Canada

National Affairs

Paul Martin, chosen in November 2003 as the new Liberal Party leader and prime minister (see AJYB 2004, p. 231), sought his own mandate by calling an election for late June 2004. His principal opponent was Stephen Harper, leader of the Conservative Party.

During the five-week spring campaign, the Conservatives appeared to be on the verge of a breakthrough, but when the votes were counted they fell far short. The Liberals did lose their majority, but held onto enough seats to remain the leading party. They formed a minority government that was dependent primarily on the support of the New Democratic Party (NDP). Both the NDP and the Bloc Quebecois increased their presence in the House of Commons, with the Conservatives becoming the official opposition. Although in principle a minority government could finish the normal four-year term, another election was considered likely by 2006.

On election day, constituencies with substantial Jewish populations generally voted for Liberal candidates, especially in the Toronto and Montreal areas. Jews elected to the House of Commons included Susan Kadis in Ontario, Irwin Cotler, Jacques Saada, and Raymonde Falco in Quebec, and Anita Neville in Manitoba. A number of non-Jewish supporters of Israel were returned to their seats, while Yvon Charbonneau, an MP who was very hostile to Israel, did not seek reelection. The campaign was marred by the defacing of Saada posters with swastikas in his riding (district) south of Montreal. Election posters of Conservative candidate Jordan Katz in Windsor were similarly defaced. Earlier in the year Saada reported receiving a number of hostile letters and phone calls that attacked him as a Jew.

Prime Minister Martin retained the three Jews he had appointed to top positions upon taking office: Irwin Cotler as minister of justice and attorney general, Jack Austin as government leader in the Senate, and
Jacques Saada, previously government leader in the House, who became minister of economic development for Quebec and minister responsible for the Francophonie. Rosalie Silberman Abella was appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada, the third Jew to sit on the court.

In an interview with the *Canadian Jewish News*, Cotler described the extent to which his public life was grounded in Jewish values, mentioning his commitment to the biblical injunction, “Justice, justice shall you pursue.” He elaborated in a November speech at York University, where he cited such Jewish principles as remembrance, guarding one’s tongue, not being a bystander to evil, liberating captives, supporting women’s rights, and protecting the most vulnerable.

Canada’s economy prospered during 2004 despite the uncertainty introduced by the emergence of a minority government after the election. Economic expansion continued at a moderate pace, inflation was low, and unemployment dropped. The Canadian dollar appreciated significantly against its American counterpart, putting pressure on manufacturers and exporters to remain competitive.

The public prominence achieved by some Canadian Jews became a matter of controversy during the year. Leon Mugesera, accused of hate crimes in Rwanda, requested that the Supreme Court decline to hear a federal government appeal of a lower court decision that he should not be deported because the allegations had not been proved. His lawyer, Guy Bertrand, charged that the Supreme Court could not be impartial. Bertrand argued that not only had Justice Minister Cotler conspired with the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) and other intervenors in the case, but that Cotler was also a close friend of newly appointed Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella, whose husband, Irving Abella, and Cotler were both past presidents of CJC. (Justice Abella had previously recused herself from the case.) Mugesera stated in an affidavit that “I live in anguish, not knowing everything that awaits me and my family as a result of pressures by intervenors such as the powerful Canadian Jewish Congress in collaboration with the justice minister and attorney general.” The Justice Department responded that the charges were “absurd, even shocking.” In December, the Supreme Court rejected Bertrand’s motion and proceeded to consider the government’s appeal.

**TERRORISM**

In his new book, *Cold Terror: How Canada Nurtures and Exports Terrorism Around the World*, journalist Stewart Bell argued that even though
the country had not yet experienced an attack, "Canada is itself a terror
target," and quoted one of Osama bin Laden's taped messages to that ef-
fect. Bell also chronicled a series of Canadian actions that he saw as con-
tradicting the government's tough official stance against terrorism. Other
countries, he wrote, were "frustrated with Canada's inability to stop ter-
rorist support and fund-raising, recruitment, passport forgery and plot-
ting." Bell claimed that political influence exerted by certain ethnic
communities inhibited necessary counterterrorism measures, and that
"the Jewish community is almost alone in lobbying the Canadian gov-
ernment to take a tougher stand." Bell was not alone in his pessimistic
assessment. In May, at a panel discussion in Toronto, John Thompson,
president of the Mackenzie Institute, predicted an eventual attack in
Canada, and Alan Baker, the new Israeli ambassador, noted that
Canada's openness and ethnic diversity made it a prime target.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Cen-
ter, visited Ottawa in January and urged government officials to take the
lead in having suicide bombing declared a crime against humanity. Jus-
tice Minister Cotler later stated that existing legislation was sufficient to
cover the offense.

In February, the Globe and Mail, citing a report by the U.S. Library of
Congress, claimed that in 1999 Al Qaeda and Hezbollah had planned si-
multaneous attacks on Jewish targets in Ottawa, Buenos Aires, and
Paraguay, but that South American police foiled the plot.

Accused Canadian Hezbollah agent Fauzi Mohammed Mustafa Ayub
was released by Israel in January as part of a prisoner exchange that led
to freedom for kidnapped Israeli businessman Elchanan Tannenbaum. It
was not clear whether Ayub, who also held Lebanese citizenship, planned
to return to Canada. Conservative Party foreign-affairs critic Stockwell
Day expressed the hope that he would not be welcomed given the fact that
he was "a known member of one of the most vicious terrorist groups in
the world." In another case, Jamal Akkal, a Palestinian Canadian,
pleased guilty in an Israeli military court to conspiracy to commit
manslaughter by attacking Israelis or Jewish community targets in North
America. He was sentenced to four years in prison and fined 2,000
shekels.

The government banned the entry of the senior cleric at Saudi Arabia's
Grand Mosque in Mecca because of his virulent anti-Semitic preaching.
Sheik Abd al-Rahman al-Sudais, who had labeled the Jews "the scum of
the earth" and urged his followers to eliminate them, had planned to at-
tend a conference in Toronto in May.
Naji Antoine Abi Khalil, a citizen of both Canada and Lebanon who headed a shipping company in Montreal, and Tomer Grinberg, an Israeli living in New York, were indicted in June by a U.S. federal grand jury for planning to ship up-to-date night-vision equipment to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The Canadian Coalition for Democracies charged in November that a charity going by the name of the International Relief Fund for the Afflicted and Needy (IRFAN) was actually a Hamas front, noting that it had the same address and fax number as the defunct Jerusalem Fund for Human Services, previously the fund-raising arm of Hamas in Canada. The Israel-based Center for the Study of Intelligence and Terror issued a detailed report outlining the links between Hamas and IRFAN.

Efforts to deport convicted Palestinian terrorist Mahmoud Mohammad Issa Mohammad had been going on since 1988. As a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, he participated in an attack on an El Al plane in Athens in 1968. Convicted and jailed in Greece, he was freed after a year as part of a deal to obtain the release of another hijacked plane. Since coming to Canada, Mohammad had managed to string out his deportation proceedings interminably, his lawyer contending that deportation to his home country of Lebanon would endanger his life, that he was no longer a threat, that he had close family ties in Canada, and that Israel might get hold of him. Government lawyers in Federal Court insisted that he continued “to pose a risk to Canadian society.” But in October the government conceded that it had made procedural errors in the case and agreed to a delay while a new risk assessment was conducted. This prompted lawyer David Matas to observe that “Canada is a haven for terrorists.”

An official of BBC (B’nai Brith Canada) was forced to resign over remarks he made on television in October. Adam Aptowitzer, Ontario chair of B’nai Brith’s Institute of International Affairs, said that Israel used terror and that this was acceptable. He explained that “terror is an option to be used by states in order to prevent deaths of their own citizens and of others . . . when that is being done to prevent deaths, are we going to say that that is wrong?” Muslim and Arab groups quickly called on BBC to repudiate the statement, which it did, dismissing Aptowitzer and saying that he did “not reflect the position of B’nai Brith Canada.”

