



# Congress Bulletin

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## Restitution Claims

CJC has been in communication with the Department of External Affairs concerning individual Jews who may have material claims against the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Canada has announced its intention to establish diplomatic relations with the GDR.

The legal implications of claims against the GDR are being examined by CJC and the United Restitution Organization.

Dr. John Stahr, Director of the United Restitution Organization of

Canada (a department maintained for the URO by the CJC) has reported that since the inception of claims against Germany in Canada for victims of Naziism about \$60,000,000 has been received by claimants. These figures do not reflect capitalized value of life pensions.

The number of Canadian claims and claimants still to be processed as of August 31, 1972 is 4,296 and 3,878 respectively in the following jurisdictions: — Frankfurt, Frankfurt a. m., Ffm.-Berlin, Munich, Berlin, Cologne, Hanover and Austria.

## Iraqi Jews Executed

Reports reached CJC of a deteriorating situation in Iraq indicating prominent Jews had been arrested without formal charges and then murdered. In addition a ban was placed on Jews leaving the country including those in possession of immigration visas from Canada and other countries.

CJC communicated immediately with the Canadian Department of External Affairs. His Excellency General Al-Bakr, President of the Republic of Iraq, and Kurt Waldheim, Secretary-General of the United Nations, stating the following.

Your Excellency, disturbing reports continue to reach Canada concerning the fate of the nine Jews held in the Kasr El Nahir prison for unspecified offences which have shocked public opinion in this country. It appears that the detainees are political prisoners whose only "crime" is that they are Jewish. A further report has reached us of other arrests in Baghdad which hopefully is without foundation. We would ask you to immediately effect the release of the nine prisoners and permit those Jews who wish to leave Iraq to do so without further delay. We have been encouraged by the enlightened policy of the Iraqi Government in permitting emigration in the past which we trust will continue in the future.

CJC received a communication from Jakob Th. Moller, Human Rights Officer, United Nations Division of Human Rights, acknowledging receipt of its telegram. Mr. Moller stated the matter "will be brought to the attention of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Commission on Human Rights".

### VANCOUVER

On February 15 a resolution was passed unanimously by CJC Pacific Region Executive Committee condemning the Iraqi Government for its probable execution of nine Jews. The resolution took the following form:

The Board of Delegates of Canadian Jewish Congress, Pacific Region, representing all facets of the British Columbia Jewish Commu-

nity, meeting in session on February 15, 1973, expresses its horror and anguish in learning of the Iraqi Government's probable execution of nine Jews who were arrested in September and October, 1972.

### MONTREAL

On February 18 CJC Eastern Region in close association with the Iraqi Jewish community in Montreal and with the Zionist Federation, Eastern Region sponsored a public prayer meeting to express condemnation of persecution of Jews in Iraq and grief and shock over the fate of nine prominent Jews in Iraq imprisoned for many months and reliably reported as executed.



## AJCS New Headquarters

Allied Jewish Community Services, one of Montreal's main federations working in the fields of health, welfare, cultural and recreational activities, moved to new headquarters March 15th. The multi-agency organization moved into Allied Jewish Community Services — Cummings House, an impressive new four-storey structure at 5151 Cote St. Catherine Road, at Westbury in Montreal.

Eventually, AJCS will be joined by nine of its 21 constituent member agencies in the building. It is believed to be the first structure in North America offering, under one roof, such a wide gamut of personal services to members of a community.

AJCS' old headquarters, at 493 Sherbrooke West, has been sold to

the Federated Appeal of Greater Montreal with whom AJCS works in planning for the greater Montreal community.

The new building's tenants will include the 109-year-old Jewish Family Services (Baron de Hirsch Institute), Jewish Immigrant Services and Jewish Vocational Services. There will be offices for Camp B'nai B'rith, Camp Wooden Acres, Jewish Laurentian Fresh Air Camp and Jewish Community Camps. Golden Age Association will have its headquarters there and the Jewish Public Library will have extensive new facilities including a children's library.

The formal dedication of the building, by AJCS President Monty Berger, is planned for noon, May 4th.

## Jewish Music Month



L-R Walter Joachim — Cellist; Janice Baty — Violinist; Morry Kernerman — Violinist; and Robert Verebes — Violist.

Reports indicate Jewish music programs are taking place throughout the country.

### MONTREAL

A series of events in observance of Jewish Music Month have been scheduled. MARCH 8 — a recital featuring four distinguished members of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra: Janice Baty — Violinist; Walter Joachim — Cellist; Morry Kernerman — Violinist; and Robert Verebes — Violist; performing music by Ernest Bloch, Harry Freedman and Srul Irving Glick. (Samuel Bronfman House) MARCH 29 — a lecture illustrated with tapes and slides by Professor Israel Katz, Musicologist, from Columbia University. The topic was *Musical Tradition of the Jewish*

*People — ADiasporic View*. Within the context of his lecture, Professor Katz included Holocaust and Ghetto Music. A question and answer period followed. (Samuel Bronfman House) APRIL 10 & 11 — the Montreal Symphony Orchestra — Janos Starker, Cellist — is performing Bloch's *Voice in the Wilderness*. Score and parts will be sponsored by the Canadian Jewish Congress in observance of Jewish Music Month.

### TORONTO

Close to 1000 people attended the Jewish Music Festival Concert sponsored by Canadian Jewish Congress, Central Region, February 25 in Toronto at the Beth Tzedec Synagogue.

The Concert featured the pre-

miere performance of an original composition commissioned by Canadian Jewish Congress, music by Ben Steinberg based on a poem by Shin Shalom, *Yerushalayim*. The program included presentations by six choirs: Beth Tikvah, Beth Tzedec, Bill Berle Singers, Temple Emanu-El, Temple Emanu-El Youth Choir and the Toronto Hadassah Choir. The guest artist was Jose Shapero, Cellist. The evening culminated with the world premiere performance of *Yerushalayim* by the combined choirs under the direction of Gordon Kushner.

### WINNIPEG

A series of events in observance of Jewish Music Month have been scheduled for successive Sunday afternoons: February 25 — David Burke, Contemporary Folk Singer and guitarist; March 4 — Choral Group of the Sara Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble, by Archie Stone; March 18 — I.L. Peretz Folk School Choir, directed by Mrs Aviva-Katz (Purim songs and dances); March 25 — Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate students in a performance of Israeli dances.

## CBC

## Meeting

Knowlton Nash, Director of the TV Information Program of the CBC, acknowledged in writing the meeting which he had with representatives of the Canada-Israel Committee (Canadian Zionist Federation and Canadian Jewish Congress) March 1 stating that he "found it particularly valuable not only in getting your perception of the situation in relation to the *Viewpoint* program but also the much broader issues involved."

The communication stated: "Our get-together was enlightening especially in the area of trends as you see them in attitudes towards the Middle East now that the war in Vietnam is drawing to a close.

As you know, I would be very greatly concerned at any intrusion of bias into our news reportage. In terms of opinion broadcasting the criterion is different since we are looking for opinions, but the objective of course must be to stimulate and not to inflame.

I think it is important for you to be in touch from time to time on your concerns because our objective is and must be to be fair in our programming, and if you think we are being otherwise I'd like to know about it. I may or may not agree with your judgment but it's important to know your thinking so that a proper evaluation can be made."

## Quebec Conference

On Sunday, March 25 at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, the Canadian Jewish Congress held a special conference to examine *The Jewish Community In a Changing Quebec*.

Structured as a working conference, Saul Hayes, Q.C., CJC Executive Vice-President provided the opening address discussing recent changes in Quebec and results arising from these changes.

Following this presentation, Mr. Fernand Daoust, General Secretary of the Quebec Federation of Labour, a French-Canadian well versed in the economic, political and social affairs of the Province discussed the present situation in the Province of Quebec from a French-Canadian point of view.

Dr. Victor Goldbloom, Minister of Municipal Affairs of the Province of Quebec, was the luncheon session's guest speaker.

Opportunity for participation by those present during a question and answer period and an open forum took place.

# comment

## THE HOLOCAUST

### Canadian Jewry's Response

Including the deeds of Attila, the scourge of God, in the dark ages and later of Genghis Khan, no murders and tortures more foul were ever committed than that of the Nazis. Preceded by a reign of terror in which thousands died of the effects of brutality, induced suicide, starvation, shots in the back while "escaping", there came the final solution. And from 1942 to early 1945, twelve million civilians were demoniacally assassinated, half of which were Jewish. The first recorded attempts of modern history at genocide (the Turkish plan to exterminate the Armenians being perhaps the only exception) nearly succeeded.

This year is the *Shnat Hazikaron* of the dreadful Holocaust which almost annihilated European Jewry. But for the escape of those who correctly assessed the meaning of the Nuremberg Decrees and the events of the 1938 Krystalnacht, of those who fled from Vichy, France, over the Pyrenees, of those who were rescued by the Bricha Movement, of the few hundreds who reached Japan before Pearl Harbour of 1941, and the delayed Eichmann shedule which gave merciful time for some thousands to survive the concentration and death camps, every European-born Jew inside Festung Europa would have perished.

The collective guilt of the Christian world, whose monstrous mockery at Bermuda and Evian and whose responsibility for the tragedies of the Struma and the St. Louis were symbolic of callous indifference, is well-known. Is there Jewish collective guilt as well? Historian will argue over this for generations to come. Undoubtedly not enough pressure was exerted but actually until 1942, too few knew how fiendish were Germany's plans.

What did Canadian Jewry do?

In 1938 it created a Refugee Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress (later succeeded by the United Jewish Refugee and Wa Relief Agency from the UJRA) and intervened successfully with government for some relief from the strictures of our then exclusionary immigration policy. It rescued many of those who crossed the border into Spain and left Portugal for Canada (the SS Serpa Pinta group.) It obtained an Order-in-Council to bring in one thousand (later increased to 1200) war orphans, and negotiated with the Polish and Czech exile governments so that Jewish nationals of those countries (doctors, engineers, and others of the learned professions) came to Canada on the Polish and Czech quotas. East Europeans were brought in as farmers and several farm settlements were established. It negotiated for the rescue of those Polish Jews who reached Japan in 1941 on visitors' visas and brought them to Canada.

It found homes for interned refugees from the United Kingdom. And, after 1945, it arranged for the labour projects as a result of which 40,000 camp survivors reached Canada. Nothing to be smug about. It failed to accomplish more and shares with the United States and other western countries (and Australia) responsibility and some guilt, partly explained by the world ignorance when there was time to act and world impotency after that.

The literature of the *Churban* cities will analyse the record. What it cannot do is pass judgment.

The problem now is not (an apt metaphor) to rake over the ashes but to implant in the memory of this generation and succeeding ones the lesson of the Holocaust. To some extent our youth is like the Canaan of Israel phenomenon of some years ago, of believing that Jewish history was active up to the days of Bar Kochba and then went into a catatonic trance awakening to reality eighteen centuries later with the creation of the State of Israel. We can excuse ignorance of Jewish mediaeval history or even nineteenth century Jewish history but we must not allow the history of the Third Reich to be our terra incognita. If the Canaanites are romantically foolish, what excuse would there be for our children and grandchildren's children to be ignorant of the genocidal plans to erase Jewry. Why know about Pharaoh and his schemes and of Haman and his plots, and ignore the history of the creation of a Jewish State and the Holocaust which preceded it!! One is the result of the other. Can one be Jewish without this identity? Rabbi Herzog, when Chief Rabbi of Israel, explained the emergence of Israel as a providential compensation for the almost total destruction of European Jewry. This is the historical proponent — the homeland thesis attracted very few when it could have been populated. The meaning was clear after the events of Hitler's grand plan.

To preserve Jewish meaning, its purpose in civilization, its identity, one must teach diligently unto our children the secular events of our recent history. If there was grief during the emergence of Hitlerism, let there be no grief on our part now by forgetting the lessons of history lest we be punished by being condemned to relive it.

by PERRY COHEN

The city was quiet. The hour was late. The car moved quickly through dark deserted streets. The destination was a hospital. The couple sitting in the car were about to become parents. The next morning the newspaper announcement read:

*Cohen-Mr. and Mrs. Brahm M. (nee Sylvia Wexler) are pleased to announce the birth on March 18, 1938, of their son Perry Ian . . .*

There are few other official records of the birth. While the world was readying itself in preparation for its deepest descent into hell, this family was renewing its faith in God and humanity by becoming parents. What a terrible responsibility — for a Jew to be born in 1938 — or anytime thereafter. Convenant responsibilities had always been present. But from now on . . . ?

#### The Baby Cried

One is told that the new-born baby cried from the beginning. And yet, one can say that he knew not how to cry. Perhaps, he would not even learn how to cry.

