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CANADIAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

FOUNDED BY SAUL HAYES, O.C., Q.C., LL.D., F.R.S.A.
FIRST EDITOR LOUIS ROSENBERG, F.R. Econ.S., F.S.S.

SPECIAL ISSUE

Forgetfulness leads to Holocaust;
Remembering is the root of redemption.
(Baal Shem Tov)

BREAKING NEW GROUND

The Struggle for a Jewish Chaplaincy in Canada

by
Rabbi S. Gershon Levi

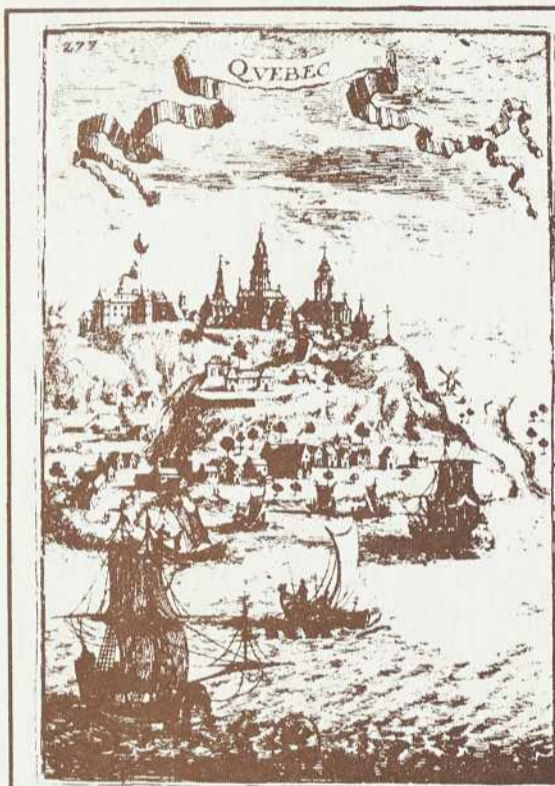
edited by
David Golinkin

National Archives
Canadian Jewish Congress

Montreal, Canada
1994

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CANADIAN JEWISH ARCHIVES - Serial Publications

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This hors-série special issue is edited by Prof. David Golinkin, Seminary of Judaic Studies, Jerusalem,
with production assistance by Janice Rosen.

Contents

Frontispiece (Figure 1)	ii
Preface by Janice Rosen	iii
Introduction	iv
Words of Tribute	x
Rabbi Dr. Isaac B. Rose	
Lady Elsie Janner	
Illustration Credits	xiii
Abbreviations	xiv

PART ONE WITHOUT PRECEDENT

1. Prologue	1
2. In the Beginning	4
3. A Struggle for Power	12
4. The Numbers Game	19
5. The Air Force Takes Off	26
6. More Chaplains	31
7. A Question of Rank	36

Illustrations (Figures 2-17)	
--	--

PART TWO FINDING A SCATTERED FLOCK

8. A Jew Among Gentiles	40
9. Goals and Means	45
10. <i>A Mare Usque ad Mare</i>	47
11. With the Army Overseas	52
*12. Soldiers and Their Problems	
*13. Hoofprints of the Holocaust	
*14. "A Very Small Barrel"	
*15. The Boys Plant a Grove	
*16. Journey's End	

Appendix A: Two Letters Written by Rabbi Levi in 1944	60
Appendix B: An Interview with Rabbi Levi Shortly after World War II	65
Appendix C: An Interview with Rabbi Samuel Cass in April, 1946	68
Notes	77
Index	97

* These chapters were planned but not written before the author's death.



Frontispiece

Fig. 1: Major S. Gershon Levi (1908-1990). Senior Jewish Chaplain in the Canadian Army. [p. 1, note 2]

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Preface

The *Canadian Jewish Archives* series was originally the work of Louis Rosenberg who produced six volumes between 1955 and 1962. The series was revived in 1974 under the authorship of David Rome as the *Canadian Jewish Archives* (new series) which continues to appear until today.

Rabbi Gershon Levi is our first "guest author" and a very appropriate one for this series, which focuses on the telling of Canadian Jewish history through archival documentation, enhanced by the recollections of those immediately involved in the events discussed.

The subject of this book is, in an important sense, a Canadian Jewish Congress story, as the establishment of the Jewish chaplaincy occurred in no small measure as a result of lobbying by this organization. However, beyond this, it is a story about the war years for all Jewish Canadians, a story that comes the closest of any publication yet to explaining how the experiences of Jewish servicemen are part and parcel of Canadian Jewish history. This story needs to be told to satisfy public demand. In the months during which this volume was in preparation, everyone with an interest in this time period requested a copy of the book as soon as they had heard about it.

I met Rabbi Levi only once, in October 1987. I was then a contract worker at the Canadian Jewish Congress Archives, and he was researching *Breaking New Ground*. At that time, I knew of the chaplaincy service exclusively through the Congress photo collection. The War Efforts Committee records, occupying two dozen boxes in the lower vault, had yet to be catalogued. It was clear that Rabbi Levi had a lot more to teach us at that time than we could teach him.

Since that time the boxes have been catalogued, and await further use by interested researchers. But the files themselves cannot tell the entire story. Rabbi Levi's account is an essential component of any serious study of the Canadian Jewish war effort, both in and of itself, and in its social context.

We are grateful to Dr. David Golinkin, Dean of the Seminary of Judaic Studies in Jerusalem, who approached us about publishing this book and edited the book despite all of the geographic obstacles involved. We are also grateful to the family of Rabbi Levi for the financial assistance which made the publication of this book possible.

Janice Rosen
Archives Director
Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives
Montreal, July 1994

Introduction

Rabbi Samuel Gershon Levi (1908-1990) was born in Toronto, Canada, the seventh of ten children.¹ He studied at various public schools in Toronto, yet his parents, Paul and Minnie Levi, also saw to it that he received a thorough Jewish education. In an interview published a number of years ago, Rabbi Levi recalled how he acquired his Talmudic education:

Father sent me to learn Talmud with a well-known rabbi - Rabbi Judah Leib Gordon was his name. He had lost his eyesight and was unable to read. I read to him and he taught me Talmud from his wonderful memory...I studied with him for years from high school through my years at the university. It was an unforgettable experience.²

But Gershon did not stop at Talmud. He wanted to study Hebrew grammar and literature. Fortunately, a Hebrew teacher arrived from The Land of Israel during World War I and from him Gershon learned Hebrew grammar, conversation, and literature.²

Rabbi Levi earned a B.A. from the University of Toronto in 1929 and was ordained rabbi by The Jewish Theological Seminary in 1933. He also studied Jewish History at Columbia University, where he received an M.A. in 1932 and did all the course work towards his Ph.D.

His career and accomplishments can be divided into five major areas:

First of all, Rabbi Levi was a devoted educator. Between 1936 and 1941, he served as educational director of Sha'ar Hashamayim, the leading Conservative congregation in Montreal. In 1951, he returned to education as Director of Camp Ramah in the Poconos, and during the sixties he served as Dean of the Cantorial School of The Jewish Theological Seminary.

Secondly, Rabbi Levi served as the first Jewish chaplain in Canadian history (1941-46). He later became Senior Jewish Chaplain and served in Europe for four years, retiring with the rank of Major. This book is his memoir of those turbulent years of service.

In addition, Rabbi Levi was a successful congregational rabbi. After the war, he was chosen as rabbi of the Jamaica Jewish Center in Queens, New York, where he served with distinction for twenty-five years (1947-1972).³ Upon his retirement, he was elected Rabbi Emeritus, and he and his wife Shonie moved to Jerusalem.

However, Rabbi Levi was not only a rabbi and an educator. He also devoted himself to the needs of the community on a volunteer basis. He devoted many years of service to the Rabbinical Assembly of the Conservative Movement, serving as Treasurer (1957-65), President (1970-72) and Chairman of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards (1972-73). In 1972, during his tenure as President, the Rabbinical Assembly held its annual convention in Israel for the first time. Rabbi Levi spoke to the convention in Hebrew and called on the Conservative Movement to support the Masorti Movement in Israel which was then in its infancy.⁴

Finally, Rabbi Levi was a gifted editor, linguist, and translator. In the 1930s, he served on the editorial board of the *The Canadian Zionist*. In the sixties (1965-69), he served as editor of *Conservative Judaism* magazine, which he upgraded by soliciting contributions from H.L. Ginsberg, H.Z. Dimitrovsky, and other scholars. He also published there translations of Hebrew and Yiddish stories, including some which he himself translated into English. As a result, the number of subscribers doubled during his tenure as editor.⁵ In 1984, he edited *Barnett Janner: A Personal Portrait*, a biography of the influential British MP and Zionist written by his widow, Lady Elsie Janner.

Rabbi Levi was also an accomplished linguist. He was fluent in English, Hebrew, French, Yiddish, and Arabic, and I believe that he read Greek and German as well. He worked for many years on the Bar Ilan Dictionary Project in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, under the guidance of Prof. Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, and thereby made an important contribution to Hebrew lexicography.

Last, but not least, Rabbi Levi was a first-rate translator and it is in that field that he will be best remembered. Already in the sixties he began to dabble in translation. In the spring of 1966 he translated Chaim Grade's story "King Solomon and the Commisar" from the Yiddish and published it in *Conservative Judaism*.⁶ He once told me that in that connection he went to visit Chaim Grade in New York and they had a lengthy discussion in Yiddish and in Hebrew.

However, Rabbi Levi's three major translations were carried out after his Aliyah in 1972 and they point to his wide interests and knowledge in the fields of Hebrew literature, Bible, and Jewish history. The first was *Gates of Brass*, one of the masterworks of Haim Hazzaz which was published by the Jewish Publication Society in 1973.⁷ The second was *The Ten Commandments in History and Tradition*, a collection of contemporary Israeli scholarship on that topic published by Hebrew University's Magnes Press. That book appeared in 1990, a short while after Gershon's death.

But Rabbi Levi's *magnum opus*, to which he devoted over ten years of labor, was Gedaliah Alon's *The Jews in their Land in the Talmudic Age*, which was published in hardcover by Magnes Press and in softcover by Harvard University Press. This book, however, is much more than a translation. Rabbi Levi edited the two volumes from scratch, checked and rechecked the thousands of sources quoted in the book, corrected many errors found in the Hebrew original, prepared the indices, and even wrote an introduction assessing Alon's contributions to Jewish historiography. As a result, the English translation is a rare commodity - a translation which is an improvement upon the original. Now English-speaking Jews and non-Jewish scholars are able to enjoy the scholarship of Gedaliah Alon, while Hebrew readers are able to benefit from Rabbi Levi's numerous corrections. The critics praised the book highly⁸ and there is no doubt that it will become one of the standard texts in Jewish Studies.

* * *

I had the privilege of meeting Gershon for the first time in 1975 when I became engaged to Chana Rotenberg, his sister Mattie's granddaughter. Over the years we saw each other on a regular basis and I learned the truth of the rabbinic statement: "Even the casual conversation of a scholar bears careful study" (Avodah Zarah 19b). I simply enjoyed talking with Gershon because every time we did I learned something - whether it was a Yiddish joke, a family anecdote or a new insight into Jewish history or Hebrew etymology. Every time we spoke, I was amazed anew at his wonderful memory, his sense of humor, his wide knowledge, and his love of Judaism.

I saw Gershon for the last time in Toronto in 1990 where we were spending the year on Sabbatical. He visited us and the conversation was lively, as usual. He updated me about his memoir of the Canadian Chaplaincy which he was trying to complete and he related some fascinating stories from that period as only he could. We spoke at length and, as always, I enjoyed every minute. I did not imagine that we would not meet again. "Alas, for those who are lost and not found" (Sanhedrin 111a). **יהי זכרו ברוך!** May his memory be a blessing!

* * *

Towards the end of his life, Rabbi Levi invested all of his remaining strength in *Breaking New Ground*, a memoir of his five years in the Canadian Chaplaincy. When he passed away on April 5, 1990 (10 Nissan 5750), the book was only two-thirds completed, yet after reading it, I decided it deserved to see the light of day since it is, as yet, the only history of the Canadian Jewish Chaplaincy.⁹ Furthermore, it was his fervent desire to see

the book published and, according to the Talmud (Ta'anit 21a), it is a *mitzvah* to fulfill the wish of the deceased.

Rabbi Levi based the book on his prodigious memory as well as on letters and documents found in the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa and in the National Archives of the Canadian Jewish Congress in Montreal. Unfortunately, very few notes or xeroxed documents were found after his death. Therefore, I had to edit the book from scratch. I tried not to tamper with Rabbi Levi's unique, personable writing style. I supplied all of the notes in which I attempted to indicate every document quoted and to identify every person mentioned in the book. I am happy to say that we were able to find most of the original documents in Ottawa and Montreal, except for those pertaining to the Air Force in Chapter 5 which have yet to be located. Since Rabbi Levi was not able to write the chapters about his experience on the continent after D-Day, I have added three appendices to give the readers an idea of his activities there. Appendix A contains two letters written by Rabbi Levi from Belgium. Appendix B contains an English synopsis of a series of interviews with Rabbi Levi which appeared in Yiddish in the *Keneder Adler* (Montreal *Jewish Daily Eagle*) after the war. Appendix C contains an English translation of a series of interviews with Rabbi Samuel Cass, Rabbi Levi's good friend and fellow chaplain, which appeared in the *Adler* in April of 1946. The final product is certainly not as good as if Rabbi Levi had lived to see the completion of the book, but it is, nonetheless, an important contribution to Canadian Jewish history which will greatly assist future historians.

In conclusion, it is my pleasant duty to thank all of the people who rendered assistance in preparing this book for publication. Dr. Stephen Speisman, Director of the Canadian Jewish Congress Ontario Region Archives, read Rabbi Levi's manuscript and encouraged me to have it published. My secretaries, Ellen Cohen and, later, Iris Weinfeld, typed and retyped the entire manuscript and all of the footnotes with infinite good cheer. Hani Davis proofread the entire manuscript and caught many errors which had escaped my attention. Maureen Richardson reset the book in its final camera-ready form. My research assistant in Ottawa, Faydra Shapira, spent many hours tracking down the documents quoted by Rabbi Levi and also supplied some of the biographies of the people mentioned in the book. Dr. Vickie Levi, Rabbi Levi's daughter, bore the costs of research and thereby fulfilled the commandment of honoring one's father after his death (see Kiddushin 31b). Rabbi Levi's good friends, Lady Elsie Janner and Rabbi Dr. Isaac B. Rose, were kind enough to contribute words of tribute. Shonie Levi, Rabbi Levi's widow, Rabbi Rose and Janice Rosen, National Archives Director of the Canadian Jewish Congress, supplied most of the illustrations. Janice and her staff graciously assisted us in locating documents and

supplying biographical information.¹⁰ She was also a constant source of encouragement and saw the book through the press in Montreal. Finally, my father-in-law, David Rotenberg, rendered various types of assistance. To all of these people, my heartfelt thanks.

David Golinkin
Jerusalem, Israel
March 22, 1994
10 Nissan, 5754

Notes

1. Regarding Rabbi Levi, see Rome, Vol. I, pp. 18-20; *World Jewish Register 1955/56*, p. 668; *Who's Who in World Jewry*, 1965, p.572; Nadell, pp. 173-174; *The New York Times*, April 6, 1990, p. A20; *The Canadian Jewish News*, June 28, 1990, p.4; Rabbi Theodore Friedman, *PRA*, Vol. 52 (1990), pp. 238-239.
 2. *Yisrael Shelanu* (in Hebrew), Sept. 20, 1985, p. 40.
 3. For a few vignettes from those years, see Letty Cottin Pogrebin, *Deborah, Golda and Me: Being Female and Jewish in America*, New York, 1991, pp.26-27, 35, 84-86 and 111.
 4. *Beineinu*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 1973), pp. 26-32.
 5. See *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly*, Vol. 33 (1969), p. 50.
 6. See *Conservative Judaism*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Spring 1966), pp. 18-23. For another short translation by Rabbi Levi, see *Judaism*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Spring 1974), pp. 135-149.
 7. See *Conservative Judaism*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Summer 1973), pp. 66-67 where Rabbi Levi explains why he chose to translate *Gates of Brass*.
 8. See note 2 above as well as Daniel Sperber, *Ariel*, No. 53 (1983), pp. 133-134 and David Berger, *The New York Times Book Review*, July 30, 1989, p. 21.
 9. The only previous effort is that of Stuart Rosenberg in *The Jewish Community in Canada*, Vol. 2, Toronto, 1971, pp. 94-97 and 217 and all of the information there was "supplied by Rabbi S. Gershon Levi". For additional information, see the interviews reprinted below in Appendices B and C as well as the articles describing a dinner given in honor of all the Canadian Jewish chaplains which appeared in the *Keneder Adler*, March 14, 1946, p. 5; March 21, 1946, p. 1; and March 24, 1946, p. 5 (in Yiddish).
- By comparison, there are many memoirs and books about American Jewish chaplains during World War II. See, for example, Louis Barish, *Rabbis in Uniform*, New York, 1962; Philip Bernstein, *Rabbis at War*, Waltham, Mass., 1971; and Alex Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame: American Jewish Chaplains and the Survivors of European Jewry 1944-1948*, Detroit, 1992.
10. Most unattributed biographical information was supplied by Janice Rosen and her staff.

Words of Tribute

The Jews of Canada owe a great debt to Rabbi Gershon Levi for his pioneering leadership in the creation of a corps of Jewish chaplains to serve Jewish servicemen in Canada and overseas during World War II. It was hardly an easy task. It was a never-ending struggle against bureaucratic and entrenched interest-groups who failed, at first, to recognize the importance of providing religious and moral support to the thousands of gallant men and women engaged in the struggle against Hitler and the Nazis.

Rabbi (Major) Levi devoted the best part of five years to the development of this group of volunteer rabbis who served as an arm of the Canadian Jewish community. Their prime task was to keep alive the spark of Jewish identity of men and women in the Army, Navy, and Air Force of Canada - spread as they were over a vast number of stations in Canada and overseas.

As a former Canadian Army chaplain who served on the Pacific Coast, England, Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany, I can personally testify to the important role which Major Levi played in the formation of the Canadian Jewish Chaplaincy and its successful record of service. He was the determined leader who labored tirelessly, far from home and family, unsparing of his health, to ensure that Jewish personnel should enjoy the warmth and friendliness of the Jewish "padre", whose visits and regular contacts brought a measure of hope for the future. The rabbi in uniform personified Jewish ideals. He was, often, the sole link between the soldier and his wife and family - between the Jewish people struggling to regain its homeland and the Jewish soldier fighting against the most bitter enemy in Jewish history.

There was another role which the Canadian Jewish chaplain serving overseas was fated to play - to help in the rescue and rehabilitation of *She'erit Hapleita*, the pitiful remnant of European Jewry who miraculously had survived the Nazi Holocaust. Recalling my own experiences in Italy and the Netherlands, I can testify that the efforts of Jewish chaplains under Major Levi's leadership were greatly instrumental in providing both material and spiritual aid to survivors in many lands. They gave significant help in re-establishing Jewish community life in cities and towns by opening up synagogues and Jewish centers and by rebuilding the demolished structure of Jewish life. Equally important was their involvement in the so-called "illegal" Aliya to Palestine - for those thousands who chose to start a new life in freedom and who could not return permanently to lands whose soil was soaked in the blood of their dear ones.

Of Gershon Levi's life one can truly say that it was "bound up in the bond of life". He was instrumental in providing the true meaning of Jewish life to individuals and groups as the founder of the Jewish chaplaincy corps, and thus earned for himself an honorable and unforgettable place in the history of the Canadian Jewish community.

יהי זכרו ברוך!

May the memory of his contributions to life serve all of us as a blessing.

Rabbi Dr. Isaac B. Rose
Jerusalem, Israel

Gershon Levi, who has died in his home in Jerusalem in his 82nd year, was well known in England during the Second World War when he was Senior Jewish Chaplain to the Canadian Forces.

Born in Toronto, Canada, he was educated at the University of Toronto, Columbia University, and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. At the outbreak of war, he was Educational Director at the Sha'ar Hashamayim Synagogue in Montreal. He was later appointed Senior Jewish Chaplain. After a year, in 1942, he was posted to C.M.H.Q. in London.

As a chaplain, he had the usual duties - arranging services for his men, performing marriages, and also, alas, funerals. But what made Gershon Levi stand out was his humanity. No problem of his men was too small or too large for him. He took endless trouble to solve their difficulties. Many hundreds of men just called in to have the pleasure of seeing him and having a chat at his office in Trafalgar Square. For this, and much more, he was awarded the M.B.E.

After the war, he was Rabbi to the Jamaica Jewish Center, New York, and became much respected in the international Progressive and Conservative communities.

My family was close friends with him since my children, Greville and Ruth, were evacuated to Montreal during the war and lived next door to the Synagogue. He never lost his endearing knack of communicating with all ages. Thus, four generations of our family mourn his loss.

Gershon's outstanding quality was his modesty. A distinguished academic, his knowledge of the Bible and most other subjects was phenomenal. His Hebrew was perfect, and many people considered that he was the best translator from Hebrew into English in Israel. He had three books published and was in a small team writing a dictionary at Bar Ilan University.

A brilliant, lovable man of humility has gone to his rest.

The Lady Janner, C.B.E.
London, England
April, 1990

Illustration Credits

- Fig. 1: Shonie Levi
- Fig. 2: Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, Montreal, DA 18.1, Box 9, File 14
- Fig. 3: Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, Montreal, DA 18.1 (supplementary), Box 22, File 28
- Fig. 4: The Canadian Jewish Chronicle, March 20, 1942, p. 6
- Fig. 5: Shonie Levi
- Fig. 6: Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, Montreal, photo PC1-6-596
- Fig. 7: Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, Montreal, photo PC1-1-33F
- Fig. 8: Rabbi Dr. Isaac B. (Bert) Rose
- Fig. 9: Rabbi Dr. Isaac B. (Bert) Rose
- Fig. 10: Rabbi Dr. Isaac B. (Bert) Rose
- Fig. 11: Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, Montreal, photo PC1-1-33H
- Fig. 12: National Archives of Canada, MG30 E252
- Fig. 13: Rabbi Dr. Isaac B. (Bert) Rose
- Fig. 14: Rabbi Dr. Isaac B. (Bert) Rose
- Fig. 15: Shonie Levi
- Fig. 16: Shonie Levi
- Fig. 17: Canadian Army Photo, Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, Montreal, photo PC1-1-33C.1

Abbreviations

(A) = Active

A.A.G. = Assistant Adjutant General

Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours* = Irving Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada*, Toronto, 1990

Abella and Troper = Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948*, Toronto, 1982

ADM. = Administration

A.F.H.Q. = Air Force Headquarters

A.G. = Adjutant General

A.M.P. = Air Member for Personnel

C.A. = Canadian Army

Canadian Biography = Stewart Wallace, ed., *The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Fourth Edition, Toronto, 1978

Canadian Who's Who = A.L. Tunnell, ed., *The Canadian Who's Who*, Toronto, Vols. II-X, 1936-1966

C.A.S.F. = Canadian Active Service Forces

C.B.E. = Commander, Order of the British Empire

C.E.F. = Canadian Expeditionary Force in World War I

C.G.R.U. = Canadian General Reinforcement Unit

CJC = The Canadian Jewish Congress

C.M.H.Q. = Canadian Military Headquarters in London

C.O. = Commanding Officer

Congress = The Canadian Jewish Congress

C.R.U. = Canadian Reinforcement Units

- C.W.A.C. = Canadian Women's Army Corps
- D.A.A.G. = Deputy Assistant Adjutant General
- D.A.G. = Deputy Adjutant General
- D.F.C. = Distinguished Flying Cross
- D.O.C. = District Officer Commanding
- D.S.O. = Distinguished Service Order
- EJ* = *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 16 Volumes, Jerusalem, 1972
- H/ = Honorary
- H.M. = His Majesty's
- H.Q. = Headquarters
- (J) = Jewish
- M.B.E. = Member of the British Empire
- M.C. = Military Cross
- M.D. = Military District
- M.P. = Member of Parliament
- M.S. = Military Secretary
- Nadell = Pamela Nadell, *Conservative Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook*, New York, Westport Connecticut and London, 1988
- N.C.O. = Non-Commissioned Officer
- N.D.H.Q. = National Defence Headquarters
- NNR = National Nominal Role (of Jews enlisted in the C.A.S.F.)
- N.W.R. = National War Records
- (O) = Overseas
- O.B.E. = Order of the British Empire

O.C. = Officer Commanding

O.S. = Overseas

O.T.C. = Officers Training Course

(P) = Protestant

P.C. = Principal Chaplain

P.C.O.S. = Principal Chaplain Overseas

PRA = Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly

(R) = Reserve

R.A.F. = Royal Air Force

R.C.A.F. = Royal Canadian Air Force

Rome = David Rome, ed., *Canadian Jews in World War II*, Vols. I-II, Montreal, 1947-48

UJE = Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 10 Volumes, New York 1939-43

UNRRA = United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration

Who's Who 1964 = Eli Gottesman, ed., *Who's Who in Canadian Jewry*, Ottawa, 1964

Who's Who 1965 = Eli Gottesman, ed., *Who's Who in Canadian Jewry*, Ottawa, 1965

PART ONE

WITHOUT PRECEDENT

1. PROLOGUE

The porter on the night train from Montreal to Toronto wanted to make up my berth, so I headed for the smoking compartment, where I found two men deep in conversation. It was obvious they were Torontonians, returning home from a business trip. I sat down on the one remaining seat and lit my pipe. It was early in the spring of 1941.

My fellow travellers were well-dressed, educated men. They were talking about a public lecture by a professor at my Alma Mater, the University of Toronto.¹ Then they turned to what they had seen in Montreal. "Did you notice all that steel going into construction? They don't seem to know there's a war on." "And all those healthy-looking young men in civvies." "Why hadn't they joined up in Canada's volunteer army? And where were the Jews?" "There ought to be at least one regiment of Jews from Montreal. Hell, there's a million Jews in the Province of Quebec." Suddenly the speaker looked across at me. "What do you think, padre?"

The black buttons on my uniform showed him that I was an army chaplain. He could scarcely have been expected to notice that they were a little different - a six point star rather than the usual Maltese Cross.² Besides, even if he had noticed, it would probably not have meant anything to him, since these were the only insignia of their kind in all of Canada, and I had been wearing them for no more than a few weeks. He seemed to think he could assume I was not a Jew, since I was in uniform, so there was no risk of embarrassment. Obviously, I was one of theirs.

I leaned forward and held out the lapel of my tunic, with its black badge. "You've come to the right address. I'm a Jewish chaplain." If they were embarrassed, they were too well-bred to show it. I quoted the Dominion census. In all of Canada there were slightly more than 160,000 Jews.³ And if we were a million in Quebec, that would not leave very much room for the French and the English, would it? The two men listened politely and soon retired to their berths.

It would have been more satisfying if I could have cited the fact that Jews were enlisting in proportionately greater numbers than others were. But I couldn't - because I had no hard information yet; it would take me some time to find out that nobody else did,

either. I was to spend a considerable portion of the next five years looking for the actual figures - and thereby hangs a tale.

But what I said to the two men in the smoking compartment scarcely matters at this remove in time. What the episode does reveal is some of the problems faced by Canadian Jewry at the beginning of World War II.

In spite of the Jewish farming settlements in Saskatchewan and Alberta, the Jews were a preponderantly urban element, and therefore highly visible. The pervasive myth about their great numbers was deeply rooted, and often impervious to fact. Not long before the war the novelist Theodore Dreiser had written that there were "10 million" Jews in the United States.⁴

Add to that the fact that Hitler's propaganda had been pushing the Jews front and center. Obviously, their role in the war was special. Somehow, both isolationists and patriots in the general population took it for granted that Jews were not enlisting in the armed forces at a time when active service was still completely voluntary. I found handwritten notes on Montreal streetcars: "C'est une guerre juive."⁵ (The implication: it's no concern of ours). The opposite view was represented by my fellow passengers in the smoking compartment. (The Jews have a stake in this war - so why do they leave the fighting to us?)

But really, why was there no Jewish chaplain until more than a year and a half after Canada declared war on the Nazis? Thereby hangs another tale, some details of which I was not to learn until almost half-a-century later as I burrowed through the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa, and those of the Canadian Jewish Congress in Montreal, prodded by a rereading of the letters I had written home.⁶

During the American Civil War, a rabbi who applied to be commissioned as a chaplain in the Union Army was politely informed by the War Department that the position was available only to clergymen of one or another Christian denomination. As the war drew to a close, Congress passed legislation at the urging of President Lincoln which made possible the first appointment of a rabbi to the Armed Forces of the United States.⁷ In Canada, the step was taken some seventy-five years later. After all, the Dominion only came into being two years after the assassination of Lincoln; and its Jewish population at the time was miniscule.

But a few generations later Canadian Jewry had grown enough to provide a considerable number of volunteers during World War I. Those volunteers got most of their

training in England, and their religious needs were looked after by British Jewish chaplains.⁸

By the time of World War II, the picture had changed in several respects. The Jewish community had become larger and more organized. The Imperial Conference of 1926 had transformed the British Empire and had given the self-governing colonies something called "Dominion status".

Canada was now expected to run its own affairs, and its military arm was to become thoroughly Canadianized. One by-product of this new situation was that the question of a Jewish chaplaincy was put on the table. The Department of National Defence - not without a measure of birth pangs - finally took the step and commissioned the first uniformed Jewish chaplain in Canada's history.

2. IN THE BEGINNING

There were two stages in the long delay that preceded my commission as the first rabbi to join the Canadian Chaplain Service in the history of the Dominion. The first stage lasted about a year, and was probably to be expected as the normal result of bureaucratic inertia - the resistance by institutions and establishments to change and innovation. The second stage, which held things up for another nine months, was caused by an internal struggle between Jews - something not without precedent in Jewish history.

