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On Anti-Semitism In Canada 1929 - 1939

A Chapter on Canadian Jewish History

By
David Rome

Section 11

NATIONAL ARCHIVES
CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

Montreal, 1980



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CONTENTS

Bitter Opposition Page 505

Order of Jacques Cartier 505
Georges Pelletier 506
As Betcherman Tells It 508
Eugène L'Heureux 512
Jules Dorion 513
Action Catholique 514
Quebec City Council 516
L'Homme libre 517
Paul Sauriol 519
Lacroix, M.P. 521
Rebutting Paris 522

Old Friend Fresh Enemy 523

The Jewish Pleas 529

Mobilizing Polish Jews 530
Canada to Appeal to Rumania 531
Desperate M.P.'s... 535
...vs. Lapointe 536
Heaps' Appeal... 539
...and Laurier's Chair 540

O. Kotkowsky Remembers

Interference from the Left 541

Alarm in Winnipeg 541
Leaning Left 542
Leaning on Labor 544
Diverse Views 545
J.A. Cherniack 546
Dr. C. Zhitlovsky, Canadian 547
The Community and the Communists 552
"We Represent 10,000 Jews" 556
Our Brave Allies and Fred Rose 560
Finale after Stockholm 561

Where is Evian? What is Evian? 565

Abella and Troper Tell It 565
"Les Trois Israélites" Appeal 567
Revolt against Parliamentarians 570
Hope in Vienna 571
Ontario Agitating 573
Belkin Report 577
Solkin Report 579
Heaps & King 580

At the Conference 583

Dirks' Version 583
Blair in Decision Making 585
Instructions to Wrong... 586
...Who Reported 590
La Nation is Worried 593
Depose St.-Jean Baptiste? 595
More Church Talk 597
Absorptive Capacity 598
The Letters of the Illiterate 600
"Where Would I Hide?" 603
Jewellry Salesman Hero 606

The Day's Mail

The Private Mr. King 608

W.M. Birks Invites 609
Mrs. Freiman Appeals 610
For Goldenberg 611
An Incoherent Telephone Call 612
In Cabinet 613

Where is Evian? What is Evian? 565

Abella and Troper Tell It 565
"Les Trois Israélites" Appeal 567
Revolt against Participation 570
Hope in Vienna 571
Ontario Agitating 573
Nellie Report 577
Sollin Report 579
Steps & Klag 580

At the Conference 584

Dicke' Verplan 585
Plait in Declaim Making 585
Instructions to Wrong... 586
...Who Reported 590
La Nation Is Worried 593
Depose St.-Jean Baptiste? 595
Save Church Talk 597
Absorptive Capacity 598
The Letters of the Illiterate 600
"Where Would I Hide?" 602
Jewelry Salesman Hero 606

The Day's Mail 609

R.S.V. Birle Invites 609
Hon. Prelman Appeals 610
For Goldenberg 611
An Incoherent Telephone Call 612
To Cabinet 613

BITTER OPPOSITION, 1938

There is a remarkable unanimity of tone, a monotony, in the far-flung opposition to the immigration of Jews into Canada during this decade in French Canada.

Whereas in other matters -- in clerical hostility, in the Sunday observance agitation, etc. -- there is pretentious disclaimer of anti-Semitism (enough to justify a claim of respectability), now bon ton evaporates, and city councils, editors and liberal politicians speak with the voice of Joseph Ménard. The headlines in Nation might have been borrowed from the Patriote which Paul Bouchard despised, when Jewish migration is the theme.

Lethargy and disinterest were not the ugly obstacles. There was organized opposition and an active campaign against acceding to the Jewish pleas. This was voiced in scores of resolutions and in thousands of letters. The Order of Jacques Cartier placed immigration, l'Achat chez nous and the dissemination of Le Boussole among its major concerns.

Pelletier opens a controversy with the Montreal Star with a statement of unusual interest, which we must accept as sincere -- even if confusing -- in the light of his other positions. (Le Devoir, Nov. 26, 1938)

To take his opening statement first,

"Any person who is somewhat human, whatever his feelings about the Jews here or elsewhere, cannot remain indifferent to the methodical brutality which the Jews of

Germany are suffering. A truly powerful civilized, Christian nation does not for any reason so treat shopkeepers, merchants, small or middle class manufacturers, professors, professional people; does not throw them into concentration camps, does not confiscate their possessions, does not despoil them of their properties, does not break up their families, does not exile destitute women and children and the aged. There is no valid justification for such conduct. The persons in power who act so have indeed turned their backs on Christ to worship the Aryan idol."

If we stop here, or if Pelletier had stopped here, we are at a point in the tragic debate where conceivably a reasonable understanding might arise between alarmed Canadien and desperate Jew. The situation was not devoid of possibilities or of personalities capable of a common viewpoint or policy -- unless one takes a pessimistic, fatalistic position, or writes off all Catholic French Canada morally.

It may or may not be helpful to peek ahead in the record and see that a useful communication between Jew and Catholic in Quebec could take place, for it did. In fact this Quebec altered its views on Jews through its own initiative, eventually.

But clearly in the 1930's there was a total absence of communication between Jew and Québecois, until tragically far too late to save any of the six million done to death even as they were knocking on Canada's gates with bloodied knuckles. Bourassa was silenced. So Georges Pelletier continued in complete reversal of his preliminary basis.

The Montreal Star had commented that our modern civilization had come to the point of viewing newcomers as a liability instead of an asset. It was an attitude that constituted a condemnation of our world. So we have seen hundreds of thousands of industrious, thrifty and intelligent Jews robbed of all they owned. We would

have expected that the nations which have vast available areas at their disposal within their long borders would turn heaven and earth to entice these people to come to establish themselves on these vacant domains. We would have expected an intense propaganda to convince these people condemned to wandering in the desert that this or that country offers them the best opportunity in the world to rebuild their homes. What we witness is the opposite, the Star wrote. It had not always been so, the English daily recalled. Canada once disbursed much money to attract settlers. (Nov. 22, 1938)

Pelletier turned on the objects of his sympathy. "Who are the Jews of Germany, of old Austria, of the Czechoslovak regions recently annexed to Germany, a number of which they would bring to us? Middlemen, shopkeepers, small factory owners, some thousand professional men, technicians, professors, intellectuals? These would never come here. England and the U.S. would receive them.

"Have you seen the recent dispatches about the cruelties heaped by the young Germans on the Jews of their country under the accomplice eye of the Reich police? It is always in the large cities -- Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, Leipzig in Germany; Vienna, Salzburg in the annexed Austrian province... Because Jews gather in the cities, there as here... The American newspaper best informed on developments in Germany, even on anti-Semitism -- sympathetic as it is, understandably, being owned by the Ochs family, whose member by the name of Sulzberger, a Jew, manages the newspaper -- illustrates this conclusively. Its photographs show ravaged, devastated business fronts, smashed by young, racism-crazed Nazis. Have you ever seen Jewish farm houses or rural establishments pillaged or burned?"

Pelletier reverts to the ancient, always outdated argument that Jews are a useless, harmful, urban element. "If any are admitted into our cities, some groups will react out of impatience -- unemployed vainly seeking work, young men without jobs, those unhappy at

seeing Jews everywhere taking their places -- might be driven to regrettably explicable anti-Semitic excesses. Let us not provoke them. Jews who are settled here should not want this, if we leave them live in peace, here, prosper and become rich. If they insist, a heavy responsibility is theirs, rather than a lasting paradise. They are a clever, perspicacious people. It is in their race; they are sometimes too clever. At times this excess of cleverness has led to other excesses. Let them take heed, before it is too late."

Nor was this antagonism confined to francophones. The Rev. John Inkster of Toronto's Knox Presbyterian Church sermonized on Dec. 4, 1938,

"The Jews' denial and crucifixion of Christ was the reason why God's curse rested on them and why they would continue to suffer even more in the future than they had in the past...It is sad to see the Jews turning in every direction and seeking sympathy and help from man instead of G-d, instead of confessing their sins and asking G-d for forgiveness for themselves, especially the sin of unbelief and denial of Christ, and asking G-d to lift the curse which is resting upon them today and to grant them his salvation." (Globe and Mail, Dec. 5, 1938, P.4)

As Lita-Rose Betcherman put it in her The Swastika and the Maple Leaf on the Quebec statements, "This solid block of opinion went unopposed as the voice of French Canada. Although English and French Canada diverged on the question of participation in the impending war, they were in accord regarding the refugee question. By and large, the English-speaking provinces were opposed to any Jewish immigration; nevertheless, unlike Quebec, they were awash with sympathy for the refugees. The Protestant churches prayed for them while community leaders denounced the Nazis for their bestial and shocking persecution of a helpless minority.

"As usual in the thirties, the Jews' most sincere friends were sectors of organized labour and of the United Church, whose spokesmen urged the government to open its doors to the victims of Nazism. They were the exceptions; most of English Canada was ready to extend its sympathy to the refugees, but not much else.

"The cautious government of Mackenzie King would not even go that far. Adhering to a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of another country, King would not commit himself to an official denunciation of the Nazi pogroms. The Globe and Mail raised the spectre of mass immigration.

"'Prime Minister King has taken refuge upon occasion in the thought that there is a time and place for all things. He has not found time and place to say what he could have said truthfully and vigorously: that Canadians will never forgive or attempt to understand the moral degeneration which leads a nation's majority to prey in hatefulness upon a minority.'

"While King said nothing, the Conservative opposition came out openly against Jewish immigration. Speaking in Quebec, the new leader, Robert Manion, opposed the entry of refugees on the grounds of the current unemployment. Nor were the average politicians of the two major parties any more in favour of an open-door policy than their leaders. A poll of Ontario federal and provincial members showed a consensus of agreement with Manion.

"Only the CCF took the humanitarian view and called for admission of a fair quota of refugees.

"As for the civil service, if Chester Walters, Ontario's Deputy Minister of the Treasury Department, was representative of its thinking, the refugees had no

friends among officialdom. Addressing a Toronto audience in December, 1938, Walters suddenly changed his topic from municipal finance to immigration: 'We are losing our pride in the fact that we are British, and, worse than that, we are admitting into our family and we are conferring British citizenship upon those who are unworthy. We will rue the day that we have taken into our midst some of these outcasts of other nations.....Admitted into our house and given full citizenship, they become a festering sore. Admitted in any great numbers, they will surely destroy the fine civilization which we have received from our fathers.'

"The most influential man in government, however, was O.D. Skelton, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs. Described by a Globe and Mail reporter as 'the man behind the scenes on all international affairs, including immigration of refugees,' he was undoubtedly instrumental in retaining Canada's restrictive immigration laws in the face of what the same reporter called 'the greatest pressure of any issue in recent years.' Applications for immigration, mainly from professional people, were pouring into Canada, and the Jewish Liberal M.P.'s were pleading with the prime minister to adopt a humanitarian policy. Nevertheless, Canada stood firm, and in doing so was little different from the other democratic nations.

"Testifying before a Senate Committee in 1946, the research director of the Canadian Jewish Congress provided documented proof that there had actually been additional constraints on Jewish immigrants in those years that did not apply to other groups. The reluctance of the Canadian government to admit Jewish refugees in any great numbers was a fair reflection of public opinion, English as well as French. While unemployment was the reason cited for Canada's closed door, underlying it was a strong Anglo-Saxon nativism permeated with antisemitism.

To the mortal end the Action catholique fought off the Jews seeking a haven in Canada. A typical editorial by its director Eugène L'Heureux (Nov. 21, 1938) was entitled "No Unassimilable Immigrants."

"Already Canada has received too many immigrants of this race, who do not assimilate with one or other of the two elements which built the nation, and the country cannot receive a further number. The presence of Jews has already created a number of vexatious problems here."

"The clearest expression of Anglo-Saxon nativism came from the Canadian Corps Association. Shortly after the November pogrom, the veterans' organization sent a resolution to the prime minister, opposing any weakening of the immigration laws which could 'tend to make Canada the dumping ground of Europe.' Legislation should ensure that 'future citizenship be predominantly British' and anyone else admitted should be of a racial origin permitting rapid and complete assimilation. They asked for an end to 'special permit abuses' and indiscriminate European immigration: 'Now is no time to bring in people who have nothing in common with us, who do not want to work in the open, and who have no desire to come here other than to find a new home.... While viewing forced mass immigration (sic) as iniquitous, and with sincere sympathy for such distressed immigrants, the ex-servicemen believe that the best interests of all concerned will not be served by directing migration to areas in which unemployment is predominant, where climatic conditions are unsuitable, and under conditions where racial origin of the immigrants is such that complete assimilation is a foredoomed failure.'