**Israel and the Middle East**

In March, Israeli political scientist Gerald Steinberg criticized Canada’s Middle East policy in his Canadian Jewish News column.
Canada tilted away from Israel, he claimed, largely out of a desire to show independence from the U.S. Australia, in contrast, which previously charted a similar course, had more recently drawn closer to Washington and farther from the Europeans in recognition of the terrorist threat and also to further the goals of democracy, security, and national defense. Canada, he concluded, should do the same. In August, Steinberg called on the new Canadian government to rethink its approach to the Arab-Israeli dispute, to stop confusing the symptoms (Israeli actions) with the disease (Palestinian rejectionism), and to begin distinguishing between terrorism and the response to terrorism.

Israel’s government, however, saw things differently. Nimrod Barkan, an Israeli Foreign Ministry official who visited Canada in September, argued that precisely because Canada did not march in lockstep with the U.S., it had credibility in Europe to promote pro-Israel initiatives. Acknowledging that Canada’s voting record in the UN left something to be desired, he nevertheless saw Canada as a supportive ally. Similarly, Israeli ambassador Alan Baker looked to Canada to play “a central role in helping to push forward the peace process” and “stressed the desire of Israel for Canada to become a more centrally involved player in the process . . . .” Israel welcomed Canada’s offer to help oversee the Palestinian elections scheduled for early 2005.

A number of MPs expressed themselves on Middle East issues during the year. In January, Liberal Marlene Jennings called on the government to be more supportive of Israel, claiming that Canada’s stance had become less sympathetic over the past decade. However, another Liberal MP, Pat O’Brien, termed Israel’s security fence an “atrocity.” Speaking in the House of Commons in February, he contended that “this wall denies basic human rights to the Palestinian people and further reduces the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to the status of concentration camps.” Another Liberal MP refuted him from the floor the next day and Jewish groups met with him to question the analogy, but O’Brien stood by his words, though he did claim that he was using the term “concentration camps” generically, not in the Nazi context.

Two MPs representing the NDP went on a mission to Israel in August sponsored by the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC), but ran into hostility within their own party after their return. Twenty-seven party members, many of them Muslim, sent an open letter to NDP leader Jack Layton mentioning the trip, charging that it was a Jewish attempt to influence NDP policy, and complaining that the party, which had not been notably supportive of Israel in recent years, was now tilting toward the Jewish state. Layton’s response to the letter was noncommittal and did not rule
out the petitioners' suggestion that NDP MPs might have to obtain some form of party approval for such trips to Israel in the future.

Echoes of past episodes were heard when two Israeli men were arrested on passport fraud charges in New Zealand in April. One of the men had entered the country using a Canadian passport, but it turned out that he was indeed a Canadian national. In 1997, two Mossad agents posing as Canadian tourists had been picked up in Jordan, leading to some tense moments in Canadian-Israeli relations that were resolved when Israel promised not to use Canadian passports in covert operations. There was speculation that the two men apprehended in New Zealand were Mossad agents, and reports that a third man involved in the operation, who left New Zealand, may have been traveling on a stolen Canadian passport.

During Canada's election campaign, the leaders of the two major parties were interviewed by the Canadian Jewish News. Paul Martin denied that past Liberal governments had exhibited lack of support for Israel. He asserted a commitment to Israel's legitimacy and rejected any moral equivalence between terrorism and defending against it. With regard to Canada's position on future UN resolutions, he said that each one would be evaluated on its merits. Conservative leader Stephen Harper declared Israel's survival and security paramount and nonnegotiable, and criticized the government for a lax approach to terrorism and its Canadian infrastructure. Harper did not believe that Canada should be neutral on Arab-Israeli matters, asserting that "Israel is part of the democratic family of nations."

Despite revelations that Hamas members were on the payroll of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) that aided Palestinian refugees, Canada maintained its annual $10-million funding of the agency. Peter Hansen, the UNRWA head, actually admitted employing Hamas personnel in a CBC interview in October, but later explained that he had meant to refer to "political sympathies, not membership." Jewish organizations such as the CIC and BBC called upon Ottawa to reconsider its funding of UNRWA, as did Stockwell Day, the opposition foreign-affairs critic.

Day, in fact, emerged during the year as perhaps the most consistently pro-Israel public figure in the country. When Canadian-Israeli Yechezkel Goldberg was killed in a January suicide bombing of a Jerusalem bus, the Canadian embassy in Israel declined to send anyone to express condolences to his mourning family, presumably because their home was beyond the Green Line. Stockwell Day issued a press release declaring the lack of a visit an "outrage" and "an insult to all victims of terror." Day
also joined the Jewish community in protesting the appointment of former MP Yvon Charbonneau, a man with a strongly anti-Israel past, as ambassador to UNESCO. (In correspondence with CJC president Ed Morgan, Charbonneau promised that he would only express views at UNESCO that reflected the positions of the government.) In addition, Day pointed out that over the previous ten years, Canada had voted in favor of 75 UN resolutions denouncing Israeli actions, abstained on 38, and never opposed any.

In July, there was a hint that Canada was shifting its voting policy in the UN when it was one of ten nations that abstained on a General Assembly vote demanding that Israel comply with the decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on its security fence (see above, pp. 229–30). Supporting the resolution were 150 countries, including all 25 members of the European Union, with whom Canada usually voted. Only six nations voted against the resolution. Shimon Fogel, CEO of the CIC, found it significant that Canada had broken with the EU, but expressed disappointment that it had not voted against the resolution. A spokesperson for the Department of Foreign Affairs said that there had been no change in policy, as Canada had always been dubious about taking the case to the ICJ. In an official statement, the department tried to balance its doubts about the fence with Israeli security concerns.

On November 30, Alan Rock, Canada’s ambassador to the UN, publicly stated that the country would henceforth reject “redundant, divisive” resolutions that “lack balance” and would support only those that were “reality-driven.” In December, the Canadian UN delegation indeed appeared to be taking a new line. In the General Assembly it voted against two resolutions critical of Israel, one dealing with human-rights practices in the territories and the other regarding the special UN committee on the inalienable rights of the Palestinians. However, Canada did vote in favor of other resolutions opposed by Israel, including one on the risk of nuclear proliferation that singled out the Jewish state, on which it had abstained in previous years. At year’s end, B’nai Brith Canada issued a report critical of Canada’s performance in the General Assembly session, noting that its delegation voted for or abstained on 17 of the 19 resolutions B’nai Brith deemed to be tinged with anti-Semitism. But David Goldberg of the CIC observed that “we never anticipated Canadian voting behavior to change overnight. It’s gradual. It’s slow, but we are happy with the start.”

The new Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy, or CIJA (see below, p. 304) held its first parliamentary dinner in Ottawa in No-
November. Prime Minister Martin declared that “Canada will not, nor will we ever, waver in our support for Israel,” adding that “we believe strongly, incontrovertibly, in Israel’s right to defend itself against those who would destroy it.” In his keynote address, CBC commentator Rex Murphy condemned international hostility toward Israel. He lamented that decades after the Holocaust there were “intimations of hostility toward Jews again . . . .” Murphy denounced “the degree, the intensity, and the frequency of opprobrium directed by world bodies at Israel.”

The refugee claim of Rabbi Erez Shlomo Elbarnes worked its way through the courts. Elbarnes—an Israeli who had spent time in a U.S. prison for kidnapping and was thus ineligible for permanent resident status in Canada—came to Quebec in 2001 on a temporary visa, and set up a small community of his fervently anti-Zionist followers in the town of Ste. Agathe. The federal government moved to deport him, but, in 2003, an Immigration and Refugee Board arbitrator ruled for Elbarnes based on his assertion that his anti-Zionist views would endanger him in Israel. Elbarnes’s attorney reiterated that argument at a Federal Court hearing in December 2004, while a government lawyer responded that Israel was a democratic country and had numerous protections against persecution. The decision was pending as the year ended.

