec as the culprits. (Representative bodies of the three groups formed a unity coalition several years ago.) Jack Jedwab, executive director of the Quebec region of Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), denounced the comments as reprehensible, asserting that “his motivation was obviously pernicious.”

In a major reform of municipal government, Ontario consolidated the several constituent cities of Metropolitan Toronto into one megacity. Mel Lastman, the longtime mayor of North York, won the mayoralty of the new Toronto. Among the new city councillors were Howard Moscoe, Mike Feldman, Milton Berger, Norm Gardner, and David Shiner.

Canada’s Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) was confronted with contradictory decisions of the Federal Court over the issue of whether Jewish refugee claimants ought to be denied entry automatically because they were entitled to immigrate to Israel under the Law of the Return. In a 1995 decision the court had affirmed that view; however, it reached the opposite conclusion in a May 1997 case involving Lioudmila Katkova, who fled the Ukraine but did not want to settle in Israel. Finally, in November 1997 the IRB’s deputy chair, John Frecker, announced that the availability of Israeli citizenship would no longer be a factor in the board’s decisions on Jewish applicants.

In November 1996 Quebec’s lieutenant-governor, Jean-Louis Roux, decided to resign after it was revealed that he had worn a swastika during a 1942 anticonscription demonstration. After announcing his resignation, he met with Jewish community representatives and asked for forgiveness for his “lack of judgment.”

Israel and the Middle East

Canada-Israel relations suffered a severe setback in the wake of the Mossad’s abortive attempt to kill Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal in Amman in September 1997, when it was revealed that the agents carried forged Canadian passports. Canadian officials were furious over the matter and recalled Ambassador David Berger from Israel for consultations. Prime Minister Chrétien denounced the use of the passports as “completely unacceptable.” Eventually Israel apologized, promising not to use Canadian passports again, and Berger was allowed to return to his post. But the affair and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s apparent lack of contrition left residual anger in Canadian foreign policy and political circles. Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy went to great lengths to emphasize that Canada had no role in the matter, despite some claims to the con-
Canada's general foreign policy orientation toward the Middle East came under scrutiny in 1996 and 1997. Axworthy expressed concern during the fall of 1996 that the peace process had lost momentum after the election of Netanyahu and advocated an interventionist posture for Canada, saying that "somehow we've got to get things back on track." However, Canada's orientation was called into question by the Foundation for Middle East Studies, which analyzed 21 United Nations General Assembly resolutions dealing with the Middle East that were passed in 1996 and generally opposed by Israel. Research Director David Goldberg pointed out that Canada voted in favor of 15 of the resolutions, abstained on five, and was on the same side as Israel on one (supporting the peace process). The other 20 resolutions were hostile to Israel's positions on a number of key issues.
including Palestinian self-determination, Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, the UN committee on the Palestinians, Israeli settlements in the territories, nuclear weapons, and refugees. The pattern continued in March and July 1997 votes on resolutions regarding construction at Har Homah in Jerusalem, which Canada also supported. In a separate move, after a bombing in Jerusalem in July 1997, Axworthy wrote directly to Palestinian Authority (PA) chairman Yasir Arafat, asking him to act more forcefully against terrorism.

Jewish leaders delivered their own message on terrorism directly to Axworthy in a meeting in September 1997 at which B’nai Brith Canada (BBC), the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC), the Canadian Zionist Federation (CZF), and the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) were represented. They urged him to be more active on the terrorism issue and criticized Canada’s UN voting record, claiming that there was “too much emphasis” on Israel at the world body and not enough on the failure of the PA to fulfill its obligations.

Norman Spector made several public comments that created a stir. The former ambassador to Israel charged in an August 1996 column in the Toronto Globe and Mail that there was “political” opposition to the Free Trade Agreement in the Department of Foreign Affairs. However, he praised the prime minister for not being swayed by advice from such sources. “Mr. Chrétien’s demonstration of independence upset, but did not vanquish the Arabists,” who had not “given up on trying to derail the agreement. . . .” He provided no specific names, but his remarks caused a furor within the department. Ultimately, Minister Axworthy defended his colleagues in a letter, rejecting the suggestion that there was an anti-Israel bias. Spector then produced another column escalating the attack by charging that Arabists had urged Jews in the department to make their careers elsewhere. That produced outraged statements and letters from former officials, such as Erik Wang, director-general of the Middle East Branch, who accused Spector of “an irresponsible slur.” However, some backing for Spector was found in comments reported in the Canadian Jewish News by Richard Cleroux. He cited career foreign-service officer Aharon Mayne, who claimed that there was discrimination against “visible” Jews. “When it comes to the treatment of visible Jews around here, none is still too many,” asserted Mayne, who charged that the department did not post Jews to Israel, even though people born in other countries could be posted to those countries. Spector kept up the pressure by renewing his charges in a February 1997 speech at a Toronto synagogue. He added that Canada’s input on the Middle East was both “relatively ineffectual” and “counterproductive,” and that Foreign Affairs bureaucrats displayed a “systematic bias” in favor of Arab positions. The opposition to Israel, according to Spector, was “strong, evident, consistent, and sustained.”

Another sensitive issue involved refugee claimants from Israel. Any recognition by Canada that a purported refugee had reason to flee from Israel raised hackles in that country and among Israel’s supporters in Canada. As a result of sustained pressure on the issue, only 92 refugees from Israel were accepted in 1996,
the lowest total since 1990. Most were from the former Soviet Union. Eighty of them were admitted in Montreal, where officials were more sympathetic. The acceptance rate dropped from about 50 percent in 1994 to 7.5 percent in 1996. Chen Ivry, speaking for the Israeli embassy, expressed his dismay at Canada's acceptance of refugees from Israel.