The outbreak of war in September of 1939 found Canadian Jewry reasonably united in the revitalized Canadian Jewish Congress,⁹ under the newly elected and very vigorous leadership of Samuel Bronfman¹⁰ and the capable executive direction of Saul Hayes.¹¹

Almost immediately, committees - soon to become known as "War Efforts Committees" - were formed across the Dominion in all three regions of the Congress - Eastern, Central and Western. Their efforts were co-ordinated by a national executive body - the "Dominion Council."

These efforts included the provision of soldiers' "comforts" in co-operation with other organizations similarly engaged; the stimulation of enlistment; and the creation of a Jewish chaplaincy.¹² Obviously, there was more than one reason for the desire to have a Jewish chaplain appointed. Of course, everyone was eager to provide the services that chaplains usually render - pastoral counselling, conducting worship, arranging leave for Jewish holidays, visiting the sick, comforting the bereaved, burying the dead - all the usual duties of the clergy. But it must be admitted that there was another motive as well - what might be called the public relations aspect. A uniformed rabbi would be worth a carload of statistics in establishing in the public mind the Jewish presence in the military. Under the circumstances, it was a not unworthy motive.

As early as November 13th, 1939, a letter on the stationery of the Canadian Jewish Congress was addressed to "The Senior Chaplain" at National Defence Headquarters, with a modest request: "As there are a number of enlisted men of the Jewish faith in the district of Montreal...I would appreciate it if you would let me know how to arrange for a Jewish chaplain to be appointed for this area."¹³ The letter was signed by Philip Abbey, a veteran of World War I with the rank of Lt.-Colonel in the reserves, in his capacity as "Chairman of the Military Committee."¹⁴

The reply from Ottawa, sent the following day over the signature of G.A. Wells, Principal Protestant Chaplain,¹⁵ stated that: "No decision regarding the appointment of a

Jewish Chaplain for Montreal (*sic*) can be made until the religious census returns have come in." Bishop Wells went on to say: "Perhaps you would like to ask the authorities of Military District No. 4 to give you that information, or forward it to me."¹⁶

It should be explained that the Canadian Chaplain Service was divided into two separate and distinct parts - Catholic and Protestant - each headed by a Principal Chaplain. The Jews in the Province of Quebec had long been considered by law to be "Protestants for school purposes",¹⁷ so the Congress Committee was not surprised to find that their request had landed on the desk of an Anglican bishop. I believe, however, that they thought they were simply being fobbed off. With civilian naivete, they could not imagine that the authorities did not know all the facts. But having since seen those "census returns" - sheets of foolscap handwritten by orderly-room clerks in units where the population was in constant flux - I am inclined to think that the Bishop was adding the simple truth to the normal bureaucratic inertia.

It must have been soon after this correspondence that the decision was taken at the highest echelons of the Canadian Jewish Congress to undertake an internal census of Jewish enlistments in the Armed Forces. The widely respected Director of Montreal's YMHA, Harvey Golden,¹⁸ was borrowed to direct this effort and to conduct ensuing negotiations with the authorities. Special stationery was printed, under the heading "Jewish Auxiliary War Services of Canada" with the subheading "Organized under the Auspices of the Canadian Jewish Congress" and giving the address of the "Y" on Mount Royal Avenue West.¹⁹

It was decided to create a "Nominal Roll" (good military parlance for "a list of names"). The minimum requirement for an entry to be considered final was name and regimental number. Of course, it was desirable to have a home address and unit as well, but these could be gotten later. Each of the three divisions of Congress was to be responsible for its area, and the information pooled at the National Office. Soon there was an extensive correspondence on this subject between Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal; and soon an internal gobbledegook arose: WNR, CNR, ENR - all combined in the National Nominal Roll (NNR), an updated version of which was periodically circulated to all three offices.²⁰

It quickly became apparent that gathering information from every little synagogue and Jewish organization in a community strung out from the Atlantic to the Pacific was going to be an onerous and time-consuming procedure. In an effort to cut this short, Harvey Golden went to Ottawa with Herbert Vineberg,²¹ who had flown with the Royal Flying Corps in the First World War. For what follows I have no documentation, but I remember what both men told me. It seems they saw an officer in the department of the Adjutant

General and were told there were not enough Jews to warrant a chaplain. When they asked, "How many do we need?", they were told: "1,000". When they asked how many there were now, they were told: "That we can't tell you." They took this to mean that the information was restricted. It strengthened their resolve to press on with the Nominal Roll.

The War Efforts Committee continued to gather names, while not neglecting to press for the appointment, nor to attend to some of the needs of the men in service as far as could be done with civilian means.

That summer of 1940 a rabbi was sent each Sunday to Camp Borden, a huge training center north of Toronto. I volunteered to go out to training camps east of Montreal on Sunday afternoons in order to conduct services. Later on I went a greater distance - to Petawawa, away up the Ottawa River Valley. That involved taking a night train out of Montreal on Saturday night and returning to Montreal late on Sunday night.

Apparently the Jewish Congress continued to press its case. On July 26th, 1940, Brigadier F.R. Phelan, D.S.O., Deputy Adjutant General,²² sent a memo to Bishop Wells: "A request has been made that consideration be given to the appointment of a Rabbi as Chaplain to Jewish personnel in the C.A.S.F. Your remarks would be appreciated."²³ A handwritten note on the memo reads "C.A.S.F. overseas - 145 - .62%".²³ The formal reply from Bishop Wells repeats this. It is dated July 29th, 1940: "I have kept in close touch with the Jewish enlistment in the C.A.S.F. with the view to appointing a Jewish Chaplain as soon as the numbers would justify. There is no district in Canada where an appointment could be given." The Bishop goes on to state that the latest returns for the RCAF show 111 Jews in the Air Force from coast to coast. He discusses the claim that many Jews are not registered as such, because of uncertainty regarding Nazi policy in case they are taken prisoner. He points out that, officially speaking, the classification "O.D." (other denominations) includes all officers and men other than Roman Catholic, Church of England, United Church of Canada, Presbyterian and Baptist.²⁴

This exchange shows that the Principal Chaplain was thinking in terms of concentrations of Jewish troops, and that apparently there had been no meeting of the minds as to how to deal with the chaplaincy needs of a community representing about 1.5% of the population, but scattered throughout the entire country.

However, it was only a matter of weeks before a dramatic change took place. The two-pronged effort of the Jewish Congress - building up the Nominal Roll and pressing for action - began to pay off.

August 1940 saw a flurry of activity. On August 2nd, a Lt.-Colonel in the Adjutant General's Department wrote to Lazarus Phillips, an officer of the Congress,²⁵ repeating the figures given by Bishop Wells in his letter of July 29th.²⁶ On Tuesday, August 27th, Harvey Golden and Herbert Vineberg saw Brigadier Phelan in Ottawa. They took issue with the figures that had been transmitted to Lazarus Phillips, and left with the Deputy Adjutant General a list of 819 names of Jews who had attested²⁷ for Active Service, at the same time expressing the conviction that this was only about half the actual number. They had many more names which they were in the process of verifying, involving an average correspondence load of six letters per man.

"Great sums of money" and an "abnormal amount of time and effort" had been expended on the Nominal Roll, with "only partially successful results." In a persuasive resume of this interview, sent to the D.A.G. the following day, Golden reiterated the two-fold request of the Congress:

that 1) the record of Jewish enlistment in the active service forces be made available to this Committee 2) with a view to achieving proper status for Jewish personnel, and, perhaps, towards simplifying the task of producing a continuing record, a Jewish Chaplain be appointed with full rank, pay and allowances...²⁸

Two days later, on August 29th, Phelan informed the Principal Chaplain about this interview:

With reference to your memorandum dated 29th July, and having regard to the communication and Nominal Rolls from the Secretary of the War Efforts Committee, Canadian Jewish Congress...it would appear... that there is a sufficient number of enlisted Jewish personnel to warrant the appointment of a Jewish Chaplain to the Chaplain Services, C.A.S.F. May your remarks be received please. Kindly treat this matter as urgent.²⁹

The Bishop did so on the very next day, still expressing his reservations. He took the number in the NNR with a grain of salt, treating it as the total claimed by Congress: "Assuming that the number 819 is correct, it must be kept in mind that these soldiers are scattered throughout the whole of Canada and some of them in England."

He picked out for criticism Golden's statement that the request for a Jewish chaplain was being made "with a view to achieving proper status for Jewish personnel and, perhaps, towards simplifying the task of producing a continuing record." He said:

The real purpose of having Chaplains appointed is that they should minister to the religious needs of [the] troops concerned. Apart from that I have no concern ... I would respectfully suggest that Mr. Harvey Golden ... give us some idea of how such a Chaplain could carry out effectively the job they have in mind for his appointment before any further action is taken.³⁰

On the same day, August 30th, Brigadier Phelan replied:

... in considering the appointment of a Jewish Chaplain to the Chaplain Services C.A.S.F., it is contemplated that such a representative would be in a position to contact Jewish Rabbis across Canada and obtain their services ... May your further remarks be received, please. Will you kindly treat this matter as urgent.³¹

Bishop Wells replied in a handwritten note dated August 31st, added as a minute to the memo from Brigadier Phelan: "In view of the fact that the Jewish Religion is separate and distinct from the Christian Religion, it would be reasonable to make the appointment on that ground."³²

It would be difficult to pass judgment on the motives of Bishop Wells in resisting this appointment for so long. "Judge not" is not only a New Testament teaching;³³ it is good Jewish doctrine too, as in the dictum of Hillel: "Judge not your fellow-man until you have been in his position."³⁴

Nevertheless, I may be allowed to express a subjective opinion based on my subsequent, if infrequent, contacts with him. He had been Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Cariboo in the Rocky Mountains, where there were no Jewish communities.³⁵ I think he knew very little about them. In Ottawa, he had to deal with the representatives of many Christian denominations and concern himself with the amounts budgeted for his department. Like any administrator, he was not happy when the "census" procedures of his office were challenged; and I doubt that he was pleased when the Jewish Congress went over his head to the Adjutant General and later even to the Minister of National Defence. But as we have seen, he capitulated with reasonable good grace.

That critical Labor Day weekend was followed by fairly quick action at National Defence Headquarters. On September 2nd, 1940, the Adjutant General, Major-General B.W. Browne, D.S.O., M.C.,³⁶ sent a memorandum to the Minister of National Defence, J.L. Ralston:³⁷

1. Following up previous requests from the Jewish community, the Jewish Auxiliary War Service Committee of Canada has requested that a Jewish chaplain be appointed to the Chaplain Services...

2. To back up this request the Committee has...surveyed the forces to ascertain the numbers of Jews now serving, and has secured the names of 819 men of [the] Jewish faith who have enlisted to date. This number, they believe, is much lower than the real figure...

3. The Principal Chaplain considers that it would be reasonable to appoint a Jewish Chaplain to co-ordinate the religious ministrations on behalf of those of the Jewish faith serving in the forces.

4. It is recommended for your consideration that a Jewish Chaplain, with the rank of Major, be appointed to the Chaplain Services.³⁸

A handwritten minute signed by Brigadier Phelan is added to this document:

The Principal Chaplain (P) agrees that the Jewish Chaplain, if appointed, will be under his jurisdiction. There were no Canadian Jewish Chaplains in the last war, but there were Jewish Chaplains with the British forces.³⁹

On the evening of that same Labor Day of 1940, a thirty-minute telephone conversation between Harvey Golden in Montreal and Brigadier Phelan at National Defence Headquarters dealt with the plan that the Jewish Chaplain would come under the authority of the Principal non-Catholic Chaplain, and that the highest rank he could be given was that of Major.⁴⁰

The following day, in his letter accepting these conditions, Golden stated that his Committee was of the opinion that "for reasons of policy and equity, the proposed appointment should at this time carry the rank of Captain."⁴¹ This issue of rank was to become a bone of contention within the military at a much later date, as we shall see.⁴²

All of this was communicated to the Minister on September 7th in a memorandum signed by Brigadier Phelan for the Adjutant General and initialled by the Minister on that day as "Approved."⁴³

The next item on the agenda was the recommendation of a rabbi to be commissioned. I believe it was about that time that I was asked by Dr. Herman Abramowitz,⁴⁴ on behalf of the Congress, whether I was willing to serve. Of course I agreed. In the first weeks of the war I had told Phil Abbey that I (only recently a pacifist) was eager to do my share against the Nazis.

To be sure, agreement had to be gotten from all parts of the country. On September 18th, 1940, Bronfman wired Phelan that this had been done, explaining that the Canadian Jewish Congress represented "the great bulk of Canadian Jewry" and that all districts were agreed that my name should go forward.⁴⁵

On that same day, Bishop Wells addressed Major Richardson in the A.G. Branch, formally requesting that I be appointed. In the light of his strongly worded objections only a few weeks earlier, the Principal Chaplain's communication is worth quoting:

The number of Jewish soldiers listed (*sic*) in the Canadian forces is found to be something more than 1,000. The question of the appointment of the Jewish Chaplain has been taken up by the Canadian Jewish Congress with the Adjutant General and it has been decided that, in view of the circumstances connected with the Jewish soldiers, it would be wise to appoint a Jewish Chaplain. I would therefore recommend that Rev. Rabbi S. Gershon Levi... be appointed to this position. This Rabbi is under 50 years of age, in excellent health, and comes highly recommended by the President of the Canadian Jewish Congress...⁴⁶

Of course I was not privy to any of this correspondence, or to the accompanying negotiations; but I was informed by the Principal Chaplain that he had recommended me and would I please stand by until the final steps had been taken.⁴⁷

Shortly thereafter Harvey Golden rang my doorbell and asked me to accompany him downtown to the Armory, where enlistees were being medically examined and processed. I sensed some urgency in his manner, but I asked no questions.

On October 1st a telegram was sent by National Defence Headquarters (N.D.H.Q.) to the Officer Commanding the Military District centered in Montreal (M.D. 4), informing him of my pending appointment.⁴⁸

It was too late to connect this appointment with the High Holy Days, which began on the evening of October 2, 1940. But no matter. There was not much that could be done until after Yom Kippur, which fell on October 12th. The final official step was taken on October 16th, when Adjutant General Browne instructed O.C. M.D. 4 to take me on strength.⁴⁹

It was the eve of Sukkot (The Feast of Tabernacles) and there was nothing that could be accomplished during the remaining week of the festival. I would now have to think out how to serve so scattered a flock - indeed, how to find that flock. But a page in Canadian history had been turned - or so it seemed.

But during the intermediate days of Sukkot my telephone rang. The District Chaplain (P) of M.D. 4 was on the phone. He had been instructed by telephone from Ottawa to tell me that the appointment was cancelled. He could offer no explanation. If we were not back at square one, we were close to it.

3. STRUGGLE FOR POWER

The telegram on file from the Adjutant General to the District Officer Commanding M.D. 4 is dated October 23rd, 1940. It reads:

CONFIRMING TELEPHONE CONVERSATION DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL LETTER OF SIXTEENTH INSTANT REGARDING RABBI SAMUEL GERSHON LEVI SENT IN ERROR AND TO BE CONSIDERED AS CANCELLED TOGETHER WITH PREVIOUS INSTRUCTIONS STOP NOTIFY ALL CONCERNED IMMEDIATELY STOP MATTER BEING FURTHER CONSIDERED AND YOU WILL BE ADVISED OF DECISION.⁵⁰

What had happened? I had been caught in the middle, an innocent victim of tensions within the Jewish community. It was a question of authority: Who speaks for Canadian Jewry? A struggle was going on over the answer to that question, and I was in the path of the storm.

For centuries past in the Old World it had been traditional that spokesmen for the Jews had been prominent individuals who had influence with the powers-that-be and who knew their way around the corridors of power.⁵¹ The change that had taken place since the middle of the nineteenth century, when Jews were admitted to the political process in most of Western Europe and the New World, was that the main path to such influence in those countries was public office, elected or appointed. A prime example of this was Sir Moses Montefiore, Sheriff of the County of London.⁵²

In Canada the role was honorably filled by Samuel Wolf Jacobs ("S.W."), who sat in the Federal Parliament for some twenty years after 1917 for a heavily Jewish constituency in Montreal. His influence was due more to his membership in the House of Commons (he became the "Father of the House" - the longest sitting member) and to his personal qualities than it was to his acceptance of what was then merely an honorary office - that of President of the fledgling and still ineffective Canadian Jewish Congress.⁵³ Towards the end of his life he was joined on Parliament Hill by two Jewish members from constituencies demographically similar to his own - one from Toronto and one from Winnipeg.

But new winds were blowing, in the Canadian Jewish community as elsewhere. Democratic principles seemed to call for leaders and spokesmen representing most (what Bronfman, in his telegram of September 18th, had called "the great bulk")⁵⁴ of Canadian

Jewry, rather than men elected by a few constituencies (in this instance, one constituency) which happened to be populated heavily - though not exclusively - by Jews.

The matter could not be put more succinctly than it has been by Irving Abella and Harold Troper in a vastly more tragic context. In their *None Is Too Many*, a study of Canadian Jewry's fruitless efforts to get Canada to admit any significant number of the refugees seeking asylum from the looming Holocaust, they refer to the organized Jewish community of that period as one that was "only slowly and painfully disengaging from dependence on its three members of Parliament, who had long served as the official voice of Canadian Jewry."⁵⁵ The struggle over who was to name the first Jewish chaplain in Canada's history was probably the last gasp of the old order in that painful process.

At the time, I knew nothing about all this. I was to learn soon enough, as the long delay in the appointment of a Jewish chaplain entered its second stage.

A number of prominent individuals who did not accept the "upstart" authority of the reorganized Jewish Congress had been following the efforts of the Congress to get the principle of a Jewish Chaplaincy accepted. Once that had been accomplished, they swung into action. Telegrams were received by many Jewish communities and organizations from coast to coast, saying that the government was about to appoint a Jewish chaplain to the Armed Forces, and asking for recommendations approving the appointment of — Rabbi Julius Berger of Montreal.⁵⁶

I was soon to learn that the prime mover in this solicitation was Peter Bercovitch M.P.,⁵⁷ who now sat in Parliament for the riding that S.W. Jacobs had represented. Some months later, when I went to see Bercovitch about this, he told me quite frankly that he had organized the opposition to Congress. He had nothing against me; I had officiated at the funeral of his aged father and paid the usual visit of condolence. "You're a fine fellow" - but the actual appointment should have been his to make. At least, he should have been consulted. He seemed genuinely aggrieved and felt an injustice had been done. "After all, I am the sitting member." I saw no point in trying to change his mind.

I can only guess why his move was supported by two prominent Montreal Jews: Rabbi Harry J. Stern of Temple Emanu-el, who had long been regarded in the local press as spokesman for the Jews;⁵⁸ and Louis Fitch (a friend of mine!), who was Rabbi Berger's brother-in-law and had been a member of the Quebec Legislature.⁵⁹

The list of those who sent in recommendations for Rabbi Berger, now available in the National Archives, will not be repeated here. It includes eight individuals, plus the three mentioned above, and fifteen congregations and communal bodies, stretching from Glace

Bay in Nova Scotia to Vancouver in British Columbia. Others who sent in their recommendations were the Anglican Bishop of Montreal and several fraternal lodges.⁶⁰ With a few obvious exceptions, most of those who complied with the request did so in all courtesy, with no inkling that they were getting involved in a contest. In fact, many of the respondent organizations and individuals were loyal supporters of the Canadian Jewish Congress!

Apparently these messages were addressed to Bishop Wells who seems to have become alarmed. On October 2nd he addressed a memorandum marked URGENT to Brigadier Phelan, suggesting that it would be "sound policy" to cancel his own recommendation of Rabbi S. Gershon Levi, dated September 18th, and to appoint Rabbi Julius Berger instead. It seems strong pressure had been brought to bear on the bishop. "With no reflection whatsoever on the character or ability of Rabbi Levi", it had been pointed out to him (he does not say by whom) that Rabbi Berger was more experienced (he was 46 years old to my 32) and had several other factors in his favor.

Wells makes particular mention of a letter from the Bishop of Montreal, speaking highly of Rabbi Berger. He himself had met Berger and was favorably impressed. Most striking of all is his mention of a telephone conversation (there is no indication as to who initiated it) with the Va'ad Harabonim (Council of Rabbis) in Montreal, whose Secretary was one of those recommending Rabbi Berger.⁶¹ The result was a telegram from the Va'ad Harabonim, which should be given here in full:

COLONEL THE RT REV G A WELLS CONFIRMING OUR TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WE WISH TO STATE THAT WE ARE PLEASED TO LEAVE THE DECISION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF JEWISH CHAPLAIN ENTIRELY TO YOU AND WE AS AN ECCLESIASTIC BODY SHALL BE PERFECTLY SATISFIED WITH YOUR CHOICE.⁶²

This message can serve as a metaphor for the transition through which Canadian Jewry was passing. The members of the Council of Rabbis were almost all ordained at European yeshivot and accustomed to leaving affairs of state to the Gentiles. The Jews of the Czar's empire had no political rights up to the outbreak of the First World War; they even had, in addition to their own rabbis, official go-betweens with the Russian authorities called "Crown Rabbis" - appointed by the government of the Czar!⁶³

Actually, Rabbi Berger had applied to Bishop Wells directly quite some time before. He had had at least one interview with him, and the Principal Chaplain had written to him several times to tell him that there were not enough Jews to warrant an appointment. The

Bishop had even suggested Berger's name to the War Efforts Committee. The two remained in touch through the rest of 1940 and for the first months of 1941.

It is clear that the Canadian Jewish Congress knew that efforts were afoot to cancel its recommendation. On or about September 27th, 1940, David Kirsch, Vice-Chairman of the War Efforts Committee,⁶⁴ went to Ottawa, intending to see Brigadier Phelan. Finding the D.A.G was not available, Kirsch spoke to the Colonel in charge of Personnel Services. The Colonel described the interview in a memo to his chief.

He reported that Kirsch was "aware of the many recommendations for the appointment of Rabbi Julius Berger ...and wished to re-affirm the recommendation for the selection of Rabbi Levi as the most suitable for the duties involved".

After a lot of detail, the Colonel concludes: "Mr. Kirsch himself impressed me as a man of exceptionally good type, conversant with all matters connected with the administration of Jewish organizations and very genuine as regards the representation that Levi was the best choice. I informed him that no definite decision had yet been reached."⁶⁵

For reasons best known to those involved, I was told nothing about all this. When Brigadier Phelan got the suggestion by Bishop Wells that my appointment be cancelled, the answer was that it was too late. Instructions had already been issued several days earlier.⁶⁶

But Bishop Wells was still worried. He wrote again to Brigadier Phelan a few days later (October 2nd, 1940) requesting that the recommendation he himself had made on September 18th be "held up for the time being permitting the Jewish Congress to come to a definite decision as to whom they wish to recommend."⁶⁷

One does not know what verbal communications passed between the P.C.(P) and the D.A.G.; but Brigadier Phelan already knew what "definite decision" the Jewish Congress had come to. He went ahead with the procedure for my appointment. On October 16th the Adjutant General, Major-General B.W. Browne, notified the D.O.C. of M.D. 4 that my appointment had been finalized.⁶⁸

Whoever intervened with the Minister of Defence to overrule this *fait accompli* must have had considerable political clout. Within a week the appointment had been cancelled by telephone and wire.

A resume up to this point was prepared for Mr. Ralston by his Military Secretary, Colonel Clyde B. Scott, on the day after the cancellation. He recalled the Minister's

approval in principle, dated September 7th, of the appointment of a Jewish chaplain and the details connected with the position. He continued:

Subsequent to September 7th the Minister was advised by the Military Secretary that certain recommendations were being received on behalf of Rabbi Berger...

On the evening of Monday, 21st October, Rabbi Berger called on the Military Secretary to enquire whether a Jewish Chaplain had been appointed, and if such appointment had not been made, requesting consideration of his qualifications for this appointment. The file could not be made available on Monday evening, so the Military Secretary requested Rabbi Berger to return to the Department at 11:00 o'clock on Tuesday morning, 22nd October.

On Tuesday morning, 22nd October, the Military Secretary requisitioned Headquarters File, and also obtained Minister's File in connection with this appointment, and ascertained that under date of 1st October, 1940, D.O.C. 4 had been instructed that Rabbi Levi had been selected for this appointment to Chaplain Services... Under date of 16th October, 1940, D.O.C. 4 was advised that Rabbi Levi's appointment to Chaplain Services, C.A.S.F. was concurred in, and approval would be sought in an early draft gazette.

Rabbi Berger kept his appointment with the Military Secretary on Tuesday morning, and Military Secretary requested Colonel Currie to be present during the conversation. Rabbi Berger explained certain circumstances in connection with this appointment, and gave his reasons, including his ecclesiastic and military qualifications as to why he thought consideration should be given to his appointment. Rabbi Berger was not told by Colonel Currie or M.S. that Rabbi Levi had been definitely approved, although Rabbi Berger seemed to know that such was the case.

On Tuesday evening, 22nd October, Colonel Currie and M.S. showed the Minister H.Q. File 54-27-68-25, and Minister's File 30-34 General, in connection with the appointment of a Jewish Chaplain. The Minister stated that this was the first intimation he had had that any appointment had been made or authorized, and that the memorandum of the D.A.G. was entirely in error, as he the Minister had not even had the matter of Rabbi Levi's appointment referred to him and had given no authority or approval whatever for the appointment. (Some brave soul had written in the margin: "see folio 29 where Minister approved the appointment". The initials are illegible.)⁶⁹ The A.G. being out of town, the Minister tried to get Brigadier Phalen by telephone without success. He did, however, speak with D.O.C.

4, who confirmed the fact that Rabbi Levi had already been notified that his appointment as Jewish Chaplain had been approved by N.D.H.Q.

On Wednesday morning, 23rd October, the A.G. being away, the Minister interviewed Colonel Nash and M.S. in connection with this matter, and instructed Colonel Nash to send a wire to D.O.C. 4 which cancelled all instructions sent by the A.G. to D.O.C. 4 in connection with the appointment of a Jewish Chaplain.⁷⁰

The deed was done that very day, resulting in a stalemate. It took me several days to find out who was behind it and almost fifty years to learn the full story.

The reaction at Congress was immediate. An emergency meeting decided that Samuel Bronfman should see Mr. Ralston and explain the situation to him. This was arranged fairly quickly. By November 7th, General Browne was able to write Samuel Bronfman that, in accordance with his request to the Minister, he was sending him the names of Jewish citizens and individuals who had written the Department on behalf of Rabbi Berger.

Now began the long process of explaining matters to those who had submitted recommendations, and getting them to withdraw. A few were not even asked - certainly not the Bishop of Montreal, nor Rabbi Maurice L. Perlzweig of the British Section of the World Jewish Congress, who was spending the war years in North America;⁷¹ nor, of course, the three men mentioned earlier.⁷² In the meantime, the pressure of wartime events occupied Mr. Ralston; he was in London part of the time, consulting with other representatives of Commonwealth countries. I was told that he left strict instructions that nothing was to be done in this matter without his personal approval.

It should be noted that whoever was responsible for administration had observed the absence in Standing Orders ("King's Orders and Regulations, Canada") of rules affecting Jewish personnel. Much earlier, in May of 1940, a regulation was promulgated, describing the insignia for Jewish Chaplains.⁷³ On November 4th, 1940, Jews and Lutherans were included in the list of denominations entitled to wear their own identity discs.⁷⁴ The source for these rules was the British precedent, so nobody in the Jewish community was consulted. When I had been notified of my appointment in October of 1940, I had ordered buttons and insignia (cap badges and lapel badges) from London.

During this period, Bishop Wells kept Rabbi Berger informed. He wrote to him on December 6th - the matter was still in abeyance.⁷⁵ He wrote to him again on January 21st,⁷⁶ having seen David Kirsch and William Abrams (who had taken over as Executive Secretary of the War Efforts Committee)⁷⁷ earlier in the month.

During these weeks, the Principal Chaplain (P) got a liberal education in Jewish affairs. On 29th January he wrote to the Adjutant General: "Re: Appointment Jewish Chaplain. I have had four representatives call to see me regarding this matter during the past two days...". The Bishop goes on to say that he has studied the material left with him and has concluded that it would be wise to accept the Canadian Jewish Congress as "the authority to whom we shall look for recommendations." He describes the make-up of the organization (this was not new to the Adjutant General - he had had Sam Bronfman's telegram four months earlier)⁷⁸ and adds that the Dominion Council covers "the whole country with the outstanding names from coast to coast".

Wells suggests that if the A.G. accepts his suggestion, the question of appointments can be settled in a very short time and adds: "Perhaps you would like to see the dossier."⁷⁹

Minuted on the margin is an emphatic "Yes!" bearing the initials of General Browne. The very next day Philip Abbey sent a personal letter to the Adjutant General: "Dear Sam: Two of the representatives of the Canadian Jewish Congress met Bishop Wells yesterday in Ottawa, and I was delighted to hear that their reception had been quite cordial." He is relieved to know that the matter seems to be getting "straightened out" and assures the General (nicknamed "Sam Browne" by the inner circles of Canada's still small defence establishment) of his continued co-operation "as a soldier and as a civilian."⁸⁰

If anyone had told me that in a matter of seven more weeks Humpty-Dumpty would be put back on the wall, it might have made things easier. But apparently there was concern that something might go wrong again. In fact, I was surprised on going through the record to find that the hiatus had lasted only nine months. In my memory, it seemed like an eternity.

Nor do I understand why the Director of Personnel had to wait until March 20th before asking Bishop Wells to repeat his recommendation.⁸¹ It was done, and on March 21st, 1941, I was taken on strength at Headquarters of Military District 4, in the Sun Life Building, Dominion Square, Montreal.

On the following day, Bishop Wells notified Rabbi Berger that the matter was closed.⁸² He must have felt obligated to him in some way. Even more interesting is an entry in the appointments book of Mr. Ralston. As it happens, the archives have the diary only from March 17th onwards. Under that very date, there is the following entry: "Mr. Peter Bercovitch M.P. re Jewish Chaplain."⁸³ It would be interesting to know whether this interview had been initiated by Mr. Bercovitch in a last ditch effort to block my pending appointment, or rather by the Minister, as a courtesy to his fellow parliamentarian, to let him know that a final decision had been taken. I am inclined to think that the latter was the case.