"The Corps' resolution suggested that the Jews be sent to Africa."

The Devoir wrote, "It is not from anti-Semitism that we oppose Jewish immigration, but because Canada does not need this immigration any more than it needs English unemployed. We need farmers, and Jews no more than Englishmen remain on the land. The Jewish storekeepers on St. Lawrence Blvd. do nothing to increase the value of our natural resources," an opinion happily cited by Paul Bouchard in his Nation of Sept. 1, 1938.

Mr. L'Heureux remarked: "Jews have serious faults to be pardoned by the Christian world. Those who know their history know that fact. Nevertheless, no true Christian approves of the odious conduct of which the Nazi Government was guilty in their respect."

Mr. L'Heureux pointed out that this sympathy should not be the basis for permitting Jews to enter here "at the wish of some committee or other", adding "No. Canada is not the place for Jews driven from Germany."

Louis Philippe Roy wrote, "Let us endure in a Christian manner the Jews we have. Let us not make them prosperous since this works against us. Above all, let us not be so stupid as to invite others." ("Little Notes," in Action, Nov. 23, 1938) And a week later, "It would be simple to protect ourselves against the Jewish immigration! Let us keep from making these strangers rich, and not a one like them will want to come to starve among us. Let us do nothing against these human beings; they are brothers in Jesus Christ. But let us do everything to give the benefit of our purchases to our own merchants, brothers in religion and in fatherland." (Editorial in Action, Nov. 29, 1938: "The Colonization of St. Joseph Street.")

So Dr. Jules Dorion, who had founded the Libre parole (1904-7) and was later one of the founders of Action sociale, wrote threateningly about the sufferings of the Jews of Europe. He thought they were greatly exaggerated in press reports, though they were somewhat justified by the exercise of Jewish power and control. "We are preparing even more real tribulations in Canada than those of Europe by becoming the blinded instruments of the fortunes of our economic enslavers -- the owners of our clothing industry who are seizing our leather, furniture, fur trade, fruit, meat, etc."

Jules Dorion warned, "It is not prudent for a nation to lend itself to invasion which Jews exemplify. They have had their say in the frightful Russian drama like in many other social upheavals in which they were alone not to suffer. A nation that permits these internationalists par excellence to take the levers of command in its trade, industry and commerce is forging chains for itself. That is the lesson of history." (Editorial in Action, Apr. 21, 1938: "The Tribulations of the Jew?")

Action grouped the various sections of the Société St.-Jean Baptiste and the social, political and patriotic organizations as well as the Quebec City Council to join the anti-immigration, to counter the partisans of immigration who are constantly assailing the offices of government, to cite Mr. Roy.

In Val d'Or the Chambre de commerce junior protested against any immigration of Jews into Canada. (Public Archives of Canada, King Papers, MG 26, J1, vol. 250, P.213936, Dec. 29, 1938)

The daily headlines underlined the fatal irony of Canadian policy.

On November 23, 1938 Action catholique carried two headlines on its front page. The United Press reported from Berlin that Das Schwarz Korps, publication of the German assault troops, predicted "the fatal extermination of the Jews who will insist on remaining in Germany, and demanded that the U.S. and Britain save them from destruction. Jews should be relegated in ghettoes,"the newspaper said,"where they will have the least contact with Germans. At that point we foresee the necessity of exterminating the Jewish underworld by the means we employ against criminals in our well established state, notably by fire and by the sword."

The editor is concerned with the undue effects of sympathy. He feared that sympathy for Jews might influence the public; he was not concerned with the consequences of heartlessness.

The context of these views within the pages of the Action catholique -- and within the world's news as reported by Action -- is interesting.

The front page of L'Action catholique is almost entirely devoted to the Jewish question in various parts of the world, and particularly with news revolving around the German-Jewish issue.

There is from Toronto the plea from the Canadian Corps Association begging Premier Mackenzie King not to permit entry of Jewish Germans. There is a story from London regarding settlement of Jews in Tanganyika, one from Washington to the effect that Jews in the United States are invited to subscribe $100,000,000 to help German Jews, and another from Montreal regarding the rush of Aryan Germans, German Jews and Italians to become naturalized.

Then comes a local story in which two Quebec aldermen deplore what happened at an anti-Nazi meeting, and questioning whether there should have been such a rush to show sympathy. It asked whether there were such protests when the Catholics of Spain and Russia were persecuted.

"'The attitude of these gentlemen was no doubt well intentioned.' one of the aldermen is quoted as saying, 'but it is not less true that it will certainly be criticized amongst our population.'

"The other alderman is quoted as saying: 'It is astonishing how sudden is the rising when it is a question of persecution of Jews. I was much surprised lately that a chief of state such as Roosevelt immediately protested against the treatment of Jews in Germany. Far be it from me to approve the conduct of the chiefs of that country, but why should we so quickly meddle in such a matter?'

"The same two aldermen are also credited with protesting strongly against the idea of opening the doors of the Dominion to Jewish refugees from Germany, according to the Montreal Gazette." (Canadian Jewish Review)

That day Eugène l'Heureux was at his least coherent in an editorial, "Jewry Manoeuvers the Christian World". Commencing with a statement of sympathy for the maltreated Jews of Germany, he proceeded for an entire column to expatiate on the damnable control of society by international Jewry, on the unregarded sufferings of persecuted Catholics, on the exaggerated attention given to Jews who attract persecution, on the errors committed by some Christians who are inspired by naive ideas all too widely spread.

"But there must be a happy medium between persecution on the one hand, and on the other undue privileges, an unbalanced sympathy, a boycott which can have sad consequences for us, an invitation to Jews to come and settle among us at the risk of increasing the numbers of our own unemployed.

"This happier medium we shall reach the day when we learn the realism to see how we are manoeuvered by international plutocracy, inseparable twin sister of international Jewry."

On the same front page, the editors headlined, "The Gate is Open; the Jews will Enter" over a British United Press report from Ottawa that King had told a strong delegation from Jewish institutions that his government will give "sympathetic consideration" to their petition that German Jews be admitted. If it was a promise, he knew it was an empty promise.

The Quebec City Council went beyond its municipal jurisdiction in the fall of 1938 to protest to the Federal Government that "Whereas seemingly drastic measures in regard to Jews in certain European countries, especially in Germany, are about to unleash a mass migration of these Jews towards Canada, and sympathetic humanity would go so far as to open the gates wide to them... Canada is a Christian country created by two great races who ought to jealously guard their rights and culture and privileges, and this is our first common concern; there is reason to doubt that an immigration of Jews, whether expelled or freely seeking a land of friendly democracy, is of benefit for the maintenance of our laws, our institutions, our faith, or will assure the peace and future of our country. The City of Quebec, French capital of Canada, in the name of its first founders and of the pioneers of the country, and in the name of all others of our population of diverse faiths and tongues, protest energetically against all immigration, especially against the admission of Jews, into Canada." (Le Combat national, Dec. 1938)

L'Homme libre, edited by Gerard Brody of the National Corporatist Movement, of Dec. 17, 1938, carried an article which Jacques Sauriol dared sign to the effect that the alleged ill-treatment of Jews in Europe is a Jewish machination to permit them to export their wealth out of those countries, and to benefit from "some perverted philanthopists, from sadism of undue compassion to enter this country."

In the same issue Ralph Jay Zeneth sought to counterbalance the extreme propaganda in favour of this minority among all others, at a time when "our martyrs suffered without any public attention; and this concerning a race which should not interest, indeed of which we should beware, for it seeks to come here and to seize all that we have.

"The Jews are preparing a film which will present Hitler as a modern tyrant -- a trick certain to attract our sympathy for the Jews. This proves that Jews control the great press agencies, cinemas, high finance; and their international bankers wish at all costs to impose upon us, regardless of our desires, the migrants whom certain countries do not wish to keep, certainly for good reasons of their own.

"We must stand up to this odious campaign. Let us refuse this immigration now, so that we shall not need to clean out this race completely from our midst, to rid ourselves of those likely to 'colonize' our commercial arteries to the detriment of Canadian merchants.

"We must protest with all our force, for Jewish associations and their sympathizers are exerting enormous pressure to force the Canadian government to open the gates of the country wide for the Jews driven from Europe."

Rosaire Beaudoin, K.C., commended Action catholique as the only daily to have initiated an offensive against the introduction of Jews into the country. If the government will not heed the people, the electorate must needs throw them overboard at the next election, together with the Jews, "most undesirable for our country... They are all communists or communist sympathizers. Their messianic dreams are of Jewish world domination. On the economic and political level they are all openly or secretly communist and seek only to destroy our institutions." (La Nation, Dec. 1, 1938)

"Our opposition to mass immigration, to the immigration of those who are barely assimilable, to military adventures on alien continents, to legislative concentration and the federal administration, our campaign for Achat chez nous -- many other of our attitudes derive from legitimate defence." (in Action catholique, October 28, 1938)

Towards the end of 1938, Action catholique organized a protest movement against the admission of immigrants into Canada and particularly against admitting Jews. As Louis Philippe Roy put it on November 28, "We have already said, but it bears repetition that Jews are the essence of trouble. They have the gift of imperceptibly acquiring the best positions. Comes a day when their position becomes fully apparent and a strong reaction of antisemitism bursts out. Is not that the history of all anti-Jewish campaigns?"

It was not only C. Brondel of the Canadian Union of Fascists and National Christian Party who "urged that under no circumstances shall Jewish 'refugees' be permitted entry into Canada... Should the Canadian government feel called upon to cooperate with other countries in the evacuation of the Jews from Germany and other European countries, we urge that -- with particular reference to the proposed Madagascar settlement -- a suitable territory outside the British Empire, to be paid for by the Jews themselves, be found for the establishment of a Jewish homeland." (Nov. 24, 1938, Mackenzie King Papers, P.210,670)

"If we blame Germany for its excessive harshness towards an element of its population whom it calls undesirable, it does not follow that Canada must become a land of asylum for those banished... Do we need an influx of merchants, of citizens who add nothing to the nation's wealth? All over the world the Jew has been parasitic, artificial, clutching the labour of others... By his very presence he lowers the level of morals; respect for agreements, courtesy in business, the most elementary confidence are shattered. The ways of the jungle replace the laws of probity... If some day Canadian prosperity will require alien manpower, I doubt whether it will be Jewish immigration that we will then seek out."

Paul Sauriol of Le Devoir spelled out the opposition to Jewish immigration -- and quickly disposed of the pope in the process.

"Immigrants whose children and grandchildren will assimilate and become Canadians are welcome, on condition that no larger number come than can be assimilated.

"Those who do not assimilate, who insist on being enfeoffed to a foreign authority -- whether Nazi, communist or fascist, internationalist, or any ideal incompatible with the double Canadian culture -- are as truly undesirable to English Canadians as to us. It is not a question of having newcomers forget their origins, their folklore, their traditions. But they must nevertheless be capable of becoming Canadian enough not to have another country beside Canada, to have no political or national allegiance other than that deriving from their quality as Canadians. They must not become an irreducible crowd in the midst of the national ensemble.

"We are not to blame if the Jews form an abnormal population with too many lawyers and merchants, who do not enter the framework of society but seek to break it. Montreal Jews form 5% of the population of Montreal but already they constitute 20% of its bar. Who is exaggerating?

"In a recent speech before Belgian pilgrims, His Holiness Pius XI said that antisemitism is incompatible with the Catholic faith, and that in Christ we are all descendants of Abraham, that spiritually we are all Semites. Nevertheless, the pope quickly added, 'We recognize the right to defend himself, to take means of defence against any menace of legitimate interests.'"

There is documentation to prove that a hostile eye was watchful lest Canada admit Jews.

L.H. Leclerc, M.P. for Shefford, wrote to the prime minister on December 13, 1938.

"You doubtless know that a great campaign is on in this province against opening the frontiers of Canada to Jewish refugees from Central Europe.