David Sultan, Israel's ambassador to Canada, assumed his duties in 1996, succeeding Yitzhak Shelef.

**Anti-Semitism and Racism**

A number of individuals accused of anti-Semitic activities were involved in various types of proceedings. One of the most prominent was James Keegstra, whose case began in 1984, when he was accused of promoting hatred against Jews in his high-school classroom. After the Supreme Court of Canada finally upheld his conviction in September 1996, he was fined $3,000, given a one-year suspended sentence, and ordered to perform 200 hours of community service.

Holocaust-denying publisher Ernst Zundel benefited from a legal loophole when Federal Court judge Darrell Heald ruled in July 1996 that the Security Intelligence Review Committee could not consider accusations that he was a security risk because it had already come to the conclusion that he was a "radical right-wing racist" and thus could not be open-minded. The judge did not rule on the question of whether Zundel, a permanent resident, was a security risk, an issue that arose in connection with his application for Canadian citizenship. As a result of the decision, the government would have to find another way to evaluate the security risk matter.

Later in the year, Zundel's Web site was under review by the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC), which asked a special tribunal to determine if it contained hate material. Zundel questioned the jurisdiction of the commission over international computer networks, because the server for the Web site was located in California. The jurisdictional challenge was turned down by the Federal Court, and the tribunal proceeded to hear evidence in October 1997. The League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada accused Zundel of being "one of the leading purveyors of materials that expose Jews to hatred and contempt." In opening arguments, CHRC lawyer Ian Binnie asserted that the material on the Web site was "simply anti-Semitism and hate propaganda wrapped up in the flag of freedom of speech." The case would likely take years to resolve, especially because of the legal question of whether communications over the Internet are covered by the Human Rights Act.

In July 1996 a Canadian Judicial Council tribunal found that Judge Jean Bienvenue of Quebec Superior Court had displayed poor judgment in making comments from the bench to the effect that Jews had not suffered while dying in Nazi gas chambers. It recommended that he be removed from office because of a lack of sensitivity, a refusal to change his behavior, and because he had abused his
power by injecting personal beliefs into the discharge of his official duties. Four of the five tribunal members agreed that he had violated the “duty of good behavior” required of judges and was unfit to serve. The judge decided to retire in September, before the government could act on the council’s 22-7 recommendation that he be removed, a move that was hailed by Jewish community-relations bodies.

Raymond Villeneuve, a convicted terrorist who advocated Quebec’s secession and had threatened violence against opponents, was the subject of a number of actions. In a September 1996 issue of La Tempête, the newsletter of his Mouvement de libération nationale du Québec, Villeneuve accused Ashkenazic Jews of playing a leading role in the opposition to separation and language laws. He went on to name several individuals, implying that they might face retaliation after independence was achieved. He also suggested on the radio to leaders of the English community that “it could come to bombs, or more simple methods like Molotov cocktails.” As a result, CJC formally complained of incitement to the federal and Quebec attorneys-general. CJC Quebec Region chairwoman Reisa Teitelbaum declared his remarks to be “a clear incitement to violence.” The Quebec Liberals proposed a motion condemning Villeneuve in the National Assembly, but the Parti Québécois (PQ) government blocked it by insisting that it also denounce Anglo-rights activist Howard Galganov, who was one of the Jews specifically attacked by Villeneuve. Liberal leader Daniel Johnson accused Villeneuve of “intolerance in its ugliest and most repulsive excess,” but PQ premier Lucien Bouchard, while personally condemning him, wanted any formal motion to “eradicate the intolerance in all political camps, and in particular that of Mr. Galganov.” The attempt to equate Villeneuve and Galganov infuriated Jewish spokespersons, especially since Galganov’s tactics had always been peaceful and he had not advocated violence. (Although he was widely admired at the grassroots level, the Jewish elite tended to be uncomfortable with Galganov, finding him too confrontational.)

The incident only served to accentuate the gulf between Montreal’s Jewish community and the ruling PQ. In a highly qualified clarification, Villeneuve blamed the Jews for not distancing themselves from the “provocateurs” among them and reproached the community for its “monolithism.” Jack Jedwab, Quebec executive director of CJC, rejected the attempt to mitigate his earlier remarks: “He’s just making his anti-Semitism and racism obvious.” In March 1997 the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission turned down a complaint about the radio broadcast but cautioned the station that Villeneuve’s remarks had been at “the limit of acceptable comment.” Villeneuve was not deterred. In a July 1997 interview in the tabloid Vice, he compared the Quebec national liberation movement to the Irgun. He claimed that he had no hatred of Anglophone Jews, “but when they place their interests on the side of the oppressors, they act as enemies of the Quebec people.”

Columnist Doug Collins of British Columbia’s North Shore News faced a
provincial Human Rights Tribunal hearing concerning one of his 1994 columns, which criticized the Jewish role in the entertainment industry and questioned the veracity of historical accounts of the Holocaust. McGill University ethnic studies chair Morton Weinfeld testified that the piece had reinforced "several well-known and well-documented anti-Semitic stereotypes" by accusing Jews "of being dishonest and untrustworthy . . ., of being motivated mainly by greed and money, of controlling the media and Hollywood, and of using the media for deliberate 'Jewish' objectives." The issue before the tribunal was whether the column had contravened antihate provisions of the British Columbia Human Rights Act, and whether it was covered by federal constitutional protections of free expression. The tribunal, in a decision announced in November 1997, found that the column was indeed anti-Semitic and was likely to encourage anti-Semitism among readers, but did not constitute hateful material that required a remedy under the law's definition.