He was Canadian born. In *The Jews of Silence*, a book about Russian Jewry, written before world Jewry's present efforts on behalf of their brethren, Elie Wiesel says: "One of the Jews I met in Moscow was a Rabbinical scholar. In comparing the present situation to that of the recent past, he quoted to me the commentary given by Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kitzk to a verse from Exodus. 'And the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel sighed by reason of their bondage. The question was raised: All the time Pharaoh was alive the Jews labored and suffered why, then, did they sigh at his death? Rabbi Mendel answered that before Pharaoh died, even to sigh had been forbidden. 'Do you understand?' the scholar said. 'Today we are permitted to sigh . . . although only when no one is listening.' That the Jews in the free world do not heed this sign will never be forgiven them. Of that I am sure. For the second time in a single generation, we are committing the error of silence."

So few seem to have learned the lessons of concern for one's fellowman. So few have earned the privilege of crying. Where, then, would the Canadian-born baby learn to cry?

The year was 1964. The need was for the Canadian-born to become Jewishly conscious. The need was for knowledge of the past so that the present would be "unrolled for understanding." There were no birth columns reserved for the announcement of a new-born Jew, age 25. His next six years were devoted to the study of Jewish tradition.

During these years, the past came into sharper focus and the present did, in fact, become more understandable. Apathy was replaced by concern, levity by sobriety, complacency by agony. The Holocaust had become an integral part of his being. The baby had learned how to cry.

#### Learning How To Cry

The privilege and the burden of crying should be stressed. Consider the secularist liberal, whose faith in himself and his ability to di-

## An Individual's Response

rect his world was sustained before the *Holocaust* by two hundred years of self-proclaimed triumphs — and know the ruins and the void in which he stands today.

Reflect on a Jewish tradition which rested comfortably on the notion that there is a special relation as between man and G-d and man and man, and know that the post-holocaust context of existence is of an entirely different nature. Come in contact with the most mundane item — a freight car, a chimney, a lampshade — and know that it has taken on a dimension of Jewish experience which cannot, could not, and should not be overlooked today. Understand that only blind, dumb luck, allows us the opportunity of remembering that we might have been the convicted and know that

we do not join hands with the past because there is no past other than ourselves.

It is all overwhelmingly incomprehensible. This is the first lesson-learning how to cry!

#### Positive Results

But the catharsis produced by learning how to cry must be directed to positive results. Dr. Emil Fackenheim, in an article in *Commentary* magazine entitled *Jewish Faith and the Holocaust*, had this to say:

"A commanding voice is being heard, and has, however faintly, been heard from the start . . . (in) Auschwitz, Jews came face to face with absolute evil. They were and still are singled out by it, but in the midst of it they hear an absolute commandment: Jews are forbidden to grant posthumous victories to Hitler. They are commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. They are commanded to remember the victims of Auschwitz, lest their memory perish. They are forbidden to despair of man and his world, and to escape into either cynicism or other worldliness, lest they cooperate in delivering the world over to the forces of Auschwitz. Finally, they are forbidden to despair of the God of Israel, lest Judaism perish. . . . A Jew may not respond to Hitler's attempt to destroy Judaism by himself cooperating in its destruction. In ancient times, the unthinkable Jewish sin was idolatry. Today, it is to respond to Hitler by doing his work."

#### The God of Israel

Dr. Fackenheim suggests several directions for our energies. One of them raises the ultimate questions. Where was the God of Israel during the Holocaust?

We may not appreciate the necessity of acknowledging this question, but the question continues to exist. There may never be an answer. At minimum, however, a scene described by Eli Wiesel's *Gates of the Forest* is relevant. The following is taken from a discussion between Gregor, the novel's principal character, and a chassidic rebbe.

*Gregor was angry. 'After what has happened to us, how can you believe in God? With an understanding smile on his lips the Rebbe answered, 'How can you not believe in God after what has happened?'*

Of interest, also, is Martin Buber's statement in the *Eclipse of God*:

*Let us ask whether it may not literally be true that God formerly spoke to us and is now silent and whether this is not to be understood as the Hebrew Bible understands it, namely, that the living God is not only self-revealing but also a self-concealing God. Let us realize what it means to live in the age of such concealment, such divine silence . . .*

Somewhere, at this moment, there is a city which is quiet. The hour is late. A car moves quickly through dark and deserted streets. Its destination is a hospital. The couple sitting in the car are about to become parents. Tomorrow morning a newspaper announcement will announce the birth of a baby. This baby must be taught how to cry. When he does, then our past, our present and our future will make their demands on him.

### MESSAGE OF FREEDOM SOLKANEE CJC PRESIDENT

Passover affords us the opportunity of experiencing the Jewish people's exodus from Egypt. For thousands of years Jews have been fascinated by this story and inspired by its message of freedom.

This issue of the *Congress Bulletin* is dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the Holocaust. The period of the Holocaust provides us with a particular challenge, a need for a continued faith in man and God in the face of what is surely history's descent into a secular hell. As Jews, we have no alternative but to gain meaning from the past for our present, in order to breathe optimism into our future. As Jewish history has experienced an exodus from Egypt there are many who feel that the 20th century's own particular exodus took place when the State of Israel rose from the ashes of the Holocaust. Painful as this rationalization might be, there is little alternative but to turn to the words of the Haggadah:

*"In every age, some new freedom is won and established . . . The events in Egypt were but the beginning of a force in history which will forever continue. In this spirit, we see ourselves as participants in the Exodus, for we must dedicate our energies to the cause there begun."*

# THE HOLOCAUST AND RESISTANCE

by ABA BEER  
Chairman, Holocaust  
Commemoration Committee  
Eastern Region

In the pre-Hitler era Central and Eastern Europe were the great spiritual reservoir of world Jewry. Jewish communal existence was exemplified by the elaborate community structures which included educational, social welfare and cultural institutions. Great contributions were made to mankind by such men as Einstein, Freud, Buber, Weizman, Shalom Aleichem and Marc Chagall, and woven into the fabric of Western civilization.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century new emphasis on anti-semitism, based on the teachings of Houston, Chamberlain and Gobineau, was adopted and prefabricated by Hitler and used by the Nazis to undermine the framework of Western society, thereby bringing about the virtual destruction of Western Europe. In his *Mein Kampf*, Hitler declared, "If the Jew did not exist, we would have to invent him."

With the approach of World War II, the wave of anti-Jewish incitement and persecution in Germany grew, reaching its peak in the "Krystalnacht" ("Night of Broken Glass") pogrom of November 9, 1938. Synagogues and Jewish homes were burnt, shops were destroyed, 20,000 Jews arrested and many were murdered.

In his speech before the Reichstag on January 30, 1939, Hitler said: "I should like once more to make a prophecy. If international Jewish finance within Europe and overseas succeeds once again in embroiling nations in a world-war, it will not bring about the bolshevization of the earth and with it the victory of Jewry, but the extermination of the Jewish race in Europe."

## POLICY OF GENOCIDE

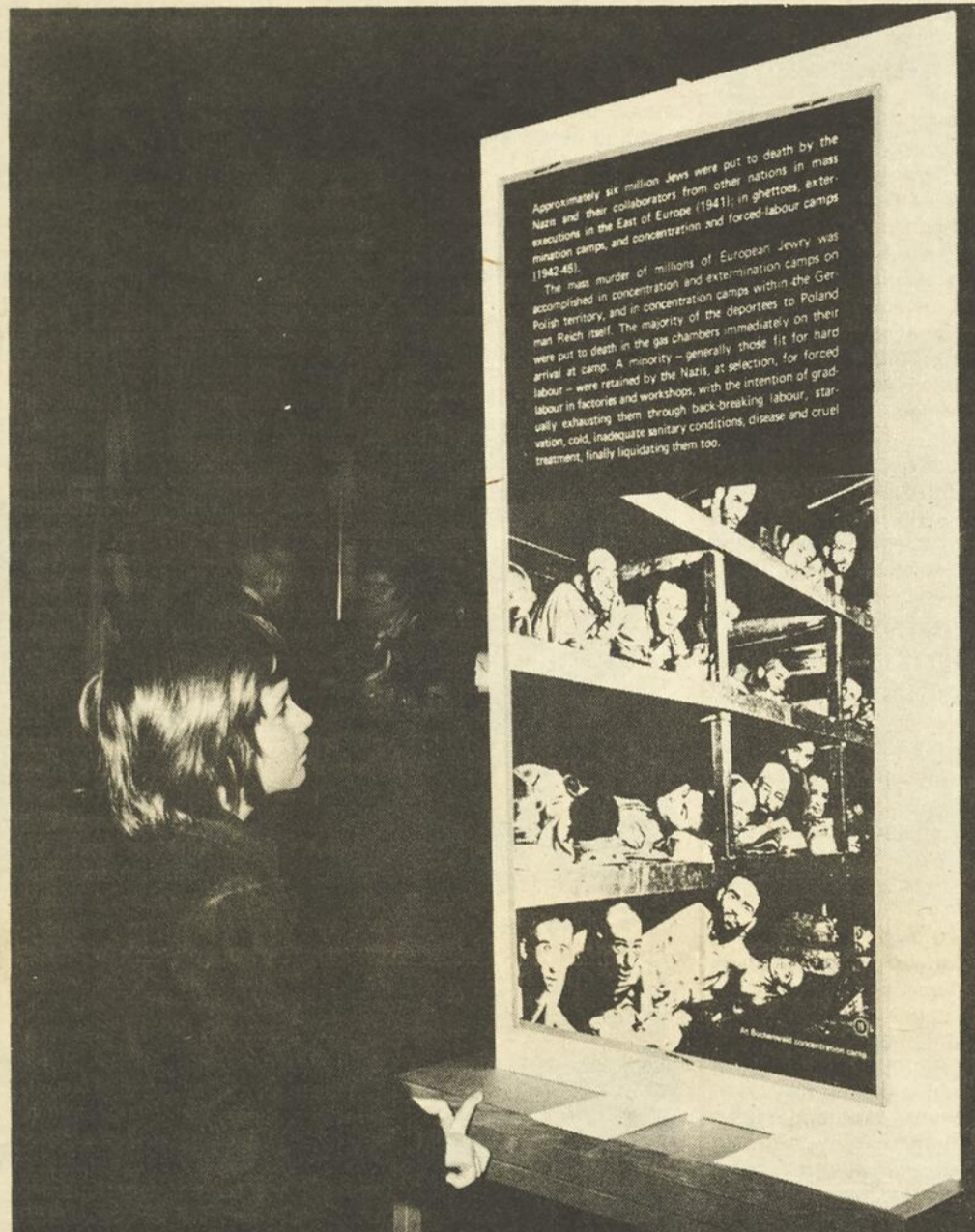
Following the occupation of Europe, the Germans began to methodically follow the policy of genocide. Jewish property was confiscated. Jews were forced into wearing the Star of David as a "Badge of Shame", were forced into press gang labour, and all forms of Jewish organizations were banned.

Ghettos were set up throughout the cities and towns of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe with the aim of isolating the Jewish population behind high walls, thus bringing about their decimation through starvation, debilitating forced labour, over-crowding, inadequate sanitary conditions, and disease.

Children, matured before their time, bore a heavy burden on their shoulders. They even supported their families by smuggling food at the risk of their lives and engaging in back-breaking factory work.

For all the appalling circumstances of their life in the ghettos, Jews contrived to frustrate the enemy's evil designs. They organized workshops, welfare institutions, public soup-kitchens, orphanages and old people's homes. A network of elementary and some secondary schools functioned. Public prayers and religious studies did not cease despite the strict prohibition. Writers and poets continued in their work, historians compiled documentation to supply evidence of Jewish suffering and heroism for the future. Even in the pall of Nazi occupied Europe, Jewish perception for learning and culture flourished.

In advance of their invasion of the Soviet Union, special action groups (Einsatzgruppen) were formed by the Nazis for the mass extermination of the Jewish population of occupied territories. Some 1-1/2 million Soviet Jews were exterminated. Vast mass graves are to be found near Vil-



Holocaust And Resistance Exhibition,  
Samuel Bronfman House Museum,  
March 18 — April 1, 1973.

na (Ponary), Kovno (Fort No. 9), Riga (Rumbuli), Kiev (Babi Yar), and Lvov (Piaski). In these tortures and massacres the Germans were assisted by collaborators from among the local non-Jewish population.

## SIX MILLION MURDERED

Approximately 6,000,000 Jews were put to death by the Nazis and their collaborators in mass executions in ghettos, extermination camps, and concentration and forced labour camps.

The mass murder of millions of European Jewry was accomplished in death camps on Polish territory, and in concentration camps within the German Reich itself. The majority of the deportees to Poland were put to death in gas chambers immediately on their arrival at camp. A minority — generally those fit for hard labour — were retained by the Nazis "at selection" for forced labour in factories and workshops with the intention of gradually exhausting them through backbreaking labour, starvation, cold, inadequate sanitary conditions, disease and inhumane treatment. Ultimately, they too were liquidated.