4. THE NUMBERS GAME

In his final push to get the principle accepted that Canada's Jews were entitled to a military chaplain, Harvey Golden had stressed the need for access to statistics. This figured in both of his two major requests:

that 1) the record of Jewish enlistment in the active service forces be made available to this Committee 2) with a view to achieving proper status for Jewish Personnel, and, perhaps, towards simplifying the task of producing a continuing record ...⁸⁴

He can hardly be blamed for not knowing that there was no such record. When I got into uniform, I, too, took up the pursuit. I began to study the ways in which the army kept its records. Had computerized data-processing been in existence, the whole story might have been different. But as things were, Congress had to continue all through the war compiling its National Nominal Roll. To a certain extent, this became my responsibility.

For basic statistical information I turned to Louis Rosenberg's invaluable book *Canada's Jews*, published by the Canadian Jewish Congress in 1939. Rosenberg, a stocky man with a powerful Yorkshire accent, was Director of the Western Division of the Jewish Congress and, at the same time, a trained demographer and statistician.⁸⁵ He made extensive use of Canada's decennial census, which he describes as one of the best in the world. But when it came to the number of Jews in the Canadian Armed Forces in the World War (there had been only one up to then) he found the figures incomplete for a variety of reasons.

It has long been known that many Jews in the Canadian Expeditionary Force did not state their religious affiliation, and that many, in order to avoid unpleasant experiences, preferred to change their names and register themselves as Protestants.⁸⁶

Indeed, the fact that many more Canadian Jews reported to British Jewish chaplains than were listed in Canadian records led him to study the *British Jewry Book of Honour*⁸⁷ and other sources. His informed estimate was 4,695 Jews in the C.E.F. out of a total Jewish population of slightly over 75,681 (the 1911 census). Of these, 76 won decorations, 98 were commissioned officers, and 160 were N.C.O.'s. He was unable to give figures for casualties.⁸⁸

But several decades had passed since World War I. No doubt military record-keeping had improved. It was my business to find out - the hard way.

The District Chaplain (P) at H.Q. M.D. 4 explained, rather apologetically, that I would have office space - and not much more. But that did not matter much to me. I did not expect to be chairborne much of the time; and just around the corner on St. Catherine St. W. were the National Offices of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Saul Hayes, the National Executive Director, harassed though he was by the problems of refugees and his unavailing tug-of-war with the Department of Immigration,⁸⁹ put a typist at my disposal as needed and kept in touch with my problems.

The Nominal Roll was useful, not only for statistical purposes. It also enabled me to identify and keep in touch with my far-flung congregation. It became second nature to make a note of the personal particulars of every uniformed Jew I met - at religious services, in the office, over the phone and by letter. Whenever I visited a unit, I would ask the Commanding Officer if he could let me have a list of his Jewish personnel. I soon developed an instinct for identifying so-called "Jewish" names (not a totally reliable method). There were some amusing results.

The C.O. of a small service unit in Western Ontario welcomed me by saying: "One of my Jewish boys is absent without leave. I wish you would find him for me." I: "How do you know he's Jewish?" C.O.: "He asked for leave on the Jewish Holy Days." I was shown the man's record. He proved to be a Canadian Indian.

One day, on a streetcar in Montreal, I met a fellow I had known as a boy - now in R.C.A.F. uniform. He was stationed at the Manning Depot (reception center) just across the St. Lawrence River. Were there any more Jews there? Yes, must be about twenty. How did he know? Well, there was one other Jewish fellow in his barrack - and there were ten barracks. I got out there as soon as I could. The total number of Jews at the time was — two.

The NNR continued to grow and was made available to Congress staffs in Toronto and Winnipeg. Sam Abramson, of the Toronto office,⁹⁰ had a penchant for writing, and, after examining one inter-office copy of the National Nominal Roll that had arrived from Montreal, wrote an article about some odd names on the list. He especially noted the absence of anyone with the name "Goldberg." His story was entitled "Abramson Blames the Goldbergs".⁹¹ I wrote to tell him that several pages of the copy he had received had been inadvertently left out.

I had to go to Ottawa from time to time - initially to report to my superior, Bishop Wells. He received me most cordially, and I explained how I expected to operate.

I took the occasion to see for myself how Central Records conducted its business. In a low building, long rows of soldiers sat in front of large binders filled with enlistment

papers and punched holes into coded cards giving the particulars of each soldier. Quixotic though it may seem, I made it a habit to carry with me lists of questionable or incomplete entries in the NNR and to use my entree to Central Records to check up. This I usually did at night, when other business that brought me to the capital could not be accomplished. I needed the names anyway; but at the back of my mind there was always the thought that totals - statistics - were hidden away somewhere. That would be useful in getting more chaplains appointed.

Then one day, about a year after my appointment, and after I had travelled the length and breadth of the Dominion (I don't think I missed a single Army unit or Air Force station) I read a press despatch datelined Ottawa, [February 23rd, 1942].⁹² At question time in the House of Commons the previous day, the Minister of National Defence had replied to a motion by Thomas Church, M.P. for Broadview (Toronto),⁹³ asking for a return showing the number of officers and men serving in the active service forces with their religious affiliations as set out in their attestation papers.

The news item, a Canadian Press despatch, if memory serves, gave the answer in terms of percentages:⁹⁴

Church of England

United Church of Canada

Roman Catholic

Presbyterian

Baptist

Jews

I understood perfectly well why Tommy Church had asked his question. He was a former Mayor of Toronto, then dominated politically by Ulster Men - Northern Irish Protestants. He was out to show that the French Canadians were not doing their patriotic share in the war. But that was his business. Mine was the figure given for the Jews. It stood to reason that if percentages were known, someone must have the absolute totals. Of course, these could not be made public. The enemy must not know our total strength. But I resolved to investigate.

The next time I was in Ottawa I spent an evening at Central Records and asked to see the Commanding Officer. He proved to be a gentle and scholarly colonel, wearing World War I decorations. I spoke admiringly of the way his department was run, and told him

about my problem. Ah yes, they had to waste valuable working time preparing answers to foolish questions asked by members of Parliament. He produced a thin folder with a sheet of paper showing the percentages as they had appeared in the paper. Before I could react he remarked that they had been asked to prepare a similar study about a year earlier, and I could look at it in the same folder. I did, and was amazed. The year-old percentages were identical - to the second decimal place!

Gently, I called this to the colonel's attention. He seemed flustered, and he had been so kind that I did not want to embarrass him. I shall always remember his answer. Someone on his staff must have decided that there was no point in wasting valuable time, so he had simply repeated the old figures. The question was hardly important anyway, and neither was the answer. The originals were probably supplied by the Offices of the Principal Chaplains.

For all these years I have thought of this episode as a perfect illustration of Mark Twain's famous definition: "There are lies, damn lies - and statistics." But I was wrong. A recent reading of the actual exchange in Hansard (Parliamentary Proceedings) shows that the colonel need not have made excuses. The Minister was a skilled parliamentarian:

Mr. Ralston: I should prefer to give the enlistments, rather than men serving, for the reasons already indicated to the House, so far as the army is concerned. Secondly, I am not in a position to give completely the religious affiliations of all men in the service. A compilation was made up until March or April, 1941, and we got from that the percentages of religious affiliations at that time. I think the only thing we could do would be to use those percentages and estimate the enlistments in the same proportions for each of the denominations. With these reservations, I have no objection to the motion.⁹⁵

So then, everybody got what he wanted. Tommy Church got his headline; the Minister skilfully parried the question; the press got its story. Only the enquiring chaplain was left in the dark.

In fact, there were those in the military establishment who were convinced that the Jews had more information than did the Department of Defence. On one occasion I received out of the blue a letter from a department unknown to me. The writer understood that I had full list of Jewish soldiers. Could I send them on, please?

I replied that I would be in Ottawa in a few days and would call on the writer. The only clue I had, apart from his name and rank, was the file reference, which proved to be The Department of Training. I found the young officer, and asked what his purpose was.

It seems there was a new invention: the use of radar to direct artillery. It called for a degree of mathematical ability in making rapid calculations. "When I was in school the Jewish fellows were always the best in math." He thought he had a good idea: direct Jewish recruits into that field. I disabused him. Being Jewish was no guarantee of braininess. I could introduce him to some Jews with less than average intelligence. My advice to him: let nature take its course. We shook hands and parted good friends.

The Nominal Roll proved useful in other respects. South of the border the Jewish Welfare Board or J.W.B. was the authority for recommending Jewish chaplains and looking after the welfare of soldiers.⁹⁶ (They were a constituent of the U.S.O.) The J.W.B. wrote to me asking about a Canadian soldier who was making a good thing lecturing in synagogues about his adventures at Dunkirk. I had to tell them that no such name appeared on our Nominal Roll and that no Canadian troops had been at Dunkirk. The First Canadian Division had just embarked for the continent when the evacuation took place.

This character had probably crossed the border into Canada and signed up. There were many Americans who followed that course, some for ideological reasons, some merely for adventure. They were allowed to wear "USA" on their shoulder patch. There were Jews among them, some of whom achieved high rank and were decorated for bravery. But there are bad apples in every bushel, and this mountebank was probably one of them.

Word gets around. Some time after Pearl Harbor, Nathan Belth⁹⁷ wrote from the J.W.B. to ask what methods we used to keep track of Jewish enlistments. I suggested to him that what we could do in a community of 160,000 plus in a population of some eleven million could scarcely be applied to four million American Jews in a country where the census was forbidden by constitution to ask about religion.

Matters never reached the point where we had to prove that there were another thousand Jews in order to get another Jewish chaplain. In December 1941, General Montague, Commandant of Canadian Military Headquarters in London (C.M.H.Q.),⁹⁸ informed Ottawa that he knew of 750 Jewish personnel overseas, and would they please despatch a Jewish chaplain.⁹⁹ Dayan Gollop, Senior Jewish Chaplain to H.M. Forces,¹⁰⁰ also called attention to the need.¹⁰¹ Before very long, the tables were turned. Instead of Congress besieging the Department of Defence for the appointment of one chaplain, the Chaplain Services were besieging the Jewish community for more rabbis to appoint!

By July 7th, 1944, a cipher message ("Restricted") from C.M.H.Q. to Ottawa read:

NUMBER OF JEWS OVERSEAS SUCH THAT ESSENTIAL TO HAVE
ONE CHAPLAIN EACH THEATRE ONE FOR CRU AND ONE AT

THIS HQ FOR ADM. ETC. RECOMMEND THEREFORE FOURTH
JEWISH CHAPLAIN BE DESPATCHED EARLIEST.¹⁰²

In August of that year, the Principal Chaplain (P) wrote to Rabbi Abramowitz, urging "that even greater efforts" be made to find rabbis of the proper age and category to go overseas.

The problem was that there was a shortage of English-speaking rabbis who were able to pass the physical examination and were willing to volunteer for active service. Younger Canadian rabbis were all trained at American seminaries and had a tendency to accept pulpits in the United States. In fact, the two most successful Jewish chaplains were Canadians who had to be called back from congregations in the U.S.¹⁰³ Rabbi Julius Berger, who had figured in the original complications over the very creation of a Jewish military chaplaincy, was appointed H/Flight Lieutenant in the R.C.A.F. with the approval of Congress.

Under the 1,000 rule, there should have been sixteen full-time rabbis in uniform. By war's end, nine such appointments had been made.

Almost half-a-century later, I thought there had been sufficient time to close the books. At the Archives in Ottawa I did find figures for Jewish servicemen and women! They read:

Army	10,235
RCAF	5,889
Navy	596
Allied Forces	163
<hr/>	
TOTAL	16,883

But there is a significant rider: "According to figures supplied by the Canadian Jewish Congress"¹⁰⁴

The full record can be found in two paper-bound volumes called *Canadian Jews in World War II*, edited by David Rome and published in 1947-48 by the Canadian Jewish Congress.

Volume I lists decorations, 196 of them, from D.S.O. to Mention in Despatches, quoting citations and accompanied by many photographs.

Volume II is confined to casualties, 839 of them:

Killed, Died, Missing	420
Wounded	334
<u>Prisoners of War</u>	<u>85</u>
TOTAL	839 ¹⁰⁵

I must confess to a degree of skepticism about the effectiveness of statistics - even carefully checked ones - in convincing people with deeply held convictions. Current "revisionists" who question the six million victims of the Holocaust are a case in point. Still, the truth must be told, and the record preserved.

5. THE AIR FORCE TAKES OFF¹⁰⁶

Back in September of 1940, when it looked as though there would soon be a Jewish Army Chaplain, Gurston Allen of the Central Division of Congress¹⁰⁷ addressed a number of questions to Michael Garber of the National Executive.¹⁰⁸ One of them was: What about the Air Force; was it to be included? (It will be recalled that the Nominal Roll made no distinction between the services.) Garber's reply was: "Probably yes."

More specific was a resume written at that same time by Herbert Vineberg, the pilot mentioned above, to Air Marshal H. Edwards,¹⁰⁹ the Air Member for Personnel, detailing an interview Vineberg and Harvey Golden had had with two senior members of Edwards' staff.¹¹⁰ The relevant part of their agreement was that

the Jewish Army Chaplain, whose appointment is now mooted, could in his official capacity approach the R.C.A.F. Chaplain concerned, and receive from the latter a sufficiency of information respecting Jewish personnel to enable him to at least partially extend his chaplaincy to the R.C.A.F.

(Incidentally, Vineberg was itching to get back into the service. He was soon commissioned in the R.C.A.F. and assigned to training fledgling air crews.)

When I assumed office, it seemed obvious to me that for a congregation so relatively small, in a geographical setting so immense, the sensible thing was to have complete co-ordination between Army, Air Force and Navy. When the time came, and the need arose, each service would have its chaplains wearing its uniform. But there was no need for duplication in such matters as procurement (prayer-books, literature, etc.), holiday leave, home hospitality, synagogue welcome, graves registration and the like. In such matters - indeed in all matters of religion - there should be complete cutting across service lines.

Bishop Wells informed me that, though there were chaplains in Canada's still small Navy, administration was handled by his office. On my first visits to his office, I met a chaplain in R.C.A.F. blue - Squadron Leader John McNab.¹¹¹ In any event, since I was the only Jewish chaplain on the horizon, I assumed that all Jews in whatever uniform were my responsibility, and I proceeded on that assumption.

Sometimes innocence is an advantage. On July 3rd, 1941, while I was visiting the various Military Districts and Air Commands, Wells found it necessary to write to the Air Member for Personnel (on Air Force stationery!):

We have a considerable number of Jews in the R.C.A.F. throughout Canada, though not enough in any one place to justify the appointment of a chaplain, or indeed of a part-time chaplain. But I have no doubt that pressure will be brought to bear by the Jewish War Services Committee to have some arrangements made to look after the religious needs of Jewish personnel.

I am quite satisfied that Capt. Levi, and the part-time chaplains who may from time to time be appointed for the Army, can very well look after the interests of the Jews in the R.C.A.F. I would therefore recommend that H/Capt. S. Gershon Levi be given authority to visit R.C.A.F. stations throughout Canada; and that Jewish part-time chaplains be given the same privilege in the districts in which they are located. It would help in his work if an order could be issued throughout Canada giving this permission.

A few days later such an order was sent to all Air Commands. I was made most welcome and flown all over the Western Prairies. But it seems there was something in the making which would alter things - a clean separation between the Army and the Air Force chaplaincies. John McNab was no longer in evidence at the offices of Bishop Wells. I can only guess that a decision had been made to treat the Air Force Chaplaincy as a separate and distinct service, like the Air Force Medical Corps, as opposed to the Army Dental Corps, which served all the Forces.

As it happens, John McNab had studied at Queens University in Kingston at the same time as had Archie Bennett of Toronto, a leader in the Central Division of the Canadian Jewish Congress.¹¹² I surmise that the two were in touch with one another during the summer of 1941, while I was travelling the length and breadth of the Dominion to get an overview of the situation with respect to Jews in the Armed Forces. Documentation at this point is somewhat sketchy, but there is evidence that proposals were being made for a Jewish chaplain in the R.C.A.F. The subject is referred to in memos as early as July 5th, 1941. At the time, Group Captain J.A. Sully noted:¹¹³

I am of the opinion that there should be a full-time Chaplain of the Jewish faith appointed to the R.C.A.F. and that this officer should from time to time visit the various units throughout Canada which have Jewish personnel on strength. In addition, it would seem desirable to have part-time chaplains in Montreal, Toronto and other points where there are concentrations of personnel of the Jewish faith.

Objection was raised by a Wing Commander Rickards, apparently from the branch responsible for finance, that this would call for an unjustified expenditure. (They were working with a fixed figure of 600 Jewish airmen scattered throughout the Dominion.) He

proposed instead that arrangements be made "with the Army Chaplain (J) to visit such R.C.A.F. units as may be practicable" and to make arrangements with local Jewish communities.

The phrasing of a memo written at this time to Central Records R.C.A.F. by one Flight Lieutenant A. Rubens is interesting:

There appear to be signs of a considerable amount of correspondence turning up in the NWR covering Chaplains (Jewish), and to prevent an explosion may we disassociate these gentlemen from the files of the Roman Catholic faith and create one for themselves.

The matter was on the agenda for the Directors' Meeting of the R.C.A.F. held on August 8, 1941. There were differences of opinion, and the whole question was left in abeyance.

On October 21, 1941, I wrote to the Air Member for Personnel on behalf of the Canadian Jewish Congress. I reported on my first six months as the only Jewish Chaplain in Canada, and my survey trip of Army, Air Force and Navy units and stations throughout the Dominion.

I suggested that the problem posed by the vast areas involved be dealt with by the appointment of part-time chaplains, both Air Force and Army, with reciprocal arrangements cutting across service lines. I urged the necessity of co-ordination, and offered to provide it, or to team up with a full-time R.C.A.F. Chaplain in some arrangement to be worked out.

The record shows that my letter led to a meeting on the subject between an officer of R.C.A.F. Personnel, and a Colonel McNiven, of Army Personnel. The views of the latter reveal that the ongoing struggle over a Jewish Chaplaincy had left a certain amount of resentment at some levels:

Colonel McNiven is prepared to submit the matter to the Army if requested, but does not think he can get anywhere with it. Apparently there was a great deal of objection to the appointment of even one Jewish Chaplain in the first instance, and the picture has not changed. He informs me that as at 31 Aug. 41 a census of the Canadian Army indicated that of 86,366 personnel in Canada, only 534 are Jews. The Jewish Congress have figures which indicate a great many more Jews in the Army, but a proportion have enlisted under other denominations. Colonel McNiven doubts whether he can get authority for any more full-time or even part-time chaplains, and is interested to know what view is taken of the matter here.

In any event, much of what had happened in connection with the original Army appointment was now repeated in Air Force circles, except that this time there was no intervention from the political sphere. Numbers were bandied about and the cost of paying a chaplain and travel expenses was brought up. It should be noted that an especially sympathetic insight was expressed by Air Marshal Edwards, the Air Officer Commanding the R.C.A.F. Overseas. He urged repeatedly the need for a Jewish chaplain to be sent to England. He signalled Air Vice Marshal Sully, by now A.M.P.:¹¹³

We have a fairly large number of personnel of the Jewish faith overseas and I definitely agree with you that these personnel require the same attention as those of any other faith. In fact, as they are very much in the minority, they should be even more carefully looked after.

Early in November, Congress received an answer to my letter, stating that

it is not thought advisable at the present time to make provision for any full or part-time Jewish Chaplains. However, the matter will be reconsidered early next year, when I hope the situation will warrant some change in policy.

But only two days after this letter, a memorandum was sent by John McNab, now a Wing Commander and Principal Chaplain (P) for the Air Force, recommending the appointment of a full-time Jewish chaplain R.C.A.F. to be stationed in Toronto. McNab stated that he had conferred with me, and that what I had suggested was "largely in the nature of the appointment of part-time chaplains to serve under his direction." (Perhaps I had, with the British precedent in mind). Instead, he proposed that between "our" Jewish Chaplain to be appointed "and the Jewish Army Chaplain there will be a close liaison".

I did not see this memorandum, but Archie Bennett tipped me off that it looked as though I was trying to build myself a little empire. I also realized that it looked that way to the Congress Committee as well. The more rabbis in uniform, the better. If liaison was needed, Congress could provide it. I therefore dropped the subject like a hot potato.

As things turned out, it was the end of January 1942 before Congress recommended Rabbi Jacob Eisen of Edmonton to be Jewish Chaplain for the R.C.A.F.¹¹⁴ By that time arrangements were afoot for me to go overseas, so that there was very little opportunity to put the liaison method to the test. General Montague, Commandant at Canadian Military Headquarters Overseas, had cabled the preceding December about the need for a Jewish chaplain over there,¹¹⁵ and the number of Jews was increasing with every troop convoy.

But there were slightly more than the usual delays in getting me moving, so that on February 26th, 1942, I was still writing to the Air Force about orders for Passover leave for Jewish airmen.

Flight-Lt. Eisen was asked to report for duty to A.F.H.Q. on April 6th, 1942. He was settling in to his new job in Toronto, while I was busy looking for someone to take over for me in Montreal, so that I could be posted to England. How things worked out after my departure, I do not know. I find nothing in the record to indicate that each branch of the service did anything more than "make Sabbath for himself", as the folk saying goes.¹¹⁶

Overseas, I was once again the only Canadian Jewish chaplain, and when the R.C.A.F. needed a rabbi, they sent for me. I had the sad duty, among others, of officiating at the funeral of Pilot Officer Michael Jacobs, the son of the famous S.W. Jacobs M.P. who had died just before the war.¹¹⁷

Apart from the funerals, my contacts with the R.C.A.F. were invariably pleasant. I included airmen in the card index I kept at Headquarters in London. I followed their casualties and decorations as published in orders and included them in my periodic pastoral letters. They knew where to find me, and it was thus that I got to know some of my most interesting co-religionists.

Flight-Lt. Eisen arrived overseas in February of 1944. He was stationed at Air Force Headquarters in Lincolns Inn Fields. We had a number of conferences, and I brought him up to date on the seventeen months of experience I had had with the R.C.A.F. in Britain. I turned over to him the record of airmen I had gathered. At that point in the war, and in that setting, nobody gave any thought to inter-reporting. I hope the issue will never arise again. But if it does, some thought ought to be given to the table of organization.

6. MORE CHAPLAINS

Shortly after I was appointed, I began to mull over the problem presented by the great distances that characterize Canada. How could they be covered? A Jewish chaplain for each Military District and Air Command was out of the question. The population figures simply did not warrant it. Out of some 160,000 Jews in Canada, about 130,000 to 140,000 were concentrated around Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg. Yet training camps were situated all over the vast Dominion.

Casting about, I noticed a provision whereby local clergymen could be appointed as part-time chaplains, on the basis of visiting military installations within a reasonable radius on a one-day, two-day or three-day-a-week schedule. They were not required to wear uniform, but could buy one if they chose to. They were supposed to wear it only when on duty.

This arrangement seemed to offer a way to serve with regularity certain very large training centers, such as Camp Borden which was a considerable distance north of Toronto, or Camp Petawawa which was an even further distance west of Ottawa. I proposed this method as a first try.

On June 29th, 1941, the District Officer Commanding recommended Rabbi Oscar Z. Fasman of Ottawa¹¹⁸ for one day a week to cover Petawawa. In December of that year, a similar appointment was offered to Rabbi Samuel Sachs of Toronto¹¹⁹ to cover Camp Borden, but he declined. The position was accepted by Rabbi David Monson,¹²⁰ on the basis of one day per week.

A similar solution was proposed to the Air Force and elicited a good deal of discussion within the establishment. Finally, the genuine desire of the Department of National Defence to regularize the situation led to the issue by the Adjutant General, Major-General H.F. Letson,¹²¹ of an order embodying my proposal, addressed to all Military Districts, and through channels to all Air Force Commands.

No doubt the order was prompted by the change in the picture on the home front, because it coincided with my embarkation for England. The order (H.Q. 54-27-68-25) is dated at Ottawa, 4th July, 1942:

I am to inform you that in order to provide Chaplain Services to Jewish Personnel of the Canadian Army (A) H/Capt. Samuel Cass has been appointed to the Chaplain Service C.A. (A) and employed on a full-time basis, to be stationed in Montreal.¹²² H/Capt. Oscar Z. Fasman and David

Monson have been appointed to the Chaplain Service C.A. (R) to be stationed at Ottawa and Toronto respectively, and authority has been granted for the appointment of Rabbis Solomon Frank and M.C. Katz¹²³ to the Chaplain Service C.A. (R) and their employment on a part-time basis at Winnipeg and Hamilton respectively.

For the R.C.A.F., it is understood that Rabbi J. Eisen has been appointed to the Chaplain Service, R.C.A.F. and employed on a full-time basis, to be stationed at Toronto, and that four Jewish Chaplains will be appointed and employed on a part-time basis in Halifax, London, Victoria and Montreal, respectively.

The part-time Jewish Chaplains will furnish religious services to Jewish Personnel of both the Army and the Air Force in their respective localities and will submit their reports in duplicate, one copy to the full-time Army Jewish Chaplain and one copy to the full-time Air Force Jewish Chaplain. It will also be necessary that copies of these reports be forwarded to the Army District Chaplain (P) of the District concerned, and to the Air Force Command Chaplain (P) of the Command concerned, for their information. The full-time Jewish Chaplains will furnish Chaplain Services to the Jewish personnel for both the Army and Air Force as required, and will submit their reports in duplicate, one copy to the Principal Chaplain (P) Army and one copy to the Principal Chaplain (P) R.C.A.F.¹²⁴

More than fair enough, and a far cry from the stone-walling met with at the beginning of the war - although it must be said that it was not the Adjutant General's department that had held things up. But the best laid plans must yield to circumstances. Some of the rabbis mentioned by the A.G. did not pass the physical. Others not named turned out to be great assets to the chaplaincy. However, the idea that co-ordination between the services could be achieved by the complicated system of reports and copies of reports never came to anything, at least as far as I have been able to discover. But no matter. We were now accepted as somewhat normal in the military establishment.

As mentioned above, as early as December 29th, 1941, General Montague had cabled from London pointing out the need for a Jewish chaplain overseas.¹²⁵ Bishop Wells discussed the matter with me, and it was decided that I should go. The Principal Chaplain (P) Overseas, Colonel Ross Flemington,¹²⁶ was duly informed that he would be getting a Jewish chaplain. But I could not leave until a replacement for me had been named. Congress was asked to nominate, and the matter was referred to me.

I wrote to my old friend and Seminary classmate Samuel Cass. We were both born in Toronto in the same year, lived around the corner from each other, went together to the

old Simcoe Street Talmud Torah and were ordained in the same class at The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.¹²⁷ Sam had been occupying a pulpit in Vancouver, British Columbia for some years. I was dismayed to find out that he had just accepted a congregation across the border in Seattle, Washington. We exchanged letters, and he became convinced that it was his duty to serve. This time, nobody was taking any chances. Bishop Wells asked Congress for its endorsement, and on April 17th the Minister himself gave his okay.¹²⁸ Arrangements were begun for my embarkation leave, after which I was to depart on the first available troop ship.

But a snag developed. The American Selective Service was not about to let an unmarried man of military age leave its borders without special permission. The matter had to be handled by the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C. Finally, the clearance came and Sam was ordered to duty at M.D. 4 in Montreal. As things turned out, I did not get aboard ship until July, giving me time to make good-bye visits to family and friends in Toronto and New York.

Sam was to serve as my replacement on three occasions. The first was when he took over at M.D. 4 with responsibility for all of Canada. The second was in 1944, when he took my place in Antwerp, at H.Q. First Canadian Army. The third time was when the war was over, and I returned to Canada. He then took over at the office at Canadian Military Headquarters in London.

One innovation that took place with his first appointment was that chaplains were now given training at the Officers School in Brockville, Ontario. What I had received was exactly zero. I did not even know how to return the salutes I received on the street. I wrote Sam that we would have to train ourselves!

I went to see Colonel Sam Echenberg, Officer Commanding the District (Reception) Depot.^{128a} He seemed amused by my problem, but turned me over to a grizzled Sergeant-Major, who seemed equally amused, but spent ten minutes drilling me on how to salute and what to do if I ever had to march in a parade (fortunately, I never did).

After I left for England, it was decided that henceforth Jewish chaplains should take the Officers Training Course at Brockville, "making their own arrangements whenever the course dealt with purely Christian teaching".¹²⁹ Some of that field training would have come in mighty handy for me when I was living with the Army in Normandy in the summer and fall of 1944.

In October of 1944, C.M.H.Q. was clamoring for my return to London. Cass arrived in Antwerp and I turned things over to him. He advanced with the Canadian Army into

Germany, keeping in touch with me by military signals. He kept asking whether names he had seen on nominal rolls belonged to Jews, and whether graves he had observed should bear Jewish markings. Our access to Central Records at Acton was invaluable.

Sam came to Montreal a bachelor, but while stationed there met Annabel Goldfine, whose grandfather had been a rabbi in Toronto. They were married on December 7th, 1943. December 1944 found Sam at Administrative H.Q. First Canadian Army, naturally without postal and floral facilities, and with the Battle of the Bulge looming. So he did the next best thing. Using Army communications, he signalled me in London to cable an orchid to his bride.¹³⁰ I read this in the Archives with a stab of pain, remembering that in 1975 he and Annabel and their only son were killed in a motor crash while driving back from Toronto, where they had visited the graves of their families before the High Holy Days, in accordance with Jewish custom.

When the time came for me to return to Canada in 1945, Sam was transferred to Canadian Military Headquarters in London. With the office came his promotion to Major. Many years later he formed a plan to write the history of the Canadian Jewish Chaplaincy, but it remained tragically unfulfilled.

When the Adjutant-General issued his order of July 4th, 1942, he could not have known that a young Ottawa-born rabbi, freshly ordained by the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary in New York, was planning to volunteer for the Canadian Chaplain Service as soon as he had served the required year in a civilian pulpit. As things turned out, Rabbi Isaac Bertram Rose ("Bert") proved to be a real find. After leaving his congregation in Irvington, New Jersey, he was given the rank of Captain, sent to the O.T.C. at Brockville, and then to Pacific Command in August of 1943.