"I have in my hands a number of such resolutions, and I will not hide from you that,in all respect, I request you not to permit them to come here in quest of asylum." (King Papers, P.215,343)

Dealing with unemployment in Canada, L'Heureux declared that "Canada wants no immigration, Jewish no more than British, Italian no more than Polish or any other. It does not have the means of feeding more people. It is no longer indifferent about renewing an experiment which by all accounts has turned out badly." ("The German

Jews: Will They Emigrate to Canada?" in Action, March 26, 1938) "What has been done," he asks, "hitherto, to prevent this invasion which carries within it such great risks? Even the press has failed in its responsibilities. Some newspapers are silent on the issue. Others are shocked that some circles are so inhuman as not to rejoice that the Jews, these eternal wanderers, are pitching their tents in beautiful Canada."

Having read in Action catholique that the government is considering admitting a limited number of Jewish refugees, Member Wilfrid Lacroix hastened to write the same day to Prime Minister King,

"I doubt that this report reflects the feelings of your government. But if such is indeed the case, I hasten to protest vigorously against any policy which might tend to admit Jews into the country.

"1) It seems we have enough unemployed to make it unnecessary to open the doors of our country to foreign immigrants.

"2) If a Jew enters as a farmer, you can be certain that it is only a subterfuge, for once admitted, he will not remain a farmer for long and will return to commerce, a perquisite of all the people of his race.

"3) An insignificant minority numerically, the Jews already in the country have already succeeded in falsifying the functioning of some of our institutions, and have remained unassimilable.

"It seems to me that our commercial society is already suffering from their presence, so that we do not need to add to the importance of an element even now too widespread, which has nothing in common with our national traditions." (PAC. King Papers, P. 215,122-24, Nov.23, 1938; and Le Devoir, Nov. 25, 1938)

Le Devoir resented Parisian editor Henri de Keriles of L'Epoque suggesting that German Jews be resettled in Canada's west and north.

"The tragedy in this question of an asylum for the Jews driven from Germany," wrote director Georges Pelletier, "is that none of the European nations, whose press weeps for the lot of these exiles, wishes to receive them. They all cry, 'What ferocity! The poor Jews, let us knock on our neighbour's door.' Why not direct these unhappy Jews to the French colonies in Africa, to populate them, to colonize them?

"If Palestine, a Jewish state, cannot or will not receive the Jews of Germany on the soil which was the cradle of their race and is the cradle of their faith, why should Canada receive them before Madagascar, Togo, French Central Africa, Morocco, Algeria or Tunisia?

"The essence of the Jewish nation, its corporate tradition and it social spirit put it in conflict with the peoples among whom they live, as the Englishman Hilaire Belloc has stated. This is even more true in Canada than in Europe. Whatever compassion we may have for the despoiled, brutalized Jews of Germany, Canada does not forget, cannot forget, that if the Jewish presence constitutes a grave problem for Europe, that is no reason for importing this problem in a new country in the form of a mass migration of 15,000 or 20,000 German Jews who speak neither French nor English.

"We have our Jews. We do not persecute them. They are happy, prosperous and untouched here. Their presence constitutes one of several problems which we must resolve quietly, with justice. Let us not make it worse." (Dec. 3, 1938)

He was born in Vienna in 1902, "graduated as Doktor of rerum politicarum and then I had a factory of silk cloths and shawls. I have been in this trade and always had the best success. I may say I was looked at as a representant of Vienna taste regarding silk cloths and shawls.

"In spite of my profession I am now taking a course to become a glazier and I perfectly know mirror foil, that is, quicksilvering or tinfoiling of a mirror.

"My wife Hilde has been a pupil in the Professional School for Beauty-Culture. She has acquired full knowledge of Paris and Vienna massage, all kinds of electric treatments, treatments of skin defects, facial packs and make-up. She has a profound knowledge of cosmetic chemistry.

"She is a first-rate cook (Vienna cooking) and lady's help and could do most household duties.

"She passed also the examinations of becoming a perfect dressmaker.

"Being a lady of well reputed home and of manners and education, she could be a help and companion to any lady."

Mr. S. of Vienna is the father:

"52 years old, healthy, was up to now owner and leader of a garage and of the greatest auto school. He is perfect autoride teacher and auto expert, motor plough expert, perfect commercial leader and worker. He speaks and writes English."

He writes to "The Jewish Corporation,"

"We beg from our hearts to interest Jewish families for the fate of our children -- in the best and quickest way.

"Please give us any hope and reply as soon as possible."

Letter from O.T., Bucharest, Roumania, to Congress, Montreal, requesting information regarding immigration to Canada:

"I am 38 years old, married, without children, would dispose over a capital of about 400-500 pounds; know perfectly German, a little French, English and Hungarian, am merchant...

"Does the state grant any favours to settlers who want to become farmers? And in which form? I should be very much obliged to you if you will give me also some information regarding the price of the ground for farming."

A joint letter was mailed, in all hope, by E.B. and G.V. of Breslau, Germany to the "Montreal Congregation", Oct. 27, 1938:

"Will you kindly excuse us if we take with these lines the liberty to apply to you with the following application.

"We have no other way and possibility to speed our affair, as to appeal to you direct. We are two friends, 27 years old, healthy and willingly to do any work we can get, even in the agriculture, if we don't get work in our trade, printer and mason and we would be very thankful to you, if you could have the kindness to help us in getting a certificate to emigrate to Canada. We assure you, that we shall never make you any trouble neither material nor by laziness. All we want is, to help us in getting a permit to Canada, in order to work for our living."

M.I., graduate from a teacher seminary, war veteran of the German army and cantor of the ancient synagogue at Trier, was forced to telegraph to his brother in Canada on December 6, 1938, "Must leave as quickly as possible. Wire if an immigration permit is possible."

A.L., a native of Drohobych in Poland, for 25 years a resident of Vienna, was "in the wood line, a sawing-master and have practice of many years in wood-felling and in sawing-works. I had been wood-buyer for prominent firms in Central Europe and in Western Europe (Holland, France, Germany, etc.). I am strong and in full health and know to work at sawing-machines and am able to fill every position in the wood-line.

"I am of blameless character. I have never worked in any political organization, have first-class certificates and references, know bookkeeping and typewriting very well."

From Bucharest came a collective petition from 30 families, "We are of different work categories, but all are suited for farm labor."

Medical doctor, E.I. of Fulek in Hungary, was prepared to surrender the practice of medicine to come "to set down in your State on any job in agriculture or industrial life which renders me possible to earn my life."

Advocate G.K and his friend electro-engineer P.W., both of Nitra, Czechoslovakia, "only need a possibility to go to Canada and there for the beginning any employment. From then further we don't fear, as we are young, healthy and like work. I hope you understand our petition, in spite of I am obliged write very short."

Experienced Jewish fruit farmers K. and S. of Kiskunholas, Hungary, whose 70 acres of orchards and vineyards are a model for the farmers around, had developed their estates on sandy pasture and grazing land and came to employ 25 workers all year round, "having introduced sprinkling, extirpation of insects, bag-making and rational dunging," to quote the declaration of the local Farmers Association.

OLD FRIEND FRESH ENEMY

Perhaps the most striking of these anti-Jewish communications came from a man who had acted very loyally and energetically in the Jewish interest in the school question, and had been vilified by those, like Arcand, whose very arguments he was now expressing. (Canadian Jewish Archives, new series, nos. 2-3)

As early as 1933, when the mud heaped on him by the Goglu was still wet, he used the language of an experienced political person when he suggested, in a public address on immigration, that in the future such newcomers as Canada may choose to accept"should be the choice of our country, and not that of the nation whence they will come." (Le Canada, Dec. 7, 1933)

So, on Nov. 25, 1938, Athanase David wrote an eight page letter to Mr. King remarkable for the coolness of its tone - and for clearly feeding upon the very wording of the antisemitic ideas being disseminated by men lesser than himself.

"Your attitude during the Czechoslovakian crisis was imbued with such wisdom, that I do not for one second doubt that the people of Canada may entirely depend on you now that a new and quite different problem is offered to your consideration and solution.

"Situations occur that move the human heart to such an extent that appeal must be made to thoughtfulness and to clear vision of the future: not to make certain very human gestures which, when normal times have resumed, may be found to have outgrown the situation.

"All over the world, today, meetings of protest are held, against the treatment inflicted to the Jews of Germany. May be tomorrow, meetings of the same kind will become necessary if Mussolini intensifies his campaign in his own country, against the same element.

"Very far from my mind, my dear Premier, the thought of criticizing these expressions of humanity. Yet I was struck by the wording of certain of these resolutions which were submitted and approved by some of these meetings, requesting the Government of Canada to widely open the doors of this country to Jewish immigration.

"We have in the past treated -- I believe -- and we do in the present treat -- the Jews, in Canada, with very great magnanimity and fairness. Already some one hundred and seventy-five thousand, if not a little more, have become inhabitants, and far from all citizens of this country. At no time, to my knowledge, have they had to complain of the treatment received from the Federal authorities or even by the Provincial governments.

"It is not so long ago, my dear Premier, that in the Province of Quebec, we have had a Jewish school question, and the problem was solved to the entire satisfaction of all elements; yet not without creating then, for the Liberal Party, great annoyances and criticism from a small minority.

"You are certainly, Sir, so much of a Statesman, and so well learned in the national situation created in any country by inassimilable elements, that I should not allow myself to dwell on the danger of any kind of unassimilable massive immigration in Canada.

"I believe that never at any time whatsoever was I inclined to be in the least prejudiced against the Jew as a Jew. But in every country outside England -- in part at least -- and France, where assimilation of the Jews is an accomplished fact -- they have remained first and above all of their own race and creed.

"As far as Canada is concerned, they have lived their own life, segregating in certain parts, for instance, of the city of Montreal, and mixing very little with others.

"Is it the result of their own express desire and of their will, or is it the result of the refractory state of mind of the Christians? This has nothing to do with the existing facts.

"Those who would be allowed in could hardly be invited to our cities which at present are overcrowded with unemployed who have to submit to the humiliation of accepting Direct Relief.

"Although it may be said that the Jews find in themselves, even in time of dire crisis, special resources enabling them to go along without accepting these momentary means of living, no doubt, due to the fact that they are sometimes satisfied of a very low standard of living -- would they not, on the other hand, deprive an additional number of our own citizens from finding an occupation, and therefore cause an additional number of our own citizens to be unemployed, thus forcing them to accept the aid and charity of the State?

"Moreover, Sir, this cheap labor and this low living mode would tend, I would say, to diminish that certain standard of living which you yourself, in your book, foresaw as a necessity for the working man.

"Now let us take into consideration the fact that the Jewish immigrants might be called upon to sign a declaration whereby they would agree to settle in agricultural parts of the different provinces. What would this bring to our Country?

"Thinking of making Jews attach themselves to an agricultural life, is, I believe, a Utopia.

"It may be said, in answer to my affirmation, that in Palestine success of a certain kind has been attained. -- I would not, Sir, accept for the moment this experiment as conclusive. It is of too recent date, and no one could say for what length of time the Jews will consent to remain sedentary cultivating their lot of land.

"Is it not therefore, to be feared that after getting admission in Canada, in absolute good faith, upon their declaring their willingness to become agriculturists, in the few years following their establishment -- unaccustomed as they are to the rural life -- their desire for a mode of living more in accordance with their mentality will make them abandon the land and join the congregations or segregations of their own people in cities and towns.

"The condition which could be included in the original declaration -- that on their abandoning the land they could be repatriated -- would again create another problem:

"Where could they be repatriated? Supposing the conditions remained the same in the country where they come from, would not the Government repatriating them be blamed and accused of being inhuman?

"In discussing this problem of the Jews in the world, one has always to guard himself against what some call prejudice, fanaticism, and chauvinism. Yet I never found myself inclined towards any of this isms. My mind has always been very clear and never shadowed by animosity.

"Yet, thinking of the immigration of the past, I cannot but, sometimes, regret that too many have come and have gone back after a few years, with the money they have made in Canada, and others have come and have stayed who are no more Canadians than they were at the time of their arrival.

"If it is true that a Canadian mentality can here be developed -- of which, I regret to have to say, I have sometimes my own doubts -- it is certainly not by massive immigration of an unassimilable element that we will obtain its existence.