## WARSAW GHETTO LIQUIDATION

In April 1943 German troops backed by artillery and tanks marched into the Warsaw Ghetto in order to complete its liquidation. Jewish underground fighters commenced the struggle against the Germans and in a first engagement repulsed the enemy. Facing an army equipped with sophisticated weaponry, Jewish combatants stood wielding primitive weapons, most of which had been home-made within the ghetto. Fighting continued in streets, in basements and in attics, causing considerable German losses. On May 16, 1943, General Stroop, Commander of the German forces, officially announced the suppression of the revolt. In the course of the fighting the Germans had to systematically blow up or set fire to houses, while all those hiding in bunkers or in the sewers — combatants and non-combatant inhabitants alike — were taken as prisoners or murdered. The prisoners were deported to extermination camps. A few groups of combatants carried on the struggle in the ruins of the ghetto until August 1943.

## RESISTANCE

The Jewish people, condemned to death by design of the Nazis, took up arms against the oppressors and heroically resisted in the ghettos of Warsaw, Bialystok, Treblinka, Sobibor, whilst others participated in partisan warfare on Soviet, Polish, Slovak, Yugoslav, Greek and Belgian territories; and, of course, hundreds-of-thousands of Jews fought as soldiers and officers of the Allied Forces.

Just as great were the heroic deeds of countless ghetto and camp inmates who risked and sacrificed their lives to ease the suffering of their fellowmen whilst striving to preserve their human dignity in spite of appalling circumstances and conditions. Dr. Janush Korczak, well-known pedagogue and writer; Rabbi Menachem Zemba, spiritual leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Jewry; Dr. A. Czerniakow, Chairman of the Jewish Community Council in Warsaw — these are only a few of the men of stature who sacrificed their lives for their brethren.

The memory of the martyrs and heroes will be hallowed for eternity, as well as the shame and guilt of their oppressors.

**NAZIISM: A BALANCE SHEET (1933-1945)**

Country*	Jewish Population September 1939	Number of Jews Lost	Percentage of Jews Lost
Poland	3,300,000	2,800,000	85.0
Soviet Union (occupied area)	2,100,000	1,500,000	71.4
Rumania	850,000	425,000	50.0
Hungary	404,000	200,000	49.5
Czechoslovakia	315,000	260,000	82.5
France**	300,000	90,000	30.0
Germany	210,000	170,000	81.0
Austria	60,000	40,000	66.6
Lithuania	150,000	135,000	90.0
Holland**	150,000	90,000	60.0
Latvia	95,000	85,000	89.5
Belgium**	90,000	40,000	44.4
Yugoslavia	75,000	55,000	73.3
Greece	75,000	60,000	80.0
Italy**	57,000	15,000	26.3
Bulgaria	50,000	7,000	14.0
Miscellaneous #	20,000	6,000	30.0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>8,301,000</b>	<b>5,978,000</b>	<b>72.0</b>

\* Considered within pre-war borders  
\*\* Figures for France, Holland, Belgium and Italy include refugees  
# Denmark, Estonia, Luxemburg, Norway, Danzig

# eastern region

## Officers Meeting

February 19 a meeting was held of the Officers of the Eastern Region of Canadian Jewish Congress.

The agenda included appointment of Members to the Board of Trustees for AJCS; Montreal Action Committee for Soviet Jewry; Conference with Premier Bourassa; Joinder of Education Committees of Canadian Jewish Congress-Allied Jewish Community Services; Resolutions of National Conference on Jewish Education; Recommendation of Committee on Position of Jews in Educational System of Quebec for holding a public meeting on Bill 71 — proposed date March 7; Opportunities for Youth Program — recommendation of screening committee; March 25 Conference on *The Jewish Community in a Changing Quebec*; Evaluation of January 28 Conference; and Leadership Recruitment Program.

## EXECUTIVE MEETING

Immediately following the meeting of the Officers, a meeting was held of the Executive of the Eastern Region.

A special item on the agenda was a request from the National Executive for an expression of opinion on Capital Punishment and a possible position of the Jewish community. It was decided not to take any stand and to recommend to the National Executive that no position be taken by the Canadian Jewish Congress on this issue. It was felt that the *halachic* aspect is not unanimous and even if it were so, a considerable portion of the Jewish population might base its decision on grounds other than religious and thus there was no position reflecting the totality of the Jewish community on this issue.

## EDUCATION

Murray B. Spiegel, Q.C., Chairman of the Eastern Region of Canadian Jewish Congress, has addressed a letter to community leaders in Montreal dealing with the changes in the educational system in Montreal and with the report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Position of the French Language and on Language Rights in Quebec (Gendron Commission).

## School Board Elections

The communication urged the Jewish community to participate in the forthcoming school elections stressing that "a right achieved after 100 years of discrimination should not be taken lightly". In accordance with the new law Jews will have a choice between Protestant and Catholic School Boards as far as their franchise is concerned. This choice is unrelated in any way to the language of instruction (French or English) as every Board, at the request of parents, has to provide instruction in either of the two languages.

## Linguistic rights

The Gendron Commission recommended that while French shall be the official language, English and French shall be designated as national languages, and the status quo shall be maintained will respect to the language of instruction in the school system.

Another recommendation urged that the Province have its own

Human Rights Charter and a permanent Human Rights Commission to guard against all forms of discrimination and violation of the charter.

Canadian Jewish Congress was in constant communication with the Commissioners in connection with the preparation of the report. The letter noted that "we believe that to a great extent we had a significant influence with respect to the final recommendations."

The communication stressed that "our strong representations that no differentiation be made between classes of citizens, and that immigrants not be coerced to form part of the francophone sector, have been upheld by the recommendations contained in the report", and that while the report is not binding on the Government, it will undoubtedly have an influence on the final linguistic policies to be developed in the Province. It noted that "we have been promised that we will participate in the discussions leading to those policies, and on the whole must say that we find the report encouraging."

## DENOMINATIONAL IDENTIFICATION TAX BILLS

Montreal newspapers and radio and TV newscasts had reports on protests expressed in Cote St. Luc by Jewish Taxpayers against recent municipal assessment notices which included religious identification. Such identification was required up to now because school taxes, which were based on municipal valuation were collected by municipal authorities for the Catholic and Protestant School Boards and each denomination was classified separately (J — Jews; P — Protestants and C — Catholics). The recent restructuring of the school system in Montreal did away with taxation on religious basis. It appears that Bill 71 did not repeal the requirement which is included in the Real Estate Assessment Act making it mandatory for municipal clerks to indicate the religious denomination of the taxpayer on the assessment notices for the purpose of collecting school taxes.

CJC was contacted by the *Montreal Star* for a comment on the issue and replied, that "Congress could not agree more with those who protested religious designation on tax bills. CJC has continuously striven for equality for all in the educational system of Quebec — without distinction on the basis of religion. It is because of this consideration that CJC has worked for a unified school system. As long as the denominational system was maintained, there had to be religious distinction in school taxation. Bill 71, though it maintains the denominational school system, does away with denominational taxation and all taxes will be equalized as of the beginning of the 1973 school taxation year. It is good to know that the J, P and C on tax bills will appear for the last time. They should never have appeared."

Canadian Jewish Congress, Eastern Region, will make representations to Government to have this proviso in the Real Estate Assessment Act repealed.

# Congress

## pacific region

A meeting of the Board of Delegates of the Pacific Region of Congress was held in Vancouver February 15. Mr. I. M. Wolfe, Chairman of the Region, presided. Participating in the meeting was Mrs. Esther Markish.

Discussed was a re-organization of the Soviet Jewry Action Committee to correspond to the National Committee and the engagement of a part-time co-ordinator to be named by Congress and the Canadian Zionist Feder-

ation. It was agreed that Mr. Leslie Harowitz, Regional Chairman of the Soviet Jewry Actions Committee, would stay on as chairman of the reconstituted committee.

A resolution was adopted on the position of Jews in Iraq which was subsequently submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and released to the media.

A report was given by Dr. Marvin Weintraub on the University of

British Columbia courses of Judaic Studies which were approved by the University of British Columbia Senate and are awaiting confirmation by the University of British Columbia Board of Governors. Also discussed were the funding requirements for this program.

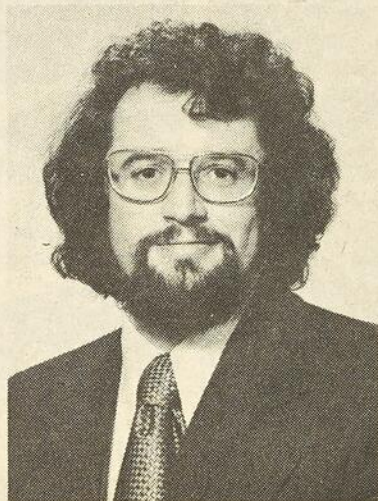
The meeting also discussed the position of the Jewish community with regard to the abolishment of Capital Punishment and recommended that there should be no Congress stand or brief for or against Capital Punishment.

## UGANDIAN DEPORTEES

The Pacific Region's National Vice-President, Dr. Roy Waldman and Executive Director Morris Saltzman are Directors of the Vancouver Immigrant Services Society which performs a much needed voluntary service for New Canadians in collaboration with the Departments of Manpower and Immigration and the Secretary of State.

Currently the focus of this voluntary group is with the Ugandan deportees. Congress Pacific Region was responsible for procuring large amounts of clothing and toys for the Ugandan expellees.

Recently a special meeting of the Federal Advisory Board of Immigrant Adjustment was convened in Vancouver. Among the Vancouver Immigrant Society's Committee members testifying before this group was Congress' Pacific Region Executive Director.



Dr. Robert Krell

Co-chairman U.B.C. Judaica Studies Ad Hoc Committee



Dr. Marvin Weintraub

## central region

### JCRC

The Joint Community Relations Committee of Canadian Jewish Congress and B'nai B'rith, Central Region, met in Toronto February 21.

A report was given of action taken by the Department of Education in respect to a classroom guide used for current events in a high school in Bradford, Ontario, which contained what purported to be excerpts from a history book dealing with Israel but which were actually the teacher's own views. The material was deemed extremely offensive and a signed statement was made by the teacher after investigation by the Department of Education and the Simcoe County Board. The statement was to the effect that the comments of the teacher would be corrected and clarified. The committee recommended that further steps be taken to assure ourselves how the subject matter is being dealt with at present.

A report was given of a special sub-committee of the National JCRC set up to consider on-going and future relations with the United Church. There will be additional consultation with the National Religious Affairs Committee.

A report was given of a sub-committee of the JCRC and Religious Affairs Committee dealing with the World Religions course given in Ontario high schools. It was agreed that representations be made to the Minister of Educa-

tion expressing misgivings and criticism of the present course and offering assistance in obtaining improvement in conception and teaching training.

A report was given of a screening of the religious program *Man Alive* (viewed by Rabbi Albert Pappenheim, Chairman of the Central Region Religious Affairs Committee, and the community relations and youth directors).

In the absence of the Chairman, Rabbi Jordan Pearlson, the meeting was chaired by Vice-Chairman Lou Ronson.

### CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE

Mr. David Rotenberg was appointed Chairman of the Chaplaincy Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Central Region. David Satok, Chairman of Central Region of Congress, stated that Mr. Rotenberg, for a number of years an executive alderman of the City of Toronto, would assist in reorganizing the Chaplaincy Committee and put to good use his wide experience and knowledge of the institutions, both Jewish and non-Jewish, in the metropolitan area.

The Chaplaincy Committee, under its co-ordinator Rabbi Joseph Kelman, spiritual leader of Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Congregation, serves hospitals, mental institutions and penal establishments in Toronto and through a network of

Ontario rabbis renders similar service through out the province.

### ONTARIO COMMUNITIES VISITED

Dr. Edmond Y. Lipsitz, Education Director CJC Central Region, has been visiting Ontario communities during January, February and March of 1973. The main purpose of the visits is to evaluate how Canadian Jewish Congress can assist or advise Jewish schools. The following is a listing of the communities: JANUARY—Peterborough, Cornwall, Oshawa; FEBRUARY—Oakville, Brantford, London (Or Shalom, Day School, Beth Tefilah), Chatham, Guelph, Kitchener, Galt, Sudbury, North Bay; MARCH—Pembroke, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Sarnia, Windsor (Beth El, Shaar Hashomayim), Belleville, Kingston, Hamilton (Beth Jacog, Hamilton Hebrew Academy, Anshei Sholom).

During each visit, meetings were held first with the principal or rabbi, followed by visits to the classrooms while in session. At the end of classrooms' observations, a detailed discussion was dedicated to evaluation and recommendations on a professional level. Finally, meetings were held with the Board of Education and/or interested parents. A written report on impression, ideas and recommendations were sent to each and every community.