After some months of service on the West Coast, he was shipped to England early in 1944 and assigned to units and hospitals in the area of Aldershot and its surroundings. He set to work very promptly (after two brief conferences with me), including in his ministrations Allied Jewish troops as well as civilians, particularly families evacuated from London.

But the real purpose of sending him overseas soon became apparent. By June he was off to the Mediterranean to become the Jewish chaplain of the Canadian Corps fighting its way up the Italian peninsula along with the Eighth Army. He was welcomed with open arms. Christian chaplains had been doing what they could for the Jewish boys, sometimes invoking the help of British Jewish chaplains within reach. Reports make particular mention of Bert's "energy" and "vigor".¹³¹

When Canadian Forces were brought together in Central Europe for the final push into Germany, Rose teamed up with Cass. They did a lot of projects together, but their pride and joy was the "Jewish Chaplains' Centre" in Amsterdam, which offered short courses in basic Judaism to soldiers, many of whom had only hazy ideas about their own religion. The Centre was in operation from June to November, 1945.^{131a}

In the course of his work with survivors of the occupation, Rose met a Jewish girl who had been an active member in a resistance unit of the Dutch Underground. They kept in touch, and after the war were married in Ottawa. Leesa Rose has told her story in *The Tulips Are Red*, published in English, Dutch and Hebrew.¹³² Incidentally, the title was the password of her secret unit in the Resistance. I have been encouraging Bert to write up his own experiences in the war. I hope he will.¹³³

Towards the end of the war, additional full-time Jewish chaplains were commissioned. A few months before the invasion of Europe, Rabbi Hyman Gevantman of Oshawa received his commission,¹³⁴ and soon afterwards Rabbi David Monson of Toronto was elevated from part-time to full-time. Other full-time chaplains in the Army were Rabbis Lewis Weintraub¹³⁵ and Ephraim Mandelcorn,¹³⁶ both of Montreal. The Air Force added two more full-time chaplains - Rabbi Julius Berger of Montreal¹³⁷ and Rabbi Wilfred Gordon of Toronto.¹³⁸ That made a total of nine for all arms of the service. Given sufficient manpower, there should and could have been half again as many - and much sooner.

The experiment in part-time chaplains was only partially successful. But mention should be made of H/Flt.-Lt. A.M. Babb of Saint John, New Brunswick who served the Maritime Provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island) with great zeal;¹³⁹ and of H/Capt. M.C. Katz of Hamilton, Ontario who, in his army rounds, did not neglect the R.C.A.F.¹⁴⁰

7. A QUESTION OF RANK

It will be recalled that when Ottawa finally approved the principle that the Jews were entitled to their own military chaplain, it was proposed that the first one appointed, presumably charged not only with the duty to function as an individual chaplain but also to organize this hitherto unprecedented branch of the service, be given the rank of Major. It was the Canadian Jewish Congress that turned this offer down, stating that "for reasons of policy and equity, the proposed appointment should at this time carry the rank of Captain" (the minimal rank).¹⁴¹ I can only assume that after the long struggle for the principle, it was felt prudent not to ask for too much.

But there was another factor, much more complicating, one that had its effect on a number of issues in Canadian Jewish life. It was a conceptual problem. How were the Jews to be envisaged in a society basically divided into two religio-ethnic cultures, Roman Catholic and Protestant? Were they to be seen as a tail to the kite of one of the Christian denominations? Or were they, as the Privy Council decided in the famous Protestant School case, a *tertium quid*¹⁴² - a separate and distinct third party in spite of their relatively small numbers?

Indeed that case, followed through the lower courts to the Supreme Court of Canada and thence to the Privy Council in London is something of a touchstone for the (perhaps insoluble) questions involved, not only in law but in Jewish attitudes as well. The issue affected only the Province of Quebec - but that was where the largest and most influential Jewish community was located. Some Jews were quite satisfied with the old pragmatic solution dating from 1894 which stated that Jews were to be part of the miscellaneous non-Catholic minority in the Protestant school system - "Protestants for school purposes." The major demographic changes that took place before the 1920s gave rise to new issues, such as representation on Protestant school boards, teaching appointments, and many others.

Admittedly, this is a rather formidable background to suggest for so small a problem as the status of Jewish chaplains. And admittedly, with the passage of time the issues have shifted from the confessional to the ethnic. Nevertheless, in the 1940s the situation was what it was; and one can hear echoes of the un-thought-out question in the debate over so world-shaking a matter as the proposal to raise my rank to Major.

In February of 1943, the Minister of Defence set up a strict control over such promotions. One may suppose that every Protestant denomination was bringing its weight to bear, and a limit had to be set somewhere. The limit was 20% of the total, to be allotted

on a *pro rata* basis.¹⁴³ Had the original offer been accepted in my case back in 1940, the question need not have arisen. But we have already seen what transpired. As a result, I bore special responsibilities over a longer period of time than most others - but remained a Captain.

I never found out who took the initiative (I suspect certain officers on Headquarters Staff). But on June 21st, 1944, a letter went from General Montague, Chief Administrative Officer of Canadian Military Headquarters in London, to the Secretary of the Department of Defence in Ottawa, as follows:

H/Capt. S.G. Levi is the Senior Jewish Chaplain in the Cdn Army Overseas and at the same time is the Senior Captain in the Cdn Chaplain Service Overseas carried on the list of "Other Denominations".

The Principal Chaplain Overseas (P) has drawn to attention the case of this officer and recommends that he be promoted to the rank of Major. However, the P.C. (O.S.) (P) points out that, whilst Jewish Chaplains are nominally under his administrative control, he does not feel that they should be considered in the proper sense of "Other Denominations" insofar as promotion is concerned and submits that the promotion of H/Capt Levi should be outside the 20% quota applying to the Protestant Group.

I am of the opinion that this officer is deserving of promotion, and am prepared to approve such promotion on its merits, but it does seem hardly fair that he should cover off a vacancy for Major within the 20% quota applied to Protestant Chaplains Overseas.

It is requested that your decision be forwarded by cable.¹⁴⁴

This communication gave rise to a considerable amount of discussion and interchange of memoranda. The main lines of division were between the Chaplain Service (P) and the Division of Personnel. The former naturally wanted to hold on to the number of majorities¹⁴⁵ available for Christian chaplains, though I must say that they showed a greater perception of the fundamental issues involved. The Division of Personnel was guided by the rules of a bureaucracy everywhere - stick to the rule book. So the argument really was, how should Levi be promoted - within the 20% or outside it. But in the process, certain ideas and approaches peeped through.

Back in 1940, Bishop Wells had noted that "the Jewish religion is separate and distinct from the Christian religion".¹⁴⁶ In 1944, Ross Flemington was saying approximately the same thing - that Jewish chaplains were only "nominally under his administrative control", and should not be considered "Other Denominations" in the proper sense of the term.

In presenting the recommendation to Personnel, Major Walter Stevens wrote for the Principal Chaplain on July 25th, 1944:

Captain Levi's appointment dates from 7 October 40. He has thus completed three years and nine months of service, during a good part of which time he has been responsible for organizing and administering the Jewish Chaplain Service.¹⁴⁷

On the other hand, the Director of Personnel quoted the old ruling that there were six categories: Roman Catholic, Church of England, United Church of Canada, Presbyterian, Baptist and Other Denominations. I was shocked to see that old orders going back to the beginning of the war, whereby there were special insignia and even buttons authorized for Jewish chaplains; that Jews were to be accounted for separately; and that they were entitled to wear their own identity discs - none of this seemed to have reached the then current Director of Personnel!

In his opinion there appeared to be "no reason to isolate one of the Other Denominations and say that promotion of a Chaplain falling in that particular sect (*sic*) should be additional to the number authorized by the Minister."¹⁴⁸

The Director of Personnel suggested a way around the difficulty, while avoiding the theological issue of principle raised by the Chaplain Service:

As there are six Jewish Chaplains already appointed, and a seventh is under consideration for appointment, if the promotion of Jewish Chaplains were to be considered a separate matter the total number of Jewish Chaplains would naturally have to be deducted from the present total number of Chaplains when considering the promotion of a Chaplain other than Jewish.

It seems, therefore, that there is no unfairness in applying the rule as it now exists and requiring the promotion of Capt. Levi to be considered as coming within the 20%.¹⁴⁹

The Chaplain Service, caught in a bind here (you can't have your cake and eat it too) decided "not to press the matter further," and I was promoted to Major under the 20 percent rule. But, as a parting shot, Major Walter Stevens for the Principal Chaplain (P) repeated the fundamental question of principle: "It hardly seems correct either to the Jews or to the 'Other Denominations' to classify the Jews as though they were a Protestant Denomination."¹⁵⁰

As a personal opinion, I recognize a desire to be fair on the part of all involved. But lurking in the background remains a question that was, in this instance, by-passed. In any

event, it was August 18th, 1944, when Routine Order C.A. (O) RO 4933 listed my promotion to Major. Just in time, too, because on that same day I embarked for Normandy. The crown on my shoulder had its uses. I carried my own kit and bedroll, but I did get a private corner for the night in a steel cubby-hole below decks on the jam-packed landing craft and I did get a tent of my own at the Reception Point.

This was another example of breaking new ground. When I left for home at the end of the war, my successor automatically inherited the rank.

JEWISH AUXILIARY WAR SERVICE COMMITTEE OF CANADA

EASTERN DIVISION

(ORGANIZED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS)

265 MOUNT ROYAL AVENUE WEST, MONTREAL

TEL. PLATEAU 8422

August 19, 1940.

Dear

The War Efforts Committee feels it to be imperative that the Jews of Canada be aroused to a need for a greater identification with the nation's war effort. To this end a program of action has been planned and launched by the Committee.

It is vital to our program that this new drive for an increased war effort be extended to the Jews throughout Eastern Canada. We wish through you to reach the organisation in your particular community. We therefore call upon you to do the following things:

1. Call an emergency meeting of every important Jewish organisation in your community.
2. Inform these organisations of what is being done by this Committee.
3. Place before them the enclosed emergency program of immediate duties, copies of which may be obtained from us, and impress upon them that all the duties mentioned therein must be accomplished with the minimum possible delay.



Fig. 2: A sample of the stationery of the War Efforts Committee. [p. 5, note 19]

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE (CONT'D)

161.	Cohen, Sidney	R77107	
162.	Cohen, Wm.	R77432	
163.	Cosoff, J.	R77205	
164.	Cooper, Sydney	Flying Officer	
165.	Costin, Saul Jacob	R77438	
166.	De Solla, H.	R81826	(NEW YORK)
167.	Deutsch, Martin	R81834	(New York)
168.	Dolgy, Mack	R66673	
169.	Droyan, L. D.	R73895	
170.	Ehdler, Herman G.	R77097	
171.	Engel, Arnold	R73979	
172.	Finesilver, W.	R77278	
173.	Finkelstein, Jacob Israel	R55445	(Quebec, Que.)
174.	Fisher, H. J.	R66833	
175.	Fogel, Jack	R66860	
176.	Fogel, Joseph	R94067	
177.	Forman, Joseph	R84657	(Amherst, N. S.)
178.	Friedlansky, Irving	R73977	
179.	Gasco, W. A.	R77487	
180.	Gaun, Percy	R65399	(Sydney, N. S.)
181.	Geniele, Julius	R54820	
182.	Genser Henry E.	10723	(Dorval, Que.)
183.	Hillman, M. J.	R59175	
184.	Hillman, S. M.	R77270	(Sherbrooke, Que.)
185.	Glass, Harold Stanley	R93628	
186.	Clustien, A.	R64980	(New Waterford, N. S.)
187.	Goldberg, Moe	1891	
188.	Goldberg, Morris	R77397	
189.	Goldberg, Morris	R81843	
190.	Goldstein, Louis	81888	
191.	Goldstick, A.	R50944	(Edison, Alberta)
192.	Goldenberg, Samson	R66519	
193.	Goldenstein, Herbert	R66803	
194.	Goldner, Harry	R66755	
195.	Goss, Stanley Arthur	R77142	(Springfield, Mass.)
196.	Greenspon, N. S.	R81922	
197.	Grien, Alfred Nathan	R77492	(New York)
198.	Grotsky, Henry	R73532	
199.	Heinich, Morton Ralph	R76013	(Halifax, N. S.)
200.	Herman, George	R54753	
201.	Hershkopf, Issie	R81545	
202.	Hoffman, William	R94071	
203.	Hornstein, Joe	R81870	
204.	Jacobs, Michael S.	R77148	
205.	Jacobson, Joseph A.	R56201	
206.	Kachergensky, J.	R73874	(Granby, Que.)
207.	Kahane, H.	R77137	
208.	Kantor, David S. gt.	R76122	(New Waterford, N. S.)
209.	Karel, B. D.	R76186	(New Waterford, N. S.)
210.	Katz, Saul	R66675	
211.	Kaufman, M.	R73675	
212.	Kirsch, Abe	R77425	
213.	Klein, Samuel	R54791	
214.	Kleinman, David	R51768	
215.	Konick, Morris	11636	(Sydney, N. S.)
216.	Kugelmass, J.	R77268	
217.	Kushner, Jesse	R66881	
218.	Lakien, Joseph	R94013	
219.	Leibner, Max	R65796	
220.	Levine, Donald	R81941	
221.	Levine, Thomas C.	R77494	
222.	Levinson, Saul	R54778	
223.	Levitt, Eric	R73972	
224.	Levitt, Monty	R73973	
225.	Levy, Morris C.	R73998	
226.	Leznoff, Joseph	R81936	
227.	Lieber, Jack	R79062	
228.	Licht, Irving	R77214	
229.	Linds, Albert	R81890	(Sherbrooke, Que.)
230.	Livis, Mortimer	R56152	(missing 7/61)
231.	Mann, I. A.	R73833	
232.	Marcus, John J.	R79039	
233.	Mendelsohn, Sydney	R77114	
234.	Mendelson, Israel	R76020	(Glance Bay, N. S.)

MAY 2ND, 1941.

NOMINAL ROLL

CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS
WAR EFFORTS COMMITTEE
(EASTERN DIVISION)

Nominal Roll of Jewish enlistments in the
Canadian Active Service Force units in the
Province of Quebec, the Maritime Provinces
and the city of Ottawa.

1. Albert, Lou
2. Dorfman, Wil
3. Elstein, Perr
4. Erlick, Saul
5. Falovitch, S.
6. Farber, Hyman
7. Hart, John
8. Kessler, H.
9. Kligman, William
10. Nadler, Joseph

BLACK WATCH - OVERSEAS.

11.	Gliman, David	D81547	
12.	Deskin, J.	D81328	
13.	Gordel, Harry	D82307	(New Yo)
14.	Lavey, Cecil	D91736	
15.	Ritchie, Frederick	D81761	
16.	Wexler, Jack	D81992	
17.	Wolfson, Louis	D81975	

CANADIAN DENTAL CORPS.

18.	Angen, Jack	1/Cpl.	
19.	Claener, M.	Lieut.	(New Wa)
20.	Copnick, I.	Lieut. Capt	
21.	Ellman, Maurice	Staff Sgt. Major	(St.)
22.	Gitnick, P. J.	Lieut.	
23.	Hershon, Sam	Lieut.	

C. D. C. - OVERSEAS.

24.	Boyaner, Frank	Captain	(St. Jc)
25.	Cripps, S.	Lieut.	
26.	Franklin, Gerald	Captain	

CANADIAN FORESTRY CORPS

27.	Ehrenreich, Jack	D26804	
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C. F. C. - OVERSEAS

28.	Brenner, Alex	D113253	
29.	Caminer, H. H.	D17105	
30.	Malslin, Noah	D113002	
31.	Schwartz, Max	D113019	

CANADIAN GRENADEIER GUARDS

32.	Adelman, Archie	D27062	- Hal. 27/7/41
33.	Bateman, Lester	D26163	
34.	Berland, P. C.	D26486	(C of E)
35.	Bidner, Max	D26374	
36.	Birk, M. M.	D26428	
37.	Chodos, Moe Allan	D26590	
38.	Dinovitz, C.	D26676	
39.	Elman, Nathan	D26922	
40.	Feigelman, Joe	D534401	2nd Batt.
41.	Fisher, S.	D92748	
42.	Flegal, P. A.	D26735	
43.	Frankel, Hyman, H.	D26433	
44.	Fry, H.	D26877	
45.	Gassman, Nathan (gone)	D26150	(New York) des.
46.	Glickman, Morris	D26029	- Hal. 27/7/41

Fig. 3: A sample of the Nominal Roll. [p. 5, note 20]

Honorary Treasurers, I. Namerow, Sendel, I. Simpson, J. Sternthal, I. Aron Schachter; Chairmen Special L. Tolziss and B. A. Usheroff.

Abramson Blames the Goldbergs A New York Letter

By SAMUEL H. ABRAMSON

During a recent visit to Montreal, I had the good fortune to see an incomplete list of Jews serving in Canada's armed forces. Being of a statistical turn of mind, I compiled the following interesting figures of the number of men in the various branches of the service bearing the better known Jewish names.

	Army	Navy	Air Force
Abramson	1	1	3
Bernstein	9	1	6
Cohen or Cohn	46	2	37
Finkelstein	1		7
Freedman, or Friedman	14	1	10
Goldstein	19		11
Goldberg	1	1	15
Greenberg	20	2	10
Katz	13		9
Levy, & Levis	6	1	13
Rabinovitch	6		1
Rosenberg	6	2	9

The clan Cohen, as to be expected, takes top honors with a very fine representation on land, sea and air. The Cohens are still Jewry's most prolific family, and can be depended upon to do their bit. Worthy of notice is the proud record of the clan Abramson, certainly not one of the larger groups. The Abramsons were always fighting men and have given good account of themselves. For the sake of the record I should like to point out that the Abramsons in uniform hail from Montreal, Ottawa, Ansonville, Winnipeg and Vancouver; several are overseas, and

there are actually two Samuel Abramsons, one in the Royal Canadian Artillery, and the other in the Canadian Forestry Corps.

But what has happened to the Goldbergs, that proud and illustrious clan? With only 17 sons in uniform, they are beaten out by such minor clans as the Bernsteins, Freedmans, Goldsteins, Katzs and equalled by the Rosenbergs. What has happened to this ancient branch of our people? Can it be that the stock has lost its traditional vigor? What will the Canadian army do with only one solitary Goldberg in its ranks? This is indeed a problem of national importance and should be given the immediate attention of our public leaders.

Close study of the lists revealed other interesting information. For instance, there are two Jewish boys in the army named RIFLE, and one named GUNN. There are also a large number of Jewish soldiers, sailors and airmen who bear such fine old Jewish names as Chapman, Collins, Cameron, Campbell, Clapham, Chambers, Costello, Cripps, Evans, Hillier, Hyde, James, Jolley, Joffre, Keene, Kerr, King, Leighton, Livermore, Marshall, Moore, Morgan and Thomson. But the real gems are the names Donavon Thorndick, Albert James Windsor, Robert Christensen and Hugh Jarvis Bedell, all borne by brave young Jews wearing His Majesty's uniform.

Fig. 4:
The Canadian Jewish Chronicle,
March 20, 1942, p. 6. [p. 20,
note 91]

Fig. 5:
Lt.-General the Hon. P.J.
Montague being handed a
scroll by Private Lillian
Meltzer (Saint John) on behalf
of the Jewish members of the
Canadian Forces who raised
500 pounds for the
establishment of a Canadian
Memorial Grove of 1400 trees
in Palestine. Left to right:
Capt. W. Epstein (Calgary);
Private Meltzer; General
Montague; Hon. Col. J.
Logan-Veneta (Ottawa),
Principal Protestant Chaplain;
Hon. Col. M.C. O'Neill
(Edmonton), Principal Roman
Catholic Chaplain; and Hon.
Major S. Gershon Levi
(Montreal), Senior Jewish
Chaplain. [p. 23, note 98]



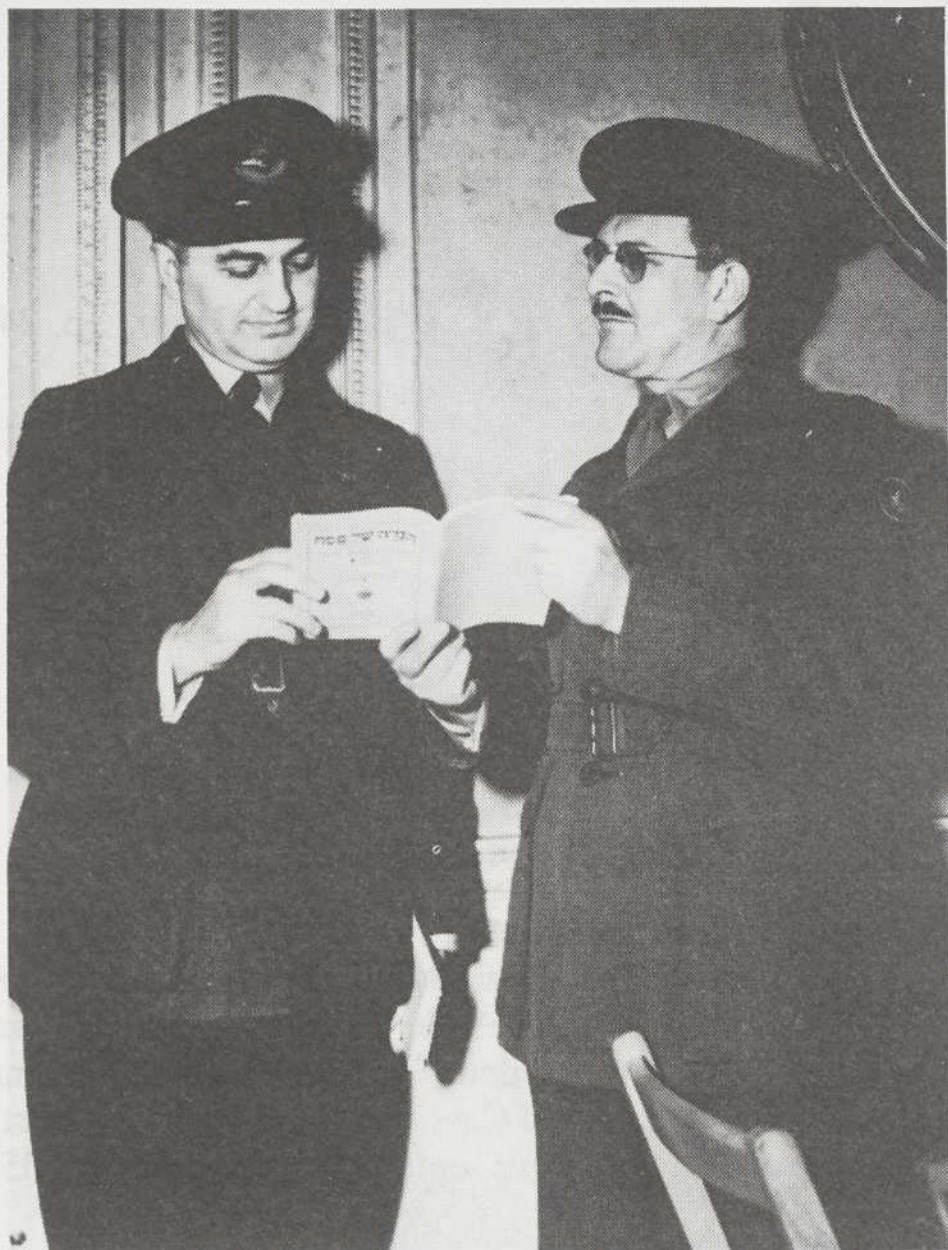


Fig. 6:
Squadron Leader Jacob Eisen,
Senior Jewish Chaplain,
R.C.A.F. and Major S.
Gershon Levi, Senior Jewish
Chaplain, Canadian Army,
confer after a Passover Seder
in London. [p. 29, note 114]

Fig. 7:
Chaplains S. Gershon Levi,
Samuel Cass and Jacob Eisen.
[p. 29, note 114; p. 33, note
127]



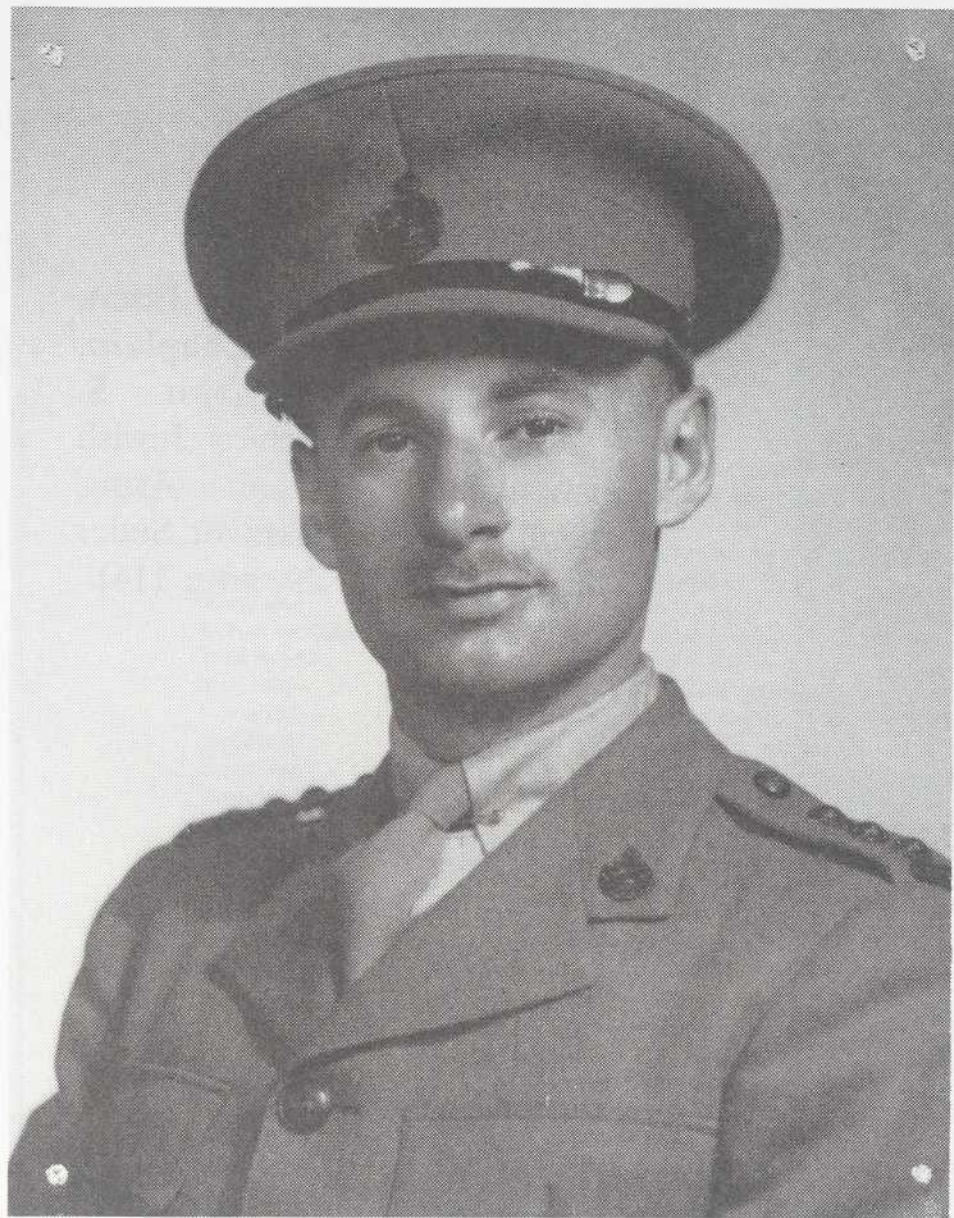


Fig. 8:
Captain Isaac B. (Bert) Rose. [p. 34,
note 133]

Fig. 9:
The Jewish Chaplains Centre on
Johannes Vermeer Street in
Amsterdam in 1945. Chaplains
Samuel Cass (left) and Isaac B. (Bert)
Rose are seated in the middle. [p. 35]





Fig.10: Left to right: Chaplains Isaac B. (Bert) Rose, Samuel Cass and Hyman Gevantman, ca. 1946, shortly before Rabbis Rose and Cass returned to Canada. [p. 35, note 134]



Fig.11: Front row, left to right: Col. Sam Echenberg, Commanding officer of M.D. 4; Major S. Gershon Levi, Senior Jewish Chaplain, Canadian Army; Rabbi Aryeh Lev of the Chief Chaplain's office, U.S.A.; Squadron Leader Jacob Eisen, Senior Jewish Chaplain R.C.A.F.; Major Samuel Cass, Canadian Chaplain. Back row, left to right: Capt. Lewis Weintraub, Canadian Chaplain; Capt. Ephraim Mandelcorn, Canadian Chaplain; (the rest are unidentified). This photo was taken on March 21, 1946 at a dinner at Shaar Hashomayim Congregation, Montreal, honouring all of the Canadian Jewish chaplains.

CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS.

Dear ^{est} Friend,

With the approach of Passover 5703 (April 20-27) I send you cordial greetings and good wishes. Naturally, we shall all miss the warmth of Seder at home, with our own families. But perhaps the festival will mean even more to us over here than it did back home. You know it is called the "Festival of Freedom", and celebrates the successful struggle of our ancestors to free themselves from slavery in Egypt. Today it doesn't read like ancient history any more. Freedom, equality, brotherhood, and the need to fight for these ideals - it's all there, in the Hagaddah, in the Seder symbols, in the story of our people's birth, - and for us Jews it gives an added meaning to the great fight in which we have a part.

Fig. 12:
Pastoral letters from Rabbi S. Gershon Levi to the Canadian Jewish troops before Passover and Chanukah 1943. (National Archives MG30 E252) [p. 46, note 162]

Now, you probably answer them. Order 3171, a discretion of intended as a. If the exigencies may be able to of April 19 of

You may Pesach. Or please let me communities a welcome to the right away, I and how many The new Place, will be planned there best of its programmes.

Matzah, experience and those who will time for the

Please, then, below, detach possible. I letter by Apr

CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

London, November 1943.