In Ontario, teacher Paul Fromm was terminated in February 1997 by the Peel Board of Education after BBC informed them that he had attended meetings and participated in programs of white supremacist and anti-Semitic groups. Fromm, who had a history of such involvements, had been reprimanded for his actions in 1992.

Racist agitator George Burdi continued to encounter legal problems. In February 1997 the Ontario Court of Appeal upheld a one-year jail term for his "severe and cowardly" attack on a female antiracist demonstrator in 1993. The court found that it was Burdi's intent "to incite his neo-Nazi followers to a frenzy of hatred." Then in April police in Windsor and Detroit raided the offices of his company, Resistance Records, which distributed racist music and other materials. The Detroit police seized 200,000 compact discs and cassettes. It was reported that Burdi's Detroit operation was designed to skirt Canadian antihate laws. Nevertheless, he and two followers were charged in September with conspiracy and willfully promoting hatred.

The 1996 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, compiled by B'nai Brith's League for Human Rights, reported 244 incidents, down from 331 in 1995. While vandalism incidents were virtually unchanged at 81, anti-Semitic harassment dropped substantially, from 259 to 163. About 40 percent of all the incidents occurred in the Toronto area. Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal all experienced declines in incidents, while smaller Ontario communities showed increases.

The 1997 Audit showed a further decline in anti-Semitic incidents, with 58 cases of vandalism and 154 of harassment, a total of 212 — the lowest since 1992. Again, Toronto experienced the greatest share of incidents, but there was a drop in the number of incidents in smaller Ontario communities.

Among the incidents that occurred during 1996 and 1997 were the desecration of a cemetery in Victoria in June 1996, a July 1996 break-in at a North York home in which the vandals smeared swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans on the walls, and graffiti on a suburban Montreal synagogue in May 1997.
There were also instances of anti-Semitism in the media, including early 1997 articles in Arabic newspapers that denied the Holocaust and suggested that Jews were planning a holocaust against North American Arabs, an on-air gaffe in July 1997 by CBC sports announcer Bob Tallman, who used the word “Jewed” to describe a monetary transaction, and a story in Montreal’s *La Presse* in May about a “Jewish criminal organization” that ran a money-laundering operation.

In December 1997 some 100 prominent Jews received anti-Semitic letters mailed anonymously from the United States. The eight-page diatribes were described by CJC’s Bernie Farber as “the most extensive hate mail campaign I’ve seen.”

**Nazi War Criminals**

The need to proceed with all deliberate speed against alleged Nazi war criminals living in Canada remained one of the highest priorities of Jewish community organizations, as it had been over the decade since the Deschenes Report recommended procedures for dealing with former Nazis in Canada. Faced with the dilatory pace of legal actions, the community looked for ways to speed up the process and keep the pressure on the courts and the government. After the Finta decision in 1994, which effectively ruled out criminal prosecutions, the government’s strategy was to seek to strip war criminals of their citizenship (on the grounds that they obtained it fraudulently) and then deport them.

Generally the accused resisted vigorously, resulting in lengthy legal proceedings. The government did appear to be stepping up the pace, with over a dozen deportation cases under way or resolved. The government won a key procedural ruling in December 1997 from Federal Court Justice Marc Noel, who held that constitutional protections against self-incrimination did not apply in citizenship cases. Noel also criticized the government for not proceeding quickly enough. Moreover, in the same month, Neal Sher, former head of the Office of Special Investigations in the United States, was appointed as a consultant to Canada’s war-crimes unit to provide “strategic advice.”

One case that was brought to a successful conclusion involved Konrad Kalejs, who was accused of being an accomplice to war crimes and crimes against humanity. His Latvian Arajs Kommando (AK) unit operated in Russia in 1942. After hearings that began in May 1996, immigration adjudicator Anthony Iozzo concluded in August 1997 that because Kalejs was commander of guards at the Salaspils concentration camp, he was indeed an accomplice to war crimes. On the other hand, Iozzo discounted evidence about participation in murder with the AK. Kalejs was quickly deported to Australia, where he had previously become a citizen.

The highest profile case of the period was that of Helmut Oberlander, Erichs Tobiass, and Johann Dueck. It attracted considerable notoriety because of improprieties by government officials and judges that jeopardized the continuation of the proceedings. After it was revealed in 1996 that the assistant deputy attor-
The general had met with the chief judge of the Federal Court in order to persuade him to speed up the trial, the judge handling the case withdrew, and the new judge granted a stay in the proceedings because of the “serious breach of judicial independence.” The government appealed, and finally the Supreme Court of Canada, in a unanimous ruling, held that the case could continue despite the imprudent actions. The gravity of the crimes and Canada’s standing in the international community were cited as reasons for proceeding expeditiously. The Court criticized Federal Court Associate Chief Justice James Jerome, who had been on the case, for his “inordinate and arguably inexcusable” delays, behavior that “defies explanation.” David Matas, speaking for BBC, welcomed the decision, adding that given the ages of the alleged war criminals, “we just can’t afford to let these cases take the 10 years they looked like they were going to take.” With the Supreme Court clearing the way, the cases could now be heard on their merits, though Tobiass died late in 1997.

Joseph Nemsila, a permanent resident whom the government was seeking to deport, died in April 1997. He had commanded a unit of the Hlinka Guard in Slovakia, which was accused of murdering hundreds of Jews. From a legal point of view, his case helped to establish the principle that domicile in Canada obtained through fraud or deception (i.e., failing to divulge wartime activities) was not a barrier to deportation, although the appeals of that ruling had not been exhausted.

Another suspected war criminal who died was Antanas Kenstavicius, who succumbed to cancer in January 1997, just as his deportation hearing was getting under way. The government claimed that in his capacity as a police official in Lithuania he participated in atrocities against Jews.