# in action

## The Holocaust

### 30th Anniversary Observances

#### western region

A joint statement was issued by Oscar Antel, Chairman of the Western Region of the Canadian Jewish Congress and Monte P. Nathanson, President of the Jewish Welfare Fund of Winnipeg, announcing the establishment of Winnipeg, announcing the establishment of the Winnipeg Jewish Community Council.

Affiliation of the new Community Council with the Canadian Jewish Congress is a key-point in the terms of the approved merger proposal. The Council will serve as the arm of Congress in Winnipeg and will establish a special department which will function in the area of regional activities. Locally the Jewish Community Council will have five departments including Campaign; Community Relations and Internal Jewish Affairs; Community Services; Jewish Education; and Budgeting, Planning and Priorities. Implementation guidelines have been set forth in the merger memorandum which was approved on January 25 by the joint meeting of Congress regional and local council members and Welfare board members.

The first two steps now under way are: (a) the drafting of a set of bylaws for the Council — undertaken by a Constitution Committee headed by Mr. Justice Roy J. Mataswin Dorfman, Q.C., Yude M. Henteleff, and Joseph J. Wilder; and (b) the preparation of a slate of officers and a board of directors by

or a Western Regional Vice-Chairman, resident in Winnipeg, will also serve as a Vice-President of the Winnipeg Jewish Community Council. Election of the first officers of the Jewish Community Council will take place at a joint meeting of the Winnipeg section of the Congress Regional Executive and the Administrative Committee of the Welfare Fund. The first Board of Directors will be elected at a joint meeting of Winnipeg Regional Council members of Congress and Welfare Fund Board members.

#### GERALD C. LASENSKY

Appointed Executive Director of the Winnipeg Jewish Community Council is Gerald C. Lasensky, who has served as Executive Director of the Jewish Welfare Fund of Winnipeg since September 4, 1972. Mr. Lasensky formerly was Assistant Executive Director of the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Federation of Atlanta, Georgia.

#### ABE ARNOLD

The retirement of Abraham J. Arnold as Western Regional Director of Canadian Jewish Congress, effective January 31, 1973, was announced by Oscar Antel, Regional Congress Chairman at the joint Congress/Welfare Fund meeting on January 25 which approved the merger proposal. Mr. Antel announced that Gerald C. Lasensky, earlier named Executive Director



Key leadership personnel involved in the creation of the Winnipeg Jewish Community Council, though the amalgamation of activities of the Jewish Welfare Fund and those activities of Canadian Jewish Congress, Western Region, relating to Winnipeg, are shown in photo. Left to right: Gerald C. Lasensky, Executive Director, Jewish Welfare Fund and newly appointed Executive Director Jewish Community Council; Monte P. Nathanson, President, Jewish Welfare Fund; Sol Kane, National President, Canadian Jewish Congress; Oscar Antel, Chairman, Western Region, Canadian Jewish Congress; David S. Kaufman, Immediate Past President, Jewish Welfare Fund and current Chairman, Combined Jewish Appeal Policy Committee who was instrumental in initiating discussions which led to the merger; Il Sokolow, President, Winnipeg Congress Council; and Abe Arnold, Immediate Past Executive Director, Canadian Jewish Congress, Western Region.

a nominating committee composed of Saul M. Cherniak, Q.C., Chia Feldman, Sol Kane, David S. Kaufman A.R. Micay, Q.C., S.L. Morants, Philip Sheps and Abram Steinberg.

The officers of the Winnipeg Jewish Community Council will include a President, five Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer and a Secretary. The Western Region Chairman of Congress, if resident in Winnipeg,

of the Winnipeg Jewish Community Council, will assume the Congress directorship as part of his overall responsibilities.

Mr. Arnold has terminated his full-time service with Congress in order to intensify his work in the research and writing of Canadian Jewish history. He will continue to serve the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada and will act in an advisory role on certain other community projects.

#### Western

Holocaust observance will include a wide variety of programs. Wednesday, April 25 (1:00 p.m.) a public ceremony will be held at the cenotaph on Memorial Boulevard in Winnipeg. The program will include the renaming of a street in that vicinity *Avenue of Warsaw Ghetto Heroes* — a ceremony which has become traditional in Winnipeg's Holocaust observances over the past several years. It is expected that the Provincial Premier Ed Schreyer and Mayor Stephen Juba will participate in the torchlighting portion of the program.

Friday, April 27 — Jewish school children will take home a small candle along with the text of a short prayer which they will recite to their parents on the eve of *Yom Hashoah*.

Sunday, April 29 (3:00 p.m.) children of Jewish schools will light the commemorative candles at a community service at B'nair Abraham Synagogue. A guest speaker will be present.

*The Jewish Radio Hour* on CFRW-FM (12:30 p.m. 1:30 p.m.) will also feature a Holocaust Memorial program.

Sunday, April 29 (evening) a memorial program at the Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate will involve participation of teen groups and individuals. Highlights of the evening will be: a dramatic telling of Anne Frank's story by Lori Goldstein, BBG International Story Telling Award winner; and a showing of parts of the film *Let My People Go*.

Of interest will be a sensitivity program designed to make those present more aware of the Holocaust period in modern history. The lighting of candles and the singing of hymns will complete the evening's program.

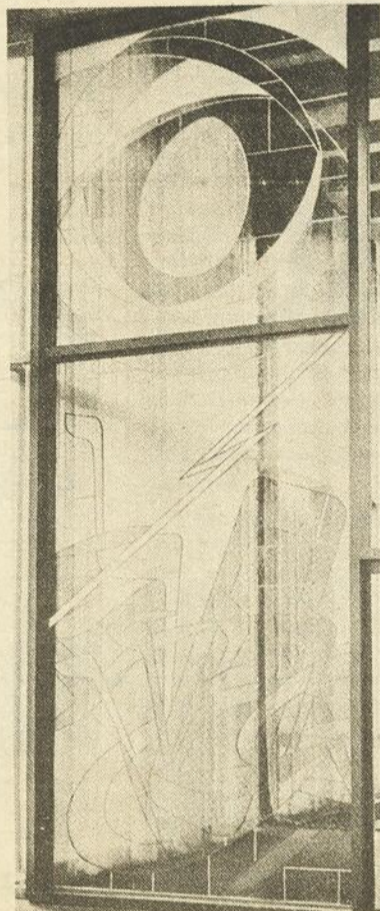
Chairmen of the Holocaust Committee are Rabbi Peretz Weizman, a Holocaust survivor, and Guy Kroft, a Vice-Chairman of Congress Western Region and National Chairman of the Committee on Integration.

#### Eastern

A meeting of the CJC Eastern Region Holocaust Memorial Committee took place February 14. Aba Beer presided.

Focusing its attention on the month of April as commemorating the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the committee is planning a number of programs memorializing this unforgettable event in Jewish history.

Among the items discussed during the meeting were: The Yad Vashem Exhibition outlining Jewish history in Nazi occupied Europe; (1933-45); increased use of Holocaust history in school and college curriculums; encouraging the display of Holocaust literature in the Jewish Public Library and bookstores; a coordinated publicity campaign; a community-wide



Permanent Memorial to the Six Million Jewish Martyrs of the Nazi Holocaust in the Entrance Lobby of Samuel Bronfman House.

campaign seeking the names of those murdered in the Holocaust; encouraging the use of Holocaust prayers during Passover; and a full schedule of events commemorating April 29 as the official *Yom Hashoah* (Day of Mourning).

The exhibition entitled *The Holocaust and Resistance* commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising opened officially at the Samuel Bronfman House in Montreal, March 18 featuring more than thirty Yad Vashem enlarged photographs which depict an outline of Jewish history in Nazi occupied Europe (1933-1945). The Exhibition also featured sculptures, paintings and books dealing with the Holocaust.

During the Exhibition's stay in Montreal the Yad Vashem photographs were viewed by thousands of students at Loyola College, Wagar High School, Sir George Williams University, McGill University and Vanier College. The display at the Samuel Bronfman House (March 18 — April 1), was then viewed at the Saidye Bronfman Centre (April 3-10).

The Exhibition was sponsored by the survivors of Nazi oppression in association with CJC, Eastern Region.

#### Pacific

Canadian Jewish Congress, Pacific Region, Warsaw Ghetto Committee is again busy planning another commemorative evening for April 29, 1973 in the Jewish Community Centre. Supplementing the play, Memorial Prayers will be chanted by some of the Cantors and at appropriate speech rendered by a dignitary of the community.

Marjorie Morris, well known playwright and author, is writing another original script for this year's program. There will be original music written especially for this presentation by Gerry Cohen. The cast is now being chosen and rehearsals will be commencing shortly. The play is entitled *The Survivors*.

Last year's program *A Testimonial to Suffering*, written and directed by Marjorie Morris, was well received and was performed on request at the Vancouver Public Library after its presentation at the Warsaw Ghetto Evening. The critics stated in their reviews of the play, "You were a Jew and felt the suffering of the Jewish people while watching this play". This play is now available at the Saidye Bronfman Centre in Montreal.

Last year's play depicted the events and tragedies of the 1940's. This year, *The Survivor* is attempting to portray the inner feelings today of the people who survived the Holocaust, vis-a-vis their remembrance of yesteryear situations and the emotional scars experienced then and today.

#### Central

The Holocaust Remembrance and Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Committee of Canadian Jewish Congress, Central Region, under its Chairman Paul Goldstein, met March 20 to finalize plans for its annual memorial program to be held on April 29, 1973 at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue in Toronto.

The chairman announced that the guest speaker would be Dr. Max Mushkat, Professor of International Law at the University of Tel Aviv who is also chairman of the Israeli World War II Veterans. Dr. Mushkat was born in Poland in 1919, lost his entire family during the Holocaust and was an officer in the Polish army.

The program this year returns to a more traditional form on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. A message will be delivered by Consul General of Israel Shmuel Ovnat, who will refer to the plight of Jews imprisoned in the USSR and in Arab Lands.

A class of Grade IV students of the Bialik School will give a dramatic presentation and there will be active participation by Rabbi Henry Hoschander and Cantor Klein of Shaarei Shomayim. Speaking on the program will also be David Satok, Chairman, Canadian Jewish Congress Central Region and Paul Goldstein who will map out plans for activities for the balance of the year. A candlelighting ceremony, songs of the Partisans and the traditional Kaddish will complete the evening.

# Jewish Values in the Post- Holocaust Future

EMILL. FACKENHEIM

Recently, the publication JUDAISM invited Emil L. Fackenheim to participate in a symposium on the theme *Jewish Values in the Post-Holocaust Future*. What follows is a transcript of Dr. Fackenheim's remarks. Emil Fackenheim is professor at the University of Toronto. He is the author of, among other works, *Metaphysics and Historicity*.

Our topic today has two presuppositions which, I take it, we are not going to question but will simply take for granted. First, there is a unique and unprecedented crisis in this period of Jewish history which needs to be faced by all Jews, from the Orthodox at one extreme to the secularists at the other. (Thus I take it that we are not going to discuss the various forms of Judaism and Jewishness as though nothing had happened.) Second, whatever our response to the present crisis, it will be, in any case, a stubborn persistence in our Jewishness, not an attempt to abandon it or escape from it. (Thus I take it that we shall leave dialogues with Jews who do not want to be Jews for another day.)