"Enough said, I believe, my dear Premier, afraid as I am to bore you with these remarks. May be you will allow me though, to draw your attention to a fact: In 1897, when trouble was beginning to brew between the Outlanders and the Boers, a Mr. Allan came to Canada. He had interviews with different politicians of the time and also with a few statesmen; among the latter was Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and also the leaders of the Conservative party.

"No one was aware that Mr. Allan had been sent here by Jos. Chamberlain who, -- let us give him credit for his real worth, -- knew then and there that the outcome of the struggle between the two elements in Transvaal would be war, and his choice of Mr. Allan had been a very cunning one, as this gentleman had very large interests in the diamond mines.

"Mr. Allan, in his conversations, naturally called the attention of the gentlemen he interviewed on the drastic inhuman treatment to which the Outlanders were subjected, and it was not very long that, animated by a pure sentiment of humanity and moved by a desire between the fighting groups, Sir Wilfrid Laurier presented to the House of Commons, a resolution protesting against Kruger politics.

"No one, yet, could doubt Laurier was a man of clear vision, great foresight; nevertheless he certainly had met in the 'Envoyé spécial' of Jos. Chamberlain just as much adroit a politician as himself. You certainly remember that that resolution was the basis upon which, a few years later, a demand was made for a Canadian contin-

gent to be sent to South Africa, the argument being that this resolution of 1897 should be substantiated in a tangible manner.

"This was the source of very acrimonious quarrels and provoked, you will remember also, the famous election of Labelle, where Mr. Bourassa was elected by an overwhelming majority.

"I am satisfied, Sir, that thousands and thousands of Canadians today, moved by the dire strait and humiliating situation in which the Jews are placed, do not hesitate to try and come to their help and rescue by all means. But when normal times have resumed, is it not to be feared that the sentiment directing their thoughts and words today would be quite different to their attitude, and may even change to one of blame towards the Government for having allowed this element to immigrate in our country in too large a number?" (King Papers, Pp. 212199-208)

The Canadian post office was receiving vaguely addressed letters for "The Canadian rabbinate," "the Jewish community," "Immigrant societies," "Jewish Church Council, in the hands of Mr. President...to anyone concerned," with pathetic self-descriptions. "We who are about..." seeking help.

As World War approached, Canadian Jewry was flooded with thousands of appeals from men and women unaccustomed to penning pleas to strangers speaking other languages, living across oceans and prairies.

A German intellectual displaced in San Remo addressed himself to the Jewish community in Montreal. He had no more specific address. Opportunities for his services in Ran Remo are "relatively small; foreigners are looked at with bad eyes. I have no money left for my new purpose. All pro-Jewish institutions are overcharged with obligations. Since the events in Austria all rich Jews in Europe get hundreds of letters a day for help. For me there is no chance in Europe. I can only hope that America can be of some help to me... I am sure that a kind heart will take interest in me and will help me to found a new existence.

"I always lived by my work. If now my situation has changed so much to my disfavour, it is not my fault, but the consequence of evolutions independent of my will...Europe is overcrowded with poor emigrants, so that I can hope for nothing here. God will bless you for all you will do for me."

The letterhead and the date make one shudder in the perspective of decades: From Berlin, from the National Representation of Jews in Germany, the Department for the Emigration of Children, written on Aug. 1, 1939, to Mr. H.M. Caiserman of the Canadian Jewish Congress, which had "offered to try its best to place in Canada 100 - 200 Jewish children from Germany," thanking him for his "readiness to help us, and we would be happy if there were a chance of considerably enlarging the scope of children's migration to Canada. Since about three years we are endeavouring to place suitable Jewish children from Germany in Canada. In some cases the Council of Jewish Women in Toronto have succeeded to obtain permits, and we may add that the results of the action have proved very good."

Hundreds of their letters survive in the archives of the Canadian Jewish Congress, the immigrant assistance agencies in Montreal and Toronto and probably in other Jewish communities around the globe. They are the substance of the Jewish history of the century.

At random: H.D. wrote from Vienna,

"As I have heard that you procure a permit for Canada to Vienna Jews, I should kindly ask you to have the humanity as to do the same for me.

"You cannot imagine how desperate my situation has got the last two months. All my life I should feel very much obliged to you, if you only could give me and my little child the possibility to find a new life in a better country than my own.

"For all your trouble, best thanks in anticipation."

His wife Lea R. added her plea for their lives,

"To you unknown, in my heavy state to request your help. My father, the late Dr. Adalbert V. has been for a long time pastor of the Jewish congregation. My husband was employed as town engineer for 15 years. In Middle Europe we have no hope for a future, neither our children, nor ourselves, therefore our intention to emigrate. My husband is versed in road building, railway building, edifices, building of bridges, town regulation, canalization, aqueducts regulation of brooks, meliorations, watering, waterworks, measuring, etc. We apply to your Jewish heart."

The whole attested in Hebrew under the seal and signature of the Rabbi Mordecai R. of Losoncz. And their families:

"One son: 21 years old, great, beautiful, nice, liked, first class education, medical student (six semesters), perfect bathing expert for hydropathic establishments -- medical baths, medical packings, healing massage, orthopedic. He can work in such establishments, can lead and build them up. Besides that he is perfect driver of all kinds of cars, tractors and motor-ploughs. He accept any work. If any family is interesting for him, he would remain obliged for the whole life of this family. He speaks and writes English with fluency.

"The daughter: 24 years old, beautiful girl, stands 1 year before medical-doctor. She learns now hairdressing and cosmetic. She is perfect for hospitals (nurse and so on) for infant schools and household. She speaks and writes English.

"The mother: 45 years old. Perfect in household, perfect in manufacturing of handmade gloves."

What ever happened to this petitioner?

THE JEWISH PLEAS

The Jews of Canada, scattered from Halifax to Victoria, hardly organized, a mere percent or two of the country's population, most of them residents of the proletarian ghettoes of Montreal and Toronto, engrossed in earning their honest bread -- and the cost of their children's education -- by sweatshop labor or endless hours in small stores, with no political power or kinship with Canadian men of power, were overwhelmed by the reports from their kin and by the clear threats of worse to come, not only in Germany, but also in the other lands of their emigration: Austria, Poland, Galicia, Lithuania, Hungary, the Ukraine, Rumania.

> As far back as 1932, A.J. Paull of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society warned his Temple Emanu-El audience that Jewry in Eastern Europe faced complete annihilation with the complete stoppage of immigration. (Gazette, Feb. 16, 1932)

Millions of Jews were trapped in a Poland permeated with anti-Semitism and governed by a group not loath to transform this racist and religious hatred into destructive social and legal conditions.

Many Canadian Jews were of Polish birth, well-informed and sensitive to the present lot and to the future prospects of their kin. The Canadian Federation of Polish Jews initiated a campaign for relief of Polish Jews and by early 1937 had transmitted $8500 to Europe to that end. (Letter from their national secretary H.M. Kirshenbaum to Caiserman, March 2, 1937)

In Feb. 1937 the Canadian Jewish Congress resolved on "conferences to be held in the larger Jewish communities of Canada, on one specified day, in order to discuss the tragic plight of the Jewish population in Poland, and to formulate plans by which we can awaken public opinion regarding the situation. The resolutions adopted at these conferences should be transmitted to the Polish Government and the press. The Canadian Government should be requested to forward the resolutions adopted, to the Polish Government and to the League of Nations." (Congress release, March 1, 1937)

The national office of the Congress prepared a draft resolution for these conferences based upon similar resolutions adopted at meetings of American Jewish communities. (Letter from Caiserman to M.A. Gray, Winnipeg, March 17, 1937)

In Winnipeg the Congress joined the Polish Federation to mobilize the community in the face of recent developments which can be called "The Polish Expulsion, the most tragic in the history of suppressed and tormented Polish Jewry. The heart of every Jew must tremble as he thinks of the final fate of the millions in eastern Europe, and particularly of the Jews in Poland." (Yiddish invitation fron Congress for conference at the Hebrew Sick Benefit Society in Winnipeg, March 21, 1937)

Other conferences were held on Apr. 4 and 11th.

Seeking to enlist Canadian cooperation in the endemic Polish situation, the Canadian Jewish Congress placed a memorandum on the problem before Under Secretary of State for External Affairs O.D. Skelton on April 21, 1937. Specifically the Jewish group requested the Canadian government to present the tragic facts before the Polish government and the League of Nations. The delegation was headed by S.W. Jacobs and included A.J. Freiman of Ottawa, Rabbi H.J. Stern and H. Wolofsky of Montreal and Jewish citizens from Winnipeg and Toronto.

An entire continent of Jews was mortally endangered, and the Canadian Jewish Congress felt this in all its horror -- if only because it was composed of Jews who geographically and culturally derived from each of the menaced zones. So its Dominion Council formulated a resolution to place the Rumanian situation before the Canadian authorities as it sought the support of the Canadian state. There was a legal nexus. The Canadian government had supported vital Rumanian claims at the Versailles Peace Conference. It had a right to expect civilized treatment of its Jewish minority by that state. Jacobs, Heaps and Factor were requested to place the Congress resolution before Dr. Skelton. (Letter from Factor to Caiserman, Feb. 9, 1938)

Painfully the Canadian Jewish Congress summarized the Rumanian condition in a letter to Dr. Skelton, Undersecretary of State for External Affairs,

"Aroused by the catastrophe which faces over 800,000 Jews of Roumania, the Canadian Jewish Congress, representative of, and speaking for, the Jewish Community in Canada, takes the liberty of bringing to the attention of our Government the following:

"During recent weeks, press despatches from Roumania have reported events which have caused all supporters of democratic government grave concern, and filled our Jewish fellow-citizens with profound anxiety for the fate of their co-religionists. Following a national election held on December 20th, the King of Roumania appointed as his Prime Minister one Octavian Goga, leader of the National Christian Party, although that Pary secured less than 10% of the votes of the people. With but few exceptions, the men comprising the Goga Cabinet are also representatives of this minority party. Its platform calls for the complete

elimination of Jews from the political, economic and cultural life of the country.

"Immediately following his appointment, the new Premier announced that his government would carry out the principles of the Party in all phases of Roumanian national life. Specifically, he declared that it was his intention to enact measures providing for: - 1. Expropriation of land owned by Jews. 2. Cancellation of licences held by Jews to sell wines and liquors, tobacco products, salt and other articles of general consumption. 3. Prohibition of Jews from establishing themselves as merchants in villages. 4. Forbidding employment of Jews by Roumanian newspapers. 5. Removal of Jews from all agricultural enterprises. 6. Revision of all naturalisations since 1920. 7. Exclusion of Jews from all government offices.

"It will, Sir, require very little study or analysis of these proposals to realize that their effect would be to close almost all avenues of honest employment to the Jews of Roumania, especially when it is borne in mind that, owing to administrative regulations of former governments and the aping of Nazi German policies by professional associations, Jews have already been deprived of their economic freedom and equality.

"The proposals of the new Premier of Roumania would be outrageous under any conditions; they are positively revolting when it is recalled that they would flagrantly violate Roumania's pledged word, incorporated in a treaty with the Allied and Associated Powers, whose victory in the World War had made possible the enlargement of Roumania by 7,000 square miles, and added 9,652,362 to her population. In this Treaty, which was signed by both Parties at Paris, on December 9, 1919, Roumania undertook to accord all persons belonging to racial, linguistic and religious minorities, the same rights enjoyed by the majority population. Because Roumania had circumvented carrying out a similar pledge in respect of Jews, given in the Treaty of Berlin of 1878, the Minorities Treaty of 1919 included the following article extending its benefits specifically to Jews:

"Article 7. -- 'Roumania undertakes to recognize as Roumanian nationals ipso facto, and without the requirement of any formality, Jews inhabiting any Roumanian territory, who do not possess another nationality.'

"And yet, despite its solemn pledge to 'recognize as Roumanian nationals ipso facto and without the requirement of any formality, Jews inhabiting any Roumanian territory, who do not possess another nationality,' -- a pledge which, along with other Provisions of the Minorities Treaty was incorporated in Roumania's constitution -- the naturalisation law of 1924 did require of Jews living in the annexed provinces proof that they possessed the right of residence under the former governments of those provinces, Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empire. In doing this, the Roumanian government was fully aware of the fact that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for thousands of residents to comply with this technicality. Because of the chaotic conditions of the War and the transfer of large territories from Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire to Roumania, many Jews, most of them natives, cannot produce the documentary evidence.