The number of Canadian Jews who relocated to Israel during 2004 was 312, a significant increase over the 228 who immigrated in 2003.

The Media and Public Opinion

The CIC surveyed the attitudes of some 1,500 people across the country about the Middle East, and the results displayed widespread ignorance about Israel. Only 42 percent knew that Israel was a democracy, and 89 percent assigned equal responsibility for violence to Israel and the Palestinians. The predominant view among respondents was that Canada should remain neutral and that the media were biased against the Palestinians. Hershell Ezrin, CEO of the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA), commented that “unfortunately, Canada is much closer to Europe in this regard” than to the U.S.

In its report on the survey, Shared Values, Communicating to Canadians: Building Support for Israel, the CIC concluded that “many of the time-tested approaches used by the Jewish community to communicate with Canadians are not working” and announced a new focus on the values shared by the two countries, the development of a consistent message, providing information about the real impact of violence on Israeli fam-
ilies, and highlighting Israel's desire for peace and social development. The findings also triggered a major effort to bring key people from influential sectors of Canadian society to Israel, and the number of such visitors more than doubled in 2004.

The reluctance to utilize the word “terrorist” when writing about Palestinian attacks on Israelis continued to be a matter of dispute in the media. CanWest Global Communications, publisher of 13 daily newspapers, announced in September that it would continue a policy announced earlier in the year to insert the word “terrorist” into Reuters dispatches to describe the perpetrators of such attacks despite complaints from the news agency, which preferred words like “insurgents,” “militants,” or “rebels.” CIC communications director Paul Michaels pointed out a similar problem at the CBC, Canada’s national public broadcaster. With no formal policy in place on the matter, the CBC identified “terrorism” in a number of contexts, but never when Israelis were victims.

_Adbusters_, a magazine based in Vancouver, ran a story in March about U.S. neoconservatives and the war in Iraq. The story listed some 50 neocons who reportedly had influence over U.S. policy, and the names of the 26 Jews on the list were checked off to distinguish them. The editor of the magazine and author of the article, Kalle Lasn, said he felt compelled to write this piece because “the mainstream and alternative media are somehow scared of talking about the Jewishness of the neocons and the Zionism there . . . and the influence this has on American foreign policy in the Middle East.”

CBC television reporter Neil Macdonald continued to be a source of controversy even after he was transferred, in 2003, from Jerusalem to Washington (see AJYB 2004, p. 240). For example, in a story about Prime Minister Sharon’s April meeting with President George Bush in Washington, Macdonald gave his own interpretation of Israel’s Gaza disengagement plan: “It’s the West Bank that Israel really wants, and Sharon, now with Bush’s approval, intends to annex a large chunk of it,” adding that Bush in effect had “sanctioned . . . Israel’s designs on Palestinian territory.” In December, both CIC and HonestReporting Canada charged that Macdonald had repeatedly injected his personal views into his news reporting, contravening CBC guidelines. B’nai Brith, for its part, urged the CBC “to uphold basic journalistic standards by immediately reviewing Macdonald’s conduct and acting on their findings . . . . Failure to ensure his adherence to core journalistic principles would make the broadcaster complicit in a process through which double standards, demonization, and delegitimization of Israel have become the order of the
day.” Paul Michaels of the CIC found a silver lining in the cloud, observing that CBC coverage of the Middle East had become much more balanced since Macdonald left Jerusalem.

MediaNet Canada, owner of several radio stations and of Tamil TV in Toronto, was granted a license to operate Jewish Television (JTV) and distribute the channel through digital cable systems. Guidelines set by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) required that at least 55 percent of the programming be in Hebrew or Yiddish. JTV was to provide extensive coverage of Israel in addition to other Jewish-themed programming. Another new outlet for news and features about Israel and the Jewish community was begun by Montreal journalist David Ouellette, who launched a Web magazine, Judeoscope — le magazine d’actualités à l’œil nu.

In the face of considerable opposition from Jewish groups, the CRTC granted a license to Al-Jazeera. However, cable operators wishing to offer the Arabic-language channel would have to comply with regulations—similar to those suggested by some Jewish groups—that were so stringent as to possibly deter the operators from getting involved, especially the requirement that cable and satellite providers “alter or delete” programming to insure that no abusive content was broadcast. CJC president Ed Morgan issued a statement on the decision: “Because of the history of anti-Semitic comment on Al-Jazeera, our first choice was not to have this broadcaster distributed in Canada. However, we are pleased that the alternatives CJC recommended to the CRTC to protect minority communities in Canada from vilification while still protecting free speech have been accepted.” In contrast, B’nai Brith remained totally opposed to allowing Al-Jazeera into Canada.

In a March decision, the Quebec Press Council rejected David Ouellette’s complaint about an article that appeared in 2003 in a small-town paper, La Voix de l’Est, which drew parallels between current Israeli policies and the crucifixion of Jesus. According to the council, it was not anti-Semitic. In another decision that same month, the council rejected a complaint against Global TV and filmmaker Martin Himel for his documentary Confrontation at Concordia. The accusation raised against the film, that it gave the impression that activists opposed to the war in Iraq were anti-Semitic, was unfounded, according to the decision. But the council chided Himel for not identifying the film as a work of opinion and for “gratuitously associating” the antiwar movement with Nazis.

In December CanWest Global Communications Corp., with headquarters in Winnipeg, acquired half ownership of the Jerusalem Post in
a partnership with Mirkaei Tikshoret Group Ltd. The Post was one of the media properties sold by Hollinger International.

THE CAMPUSES

Since the outbreak of the current wave of Israeli-Palestinian violence in late 2000, some of the most significant struggles between Canadian supporters of Israel and their opponents took place on university campuses. Concordia University in Montreal achieved the greatest notoriety because of the confrontation that prevented former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu from speaking there in 2002 (see AJYB 2003, pp. 310–12); York University in Toronto was another hotbed of anti-Israel activity.

In late 2003, the student government election at York resulted in the victory of a slate opposed to the anti-Israel incumbents, but the outgoing student council refused to ratify the result, preventing the victors from assuming their posts. In January 2004, the university administration responded by suspending funding for the student council, a step that finally induced the losing side to hand over control to the newly elected officers. But in the next election, held in November 2004, the pro-Palestinian element won 15 of the 19 council seats, and one of the new vice presidents was a spokesperson for Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR), the most aggressive anti-Israel group on Canadian campuses. The victorious slate called for “reinvigorated activism,” and a former Hillel president said that “the atmosphere on campus has definitely taken a turn for the worse.”

Earlier, in February, a local of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) — which represented teaching and research assistants as well as contract faculty, and had a long anti-Israel record — sponsored a talk, “From Occupied Palestine,” by a journalist and activist who had spent the previous summer in Jenin and Rafah. When some students challenged the one-sided nature of the presentation and expressed doubts as to whether their teaching assistants could be objective and fair-minded about the issue in the classroom, a union official observed that his members “believe the Israeli government acts in an oppressive fashion which needs highlighting and don’t believe there is any need to present any evidence or justification for what is being done by the Israelis.”

The next month, pro- and anti-Israel students clashed at York when SPHR and several other leftist and union groups sponsored a “street-theater” type event depicting the Israeli “occupation” in a grossly unfa-
favorable manner, with mock “checkpoints” at which passing students were harassed. Jewish students responded by trying to block the installation of the checkpoints and the theatrical presentations. Afterward, the university suspended the activities of SPHR, Hillel, and another pro-Israel group for violating a ban on events in a particular building. A few days later, Hillel held a Jewish Unity Rally. MP Art Eggleton addressed the gathering, telling the students that “hatred of Israel is the new and clever guise of anti-Jewish prejudice.” The suspensions of the groups were lifted after a week.