Dear Friend,

Here is another letter from your Padre, bringing you my warmest greetings for Chanukah, 5704 (Dec. 22nd to 29th). Perhaps this letter will not reach you till after Chanukah, as many of our boys are even further afield than when I wrote you last. But you will know that my greetings are no less warm, and that I am no less eager to hear from you.

Chanukah is the Maccabean festival, the Feast of Dedication. It commemorates the victorious fight for liberty and freedom of conscience waged by our ancestors against the totalitarians of old. Led by Judah the Maccabee and his four brothers, our people rose against the tyrant Emperor Antiochus of Syria, and though greatly outnumbered, defeated the enemy in battle. On the 25th of Kislev, in the year 167 B.C.E., they recaptured Jerusalem and rededicated the Temple to the service of God. Their victory has always been an inspiration to us Jews, and to all freedom-loving people. And today the spirit of the Maccabees lives again in those who fight to establish the Four Freedoms for mankind.

CHANUKAH CELEBRATIONS

If you are in Italy or North Africa, you may have little opportunity to celebrate Chanukah. Still, some of the boys have written me that they managed to observe Passover or the High Holydays with fellow-Jews in the British or American Forces, or with civilians, even as far away as India. You may be able to do the same. I would be interested to learn of your experiences.

In the United Kingdom, special Chanukah Services have been arranged, in conjunction with the Jewish Hospitality Committee, in centres all over the country. In most cases they will take place on Sunday afternoon, December 26th, and will be followed by a Chanukah Party.

In LONDON a service will be held at 1500 hours, 26 Dec., in the oldest Synagogue in the British Empire, - the 250-year old Synagogue in Bevis Marks, E.C.3. (near Aldgate). It will be followed by a tea and entertainment.

In ALDERSHOT a large service and Chanukah party will be held. Watch D.R.O's for the place and hour.

In BOURNEMOUTH, BRIGHTON, LEEDS, HARROGATE, DARLINGTON, GLASGOW - and scores of other towns, arrangements are under way for appropriate celebrations. Details can be secured from any Jewish Chaplain, or from your nearest Jewish Centre for the Forces.

(A reminder:- There is no special leave for Chanukah, and travel to London is strictly limited over that week-end).

That's all for now, except to say that I am always happy to hear from you. How are you getting on? Is your address changed? Are there any Jewish boys in your unit who are not in touch with me? Have you any requests? Let me know - your letters are always welcome.

May God Bless and Keep you, and may we all be able to light the Chanukah candles next year in our own homes.

Cordially,

To: Jewish Ch
A. I expect
B. I would l
from.....
C. I would l
Name and Rank
Unit,.....
Remarks:



Fig.13: Left to right: Rabbi S. Gershon Levi, Mr. Levi, Rev. Arthur Barnett, Mrs. Levi, Rabbi Isaac B. (Bert) Rose at a Chanukah party in Surrey, England, 1943. [p. 55, note 174]



Fig.14: A Chanukah party at Surrey, England, 1943. Standing in the rear left to right: unknown, Rev. Arthur Barnett, Mr. Levi, Rabbi S. Gershon Levi, Rabbi Isaac B. (Bert) Rose. [this event is not explicitly mentioned in the book]



Fig.15: Rabbi S. Gershon Levi, Senior Jewish Chaplain, Canadian Army, conducting a service with Rabbi Judah Nadich, Senior Jewish Chaplain, United States Army. [p. 58, note 182]



Fig.16:
A Seder in London, England, ca. 1943, probably for Canadian and American Jewish soldiers. [p. 58, note 183]



Fig.17:
Rabbi Samuel Cass conducting a Passover Seder at the front in Kleve, Germany, April 1945. [Appendix C, p. 72 and note 217 ff.]

Jewish Chaplain, United States Army. [p. 58 note 182]

PART TWO

FINDING A SCATTERED FLOCK

8. A JEW AMONG GENTILES

After I put on the King's uniform there were times when I felt a little bit as though I were masquerading - a kind of reverse role of the character in Laura Hobson's *Gentleman's Agreement* where a newsman pretends to be a Jew in order to find out what it is like. The two men on the train to Toronto mentioned above¹⁵¹ were not the only ones who took me for a Gentile because I was in uniform, and spoke their minds freely.

I say "a little bit" because there were many times when I met with the warmest friendliness just as soon as I made my identity known. But there were a few cases of the opposite as well.

Shortly after my appointment I was waiting for a street-car on Westmount Avenue when a motorist stopped. "Can I give you a lift, Captain?" Gratefully, I hopped in. Just as he let me off, another driver pulled out and passed him. "Must be a Jewish fellow. They haven't had their money long enough to learn good manners."

It was too late to give vent to the anger that welled up within me. I suppose I had led a somewhat sheltered life - growing up with Jewish kids, at Varsity¹⁵² something of a library recluse, then off to a Rabbinical seminary and life as a rabbi. Still, I was not ignorant of the facts of life. It took me some time to learn how to respond to such situations with controlled dignity.

On my first duty trip to Toronto I had to officiate at the funeral of a Jewish lad who was killed while a student-pilot in the R.C.A.F. It was my first military funeral.

That evening I paid the customary condolence visit to the family. Although I had grown up in Toronto, upper Bathurst Street was new to me - in my boyhood Eglinton had been the end of the world. I think I was driven to the house of mourning; my brother-in-law, Samuel Godfrey,¹⁵³ had not yet given me the coupe for the transportation the Army was unable to provide.

I emerged into the dark street and started to walk south in the direction of my sister's house. I passed an open garage door, where the homeowner was hosing down his car.

"Excuse me, sir, is there any kind of bus I can get to?" "Just a minute, Captain." He turned off his hose, backed out his car, and said: "I'll take you." Within minutes we passed the Holy Blossom Temple, and he remarked: "This used to be a nice neighborhood. But now that the Temple is here, property values will go down."

I had just come from the family of a boy who would never reduce property values, because he had just given his life in the service of his country.

Ultimately I was to accumulate a stock of answers to such foul balls, having learned that reasoned argument is not much use in the battle against prejudice. One such retort I learned from Major Sol Kanee, a legal officer at C.M.H.Q. When in the company of those who were running down the Jews, he would say, "Oh, I don't know. Two of the nicest people I ever knew were Jews." "Who?" "My father and my mother."

As a wandering Jew, I walked into more than one officers' mess only to find the buzz of conversation suddenly fall silent - more from embarrassment, I think, than for any other reason. Many Canadians, especially those from outside the larger centers of population, had never met a Jew. I learned to relax the tension with a stock of quips - mostly old hat. For example: "I'm the Jewish chaplain. I just came from the hospital, where they said that Cpl. O'Brian wanted to see me. I said to O'Brian: 'You don't want a rabbi; you want a priest.' He answered: 'Do you think I want a priest to catch the measles?'"

But there were many entries (perhaps more) on the credit side of the ledger. On my survey trip that took me all across the Dominion, I found the warmest of friendly receptions and co-operation from all District Officers Commanding and their Senior Chaplains, who treated me as a colleague. The same goes for every Air Command.

At Nanaimo on Vancouver Island I found an infantry brigade from Western Ontario with a strong representation of Canadian Indians. There was not a Jew among them. The commander himself, Brigadier Martin, was the very picture of an Indian Chief. Yet never was I treated with such a combination of warmth and deference. Hearing that I would stay over the weekend, as I did not want to travel on the Sabbath, Brigadier Martin asked me to preach the sermon at the Sunday Church Parade!

I must quote other instances of special consideration shown to me as a Jew. Shortly after the Chaplain Service Overseas moved to Trafalgar Square in London, I asked where a fellow could get a bite for lunch. I was directed to the Canadian Officers' Club around the corner, a second story rented by a group of volunteer expatriate Canadian ladies. Other ranks were well looked after by the Maple Leaf Club - but officers had to fend for themselves.

I climbed the stairs and joined the line of generals and lieutenants and everything in between. Behind a table stood several ladies in aprons dishing out the simple wartime food. The first of them, who seemed to know everyone, extended her hand: "I'm Alice Massey" (I knew she was the wife of the Canadian High Commissioner,¹⁵⁴ and the moving spirit behind the Officers' Club). "You must be the Jewish Padre." It was the first time anyone had recognized my badges; but no doubt she had inside information. Then, looking down at the Spam and such, she exclaimed: "O my, there's nothing here that you can eat."

"It's all right, Mrs. Massey," I protested, "I see you have plenty of lettuce and tomatoes." "No, no. I'll just slip into the kitchen and fix you a nice dish of fish. Just wait here." Soon she reappeared, triumphant. "Here, I've made you a nice dish of fish" - and she handed me a well-garnished shrimp salad!¹⁵⁵

I moved out of sight to the head of the stairs. A tired and hungry-looking young lieutenant came up and eyed with dismay the long line ahead of him. "Lieutenant, would you care for a nice shrimp salad?" His face brightened. "Would I!" I handed him the plate and beat a hasty retreat to a vegetarian restaurant in Leicester Square. But I carried with me the warm feeling of Mrs. Massey's good intentions.

The same considerate attitude was shown to me by the colonel of a French Canadian regiment - Roman Catholics to a man. I was visiting the First Division, stationed near the Channel Coast, in November of 1942. What was I doing with the *Vingt-Deuxieme* Regiment - known as the "Van-Dooz" since the First World War? Well, I knew that their adjutant was the only Jew in the outfit, and I figured he was entitled to a pastoral visit.

I arrived towards evening and was given a cordial welcome. At dinner, the colonel seated me at his right, with the regimental priest at his left and the adjutant next to the padre. Assuming that I understood no French, the colonel said to the adjutant, "Paul, ce soir vous ne mangez pas de la viande." Then he motioned to the Mess Sergeant: "Est-ce-que vous avez des legumes? des oeufs?"¹⁵⁶ Naturally, I kept a straight face.

On one occasion while I was still in Canada I was invited by the Talmud Torah Association of Ottawa to address their Annual Dinner. The organization was dedicated to Jewish religious education, and I felt I ought to accept. It was an unpretentious affair - none of your hired caterers - home cooking, service by volunteers. The organization put a few lines in the local newspaper, announcing that I was to be the speaker. When I arrived at the modest building, a young fellow rushed up to me, slightly agitated. "What shall we do? Bishop Wells has shown up!" Without hesitation, I answered: "Seat him at the head table next to me."

The Principal Chaplain was wearing the civilian canonicals of an Anglican bishop. After the grace before bread, a fellow with an open bottle came around. "Care for a drink?" He reached me first, and I said: "No thanks." Next the Bishop, who said heartily: "Yes, I'll have a little whiskey." Then, turning to me: "You know, my boy, that will never do. I have a lot of trouble with chaplains of a certain denomination who follow an officer from the bar to the table, all the while talking about the sinfulness of drink." "Don't get me wrong, sir. I have nothing against drink in moderation. It's just that I have to make a speech."

The ice well broken, the Bishop confided the real purpose of his presence. "You know, my boy, during wartime an officer is not supposed to make speeches without the permission of his superior officer." I made some sort of apology - I didn't think the rule applied to sermons and such. Then I asked innocently: "Isn't there a regulation that requires officers to appear only in uniform except within the privacy of the Officers' Mess?" We both grinned and let the matter drop.

This ignorance about Jewish practices was fairly widespread, especially in the matter of alcohol. Were they like Catholics or like Baptists?

Early in my chaplaincy I spent a weekend at Camp Borden - a huge training ground miles from nowhere. The Commanding General treated me like a V.I.P., putting me up in the guest quarters of his own H.Q. Building, and even assigning a young lieutenant to look after me. I must admit that that summer Sabbath was one of the longest in my life. I read everything readable in the lounge of the mess, the young fellow never more than a few yards away. Finally I took pity on him. "Look, there's no reason for you to be stuck with me. Haven't you anything you want to do?"

He had his orders. "Say," I asked, "will you be missing anything tonight?" "We-ell, there's a movie." "Why not take me along?"

We drove through the dark to the biggest Nissen Hut I had ever seen, crowded to the rafters with soldiers. After the show, there were lots of officers milling around at the entrance. I saw a major speak to my bodyguard, who shook his head with a glance at me. I went up to the major, a jolly fellow who proved to be the Chief Medical Officer. "Look, if you're having a party, just forget about me. I can find my way back." "Oh no," cut in my shadow, "you'll get lost." "Then why not take me along?" The major grinned. "I warn you, there'll be a lot of drinking." "Not to worry."

At the infirmary, where there seemed to be no patients, the chief prescription was Hiram Walker. Somebody turned on the radio, and we heard that British Forces had invaded Vichy-held Syria. I believe that was when Moshe Dayan lost his eye.¹⁵⁷

Nobody in the room had any idea about the Middle East; but my wife and I had visited Palestine in 1935. So, out of the depths of my military ignorance, I expatiated on the trouble the French had had in mandated Syria; and how they had been unable to tame the Jebal Druse, and similar learned matters. My disquisition was received with great respect.

On the way back to quarters, four or five young fellows piled into the car driven by my aide-de-camp. Silence. To break it I asked: "Were you guys worried about me?" Hesitation. "Well, we didn't know." I said: "In my Bible it says: 'wine maketh glad the heart of man'."¹⁵⁸ From the back seat a sepulchral voice: "But when morning cometh, it ain't so hot!"

9. GOALS AND MEANS

What was a Jewish chaplain supposed to do? How would he function? The answers were not at all obvious. In an earlier age, military chaplains were sort of paramedics; they wrote letters for soldiers with bandaged eyes; they made themselves generally useful; and above all, they prayed. The assumption was that they were living with a group of men mostly of the same faith as theirs. But how to deal with a religiously pluralistic military formation?

There were precedents. The United States had a unified chaplain Service, and each chaplain was supposed to help any soldier of a faith different from his to find someone to provide the consolations and perform the duties of that soldier's faith. A Protestant chaplain ought to find a priest to celebrate the Mass for any Catholics in his unit. On Christmas Eve on a train loaded with U.S. troops heading into the Battle at Bastogne, a Jewish chaplain multigraphed sheets of Christmas carols and distributed them along with sprigs of evergreen.

But my situation was different. Bishop Wells was not talking through his episcopal hat when he asked: "How will a Jewish chaplain in Canada function?"¹⁵⁹ When I first reported for duty, I wondered too.

The fact is that I was left pretty much to my own devices. I got the impression that I had to create my own job; that if I had stayed home and done nothing, and just kept out of the way, nobody much would have noticed, at least for a long time. I knew something about what was done in Britain and in the U.S.A. I had already conducted services at Petawawa and Farnham, and spent some time with military personnel. But now I would really have to think things through.

Quite apart from the great distances, there were the questions: "Who is my congregation? Where will I find them? How will they find me?"

It must be kept in mind that in the major Christian communions it is important to have someone at hand to administer the sacraments connected with life and death. But Judaism (most will agree) has no sacraments. It is an individual and family-centered way of life, rather than synagogue-centered. Certainly, it is preferable to pray with a community. Some parts of the service can only be read when a minimum of ten worshippers are present. But basically, it is the home that is the focus of religious observance; the family table that is the altar. Some American rabbis have told me that the prayer that seemed to move soldiers most was not a traditional one, but one composed especially for the military prayerbook. It begins with the words: "Far from home and those we love..."¹⁶⁰

Of course, all the other roles of chaplains in general - moral support, comfort when sick or hurt or bereaved, counsel about personal problems, the sense of having a friend in the establishment, not to speak of the fellowship of religious services, all these were to be included. I decided to take a number of steps.

First, I had to let the fellows know that I existed. Here, the Nominal Roll played a part perhaps not originally thought of. I asked the Chaplain Service to order 3,000 copies of the *Prayer Book for Jewish Members of H.M. Forces* from the Senior Jewish Chaplain to H.M. Forces in London.¹⁶¹ On June 21st, 1941, I was notified that the shipment had been lost by enemy action. It was soon replaced by 5,000 copies that arrived safely.

To every man (and later, woman) on the list I mailed a prayer book with a friendly letter, inviting communication and/or visits and requests. I got some interesting reactions. One was from a sailor in the Canadian Navy. Could I send him a Jewish calendar? He wrote from the Pacific island of Suva (it was before Pearl Harbor). Later he showed up at my office in Montreal and asked me to send calendars to the two European refugees he had met in the South Pacific.

Thus began a series of "pastoral letters" which continued throughout my service. The mailings (and the postal returns) helped me keep abreast of transfers, casualties and illnesses.¹⁶² Of course, I kept in touch with lists of casualties and decorations. I remember conning the roll of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, taken captive in Hong Kong.

A second decision was that I would have to be mobile - a sort of circuit rider over the vast Dominion. A single man was worth a visit - if isolated, all the more so.

A third decision was to set up a network of home-hospitality, especially for Jewish festivals. In this respect the contacts of the Canadian Jewish Congress proved invaluable. The effort continued throughout the war - overseas, it was the Jewish Hospitality Committee that provided lists of homes for the Seder and similar occasions. In my rounds, I myself was sometimes the beneficiary of such home hospitality.

This does not mean that I did not find plenty to do right where I was. There were military hospitals and other installations in and around Montreal. But I knew I would have to get moving - and soon I was on my way.

10. *A MARE USQUE AD MAREM*

The Latin motto on Canada's coat of arms is really a quotation from the Hebrew Bible. The Fathers of Confederation in 1867, looking for a term to describe the new political entity they were creating, hit upon the verse in Zechariah (9:10): "His dominion shall extend from sea to sea". Hence, the "Dominion" of Canada; hence, the new meaning given to the word "dominion" as a political term.

My duties as the (so far) only Jewish chaplain took me literally from sea to sea. My first survey trip was to Military Districts 3 and 2 - along the St. Lawrence River Valley and the Great Lakes littoral from Montreal to Windsor. It would have taken much too long had not my brother-in-law, Samuel Godfrey of Toronto, given me a small coupe and taught me to drive it. I stopped in at Army and Air Force installations along the way, got to meet Commanding Officers and their Jewish personnel, picked up much useful information and made myself known.

Returning to Montreal, I flew to Halifax for a planned trip to the Atlantic coast. Travel in the forties was not what it is today. This was the first time in my life I was airborne.

Halifax provided contact with the Navy. The town was suddenly packed beyond its normal capacity - the Lend-Lease naval deal had just been concluded.¹⁶³ I had to find a cot in what was ordinarily the ladies' lounge of an overcrowded hotel.

I have not forgotten my talk with the Senior Naval Chaplain. He wore no insignia of rank. "When I talk to an ordinary seaman, I'm an Ordinary Seaman Chaplain; when I talk to an admiral, I'm an Admiral Chaplain."

There was the huge embarkation camp at Debert, Nova Scotia; there were places to check in the southern part of the Province. The civilian Jewish community was unfailingly helpful. I spent a pleasant Sabbath in Halifax.

I crossed the Bay of Fundy by ferry and toured New Brunswick. I think I returned to Montreal by train. Next came the West - a more formidable operation in those days. I had to wait for authority before setting out on the first leg of the journey - to Winnipeg by train. Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta were strewn with flying schools of the Commonwealth Air Training Plan. I covered the ground (and air) in little Harvards and Cessnas, my heart in my mouth most of the time - and sometimes by a train that ran two

or three times a week. I remember climbing a control tower to have a talk with a solitary British Jew who was undergoing training far from home. He was thrilled that a rabbi had come all that way just to visit him.

Headquarters' chaplains and command chaplains went out of their way to be helpful. They introduced me around, set up flights, suggested where to go. I was flown into one air station just at supper time, and the moment I entered the mess the heated discussion fell silent. At first I thought it was me; but the adjutant took me aside and explained. It was the C.O. who was running an overtight ship. I met him, a domineering fellow, who said: "Jewish chaplain, eh? Aren't your guys scared of what will happen if Hitler gets his hands on them?"

"No, sir, that's one of the reasons they're in this fight. I think they'll give a pretty good account of themselves." "Oho, so you think pretty well of your fellows." "That I do, sir."

It was around 9:00 p.m., but the adjutant motioned me to follow the C.O. on his inspection rounds. All over the place airmen were busy scrubbing spots that were not clean enough for the Old Man (they called him "Old Bull"). Outside in the dark a small squad was being drilled - they had been found wanting.

I sat up late with the adjutant. Why had nobody done anything? Well, you couldn't go over his head, outside channels. There was no chaplain at the moment. I suggested I might put in a word at Air Command - I was going back there. He thought I should not get involved.

In the morning I boarded a Cessna for the flight back to H.Q. There were five of us passengers. I sat next to a squadron-leader who turned out to be from Command Staff. I introduced myself and said: "They seem to be having a bit of trouble with Old Bull." Close-lipped, he simply said, "We know."

The story has a sequel. Almost a year later, aboard a crowded troop-ship, I ran into the self-same adjutant. "Hey, what happened to Old Bull?" He shook his head sadly. "They came for him the next morning and led him away. He was crying."

I proceeded westward, partly by train. The meeting with Louis Rosenberg the demographer was rewarding. He seemed to know every farmer in the Jewish agricultural settlements at Herschel and Edenwold, Saskatchewan and similar places. I met few Jewish servicemen. Most of them had volunteered early, and were already overseas. The lovely old synagogue in Victoria, British Columbia was closed for lack of worshippers.

The Commanding General of Pacific Command was most cordial. By his speech and manner he seemed to be an old British Army officer. He closed his door and lowered his voice: "Two of the young officers on my staff are descended from Jews, although they don't know it". I wonder.

At Nanaimo, when Brigadier Martin invited me to preach at the Brigade Church Parade,¹⁶⁴ I decided to be distinctively Jewish. I took my text from the Talmud, and applied it to Hitler's "secret weapon". It was not, I said, any new armament, but the ability to arouse hatred, to set race against race, people against people. Honestly, I did not realize that I was going straight to the heart of the Brigadier.

I was not quite finished - in fact, I was in the middle of a sentence - when I felt a drop of rain on my nose. Immediately I said, "Amen", and stepped back from the microphone. The band struck up, the three regiments drawn up in a hollow square marched off in good order, beating the downpour that was to follow.

That may have been the best sermon I ever preached.

One unexpected thing I was to discover: there were military formations in exile using the hospitality of Canada for training purposes. The Free Netherlands' Forces had a camp near Stratford, Ontario; the Norwegian Air Force had a base on the Island in Toronto Harbor; somewhere there were Polish units in exile - and so on.

These foreign armies were interested primarily in fighting effectives.¹⁶⁵ They did not have the resources for the usual service branches - medical, dental, chaplaincy and the like. For the most part, these were supplied by the Canadian Army. Sometimes I found myself called upon to help the Jews in these non-Canadian forces.

One case concerned a family newly arrived from Holland. Their son reached military age and received his call-up notice to report to the Free Dutch unit. Unfortunately, the day he was to report was the first day of Passover. The father asked me whether I could get a postponement.

I went to explain matters to the Consul of the Netherlands' Government-in-Exile. No explanation was necessary. Any Amsterdammer since Rembrandt's time is familiar with Jewish customs and Holy Days. In fact, Mr. Loudon was a frequent guest at the synagogue in Montreal. He picked up the phone and called the Commanding Officer at Stratford. He spoke Dutch, but the words I understood were "Pesach" and "Seder." Result: the young man was given an eight-day deferment.

An entirely different situation was that of the so-called "Jewish internees". These were German-Jewish refugees, mostly unmarried young men, who had been rounded up in Britain after the fall of France on the suspicion that they might be enemy agents. In the slightly panicky atmosphere that followed the emergence of fifth columnists in the Lowlands and in France, these people were classified as "enemy aliens", and the Canadian government was asked to intern them along with regular prisoners-of-war. Their story is documented in full in Eric Koch's *Deemed Suspect - A Wartime Blunder*, which has been characterized as "one of the dark corners of Canadian history".¹⁶⁶

The problem was that, as far as the Canadian authorities were concerned, they were simply providing custodial space for enemy prisoners. At first the internees were held in P.O.W. camps along with captured Nazi pilots and interned Italian fascists. The young Jews rebelled and made things hard for the Canadian officers put in charge of them, and for the guards, who were mostly overage soldiers belonging to the Veterans' Guard. The truth finally penetrated that these were not dangerous Nazis, and they were put into separate camps.

This was one more headache for the overburdened Saul Hayes. Here were Jewish victims of Hitler who needed help, but he could not have easy access to them because they were technically "enemy aliens," kept behind barbed wire. He suggested to me that, as an army officer, I might be able to visit some of these boys, on the theory that, as a Jewish chaplain, the Veterans' Guard was part of my flock.

I tried it. I went to a nearby camp - either Farnham or Sherbrooke.¹⁶⁷ It was easy enough to get past the gate. But the Commanding Officer was a different story. He let me stand for a while without looking up from the papers on his desk, and then said, "Yes?" - still without looking up.

As I had expected, there was not a Jew in the Veterans' Guard. As for his prisoners - he would expect them to be loyal to Germany, the land of their birth. A real Bourbon: since the First World War this Major seemed to have learned nothing, but forgotten a great deal. I left his icy presence no better informed than when I had come in.

But out in the sunshine things were different. Waiting for me was the Second-in-Command, who proved to be none other than the Montreal lawyer and public figure J. Alex Edmison.¹⁶⁸ We had been at Jarvis Collegiate in Toronto at the same time. He showed me around and assured me that everything possible was being done in this difficult situation.

My visit to Isle aux Noix was an entirely different story. The commander, Major Racey, was a humane and understanding man. He was noted for his care in providing for the special needs of the Orthodox Jews in his care.

Incidentally, there was a lot of talent among these internees - musical, artistic and academic. They did not waste their time, but kept up with their studies. It was a group of them who wrote and produced the "Canadian Army Show," with its hit-songs "You've Got To Get Used To It" and "Let's Hang A 'V' On Every Maple Tree".

Of a completely different order was the affair of the Polish Jews at Owen Sound, Ontario. Again, it was Saul Hayes who put me on their track.

A group of Jews had gotten out of Poland ahead of the German Army, and travelling across Russia had reached Shanghai. From there they had managed to cross the Pacific to Vancouver and volunteer for the Polish-Army-in-Exile. They were sent to the Polish barracks at Owen Sound. Somehow, word leaked out to the tiny Jewish community in Owen Sound that these Jews were being treated as semi-internees. They were given no uniforms, no training, no weapons. What was the truth of the matter? As an army officer, I might have a chance to find out.

My attempted intervention was unrewarding. I met some of the men in a large shed, with no military trappings. They claimed their Commanding Officer was a notorious "Endek" - a member of the National Democrats, a strongly anti-semitic party in pre-war Polish politics.¹⁶⁹ I did not get to meet him, and was never sure I had gotten to the bottom of the matter.

Later, on a visit to Ottawa, I went to see the Canadian officer in charge of liaison with foreign armies. I found him unsympathetic and got the distinct impression that he felt I was meddling. Afterwards I heard the camp was closed.

I came closer to the Polish Army a few years later in France, when the Polish Brigade came under Canadian command. Nobody could tell me anything about whatever had happened at Owen Sound.

11. WITH THE ARMY OVERSEAS

Once again there was new ground to be broken. Never before had a Canadian Expeditionary Force had a Jewish chaplain of its own. To be sure, some precedents had by this time been established in Canada, principally that Jewish chaplains would come under the authority of the Protestant Branch. But in almost every other important respect, service with the Canadian Forces in England presented a new situation.

In the first place, the problem of great geographical distances was dissolved. The entire Canadian Army - all five divisions plus the usual service units, artillery regiments, medical, dental and other supporting troops - was concentrated in order of battle facing the south coast, mostly in the counties of Surrey and Sussex, with a slight overflow into Hampshire and Kent, but all within easy reach. I took it for granted that this was no accident - that immediately after the withdrawal from Dunkirk the Canadians had taken up the front line in the defence against invasion, since they were the only force with its arms intact. I may have been right.

In the second place, the war was no longer half a world away; it was visibly right at one's doorstep. The wail of sirens, the crack of anti-aircraft guns, the sight of bombed-out buildings, the nightly blackout - this was a very different scene from what was the norm in Canada.

Then there was the civilian community. Every chaplain needs as his rear echelon the religious community from which he derives. The Canadian Jewish Congress continued its support in whatever ways were possible across a submarine-infested ocean, sending me books and pamphlets and - I now regret to say - masses of cigarettes for distribution. But the Jewish community of Britain - old, established, well-organized - was right where I needed them and rendered unparalleled hospitality and service.

However, the principal factor in making my overseas experience different, and the breaking of new ground easier, was Colonel Ross Flemington, the Principal Protestant Chaplain Overseas. The fact that (as a friend at National Headquarters later confided) my position did not exist in the formal establishment did not deter him from acting as though it did. With lots of good will and an abundance of common sense, he treated me as a colleague from the very start and made every facility available. He took an interest in my work, without interfering.

The crowded troop-ship on which I crossed was part of a huge convoy that took eight days. We were three chaplains in a stateroom for two on what had been a cruise vessel. As

the youngest, I volunteered to use a mattress on the floor. We were included in a group of chaplains and doctors who were sent immediately to Farnborough for a four-week course of basic training. I was told that General McNaughton, commanding Canadian troops,¹⁷⁰ was furious to have been sent chaplains and doctors with no military training, who had never heard a shot fired in anger or any other way. True, we were not supposed to bear arms, but we would no doubt be near a lot of gunfire and might even have to extricate ourselves from some tight positions. Perhaps this was one reason why new chaplains were thereafter sent to Brockville.

At Farnborough we were taught how to operate automatic weapons, how to ride motorcycles over rough terrain, how chain of command functioned, how to recognize aircraft and much else. As for me, I was eternally grateful for the course in map-reading - perhaps more so than any of my fellow-students, since I was to be the most mobile of the lot, both in England and on the continent.

During this period of training, Ross Flemington came down from London to discuss postings with his newly-arrived chaplains. He and I concluded our business in a few minutes' conversation. I told him that I would have to move around, and suggested London as the center out of which I should operate, because it was the hub for road and rail travel - "like the spokes of a wheel."

I did not realize then - or even years later - that this was accomplished by a skillful treatment of the book of rules, as witness the following sent a year later from the Adjutant General's Department at C.M.H.Q. to the corresponding branch at Reinforcement Units:

10/Levi, S.G./1 (M.S.6.)