"Not content with the results of this whittling down of its treaty pledge, the Roumanian government, last in power, that of Premier Tartarescu, inaugurated a systematic revision of the naturalisations acquired under the law with a view to finding technical pretexts for cancelling the citizenship of Jews and other minorities. Such cancellation of citizenship is tantamount to loss of livelihood, because, although the Law for the Protection of National Labour of 1934 provides that 80% of employees in commercial or industrial establishments shall be Roumanian, it has been so administered as to exclude aliens entirely.

"During 1937, the Tartarescu government went even further and issued a ministerial circular requiring all industrial and commercial establishments to employ from 50% to 75% "ethnic" Roumanians, a term which excudes all persons of German, Hungarian, Russian or Jewish descent, of whom there are about 5,000,000, or 30% of a total population of 18,000,000. Obviously, this measure is also a flagrant violation of the Minorities Treaty.

"These unwarranted measures and those now being proposed by Premier Goga appear even more reprehensible when it is remembered that there is not even the semblance of justification for such oppressive policies. Roumania is one of the few countries in Europe in which there is virtually no unemployment. As recently as August 1937, the Ministry of Labour announced that in 1936 the number of unemployed fluctuated between 7,496 and 19,653.

"The avowed purpose of these oppressive measures, which are espoused by the fascist parties, is to deprive so-called non-Roumanians, especially Jews, of any voice in the conduct of the government; and the appointment of Goga, the leader of the largest of these parties, as Premier, clearly indicates that the King of Roumania approves of such measures and is desirous of seeing them extended and increased along the lines of the program recently announced by Goga. Whatever be the motives of this program, it is obvious that these measures will result in the impoverishment and degradation and the eventual expulsion of the Jews of Roumania, who, according to census of 1930, numbered 984,213, or 5.46% of the total population.

"In view of the above, the Dominion Council of the Canadian Jewish Congress solemnly declares its full and fraternal solidarity with the Jews who are being persecuted in countries now dominated by racial doctrines.

"It prays that our Government instruct its representatives at the League of Nations to use the rights conferred upon them by the treaty freely accepted by Roumania, to draw the attention of the Council of the League of Nations to the infringement, or danger of infringement, of the provisions of this treaty and to take steps to secure the effective restoration of treaty rights which have been withdrawn or are threatened.

"We are confident that our government will hasten to take this humanitarian step which will be acclaimed by all citizens of Canada who stand for Liberty, Justice, and Equal Rights to minority groups." (H.M. Caiserman to Dr. Skelton, Feb. 3, 1938)

There is desperation, even incoherence, in Jacobs' appeal to King of March 11, 1938:

"Mr. Heaps, Mr. Factor and I are prompted to write you with regard to the situation which has arisen respecting the immigration of our people here, which has become increasingly difficult during the last few years, owing to the imposition of strict regulations which make it practically impossible for Jewish citizens to secure the admission of relations and friends destined to their respective families, who are expected to marry the proposed immigrants and set up in housekeeping on their own account.

"We need not tell you about the great hardships which our people are encountering in Europe just now, making it almost impossible for them to continue to live in Europe; and the tales of inhumanity which reach us are such that we are compelled to bring the matter to the attention of you and your Government to see if some relief cannot be obtained, to the end that these regulations may be ameliorated.

"It is making it increasingly difficult for the Jewish members of the House to cope with this entire question, and we believe that a sympathetic consideration of the matter as it affects certain phases of Jewish immigration at the moment to Canada, by you in your usual way and the Department concerned,will be beneficial. It will, at any rate serve to show that you are alive to the almost intolerable situation in which our race is placed by conditions brought about by no fault of their own and of which they are innocent victims."

The single voice of the three Jewish M.P.'s -- representing two political parties, each of the legislators so different in background -- yet all so loyally concerned with the fate of their fellow-Jews -- evoked a remarkable article in Le Devoir on "Trois Israélites." (Sept. 8, 1934)

Their letter was taken up in cabinet, and the Jewish members were told on March 15 that "the Minister of Mines and Resources has been asked, when he has had an opportunity of giving consideration to its representations, to bring the matter up again in Council." (Public Archives of Canada, King Papers, Pp. 213,016, 213,020)

Began the very active process of inaction. The letter was referred to the cabinet, which appointed a committee consisting of the Hon. Messrs. Crerar, Lapointe, Rinfret, Ilsley and Mackenzie.

Several weeks later, on May 16th, Heaps reminded the Prime Minister that "in our brief conversation on Thursday last, you kindly consented to receive a delegation in reference to the question of political and religious refugees.

"A small group of Members of the House (probably seven) would like to confer with you on this problem at a time and place that will suit your convenience." (King Papers, P. 214,191)

The meeting of the sub-committee with Heaps, Factor and Jacobs as well as J.S. Woodsworth and Col. T.A. Vien did take place on May 25, 1938 in the significant absence of Mr. Lapointe. The committee received the representation of the members, but stated that the question will have to receive further discussion in Council. And that was that. (King Papers, Pp.214,993-94)

"It appears that the two French members of this cabinet committee, Mr. Rinfret and Mr. Lapointe, will have to be interviewed privately before the meeting with the hope of convincing them to be favorably disposed to a proposition which the government is anxious to carry out, namely, to allow a certain number of Austrian refugees to come to Canada. Mr. Heaps, Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Factor have undertaken to see these two French members of the cabinet with a view to winning them over. Doubtless they will point to the French Canadian agitation against any immigration, particularly Jewish, and it may be necessary to suggest to these members that only those provinces that can assimilate the refugees will be asked to cooperate, which means that very few will be settled in the Province of Quebec." (May 23, 1938; National Archives of Canadian Jewish Congress)

Ernest Lapointe (1876-1941) K.C., was minister of justice, 1926-30, 1935-41. Elected for Kamouraska in 1904 he sat in the Commons for that constituency until 1919 when he won the Quebec-East seat which he held until 1934. He headed the ministry of marine and fisheries from 1921 to 1924. The right hand of Mackenzie King, Lapointe represented Canada at important imperial conferences, notably that of 1926.

In 1922 he was Canadian delegate to the League of Nations. The following year he negotiated and signed a treaty with the U.S. in regard to the Pacific fisheries; this was the first Canadian treaty signed without the assistance of a British diplomat.

His name in a crucial sentence in a Trudeau speech illustrates how profoundly Lapointe was representative of political Quebec:

L. Ian MacDonald recalls the prime minister's address in the provincial capital's Municipal Convention Centre,

"Trudeau told them straight up that he was the boss of the joint. 'Les Laurier, les Lapointe, et les moi-même,' he said. And the audience of people who understand and obey leadership before everything else, stood and cheered." (Gazette, May 21, 1979)

The outcome of the discussion will be guessed by anyone who has read the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. Book 3 of that report tells of "Ernest Lapointe, the Minister of Justice, and Quebec leader in the government formed by W.L. Mackenzie King in 1935. His reputation as a champion of Francophone rights in the Public Service was established soon after he assumed his central role in the government, and thereafter he was the spokesman for hundreds of grievances, large and small. In this respect, of course, he was fulfilling his role as Quebec leader, but the energy and patience he devoted to these political tasks in spite of repeated rebuffs and -- more important -- the way he was able to grasp the various dimensions of problems were exceptional for the time. He was pressed with patronage demands from Quebec and grievances over representation and, like any effective political chief, he did his best to keep the party happy." (P.103)

Lapointe presents himself as victim of the situation. In Feb. 1938 he spoke on the 35th anniversary of his entry into politics,

"As a result of unfortunate events in Europe, we have received many missives; humanitarian groups have begged us to admit suffering victims of atrocious persecution.

"We have been vigorously attacked. On the one hand we are accused of cruelty and of barbarism because we have not opened our doors. On the other hand I have been attacked because,our doors closed and remaining closed, I have not heaped insults on those we could not receive. I do not hesitate to say that the persecutions in certain European countries are a crime against humanity, a crime that has taken these countries back to the most sinister times of the middle ages; I am in agreement in this with the lamented head of our church, His Holiness Pius XI. If I cannot help the victims of this odious tyranny, at least do not ask me to insult them. But we cannot increase immigration into Canada as long as current conditions prevail." (Le Canada, Feb. 20, 1938; also cited in Le Devoir, Apr. 14, 1939)

The parliamentary developments are situated within a chapter midway in the dramatic biography of an important figure in Jewish and western Canadian history.

Some years after the Winnipeg General Strike Heaps of the CCF was elected to the House of Commons for Winnipeg North in 1925 against E.J. MacMurray, who had been Crown Prosecutor in the case against him in 1919, after a vigorous campaign on both class and ethnic lines

When he fought for his seat in 1935 his most threatening competitor was Communist Party leader Tim Buck.

So Heaps sat until the 1940 election when Liberal Booth defeated him, largely because the C.C.F. was seen as too mild in its support of the war effort against the Nazis. Henry Trachtenberg sees this election outcome as

a reflection of what sociologist S.D. Clark has called "the phenomenal improvement in the economic and social state of Eastern European Jewish immigrants in the second quarter of the century." (Henry Trachtenberg. The Winnipeg Jewish Community in the Inter-War Period, 1919-39; Antisemitism and Politics, paper before Canadian Jewish Historical Society, Saskatoon, June 5, 1939)

The tragic plight of Europe's refugees was deep in the awareness of A.A. Heaps, himself a victim of Canada's arbitrary and voracious immigration laws. His biographer-son reminds us that "he had been personally responsible, through intervention with the Minister of Immigration, for the admission of many hundreds of refugees into Canada... He often, at his own personal expense, arranged for the entry into Canada of many of these poor, persecuted people. During the war he once showed to his children a small silver cup inscribed with thanks from a refugee family whom he had brought to Canada from Germany. To this extent and no more would he accept a token of gratitude.

"There had been in some quarters of Canada a strong protest to the entry of refugees. The cry of anti-Semitism had been raised, although less than half of those who sought asylum were Jews. The callous inhumanity of Canada to the tens of thousands who were beating at the doors of the country had aroused Heaps to protest as a Canadian and as a Member of Parliament who represented a constituency of mixed racial origins. But when he attacked the Government's attitude, he did so with facts. The cold, austere atmosphere of the Chamber did little to enhance Heaps' appeal to the humanitarian instincts of politicians, who were more impressed with the legalities of the Constitution than with human suffering. Heaps made a plea."(The Rebel in the House. London, Niccolo, 1970. P.34-37, 158-59)

The extraordinary political and social career of this Jewish labor representative of Winnipeg accorded him a remarkable influence with the prime minister who was hypersensitive even to short-time conjunctions of power and to politicians' use of their positions of the minute. It so happens, in the confusion of western Canadian politics, that Heaps became the fulcrum of the House of Commons just when King's place in history was in the balance. Heaps acted vigorously and honestly in the line of his electoral program -- and King proved to be the beneficiary.

The two opposing politicians developed an unusual friendship, within limits carefully observed, but sincere and humanly warm notwithstanding. One moment in their lives in common is told by Heaps' son,

"King had invited Heaps on occasion into his office in the East Block to hear his views on legislation that he was urging upon the Government. It was on one of these visits that Heaps noted an old black leather chair in bad need of repair. His professional upholsterer's pride was challenged. The Prime Minister of Canada could not possibly sit in such a chair. Something should be done about it immediately. When King agreed, Heaps, to the amazement of the Prime Minister, said he would have the chair taken to his office and he would re-upholster it himself. The old chair was a relic left by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and, rather than throw it out, King had kept it for sentimental reasons.

"Late in the year 1927, Heaps had the chair moved to his office in one of the garret rooms on the fifth floor of Parliament and started to work on it in his spare time. When Parliament opened for its new Session in 1928, the chair was completely reupholstered, sprung, padded and polished. It was ready to be returned to the sentimental King, who was convinced that he had lost forever his cherished souvenir from his beloved Sir Wilfrid. King had never doubted Heaps' ability as a parliamentarian but,

not knowing Heaps' upholstering background, had reservations concerning his technical skill as an upholsterer. Shortly after the new Session began, Heaps returned the magnificent new chair to the office of the Prime Minister. King was overwhelmed.

"'I feel that few, if any, tributes could be finer to the memory of Sir Wilfrid than this one which you have just paid. The work done is that of an artist, the thought which inspired it that of a true patriot and poet. For all that your services express I cannot thank you too warmly.'