In November, York history professor David Noble (himself Jewish) handed out literature after a SPHR film presentation alleging that the York University Foundation “is biased by the presence and influence of staunch pro-Israel lobbyists, activities, and fund-raising agencies.” He also listed the names of some board members and their links to Jewish community groups. York president Lorna Marsden condemned Noble’s “highly offensive” material, and the CUPE local responded with a rally to protest restrictions on speech and assembly, support Noble, and demand that Marsden apologize to him. In addition to his anti-Israel activities, Noble sought to prevent the university from canceling classes on religious holidays such as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Good Friday, claiming violation of provincial law.

Two years after the fiasco of the Netanyahu visit, Concordia University was again embroiled in controversy. Hillel proposed inviting another former Israeli prime minister, Ehud Barak, to give a campus lecture. The administration turned this down on the grounds that it could not ensure security, but offered to cosponsor an off-campus talk. The Jewish students, backed by leaders of the Jewish community, insisted on a campus venue in order to demonstrate that threats of violence emanating from pro-Palestinian groups could not keep Israeli speakers away, but the university would not budge. Federation CJA president Sylvain Abitbol complained that “for the sake of not disturbing things, the Jews are being sacrificed,” Israeli consul-general Marc Attali asked whether this meant that “an Israeli cannot speak there ever,” and the Canadian Jewish News editorialized that “the university has effectively given a veto to the extremists and the abhorrers of tolerance on the question of who is a permissible campus guest.” Concordia’s rector, Frederick Lowy, published an article in three newspapers in October explaining the steps the university was taking to ensure proper security for controversial speakers. A month later, Lowy announced that Concordia was prepared to invite Barak to speak on campus during the first half of 2005, once security measures were in place.
In February, the National Film Board documentary about the university’s 2002 Netanyahu incident, *Discordia*, premiered on campus. The directors were Ben Addelman and Samir Mallal. The film followed three of the main student protagonists in the conflict—a Palestinian-Canadian student activist, a Jewish supporter of the Palestinians, and a Hillel leader. Student elections were scheduled for March, and Hillel mounted a campaign to get out the vote, fearing that apathy might play into the hands of the most radical student politicians. In the end, a moderate slate prevailed and a number of candidates backed by Hillel won seats on the student council.

In addition to developments at York and Concordia, a number of other campuses witnessed varying degrees of tension over Israel-related matters. The SPHR chapter at McMaster University in Hamilton was put on probation in March for including a placard on its Web site denouncing Zionism as racism. SPHR at the University of Western Ontario in London joined a rally against anti-Semitism in April, and nevertheless, a few months later, erected a mock wall in the university’s community center to protest Israel’s security fence. SPHR also erected symbolic “apartheid walls” at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University, spurring the Jewish Students Association to increase its advocacy activities. Serge Elbaz, president of Center Hillel, described the Université du Québec à Montréal and the Université de Montréal as “bastions of pro-Palestinian militance.” Due to declining Jewish enrollment at these institutions, he said, Hillel was at a disadvantage, but nevertheless brought Israeli speakers to the campuses. Hillel protested a series of three lectures at the Université de Montréal in November on “Israel and Palestine” that featured two anti-Zionist speakers (one of whom was Jewish) but no one favorable to Israel. In response, the university agreed to hold additional lectures in the series in 2005 with a pro-Israel academic.

In October, Mohamed Elmasry, a University of Waterloo professor who was also an advisor in the university’s Middle East studies program and president of the Canadian Islamic Congress, stated on a Toronto television show that attacks on any Israeli adult were legitimate because all Israelis serve in the military. Waterloo’s president, David Johnston, said he found that view abhorrent, and numerous other public figures also expressed outrage. After Elmasry backtracked and granted that his earlier comments were “totally unacceptable,” the university decided not to pursue disciplinary measures demanded by CJC and BBC.

The selection of Mary Robinson to receive an honorary law degree at McGill University in June set off a major contretemps. History professor Gil Troy and others protested that her record as UN commissioner
of human rights and chair of the infamous World Conference against Racism in Durban in 2001, which was tinged with anti-Semitism, should disqualify her from the honor. Eventually Robinson agreed to meet with her critics after receiving the degree. There were also protests against the honorary degree that Osgoode Hall Law School of York University conferred on Richard Falk. A number of students protested because Falk defended Palestinian "resistance to occupation," but Dean Patrick Monahan assured them that Falk opposed deliberate violence against civilians.

The Jewish community supported a number of nationwide campus initiatives. CIJA announced the establishment of a Canadian Federation of Jewish Students, which would contend with Muslim and Arab campus organizations that had a national focus. The first president of the federation, Alex Kemeny, sought to develop a strategic concept of Jewish advocacy. During its first year, the federation established a network of collaboration with a variety of bodies and helped students at several universities cope with anti-Israel activism. The Jewish community federations, meanwhile, funded National Jewish Campus Life, which hired seven Israel advocacy specialists to work on campuses in 2003–04, funded outreach initiatives, and ran programs to train student leaders.

In March, the Wolfond Center for Jewish Campus Life opened at the University of Toronto. Funded by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the facility soon became a focal point for Jewish activity on campus.

**Anti-Semitism and Racism**

Anti-Semitic incidents rose by nearly 50 percent in 2004, according to B’nai Brith Canada’s annual audit. The 857 incidents, three times the number recorded in 2000, was the highest yearly total in the audit’s 22-year history. BBC categorized 457 cases as harassment, 369 as vandalism, and 31 as violence. The province of Ontario was the site of 530 incidents, 405 of them occurring in the greater Toronto area. There were 257 incidents in Quebec, 187 of them in Montreal.

The accelerated pace of anti-Jewish activity was evident early in the year. Anti-Semitic graffiti were found in the Vancouver suburb of Richmond in February. In Vaughan, outside Toronto, two homes and 11 cars were smeared with anti-Semitic graffiti in March, one Holocaust survivor finding a swastika on her door. (Later that month, swastikas were spray-painted on the walls of a Muslim-owned business in Vaughan.) There was major anti-Semitic vandalism in Toronto toward the end of March: ceme-
tery headstones were overturned; windows were broken and swastikas spray-painted on a synagogue; windows were broken at a day school; and UJA fund-raising signs were defaced.

The events in Toronto aroused the Jewish community, which organized a rally in protest against anti-Semitism that drew some 3,000 people, including elected officials and leaders of several ethnic and religious groups. Ontario prime minister Dalton McGuinty told the crowd that "this hate is the stuff of cowards," adding that "an attack on any of us is an attack on us all." After the rally, representatives of the national Jewish organizations met with McGuinty to express their concern about the attacks and to thank him and his colleagues for publicly condemning the incidents. On the day of the rally, Libby Davis, an MP for the NDP, introduced a resolution in the House of Commons condemning the recent attacks, which passed unanimously. In April, three teenagers, one 18 and the others 15, were arrested in connection with the vandalism in Toronto and charged with various counts of mischief. Police Chief Julian Fantino declared that "any hate crime . . . is absolutely unacceptable." In June, the Ontario attorney general consented to the filing of charges of willful promotion of hatred against the three.

An international conference on anti-Semitism was held in Montreal in March, cosponsored by the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research and the Quebec-Israel Committee. The keynote speaker was Israeli cabinet minister Natan Sharansky, who argued that the current wave of attacks on Jews around the world should not be shrugged off simply as fallout from the Middle East conflict, but in fact constituted the strongest manifestation of global anti-Semitism since the Holocaust.

The most significant anti-Semitic incident of the year came in April—the firebombing of the library of the United Talmud Torahs school in the St. Laurent area of Montreal just before Passover. Anti-Semitic flyers left at the scene blaming Israel for crimes against the Palestinians and warning "this is just the beginning" were signed "the brigades of Sheik Ahmed Yassin." The visual image of the library's smoldering ruins made a profound impact on the Jewish community, and the significance of the event reverberated across the country. Prime Minister Martin said that "it is against the values espoused by all Canadians" and an "unspeakable crime." Justice Minister Cotler, himself a graduate of the targeted school, promised to pursue the perpetrators with the full force of the law. The Quebec premier, Jean Charest, called on all Quebeckers to denounce the bombing. He later toured the site and tried to reassure the students.