## THE CRISIS

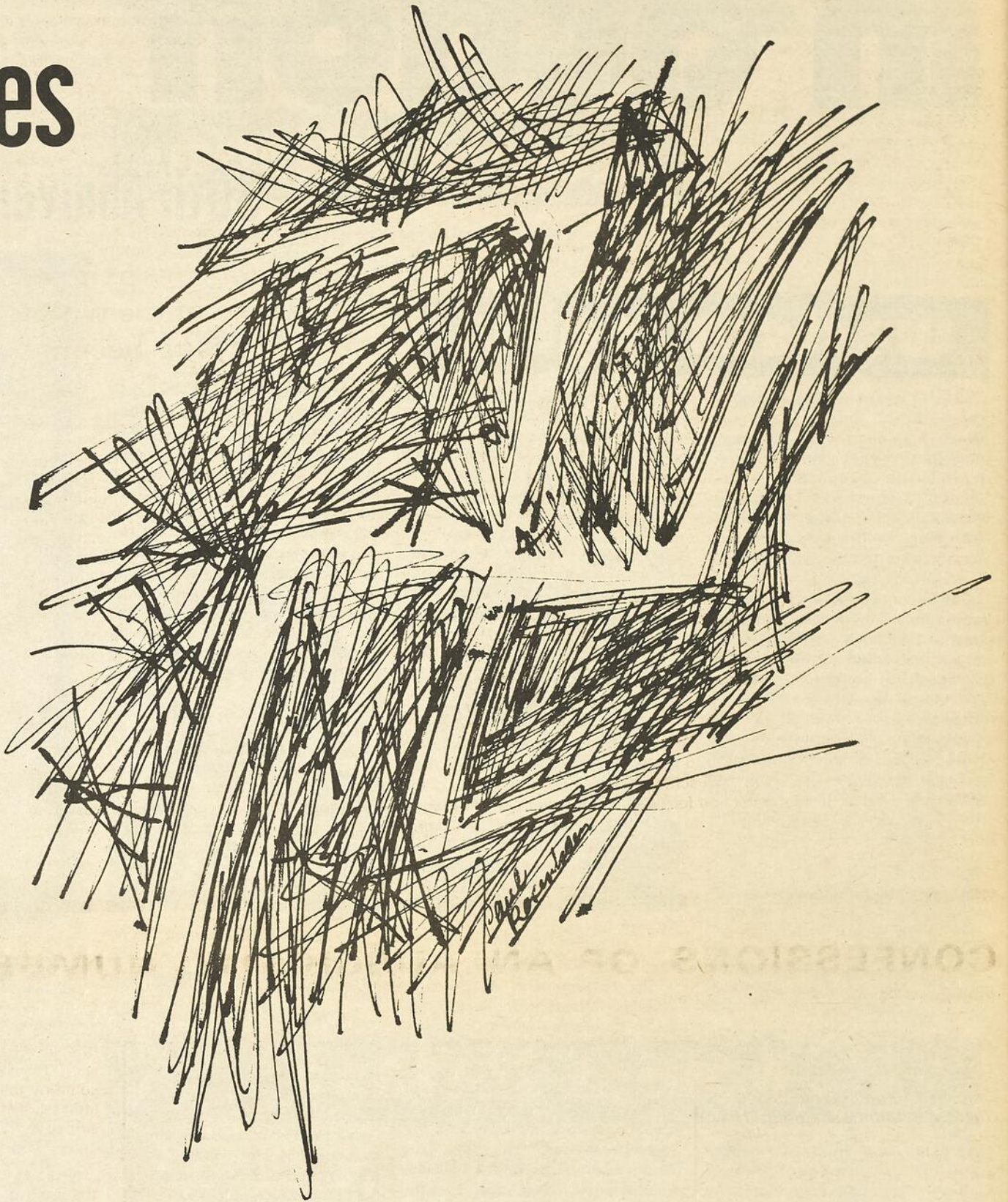
How shall we understand the crisis of this period in Jewish history? We shall, I think, be misled if we think in the style of the social sciences which try to grasp the particular in terms of the universal. We shall then, at best, understand the present Jewish crisis only in terms of the universal Western or human crisis, thus failing to grasp its uniqueness; at worst we shall abuse such an understanding as a means of escaping into the condition of contemporary-man-in-general.

Instead of relying on the sociological mind, we must rely on the historical mind, which moves from the particular to the universal. But the historical mind, too, has its limitations. Thus no contemporary Jewish historian at the time of the destruction of the First or the Second Temple could have fully understood the world-historical significance of that event, if only because, in the midst of the crisis, he was not yet on the other side of it. We, too, are in the midst of the contemporary crisis, and hence unable fully to understand it. As for our attitude toward the future, this cannot be one of understanding or prediction, but only one of commitment and, possibly, faith.

## UNDERSTANDING JEWISH EXISTENCE

How shall we achieve such fragmentary understanding of our present crisis as is possible while we are still in the midst of it? A crisis as yet unended can only be understood in terms of contradictions as yet unresolved. Jewish existence today is permeated by three main contradictions:

1) The American Jew of today is a "universalist", if only because he has come closer to the full achievement of equal status in society than any other Jew in the history of



... there is a unique and unprecedented crisis in this period of Jewish history ...

the Diaspora; yet this development coincides with the resurrection of Jewish "particularism" in the rebirth of a Jewish nation.

2) The Jew of today is committed to modern "secularism," as the source of his emancipation; yet his future survival as Jew depends on past religious resources. Hence even the most Orthodox Jew of today is a secularist insofar as, and to the extent that, he participates in the political and social processes of society. And even the most secularist Jew is religious insofar as, and to the extent that, he must fall back on the religious past in his struggle for a Jewish future.

3) Finally—and this is by far the most radical contradiction, and one which threatens to engulf the other two—the Jew in two of the three main present centers of Jewry, America and Israel, is at home in the modern world, for he has found a freedom and autonomy impossible in the pre-modern world. Yet he is but twenty-five years removed from a catastrophe unequalled in all of Jewish history—a catastrophe which in its distinctive characterizations is modern in nature.

These are the three main contradictions. Merely to state them is to show how false it would be for us to see our present Jewish crisis as nothing more than an illustration of

the general Western or human crisis. I will add to the general point nothing more than the mere listing of two specific examples. First, we may have a problem with "secularity," like our Christian neighbors. But our problem is not theirs, if only because for us—who have "celebrated" the secular city since the French Revolution—the time for such celebrating is past since the Holocaust. Second, while we have our problems with academically inspired atheism and agnosticism, they are central at best only for Jews who want to be men-in-general. For the authentic Jew who faces up to his singled-out Jewish condition—even for the authentic agnostic or atheistic Jew—a merely academically inspired doubt in God must seem sophomoric when he, after Auschwitz must grapple with despair.

## RESPONSES

We must, then, take care lest we move perversely in responding to our present crisis. We must first face up and respond to our Jewish singled-out condition. Only thus and then can we hope to enter authentically into an understanding of and relation with other manifestations of a present crisis which is doubtless universal.

In groping for authentic responses to our present Jewish crisis, we do well to begin with responses which have already occurred. I believe that there are two such responses: first, a commitment to Jewish survival; second, a commitment to Jewish unity.

I confess I used to be highly critical of Jewish philosophies which seemed to advocate no more than survival for survival's sake. I have changed my mind. I now believe that, in this present unbelievable age, even a mere collective commitment to Jewish group-survival for its own sake is a momentous response, with the greatest implications. I am

convinced that future historians will understand it, not, as our present detractors would have it, as the tribal response-mechanism of a fossil, but rather as a profound, albeit as yet fragmentary, act of faith, in an age of crisis to which the response might well have been either flight in total disarray or complete despair.

The second response we have already found is a commitment to Jewish unity. This, to be sure, is incomplete and must probably remain incomplete. Yet it is nonetheless real. Thus the American Council for Judaism is an anachronism, as is, I venture to say, an Israeli nationalism which would cut off all ties with the Diaspora. No less anachronistic is a Jewish secularism so blind in its worship of the modern secular world as wholly to spurn the religious resources of the Jewish past; likewise, an Orthodoxy so untouched by the modern secular world as to have remained in a pre-modern ghetto.

Such, then, are the responses to the present crisis in Jewish history which we have already found, in principle, however inadequately in practice. And their implications are even now altogether momentous. Whether aware of what we have decided or not, we have made the collective decision to endure the contradiction of present Jewish existence. We have collectively rejected the option, either of "checking out" of Jewish existence altogether or of so avoiding the present contradictions as to shatter Jewish existence into fragments.

### CONFRONTING THE HOLOCAUST

But the question now is whether we can go beyond so fragmentary a commitment. In the present situation, this question becomes: can we confront the Holocaust, and yet not despair? Not accidentally has it taken twenty years for us to face this question, and it is not certain that we can face it yet. The contradiction is too staggering, and every authentic escape is barred. We are bidden to turn present and future life into death, as the price of remembering death at Auschwitz. And we are forbidden to affirm present and future life, as the price of forgetting Auschwitz.

We have lived in this contradiction for twenty years without being able to face it. Unless I am mistaken, we are now beginning to face it, however fragmentarily and incon-

clusively. And from this beginning confrontation there emerges what I will boldly term a 614th commandment: the authentic Jew of today is forbidden to hand Hitler yet another, posthumous victory. (This formulation is terribly

**... the 614th commandment... we are commanded to survive as Jews... to remember the martyrs... forbidden to deny or despair of God... to despair of the world as a place which is to become the kingdom of God...;**

inadequate, yet I am forced to use it until one more adequate is found. First, although no anti-Orthodox implication is intended, as though the 613 commandments stood necessarily in need of change, we must face the fact that something radically new has happened. Second, although the commandment should be positive rather than negative, we must face the fact that Hitler did win at least one victory—the murder of six million Jews. Third, although the very name of Hitler should be erased rather than remembered, we cannot disguise the uniqueness of his evil under a comfortable generality, such as persecution-in-general, tyranny-in-general, or even the-demonic-in-general.)

I think the authentic Jew of today is beginning to hear the 614th commandment. And he hears it whether, as agnostic, he hears no more, or whether, as believer, he hears the voice of the *metzaveh* (the commander) in the *mitzvah* (the commandment). Moreover, it may well be the case that the authentic Jewish agnostic and the authentic Jewish believer are closer today than at any previous time.

To be sure, the agnostic hears no more than the *mitzvah*. Yet if he is Jewishly authentic, he cannot but face the fragmentariness of his hearing. He cannot, like agnostics and atheists all around him, regard this *mitzvah* as the product of self-sufficient human reason, realizing itself in an ever-advancing history of autonomous human enlightenment. The 614th commandment must be, to him, an abrupt and absolute given, revealed in the midst of total catastrophe.

On the other hand, the believer, who hears the voice of the *metzaveh* in the *mitzvah*, can hardly hear anything more than the *mitzvah*. The reasons which made Martin Buber speak of an eclipse of God are still compelling, and if nevertheless, a bond between Israel and the God of Israel can be experienced in the abyss, this can hardly be more than the *mitzvah* itself.

The implications of even so slender a bond are momentous. If the 614th commandment is binding upon the authentic Jew, then we are, first, commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. We are commanded, second, to remember in our very guts and bones the martyrs of the Holocaust, lest their memory perish. We are forbidden, thirdly, to deny or despair of God, however much we may have to contend with Him or with belief in Him, lest Judaism perish. We are forbidden, finally, to despair of the world as the place which is to become the kingdom of God, lest we help make it a meaningless place in which God is dead or irrelevant and everything is permitted. To abandon any of these imperatives, in response to Hitler's victory at Auschwitz, would be to hand him yet other posthumous victories.

How can we possibly obey these imperatives? To do so requires the endurance of intolerable contradictions. Such endurance cannot but bespeak an as yet unutterable faith. If we are capable of this endurance, then the faith implicit in it may well be of historic consequence. At least twice before—at the time of the destruction of the First and of the Second Temples—Jewish endurance in the midst of catastrophe helped transform the world. We cannot know the future, if only because the present is without precedent. But this ignorance on our part can have no effect on our present action. The uncertainty of what will be may not shake our certainty of what we must do.

## CONFESSIONS OF AN AUSCHWITZ NUMBER

Published by Dawson College, Montreal, 1972

*Mr. Rogel, born in Poland in 1911 is a Montreal resident.*

*John Richmond, critic for the Gazette in Montreal, stated: "His poems move because of their very deceptive simplicity. The emotions they arouse reverberate..."*

*A plain, unvarnished, account of unquiet despair, here and there illuminated... by the sheen of faith"*

*Mr. Rogel's personalized introduction captures the soul of his poetry.*

After years of silence and solitude, after years of living a life of self-imposed loneliness and isolation, I open up once more my *Book of Confessions* and say: let all those who feel and understand human tears and suffering - let them all read my confessions line for line, word for word. For only then they'll feel and understand my weeping heart.

My solitude was caused by my wounded spirit imprisoned in the darkness of my soul.

For years and years I was like a singing bird caught suddenly into the net of darkness, sorrow and despair, with no way out.

For it is from the twittering birds that I learned my song. Their singing sounded to me like the singing of a hymn to life, nature and God. Listening to their song, I felt a happiness as never before. Each song was to me an act of creation, a praise to life in all its dimensions.

Then, my soul, inspired by their song, taught me to love nature, beauty, life and all those things

### Confessions of An Auschwitz Number



that enrich the human soul and spirit. I realized then that there are so many things in life I know very little about. I learned that each simple life is a tiny living part of the universe.

From the birds I learned to sing the song of the human soul. And so, I walked on the path of song, drinking with my thirsty eyes the beauty of nature. And when I doubted the worth of my writing, the birds came along singing, reciting their song, and in time their song became my song; it became like a lute fastened to my heart singing at will... I fell in love with life and nature. I saw in love a tiny little rivulet cruising around the world day and night. Everybody sees the rivulet of love, everybody feels it, but nobody can reach its depth...

That was years and years ago. Then sadness came upon me and my song, darkness and night. For I saw Death coming over me and my people. I saw Death with his iron fists pushing my brethren deeper and deeper into the abyss of death and silence...