In the case of Ladislaus Csizsik-Csatary, the accused decided not to contest denaturalization and thus had his citizenship revoked by the cabinet in August 1997. He had been an officer of the Royal Hungarian Police who exercised authority inhumanely in a brickyard camp and also rounded up Jews for deportation to Auschwitz. Less than two months after the cabinet action he voluntarily departed from Canada and was barred from re-entry. Csizsik-Csatary was only the second suspected war criminal to be stripped of his Canadian citizenship.

Denaturalization hearings began in 1997 in cases involving a number of individuals: Vladimir Katriuk, for his role in the atrocities committed by his police battalion in Ukraine and Belarus between 1942 and 1944; Wsily Bogutin, accused of being a member of a Ukrainian police unit that collaborated with the Nazis and of involvement in the execution of a Jewish family in 1941; Peteris Vitols, who allegedly served in the Latvian police and the Waffen SS and was associated “with organizations actively engaged in atrocities against the civilian population”; Mamertas Rolland Maciukas, who belonged to Lithuanian police and Schutzmannschaft battalions, accused by the government of collaboration and participation in the mass killing of Jews and Gypsies in Belarus and Lithuania; Serge Kisluk, accused of collaborating with the Nazis in Ukraine and participating in
war crimes and atrocities; Michael Baumgartner, originally from Hungary, who allegedly served as a guard at Sachsenhausen and Stutthof concentration camps and was a member of the Waffen SS; and Wasyl Odynsky, charged with being a guard at labor and concentration camps in Poland.

In addition, CJC and private investigator Steve Rambam accused Josef Kisielatitis of being a member of a Lithuanian unit that murdered thousands of Jews. He came to Canada after the war, then moved to the United States in 1962, but returned to Canada in 1985, just two days before a U.S. deportation hearing was scheduled to begin.

Early in 1997, in an assessment of the ten years since the Deschenes Report, Arnold Fradkin, former deputy director in the War Crimes Unit of the Justice Department, lamented the slow pace and lack of results up to the beginning of 1997. "It is not justice for Nazi war criminals and collaborators to find a safe haven in Canada." But, he warned, unless cases are moved forward with dispatch, "justice delayed will most certainly result in justice denied." He noted that Deschenes had recommended investigating 224 individuals, with 20 of them considered urgent. Yet 10 years later, only 13 proceedings had been undertaken, with only one of them successfully concluded. In an address at a Montreal synagogue in September 1997, Paul Vickery, head of the War Crimes Unit, claimed that his group was doing as well as could reasonably be expected and was "pressing forward as quickly as possible."

One factor that helped to increase the pressure on the government was the work of Steve Rambam, an independent investigator from New York, who located 157 alleged war criminals in Canada and interviewed 62 of them, on occasion even obtaining admissions of responsibility on tape. Rambam described himself as a free-lancer who undertook the investigations because he believed in the cause.

The effort to proceed more rapidly garnered support from a wide-ranging group of religious leaders, who met with Justice Minister Allan Rock in May and urged him to accelerate proceedings as a "moral imperative."

**Holocaust-Related Matters**

Plans were announced in February 1997 for the addition of a Holocaust gallery to the Canadian National War Museum in Ottawa, but opposition arose from some veterans' groups, who objected to diverting attention from the Canadian military, which is the focus of the museum's program. Consideration was being given to building a separate Holocaust museum.

Responding to questions about a possible Canadian role in laundering Nazi gold during the war, the Bank of Canada appointed a historian, Duncan McDowall, to investigate the matter. In his report issued at the end of November 1997, McDowall found that gold transferred to Canada was not connected with the Nazis and that none of the Nazi gold that passed through Switzerland made its way to Canada.
**JEWISH COMMUNITY**

**Demography**

The number of Jews in Canada, based on the 1991 census, was 356,315.\(^1\)

Ottawa's Jewish population continued to grow rapidly, doubling from 7,000 to 14,000 between 1984 and 1996. Already growing at a faster rate than any place other than Toronto, it was likely to soon pass Winnipeg to become the third-largest Jewish community in the country. In contrast, Winnipeg continued to decline in Jewish population, with a drop of some 18 percent between 1971 and 1991. On the brighter side, the number of Jewish children under age 14 increased 3.7 percent during the second half of that period.

Montreal's Jewish community continued to be beset by uncertainty. A 1996 survey by Federation CJA showed that about one-quarter of Montreal's Jews were unsure where they would be living in five years, with only about half still expecting to be living in Montreal. Anecdotal evidence suggested that the atmosphere after the 1995 referendum was producing increased emigration, but community officials claimed that indicators such as the number of campaign contributors, immigration, and day-school enrollment had remained steady between 1995 and 1996. Some two-thirds of the respondents to the survey also were generally pessimistic about the outlook for the next five years—a higher level of pessimism than was expressed in a similar survey in 1991. The major reasons given for contemplating departure from Quebec were politics and economics.

**Communal Affairs**

Ground was broken in September 1997 for the expanding Jewish Community Campus in Ottawa, responding to demographic shifts and population growth. The $13-million campus will include a large building for the council and community center, a day-school building, a home for handicapped adults, and eventually a senior-citizen residence. In Winnipeg, the new $28-million Asper Jewish Community Campus opened in September 1997. Larry Hurtig, president of the Winnipeg Jewish Community Council, described the new campus as "the most important" project in the community's history.

Montreal also announced plans for a new campus in the Snowdon neighborhood that will integrate existing buildings that house the YM-YWHA, the Saidye Bronfman Centre, the Jewish Public Library, and Federation CJA. The $23-million expansion would be, according to Federation CJA president Stanley Plot-
nich, a concrete "message to ourselves, to our city, and to all Quebecers and Canadians alike that our future is here." Community leaders expressed the hope that other organizations would move into the completed quarters, a key feature of which would be expanded senior-citizen facilities.