In May, three people—a mother, her son, and another young man, all
reported to be of Lebanese origin—were charged with the crime, and all pleaded not guilty. Later in the year, charges against one of the young men were dropped because of insufficient evidence. In December, 19-year-old Sleiman Elmerhebi pleaded guilty to one charge of arson; the additional charge of conspiracy was dropped, much to the displeasure of Jewish leaders. At year’s end, Elmerhebi’s mother, Rouba Fahd-Elmerhebi, still faced the charge of being an accessory after the fact for trying to help her son escape from Canada. The library, meanwhile, was rebuilt with the help of donations from many sources. Over $400,000 was raised and more than 13,000 books were received to restock the library, which reopened in December. Education Minister Pierre Reid and Revenue Minister Lawrence Bergman attended the ceremony.

The pace of anti-Semitic incidents did not slow down. In April, 12 monuments were overturned at a Jewish cemetery in Kitchener, and, in Oshawa, a synagogue was defaced and a swastika painted on a Holocaust memorial plaque. Graves were desecrated in May at two more cemeteries, one in Montreal, where graffiti were written on gravestones, and the other in Quebec City, where 20 headstones were overturned. In June, a synagogue in Ottawa was desecrated with racist graffiti and swastikas. In the town of Markham, outside Toronto, more than 25 anti-Semitic messages and symbols were spray-painted in various locations in June. Calgary was the scene of two incidents of anti-Semitic graffiti in August, one a message of “Jews, go home” found near the Calgary Jewish Center, and the other a caricature of Prime Minister Sharon depicted as a Nazi.

A particularly nasty example of hate speech came from the leader of a Vancouver mosque, Sheik Younus Kathrada, in October. He denounced Jews as “the brothers of monkeys and swine,” and stressed that the Koran depicts Jews as treacherous.

There were a number of legal developments related to anti-Semitism. After a preliminary hearing in January, Christopher Steven McBride was ordered tried for first-degree murder in the 2002 stabbing of David Rosenzweig in Toronto (see AJYB 2003, p. 313). A young man was acquitted in an Ontario court in July on charges of promoting hatred through the sale of 15 CDs at a party in 2003. Although their content was “horrific,” in the judge’s words, there was no proof that the man had sold them. In October, Kevin Haas, 21, was charged with seven counts of mischief and two of death threats for actions allegedly taken during the summer at Ryerson University in Toronto that were directed at both Jews and Muslims. (There were over a dozen incidents at Ryerson during the period.)

A Muslim newspaper in British Columbia, The Miracle, published an anti-Semitic article at the end of 2003. Nusrat Hussain, the editor, de-
fended publication on the grounds of free expression, even though he said he did not agree with the content. But CJC, Pacific Region, demanded a criminal investigation, and the government of the province announced it would increase funding and support for its Hate Crimes Unit, which would look into the charges. Along similar lines, BBC asked the Alberta attorney general to investigate the possibility that *Alberta Arab News*, published in Edmonton, had violated the hate-crimes statute by running a series of articles that included Holocaust denial and charges of Zionist control over the media and government.

Despite the widespread concern in the Jewish community, Canadians did not generally see anti-Semitism as a serious threat to the nation, at least early in the year. An Environics poll in April showed that only about one-sixth of the Canadian population believed that anti-Semitism was on the increase. The figure for Quebec was somewhat higher, around one-fourth. Respondents, both nationally and in Quebec, were nearly evenly split over whether the cases of anti-Semitic vandalism that had occurred up to that time were random acts or part of a trend.

**Holocaust-Related Matters**

Legal proceedings against accused Nazi war criminals continued to grind along at a slow pace. From 1995, when the government began dealing with such cases through denaturalization proceedings followed by deportation, until the end of 2003, 1,684 files were opened and 19 cases initiated: six of them resulted in deportation and two others were not contested, the accused leaving the country voluntarily; in three cases the accused war criminal prevailed; four of the accused died before their cases were concluded; and four cases were still pending.

Two new cases were initiated in March 2004. Jura Skomatchuk of St. Catharines was alleged to have been an SS guard at the Trawniki training camp, later serving at the Poniatowa forced labor camp and the Sachsenhausen and Mauthausen concentration camps. Josef Furman of Edmonton was accused of taking part in the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto. According to the government, Furman, who came from Ukraine, was trained as an SS guard at Trawniki, and then helped clear the Warsaw Ghetto and the Bialystok Ghetto in 1943. Later he served at the Flossenburg concentration camp. Had these men told the truth about their wartime service when applying to immigrate to Canada, they would have been barred, and this was grounds for denaturalization and deportation. Both accused men denied the allegations.

There was a strange twist in the Helmut Oberlander case. In 2001, the
cabinet ordered the denaturalization of Oberlander, who had worked as an interpreter for an infamous Nazi death squad responsible for thousands of murders in Ukraine during World War II. But a series of appeals delayed enforcement of the order and, in late 2003, a judge on the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled that the cabinet had acted improperly. In June 2004, the Federal Court of Appeals restored Oberlander's citizenship, an action that David Matas of BBC charged "basically guts the process of war criminal citizenship revocation." According to Matas, the decision not only in effect denied the criminal nature of the Nazi Einsatzgruppen, but also ignored the fact that Oberlander had lied about his past when entering Canada. The government was expected to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Ernst Zundel, the Holocaust denier and anti-Semite who entered Canada from Germany in 1958, continued his long legal battle with the authorities (see AJYB 2004, p. 248). In April 2003, the government began proceedings to deport him as a security threat. His challenge to his detention, pending court proceedings, was denied in January 2004 by Judge Pierre Blais of the Federal Court. In May, the Ontario Court of Appeal found that it did not have jurisdiction to hear his challenge to the government's security certificate declaring him a danger to Canada. In June, Judge Blais quashed subpoenas through which Zundel was trying to compel the testimony of leaders of CJC and B'nai Brith Canada (BBC) as well as that of a journalist and a judge who was once Zundel's attorney, to prove undue Jewish influence on his case. Judge Blais found that the Jewish organizations' involvement was open and legitimate. An appeal to the Supreme Court by Zundel's lawyers to deny the deportation order was denied in October.

Canada's first official Holocaust Memorial Day was observed on April 18, Yom Hashoah. Observances were held on Parliament Hill and at the Ottawa Conference Center. Justice Minister Cotler was the main speaker and Israeli Ambassador Haim Divon also addressed a crowd estimated at more than 1,000 that included members of both houses of Parliament and foreign diplomats.

When the National Gallery of Canada discovered that one of the paintings in its collection had been stolen from its Jewish owners by the Nazis, it endeavored to find the descendants of those owners and return the painting to them. CJC president Keith Landy praised the National Gallery for its persistence. In another controversy over the disposition of artwork, a lawyer in Hamilton, Andrew Orkin, and three of his South African relatives filed suit against actress Elizabeth Taylor over posses-
sion of a painting that Taylor purchased some 40 years earlier. Orkin claimed it belonged to his great-grandmother in Berlin, who had been forced to give it up due to “Nazi economic and political coercion” in 1939 before her departure for South Africa.

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Demography

An assessment by the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute (JPPPI), the first of an annual series, recognized that “Canada rates among the most successful of Diaspora communities.” Not only was it one of the few that was growing, but the report also noted “an overall maintenance and even intensification of Jewish identity in Canada,” attributing this at least partly to a strong day-school system.