I heard the voices of weeping souls falling dead on each side of the road. And I saw the march of dying shadows going on and on... I saw multitudes of lives being driven to their tragic end... We heard their moaning and wailing while Death was swallowing more and more lives. We saw how father and son, mother and daughter were tormented by the pangs of hunger and despair. But Death never stayed of his hunger for more lives... And nobody heard their cries, nobody felt their tears, and nobody came to their rescue. And I saw city after city desecrated, the

faces of their people, stained with their blood, perished, endlessly, day and night.

And the Death kept marching, marching on and on, mocking and laughing at all those driven to their death, carrying the banner of triumph and victory. And I saw also myself once more, among all those multitudes of shadows crying in fear and fright. I saw us eating bread kneaded with our own ears and blood.

That was a time of constant night. Our whole life was suddenly thrown into the abyss of death.

And so, silent and mute became my song, all my words left me, and I felt an indescribable sadness and emptiness in my heart. Then I said: silent and still shall remain my song till the last minute of my life.

And, I would have ended my last days in silence and solitude, forgotten by everybody and forsaken.

Then, the souls of all those perished brethren appeared before me, asking me and begging to let my truth be known to the world, for their sake, and for the sake of the lonely weeping souls.

And I saw a light coming from under their burned ashes, and I heard once more their voices coming from their unknown graves. And, it was the voice of sobbing souls. Then I said: my voice can be silent no more!

Therefore, I open up the *Book of my Confession* and say: let all those who feel human tears and suffering - let them all come to me and whisper my prayers for their souls.

Let my "confessions" written with the tears of my weeping heart be the lighted candles over their unknown graves.

# AN INTERVIEW WITH

**WILLIAMS:** John, can we start with your telling us when and where you were born?

**HIRSCH:** I was born in 1930, May 1st, in Hungary, in a small town called Shoofough, a town on the shore of Lake Boliton which is the largest lake in central Europe.

**WILLIAMS:** What kind of a family and community were you living in?

**HIRSCH:** My family consisted of my father, mother, grandfather, and a younger brother, also a great many aunts and uncles and nephews and nieces who all lived in a very large house with a courtyard in the middle of it. We must have been around 25 all together.

**WILLIAMS:** What did your father do for income?

**HIRSCH:** Well, my father had a hardware store and he also sold building materials, construction materials.

**WILLIAMS:** Your grandfather, being a member of the legislature, was that quite rare for a Jew to be a member of a Provincial legislature?

**HIRSCH:** It was very rare. Though, in Hungary, at the beginning of the century there was quite a liberal attitude towards Jews. Jews were engaged in the professions and they could own land. We were brought up as very patriotic Hungarians. My father was an officer during the First World War in the Hungarian Army. He was wounded and every time there was a parade in town, my father was marching right in the forefront of it. When the Second World War came, even before that, all that changed because we were looked upon as foreigners and strangers and not Hungarians. Though our family went back for, as far as I know, hundreds of years. In Hungary, my great-grandfather was born in a small village outside of Shoofough where I was born.

**WILLIAMS:** The Second World War and the preamble to it, how did this affect your life?

**HIRSCH:** Well, for a while my family thought that we would be exempted somehow from all the horror. When our relatives began to come from Germany and Austria fleeing Naziism, they told us what was to come. Then people came from Poland who saw concentration camps, and they told us to go, to leave. My grandfather wouldn't hear of it because he was Hungarian, his whole family was Hungarian, and nobody would do anything to him or to his children or to his grandchildren. They simply could not believe that what was to happen would happen. When you have lived in a place for hundreds of years, you couldn't really imagine that suddenly your neighbours and everybody around you would turn against you and murder you. The Germans came in and ran over Hungary, officially occupying it. Whole communities were rounded up and sent to camps in Hungary, gathering points from which people were shipped away in cattle cars to Poland, to the various extermination camps. My mother had a very strong feeling this was going to happen. Within a couple of days after the occupation she called my uncle who was in the capital city, asking him to send somebody down to take some of us away. I remember it was very early in the morning. The train was leaving around 6:30. Most of the people in the house were still asleep so there was no way of saying goodbye to people. My brother was in his bed, still asleep. My father was up, and ran



Sculpture by Isy Brachat

to the baker, bought two rolls which my mother stuck into my pockets. I remember they were still hot. My mother and father kissed me goodbye. That was the last I saw of them.

**WILLIAMS:** Of any of them?

**HIRSCH:** Yah. My grandfather who was 85 at the time was sent to Budapest also. We lived in the ghetto for 6 months during the time when the city was besieged by the Russians. Around 300,000 people were herded into an area really built for maybe 30,000 people or 20,000 people. It was during the winter, the siege was quite horrendous because during the day the Americans were bombing the city and during the night the Russians were bombing the city. The Germans were there all the time. There was a great deal of deprivation for everyone. There were around 30

people living in a tiny room. There was no light, water, and food. During the day we were allowed to go out in the streets maybe for an hour or two. I used to take a big kitchen knife and a basket to find dead horses so we could cut some meat off the carcasses that were lying in the street. Corpses were piled up like cord wood, you know, 20 people this way and 20 people that way and maybe 100 piles like this in the centre of the ghetto, so that when we went once a week to the soup kitchen to bring some soup again, courtesy of the Swiss Red Cross, we had to pass through those corpses in the middle of winter. And I remember the pea soup that we used to bring was just plain water with worms swimming on the top. People were dying like flies, all over the place.

**WILLIAMS:** Were you filled with des-

pair or did you feel that it was all leading some place into some sort of a dawn in all this darkness?

**HIRSCH:** There was no hope there really, because we were caught like rats, and there was no way of telling anybody of your problems. The rumours were that people were taken to Auschwitz, which turned out to be true. After the war, I did find out that my mother and brother and all our family were gassed and then burned in the ovens in Auschwitz. My father who was taken away to Germany survived all the way through the war. During the last day in the course of the first march, he couldn't walk any longer and they shot him by the wayside and that was that. I had some kind of vague unbelievable hope, being fourteen years old at the time, that the war would be over, that I would take the train and go home to my whole family, sitting under the trees as they did in the summer time. That never came. My grandfather starved to death at the end of the siege, in a kind of delirium saying, "If you could just get me a piece of white bread." That's all he wanted. He prayed every morning.

**WILLIAMS:** Did you ever follow suit?

**HIRSCH:** No. There was no way for me to pray. I knew too much, it seems. I didn't even know what I could be praying for. It seemed so futile.

**WILLIAMS:** How did you in fact, get out of there then, out of Budapest?

**HIRSCH:** Well, the Russians came and they liberated the city. I think I went through a period that now I can only describe as severe nervous breakdown where I couldn't really function anymore. I travelled to southern Hungary. Then started to walk on foot, back towards my birthplace, nurtured by this really insane kind of hope that I would find my mother, father, and everybody home. So I walked miles and miles for weeks following the Russians, sleeping in the fields, in barns, villages and so on. Then it was a lovely summer, spring day. I was walking along the canal that had its mouth at the lake where my town was. And as I was walking along the canal. I remember somebody shouting across it, "Jew, you've come home, hey?" I was only 15 years old, a very scrawny and miserable kind of 15 years old. And I just ran from then on until I got to our house. I could hardly get through the door. In my parents' bedroom, there was a mountain of books. All their books were dumped. We had a very big library. All the books I had read as a child were piled in the middle of the floor. I remember walking into my parents bedroom, where I slept as a small child, and sitting on top of these books and just crying for what must have been 24 hours. Just sitting there. And then followed a le period of a different kind of madness. I was 15, started to smoke, gamble and run. Then I started to walk back to the capital city, hoping to find some of my other relatives there and hoping that my grandfather was still alive. He was dying when I got back. My uncle took a little cart, put him in a box and just pulled him out to the cemetery where he dug a grave. Recently, I was back in Hungary and visited the cemetery where my grandfather is buried. There's nobody to tend the stones and this huge cemetery is now rooted up so there won't be any memory left of all these people who lived there for hundreds of years, contributing to the life of the country in every possible way. The time will come I'm sure when their memories will be as lost to the future as if they had lived tens of thousands of years ago.

# JOHN HIRSCH

The noted Canadian theatrical director, John Hirsch, was interviewed recently for the film *It Must be Told* by producer Don S. Williams. The film was a CBC production in association with Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature for the Jewish Museum of Western Canada exhibit *Journey Into Our Heritage*. The following is a condensed version of that interview.

**WILLIAMS:** What were the events that led up to your coming to Canada?

**HIRSCH:** Well, some sort of normalcy was restored in Hungary. I went to live with an aunt and an uncle of mine. I tried to go back to school but it was no use. I was young and totally disturbed, dislocated. At the first opportunity I left Hungary. I wandered around in Paris. I lived on tomatoes, slept on the benches on the Boulevard Stratsburg, and got into an orphanage outside of France. Then suddenly I wanted to do something. I wanted to go back to school. I wanted to read again. I wanted to have some kind of a regular life. So every week I would go to a different Embassy and ask whether they can use a 16 year old Hungarian Jewish orphan. The Canadian Jewish Congress then sent people to Europe. They were looking for orphans, Jewish orphans who could be brought to Canada. I came to Canada under the scheme of the Canadian Jewish Congress and I came here in the fall of 1947. I didn't know where Winnipeg was, or what Winnipeg was. The closest I really came to any idea of Winnipeg came from a book that I read when I was eight years old called *Wolves of Winnipeg*. The story had to do with three trappers caught in a house, wolves running around in the snow, and finally they all died. The wolves came and ate up all the people. That's what I knew about Winnipeg. But when I was asked whether I wanted to go to Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto, or Halifax, I asked for a map of Canada. Winnipeg being in the middle of it and having been involved in so many extreme situations, the mere fact that Winnipeg was in the middle of the continent, I pointed to Winnipeg and I said, "that's where I want to go, it looks safe". And I came here with a group of boys, one of them was my kind of adopted brother, David Erlich who is now in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. David and I were placed at in the home of the Shacks, Sybil Shack and Mrs. Shack and Mr. Shack who died a few years after we arrived there. They were the most exceptional people I have ever come across in my life. I didn't know it then. I could feel it and it was everything in the air. But now 25 years later, I realize I was placed in the home of exceptional, extraordinary human beings. My mother, my adopted mother, Mrs. Shack, is an exceptional human being. If I would pick a model for the kind of person I would like to be I suppose it would be the kind of person she is. She's a humanitarian in the true sense of the word. She's one of the most religious people I've met in my life, without being formally religious because she's an agnostic. Her whole life has to be with life — plants, animals, love, people. She is always concerned with everybody around her and with the world in general. She is, God bless her, 82 years old, as sharp and bright as anyone I know. They mended me. They really put me together and they did it with the only glue that can put human beings together. They did it with love and concern, and this love and concern lasted and I hope will last as long as we live. I had a marvellous family when I was a child, an extraordinary group of people. But I've found an equally extraordinary family when I came here.

**WILLIAMS:** Let's get into once you were established in the Shack home, functioning?

**HIRSCH:** I got a job in Winnipeg, very soon after I arrived, at Aronovitch & Leipsic, an insurance firm, as office boy. I went to night school where I learned English. By the time spring came around, I knew enough to begin private lessons so I



could pass my Grade 12 entrance examinations. At the end of the summer, I went to St. Johns High School into Grade 12, passed that and then went on to University. All during this time I was working for Aronovitch & Leipsic who were very kind good to me. This way I could put myself through school and finally University. While I was at University, I began to write poetry, and short stories which were published in the campus newspaper. I also became involved in the Winnipeg Little Theatre, painted scenery for them, acted for them, did tiny bit parts. . . . At the same time I also started a puppet theatre in Winnipeg called the Muddy Water Puppet Company and that company had Tom Henry, Mark Negan, and myself as the artistic heads. Then we started a children's theatre. We toured schools, community centres. Our next project was a children's theatre that was done at the Playhouse Theatre where children came and saw shows. I was around 22 at the time. I finished University, graduated with B.A. honors in English Literature and Philosophy and started to work with the Winnipeg Little Theatre. And I had the children's theatre and worked with puppets at the same time. Around that time, James Duncan started Rainbow Stage and we started to produce musical comedies at Rainbow Stage. Then television came to Winnipeg and I was their very first producer. I stayed with C.B.C. in Winnipeg for 3 years and produced educational programs, baseball games, hobby shows, drama, literary programs. You name it and I did it. I became involved in theatre more and more, and I quit the CBC. Went to England, where I attended the Central School of speech and drama and learned a bit more about what actors and directors can do. Came back to Canada and started Theatre 77, in opposition to the Winnipeg Little Theatre. After a year, the Little Theatre and the Theatre 77 combined and formed the Manitoba Theatre Centre which was the first truly community based professional, regional theatre in the country and the beginning of the whole chain of theatres of that sort

across the country. I began to direct all over Canada, in Toronto, in Montreal, and in Vancouver. After a while, I left Winnipeg, having established this theatre very firmly indeed, and became associate artistic director of the Stratford Shakespearean Festival. From there I went to New York where I did a great deal of work at the Lincoln Centre Repertory Theatre, a sort of resident director. I also did work on Broadway, Joseph Heller's *We bombed in New Haven*. I worked for the New York City Opera. Finally I get to Israel and directed the opening production of the New National Theatre of Israel. I worked at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, and hope to continue working in Canada, in New York, wherever they ask me to work.