Another major project of the Montreal community, launched in 1996, was Operation Montreal, an effort to build an endowment fund of $30 million—-to fund programs to help retain Jews in Montreal and to provide coverage for shortfalls in annual campaigns. Combined Jewish Appeal chairman Robert Vineberg said that the project was fueled by "the anxiety the community feels about its future." That anxiety was addressed directly in a *cri de coeur* by Plotnick in the *Canadian Jewish News* in April 1997, which followed by a few weeks Edgar Bronfman's statement quoted in the *Toronto Star* that "if I was a young person, I wouldn't stay in Quebec." Plotnick reminded Jews across Canada of the unique stress faced by his community due to the Quebec political situation. While lamenting threats to individual rights, language restrictions, the decline of Montreal, families watching children move away, and the deterioration of the economic structure, he confirmed the commitment of the community's leadership to deal with the issues and maintain "an exemplary Jewish community."

Toronto's Sephardic community celebrated the opening of the $16-million Sephardic Kehila Centre in Vaughan, just north of Metro Toronto, in September 1997. Israeli foreign minister David Levy was the guest of honor. The new building, which will house a synagogue, social hall, mikveh, swimming pool, and offices, will serve the approximately 15,000 Sephardim in greater Toronto.

Early in 1997 there was some talk of restructuring the Canadian Jewish Congress and moving its headquarters from Montreal to Ottawa, an action that would be perceived as a further indicator of the declining importance of the Montreal community. There were no further developments on this in 1997.

*Israel-Related Matters*

The Canadian Zionist Federation (CZF) decided to cancel the elections for the World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem in December 1997 and instead allocated the seats by agreement among the constituent organizations. In addition to saving the cost of an election, CZF president Kurt Rothschild claimed that the 25,000 members "don't have the stomach" for a vote. He was also sharply critical of the elections held in the United States.

El Al decided to move its Canadian head office from Montreal to Toronto in 1997 in order to tap the greater tourist potential in the Ontario market. The move was also designed to situate El Al more favorably to compete with the new service to Israel provided by Air Canada.

The Canadian team at the Maccabiah Games in Israel in July 1997 recorded its best showing in the history of the competition. It won three gold medals (hockey, men's basketball, and men's softball) and two silver medals (water polo
and men's tennis doubles). Individual members of the team also won numerous medals in most of the sports.

Religion

Sephardic Jews in the Greater Toronto area formed the Sephardic Rabbinate of Ontario in mid-1996 under the leadership of Chief Rabbi Armand Assayag. The rabbinate, grouping 13 affiliated synagogues and organizations, was housed in the new Sephardic Kehila Centre. Rabbi Assayag, along with five other Canadian rabbis, was active in the newly formed Association of Sephardi Rabbis of North America. At the 1997 annual meeting in September in New Jersey, the group approved initiatives to better serve the religious needs of Sephardim.

The March 1997 declaration of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, which denied the legitimacy of non-Orthodox movements within Judaism, had little impact in Canada, as several Orthodox rabbis took pains to dissociate themselves from it. Rabbi Dow Marmur (Reform) termed the announcement “pathetic,” while Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl (Conservative) lamented the inability of the Agudath Harabonim “to accept the historical reality of religious pluralism.” Montreal’s chief rabbi, Pinchas Hirschprung (Orthodox), was named as one of the supporters of the statement but denied signing it. Other rabbis were unsparing in their criticism.

In September 1997 Rabbi Reuven Bulka (Orthodox) brought 13 Canadian rabbis from diverse backgrounds together to form Kol Hakovod, Voice of Dignity, under the auspices of CJC. Its objective was to combat divisiveness and promote respect and cooperation. Rabbi Philip Scheim (Conservative) commented that the group reflected a community consensus that it was necessary “to find a way to acknowledge our differences and move forward together.”

A survey of Montreal Jewry for the Montreal federation by Charles Shahar and Randal Schnoor showed much higher levels of religious observance than anywhere else in North America, with 85 percent fasting on Yom Kippur, 98 percent holding a Passover seder, about half observing kashrut at home, and about a quarter attending synagogue services on a regular basis. Some 63 percent belonged to a synagogue. The likelihood of religious observance was significantly higher among Sephardim than among Ashkenazim.

At its biennial convention in Toronto in November 1996, the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism decided that children of interfaith couples should not be allowed to enroll in Reform religious schools or participate in life-cycle events if they were also receiving formal education in another religion.

The first synagogue in Canada to be oriented toward gays, Congregation Keshet Israel in Toronto, introduced a “degenderized” prayer book in which all of the Hebrew text is also transliterated.

The Coalition of Jewish Women for the Get produced a documentary film, Untying the Bonds... Jewish Divorce, which premiered in Montreal in December
1997. The film, directed by Francine Zuckerman and written by Marsha Levy, Evelyn Brook, Marilyn Bicher, and Norma Joseph, was designed to increase awareness of the Jewish divorce issue by profiling three women who experienced difficulties in obtaining a get from their husbands. It also contains interviews with rabbis who condemn men who use the divorce situation to extort material benefits from their wives. In the film, Rabbi Reuben Poupko calls upon rabbis and the community as a whole to “use their moral authority” to combat “blackmail or mental torture.”