"The picture of the finished chair was flashed by the press around the world. The old chair of Sir Wilfrid became front page news for a day and then passed quietly away into history." (Rebel in the House, P.84)

It is as fascinating a chapter as any in the annals of Canadian democracy. King long remembered Heaps, indeed very fondly, probably more as the admiration of one professional political craftsman for another than as gratitude. But this did not extend to paying a debt in the form of lives of Jews.

O. KOTKOWSKY REMEMBERS

My family was murdered in Treblinka. Still this book does not describe the horror. I was not in those places. I was lucky to have chosen a secure working place long before the Actions began. To avoid being hunted to do slave labor, I volunteered to work in a glass-foundry in 1941, in my home-town Piotrkow Trybunalski.

I used to get out of the ghetto to buy German newspapers. Nobody ever paid attention to me. I had a good "appearance". My friends frequented my house to read the papers. We read between the lines. Also, some friends heard the "news" which we called Yi-va News (Yiden villen azoi), news that served only our soul.

We read that Goebbels complained bitterly about our women's fault. They like to put excessive lipstick on, but they don't like to work! Also, the Italian soldiers are so feeble-minded that they freeze to death on the Russian front." When the Russians deployed their Katiusha for the first time, the Germans did not know what had hit them. "It burns everything wherever it lands. We could not find a driver for those mechanized things."

This was elixir for our souls. It gave us pleasure to read about their defeat at Stalingrad and the bombings of the German cities. We were caged animals squeezed within their overwhelming power, but our minds were alert enough to subvert their propaganda about their invincibility.

We still believed deep in our hearts, during our darkest moments, that their end would eventually come.

Later, I was fortunate enough to get involved with the underground of the Coordinating Committee and the ZOB (Jewish Fighting Organization). Day and night I breathed in fresh air from the outside world by reading the underground press. I marked some facts down on paper while they were happening and always buried them wherever I could.

I did not go back to Poland after the war, because of the pogroms by some Poles upon the few returning Jews, so I could not retrieve my buried notes and letters from the Coordinating Committee in Warsaw.

Vladka's book <u>On Both Sides of the Wall</u> tells of her courier friend Ala Margules, whom we saved from the Germans in 1944 and that Vladka brought 50,000 zlotys to me to the Piotrkower Labor camp.

These underground leaders of the Bund and Zionist organizations outside the ghetto worked for the common cause and they will never be forgotten.

I still remember my mother's words when my younger brother and I said goodbye a week before the main Action: "You save yourselves. If you succeed, take revenge for all of us."

Well, I could not take revenge in the physical sense of the word. But I thought I ought to write down these facts.

FROM PIOTRKOW - TRIBUNALSKY

--Pages out of his journal of recollections from the years of the Holocaust in Poland...

The Jewish Council under Tenenberg tried their utmost to alleviate the hunger and pain of the Jewish population. They organized an orphanage, a people's kitchen, a people's bathhouse, essential for the overcrowded ghetto. The Piotrkower Judenrat, unlike other ghetto administrations under Hitler Germany, worked illegally. Tenenberg was very ambitious and persuasive, and he was able to deal with Nazi officials. He used money to corrupt them in some "delicate" matters like freeing Jews from jail and the illegal activities in the Judenrat building.

The Jewish Council tried very hard to put a stop to the wild and chaotic hunting for Jews. They put a thousand workers to their disposition to fill their need, but to no avail. The SS men said that it gave them pleasure to hunt for Jews.

Once, after shovelling snow on a highway, all day without food, the SS men did not let us go home. Instead, they brought us before the Jewish Council building on Pilaudskiego St. They called out the Judenrat members to the balcony.

Suddenly they started to whip us. They would put questions for us to answer very loudly, for the whole world would hear. "Who are the greatest warmongers?" From the hungry and half frozen crowd of captured people came out a slight murmur: "The Jews". The SS men became very angry at the low voices. They hit everyone again yelling: "Louder, louder!!"

Then more questions: "Who wanted the war?" Only a few voices were heard, accompanied by a snap of the whip: "The Jews". "Who are the communist blood-suckers?" "The Jews" again, with the yells of the SS men and the cracks of their whips. "Who are the capitalistic world leaders?" "The Jews". And so on. The spectacle went on for quite some time...

AT THE BORDER

I made up my mind to run away. At that time, some of our youth crossed the Bug River to get away from the Germans. I gathered some money that I had hidden in the attic. I took my younger brother Faywel and we said good-bye to our parents. I also persuaded my friend Izak Kalinski to come with us.

We bought train tickets to Warsaw. We were not allowed to travel, but we did anyway. There was no way I would obey all their orders. On the train we encountered some queer looks, as if we were subhuman.

When we arrived at the Bug we went into a hut to negotiate the fee for a barge. We had to wait around until enough people had gathered. Just before we were ready to get into the barge, a German border guard came out of a hut yelling: "Spielt nicht keine ferfluchte komedie hier!" He meant we were not to make too much noise here,but get it over with. We were surprised that he did not mind us crossing the border.

It was dark when we got on the barge, and the paddlers were working diligently. We reached the other shore and headed into the woods. While walking in the dark, my brother stumbled over a loaf of bread. He picked it up and found a wristwatch in it. We heard noises and soon we saw the Russian border guards running towards us. They yelled out: "Davoy Nazad!" (Get back) All our pleas, that we were running away from the Nazis did not help. They pushed us back onto the barge with bare bayonets.

When we were in the middle of the river, the Ukrainian crew demanded everything we possessed, or they would drown us. They were armed.

We began our journey back home to the ghetto, hungry, tired and very disappointed. We had to walk some of the way and we hitched a ride. We entered a peasant house and Faywel offered the new found watch for some food. The woman cooked a potato soup for us. Nothing ever tasted so good.

THE END OF THE PIOTRKOW GHETTO

During the night of the 13 of October 1942, our ghetto was surrounded by the SS men and the Ukrainians. Here and there, loud drunken Ukrainians could be heard, readying themselves for their ugly festivities. The "action" lasted a whole week as over 22,000 were taken from the Piotrkower ghetto. Street by street, they emptied the houses taking men, women and children by force.

Most victims knew that they were being taken from their homes to be exterminated in Treblinka. What could they have done to avoid it? They were completely isolated from the world outside. The young people were separated, working, kept inside the factories outside and far from the ghetto. Mothers had to take care of their children. The old and the sick were shot on the spot if they would not or could not move fast enough. What could they do with their bare hands against these young SS men well trained and armed?

There was some passive resistance in the form of not obeying the Nazi orders. Some were shot while hiding, or simply died in their own home. Our last Rabbi Lau was determined to speak before getting into the cattle car. He spoke to the unfortunate people about "Kiddush Hashem" (Sanctification of God's Holy name): "Better a live death, instead of a dead life; and everyone who perishes as a Jew is a saint. I call upon all of you to realize the will of God to die for Him with dignity."

Rabbi Lau did help a little with his inspirational speech to lift the spirits of those innocent victims of Nazism. The religious Jews boarded the cattle wagons breathing easier, knowing in their hearts that they were fulfilling their duty to God by praying silently. The rest looked around in disbelief, that nobody was willing or able to help, and thus resigned themselves to their untimely end...Others yet were relieved that this would mark the end of their long hunger, degradation, inhumanity to men and the disinterest of the world.

Late the same afternoon, I saw the first train with the deported Piotrkower people. It was moving very slowly, and I noticed many resigned familiar faces at the little windows. My eyes were glancing nervously around, seeking out any members of my family. I hoped to see them for the last time...

Suddenly, I heard a shrill cry from a window: "Chil! Chil! Watch over Mosze! Take care of him! Avenge all of us!!! Chil..." By the time I sadly nodded that I would, Sara disappeared from view with her anguished cry. It was a friend of mine, Sara Lebor, who cried to me to keep an eye on her younger brother, the only member of her whole family, who worked with me at the Mortensia factory.

Nothing could alleviate the depression of the slave workers who remained alive, seething with vengefulness against the Nazis.

Every day we marched through the small ghetto. During a walk I noticed a commotion further down the yard. Someone was being chased. When they were closer, I saw it was a friend of mine, who had taught me to swim. Gruszkowski. He had a whip in his hand. My first reaction was to stop Gruszkowski. He was very angry that I had gotten in his way to catch an "illegal". He needed him badly. I saw it in his red angry face. He yelled at me: "Do you know what you have done? It took me a long time to track him down! And now he is gone. Next time, stay out of my way, and don't be my friend anymore!" And he lifted his whip and struck at the corner of the house where his intended victim disappeared. I tried to talk to him to gain more time for the swimmer. I pretended that I did not understand why he was so important to him. I asked him, "What did he do to you? You can hit him tomorrow. And why do you need a whip? You are stronger than him!" He looked at me so bewildered, that he lifted his whip again as to strike me with it. But at the last second he yelled at me to get away from him. He hit the ground and a cloud of dust sprung up. He yelled while proceeding in the same direction: "Times have changed and I don't need you any more. Don't ever get in my way again, or..." I could not hear his last words, because he was running further with his whip striking the air with frustration. I had not known that Gruszkowski was working for the Gestapo. I remembered him as a young movie fan who used to climb trees in the Wolborz woods and imitate Tarzan.

My next experience was even worse. While walking by the Police station, I noticed one of my pre-war friends, with her baby in her arms, looking out the basement window. She was married to my friend and were "illegals". I was in no position to help them. As I came closer to the window, I had to turn my head cowardly the other way. I could not face her. It made me cringe in the very depth of my soul. Pola's beautiful eyes piercing up from the cellar of death with a little baby in her arms. I was walking freely and was not bothered by anyone. I could not take it, for this was not the time to be a hero. I would only share her fate. The only thing I could do was to bite my lower lip, until it bled. I walked away in helplessness and frustration.

The cellar was the first stage of the condemned. When it got overcrowded, the victims were taken to the synagogue. Our place of worship was now a modern hell. The Ukrainian guards had a free hand in handling the victims. They terrorized the unfortunate "illegals" by aiming and firing shots through the windows...

CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE

The fireman came in and told me the good news that after two months of waiting he was expecting someone from Warsaw. I should be in the Block tomorrow at 5 o'clock in the afternoon for something from the world outside.

As he said, he came into the Block the next day. He handed me a large parcel. He did not tell me this time how much money there was, but again said that he would like to get 5,000 zl. for his trouble He also wanted our answer tonight. I just gave him a look that he understood that I was in no position to give him an answer now.

Later our friends opened the parcel. There was a letter with 45,000 zl., and a special edition of the underground paper about Auschwitz. While we were reading the letter, we noticed that the number 45 was not clear. It looked as if something had been erased.

There was a tense situation in our Block this day. Michelson, the banker's son, had hidden a jar with valuables in the ground under a window. Someone outside the Block noticed something and reported it to the guards. They dug it up and showed it to our Commandant Herford. As we were pondering, Herford and the rest of the guards came out. Herford ordered us to form a line of two's and told the first two to get inside the guard-house. Such an occurrence happened for the first time.

To satisfy my curiosity I straightened out to look through the window which was high. I felt a shiver go through my body as a result of what I saw inside. The first two stood naked and the guards were searching through their clothes. Herford was looking on triumphantly. They let the first two out and directed the next two in. We could hear Herford's yelling: "Where have you hidden the American dollars? If you don't give them to me, you will be shot like a dog!"

I had been in many bad situations before. This one was the worst. Each time it involves only myself, but this time I carried 45,000 zlotys and a special edition of the illegal newspaper about Auschwitz.

What could I do now? There was no way out. The guards were watching every move that we made. The only thing I could do, was to move gradually down the line to win time. Maybe some kind of miracle would happen.

The line was getting shorter. We should have been at work half an hour ago. The former shift had to stay on until we arrived. The last time I looked through the window, Herford held quite a bundle of foreign money in his hand. Although it was cool I perspired profusely, thinking of how I could avoid disaster. It would be too difficult for me to hold everything in my hands, because I would have to undress.

It was already 10:45 p.m. I was almost at the end of the line. The last two workers behind me were poor boys in old torn coats. My coat was not in good condition either. I had noticed that when a poor boy was taken in to be searched, they did not spend too much time with him. Therefore, I took one more step back and in front of my eyes all I saw was a torn and patched coat.