Prof. Leo Davids of York University analyzed those who identified themselves as Jews by religion in the 2001 Census. He found 330,000 people, up from 318,075 in 1991. Of these, 18.5 percent were aged 14 or younger and 17.7 percent 65 or older. The number of Jewish immigrants during the previous decade was 22,365. The population was heavily concentrated geographically, 77 percent of Canadian Jews living in the Toronto and Montreal metropolitan areas and another 5 percent in Vancouver. (As the census included separate questions on religion and ethnicity, Davids’s findings excluded Canadians who identified as Jews ethnically but did not profess the Jewish religion.) In Greater Toronto, by far the largest Canadian Jewish community — over 180,000 in 2001 — there were now three distinct areas of Jewish concentration: downtown (about 21,000); the York Region north of the city (about 60,000); and the Bathurst corridor (over 90,000). Explosive growth in the York Region led community planners to focus significant resources for the development of appropriate infrastructure there.

The rather modest 3.75-percent growth of the Canadian Jewish population over the decade 1991–2001 was infinitesimal compared to the increase in Muslim population, which grew nearly 129 percent, to reach 579,650 in 2001.

The rapid aging of the Canadian Jewish population made it likely that the over-65 age group would grow by about 50 percent by 2021 and place a strain on communal resources. The problem was especially dire in Montreal, where the proportion of senior citizens was increasing at the same
time that the overall Jewish population was shrinking. The correspond-
ing decline in the economically productive age groups “has implications 
for the economic viability of the Montreal Jewish community and its 
long-term ability to provide services and programs to its more vulnera-
ble members,” according to Charles Shahar, the Federation CJA demog-
rapher.

According to the census, nearly 50,000 Jews, about one-eighth of Cana-
dian Jewry, lived below the poverty line, as did some 20 percent of its se-
nior citizens. The highest proportion of poor Jews were found in 
Montreal, which had a relatively large percentage of ultra-Orthodox and 
elderly Jews.

Communal Affairs

The new Jewish umbrella organization, the Canadian Council for Is-
rael and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA), began operations early in the year and 
named Hershell Ezrin, a man with considerable political and diplomatic 
experience, as CEO. Funded nationally through UIA Federations 
Canada, CIJA was designed to provide overall coordination for commu-
nity work in support of Israel and the domestic Jewish agenda. It grew 
out of a perception among senior lay leaders that the work being done 
in these areas was inadequate. The surge of anti-Semitism and the emer-
gence of university campuses as key battlegrounds gave further impetus 
to the initiative (see AJYB 2004, pp. 251–52).

CIJA had a national board with wide geographic representation, and 
a larger community council representing its member organizations. CIJA 
had oversight responsibility for the policies and resource allocations of 
the CJC, CIC, and the National Committee for Jewish Campus Life. 
Ezrin expressed optimism that CIJA’s work would raise the community’s 
profile among policymakers and the media, facilitate outreach to other 
minority communities and the creation of political alliances, and mobi-
lize members at the grassroots level through political action committees. 
In an evaluation of CIJA’s first year as 2004 drew to a close, cochairs 
Steven Cummings and Brent Belzberg pointed to a near doubling of 
community financial allocations for advocacy activities.

The Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) switched the planned venue for 
its triennial plenary in June from Montreal to Ottawa, ostensibly so as 
to facilitate meetings with government officials. In fact, Ottawa was a 
compromise choice, as those seeking to move the conference actually 
wanting its relocation to Toronto, which had become the country’s dom-
inant Jewish community by far. This was only the second time that the meeting was held outside the two major centers. Much of the discussion at the plenary focused on dealing with anti-Semitism and providing security for the community.

The expansion of the Toronto community was felt not only in numbers but also in the range and scope of its programs. Annual fund-raising for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto grew from $34 million in 1995 to about $60 million in 2004, and foundation assets now exceeded $120 million. The federation launched an ambitious, multiyear $250-million project called Jewish Toronto Tomorrow, an effort to build the facilities needed for the coming decades. Already completed were a redeveloped Jewish center and new center for campus life, both in the downtown area. Other projects in the planning stage were the modernization and expansion of another existing Jewish center in the heart of Jewish Toronto and the construction of a major new multipurpose campus in rapidly growing Vaughan (in the York Region).

The increase in anti-Semitic incidents induced synagogues, schools, and other Jewish institutions to beef up security by hiring private guards or off-duty police officers to patrol their premises, and this, in turn, imposed additional costs on the organizations and stretched their budgets. Some synagogues levied special security fees on top of membership dues to offset the increased costs. Federation CJA in Montreal allocated $3 million to upgrade security at day schools and day-care centers. In April, representatives of UJA Federation and CJC met with top Ontario officials seeking government aid for security. Attorney General Michael Bryant said after the meeting that “this government firmly believes that no one deserves to live in fear. We will do everything we can to end this campaign of hate . . . .”

Montreal’s Jewish General Hospital undertook a major expansion expected to cost over $53 million. In July, the Quebec government announced it would pay $24 million toward the project, the balance coming from private fund-raising. The two focal points of the expansion were the hospital’s comprehensive cancer center and its cardiovascular sciences center.

A major reform of Quebec’s health-care system threatened the autonomy of three Jewish institutions in Montreal, all dependent on public funds, which now might have to merge into larger institutions and lose their Jewish character and lay direction. The government sought to ease Jewish concerns by proposing a merger of the three Jewish facilities, the Jewish Eldercare Center, Mount Sinai Hospital, and Maimonides Geri-
atric Center, so that they would not be subject to more general consolidation. But even that was troubling for Jewish community leaders, who worried about the vitality of institutions that might lose their identity under a unified administration.

Two new Jewish projects with military themes were announced for Toronto. The city donated land in Earl Bales Park for a memorial to Jewish war veterans from all countries that would include a 350-seat amphitheater. Designed by the noted architect Daniel Libeskind and slated to open in 2005 close to a Holocaust memorial and a bust of Raoul Wallenberg, the memorial would be managed by the Jewish War Veterans of Canada. A second, independent undertaking was the creation of a Canadian Jewish military museum.

Religion

In December, the Supreme Court of Canada handed down a ruling on same-sex marriage in response to a reference from the government. It held that the government’s proposed law to allow for same-sex marriage was constitutional, but that religious groups could decline to perform such rites. The issue had been brought to the court in the wake of several decisions by provincial courts throwing out laws that allowed only heterosexual unions. The federal government planned to introduce its new legislation in 2005. In its opinion, the court noted that “several centuries ago, it would have been understood that marriage be available only to opposite-sex couples. The recognition of same-sex marriage in several Canadian jurisdictions as well as two European countries belies the assertion that the same is true today.”

The 25-member Canadian Coalition of Liberal Rabbis for Same-Sex Marriage welcomed the ruling “as a matter of social justice and religious conviction,” and expressed pleasure at “the Court’s recognition of the need to balance same-sex equality rights with protections for religious freedom.” The coalition had filed a brief with the court while the case was under consideration, arguing that “many kinds of families, including those with same-sex partners, are capable of fulfilling Jewish family values,” and that Jewish law is “not immutable.” In contrast, Rabbi David Novak, professor of Jewish studies at the University of Toronto, opposed the ruling and said he worried that it might eventually threaten the integrity of religious traditions. Novak also criticized Justice Minister Cotler, who was responsible for shepherding the legislation through Parliament, for not in the least being influenced “by his Jewish tradition . . . .”
Rabbi Reuven Bulka of Ottawa said he would decline to wed a same-sex couple just as he would refuse to marry a Jew and a non-Jew, as both unions would violate Jewish law.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) held its annual meeting in Toronto in June. It featured a study session on the Zohar, the classic work of Jewish mysticism; an address by American Christian theologian Martin Marty; a discussion of congregational programs for adolescents; and affirmation of a commitment to the legitimacy of same-sex unions.

Rabbi Dow Marmur of Toronto wrote in the Canadian Jewish News in December about the emergence of what he called “post-Halakhic Judaism”: rabbis and cantors of various persuasions were ministering to Jews for whom Halakhah, Jewish law, had “ceased to be normative, but for whom tradition matters.” He found such trends in all the Jewish movements aside from the ultra-Orthodox, and expressed the hope that “parallel dynamics across denominational divides could reduce tensions and make for unity.”