17 Jul 43.

H.Q.

C.R.U. (Attn. "A")

H/Capt. S.G. Levi, C.C.S.

(Jewish)

1. Reference your 409 Chaplains/1 (D.A.A.G.) of 15 July 43: since no vacancy exists on the war establishment at C.M.H.Q. for this officer, it will be necessary for him to remain on strength at 1 C.G.R.U. attached to C.M.H.Q.
2. When this attachment was first authorized, it was considered best for H/Capt. Levi to be situated in London which would make him accessible to all parts of the Forces and enable him to draw Subsistence Allowance

which would partially solve the problem of his expenses in moving about the country.

3. For your information.

H.M. Cathcart, Lieut. Col.
for D.A.G.
Canadian Military Headquarters.¹⁷¹

This remained the technical situation until the end of the war, and I remained blissfully ignorant of it. For all practical purposes, it made absolutely no difference.

My posting to London took effect on September 8th, 1942 - four days before Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year). It seemed that at critical moments I was always running into the High Holy Days. Flemington suggested that I find suitable living quarters where I could store my gear and live when I was not on the road. In his report for that September he wrote:

H/Capt. S.G. Levi is now in charge of Jewish personnel in the Canadian Army Overseas. After consultation with A.A.G. (Pers.) I requested he be attached to C.M.H.Q. He has an office with the Canadian Chaplain Services and will make planned visits to the formations.¹⁷²

As it happens, the Chaplain Services were just then in the process of being assigned their permanent location. When I did get a desk and a telephone, my first self-assigned task was to pull out a list of children who had been "evacuated" to Montreal and to telephone their parents. After the fall of France, the British Government, bracing itself for a Nazi invasion, had quietly encouraged families with ties across the Atlantic to send youngsters under 16 and oldsters over 65 to a safe haven away from the war zone. Ordinary communications being what they were across the submarine-infested ocean, a personal message was greatly appreciated. Reactions ranged from thankful to tearful, plus the occasional invitation to lunch.

These parents were scattered around Britain; but there was one family I could contact even before I had a phone. Barnett Janner, a former Member of Parliament, was a solicitor with offices in High Holborn.¹⁷³ His young son Greville and his daughter Ruth were in Montreal with their grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Cohen, their aunt, and other assorted grandchildren. On one of my early visits to London, I went to the law offices in High Holborn to deliver the message.

Barney and his wife, Elsie Cohen Janner, gave me a cordial welcome and invited me home for dinner. I told them that I was about to be posted to London, and asked for their advice about finding "digs". They promised to make inquiries, and the next time I was in London they had a solution. I could become a paying guest in their childrens' room.

And so I became the man who came to dinner. I more than half suspect that they relished the anecdotes I was able to remember about their absent children.

I decided to spend the High Holy Days with the new arrivals at Canadian Reinforcement Units. Therefore I returned to my old stamping grounds, where I assisted the Rev. Arthur Barnett (who had been Chaplain to H.M. Forces in World War I)¹⁷⁴ in conducting the services at the Military Synagogue in Aldershot, an old building which had stood since the First World War. It was shortly after my return to London that the Chaplain Services were given semi-permanent offices in Fairfax House, Holborn.

In the interim, I had made the rounds of various officers at the Reinforcement Units, paid my respects and gotten to know certain key figures, and made friends with Major Abe Friedgut, Senior Law Officer at C.R.U.¹⁷⁵ Of him I was to read years later in the War Diary of the Senior Chaplain at C.R.U. in an entry dated July 22nd, 1942: "This officer has been of great assistance".

I also oriented myself to the institutions and personalities of Anglo-Jewry, and paid my respects to Chief Rabbi J.H. Hertz, a courageous and sharp-spoken man who refused to leave London during the blitz and all through the war. I understand that he turned down a peerage. He was ultimately made a Companion of Honour.¹⁷⁶

It was from Fairfax House that I really began my work, fielding calls from "the formations" (units in the field), dealing with immediate problems, some of which had waited for my arrival, and planning my strategy. It was from there that I paid the first of my planned visits - first to Army Field Headquarters at Leatherhead, and from there on a trip lasting several weeks to every element in the First Canadian Division, which had been in the U.K. since 1939. The army provided a jeep and a driver.

In his report for December, 1942, Flemington wrote: "H/Capt. Levi is settling into his work splendidly, and receiving whole-hearted support."¹⁷⁷

Finally, on December 10th, 1942, the Canadian Chaplain Services got their permanent home - on the top floor of Malaya House, right on Trafalgar Square, opposite Canada House. It was not a large office. One entered an open space, with room for a secretary or

two and some files. To one side was the office of Father O'Neill, the Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain Overseas; a kinder and gentler man I have yet to meet. Straight ahead was the office of Colonel Flemington, entered by way of a space shared by the assistants to the two chiefs. In the middle was the office of the Jewish Chaplain - a small room, but perfectly suited to my needs. I could close the door and listen in perfect privacy to the problems of servicemen who came to see me.

But I had other, special needs. I had to build up a card-file of my military flock; I had to find some way to house it. I had to communicate by letter more than the others did. But this was wartime England, and everybody was learning how to make do.

All my needs were met. I designed a record card, and the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps printed up a supply. Their carpenters built me an eight-drawer card-tray to exact specifications - wooden, of course, but perfectly serviceable. The individual records it held proved to be one of my most useful tools.

Ordinary flat tables were the order of the day. But a small desk with drawers appeared from an unexpected quarter. It was sent from the solicitors' offices of Barnett Janner and Davis - who claimed (or pretended) that they had no further use for it. It filled the bill to perfection.

But I was putting an additional load on the one available secretary. Col. Flemington suggested that I recommend a civilian Jewish secretary who could keep my records, take my phone calls and deal with whatever business came in whenever I was out in the field. This was how Pauline Hellier entered the service of the Canadian Army. She managed the office of the Jewish Chaplain beautifully until 1945, when she left for Canada to become the bride of a Canadian soldier. Her place was taken by Cpl. Gloria Rosen of the C.W.A.C.¹⁷⁸

Overseas, record-keeping was even more important and useful than it had been in Canada. Canrecords was located at Acton, on the western edge of London. I was given a hearty welcome by the Commanding Officer and shown around by a genial Major from Ottawa. From then on, I and my successors could get any information we needed for the asking.

Proper marking of the graves of the Jewish fallen was a matter of serious concern. I was told this was handled by the Imperial War Graves Commission, so I visited their office in a tiny hamlet north of London and was instructed in the proper procedures.

The raid on Dieppe had taken place while I was still in basic training at Farnborough.¹⁷⁹ I conned the casualty lists carefully, trusting to memory, and later checked at Acton. Then,

in 1944, I was able to visit the churchyard at Dieppe, where the townsfolk had lovingly placed stone crosses over all the graves. I was able to make the necessary corrections.

Once these procedural matters were in place, I could devote myself for weeks at a time to visiting the remaining formations of the Canadian Army in the field, as well as Canadian Military Hospitals and R.C.A.F. stations. Touching base with individuals was more common than holding services or discussion groups. These individual chats often led to uncovering problems and worries that might have been left unspoken. I often wished I had had more training in pastoral psychiatry.

Of course, there were regiments with more than a "minyan" of Jews - like the 17th Hussars, the Toronto Irish, or the 48th Highlanders (Jews in kilts!). One such outfit, the Royal Montreal Regiment, was disbanded while still in England, following a decision by those who decide such things. This was quite a blow to morale, and I understand that some of the fellows went on a small rampage at Seaford, where they were stationed. Colonels O'Neill and Flemington thought it would be a good idea to go down and conduct a final regimental service. I agreed.

As the three of us were leaving, Flemington turned to me. "Gershon, I'm going straight from here on leave. Would you mind taking my communion set back to the office?"

The following morning found me in a bus queue on Bayswater Road holding the communion set awkwardly, not quite sure which side was up. A British officer took his place behind me with a cheery greeting: "Been holding a service, padre?"

In the matter of leave, I, too, was actually entitled to one week every three months, with a travel warrant to any place in the United Kingdom. But I never seemed to find the time, and took the privilege only once in three years.

Among the concerns that kept me busy, were relations with the officials of Anglo-Jewry. I have referred to my visit with the Chief Rabbi. I also went to pay my respects to Rabbi Gollop, Senior Jewish Chaplain to His Majesty's Forces.¹⁸⁰ He had his office in Woburn House, where most Jewish organizations had their headquarters - and I believe still do. While there, I decided to have a look at the modest club-room where servicemen of any of the Allied Forces could get a cup of tea, buy a postage stamp or get information.

It was a single room. At that hour of the morning, it was occupied by only one Dutch sailor, speaking to the young lady in charge. Soon, he and I got into the elevator together. I: "You're only the second member of the Netherlands' Navy I have met." He: "Who was the first?" I: "Oh, it was back in Montreal where I heard a speech from a Dutch Naval

Surgeon." He: "Do you remember his name?" I: "Oh no. But he described his escape from Nazi-occupied Holland, and told how one of his sons had crossed the channel in a rowboat."

By this time we were out on the street. He pulled a photo from his pocket. "Do you recognize this man?" "Why yes, that's the doctor!" "And I'm the fellow who crossed in a rowboat!"

It was not very long before the Jewish Hospitality Committee realized that something bigger and better was needed for the troops from many countries, especially the U.S.A., who were thronging into Britain and inevitably coming to London on leave.

A large unoccupied town house on Portland Place (near the BBC!) was acquired, and a small Executive Committee was formed under the energetic leadership of Sigmund Gestetner.¹⁸¹ The Executive included Chaplain Judah Nadich of the U.S. Army¹⁸² and yours truly for the Canadians. The house was renamed "Balfour Service Club for the United Nations" (this was before the U.N. existed!) and soon became a hive of activity. Among other things, it was the scene of two large Passover Eve "sedorim" conducted simultaneously by Nadich and me in 1943, and repeated in 1944.¹⁸³ The latter was visited by Chaim Weizmann, who gazed sorrowfully at all those young people about to invade Fortress Europa. A son of his in the R.A.F. had just been shot down.¹⁸⁴

For the High Holy Days of 1943, the Committee placed at our disposal a large hall in Red Lion Square, a cantor included. Once again Nadich and I teamed up to serve a large and very international congregation.

At Hanukkah of 1943, a joint service was again held, this time in the old Spanish Synagogue in Bevis Marks.¹⁸⁵ This time we were joined by the Jewish Chaplain of the Free French. I knew the service was being taped by the Overseas Service of the BBC. I composed a special prayer in Hebrew looking forward to the redemption of all Israel, in the hope that it might be heard by European Jews in hiding. Later, it was strange to hear one's own voice following the opening beats of Beethoven's Fifth, the signal of the BBC broadcasting to occupied Europe. It is even stranger - and sadder - to think of the hopes one could nourish in December of 1943.

Of course, soldiers could not always get to London on festive occasions. During my travels, I was often able to drop in on families in the country, and thank them personally for the hospitality given to Canadian soldiers. One such visit was to a rabbi living in the shadow of Winchester Cathedral. He received me in a darkened room, silent and morose. To brighten things up, I asked about his prewar duties as supervisor of kosher food for the

Cunard liners. I mentioned a Shomer^{185a} we had met on the old Berengaria in the 1930s. His voice broke. "That was my son. He was killed in action."

A Canadian is both a North American and a citizen of the British Commonwealth. Thus I found myself invited to conferences of American Jewish chaplains as well as to those of the British Forces. But the one I remember best was purely Canadian. Shortly before D-Day, the whole Protestant Chaplaincy was addressed by General Hughes,¹⁸⁶ Monty's chief chaplain. They were kind enough to seat me on the platform and to ask for my greeting. I wonder where else I could have found an audience to appreciate my biblical reference. I said: "Most of you know me from my 'going to and fro upon the earth, and from walking up and down on it'".¹⁸⁷ They seemed to know their Book of Job, for there was a roar of appreciative laughter.

כאן מת רבינו גרשון ז"ל
חבל על דאבדן ולא משתכחין.

Appendix A¹⁸⁸

Two Letters Written by Rabbi Levi in 1944

Sunday, Sept. 24th, 1944.

Dear Selig:

By the time you receive this letter, you will have heard that your mother and sister are in very good health. As soon as I can reach a Canadian Military Post office, I will send you the cable for which I know you are waiting. But now I have so much to tell you that I scarcely know where to begin.

I left H.Q. Camp on Thursday before Rosh Hashanna and spent days travelling far and wide to arrange final details for services for the troops in various sectors. Saturday night (16 Sept.) your letter was brought up to me. Curiously enough, I had been talking to Major Gerald Levenston¹⁸⁹ that very morning and he had said he was resolved to seek out your family as soon as we got to Belgium.

I was then far from the place you indicated and terribly involved in my duties. After Rosh Hashanah, I returned to H.Q., prepared matters in that and neighbouring sectors for Yom Kippur, and Friday morning (22 Sept.) I broke camp and set out for a long trip.

After travelling over 100 miles I arrived in Mons¹⁹⁰ at 1.00 p.m., parked in the main square and set out to find Rue des Marcottes. An old man insisted on showing me the way. As we entered the street, Honia passed on the other side, thought I looked familiar but, hearing the French conversation, decided she was wrong and went on her way. I didn't notice her.

I arrived at the house and asked for Alice Verhozen.¹⁹¹ She proved to be an elderly schoolmistress. She told me your sister had just left but could be found. We set out, tried several places and after a twenty-minute search, found where she was. A child at the gate went in to say there were visitors. Honia came out onto the terrace and exclaimed: "Is it, or is it not!" After embracing her, I produced your letter. On seeing your handwriting, she broke down completely and wept on my shoulder for several minutes. She composed herself and we went in. M. & Mme., two children and the school teacher. Matters were explained, wine was produced and we talked a while. Your sister explained that M. had risked his life over and over again to protect them, found them a hiding place, supplied them

with money, false documents, etc. The teacher had taken great risk in sending you the card. She has been visiting them regularly each week for two years. The convent, too, had taken risks in hiding them.

Mlle. Verbozen, Honia and I returned to the square. I put them in my car and we drove out of town to the convent where they had been hiding. The nuns admitted us and there, in a large room, which has been their home for some time, I found your mother. She looks unchanged (since 1935 when I visited her.) They insisted on feeding me - a nun assisted.

They told what they had gone through - how they had fled from place to place - Charleroi¹⁹² etc. - until finding this hideout. I asked whether they had ever been ill. Your mother had not. Honia, at the time they arrived in Mons, had been on the verge of a breakdown. She had almost lost her memory. There were times when it had been too much for her, wondering what would happen. She had begged your mother that both of them take gas. But your mother was wonderful. She never lost courage or faith and strengthened her daughter always - and pulled her through. Once they settled in Mons (albeit in a tiny room at first, and always confined to it) Honia recovered. She is very well now - her old self again.

I asked what I could do for them. They said nothing - only cable you as soon as I could. Unfortunately, as for money, I had not a Belgian sou, but they are not short of money. I hope to return to them, duty permitting, and advance them what I can. But that is not a pressing problem. They are all right now, during this period of transition, until contact is established with the outside world. I left them your letter - it means so much to them - and had to resume my way (it was a considerable detour for me).

Brussels looks as though there had been no war. Luxuries unknown in England are available - at exorbitant prices. I attended Shul (Rue de la Regeure) yesterday. It is estimated 18,000 Jews have arrived in Belgium, mostly in Brussels. Antwerp Jewry is a "Churban".¹⁹³ Possibly 2,000 Jews have emerged from hiding. Some 3,000-5,000 children are distributed in the countryside. What will become of them is a problem. I attended a meeting of the Antwerp Jewish Committee (nebbich)¹⁹⁴ today. The Hon. Pres. is a non-Jew, Malter.

Your aunt (Kutner) and married son are alive in Charleroi. Her husband and boys are missing.

Tonight I met the "Scarlet Pimpernell" who saved thousands of Jews here - Prof. Allard, a non Jew¹⁹⁵ - but there is too much to tell in a letter. One day the whole story will become known.

You have no idea how thrilled I will be tomorrow to send you a cable.

Gershon Levi (Mook)

Letter from my brother, Major S.G. Levi, Jewish chaplain with Canadian forces overseas.¹⁹⁶

Thurs, Sept. 28th/44

I don't know where to begin. It's the day after Yom Kippur, and I haven't written you since Sunday night. I got back here, to my own H.Q. at 7.00 P.M. - just in time to put up my tent in the twilight. Though I was in time for supper, I decided to sup on prunes and chocolate bars, so I should have a chance to write to you. I have spent the past hour reading a vast accumulation of mail, and now I begin to write - first to you, and I have to tell you about the most crowded week in my life - that's why it's hard to know where to begin.

I'll begin [with an] account of my wanderings since last Friday. You will know from the papers that at that time the Canadian Army was spread over a terrifically wide front in France and Belgium. I had reason to hope they would be more concentrated for Yom Kippur, but it worked out just [the] opposite. Anyhow, I left bright and early from our place in France, and arrived at 1.00 P.M. in Mons, Belgium (a detour), to look for Selig Gross' mother and sister. I told you I had received a letter from him Erev Rosh Hashonah, giving me the name and address of a stranger in Mons who had written him last spring, through the Red Cross, saying his mother and sister were alive. I arrived in Mons, parked my car, and set out to find them. At the given address I located the author of the postcard - a graying school-mistress. She took me to Honia, who had been visiting her five minutes before. I embraced her and showed her Selig's letter. She wept on my shoulder for several minutes. We went into the living room of the people she was visiting. The man, she said, has risked his life time and again to protect them. He had found them a hideout in a convent outside of town. I put her in my car and we drove out. A nun ushered me in and insisted on serving me an omelette and salad. There, in a room abounding with crucifixes, was old Mrs. Gross. She was still a sparkling old lady, after two years of a hunted life. It was she who kept up the spirits of the two and prevented suicide. I spent an hour with them and promised to cable Selig. (Only on Tuesday did I reach a place where I could cable. I sent you one at the same time.)

Proceeding, I reached Brussels just in time for Shabbos. I had several errands to do en route. I drove directly to the lovely Shul. It was open, and services were beginning. When I walked in, there was the Secretary of the London Jewish Hospitality Committee. He had come over with Mr. Gestetner¹⁹⁷ to make arrangements for clubs, etc. They had wired me via Army channels to meet them on Sunday - but here I was! After Shul, I checked in with the military authorities, and was ensconced in the officers' mess - a luxury hotel.

What a change for me! A real bed, bath, etc. I took six baths over the weekend - for a week I hadn't even been able to get a shower! [Then] we went to Friday night dinner at the home of a local Jew - wife and daughter. It was real old style - gefilte fish, etc. I got back to the hotel late. Shabbos was Shul - it was pitiful the way people crowded around me, pressing letters on me to relatives in [the] U.S., Canada, South America, Palestine. I had to explain that I couldn't send them, but would write on their behalf. Then home to dinner with the Rabbi - Ullman, formerly of Antwerp.¹⁹⁸ The Nazis removed him to Brussels and tried to use him for their own ends. The worst persecutions began in 1942, but though he was in [a] concentration camp several times, he managed to survive. He showed me his wounds and bruises. Just before the British arrived, he, his wife and daughter were in [a] concentration camp awaiting deportation. All were agreed that had Brussels been liberated a week later, scarcely a Jew would have survived. As it is, it is estimated some 18,000 have survived in Belgium, mostly in Brussels. During dinner, I walked a British soldier - a Jewish lad from Wales, who spoke excellent French. Later, we were joined by another Jewish soldier, this time in the Belgian army. He had escaped several years ago, and now at last was home - from England and Canada.

I'll have to continue in my next letter.

Appendix B¹⁹⁹

An Interview with Rabbi Levi Shortly After World War II

“Major Levi had warm words of praise for the devotion and heroism of the Jewish soldiers in the Canadian army. During the battles of Caen, Falaise and on the Seine the Canadian army suffered heavy losses,²⁰⁰ among which were a large number of Jews. Major Levi told of soldiers devoting their leisure time to mark the graves of fallen Jewish comrades with the Mogen Dovid. The chaplain has the highest praise for the morale, devotion and idealism of the Jewish soldiers who, he said, always knew what they were fighting for. They were impelled by a common desire to defend Canada against its enemies, to avenge their suffering and murdered brethren in Europe and to bring hope and succour to those who survived. Major Levi had special commendation for the heroism of the Jewish doctors in the service who showed exemplary courage and self-sacrifice while carrying out their tasks in the face of the greatest danger. He found it interesting and encouraging that Jewish servicemen evinced a strong interest in Jewish affairs and eagerly frequented the field synagogues not only as a place of worship but also as a gathering point where they could exchange experiences with other Jewish soldiers, discuss Jewish affairs and obtain advice and information from the Jewish chaplain. A number of the soldiers who, in civilian life, had been indifferent to Jewish affairs expressed a strong desire to learn Yiddish. Away from home and lonely, they felt for the first time in their lives the need of knowing more about their own background and religion, and it was always a cause of deep regret for Major Levi that circumstances and the lack of time made such a course impossible in the theatres of the war.”

“His first task upon landing in Normandy was to organize a synagogue for Jewish service men. A broken-down shack on the Normandy bridgehead was the scene of the first Jewish religious service on a Friday evening: it was a dramatic and solemn event, its poignancy heightened by the presence of an elderly Jewish woman from Paris who had been in hiding for two years to escape the Nazis. That night she lit candles in the traditional Jewish manner. To the assembled Canadian soldiers, she was a symbol of Jewish suffering and martyrdom - the first Jewish person they liberated in Europe.”

“Most touching was the observance of Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur in September of 1944. It was a solemn and gloomy period: the Canadians were storming the ports of Calais and Boulogne, but, in the midst of battle, Jewish soldiers came to worship and to mark the coming of the New Year and the Day of Atonement. The bursts of shells and the deafening roar of planes overhead could be heard from the large tent where the services

were held. Soldiers left their tanks and their cannon to go to the synagogue; immediately after the services they resumed their places on the battlefield. Kol Nidre was attended by some 200 Jewish servicemen.”

As one of the first Jews to step on the soil of Europe after the cataclysm of German occupation, it fell to the lot of Rabbi Levi to learn the extent of the Jewish catastrophe in the Canadians’ theatre and the heroism of Jewish resistance as well as to organize the first emergency relief work in the areas which the Canadian forces liberated. As I. Medres reported in the [Montreal Jewish Daily] Eagle:

“Passing north through France on the way to Belgium, Major Levi inquired in every city and town as to the whereabouts of any Jewish residents, but in each case received the same sad answer: nobody knew what had become of them. They had either been deported to some unknown destination or they had fled for their lives.

“A few days before Rosh Hashonah [1944], Major Levi was informed by the authorities that a concentration camp near Boulogne had just been captured and that the inmates were Jewish slave labourers. Major Levi immediately visited the camp and found that they were Belgian Jews who had been sent by the Nazis to work on building Hitler’s Atlantic Wall. One of the inmates, who later became the shammoss (sexant) of Major Levi’s military synagogue, told a moving tale of Nazi brutality and of the humiliation inflicted upon the Jewish prisoners. This was one of the first groups of Jews to be liberated on the continent and for them Major Levi was the first outside Jew they [had] beheld since the Nazis had enslaved them...²⁰¹

“Immediately after Yom Kippur, the chaplain arrived in Ghent. He set out to find some trace of the Jewish population that he knew had lived there before the war but discovered that only two persons of the entire Jewish community had remained in the city. Ghent had been captured a few days before Yom Kippur by a Polish unit among whom there were a large number of Jews. Major Levi learned that an impressive synagogue service had been organized by the Jewish soldiers. There being no synagogue in the city, the service was held in the municipal library and the assembled Jewish soldiers were warmly welcomed by the Burgomaster as deliverers of his city. Major Levi heard of a historic Sefer Torah (scroll of the law) located in the municipal archives at Ghent. This Sefer dated back to the Middle Ages and had been used by the Jews in their congregation, but when the Nazis invaded Belgium it was placed in the archives for safekeeping. Major Levi visited the Ghent archives and requested that the Sefer be loaned to the Jewish community for the Succoth services. The request was granted.²⁰²

"In Brussels, Major Levi met Jews who had taken an active part in the underground movement against the Nazis, and one prominent Jewish member of this movement, a professor of aeronautics at the University of Brussels, told him that one of their activities was to hide Jewish children in Christian homes. The group had an agent in Gestapo headquarters and were fully posted on Nazi plans. On one occasion they raided a sealed train and liberated 400 Jews who were already on the way to Poland. Moneys for this work had come by courier through Jewish committees in Switzerland from the Joint Distribution Committee."²⁰³

Appendix C²⁰⁴

An Interview with Rabbi Samuel Cass in April, 1946

Jewish Chaplain from the Canadian Army Tells his Experiences

Amidst the Ruins of Jewish Life in Belgium and Holland - Canadian Jewish Servicemen Were the First Relief Workers for the Liberated Belgian and Dutch Jews - Meetings with Liberated Jews and Liberated Torah Scrolls

A Conversation with Rabbi Samuel Cass

by I. Medres

Major Samuel Cass is one of the older Jewish chaplains in the Canadian Army. Like the other Jewish chaplains, he was recommended for his position by the War Efforts Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress. A few weeks ago, he returned from Europe. He is, in the meantime, still at his post and has his office at the headquarters of Military District 4. This writer visited him there and chatted with him about his experiences and impressions in Europe both as a chaplain and as an observer of Jewish life.

Rabbi Cass spent about a year on the other side of the ocean. He came there in October 1944, when the Canadian Army was engaged in bitter battles near the Maas River opposite northern Holland and [near] the Rhine opposite Germany.²⁰⁵ He left the Continent for England about a year later, several months after the German surrender. During that year, relates Rabbi Cass, the liberated Jews from Belgium and Holland healed their physical and spiritual wounds and quite a lot of progress was made.

Jewish life in Holland and Belgium cannot return to the same situation which existed before the war. The losses are too great to be replaced. Yet wounds are healing. Jewish life is developing on the terrible ruins which the war and Nazi occupation brought about, stated Rabbi Cass.

In the first days after the liberation, one found individual Jews here and there. These were Jews who came out of hiding, Jews who for years had lain in ditches and in cellars, in attics and in forests. For these Jews, the Canadian soldiers were the redeemers who brought not only freedom but also life.

The Aid of Canadian Jews

The first aid to the liberated Jews of Belgium and Holland came from Jewish servicemen in the Canadian Army. Jewish soldiers collected food and brought it to the liberated Jews who could not live on freedom alone. The aid was given in a fine, worthy fashion, with a brotherly hand. A little later, there began to arrive Jewish refugees from the liberated concentration camps of Bergen-Belsen, Auschwitz and other camps. They came emaciated, as thin as needles. Many were too weak to stand on their feet. All were forlorn, dirty and dressed in rags. One had to provide them not only with food but also with clothing, medicines, soap, friendship and tenderness. When one gave these people a piece of soap, they delighted in it like an extraordinary luxury. They smelled it the way observant Jews smell the spices at the havdalah ceremony.²⁰⁶

A year later, says Rabbi Cass, these liberated Jews already looked different. They looked like they had healed from the terrible war wounds. Around fifty percent of the liberated Jews were already able to take care of themselves. They occupied themselves with social activities. Jewish organizations had come to life. The Zionist movement is making a strong impact. Hachsharot were opened to prepare agricultural workers for the Land of Israel.²⁰⁷

In all the cities and towns of Holland and Belgium, there were Jewish communities before the war which had had beautiful synagogues. Almost everywhere, the Nazis destroyed the synagogues. With the help of Canadian soldiers, says Rabbi Cass, the ruined synagogues were repaired. In the course of the year, a large number of synagogues were renovated. In some places, the synagogues were the prettiest buildings in the city. Consequently, the Nazis took over those buildings and used them for military or administrative purposes.

Headquarters for Sacred Objects

Rabbi Cass tells a very interesting story about the synagogue in Tilburg, a medium-sized city in southern Holland where there was a large Jewish community.²⁰⁸

When Tilburg was liberated, they found fifty Jews there who had survived of the 500 Jews who had lived there previously. In the synagogue of Tilburg, they found Torah scrolls and other holy objects such as sacred books and prayerbooks which the Nazis had collected from all the synagogues in that region. The Torah scrolls were lying on the floor. Rabbi Cass relates that these Torah scrolls were subsequently sent to all the Jewish communities which were liberated.

This was the touching encounter which Rabbi Cass had with the liberated Torah scrolls of Holland and Belgium.

The Funeral of a Desecrated Torah Scroll

In the city of Tilburg, relates Rabbi Cass, he had to conduct the funeral of a desecrated Torah scroll. That scroll was brought to Tilburg from the small Belgian town of Turnhout.²⁰⁹ When Rabbi Cass went to a military hospital in order to visit wounded Jewish soldiers, he was informed by a soldier that there is a cafe in Turnhout where the windows are covered with the parchment of a Torah scroll.

Rabbi Cass went to investigate and established that a sheet of parchment from a Torah scroll had been used in lieu of a pane of glass. The owner of the cafe explained that he had received this "material" from a neighbor who had decorated her entire house with such "paper" which had looked to him like "Jewish music". Accompanied by a couple of officers, Rabbi Cass went to the house which was "decorated" with the parchment from the Torah scroll. It was a small, old house with a broken roof and walls full of holes. The parchment of the Torah scroll was being used to cover the holes in the roof and walls so it shouldn't rain in. The woman explained that she had found these "materials" in a factory. When she heard that this is a holy object which one may not use, she said: "If so, take it away." But how does one take away the sheets of parchment and leave behind a broken roof and walls full of holes? Rabbi Cass said that he would come back the next day to take the parchment.

The next day, Rabbi Cass arrived with a military truck and military craftsmen. The latter removed the parchment and repaired the holes in the ceiling and walls with proper building materials which they had brought.

The fragments of the torn Torah scroll were brought to Tilburg where they were buried according to Jewish law.