Now it was eleven o'clock and Gregor came out to see how many still remained to be searched. He counted: "One, two, three, four." The one with the torn coat was frisked by Gregor and pushed aside. Then he turned to me: "Kotkowski, you are also here!" and he leaned into the door and reported that there were still three unimportant persons outside. Herford retorted: "You check them yourself and let's get rid of them!"

As soon as I heard that, I reached into my pockets for the money with my right hand, and for the Auschwitz edition with my left. Gregor leaned back in our direction and took one step with his lame foot towards me.

"Well, Kotkowski, how much money do you have?" with a smirk on his face, being sure that there was no way I could have money on me. But his question surprised me. I had the impression that he knew that I had money. Still I did not lose my composure. I smiled and told him to take my wallet out of my pant pocket. He replied that he knew me too well, that I would never cheat and that I should show him my wallet. I quickly put my right hand into my pant pocket, left the money there, and took my wallet out and handed it to him. He did not want to take it, he only wanted to know how much money was in it. He trusted me, because I used to work for him.

However, this was worse for me, because in order to open my wallet I needed both hands. It was a good thing it was dark. I quickly put my left hand in my pocket with the illegal paper, left it there, and opened my wallet to show him that I had 2 zlotys. He looked into it and said: "No, you don't have diamonds." and laughed. So did I. He did not even touch the last two boys and rushed them into the new formed line. We were out the gate in a hurry, because the guards wanted us to get to work fast.

ALA MARGULES

One morning, while we were out of the gate to go to work to the "Kara", I noticed a dark haired woman looking in our direction. Instinctively I felt that this was her at last. She had a basket in one hand like the other "merchants" who usually tried to sell bread, eggs and other products to us. While the Polish women were conducting their business, the guards were sometimes lenient and looked the other way. Only if they saw someone important pass by, they chased the merchants away from the marching Jews.

This time two guards saw a new face among the Poles. They observed that her eyes were riveted on a little girl. They were also curious why they had not seen this woman here before.

As soon as she approached Renia Zaks and gave her something, they went over to the woman and asked her what she was selling. The woman replied that she was selling food to the Jews like all the others. However, they did not see any food in her basket, so one of them put his head in it. Beneath the cover he found a large sum of money. He pulled it out and said to her half jokingly: "Ah, you deal in money! We have to check that. Come with us to our boss; let him believe you." They took her back to the Block.

Meanwhile, when Renia saw the commotion, she in turn slipped the letter that she had received from the woman, to her friend Hanka Pfeffer who hid it in her shoe. We went into the foundry yard and the gates were closed behind us...

As soon as the cart with the food was put in place, Nachum came over and told me that the arrested woman was our courier. She was arrested with 75,000 zlotys which was destined for us. We were dumbfounded and could not utter a word.

When I came home from work after 6 p.m., Nachum was waiting for me at my window. He told me what he learned about the arrested woman. She was Ala Margules, about 24 years old, daughter of Dr. Margules from Lodz, whom the Nazis had killed as a Bundist. She now lived with her mother outside the ghetto in Warsaw. She travelled with a German passport.

They jailed her in the empty room over the kitchen in the back yard. Director Christman was out of town. Without his knowledge and permission, nobody was allowed to report her to the Gestapo.

Now I wanted to see her. We went up one flight of stairs in the back of our building. We stood at the open window. Nachum whistled lightly, and she slowly appeared in her window, across from where we were standing. Her face showed a slight, insecure smile. She figured that we were her friends, but was not sure.

Nachum ran down the stairs and entered the women's washroom. She disappeared from her window and I saw the guard lead her to the washroom and wait outside.

After a few minutes she came out and the guard led her back to her room. Afterwards Nachum came out and returned to the window and related to me this short and excited conversation he had with her:

Nachum: "We will try to do everything to get you out of here!"

Ala: "Friends, don't be confused. Don't worry about me. Keep up your spirits, because their time is up soon..."

Nachum: "But, Ala, your life is in danger. They are waiting for the Director of the foundry to report you to the Gestapo."

Ala: "I had been many times in similar circumstances in Warsaw and my lucky star will guide me through this time, too."

Meanwhile, Herford arrived on one of his frequent noisy visits. We could not hear the exact words, but it went something like this:

Herford in Polish: "I know what kind of work you Jewish Communists do. Your place is in a concentration camp or to be buried, and not to travel these days."

Ala in German: "I am a German woman, and I would not ask a Polish swine like you what to do!"

Herford was stunned for a moment, then we saw him reach for his gun and yell: "You Jewish...You think I don't know who you are?! I can fire a bullet into your Jewish head and nobody would blame me for it! It is only a pity that you waste our bread! Ah, you will only live until tomorrow, you Jewish whore."

After his shouting, I said to Nachum that we had to silence him somehow. We decided to bribe him with out last 10,000 zlotys. We thought of sending our Camp leader Salomon Gomberg to talk to him. It was impossible to uphold our anonymity now. We had to tell Gomberg the truth.

We went to see him and told him clearly that if he wanted to keep this Camp intact, he had to do three things for us: To keep Herford quiet with our last 10,000 zl.; to see that Renia Zaks was freed and to go to Director Christman -- when he arrived from out of town -- to free Ala Margules.

In the beginning Gomberg had a smirk on his face. Only when he learned that the girl was a courier sent to us by the Jewish Fighting Organization in Warsaw did he become very respectful. He could not forgive himself of being ignorant of such goings on behind his back in his Camp. I handed him the money to go and bribe Herford.

He left immediately to see Herford and we waited for Gomberg's return at the window of my room.

When he came back, he was all smiles and assured us that Herford "accepted" the money and was freeing Renia immediately. He also promised not to interfere in the case of the "strange" soman.

The next day I did not want to go to work in order to supervise the rescue of Ala Margules. I was to fake some kind of sickness. I sent my brother for the head nurse Mania Blumsztein. I stayed in bed.

Mania came immediately and asked me what the matter was. I looked straight into her eyes and slowly said that I had a fever. Although we had never talked to each other, she knew of me. Seemingly, she understood that I had to stay in the Block today. Without a word, she measured my fever. She did not wait long enough for the thermometer to warm up before she gave me a sick pass. She knew in her heart that she was also contributing to the saving of her comrade Ala Margules. She was risking her reputation and job by stating falsely that I was sick. I did not want to tell her that she was also very much involved and that her name was mentioned in the letter that we received. She could have also been arrested together with us if the guards had intercepted our letter instead of the money.

But she probably knew all of this. We could not always keep a secret from party members. In the absence of veteran Bund members, Mania was the main force in their movement. Although I had never been a party member, I was now very much involved with them.

First we had to free the courier. We went to see Gomberg again and told him to explain to the Director openly and clearly that the woman was sent to us by an underground organization in Warsaw, to make contact with the Jewish workers here. He should listen very carefully: if he would not let her free, the acts of sabotage in the glass-foundry might increase and his life would be in danger. Did he really need that? To make the proper impact on him, we told him to take our Camp Police Chief Josek Zemel with him.

Meanwhile, we consulted with Zemel on what to do in case the Director would not be able to free her. Zemel proposed a sure way to let her out of our Camp: a few strong persons would dig a hole in the wall of the women's washroom. From there she could immediately be on the outside.

The Director arrived in the glass-foundry about 5 p.m. Gomberg and Zemel went to see him. After an hour of suspenseful waiting, we saw them come back to the Block with happy smiling faces. They had persuaded the Director to make a crucial and dangerous decision. After weighing the consequences for awhile he decided to let her go free.

Finally we saw the guards going for her to the back yard. All eyes were turned and riveted in that direction. After a few

minutes, the guards led her through the front yard. She walked with dignity as a brave Jewish daughter who did not falter in the face of danger. She was hopeful while in captivity.

Here we had the historic opportunity to see before our eyes one of many Jewish couriers who risked their lives to bring some hope and material help for the downtrodden slaves.

When she was in danger of losing her own life, she had told us to be courageous and not to lose faith. Now she was leaving us.

Now she was already near the gate and she turned her head to have a last glance at us -- subjugated Jews. She left the yard and crossed the gate.

I looked out through the openings of the fence and saw her walking away fast all by herself.

About 10 p.m., we heard a wild commotion at the gate. We looked out the window and heard banging mixed with shouts: "Open up you swines!"

The guards opened the gate and a group of Gendarmes with motorcycles pushed their way in, yelling obscenities: "Where is the Jewess? Where is that cursed woman?" They left their motorbikes at the fence and entered the guardhouse.

The calmness of such a joyful evening was interrupted with their wild shoutings. We thought that after freeing Ala Margules, everything would quiet down. Wegliszowski got very excited and scared, and exclaimed: "Chil, let's jump over the fence, let's run away! We were betrayed!"

I tried to calm him down, to wait and see what would happen. We did not have any money. We could not survive outside without any means these days.

He tried to calm down and we listened what was going on in the front at the guardhouse. Vogel arrived in his party uniform and somehow he was able to restore order.

Next morning we found out that one of the guards had reported to the "Schutzpolizei", that there was a transient Jewish woman in our Block. It seemed that he was not satisfied that they did not share the 75,000 zl. with him.

Vogel was the boss over the money. There was a suggestion that it be donated to the German Red Cross. He admonished the guard and sent him away. We did not see him anymore.

HELL DESCENDS INTO INFERNO

We marched to the railway station and they packed us into cattle wagons, so that nobody had space to sit down. After a few dreary days of travelling aimlessly without food or water, many prisoners died. Now we could sit or even lie down. Those who did not have shoes, took them from the dead prisoners.

The rumour among us was that we were being taken to Mauthausen. Rosenwald and I had decided to find a way to escape. Somebody had a knife and we tried to cut a hole in the wagon floor. We could not accomplish anything, because the floor was too thick and too hard for a knife.

My sick brother, lying on the floor, was so weak that he could not get up any more. I kept him alive by giving him salt to suck in a piece of paper.

When the train stopped, we removed the dead bodies. We buried them in a foreign land, that was soaked with blood of our innocent people...

While outside, someone found a big bone from a dead cow and brought it into the wagon. We tried to chew it, although it stank. Everyone was very hungry.

Once the train stopped and the Red Cross people distributed a cooked egg to the prisoners. By the time I took my sick brother out of the wagon, there were no more eggs left for us. Afterwards they cooked some soup out of green leaves. Lewkowicz gave us a double portion. We drank it and vomitted.

Once we stopped and they attached a women's convoy to our train.

We mounted the train and continued our journey into the unknown. After a day and a night the train stopped again. It was dark outside. When dawn came, I lifted myself up to the little window and peering through the barbed wire, I saw that we were in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. The train stopped because the rails had been bombed. Half-burned cows were scattered over the railway tracks. Farther away I could still see the smoldering smoke from last night's bombardment.

I lowered myself down and observed my brother chewing the salty paper. I closed my eyes and half-dozed off, when the door opened and two Kapos from Flossburg came in loaded with lots of bread. When the train stopped, they had gone in the dark to "organize" bread.

Everyone looked at them in silence with big hungry eyes. Nobody dared jump at them. I approached them and asked for a few crumbs for my brother, because I knew them well. The younger of the two brothers crossed over to my brother to check why he needed bread crumbs. When he saw him lying on the floor, delirious from fever, he got angry with me and shouted: "Why don't you let him die?" and hit me over the head with his thick, strong hand. I did not have the stamina to hit him back, so I told him that if I'd survive, I would not forget it. He did not like that and struck me again in my forehead even harder, so that I thought I received it in the back of my head. I fell down near my brother and lay there helpless.

Lying next to my brother, I was thinking: "Is he really a Pietrkower? Yes, this is a Pietrkower who stems from the Chapuszes (catchers), the underworld, the scum of the Stare-Warszawska Street. What could I expect of him?"

Why were they called catchers? Because their fathers and grandfathers were underworld characters and their job was to catch people wanted by the Czarist Police.

Next morning at dawn, while the train was still in the same place, I got up to the window again and saw Czech workers coming to fix the rails. When one of them came near our wagon, I stretched out my hand as far as I could. He understood that I was desperate for food. He stopped and looked around and reached into his lunch box. He climbed onto the step of our wagon and stretched a little higher and gave me a piece of white bread.