Education

After years of legal and political battles, the struggle to obtain funding for Ontario’s Jewish day schools appeared to have reached a dead end. The Supreme Court of Canada decided in November 1996 that the provincial government was not required to fund private denominational schools, even though Roman Catholic schools did receive support. In a 7-2 ruling, the Court rejected constitutional claims based on the religious equality section of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The decision affirmed earlier rulings that the funding of Catholic schools was based on a unique agreement at the time of Confederation in 1867, which meant that equal treatment arguments would not prevail. The Court took the view that as long as parents could avail themselves of the opportunity to send their children to religious schools there was no constitutional defect. The decision was a blow to the hopes of the Jewish community, which had been pressing the government intensely for 12 years to emulate the support for Jewish schools that was available in a number of other provinces. Henry Koschitzky, chairman of the Ontario Jewish Association for Equity in Education, said that “the message religious minorities take home is that here in Ontario, all are equal, but some are more equal than others.” Protestant groups with day schools also criticized the decision sharply. For the advocates of funding, the only course of action that remained, and that had been tried frequently in the past, was the political route, to try to persuade the government to legislate a solution.

Some progress was made in August 1997 when a meeting between government officials and a delegation from the Working Group on Educational Equality, representing both Jews and Protestants, produced a statement from the executive assistant to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education, saying that “parents are entitled to public economic support in the choice they make for their children’s education.” However, the government had yet to produce any money.

Montreal’s Jewish schools, which had been publicly funded for nearly 30 years, were concerned that at some point those grants, currently about $20 million per year, might be eliminated. A report from an inquiry into Quebec’s educational system recommended in October 1996 that the support be gradually reduced. Felix Melloul, executive director of the Association of Jewish Day Schools, expressed great concern and promised that his group would be prepared to do bat-
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tie politically to protect its standing as part of the over 200 other private schools that presently received subsidies. The government funding allowed Montreal's Jewish schools to charge tuition at about half the rate paid by Toronto parents. Even so, the Jewish schools were hurting because of a 3.2-percent drop in government support in 1996–97 and a further 9.3-percent reduction in 1997–98. Mellow said that "it's going to be a question of survival for some schools."

Community and Intergroup Relations

Montreal's Jewish community and the Quebec government renewed their immigration agreement in 1996 for a third biennium. The program had already brought several hundred ex-Soviet Jews to Montreal since 1992.

In the aftermath of the flap over kosher Passover products in Quebec in the spring of 1996, the Office de la langue francaise (OLF) and the Quebec Region of Canadian Jewish Congress negotiated an agreement to prevent a recurrence. The OLF would recognize the Jewish community's right to import Passover foods that did not meet French-language labeling requirements and allow an annual 68-day period for such products to be sold. The CJC, the Vaad Ha'ir, and the Communauté Sépharade du Québec (CSQ) agreed to keep kosher importers aware of the requirements. There was no OLF interference with the distribution of kosher products during the 1997 Passover season.

The Quebec language police targeted a cemetery monument business in Montreal in December 1997 over a 50-year-old sign. The tombstone maker, L. Berson & Fils, was told to change the sign, in which the Hebrew word matzevot (monuments) was more prominent than the French word Monuments, or face penalties. After a public outcry, adverse media coverage, and backtracking by the minister in charge, the French language commission withdrew the threat.

In the aftermath of Quebec's 1995 referendum on sovereignty, tensions increased between some separatists and Jews. For example, Howard Galganov, a leader of the antiseparatist Quebec Political Action Committee, which garnered considerable publicity, made remarks that angered independence supporters (see above). In September 1996, Bloc Québécois leader Michel Gauthier called upon CJC to denounce him. Congress officials were astonished that they had been asked to intervene simply because Galganov happened to be Jewish. BBC's League for Human Rights attacked Gauthier's "ethnocentrism and chauvinism," while the CSQ's president, Maryse Ohayon, accused him of "intolerable extremism." Galganov was also attacked by journalist Gilles Paquin in La Presse because of his involvement with the Jewish Defense League on behalf of Soviet Jewry around 1970. Paquin denounced him as someone "who went to school in the JDL, an outlawed racist movement in Israel." In an October appearance at a Montreal synagogue, Galganov vowed not to keep quiet because of a fear of antagonizing non-Jews.

La Presse was the source of other articles that raised hackles among Montreal
Jews. In May 1997 the paper ran a story about a money-laundering scheme in which seven Jews, as well as 24 non-Jews, were accused. The depiction of the group as a "Jewish criminal organization" led CJC spokesman David Sultan to denounce the piece as "pernicious, tendentious and insensitive." The article and an accompanying sidebar contained references to Meyer Lansky and Bugsy Siegel and suggested that Jews were prominent among criminal elements because of their "financial power and especially their invaluable contacts in almost every country of the world." In November 1997 the newspaper ran a story that distorted the purposes of Federation CJA's new endowment fund, Operation Montreal.

A group of Jewish federal civil servants went to court to obtain paid leave on the High Holy Days on the grounds that such leave on Christian but not Jewish holidays was discriminatory. They were turned down in May 1997 by a 2-1 majority in the Federal Court of Appeal. The employees were allowed to use vacation days or accumulated overtime to be off on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The dissenting justice argued that it should be possible to accommodate their needs, but the majority found that practical considerations and labor contracts precluded granting the relief sought. The Supreme Court declined to hear the case.

Culture

Both Montreal and Toronto had festivals celebrating the multifaceted dimensions of European Jewish culture. Toronto's Ashkenaz, held in August 1997, featured theater, dance, poetry, music, and film and included several premieres. Some 67,000 attended the weeklong event. KlezKanada was held for several days at a camp in the Laurentian Mountains north of Montreal in August 1996 and again in 1997. The focus was on klezmer music, with groups and personalities brought in from the United States to supplement local talent. The audience came from as far away as Israel and Latin America. The 1997 program expanded to include events dealing with film and theater as well as music.