Canadian Jewish Soldiers Conducted Sedorim²¹⁰ Last Year at the Siegfried Line²¹¹

Rabbi Samuel Cass, Canadian Jewish Chaplain, Describes the Sedorim which He Conducted at the Front - Artillery Shelled the German City of Kleve²¹² as Jewish Servicemen Conducted the Seder²¹³

From a Conversation with Major Cass

by I. Medres

A Jewish chaplain needed to be a strategist all by himself. When a Jewish festival approached, the Jewish chaplain needed to reckon and plan - to reckon where the front would be on the festival days and to plan where to conduct the services so that as many Jewish soldiers as possible would be able to participate.

Last Pesach, relates Rabbi Cass, his problem was to hold the sedorim as close to the front lines as possible. The most important question was: in which places should one conduct the sedorim? Therefore, it was necessary to make certain strategic calculations and to calculate in which towns the front would be on the first two days of Pesach.²¹⁴

The Canadian Front on Pesach

Rabbi Cass studied the war-maps himself and also sought the opinion of high-ranking military officers. Finally, he planned that the sedorim would be held in two towns, in Kleve and in Grave. Kleve is the first German city which the Canadian Army entered in its Rhine offensive. Grave is a small town nearby in Holland, near Nijmegen.²¹⁵

Rabbi Cass relates that he was pleased with the choice of both locations. Kleve was the most active point on the Canadian front on the first days of Pesach. From there, the Canadian Army began to storm the Siegfried Line which was next to the Rhine. A little to the west, in Grave, which is by the Maas River, there was a concentration point for Canadian troops. From Grave they used to send soldiers to the front in Kleve in the Rhine offensive and also to Nijmegen which is near the Waal River where the Arnhem front was located.

Rabbi Cass conducted the sedorim in both places, in Kleve and in Grave. Sedorim for Canadian servicemen were also held in several places away from the front.

At that time, the First Canadian Army arrived from Italy. With those troops arrived Rabbi Rose, the Jewish chaplain who was with the Canadian Army in Italy. Rabbi Rose conducted the sederim in Ghent and in Antwerp, Belgium.²¹⁶

In Tilburg, southern Holland, a seder was conducted for Jewish servicemen in the local synagogue by the local Jewish civilians. The leader of the Jewish community in Tilburg is Mr. Gross, a layman who is the head of the community. He took over the synagogue soon after the liberation and settled in the synagogue apartment which was previously occupied by the rabbi. The synagogue was used by the Nazis as storage for the Torah scrolls and other sacred objects which they had robbed from the synagogues in the vicinity.

The Sedorim at the Front

The sederim in Kleve and Grave were at the front. The soldiers came to the sederim in Kleve by literally tearing themselves away from the front lines. In Kleve, the sederim took place between two and four in the afternoon.²¹⁷ In Grave, they took place in the evening.

Kleve was entirely destroyed. The civilian population fled. Only a few houses remained partially intact. There was an old, historic synagogue there, but it was completely destroyed. A half-ruined high school building was chosen for the sederim. It was necessary to work hard in order to adapt the building for that purpose. But one did the work.

Tables were lined up and covered with white paper (tablecloths were not available). On the tables were matzot²¹⁸ and wine and all kinds of Pesach foods. Everything was completely kosher.²¹⁹ The food was provided from England through a committee under the supervision of Chief Rabbi Hertz.²²⁰ New pots, cutlery and dishes were purchased in Brussels. The army had provided the best cooks to see to it that the food should be tasty and festive.

The Seder at the Siegfried Line

Around 250 soldiers came to the first seder in Kleve. They came from the front lines. They were very emotional. The call to the seder came to them unexpectedly. They didn't imagine that near the front there would be a seder with all sorts of familiar Pesach foods. They couldn't control their emotions. They sang and cried out for joy. Their singing and exclamation mixed with the sounds of war from outside, with the violent roar of artillery. This was the Canadian artillery assaulting the Siegfried Line.

When the soldiers came to the seder, they saw the set tables, but there were no chairs. Should one conduct the seder standing?! No, one must sit! So the soldiers decided. They began to run through the ruins of the destroyed city and from under the ruins they pulled benches, chairs and couches. In a short time, all were able to sit at the seder.

The seder was festive. Rabbi Cass had suggested that the youngest soldier should ask The Four Questions.²²¹ The youngest was a Montreal boy named Alfred Cohen. Rabbi Cass spoke to the servicemen about the meaning of Pesach in connection with the historic moment of the present war and about the great historic duties which they had the opportunity to fulfill now as Jews and as Canadian citizens.

From Kleve, Rabbi Cass travelled to Grave. There the seder was conducted in a cafe which the army had requisitioned especially for that purpose. In Grave there was a small synagogue. The synagogue remained, but the Jews had all been deported.

Around 250 Jewish servicemen also came to the seder in Grave. To them, too, the call to the seder came unexpectedly. The atmosphere there was not as charged as at the seder in Kleve, but it was, nevertheless, a seder at the front. While the seder was being conducted, one heard the whistling of the bombs which flew overhead.

The seder at Grave was attended not only by army personnel but also by Canadian and British airmen. There, too, one applied the principle that the youngest should ask The Four Questions. The youngest at Grave was a flyer from the British Air Force. He came from an intelligent Jewish family in England and his parents were active in Jewish life. Therefore he was familiar with the Hebrew in the haggadah.²²²

The seder in Grave lasted longer. It was, after all, in the evening and not as close to the front lines as Kleve. In his speech, Rabbi Cass emphasized the historic struggle for freedom which Jews had conducted from ancient times - since the Exodus from Egypt - until right here and now on the battlefields near the Rhine where the historic battle against tyranny and slavery was being reenacted.

Rabbi Cass related that these sedorim were very touching moments for the servicemen at Kleve and Grave. He also described how on the second day of the festival in the afternoon a seder was conducted for the Jewish civilians in Nijmegen, a bit north of Grave. About this, in the next article.

At a Seder for Liberated Dutch Jews a Year Ago in Nijmegen, at the Canadian Front
Rabbi Samuel Cass, Jewish Chaplain in the Canadian Army, Conducted the Seder - A
Small Refugee Boy, Aged Four-and-a-Half, Asked the Four Questions - How the
Liberated Dutch Jews Celebrated their First Free Festival of Freedom.

From a Conversation with Major Cass

by I. Medres

A year ago at this time, the town of Nijmegen in southern Holland occupied a very important place in the war news. Big battles between the Canadian Army and the Nazis were taking place around the town. British troops also operated there and the Germans in that vicinity displayed strong resistance even in the last weeks of the war when it was already apparent that the Wehrmacht was fighting with its last ounce of strength.

Nijmegen is actually not a town but a large city, one of the biggest cities in Holland. But when Rabbi Cass arrived there, it no longer had the characteristics of a large city. The majority of the houses of Nijmegen had been destroyed so that it looked like a small town.

In normal times, before the war, Nijmegen had had a population of around 50,000 people. Among them had lived around 300 Jews who occupied an important place in the commercial life of the city. The majority of the local Jews were deported by the Nazis to the death camps in the east. There remained around sixty Jews - men, women and a few children. These Jews hid themselves in forests and in villages before the time when the region was occupied by the Nazis. Nijmegen was liberated by the Canadian Army in the offensive of fall 1944. In that offensive, the Nazis were expelled from all of Belgium and from southern Holland.

The Front in Nijmegen

When the 1944 fall offensive ended, the Canadian front stopped at Nijmegen. This is because the city is on the banks of the Waal River where the Germans were strongly fortified. Over the river at Nijmegen stretched bridges to Arnhem on the other side. In front of these bridges terrible battles took place in which both armies used paratroopers. The Canadians were not able to defeat the Germans at the Waal River so they went to Arnhem

via a roundabout route through Germany. They had to storm the Siegfried Line at the Rhine, cross the Rhine in the vicinity of Kleve, go north from there and attack Arnhem from the other side.²²³

A year ago, on the week of Pesach, the Canadians began the offensive to storm the Siegfried Line and cross the Rhine. The Canadian front [at that time] was in the Kleve vicinity. [At that time] Rabbi Cass held sederim at [Kleve and Grave] for the Jewish soldiers who were participating in the offensive...²²⁴

In the Synagogue of Nijmegen

In Nijmegen, there was a beautiful synagogue like all of the synagogues in Holland. In many cities, the synagogues were destroyed, but in Nijmegen the synagogue building remained more or less intact.

When Rabbi Cass came to the synagogue for the first time, he saw a strange scene: the synagogue was packed with furniture and various household items. It looked like a furniture storeroom. These items, it turned out, belonged to the Jews of Nijmegen. When the Nazis deported Jewish families, they packed their possessions into the synagogue.

What should one do with these things? In the meantime, there was no place to put them. One had to leave them in the synagogue. In order to be able to pray, one had to clear out a small room in the synagogue. In that room, Rabbi Cass used to come to pray with the congregation, both with soldiers and with Jewish civilians.

The community of liberated Jews in Nijmegen was mixed. One saw there various sorts of Jews. There were Dutch-born Jews who had once belonged to the upper class. These were the types of Jews who, in normal times before the war, used to come to synagogue on festivals dressed in silk top-hats. Now, naturally, they had become economically and socially equal to the stateless Jews or to the Yiddish-speaking Jews who stemmed from Poland or Rumania. Among them, there were very few children.

Among the few dozen remaining Jews, there weren't any who were able to serve as cantor. So Rabbi Cass was, a year ago at Pesach, both the cantor and the Torah reader.²²⁵ The congregation prayed with great desire. The mood was one of elation. Every one of them felt the festival in his heart. For the Jews there, it was the first free Pesach after six years of hardship in an atmosphere of fear and constant danger. Every one of them had been saved

as if by a miracle. Every one of them had needed to conceal his Jewishness. Even the children needed to conceal their Jewish origin and make the world believe that they are Aryans. Even the children knew that if one would find out about their Jewishness, they would be candidates for the ovens. Now they are free. Now they don't need to conceal themselves from anyone. Now they can live without fear. They can walk freely in the street and not tremble lest a Nazi stop them and lead them away to the gestapo from whence one does not return.

The Seder of Freedom

The seder was conducted in the same synagogue room in which they prayed. It was a historic moment for the Jews of Nijmegen - their first free seder. They couldn't control their emotions. Many cried from joy while others laughed from joy.

A small boy aged four-and-a-half was chosen to ask The Four Questions. The little boy did not know the meaning of the Hebrew words which Rabbi Cass said with him. But the little boy felt that a great event is taking place here, a great celebration of freedom. The little boy knew what freedom meant. For him it wasn't just a pretty word.

The little boy who asked The Four Questions suffered during the years of Nazi occupation when he had no freedom, when he was not free to live as a Jew together with his parents. The little boy knew what Nazism meant. When the Canadian Army entered Nijmegen and expelled the Nazis, the little boy immediately felt a great change in his life. He felt that he didn't need to tremble any more. He felt his freedom.

For the Jews of Nijmegen, that seder was, as mentioned, a historic one which they will always remember. That is the impression of Rabbi Cass. The tables were nicely covered and the women served the festive foods. Rabbi Cass spoke warm words of hope and encouragement, relaying to them a hearty greeting from the Jews of Canada in whose behalf he was addressing them at that holy moment.

Among those present, relates Rabbi Cass, were also a number of Jewish servicemen who were attached to Headquarters at Nijmegen. Among them was Feivel Medres, the son of this writer, who was, at the time, an accountant clerk at Headquarters.

Notes

1. Rabbi Gershon Levi received his B. A. from the University of Toronto in 1929. See Nadell, p. 173.
2. For a picture of Rabbi Levi in uniform, see Fig. 1 and see below, note 73.
3. The Dominion Census of 1941 gives the Jewish population as 168,367. See *The Canada Year Book 1943-44*, Ottawa, 1944, p. 108.
4. Novelist Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) was also known for his anti-semitism. This particular quote eludes us, but for similar statements see W. A. Swanberg, *Dreiser*, New York, 1965, pp. 267, 276, 363-364, 405, 408, 412-413, 427 and 462.
5. Translation: "It is a Jewish war."
6. Unfortunately, we have yet to locate most of these letters. For two examples, see Appendix A.
7. The legislation was passed on July 17, 1862. It was the result of a Jewish community campaign to change existing legislation, based on publicity, petitions and extensive lobbying in Washington. See Bertram Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, Philadelphia, 1951, Chapter IV, especially pp. 62-72.
8. For a list of the 1,682 Canadian Jews who reported themselves to Jewish chaplains of the British Army Overseas, see Michael Adler, ed., *British Jewry Book of Honour*, London, 1922, pp. 579-594. For examples of a British Jewish chaplain ministering to Canadian Jewish troops, see *ibid.*, pp. 40-41, 51 and 53.
9. "Efforts to establish a single national Jewish organization, built on a coalition of existing Jewish organizations, had begun in March 1919 when the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) was established. At its founding convention, the Congress spawned the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society, then promptly foundered on the rocks of internal disharmony. It lay moribund, little more than a name on stationery letterhead, until the rise of Hitler in Germany and the growth of Fascist organizations in Canada. In response, then, to the threat of anti-Semitism at home and abroad, meetings were held in Toronto in 1933 and 1934, and the Canadian Jewish Congress was resurrected. It was reconstituted as a union of three

semi-autonomous regions - East, Central and West - whose headquarters were in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg. A national executive, housed in Montreal, was elected with member of Parliament Samuel Jacobs as president." See Abella and Troper, p. 10.

10. Samuel Bronfman (1891-1971) was a leading Canadian industrialist and philanthropist who was President of the Canadian Jewish Congress during World War II and for a total of twenty three years. See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 14; *EJ*, Vol. 4, col. 1406; and Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours*, pp. 202-203.

11. Saul Hayes (1906-80) became the Executive Director of the Canadian Jewish Congress in 1942 and the Executive Vice President in 1959. See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 421; *EJ*, Vol. 7, col. 1498; and Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours*, p. 203. For his repeated attempts to open Canada's doors to the Jews of Europe during the Holocaust, see Abella and Troper, in the Index.

12. See Vladimir Grossman, ed., *Canadian Jewish Year Book*, Vol. 3 (1941-42), Montreal, 1941, pp. 67-76. On p. 73, Rabbi S. Gershon Levi is mentioned as "the first Jewish Chaplain in Canadian history".

13. National Archives RG24, Vol. 4465, File 1148-2, part 1, folio 1.

14. Philip Abbey (1896-1953) had a very active military career. He commanded two different brigades in World War I and the 27th Field Regiment in World War II. See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 338.

15. George Anderson Wells (1877-1964) served in the South African war as a trooper and in the First World War in the chaplaincy service. From 1934-39 he acted as Bishop to the Cariboo diocese, after which he returned to the military as the Principal Protestant Chaplain. Following World War II, Wells became the Assistant Bishop of Toronto. See *Canadian Who's Who*, Vol. IX, 1961-1963, p. 1160; *Canadian Biography*, p. 878; and his autobiography entitled *The Fighting Bishop*, Toronto, 1971.

16. See note 13 above, folio 2.

17. Regarding this phenomenon, see note 142 below.

18. Harvey Golden (born 1904) was director of Montreal's YMHA for many years. In 1939 he took a leave of absence from his job in order to organize the War Efforts Committee of the CJC. See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 423.

19. See Fig. 2 for a sample of this stationery from the CJC Archives in Montreal, DA 18.1, Box 9, File 14.
20. See Fig. 3 for a sample of the Nominal Roll (Eastern Division), *ibid.*, DA 18.1, (supplementary), Box 22, File 28.
21. Herbert Vineberg helped organize the Jewish Reinforcement company during World War I which was later split into other units. He later joined the Air Force and was awarded the D.F.C. Regarding his service in World War II, see the beginning of Chapter 5 below.
22. We have yet to locate any biographical information regarding Brigadier F.R. Phelan.
23. See note 13 above, folio 5. The note means that are 145 Jewish soldiers in the Canadian Army Overseas, which is .62% of the total.
24. *Ibid.*, folio 6.
25. Lazarus Phillips (1895-1987) was a prominent Montreal lawyer active in Jewish affairs who was named to the Canadian Senate in 1968. See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 25 and *EJ*, Vol. 13, col. 406.
26. See note 13 above, folio 22.
27. *I.e.* enlisted.
28. See note 13 above, folios 19-22.
29. *Ibid.*, folio 23.
30. *Ibid.*, folio 24.
31. *Ibid.*, folio 25. The reason for urgency was that the High Holy Days were to begin on the evening of October 2, 1940.
32. *Ibid.*, in a handwritten note at the bottom.
33. Matthew 7:1 and Luke 6:37.
34. Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) 2:4.
35. See note 15 above.

36. Major General Beverly Woon Browne (1883-1948?) was a career army officer in the Canadian Army (1901ff.). He served in World War I and was decorated on numerous occasions. In 1940 he was appointed Adjutant General and he became Director General of the Reserve Army in 1943. See *Canadian Who's Who*, Vol. IV (1948), p. 118.

37. James Layton Ralston (1881-1948) was the Minister of National Defence from 1926-30 and again from 1940-44. He had previously served overseas during World War I and was awarded the D.S.O with bar. See *Canadian Who's Who*, Vol. IV, 1948, pp. 779-780 and *Canadian Biography*, p.689.

38. See note 13 above, folio 26.

39. *Ibid.*, in a handwritten note at the bottom. And cf. above, note 8.

40. *Ibid.*, folio 27.

41. *Ibid.*, folio 28.

42. See Chapter 7 below.

43. See note 13 above, folio 29.

44. Rabbi Dr. Herman Abramowitz (1880-1947) was a Conservative rabbi who spent his entire career at Congregation Sha'ar Hashamayim in Montreal (1903-47). See *EJ*, Vol. 2, col. 169 and Nadell, pp. 26-27. Rabbi Levi was the educational director at his synagogue (1936-41) before enlisting in the Canadian Army - see *ibid.*, p. 173. It is worth noting that Rabbi Abramowitz served as honorary chaplain to Canada's Jewish troops in World War I - see Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours*, p. 165.

45. See note 13 above. The page in question is unnumbered.

46. *Ibid.*, folio 38.

47. Rabbi Levi refers to File HQ-54-27-68-25, but this filing system is no longer used so we were unable to locate the document in Ottawa.

48. See note 13 above, folio 54.

49. *Ibid.*, folio 62.

50. *Ibid.*, folio 63.
51. See *EJ*, s.v. Shtadlan, Vol. 14, cols. 1462-1463 and the literature cited there.
52. Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885) was Sheriff of London from 1837-38. See *EJ*, Vol. 12, cols. 270-275, for his many other achievements.
53. Samuel Wolf Jacobs (1871-1938) was a Liberal member of the Canadian House of Commons from 1917-38 and the first President of the CJC. See *UJE*, Vol. 6, pp. 19-20 and note 9 above.
54. See note 45 above.
55. Abella and Troper, pp. 282-283.
56. Rabbi Julius Berger (1893-1953) was ordained by The Jewish Theological Seminary in 1927 and was rabbi of Sha'are Zion in Montreal for many years. See *Jewish Theological Seminary Students' Annual*, Vol. 3 (1916), p. 201; *PRA*, Vol. 5 (1933-38), p. 492; and *ibid.*, Vol. 17 (1953), p. 272.
57. Peter Bercovitch (1879-1942) was the first Jew to serve as a member of Quebec's Provincial Legislature (1917-38). He then resigned to serve as a member of the Canadian House of Commons. See *UJE*, Vol. 2, p. 192 and *EJ*, Vol. 4, cols. 588-589.
58. Rabbi Harry Joshua Stern (1897-1984), a Reform rabbi and a well-known orator, was rabbi of Temple Emanu-el in Montreal for almost sixty years (1927 ff.). See *UJE*, Vol. 10, p. 55; *Who's Who 1964*, p. 93; and Kenneth Cleator and Harry J. Stern, *Harry Joshua Stern: A Rabbi's Journey*, New York, 1981.
59. Louis Fitch (1889-1956) was a prominent lawyer, author, orator and Zionist who sat in the Quebec Provincial Legislature for one year (1938-39). See *UJE*, Vol. 4, p. 321.
60. See note 13 above, folio 66, where all those who recommended Rabbi Berger are listed on one page.
61. *Ibid.*, folio 58.
62. *Ibid.*

63. Such a rabbi was called *Harav Mita'am* meaning "the rabbi appointed by". See *Encyclopaedia Hebraica*, Vol. 30, col. 485, and especially Azriel Shochat, *Mossad Harabbanut Mita'am B'russia*, Haifa, 1976.

64. David Kirsch (born 1885) was a prominent businessman and philanthropist who helped found the Jewish General Hospital in 1928. See *Who's Who 1964*, pp. 256-257.

65. See note 13 above, folio 53.

66. *Ibid.*, folio 59.

67. National Archives RG24, Vol. 15,634. Folder 1 (Oct. 1939-Mar. 1942), Vol. 13 (Oct. 1940), p. 1.

68. See note 49 above.

69. See note 43 above.

70. See note 13 above, folios 63-65.

71. Rabbi Maurice Louis Perlzweig (1895-1985) was a prominent Reform/Liberal rabbi and Zionist in England. A founder of the World Jewish Congress, he moved to New York in 1942 in order to serve as head of its Department of International Affairs. See *UJE*, Vol. 8, pp. 459-460 and *EJ*, Vol. 13, col. 298.

72. See notes 57-59 above.

73. We have yet to locate this document in Ottawa. Regarding these insignia, see note 2 above.

74. We have yet to locate this document in Ottawa.

75. See note 67 above, Vol. 15 (Dec. 1940), p. 6.

76. *Ibid.*, Vol. 16 (Jan. 1941), p. 9.

77. Regarding David Kirsch, see note 64 above. William Abrams (born 1914) was National Executive Director of the CJC War Efforts Committee from 1940-44. He is now the editor of *Viewpoints* which is based in Montreal.

78. See note 45 above.
79. See note 13 above, folio 68.
80. *Ibid.* The page is unnumbered.
81. *Ibid.*, folio 82.
82. See note 67 above, Vol. 18 (Mar. 1941), p. 6.
83. National Archives MG27, III B11, Vol. 67, Folder 8, p. 3.
84. See note 28 above.
85. Louis Rosenberg (1893-1987) was the Executive Director, Western Division, Canadian Jewish Congress (1940-45) and National Research Director of the CJC (1945 ff.). He published numerous studies about Canadian Jewish history and demography. See *UJE*, Vol. 9, p. 208; *Who's Who 1964*, p. 423; *EJ*, Vol. 14, p. 279; and *National Archives Newsletter*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Autumn 1987), p. 1. The book being cited is entitled *Canada's Jews: A Social and Economic Study of the Jews in Canada*, Montreal, 1939.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
87. See note 8 above.
88. Rosenberg (note 85 above), pp. 249-252.
89. See note 11 above.
90. Samuel Abramson was the Executive Secretary of the Central Division of the CJC in the early 1940s. He was later Field Secretary of the Council Against Intolerance in America, which was based in New York.
91. *Canadian Jewish Chronicle*, March 20, 1942, p. 6. It is reproduced in Fig. 4.
92. The manuscript says March 10th, 1942, but the debate took place on February 23rd - see note 95 below.
93. Thomas Langton Church was a barrister who held various positions in the City of Toronto, including school trustee, alderman, controller and, finally, mayor from 1915-21.

He was then elected as a Conservative Member of Parliament for Broadview in 1921 and was subsequently re-elected numerous times. See *Canadian Who's Who*, Vol. II, 1936, p. 199.

94. Despite repeated searches, we have yet to locate this important article in the National Archives. The *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), the *Toronto Star*, and the *Montreal Star* for the period in question were also checked without success.

95. See House of Commons Debates, 1942, Volume 1, p. 777. The debate took place on Feb. 23, 1942.

96. The Jewish Welfare Board was founded in 1917 to supply Jewish soldiers with prayer books, kosher food and other amenities. See Peter Wiernik, *History of the Jews in America: From the Period of the Discovery of the New World to the Present Time*, Third Edition, New York, 1972, p. 418.

97. Nathan C. Belth later became Public Relations Director of the Anti-Defamation League and authored *Germany - Nine Years Later*, 1954; *Barriers: Patterns of Discrimination Against Jews*, New York, 1958; and *A Promise to Keep: A Narrative of the American Encounter with Anti-Semitism*, New York, 1979.

98. Percival John Montague (1882-1966) was a judge appointed to the Manitoba Queen's Bench in 1932 and to the Court of Appeals in 1951. He had served in the First World War and was an active commanding officer in the interwar period. During World War II, General Montague acted as D.A.G., Chief of Staff at C.M.H.Q. London, and Judge Advocate General of the Canadian Army Overseas, for which he received many military decorations. See *Canadian Who's Who*, Vol. VII, 1955-57, p. 784 and *Canadian Biography*, p. 585. For an important photo, see Fig. 5. It relates to Chapter 15 which Rabbi Levi planned but did not write.

99. See note 13 above, folio 107.

100. Dayan Mark Gollop (1888-1950) was the Senior Chaplain to H. M. Forces (1926-44) and Assistant Dayan of the United Synagogue (1929-1944). See the *Jewish Year Book 5710-5711*, London, 1949, p. 373; *ibid.*, 5711-5712, London, 1950, p. 338; and note 161 below.

101. National Archives RG24, Vol. 12,458 6/CCS/1, p. 20A and RG24, Vol. 12,459 6/CCS/1/2, p. 3. These letters do not directly ask for a Canadian Jewish chaplain overseas. In the second letter, Gollop offers his services because "personnel of the Jewish Faith

arriving in this country are sometimes anxious to make contacts with a Jewish chaplain but have no knowledge of how to obtain authentic and official information about the Jewish services and ministrations to Jewish troops." In Folio 107 (note 99 above), it is mentioned indirectly that Gollop noted the need for a Jewish chaplain overseas.

102. National Archives RG24, Vol. 12,458, File 6/CCS/1/3, folio 168.

103. Rabbi Levi is referring to Rabbis Samuel Cass and Isaac Bertram Rose - see below, pp. 32-35.

104. We have yet to locate this document in Ottawa, but the same figures are quoted by Rome, Vol. I, on the inside of the front cover.

105. Rome, pp. VII-XII.

106. Unfortunately, despite repeated searches, the documents for this chapter have yet to be located in Ottawa.

107. Gurston Sidney Allen (born 1911), businessman and barrister, was Chairman of the War Efforts Committee, CJC, Central Region (1939-1942) and a member of the National Executive of the CJC. See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 29.

108. Michael Garber (1892-1977) was a lawyer, an Alderman of the City of Westmount (1955-59) and President of the CJC (1962-68). See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 21.

109. Air Marshal Harold Edwards assumed the post of Air Officer Commanding (A.O.C.) R.C.A.F. Overseas and held that post until the end of 1943. See Larry Milberry and Hugh Halliday, *The Royal Canadian Air Force at War 1939-1945*, Toronto, 1990, pp. 21-22.

110. See note 21 above.

111. John McNab (born 1887) was a Presbyterian minister who served as an officer in the Canadian Expeditionary Force chaplaincy during World War I. During the Second World War, he was the Director of Chaplain Services and the Chief Chaplain Overseas for the R.C.A.F. See *Canadian Who's Who*, Vol. IX, 1961-63, p.772.

112. Archie Bennett (1891-1980) was a journalist, Zionist and communal leader who served as National Vice President of the CJC and President of the Central Division of the CJC. See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 524.

113. Air Vice Marshal John Alfred Sully (1892-1966?) served in World War I and was awarded the Air Force Cross. During World War II, he served as Air Member Personnel in Ottawa from 1941-45. See *Canadian Who's Who*, Vol. X, (1964-66), p. 1065.

114. Rabbi Jacob Eisen (born 1906) was ordained by the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. He served as founding rabbi of Beth Shalom Synagogue in Edmonton, Alberta for ten years. He was the second Jewish chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces and the first in the R.C.A.F. (1942-45). After the war, he worked with the American Joint Distribution Committee in Europe and worked for the CJC and Bnai Brith in Winnipeg. See *Who's Who 1965*, p.121 and Figs. 6 and 7.

115. See note 99 above.

116. *Macht Shabbes far zich* - a Yiddish expression which means to take care of one's own needs.

117. Regarding S. W. Jacobs, see note 53 above. Regarding his son Michael Jacobs, see Rome, Vol. II, p. 38, which contains an obituary and a photograph. The obituary says that Jacobs was killed in action on Feb. 19, 1943 and buried at Stratford-on-Avon. "Major S. Gershon Levi, M.B.E., senior Jewish Chaplain, officiated over the rites." Also see Rome, *ibid.*, pp. 24 and 51 for pictures of Rabbi Levi officiating at other R.C.A.F. funerals.

118. Rabbi Oscar Fasman (born 1908) was rabbi of the Jewish Community Council of Ottawa (1940-46) and part-time chaplain in the Canadian Army (1941-45). See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 95.

119. Rabbi Samuel Sachs (born 1893) was ordained by The Jewish Theological Seminary in 1916 and served as rabbi of Goel Tzedec (now Beth Tzedec) in Toronto for many years. See *Jewish Theological Seminary Students' Annual*, Vol. 3 (1916), the picture between pp. 196 and 197, and *PRA*, Vol. 1 (1927), p. 105 and Vol. 10 (1946), p. 310.

120. Rabbi David Monson (born 1917) served as a Canadian chaplain. He was later rabbi of Beth Shalom in Toronto for over forty years (1946 ff.). See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 93.

121. Harry Farnham Letson (born 1896) served in various positions in the Canadian military from 1910-58. During World War II, he was military attache to Washington. He became Adjutant General in 1942, after which he continued to hold many prestigious military and political appointments. See *Canadian Who's Who*, Vol. IX, 1961-63, p. 643.

122. Rabbi Samuel Cass (1908-75) served as rabbi in Vancouver and Seattle and was long-time director of B'nai Brith Hillel at McGill University in Montreal (1946-ca. 1966). He was an army chaplain (1942-46) and was overseas with the 1st Canadian Army at C.M.H.Q. and at H.Q. 1st Canadian Army Overseas from 1944-46. He worked with survivors of the concentration camps and helped reorganize the Jewish communities of Belgium and Holland. See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 428; *PRA*, Vol. 38 (1976), pp. 266-269; Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours*, p. 206; and see below in this chapter.