But leaders of the Conservative movement did not necessarily agree. After participating in a Conservative forum on intermarriage, Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl of Toronto emphasized that his movement rejected two of Reform’s innovations: the acceptance of children of non-Jewish mothers and Jewish fathers as Jewish, and allowing non-Jews to be synagogue members. Nevertheless, he affirmed the importance of drawing intermarried couples closer to the community.

At a meeting of the Canadian Region of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, there were animated debates about issues of Jewish law. Rabbi Howard Morrison vigorously defended the movement as Halakhic, speaking of a long history of what he called Halakhic pluralism dating back to the ancient rabbis. But Rabbi Steven Saltzman raised the possibility that egalitarian synagogues, which provided equal roles for men and women, stretched acceptable limits and played “a risky game with the future.” Saltzman added that ordination of homosexual rabbis or permitting consecration ceremonies for same-sex couples would constitute “the last nail in the coffin of any façade that this movement is Halakhic.”

In February, Montreal’s Vaad Ha’ir, which provided kashrut certification for the community, announced that it would not allow kosher food manufacturers and caterers under its supervision to use machine-made matzo or matzo products from the U.S. for Passover. (The ruling did not affect products sold at the retail level.) This meant that products certified by the Orthodox Union (OU) would be barred, reflecting a trend in
the Vaad to defer to the strictest interpretations of Halakhah in the community, a position that drew criticism from some observant Jews. In the fall, a strike at Marvid, Montreal’s sole supplier of kosher chickens, resulted in a shortage that led the Vaad Ha’ir to relax its normal prohibition of the importation of kosher meat that has not been slaughtered under its supervision.

**Education**

In December, Quebec Education Minister Pierre Reid announced that Jewish day schools in Montreal would be able to achieve associate status with public school boards, and thus receive an increase in public funding for their general-studies programs from 60 percent to 100 percent. The change would add about $10.5 million per year to the existing government grants. Federation CJA and its agencies negotiated the agreement with the government, which included a requirement that the Jewish schools develop intercultural-exchange programs.

After a long and acrimonious bargaining process that included a work-to-rule protest in 2002, the Federation of Teachers of Jewish Schools agreed to a five-year contract with the three large Montreal day schools.

Day-school parents in Toronto continued to be squeezed by steadily increasing tuitions and the government’s refusal to provide any relief. Despite federation aid to needy families, enrollments began to drop, with some attributing the decline to the tuition situation. One advocate for affordable day schools, Jerrold Landau, called for a combination of political and communal action to address the crisis.

Construction began in the spring for a Jewish community high school in Vancouver, scheduled to open in 2005. In the fall, York University began to offer courses in Yiddish. York hosted the first Limmud Festival of Jewish Learning in November.

**Community and Intergroup Relations**

In a case that divided the Jewish community, the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in June that Orthodox Jews living in a condominium building in Montreal had a right to erect their own sukkot on their balconies during the holiday, despite condominium rules governing the use of balconies. The court, declaring that sincerely held religious belief must be respected, overturned a Quebec Court of Appeal affirmation of a trial court ruling that was based on conflicting rabbinic testimony as to whether a religious
Jew was obliged to set up his or her own sukkah. B’nai Brith’s League for Human Rights lauded the decision as “a landmark ruling that upholds the right of all Canadians to follow their religious practices without interference by the courts.”

BBC and CJC both praised the Assembly of First Nations for rejecting the candidacy of David Ahenakew for a committee studying democratic reform of the AFN. Ahenakew, a former aboriginal leader, made headlines with an anti-Semitic diatribe in 2002 (see AJYB 2003, pp. 314–15).

The Ontario provincial government took up the question of amending its Arbitration Act to allow Islamic tribunals to use sharia (Islamic law) to decide cases when the parties voluntarily submitted to its jurisdiction. Jewish organizations were invited to submit their views to former attorney general Marion Boyd, who was assigned to review the use of religious courts. Such Jewish courts, bettei din, had functioned under the act in the past. BBC president Harold Davis, stressing that point, advocated recognition of the Islamic religious courts as well.

Marc Attali, Israel’s consul-general in Montreal, and CJC regional executive director David Birnbaum walked out of an interfaith ceremony honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in January after a Muslim journalist used his speaking opportunity to condemn Israel. Attali said that Yahya Abdul Rahman took political advantage of the situation in a way that was inconsistent with the spirit of the occasion.

Religious leaders from several faiths convened in the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Center in July to pray for the victims of genocide in Sudan. Rev. Darryl Grey said that “as a community of faith we have a responsibility to be the conscience to government,” while Rabbi Reuben Poupko denounced an apathy reflecting “a double-edged racism” that is indifferent to victims while not demanding enough of perpetrators.

The Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism, in cooperation with Jews for Jesus, sponsored a conference in April in Toronto on new strategies to convert Jews. Leaders of so-called messianic Jewish movements from throughout the Americas attended. Andrew Barron of Jews for Jesus told the conference that the operation in Canada “is small, but we’re getting the gospel heard more than ever.”

A complaint by a Jewish high-school student in the fall led the Toronto District School Board to reconsider its guidelines for teachers so as to ensure that sensitive material would be handled in a fair and balanced way. The student reported that a school presentation had ended with a poem about oppression of Palestinians by Israelis.
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) ran an outdoor exhibit, "Holocaust on Your Plate," in Montreal and Ottawa, and later tried to display it in Toronto, but officials turned down the request. The exhibition compared the treatment of abused livestock to the suffering of Jews in Nazi death camps. Jewish groups found the display offensive because it blurred the uniqueness of the Holocaust and trivialized the experience of European Jews. Furthermore, the utilization of photographic images from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum violated the museum's rules.

Culture

Daniel Goldfarb's new play, Modern Orthodox, opened in New York in December. Comment devenir une mère juive en 10 leçons (How to Become a Jewish Mother in Ten Easy Lessons) by Paul Fuks had its Canadian premiere in June as one of the highlights of the biennial Quinzaine Sépharade de Montréal cultural festival. In Toronto, there was a Sabbath-observant theater company, Pushover Productions, making it possible for observant Jews to participate in theatrical performances.

Rosalind Rabbatz's and Iris Wagner's film, Inspiring Figure: The Louis Rubenstein Story, about a Montrealer who was a world-class figure-skating champion, premiered in Montreal in May. Mr. Mergler's Gift, directed by Beverly Shaffer, telling the story of a dying Jewish piano teacher and his last student, premiered in Montreal in September. John L'Ecuyer produced a television film about a Holocaust survivor in Montreal who became the country's most famous advocate for abortion rights and spent time in prison for it. Titled Choice: The Henry Morgentaler Story, it first aired in December.

Among the films at Hot Docs, the documentary film festival held in Toronto in April and May, were several submissions from Israel, including Checkpoint by Yoav Shamir, No. 17 by David Ofek, and My Family's Pizza by Ronen Amar.

Canadian entries at the Toronto Jewish Film Festival in May included Nobody Swings on Sunday by Harry Rasky; My Father's Camera and My Grandparents Had a Hotel by Karen Shopsowitz; Montreal Jewish Memories: Stories of the War Years 1939–45 by Dov Okunéff; Impact of Terror by Tim Wolochatiuk; The Bund by Andrea Feder and Carolina May; and The Chosen People by Igal Hecht. Numerous Israeli films were shown at both the Toronto and Montreal Jewish Film Festivals. Behind Enemy Lines by Dov Gil-Har had its world premiere in Toronto.
An Israeli film, *The Syrian Bride*, by Eran Riklis and Suha Arraf, won the top prize at the Montreal World Film Festival in September. The Canadian-Israeli-German film *Metallic Blues* by Danny Verete was also screened in Montreal. Anita Doron’s *Elliot Smellow* was shown at the Toronto International Film Festival in September.