Toronto documentary filmmaker Simcha Jacobovici and his co-producer Elliott Halpern won Emmy Awards in both 1996 and 1997. The first award was for The Plague Monkeys, which is about the Ebola virus. The second was for The Selling of Innocents, which deals with the exploitation of young girls in India. Their next film, Hollywoodism: Jews, Movies, and the American Dream, premiered in Toronto in November 1997.

None Is Too Many, a play based on the book about Canada's wartime immigration policy by Irving Abella and Harold Troper, was produced at the Western Jewish Theatre in Winnipeg in March 1997. Jason Sherman's script focused on the efforts of CJC's Saul Hayes to persuade bureaucrats to admit Jewish refugees fleeing Nazism. Sherman's Reading Hebron, which opened in November 1996 at the Factory Theatre Mainstage in Toronto, was a controversial work dealing with Baruch Goldstein's Hebron massacre.
Former prime minister Kim Campbell collaborated with Hershey Felder on the musical *Noah's Arc*, which premiered as a work in progress at UCLA in June 1997. The play raises questions about the Holocaust through the story of Noah and the flood.

Arnold Bennett directed his own play, *The Failure*, in a production in St. John's, Newfoundland. It is based on the poetry and prose of the Canadian Jewish writer A.M. Klein. Bennett suggests that Klein's quest for a personal messiah in his poetry was unsuccessful, and that he gave up writing after failing to resolve his questions about God and the Holocaust.

Montreal's Yiddish Theatre presented a musical adaptation of Mordecai Richler's *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, entitled *Duddy!* The play, directed by Bryna Wasserman in July 1997, was the first project of the new Dora Wasserman Endowment Fund for Jewish Culture, which is designed to insure the financial continuity of Yiddish theater in Montreal.

Among the films with Jewish themes that were exhibited at the Toronto International Film Festival in September 1996 were *A Tickle in the Heart* by Stefan Schwietert, *Holy Week* by Andrzej Wajda, *To Speak the Unspeakable: The Message of Elie Wiesel* by Judit Elek, *The Substance of Fire* by Daniel Sullivan, and *The Arena of Murder* by Amos Gitai. Among those shown at the 1997 festival were *Best Man* by Ira Wohl and *Exile Shanghai* by Ulrike Ottinger.

Some of the more important entries at the May 1997 Montreal Jewish Film Festival were *Chants de Sable d’Etoile* by Nicolas Klotz and *Nothing to Be Written Here* by Wendy Oberlander. The corresponding Toronto festival featured *Exodus 1947* by Elizabeth Rodgers and Robby Henson, *The Italians Are Coming* by Eyal Halfon, and *As Tears Go By* by Eitan Green. Daniel Petrie's *The Assistant*, based on Bernard Malamud's novel, premiered at the Montreal World Film Festival in August 1997. Among the five Israeli films at the festival was the Arabic-language film *Milky Way* by Ali Nassar.

Montreal's Italian Cultural Institute held a colloquium in September 1997 to mark the tenth anniversary of Primo Levi's death. Academics from Canada, the United States, Italy, and France presented papers on Levi's work.

Canada's National Library marked the centennial of the Canadian Jewish press with an exhibition in Ottawa in the fall of 1997. The curator was Cheryl Jaffee.

**Publications**


In Anne Michaels' first novel, *Fugitive Pieces*, two stories related to the Holo-
caust are contrasted. Both involve survivors or their children and convey with great depth of feeling the events and implications of that terrible period.

Growing Up Jewish, edited by Rosalie Sharp, Irving Abella, and Edwin Goodman, comprises essays by 26 prominent Canadian Jews recounting memories of the past. William Weintraub recalls the old days in what was then Canada's largest and most open city in the prize-winning City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and 1950s.

Allan Nadler, who had been doing battle with at least part of the hassidic world for some time, produced The Faith of the Mithnagdim. Benjamin Freedman published Duty and Healing: Foundation of a Jewish Bioethic (on the Internet). Abraham Boyarsky wrote The Laws of Chaos; Yakov Rabkin and Ira Robinson edited The Interaction of Scientific and Jewish Cultures in Modern Times.

Anthony Bianco chronicles the business successes and failures of one of Canadian Jewry's wealthiest families in The Reichmanns: Family, Faith, Fortune and the Empire of Olympia and York. Conservative activist and writer Hugh Segal published his autobiography, No Surrender, as well as Beyond Greed: A Traditional Conservative Confronts Neoliberal Excess. Irene Burstyn focuses on the lives of women in Picking Up Pearls. Linda Frum remembers her mother, the renowned broadcaster, in Barbara Frum. Other works of biography and autobiography include Various Positions: A Life of Leonard Cohen by Ira Nadel and Shlomo Efrat's autobiographical The Black Shofar.

Felicia Carmelly produced the first comprehensive history in English on the slaughter of most of Romania's Jews: Shattered! 50 Years of Silence—Voices from Romania and Transnistria. Robert Jan van Pelt and Deborah Dwork wrote Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present. Frank Bialystock, in Delayed Impact: The Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community 1945–1985, deals with the issue of what he calls "collective amnesia," a condition that led to a lack of communication between Canadian Jews and the survivors who settled among them. Other Holocaust-related works include Hitler's Silent Partners: Swiss Banks, Nazi Gold and the Pursuit of Justice by Isabel Vincent; Open Your Hearts: The Story of the Jewish War Orphans in Canada by Fraidie Martz; and Elaine Kalman Naves's Journey to Vaja: Reconstructing the World of a Hungarian Jewish Family.