123. Rabbi Solomon Frank (1900-82) was rabbi in Winnipeg (1926-47) and later in Montreal (1947 ff.) - see *Who's Who 1964*, p. 98. Rabbi Morris Casriel Katz (born 1909) was ordained by the Hebrew Theological College of Chicago in 1932. He was rabbi of Beth Israel Congregation in Calgary (1935-38) and Beth Jacob Synagogue in Hamilton (1939-44) after which he held a number of pulpits in the United States. See *Who's Who in World Jewry 1965*, p. 489 and *ibid.*, 1978, pp. 464-465.

124. See note 13 above, folio 160.

125. See note 99 above.

126. William Thomas Ross Flemington (born 1897) served in World War I with the 16th Canadian Field Ambulance and later as a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps. From 1941-45 he was the Principal Protestant Chaplain Overseas, for which he received the O.B.E. See *Canadian Who's Who*, Vol. IX, 1961-63, p.362.

127. They were both ordained in 1933. See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 428 and Nadell, p. 173. For some of Rabbi Cass's experiences in Europe, see Appendix C below. For his photo, see Fig. 7.

128. National Archives RG24, Vol. 15,603, Folder 2 (Apr. 1942 -Sept. 1942), Vol. 31 (April 1942), p. 8.

128a. Sam Echenberg (born 1897) of Sherbrooke, Quebec served in the Canadian Army in World War I (1916-19) and rose through the ranks in the Active Militia during the inter-war period. In 1939 he was appointed officer commanding No. 4 District Depot, Montreal and in 1942 he was named commanding officer of Military District No. 4. He received the O.B.E. in 1945. See Rome, Vol. I, p. 7 and Fig. 11.

129. We have yet to locate this document in Ottawa.

130. National Archives MG30 D255, Vol. 6, Folder 2, dated Dec. 4, 1944.

131. National Archives RG24, Vol. 10,236, File 47/Reports/1/3. Report for Oct. 1944, Appendix "D", p. 3. For his photo, see Fig. 8.

131a. For a photo, see Fig. 9.

132. The English version of Leesha Rose's book is entitled: *The Tulips are Red: The Story of a Jewish Girl in the Dutch Resistance during World War II*, fourth printing, Jerusalem, 1988, 275 pp.

133. Rabbi Rose and his wife Leesha now live in Jerusalem and he was kind enough to write one of the prefaces for this book.

134. We have yet to locate any biographical information regarding Rabbi Hyman Gevantman. For his photo, see Fig. 10.

135. Rabbi Lewis Weintraub (born 1918) was ordained by The Jewish Theological Seminary in 1944 and served as a Canadian chaplain from 1944-46. After the war, he served as rabbi in Denver and Charleston, S.C., followed by 35 years at Temple Israel in Silver Spring, Maryland (1955-90). See Harold M. Glass, ed., *Who's Who in American Jewry: 1980 Edition*, Los Angeles, 1980, pp. 516-517. For his photo, see Fig. 11.

136. Rabbi Ephraim Mandelcorn (1918-1982) was born and raised in Montreal. He was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary (ca. 1944) and held pulpits after the war in Montreal, the Bronx and Miami. He was stationed in Vancouver and he was apparently a chaplain from 1944-45. My thanks to his twin brother Rabbi Harry Mandelcorn of Jerusalem who supplied this biographical information and cf. *PRA*, Vol. 10 (1946), p. 307 and Vol. 25 (1961), p. 263. For his photo, see Fig. 11.

137. See note 56 above.

138. Rabbi Wilfred Gordon (born 1909) was a lawyer and businessman who was also ordained by Rabbi Saul Silber, President of Hebrew Theological College in Chicago. He was an R.C.A.F. chaplain in the years 1945-46. See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 25.

139. Rabbi A. M. Babb (1898-1976) was ordained in Poland in 1920 and served as rabbi of Sha'arei Tzedek in St. John from 1921-46, which included four and a half years as R.C.A.F. Chaplain (1940-45). He then served congregations in Belleville and Peterborough. See *Who's Who 1964*, p. 103, where he is pictured in uniform. For a picture of a Passover seder in the Maritimes, see Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours*, p. 206.

140. See note 123 above.

141. See note 41 above.

142. *Tertium quid* means "a third something". See Henry Thomas Riley, ed., *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Quotations, Proverbs, Maxims and Mottos*, London, 1909, p. 460.

The "Protestant school case" was an agreement reached and made into law in 1894. This was necessary as the Constitution entrenched separate school systems but made no provision for non-Catholic or non-Protestant students. The law stated that: 1. All Jewish children would from then on be considered Protestant in matters of education; 2. school taxes would go to the Protestant organizations; in return for which 3. Jewish students would enjoy all the same rights and privileges as Protestants; 4. religious education was protected by a "conscience" clause. See Jacques Langlais and David Rome, *Jews and French Quebecers: Two Hundred Years of Shared History*, Waterloo, 1991, p. 72.

143. *Pro rata* means "in proportion". See H. T. Riley, *ibid.*, p. 344. The document quoted is in RG24, Vol. 4465, File 1148-2, part 2, folio 179.

144. *Ibid.*, folio 177.

145. *I.e.* appointments to the rank of Major.

146. See note 32 above.

147. See note 143 above, folio 182. The exact date was October 16th, 1940 - see note 49 above.

148. *Ibid.*, folio 183.

149. *Ibid.*

150. *Ibid.*

151. See p. 1 above.

152. "Varsity" is a common nickname for the University of Toronto where Rabbi Levi received his B.A. in 1929.

153. Samuel Godfrey (1899-1956) was a prominent Toronto businessman married to Rabbi Levi's sister, Sarah. In 1946 he received the O.B.E. and in 1952 he was appointed

President of the Community Chest of Greater Toronto, the first time a Jew held such a post in North America.

154. Charles Vincent Massey (1887-1967) was a history lecturer at the University of Toronto and a staff officer for Military District No.2 before Mackenzie King appointed him to the Cabinet. He held a number of key political positions until 1935, when he was named Canadian High Commissioner in London. He went on to become Governor-General of Canada from 1952-59. See *Canadian Who's Who*, Vol. IX, 1964-66, p. 712 and *Canadian Biography*, p. 564.

155. Shrimp is not kosher because it does not have fins and scales - see Leviticus 11:9-12.

156. Translation: "Paul, tonight you are not eating meat." "Do you have any vegetables? Any eggs?"

157. Dayan led a Jewish advance unit in the British-Australian invasion of Syria. During a battle at Lebanon's Litani River, he lost his left eye. See Raphael Patai, ed., *Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel*, Vol. 1, New York, 1971, p. 241.

158. Psalms 104:15

159. See note 30 above.

160. The reading is entitled "For Home". See Rabbi Sidney Hoenig, ed., *High Holy Day Prayer Book for Jewish Personnel in the Armed Forces of the United States*, 1969, p. 377.

161. *Prayer Book for Jewish Members of H.M. Forces*, New Edition, London, 1940. This new edition was seen through the press by the Senior Jewish Chaplain, Dayan Mark Gollop, about whom see note 100 above.

162. For an example, see Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours*, p. 206. That pastoral letter from November 1943, as well as one other from April 1943, are preserved in the National Archives of Canada MG30 E252 (but Abella quotes the number C 135436). Rabbi Levi saved them because of the personal messages scrawled to his wife Shonie at the bottom, as he explains in his letter to the Dominion Archivist of June 29, 1975 preserved in his personal papers. Both pastoral letters are reproduced in Fig. 12.

163. The Lend-Lease Act was passed by the United States Congress on March 11, 1941. It provided a system of mutual aid between anti-Nazi countries and the United States. "The terms of this act empowered the President to provide goods and services to nations whose

defense he considered to be vital to the defense of the United States." See R. Ernest and Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Encyclopedia of Military History: From 3500 B.C. to the Present*, Revised Edition, London and Sydney, 1980, p. 1070.

164. See p. 41 above.

165. *I.e.* a military force equipped and ready to fight.

166. See Eric Koch, *Deemed Suspect: A Wartime Blunder*, Toronto, 1980. Also see Joseph Kage, *With Faith and Thanksgiving*, Montreal, 1962, pp. 106-107; and Vladimir Grossman, ed., *Canadian Jewish Year Book*, Volume II (1940-41), pp. 221-222.

167. It was Sherbrooke - see Koch, *Deemed Suspect*, Chapter Eight.

168. The Assistant Adjutant at Sherbrooke was Second Lt. J. Alex Edmison. Born in 1903, he was a lawyer and Alderman from Montreal who did his best to help the young internees - see *ibid.*, pp. 127-128 and 142-143. After the war, Major Edmison rehabilitated the survivors of the Holocaust as a member of the overseas executive staff of UNRRA.

169. The National Democratic Party was the chief bastion of political anti-Semitism in Poland after independence was gained. Known as "Endecja", its platform involved ridding the country of Jews to solve the extensive problems faced in this period. The party vilified the Jews as a foreign minority active in economic and cultural domination, destruction of Polish values and exploitation of the people. Based on a longstanding dislike of Jews, the party had tremendous influence on government policy due to the political upset and economic weakness of that era. See Celia Heller, *On the Edge of Destruction: Jews of Poland Between the Two World Wars*, New York, 1977, pp. 83-86.

170. Andrew George McNaughton (1887-1966) served overseas during World War I and received the D.S.O. He held various command and staff positions, including Brigadier General in command of the Canadian Corps Heavy Artillery. During World War II, General McNaughton became Commander of the First Canadian Army, and in 1944 replaced James Ralston as Minister of Defence. See *Canadian Who's Who*, Vol. IX, 1961-63, p.774 and *Canadian Biography*, p.544.

171. A photocopy of this letter was found in Rabbi Levi's files. We were not able to locate a copy in Ottawa.

172. National Archives RG24, Vol. 15,633, folder 1. Report for Chaplain Services (P) C.M.H.Q., Sept. 1942.

173. Lord Barnett Janner (1892-1982) was an M.P. in the British Parliament (1931-35, 1945-70), a Zionist leader and President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews (1955-64). Rabbi Levi edited *Barnett Janner: A Personal Portrait*, London, 1984, which was written by his widow Lady Elsie Janner. Also see Lady Janner's introduction to this book.

174. Rev. Arthur Barnett (1889-1961) was a chaplain to H.M. Forces during both World Wars (1916-20, 1941-45) as well as the Honorary Secretary of the Jewish Historical Society of England. See the *Jewish Year Book 1962*, London, 1961, p. 223, and *ibid.*, 1963, London, 1962, p. 215. For his photo, see Fig. 13.

175. Abraham H. Friedgut (1897-1976) was born in Regina and practiced law there and in Toronto. He served in both World Wars and in the Jewish Legion in Palestine. He moved to Israel in 1949 where he represented the Zionist organization of Canada, worked in the citrus industry and practiced law in Jerusalem. His sons, Ted, Naftali and Natan, live in Israel.

176. Rabbi Joseph H. Hertz (1872-1946) was Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth from 1913 until his death. See *EJ*, Vol. 8, cols. 397-398.

177. See note 172 above, Dec. 1942.

178. We have yet to locate any biographical information about these two women.

179. The Dieppe raid took place on August 19, 1942, with the participation of 1,000 Canadian troops. It was a trial invasion of France in which most of the Allied forces were killed or captured. See the *New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Micropaedia, Vol. III, Chicago, 1979, p. 538, and Dupuy (note 163 above), p. 1082.

180. See notes 100 and 161 above.

181. Sigmund Gestetner (1897-1956) was an industrialist and Zionist who served as President of the Jewish National Fund of Great Britain and Ireland and Treasurer of the Joint Palestine Appeal in the 1950s. See *The Jewish Year Book 1956*, London, 1955, p. 382 and *ibid.* 1957, London, 1956, p. 291.

182. Rabbi Judah Nadich (born 1912) was ordained by The Jewish Theological Seminary in 1936. During World War II, he was the Senior Jewish Chaplain in the U.S. Army (1942-46). He later served as rabbi of Kehillath Israel in Brookline, Massachusetts (1947-57) and

Park Avenue Synagogue (1957ff.). See Nadell, pp. 195-197, and Nadich's own war memoir: *Eisenhower and the Jews*, New York, 1953. For a photo, see Fig. 15.

183. Sedorim is the plural of seder which is the special festive meal held on the first two nights of Passover in order to commemorate and retell the Exodus from Egypt. A photograph of one of the sedorim is reproduced in Fig. 16. The seder of 1943 is mentioned in one of the pastoral letters mentioned above (in note 162) which is also reproduced in Fig. 12.

184. Chaim Weizmann's younger son Michael (1917-42) was shot down during World War II. See Raphael Patai (note 157 above), Vol. 2, p. 1208.

185. This service is mentioned in one of the pastoral letters mentioned above (in note 162) and reproduced below.

185a. A *shomer* is a Hebrew word meaning guard or watchman. I do not know why Rabbi Levi used the Hebrew term here.

186. The apparent reference is to Frederick Llewelyn Hughes (1894-1967) who was a British chaplain beginning in 1935 and the Chaplain-General to the British Forces from 1944-51. See *Who Was Who*, Vol. VI (1961-1970), p. 562.

187. Job 1:7.

188. These two letters were discovered among Rabbi Levi's papers after his death. They are probably typical of the letters he wrote from Europe. The first is a letter to Selig Gross of Toronto, describing how Rabbi Levi found his mother and sister who survived the war in a convent in Mons, Belgium. The second is a letter to one of his siblings written a few days later.

189. Major (later Lt.-Colonel) Gerald Levenston (born 1915) of the Canadian Armoured Corps, served in Canada, England and North Africa. He received the O.B.E. in 1945. See *Rome*, Vol. I, pp. 8-9.

190. Mons, Belgium is located about 40 km southeast of Brussels.

191. Below it is spelled Verbozen.

192. Charleroi, Belgium is located about 40 km south of Brussels and about 25 km west of Mons.

193. A Hebrew and Yiddish word meaning "destruction".
194. A Yiddish word meaning that the person or item is an object of pity.
195. We have yet to locate any biographical information about Prof. Allard.
196. This handwritten note was written by one of Rabbi Levi's brothers or sisters.
197. See note 181 above.
198. Before the war, Rabbi Salomon Ullman was a Belgian Army chaplain (1936-1940) who also published two monographs about the history of the Jews of Belgium. After the war, he was the Chief Rabbi of Belgium from 1945-57. He died in 1966. See Ephraim Schmidt, *L'histoire des Juifs a Anvers (Antwerpen)*, Antwerp, 1969, pp. 89, 120, 236 and 264.
199. This Appendix derives from Rome, Vol. I, pp. 19-20. Rome explains that it was excerpted from a series of interviews given by Major Levi to I. Medres in the Yiddish daily *Keneder Adler* (Jewish Eagle) which was published in Montreal. I scrolled through the microfilm of the *Keneder Adler* from October 1945 - December 1946 but was unable to find the original series of interviews.
200. Regarding these battles, see Dupuy (note 163 above), pp. 1106-1108.
201. Regarding the concentration camp at Boulogne, see Maxime Steinberg, *L'etoile et le Fusil: 1942 Les Cent Jours de la Deportation des Juifs de Belgique*, Bruxelles, 1984, pp. 143-154 and especially p. 147.
202. Regarding the Jewish community at Ghent, see *EJ*, Vol. 7, col. 541 and the literature cited there.
203. Regarding these resistance activities, see *EJ*, Vol. 4, cols. 421-422 and Israel Gutman, editor, *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Vol. 1, New York and London, 1990, pp. 167-168.
204. This interview with I. Medres appeared in three installments in the Yiddish daily *Keneder Adler* in April, 1946: April 7th, p. 5; April 14th, pp. 4 and 6; and April 21st, pp. 4 and 8. The English translation is my own. My thanks to my father, Rabbi Noah Golinkin, for his help in translating a number of difficult phrases. Regarding Rabbi Cass, see notes 127-130 above.

205. Regarding the battles mentioned in this Appendix, see Dupuy (note 163 above), pp.1110ff.

206. Havdalah is a ceremony conducted with wine, a braided candle and spices at the end of every Sabbath. The participants smell the spices in order to express their desire for a sweet week.

207. Hachsharot were intensive training programs which prepared Jewish youth for agricultural work in Palestine.

208. Tilburg is located in southern Holland, in close proximity to the border with Belgium.

209. Turnhout is in northern Belgium, about 25 km. southwest of Tilburg.

210. See note 183 above.

211. The Siegfried Line was a chain of pillboxes and concrete tank barriers built by the Germans in the 1930s which extended along the border between Germany and France. See *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Micropaedia, Vol. IX, Chicago, 1979, p. 188.

212. Kleve is in Germany, about 15 km. southeast of Nijmegen, Holland.

213. See note 183 above.

214. Pesach is the Hebrew term for Passover.

215. Grave is a small town 10 km. southwest of Nijmegen and 30 km. west of Kleve. Nijmegen is a large city 20 km. northwest of Kleve.

216. Regarding Rabbi Rose, see notes 131-133 above as well as his Words of Tribute at the beginning of this volume.

217. A Passover seder is normally conducted on Passover eve. It was apparently conducted in the afternoon due to front-line conditions. For a photo of one of the sedorim conducted by Rabbi Cass, see Fig. 17.

218. Matzah (plural: matzot) is the unleavened bread eaten during Passover. See Exodus 12:15-20.

219. Kosher food means food which is prepared according to Jewish dietary laws.

220. See note 176 above.

221. "The Four Questions" or Mah Nishtanah are traditionally recited towards the beginning of the seder by the youngest child present.

222. The haggadah is the special liturgical booklet recited at the seder on Passover.

223. See note 205 above.

224. Here Medres repeats information from the previous articles.

225. The cantor chants the service from the prayerbook while the Torah reader chants the weekly Torah portion from the unvocalized Torah scroll. These tasks are usually performed by two different people.

Index

This is an index of the book and the Appendices. It does not cover the Introduction or the Notes nor does it cover very common words such as Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto. Occasionally an item is indexed even though the exact name appears only in a footnote.

- Abbey, Philip, 4, 9, 18
Abella, Prof. Irving, 13
Abramowitz, Rabbi Dr. Herman, 9, 24
Abrams, William, 7
Abramson, Samuel, 20
Acton, England, 34, 56
Air Force, 26-30, 40
Air Force Medical Corps, 27
Alberta, 1, 47
Aldershot, England, 34, 55
Allard, Prof., 62
Allen, Gurston Sidney, 26
A Mare Usque ad Mare, 47
Amsterdam, 35
Antwerp, Belgium, 33, 61, 64, 72
Army Dental Corps, 27
Arnhem, Holland, 71, 74, 75
Atlantic Wall, 66
Auschwitz, 69
- Babb, Rabbi A.M., 35
Balfour Service Club
 for the United Nations (London), 58
Baptists, 21, 38, 43
Barnett, Rev. Arthur, 55
Battle of Bastogne, 45
Battle of the Bulge, 34
Bay of Fundy, 47
BBC, 58
Belgium, 60-64, 66, 68-71, 74
Belth, Nathan C., 23
Bennett, Archie, 27, 29
Bercovitch, Peter (M.P.), 13, 18
- Bergen-Belsen, 69
Berger, Rabbi Julius, 13-18, 24, 35
Bevis Marks Synagogue (London), 58
Boulogne, France, 65, 66
British Air Force, 73
British Jewish chaplains, 2-3, 34-35
British Jewry Book of Honour, 19
Brockville, Ontario, 33, 34
Bronfman, Samuel, 4, 10, 12, 17, 18
Browne, Adjutant General
 Major-General Beverly Woon, 8, 10,
 15, 17, 18
Brussels, Belgium, 61, 63, 64, 67, 72
- Canada's Jews*, 19
Caen, France, 65
Calais, France, 65
Camp Borden, Ontario, 6, 31, 43
Camp Petawawa, Ontario, 6, 31, 45
Canadian Army Show, 51
Canadian Jewish Chronicle, 20
Canadian Jewish Congress, 2, 4-8, 10, 12, 14,
 15, 17-20, 24, 26-29, 36, 46, 52, 68
Canadian Jews in World War II, 24
Canadian Press dispatch, 21
Cariboo, British Columbia, 8
Cass, Rabbi Samuel, 24, 31-34, 68-76
Cathcart, Lt.-Col. H.M., 54
Central Records (Ottawa), 20-21
Channel Coast, England, 42
Charleroi, Belgium, 61
Christmas, 45
Church of England, 21, 38

- Church, Thomas Langton, 21-22
 Civil War (United States), 2
 C.M.H.Q. (London), 23, 29, 33, 34, 37, 41, 53
 Cohen, Alfred, 73
 Cohen, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph, 54
 Crown Rabbis, 14
 Currie, Colonel, 16
 Dayan, Moshe, 43
 Debert, Nova Scotia, 47
Deemed Suspect - A Wartime Blunder, 50

 Department of Training, 22
 Dieppe raid, 56-57
 Dominion Council, 4
 Dreiser, Theodore, 2
 Druse, 44
 Dunkirk, France, 23, 52
 Dutch Underground, 35

 Echenberg, Colonel Sam, 33
 Edenwold, Saskatchewan, 48
 Edmison, Second Lt. J. Alex, 50
 Edmonton, Alberta, 29
 Edwards, Air Marshal Harold, 26-29
 Eisen, Rabbi Jacob, 29-30, 32
 Endek, 51
 England, 3, 23, 29-31, 33-34, 52-59, 64, 68, 72, 73

 Fairfax House, Holborn (London), 55
 Falaise, France, 65
 Farnborough, England, 53, 56
 Farnham, Quebec, 45, 50
 Fasman, Rabbi Oscar Z., 31
 Fitch, Louis, 13
 Flemington, Colonel William
 Thomas Ross, 32, 37, 52-57
 France, 50, 54, 63, 66
 Frank, Rabbi Solomon, 32

 Free French, 58
 Free Netherlands' Forces, 49
 Friedgut, Major Abraham, 55

 Garber, Michael, 26
Gentleman's Agreement, 40
 Germany, 34, 35, 68, 71-75
 Gestapo, 67
 Gestetner, Sigmund, 58, 63
 Gevantman, Rabbi Hyman, 35
 Ghent, Belgium, 66, 72
 Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, 13-14
 Godfrey, Samuel, 40, 47
 Golden, Harvey, 5, 7, 9, 10, 19, 26
 Goldfine, Annabel, 34
 Gollop, Dayan Mark, 23, 57
 Gordon, Rabbi Wilfred, 35
 Grave, Holland, 71-73, 75
 Gross, 72
 Gross, Honia, 60-61, 63
 Gross, Selig, 60, 63

 hachsharot, 69
 Halifax, Nova Scotia, 32, 47
 Hamilton, Ontario, 32, 35
 Hansard, 22
 Hanukkah, 58
 Hayes, Saul, 4, 20, 50, 51
 Hellier, Pauline, 56
 Herschel, Saskatchewan, 48
 Hertz, Rabbi Joseph H., 55, 57, 72
 High Holy Days, 10, 20, 34, 54-55, 58, 60, 63, 65-66
 Hobson, Laura, 40
 Holland, 68-76
 Holocaust survivors, 60-67
 Holy Blossom Temple (Toronto), 41
 Hong Kong, 46
 House of Commons, 21-22
 Hughes, General Frederick Llewelyn, 59

Imperial War Graves Commission, 56
 insignia, 1, 17, 38, 47
 Irvington, New Jersey, 34
 Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary
 (New York), 34
 Isle aux Noix, 50
 Israel, 69
 Italy, 34, 72

Jacobs, Pilot Officer Michael, 30
 Jacobs, Samuel Wolf (M.P.), 12, 13, 30
 Janner, Greville, 54
 Janner, Lady Elsie, 55
 Janner, Lord Barnett (M.P.), 54-56
 Janner, Ruth, 54
 Jarvis Collegiate (Toronto), 50
 Jewish Chaplains' Centre,
 Amsterdam, 35
 Jewish Hospitality Committee, 46, 58, 63
 Jewish internees, 50-51
 Jewish population of Canada, 1-2, 31
 Jewish soldiers, statistics, 6, 7, 9, 10,
 21-25, 27, 28
 Jewish Theological Seminary
 (New York), 33
 Jewish Welfare Board (U.S.A.), 23
 Joint Distribution Committee, 67

Kanee, Major Sol, 41
 Katz, Rabbi Morris Casriel, 32, 35
Keneder Adler, 66, 68
 Kingston, Ontario, 27
 Kirsch, David, 15, 17
 Kleve, Germany, 71-73, 75
 Koch, Eric, 50
 Kol Nidre, 66
 Kutner, 61
 Leatherhead, 55
 Lend-Lease Act, 47
 Letson, Adjutant General
 Major-General Harry Farnham, 31

Levenston, Major Gerald, 60
 Lincoln, President Abraham, 2
 Lincolns Inn Fields, England, 30
 London, England, 30, 32-34, 36, 37,
 41, 53-59
 London, Ontario, 32
 Loudon, Mr., 49
 Lutherans, 17

Maas River, Holland, 68, 71
 Malaya House (London), 55
 Malter, 61
 Mandelcorn, Rabbi Ephraim, 35
 Manitoba, 47
 Manning Depot, Montreal, 20
 Maritime Provinces, 35
 Martin, Brigadier, 41, 49
 Massey, Alice, 42
 Massey, High Commissioner
 Charles Vincent, 42
 McNab, Wing
 Commander John, 26, 27, 29
 McNaughton, General Andrew
 George, 53
 McNiven, Colonel, 28
 Medres, Feivel, 76
 Medres, I., 65-76
 Mons, Belgium, 60-63
 Monson, Rabbi David, 31, 32, 35
 Montague, General Percival John, 23, 29,
 32, 37
 Montefiore, Sir Moses, 12

Nadich, Rabbi Judah, 58
 Nash, Colonel, 17
 National Democratic Party (Poland), 51
 Nazis, 9, 50, 54, 64-67, 69, 72, 74, 76
 Netherlands' Government-in-Exile, 49
 Netherlands' Navy, 57-58
 New Brunswick, 47
 New York, 33

- Nijmegen, Holland, 71, 73-76
 Nominal Roll, 5, 6, 7, 19, 20, 23, 26, 46
 Nonaimo, Vancouver, 41, 49
None is Too Many, 13
 Normandy, France, 33, 39, 65
 Norwegian Air Force, 49

 O'Neill, Father, 56, 57
 "Other Denominations", 6, 37-38
 Owen Sound, Ontario, 51

 Pacific Command, 34, 39
 Palestine, 44, 64
 Paris, France, 65
 Passover, 30, 49, 58
 pastoral letters, 46
 Pearl Harbor, 23, 46
 Perlzweig, Rabbi Maurice Louis, 17
 Pesach, 71-76
 Phelan, Deputy Adjutant
 General Brigadier F.R., 6-9, 14, 15
 Philips, Lazarus (Senator), 7
 Polish Army, 51, 56
 Polish Jews, 51, 75
 P.O.W. Camps, 50
Prayer Book for Jewish
 Members of H.M. Forces, 46
 Presbyterian, 21, 38
 Privy Council, 36
 Protestant School Case, 5, 36
 Protestants, 36, 37, 45, 52, 59

 Queens University (Kingston), 27

 Racey, Major, 50
 Ralston, Minister of Defence
 James Layton 8, 15-17, 18,
 21-22, 33, 36
 Red Cross, 63
 Rhine, 68, 71, 75
 Richardson, Major, 10

 Rickards, Wing Commander, 27
 Roman Catholics, 21, 28, 36,
 38, 42, 43, 45, 56
 Rome, David, 24
 Rose, Leesha, 35
 Rose, Rabbi Isaac
 Bertram (Bert), 24, 34-35, 72
 Rosen, Cpl. Gloria, 56
 Rosenberg, Louis, 19, 48
 Rosh Hashanah, 54, 60, 63, 65-66
 Rubens, Flight-Lt. A., 28
 Rumania, 75
 Russia, 51

 Sachs, Rabbi Samuel, 31
 Saint John, New Brunswick, 35
 Saint Lawrence River Valley, 47
 Saskatchewan, 1, 47, 48
 "Scarlet Pimpernell", 62
 Scott, Colonel Clyde B., 15
 Seaford, England, 57
 Seattle, Washington, 33
 seder, Sedorim, 49, 58, 71-73
 Seine River, France, 65
 Shanghai, 51
 Sherbrooke, Quebec, 50
 Siegfried Line, 71, 72, 75
 Simcoe Street Talmud
 Torah (Toronto), 33
 South America, 64
 South Pacific, 46
 Stern, Rabbi Harry Joshua, 13
 Stevens, Major Walter, 38
 Stratford, Ontario, 49
 Sukkot, 10-11, 66
 Sully, Air Vice Marshal
 John Alfred, 27, 29
 Suva (in the Pacific), 46
 Syria, 43-44
 Switzerland, 67

Talmud Torah Association (Ottawa), 42
Tertium Quid, 36
The Tulips Are Red, 35
 Tilburg, Holland, 69, 70, 72
 torah scrolls, 66
 Troper, Harold, 13
 Turnhout, Belgium, 70
 Twain, Mark, 22

Ullman, Rabbi Salomon, 64
 United Church Of Canada, 21, 38
 United States of America, 1, 23, 45, 58, 64
 University of Toronto, 1, 40

Va'ad Harabonim (Montreal), 14
 Vancouver, British Columbia, 14, 33, 51
 Verhozen/Verbozen, Alice, 60-61
 Veterans' Guard, 50

Victoria, British Columbia, 32, 48
 Vineberg, Herbert, 5, 7, 26

Waal River, 71, 74
 Wales, 64
 War Efforts Committees, 4, 6, 7, 27, 68
 Wehrmacht, 74
 Weintraub, Rabbi Lewis, 35
 Weizmann, Chaim, 58
 Weizmann, Michael, 58
 Wells, Bishop George Anderson, 4-8, 10, 14,
 15, 17, 18, 20, 26, 32, 33, 37, 42-43, 45
 Western Prairies, 27
 Windsor, Ontario, 47
 Winnipeg, Manitoba, 20, 31, 32, 47
 Woburn House, London, 57
 World War I, 2-3, 14, 19, 21, 42, 50, 55

Yiddish, 65, 75
 Yom Kippur, 60, 63, 65-66

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