**WILLIAMS:** What form does your Jewishness take? How can you describe or define it? Is it relevant at all?

**HIRSCH:** I feel myself very Jewish because my whole life has been shaped and formed very strongly by the fact that I was born a Jew. It's not the only influence in my life, but a very important one.

**WILLIAMS:** Because of the negative results of being a Jew and the negative factors that were created, or the positive factors that shaped your life?

**HIRSCH:** Not only because of the negative factors. It's because of the positive factors. I don't think I could have borne the negative factors of my Jewishness if I wouldn't have had some very positive factors coming from my Jewishness. The whole idea of suffering is very much part of my Jewishness. The idea that life must be lived here and now, not in another world after death, is also a very Jewish outlook influencing my life. My sense of social responsibility, that I am here not only for myself but for what I can do for others, is a very strongly Jewish strain in me. The whole thing about starting theatres and involving myself in community affairs, which I have done all my life, is part of my Jewishness. I'm also enriched by Jewish traditions. I do a great deal of reading in Jewish mysticism, for example. I am very concerned and interested in Jewish reli-

gion. Not because I am a practicing Jew, but because it is part of my tradition. Some of the things that people are talking about today, ways of life, ways of perceiving reality, ways of interpreting reality, can also be found in Judaism. And I'm rediscovering those things now. And I'm very excited about those things. The whole experience I had in Winnipeg, in Canada, with the Canadian Jewish Congress, and more specifically with the Shacks, reconfirmed my faith in the positive aspect of Judism service, fellowship, caring and loving fellow human beings, is very important to me. I also feel that being part of a group of people who survive for five or six thousand years is nothing to be scoffed at. And I don't say that Jew is beautiful, the same way that you say Black is beautiful. I don't go that far in a kind of chauvinistic direction but in a quiet humanistic way, I feel fortunate I have been born a Jew. I can't imagine myself to be anything else, because of the Jewish outlook of life, because of the way a Jew looks at society and at another human being.

**WILLIAMS:** Can you single out the most exciting event or happening or moment of your life?

**HIRSCH:** I can't single out the most exciting moment or happening of my life because I have had so many most exciting marvellous moments and happenings in my life. I think the way I tried to live is to live a very open life. A life where every day, every second, is full of the promise of something exciting. The whole process of living for me is very exciting. Walking down the street every day, passing the same wall where an ivy grows and seeing the growth of those leaves day by day is very exciting. Quite as exciting as having a marvellous rehearsal during which I make some kind of a fantastic contact with a work. Playing with a child, eating a very good meal, looking at some color that comes into my view at any given moment. Being with someone I love. All these things are very exciting. But there are no great peaks. I don't look at life that way. And I hope that the most exciting moments are still ahead of me and I hope there will be many. As long as I am productive, remain open, have a kind of continuing faith in existence in my own existence and in the existence of other human beings around me, despite the dismal absurdity of life and the injustice that goes on all the time — as long as I can balance my life with the beauty of it. Then I think I will be very alright.

**WILLIAMS:** Do you think that the non-Jewish world ever learns anything from the example of the Jewish world? By examples, I mean things like the recovery from the Holocaust, the great striving and success of the State of Israel, the thousands of years of recovery from suffering and so on?

**HIRSCH:** All human beings learn from one another and I think that the non-Jewish world knows what the Jews know. The only difference seems to be Jews have been subjected to life, to the horrors of it and the beauty of it in a more concentrated kind of fashion. Other human beings suffer, recover, survive. It's only in the twentieth century I think that most people are becoming Jews. The non-gentiles are becoming Jews because they are displaced also and they are undergoing tremendous quick changes in this never ending cycle of suffering and recovery, almost death and resurrection. These are not especially Jewish qualities, they're human qualities. But in the history of the Jews, one sees these qualities in a much more concentrated way.

# book review

## CANADIAN JEWISH PROFILES

BERNARD FIGLER Q.C.

BY RABBI WILFRED SHUCHAT D.D.  
SHAAR HASHOMAYIM SYNOGOGUE

Harpell's press co-operative, Gardenvale, Quebec

Bernard Figler's two biographical essays on Rabbi Dr. Herman Abramowitz, Lazarus and Lyon Cohen have made a profound impression upon me as I think they will upon every reader. They have accomplished what all successful biographies should accomplish and that is to bring to the attention of the reader an additional dimension not formerly realized and appreciated.

One does not need an official biography to inform even the most casual citizen in the city of Montreal and certainly within the Jewish community that Rabbi Abramowitz was the spiritual leader of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim for almost the entire first half of the twentieth century and that Lyon Cohen, like his father Lazarus Cohen, was an out-standing lay leader and President of the same Congregation for a good proportion of that period. What the biography does reveal is a special quality about their lives and their careers.

Rabbi Abramowitz was a spiritual leader not only of achievement but of uncompromising integrity. Devoted, conscientious and an extremely hard worker, he shied away from publicity and publicity-seeking which he regarded as the *Yetzer Horah* — the evil tempter of otherwise great men.

He was outspoken in his traditionalism, a severe critic when necessary of his lay leaders and congregants, but, even more important, a severe critic of himself. This outstanding man who at various times headed the United Synagogue of America, the United Palestine Appeal and occupied various other Jewish community

decision-making positions, regarded himself at the very height of his spiritual career as a Rabbinic "failure." At the very same moment of this public confession his lay leaders proclaimed him as their indispensable guide in religion, Jewish education and Jewish community responsibility. Probably both were right. Rabbi Abramowitz regarded himself as a "failure" because like Moses he projected for himself goals that were so high as to be unachievable. His lay leaders regarded him as a towering success because their goals were more pragmatic and, in realistic terms, Rabbi Abramowitz was indeed the master builder of Canadian Judaism.

Bernard Figler was able to bring out the same qualitative profile in the career of Lyon Cohen that he was able to discern in his evaluation of Rabbi Abramowitz.

Lyon Cohen was the President of Shaar Hashomayim on and off from the early part of the twentieth century almost to the close of his life. However, he never looked upon the Synagogue as a separate department either of his life or of the Jewish community. When, for example, the Separate Jewish School Panel became an issue in the early twenties, he insisted that it be discussed at an open congregational meeting so that the congregation might use its leverage in maintaining a united Jewish front. When the congregation refused to accept his point of view he thereupon resigned as its President. It is to the credit of the congregation that it did not accept his resignation; on the other hand, it points out the lesson of Lyon Cohen's example, that everything Jewish is the Synagogue's business.

Statesman, arbiter, co-ordinator, visionary. All of these qualities apply to Lyon Cohen. Probably the most unusual illustration of all of these virtues was his determination to establish an Anglo-Jewish newspaper so that the community might obtain for itself not only a voice but an image and an interpreter. *The Jewish Times* which he created was short-lived but of tremendous importance. Its successor the *Canadian Jewish Chronicle* is no longer published as a weekly. How we miss his vision today!

Lyon Cohen once said about himself in connection with a favorite project that he allowed nothing to stand in the way of its fulfillment, neither business, health or pleasure. This was the key to his leadership at all times.

The fact that the Montreal Jewish community and, in particular, Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, had, for such a long period of time, a partnership of Herman Abramowitz as Rabbi and Lyon Cohen as President goes a long way to interpret the stature and uniqueness of both the Shaar Hashomayim Congregation and the Montreal Jewish community.

We owe a debt of singular gratitude to Bernard Figler for bringing this material and these insights to our attention. The two portraits are a grand-addition to the *Canadian Jewish Profiles* upon which Bernard Figler has embarked as the historical project of his lifetime. They are an invaluable contribution to Jewish Canadiana and we extend to him every measure of encouragement with the hope at the same time that he may be privileged to continue his very creative work for many years to come.

## A SABBATH MANUAL

In a major effort to restore the Sabbath among Reform Jews to its traditionally central role of Jewish observance, the Central Conference of American Rabbis has published *A Sabbath Manual*.

The slim volume of barely more than 100 pages, titled *Tadrach L'Shabbat* in Hebrew, takes in the entire range of Sabbath observance, from its history and purposes through home services for Friday evening and Saturday noon and night. It contains a section on traditional songs, with both words and music, and selected readings on the Sabbath from the Bible, Talmud and Midrash, from medieval sources and modern literature and from contemporary authors such as Elie Wiesel, Franz Rosenzweig, Robert Gordis, Abraham J. Heschel and Milton Steinberg.

Compiled by a committee of Reform rabbis under the chairmanship of Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, the Manual is the result of a decision taken in 1965 by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the rabbinical arm of Reform Judaism.

Rabbi Plaut has stated the Manual is "our beginning effort to recover Shabbat observance as an enhancement of Jewish life, both for the individual Jew and our people as a whole." The unique volume contains many prayers both in Hebrew and English, including the Kiddush, and some are also transliterated.

One whole section is devoted to questions and answers about the Sabbath, including who should

light the Sabbath candles and when; why weddings are not permitted on the Sabbath; why Reform congregations permit the blowing of the shofar on the Sabbath while Orthodox congregations forbid it; and the position of Reform Judaism on Biblical and Talmudic prohibitions against work and engaging in business on the Sabbath.

There is also a glossary explaining some key words pertaining to the Sabbath and Sabbath worship.

Members of the *Sabbath Manual* committee in addition to Rabbi Plaut were Rabbis Herbert M. Baumgard, Robert I. Kahn, Joseph Klein, Herbert H. Rose, Herman E. Schaalman and the late Rabbis Frederic A. Doppelt and Henry E. Kagan.

## SHLOMO WISEMAN A TRIBUTE

by DR. JOSEPH KAGE

*Shlomo Wiseman was Montreal's leading educator and pioneer in the Day School Movement. Recently retired after fifty years of dedicated service to the community, Mr. Wiseman was a prominent member of CJC Education Committee and a principal speaker at Congress' many meetings and conferences. In recognition of his accomplishments this article is being published as a tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Wiseman while the Labor Zionist Alliance and the Jewish National Fund honoured Mr. and Mrs. Wiseman at the Chevra Kadisha Synagogue in Montreal, March 24.*



Shlomo Wiseman

Shlomo Wiseman came to Canada in his early youth and started his teaching career almost immediately following his arrival. He has excelled not only as a teacher; he is also blessed with abilities of dynamic creativity which find their expression in the performance of his daily tasks of instilling within the Jewish child feelings of *Ahavas Yisroel*.

For over half a century, Shlomo Wiseman has been the principal and guiding spirit of the Jewish People's Schools of Montreal; he is also the founder of our first Jewish Day School. This has been and will remain a colossal achievement in the field of Jewish education. Jewish Day Schools throughout the North American continent owe him a debt of gratitude for his pioneering efforts which he undertook despite great financial, organizational, and pedagogical difficulties. His deep conviction that an intensive Jewish education is the main road towards our *Hemshech* and national existence is responsible for this achievement. Another cardinal point of his pedagogical belief is that an integrated Jewish education, seeking the natural fusion of secular and Jewish studies, is essential. The core of Mr. Wiseman's approach is that modern Jewish education ought to be the raising of our youth within the broad concepts of North America culture where Jewish national and cultural aspirations should find a legitimate and harmonious place.

Shlomo Wiseman has been and has remained my teacher

just as he has been and has remained the teacher of thousands of his other students. This could only have been achieved by an educator who considers his pedagogical tasks to be sacred, who does not permit hardships to hinder him and who, simultaneously, has also been involved in adult education and in raising the cultural standards of the entire community. To achieve all this, one must possess energy, initiative; as well as faith and idealism. It is also necessary to have a great deal of awareness and understanding of the total factors that constitute the difficult and complicated problem of a national Jewish education.

Shlomo Wiseman adheres to a positivistic pedagogical philosophy, and, when it comes to the question of Jewish education he is determined to the point of stubbornness. He is also, however, aware of the fact no one can foresee or foretell the future of Jewish life and the spiritual-cultural physiognomy of the Jewish populace. It is for this reason that Shlomo Wiseman is not merely a pedagogue, a teacher of teachers, but also an eternal student who never ceases his own studies, *Erev Vaboker, U'Vkol Yom Tomid*.

Shlomo Wiseman is not one of those "nice people" whose aim it is to please everybody. He follows his own path and, if he is stubborn, it is not for the sake of being stubborn but because he remains true of his convictions; he retains an open mind and is ready to listen and be convinced as well — the true mark of a pedagogue and responsible communal leader.