Two new dramas about the Holocaust were produced in March, both in Toronto: Jonathan Garfinkel’s play *The Trials of John Demjanjuk: A Holocaust Cabaret* and Robert Majzels’s *This Night*.

Martin Himel’s documentary *Jenin: Massacring Truth*, airing on Global TV in April, refuted war-crimes accusations against Israel. Tim Southam’s *A Spy’s Life: Kitty Harris*, shown on History Television in October, told about a Jewish woman from Winnipeg who worked as a spy in Europe for the Soviet Union during the Stalin era. *The Other Zionists* by Eric Scott was screened at the National Film Board in October and then shown on television. Its depiction of Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank created some controversy. While Scott believed that he was trying to get Israel to live up to its ideals, Université du Québec political scientist Julien Bauer saw the film as “a remarkable propaganda weapon against Israel.”

A Jewish museum was to be built in downtown Montreal on land donated by the city. The expected opening was set for 2007. The museum would relate the Jewish experience in Canada, chronicling the contributions that Jews made to society. A cochair of the museum committee, Herschel Segal, said that “we have an uplifting story to tell about struggle, adaptation, and success.”

The late Max Stern was an influential patron of contemporary Canadian art. Paintings from his collection were exhibited at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and at Concordia University beginning in September. The university established a visual arts building with its bequest from his estate; other beneficiaries were the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and McGill University.

McGill hosted an academic symposium in March on Mordecai Richler’s literary legacy. Among the questions addressed was why Richler’s work was not generally included in courses on Canadian literature, which Prof. Neil Besner of the University of Winnipeg thought had to with Richler being “too raw, too apt to jangle sensitivities.” In March, Concordia University held a symposium on “New Readings of Yiddish Montreal” that featured an appearance by the acclaimed Yiddish writer Chava Rosenfarb and a tribute to her life’s work. She also participated in a panel discussion in April at Concordia and expressed doubts about
whether Holocaust literature could adequately convey what happened, saying: “Even for a person like myself . . . what I write is only an echo of the reality.”

The Miles Nadal Jewish Community Center in Toronto hosted its first annual Yiddish seminar in August, which included intensive introductory language instruction as well as more advanced literary analysis. York University opened a Web museum, Mosaica, in June, devoted to contemporary Jewish art and culture.

Publications

Michael Greenstein published *Contemporary Jewish Writing in Canada: An Anthology*. It offered readers access to many different types of literature, including translations from French and Yiddish, short stories, and excerpts from novels. Greenstein’s introductory essay gave added coherence to a valuable collection.

One of the country’s best-known writers, Peter Newman, produced his memoir, *Here Be Dragons: Telling Tales of People, Passion and Power*. Newman’s journalistic career gave him access to most of the movers and shakers who shaped Canada over the previous half century.

Chava Rosenfarb’s *Survivors: Seven Short Stories* was translated by her daughter, Goldie Morgentaler. The stories all involved the struggle to adapt and adjust after the Holocaust.


Paul Charles Merkley stressed the positive role of evangelicals and expressed skepticism about the mainstream denominations in *Christian Attitudes towards the State of Israel*. Other nonfiction works included a

Works of fiction included David Bezmozgis's *Natasha and Other Stories*; *The Master* by Colin Toibin; *The Singing Fire* by Lillian Nattel; *The Mermaid of Paris* by Cary Fagan; *The Last Light of the Sun* by Guy Gavriel Kay; *Gotz and Meyer* by David Albahari; *The Innocent Traitor* by Eric Rill; *Les contes des mille et une ères* by Oro Anahory-Librowicz; and *Look for Me* by Edeet Ravel. Books of poetry included *Borrowed Light* by Merle Nudelman; *Mask* by Elana Wolff; *At the Moonbeam Café* by Malca Litowitz; *A Day's Grace: Poems 1997–2002* by Robyn Sarah, *In the Worshipful Company of Skinners* by Endre Farkas; and *Foreplay* by Seymour Mayne and Christal Steck.

In December, noted Montreal writer Nairn Kattan was awarded the Prix Athanase-David, the Quebec government's highest distinction for achievement in the arts.


**Personalia**

The following were appointed to the Order of Canada: companions—Avie Bennett and Martin Friedland; officers—David Bercuson, Irving Schwartz, William Weintraub, and Royden Rabinowitch; members—
Manuel Batshaw, Jonathan Wener, Abraham Arnold, Arthur Drache, Rabbi Lawrence Englander, Sidney Aversion Katz, Harry Rosen, and Morton Brownstein. Bernard Shapiro, Samuel O. Freedman, and Jean-Charles Chebat were named to the Ordre National du Québec. Shapiro was also named ethics commissioner for the federal government. Sam Katz was elected mayor of Winnipeg and Stephen Mandel mayor of Edmonton. Alan Baker succeeded Haim Divon as ambassador of Israel to Canada. Jack Silverstone left his position as CJC executive vice president to become chief of staff to a federal minister. Michael Goldbloom became publisher of Canada's largest daily newspaper, the Toronto Star. Prof. Jim Torczyner of McGill University won two prizes for his work toward building peace in Middle East, the award for innovation in international education from the Canadian Bureau for International Education, and the Jordanian Red Crescent's gold medal for outstanding achievement in the humanitarian field. Adam Sol won Ontario's Trillium Prize for his poetry.

Ed Morgan and Victor Goldbloom were named, respectively, president and chair of the national executive of CJC. Marc Gold became national chair of CIC. Others who assumed leadership positions included Neil Duboff, president of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg; Rose Lax, president of Herut-Likud Canada; Mark Rosen, president of the Atlantic Jewish Council; Ronald Appleby, president of Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University; David Bensoussan, president of the Communauté Sèpharade du Québec; Arthur Silber, president of ORT Canada; Jay Brodbar, president of the New Israel Fund; Jack Silverstein, director of the UIA in Ottawa; and Jeffrey Boro and Joel Richler, presidents of CJC, Quebec Region and Ontario Region, respectively.

Members of the community who died this year included Bernie Offstein, in January, aged 64, an official of Maccabi Canada; noted Yiddishist and cultural pioneer Sara Rosenfeld, in January, aged 83; distinguished writer and poet Miriam Waddington, in March, aged 86; innovative film executive Nat Taylor, in March, aged 98; environmentalist Tooker Gomberg, in March, aged 48; writer Sheldon Oberman, in March, aged 54; Harry Mayerovitch, architect and illustrator, in April, aged 94; Benjamin Schneider, former federation executive, in April, aged 92; journalist Jerry Gladman, in June, aged 61; philanthropist Alexander Dworkin, in June, aged 94; lawyer and organizational leader David Litner, in June, aged 96; community activist and lay leader Anne Romoff Gross, in July, aged 89; Hungarian community leader Rabbi Miklos Schnurmacher, in July, aged 87; renowned classics scholar Paolo Vivante,
in July, aged 81; community leader Hyman Soloway, in July, aged 90; former MP and senator Jack Marshall, in August, aged 84; chiropractor Michael Brickman, in August, aged 39; federation executive Gerry Koffman, in September, aged 54; philanthropist and community leader Lily Silver, in September, aged 85; health care fund-raiser Gloria Shapiro, in September, aged 49; retired cantor Joseph Cooper, in October, aged 81; psychiatrist and Holocaust chronicler Mina Deutsch, in October, aged 92; entrepreneur and community leader John Fienberg, in October, aged 87; community activist Thelma Steinman, in November, aged 92; developer and philanthropist Harold Green, in November, aged 78; retired camp director John Bernstein, in November, aged 86; pediatric neurosurgeon Harold Hoffman, in November, aged 72; restaurant owner Jerry Silverberg, in November, aged 58; builder, philanthropist, and community leader Max Sharp, in December, aged 102; and baseball book collector and mathematician Morris Liebovitz, in December, aged 69.

Harold M. Waller