The critical early years of Canada's relationship with the new Jewish state are examined by Zachariah Kay in The Diplomacy of Prudence: Canada and Israel, 1948–1956, with particular emphasis on the Nobel Peace Prize-winning work of Lester B. Pearson. In The Israeli-American Connection: Its Roots in the Yishuv, 1914–1945, Michael Brown focuses on six Zionist leaders and how they gradually oriented Palestinian Jewry toward America. Also published was Dawn of the Promised Land: The Creation of Israel by Ben Wicks.

New translations from the Yiddish include Stories by Yiddish Women Writers, edited by Frieda Forman, Ethel Raicus, Sarah Silberstein Swartz, and Maggie Wolfe, and two works by Yehuda Elberg, Ship of the Hunted and The Empire of Kalman the Cripple. Ruth R. Wisse compiled the I.L. Peretz Reader.
New religious works include *The Haftorah Commentary* by Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, and *Renew Our Days: A Book of Jewish Prayer and Meditation* by Rabbi Ron Aigen.

Some new works of poetry are *Funken in Zhar* (Sparks in Embers) and *A Song Will Remain* by Simcha Simchonovitch; *A Seed in the Pocket of Their Blood* by Rafi Aaron; *Selected Poems: A.M. Klein*, edited by Zailig Pollock, Seymour Mayne, and Usher Caplan; *Clusters* by Kenneth Sherman; *David and Jonathan: A Story of Love and Power in Ancient Israel* by Stephen Schecter; and *Jacob’s Ladder* by Joel Yanofsky.

Gabriella Goliger won the Journey Prize for her short story “Maladies of the Inner Ear,” which appeared in *Parchment*. Among the winners of the 1997 Canadian Jewish Book Awards were Anne Michaels, Roger Nash, Seymour Mayne and Glen Rotchin, Manny Drukier, Felicia Carmelly, Simcha Simchovitch, Mervin Butovsky and Ira Robinson, Steven Saltzman, Yves Lavertu, and Fraidie Martz.

**Personalia**


Barry Carin was appointed High Commissioner to Singapore; David Levine became Quebec’s Delegate-General in New York; Ronald Berger joined the Alberta Court of Appeal; Gerry Weiner became president of Quebec’s Equality Party; Barbara Berger and Joel Moss were appointed to the Immigration and Refugee Board.

Norman Spector was appointed vice-president of Imperial Tobacco but subsequently took the position of president and publisher of the *Jerusalem Post*. Lorrie Goldstein became editor of the *Toronto Sun*.

Myron Scholes was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics for 1997; Dr. Victor Dirnfeld was elected president of the Canadian Medical Association; Mark Wainberg was chosen as president-elect of the International AIDS Society; Barry Levy became the first Jewish Dean of Religious Studies at McGill University; and David Novak was appointed the first occupant of a chair in Jewish studies at the University of Toronto.

Several Jewish writers and scholars received the gold medal of *La Renaissance Francaise*: Alexis Nouss, Paul Sidoun, Regine Robin, Michel Vaiss, and Gerard Etienne. Gad Soussana won a silver medal.

Several Jewish organizations selected new presidents: Naomi Frankenberg at JNF Canada, Joseph Steiner at UJA Federation in Toronto, and Stanley Plotnick
at Federation CJA in Montreal. Danyael Cantor was appointed executive vice-president of Federation CJA and Maxyne Finkelstein executive director. Bernie Farber became executive director of CJC's Ontario Region, succeeding Manuel Prutschi, who became the executive vice-president of the Sephardic Educational Foundation and the World Sephardic Educational Centre. Rabbi Irwin Witty retired as the executive director of the Board of Jewish Education in Toronto and was succeeded by Rabbi Jeremiah Unterman. Michael Briks became executive director of Jewish Immigrant Aid Services, and Lawrence Waller was appointed executive vice-president of Canada-Israel Securities. Brenda Gewurz was elected president of Montreal's Jewish Education Council. David Moss was appointed director of the Saidye Bronfman Centre for the Arts.

Among the deaths suffered by the community during the second half of 1996 were those of Harold Greenberg, in July, aged 66, a leader in the Canadian film and television industry and founder of Astral Communications; former Olympic wrestler Fred Oberlander, in July, aged 82; retired Senator H. Carl Goldenberg, in July, aged 82, one of the country's foremost labor lawyers and mediators; Albert Rose, in August, aged 78, a social work professor and expert on housing issues; Manya Lipshitz, in July, aged 89, Yiddish educator, writer, and political activist; former executive vice-president of JIAS and community leader Joseph Kage, in September, aged 84; Jack Reitman, co-founder of a national retail clothing chain, in October, aged 86; and Peter Bronfman, businessman, philanthropist, and co-founder of the Edper Group, in November, aged 67.

Members of the community who died during 1997 included Salah Mukamal, in January, aged 82, founder of Toronto's Iraqi Jewish Federation; bookstore chain co-founder Jack Cole, in January, aged 76; retired editor of the Canadian Jewish News Maurice Lucow, in March, aged 78; medical ethicist Benjamin Freedman, in March, aged 45; Isidore Pollack, businessman and patron of the arts, in April, aged 83; Irvin Strub, founder of the pickle company bearing his name, in May, aged 86; Ben Dunkelman, a leading member of Machal in Israel's War of Independence, commander of an armored brigade in the Galilee, in June, aged 83; former Ontario Progressive Conservative leader and cabinet member Larry Grossman, in June, aged 53; theatre director, drama teacher, and playwright Basya Hunter, in July, aged 85; Rose Goldblatt, concert pianist and professor, in September, aged 84; saxophonist and music professor Gerald Danovitch, in December, aged 65; and Gordon Schwartz, community fund-raiser and Maccabiah activist, in December, aged 55.

Harold M. Waller