# THE WARSAW GHETTO CHESS SET

Its story as told by Edward Felsher



The Warsaw Ghetto was the living hell of 500,000 Jews in the period from September, 1941 to January 1945. When Russia arrived to liberate what was left of Warsaw from the Germans, there were precious few remaining. More than a quarter of the citizens of Warsaw had died during this war.

There was a heroic attempt by young Jews of the Ghetto to free themselves from the Ghetto. This uprising was brought down by the Nazis. After which upon Hitler's orders, the Ghetto was burned to the ground and his troops ordered back to Berlin. This was done in late 1944.

## Chess Set

The work known as the Warsaw Ghetto Chess Set was created between the years 1942 and 1944 in the Warsaw Ghetto, which was a conglomeration of streets alongside the Vistula River in Warsaw, Poland. This area was completely shut off from the outside world to all those living or dead at the time.

Disease, death, starvation, suffering in all its forms was the order of the day for its inhabitants.

Through this suffering, the chess set was created by the Jewish artist, a sculptor famous for his hand carved chess pieces. This man's name was Hershel Edelman.



The chess set was brought out of the Ghetto just days before the burning to the ground and total destruction of the remains of the Ghetto. This was done by a soldier of the Third Reich who was returning with the others to the Fatherland on orders of the Fuhrer.

## Method Used

The chewing of bread and the placing of chewed bread on fine wires, bent to form a figure and then moulded to dry and harden; intricate time consuming work carving details into small figures to show such things as a button on a pawn's shoe or the petal of the rose in the queen's hand or the pearls on her neck; all the figures colored to highlight the fine details this was the artist's methodology.

The bread used was dark in color and inferior in quality, containing no dairy products. It was a coarse dry bread which was all that was available in rationed quantities, at the time of the Nazi occupation of the Warsaw Ghetto of Poland. All in all, approximately twenty-three slices of bread were used to fabricate the thirty-two chess pieces. The chess pieces, after being moulded, carved and colored, were coated with a liquid to preserve the colors and bring them to the finished state, as they appear today, except for aging, wear and tear.

## Treasure of Treasures

This treasure of treasures is the Warsaw Ghetto



Chess Set. It is truly a significant tribute to man's ability to adapt, to achieve and to create in an atmosphere of utter chaos and degradation. There was never a time in the history of man when the forces of evil were at their worst and misery was a daily way of life for most of the world for five long years. Yet in the very heart of this place and period in history, a work of art was created which knows no equal.

This magnificent chess set comprised of thirty-two minute scale sculptures was made entirely by hand with few mechanical aids, created with, of all unbelievable substances, bread. This commodity of extremely poor quality, was rationed and rare at the time of this work. Yet enough was acquired through the delicate process of barter, chicanery and at times theft, to supply the artist with the precious life giving material for his painstaking and bizarre task. In this, one can see the doomed master sculptor of the Warsaw Ghetto Chess Set caught up as a pawn in the conflict in the chess game of life, with the end result being a work of exquisite beauty and uniqueness left behind for those of the future to behold.

## Criticism

Although comments pertaining to the works of the Warsaw Ghetto Chess Set have been superb, original, excellently done, unique, exquisite, rare, highly detailed and creative, there has also been criticism. There are those that say it is not extraordinary. Any artist can do it. I must challenge these people that feel this way. If it is such a simple and ordinary feat, why in man's history in the world of sculpture, hasn't anyone tried to create a sculpture of chewed bread?

My investigations have taken me to the *World Book Encyclopedia* where in the section on Sculpture #17, the following is stated and I quote, "Materials used in sculpture are al-

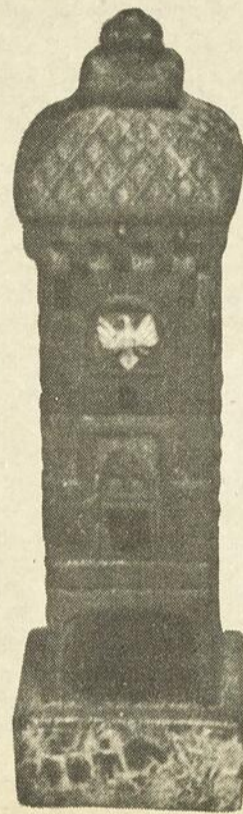


baster, bronze, clay, ebony, granite, iron, steel, silver, gold, aluminum, ivory, jade, lacquer, marble, plaster, plasticene, plastics, porcelain, terra cotta, wood, soapstone, wire, and copper." To make a further point, I again make reference to the section in the *World Book Encyclopedia* dealing with paintings and art. This section is entitled *What Makes A Work of Art Great?* and I quote, "Basically the value of a work of art can be judged by its power to produce worthwhile experience in the observer." "The work of art does so especially by stimulating the person's sight or hearing and also by communicating the important ideas, feelings, and attitudes that make up our cultural heritage. To be ranked as great a work of art, it must have values that are broadly human. At the same time, great works usually sum up much of the culture of some particular period. The subject may even be trivial and yet the work of art can be considered great because it makes us feel the reality of this common subject and object as never before. The artist can add to the world's artistic heritage by some new way of imagining or looking at things."

It is difficult to make argument with the above. In conclusion, it is my firm belief that viewing the uniqueness and excellent work of the Warsaw Ghetto Chess Set is to be made aware of the existence of suffering and human effort.

## Art

Art in all its forms can be duplicated. The great works of sculptures, paintings, tableaux and man's countless creations have



been copied, down the centuries in a variety of ways. They have been reproduced to represent the originals as seen in prize fakes of the Mona Lisa and others. But try to make an identical copy of the Warsaw Ghetto Chess Set. That is an impossibility.

The craftsman and artist of the world can with the necessary amount of time copy the masterpieces, even using materials, paints, canvas, etc. similar to the originals, but a chess set made of chewed bread copied exactly as it exists today is certainly another matter. Of course, the chess set can be copied easily into other materials, but never in the one material which makes it unique, that very poor quality of bread that was known in the days of the Ghetto.

## Conclusion

It is my sincere hope and desire to bring about the universal recognition of the Warsaw Ghetto Chess Set, as it is a most unique and unusual endeavor of man. The very existence of the chess set speaks of the truth. For in this way we can show that with all of man's many wonderful accomplishments, his voyage to the moon, the transmitting of pictures and messages around the world with the speed of light, his flying faster than the speed of sound, these instantaneous and numerous accomplishments with which man surprises himself each day is but a glimpse of man's capacity to create.



With all of this, the world as we know it today is torn by strife and violence brought about by man. For a handshake is but a handshake, an acknowledgment is but an acknowledgment. The understanding, the sincerity, the logic, the feelings are lost. We are just as soon prepared to bomb, destroy, maim and kill, as we are prepared to understand and create. In other words we would sooner act than think. Although we have reduced ourselves to but a magnetic impulse in a computer, we still with our God-given right to think, have the opportunity to show ourselves as individuals. The Chess Set proves once again though we are a speck of dust in the universe and passage of time, our thoughts and actions could be monumental.

Hershel Edelman, was just like any one of us, surrounded by the miseries of the world. He was one of the many millions, Jews, Catholics, Protestants, French, English, Italians, Germans, Japanese, Chinese, Blacks, and others among the mass of humanity who fought and who perished. He left us with a gift of love, and showed us that "man does not live by bread alone."

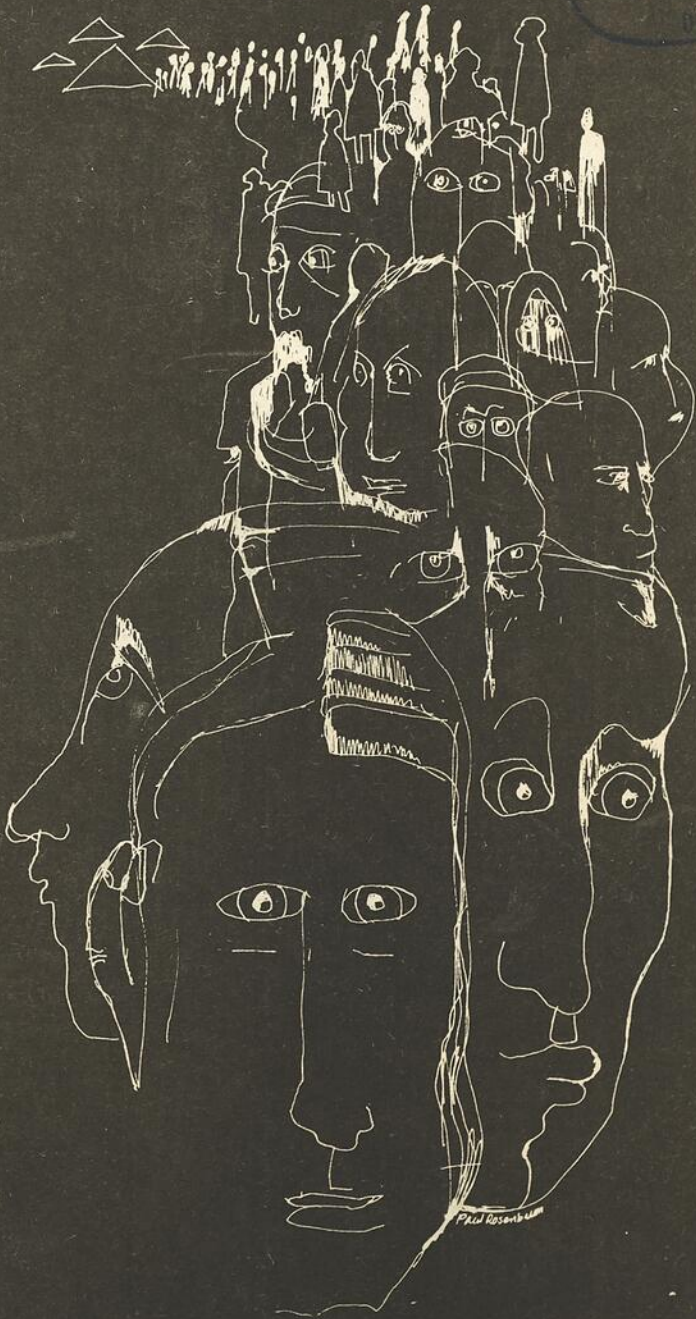


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A commanding voice is being heard, and has, however faintly, been heard from the start. . . (in) Auschwitz, Jews came face to face with absolute evil. They were and still are singled out by it, but in the midst of it they hear an absolute commandment: Jews are forbidden to grant posthumous victories to Hitler. They are commanded to remember the victims of Auschwitz, lest their memory perish. They are forbidden to despair of man and his world, and to escape into either cynicism or other worldliness, lest they cooperate in delivering the world over to the forces of Auschwitz. Finally, they are forbidden to despair of the God of Israel lest Judaism perish. . . A Jew may not respond to Hitler's attempt to destroy Judaism by himself co-operating in its destruction. In ancient times, the unthinkable Jewish sin was idolatry. Today, it is to respond to Hitler by doing his work.

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## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEETING AGENDA WINNIPEG, APRIL 1, 1973

**MINUTES OF MEETING, FEBRUARY 4, 1973:**  
Business arising therefrom.  
**BUDGET:** CJC Budget and arrangements with Welfare Funds.  
**WINNIPEG JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL:**  
Report.  
**COMMUNITY RELATIONS:**  
a) Status of negotiations with B'nai B'rith  
b) Joint Labour Advisory Committee  
**EDUCATION:** Examination of resolutions of National Conference on Jewish Education and related matters.  
**PLENARY ASSEMBLY MAY 1974:** Review of arrangements and program.  
**CANADA-ISRAEL COMMITTEE:** Program and report.

**OTTAWA MATTERS:** Reports discussed  
a) Income Tax Act and CJC status  
b) Immigration regulations  
c) Multiculturalism  
d) Meeting with Mr. David Lewis, M.P.  
e) Meeting with Mr. Claude Wagner, M.P.  
**FOREIGN AFFAIRS:** Discussion of continuing program concerning:  
1. a) National Committee for Soviet Jewry b) Iraq c) Syria d) German Democratic Republic: Claims Conference  
2. World Jewish Congress Executive Meeting Jerusalem, June 27 — July 4: delegates  
**CANADIAN UNION OF JEWISH STUDENTS:**  
Funding problems discussed.

**CAPITAL PUNISHMENT:** CJC Policy — the majority opinion taken by poll of CJC Regions was against submission to the House of Commons.  
**CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES:** Proposed working group.  
**MUSEUM:** LIBRARY: ARCHIVES: Full report made thereon  
**WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS:** Cultural Department: Jewish People's Universities.  
**UNITED JEWISH RELIEF AGENCIES:**  
a) Report on Cuba  
b) Mo'ess Chittin policy for 1973  
c) Scholarships  
**JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY:** Recommendations presented as formulated during a meeting held prior to the CJC National Executive meeting.