My first thought was: "There is still white bread on this earth! Five long years had passed by without seeing white bread!" I put the precious piece of bread into my pocket and lowered myself down quietly. I put small pieces of bread into my brother's mouth and he suddenly opened his eyes. I also ate some. They fixed the rails and the train moved again.

ESCAPE IN A HAIL OF BULLETS

Later I discussed the possibility of escaping. I said that we were in Czechoslovakia and they had bread here! I asked them to hold me and I would untangle the barbed wire in the window. A new fighting will surged into us.

Five persons agreed to jump from the moving train. I said that I would not jump without my brother. I told him if he could only stand up, we would all escape. Then he said angrily: "What, I can't stand up?" and in one motion sat himself up. After I saw that, I said we were all going to make it tonight!

A light rain started to fall. It was very dark outside. The window was cleared of the barbed wire. I studied the best way to jump from a moving tain, to avoid hitting the iron posts alongside the railway.

It was about 11 o'clock in the evening, when we started our escape to freedom. We had never realized what a spark of hope could do to skeletons like us. Even my sick brother's eyes got livelier.

Noah Rosenwald wanted to be the first to jump. I lifted him up and legs out first, he held on to the window outside. When the opportune moment came, i.e., watching out for the iron posts, he jumped. At this moment shots rang out. We lifted my brother and we had some difficulties holding him up at the window. We could hear more shots being fired outside. I climbed up quickly and let him go when I saw an iron post pass. It seemed that some prisoners had also escaped from other wagons, because the shots continued. They then helped me up. The shootings intensified, but I did not heed them. I wanted to get outside. When I held on to the window outside, I also looked out for the iron posts and when one came close, I jumped. As I fell into the ditch, a hail of bullets whistled by. I waited, lying there impatiently until the train had gone. It looked like it would never end.

I got up and walked back alongside in the ditch to find the others. First I found my brother, still in the ditch with a bruised eye from the fall. Then Rosenwald joined us. The three of us waited for awhile to see if anyone else would meet us.

We saw a dimly lit object far away, and decided to walk in that direction. We took my brother under our arms to support him and we wandered in the dark of the night into the free world.

After an hour of walking, we arrived at a village. We found the window where we had previously seen the light. We did not know who lived there, so we decided to go into the yard and hide in the barn.

On the way to the barn we knocked over a vat with raw potatoes. We grabbed some and devoured them. We entered the dark barn, stumbled over a goat and tried to milk her. No milk. Then we found a barrel with oats. We ate that. Our stomachs started to crave for more solid food. We had just whetted our appetite.

I was determined to see who lived there, but the curtains were drawn. Mustering up all my courage I knocked at the door. I closed my eyes for a moment and thought, "I hope that it is not a German." When the door opened, a grey haired tall man stood in front of me. He spoke in the Czech language and asked me who I was. I answered in Polish that I had escaped from a moving train and I needed something to eat. He said that he would give me food and asked me into his house. I mumbled that I was not alone, and that my two companions were in his barn. He opened the door, looked around, and told me to bring them in quickly.

INTERFERENCE FROM THE LEFT

In the spring of 1938 a problem long latent within the Jewish community became more serious as a complicating element in the frantic Canadian effort to rescue desperate Jews from Europe. The issue is expressed in a letter from B. Sheps of Winnipeg of April 2, 1938 to H.M. Caiserman, national secretary of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

Mr. Sheps was dealing with the Winnipeg phase of a matter concerning the Jewish community from coast to coast. In the prairie centre J.A. Cherniack, distinguished activist in Winnipeg affairs, had become spokesman for those who felt that Jewish communists and their front organization, the League against Fascism and Anti-Semitism, ought to be admitted into the councils of the community.

"We must know the decisions of the Congress head office; what it had decided to do in connection with Roosevelt declaration on the political refugees. We note from the press that ten nations have already responded and that many national organizations have congratulated him on his act. Probably Canada is included among these nations.

"The Congress ought to take some steps in this matter. I am confident of their action in this regard, but we are not informed, and we can say nothing in this delicate diplomatic question until we hear from you.

"Our trouble is that in the meantime Cherniack and his are calling a public meeting in Winnipeg about the Jews of Austria and are preparing a memorandum to be directed by the meeting to the government in accord with Roosevelt's appeal, "

"You can see how damaging this can be; so we must react on this immediately. But we have no knowledge about Congress thinking or intentions, and are therefore in an uncomfortable position. You must reply at once so that we can state publicly that such meetings are damaging to our cause.

"We in Winnipeg hold that Congress should felicitate Roosevelt and should develop a constructive plan to have the federal government approve the plan; also to prepare for a larger scale for, as I understand, the Jewish people will need to establish a national fund to receive those who will be admitted.

"We are having a fearful battle with the League and its chairman J.A. Cherniack. Their way is with mass meetings and resolutions, whether effective or not. The people like it, and we appear to be sitting with folded hands."

The organized Jewish community had had much experience with its communist-inspired members. Long before Lenin the community knew the nature of its laboring class members who were assimilated out of Judaism, just as it knew its upper class sector which was leaving the community in upward assimilation. But many of the radical assimilation were staying behind within the Jewish community to proselytize their ideology of cosmopolitanism and to counter the Jewish nationalists who were fighting for the survival of Judaism in all forms.

Ironically, by remaining in the Jewish arena to fight as a Jewish group within the community for a broader loyalty and perspective, they were delaying indefinitely their own exit from Judaism: some were adding another far-flung sector of Jewish society, which was not among the least creative in the totality of new world Judaism.

There were a number of them -- varying from one moment to another during the period between the world wars. They were well organized, militant, clearly audible, very often selfless. A network of institutions of their own permitted them to live a social and cultural life of their own; but they were engaged in a well planned campaign of "conquest" of other community institutions, such as labor unions, mutual aid and friendly societies, libraries, schools, etc. (Canadian Jewish Archives, new series, no. 10, Pp. 171-88). And there were powerful instruments at their command -- not the least their claim as combatants against fascism on all levels, this during a decade of sweeping Naziism and of murderous anti-Semitism.

But basically this posture was false, and Jews who were following the cataclysmic events of these decades knew it. The communists who were posing as rescuers of Jewry were the very men who had destroyed Judaism in Russia, suppressed the Jewish religion, outlawed Zionism, exiled Hebraists to Siberia, severed all contact between world Jewry and fellow Jews in Russia, supported the Arab pogromists of Hebron, the precursors of the P.L.O., and stood far apart from the Canadian community with its synagogues, schools, social groups, etc.

The sympathizers of the Russian Revolution of November were fighting on two fronts. On the one hand they were mobilized in the struggle for the overturn of society and the defence of Russia, their base and spiritual homeland; on the other they were building an alternate, parallel Jewish society with its own Jewish ethos, culture, literature and institutions. Their struggle against the social order replaced religion in their lives; Biro-Bidjan and Russia substituted for Zionism, Yiddish for Hebrew.

This multifacetted disloyalty, deliberate or unconscious, probably resulted in the communist movement failing to appreciate the extent and the contribution to the red cause of their Jewish section on the American continent; in Russia these Jewish communists, operating on the political and cultural level, were, of course, exterminated. Probably the absence of a geographic national base for these Jewish communists, such as possessed by the Ukrainian and Finnish-origin communists, hastened the disavowal of the Jewish left liners by their ideological colleagues.

From their viewpoint there was colour of justification to their claim to be regarded as a legitimate element of Judaism, and therefore to a seat in such totally representative institutions for Jewish continuity as the Congress. This was consistently refused them by Judaism for decades -- with the brief exception when Russian heroic resistance in 1941 against their ally of 1939 won them the temporary title of "Our Brave Allies." The pages of the Canadian Jewish Review in particular reflect the deep feelings which this controversy and program aroused within the community.

The Jewish labor movement in particular had suffered a decade of agony as it fought off communist efforts to capture the syndicalist institutions of the community and make them an arm of the reds' class struggle and of the Soviet state. The Communists did not win, but the fratricidal clash divided the labor movement and bled it of energy and vitality. Not a union local or a worker's family that did not bear the scar of that unnecessary, futile and diversionary conflict.

One moment in this situation is reflected in a document in the Labor Zionist files in the Canadian Jewish Congress.

D. Goldberg, secretary of the Poale Zion - Zeirei Zion of Toronto, reported to his Montreal colleagues that they joined the 44 labor organizations in the Jewish labor conference sponsored by the Workmen's Circle and the Socialist Farband to advance the boycott of Nazi German imports into Canada, even though this conference was competing with the Congress. The Poale Zion had at least ensured a measure of cooperation between the conference and the Congress. Goldberg recalls a parallel situation in the U.S. where the labor Zionists had joined the Jewish Labor Committee, but withdrew when they were called upon to sever their affiliation with the American Jewish Congress.

Not surprisingly, Goldberg continues, the Communists then appeared before the labor conference and demanded admission into the anti-Fascist program. They were admitted, and now even the Left Poale Zion and the Socialist Farband often support the Communists against the Poale Zion. "It seems that they have not yet learned the lesson of history and of recent events."

It was more than instinct that led Canadian Jews to question the totalitarian Communists in their claim to be anti-Fascist. They were clearly Jewish strawmen for a foreign state, an anti-Jewish state. It was the first and only such phenomenon in the long history of the Jewish people. The mask came off in 1939 when their principal, the red state of Russia, signed a pact with Hitler. The Jewish Communists supported that pact with Naziism.

The rise of Hitler and its threat to world-wide Jewry transferred the antagonism to another arena -- the anti-Fascist campaign.

The politically sophisticated workers in community affairs, not least the labor element were just emerging from two decades of vicious conflict with the communist on the union front, were not surprised by Stalin aligning with Hitler in 1939.

The Jews in the thirties who opposed a united front with red-tinged groups instinctively, or out of recent historic experience, knew that the communists who were inspiring it, and who seemed to be energizing it, would within two years be allying themselves with the Quebec enemy of the Jews as well as with the German enemy.

The Jewish syndicalists in the Canadian garment trade were all too painfully aware that sparse energies during the union-building decades since the establishment of the Third International had been tragically wasted in the internecine struggle; energies that could have been used to better the condition of workers went into fighting other workers. Evelyn Dumas has described the Montreal conflict personalized in the Shane-Gershman confrontation in her Dans le sommeil de nos os. (Montreal, Leméac, 1971, Pp. 43-75; English version issued by Black Rose Press of Montreal)

These experienced workers were therefore not surprised by Stalin aligning with Hitler in 1939. Nor, naturally, when the Quebec red party, in 1940, became allied to the more extremist of the provincial "nationalists," in common opposition to Canadian participation in the war against Hitler. This joint activity was largely in the French Canadian Youth Congress, in the Congress of French Canadians and in the Voix du peuple.

The latter congress brought the Communists together with the Societé St.-Jean Baptiste, the Jeunes laurentiens, the Jeunesses patriotes, the Clubs ouvriers and the Zouaves pontificaux, some of these active in the anti-Jewish and anti-refugee causes.

The same alliance issued La Voix du peuple from the address of the Communist Party paper, the Clarté. Among its contributors: Maxime Raymond, André Laurendeau, Abbé Lionel Groulx and Armand Lavergne are the symbols of its battle." (Marcel Fournier. Communisme et anticommunisme au Québec, 1929-50. Montreal, Editions coopératives Albert St.-Martin, 1979. Pp. 89-93)

It was a deep-seated hostility which caused painful rifts not totally forgotten four decades later. This was reflected at a Jewish anti-Fascist meeting at Auditorium Hall on June 27, 1935 which condemned the Congress for its silence and indifference to the suffering of the Jews in Germany. (Canadian Jewish Archives, new series, no. 7, P.86)

This group, like so many others of that desperate time, immensely complicated the efforts of the Jewish community -- they also jeopardized and exploited many other legitimate causes by interjecting irresponsible and ad hoc bodies set up when ultimate intention, as ensured by the guiding organizers, was not the cause set out on the placards, but totally different complex objectives determined by the leftists for the good of their political movement. Indeed, they ultimately hindered the cause on the placards by labelling, or having them labelled Communist, not a very attractive label even at the time.

The issue was complicated by many gullible innocents who were recruited by these fronts; these often benefitted from leadership roles temporarily lent them by the activists behind the scenes.

The current division was indeed complex, beyond political opportunism. Indeed the effectiveness of this partisan strategy derived in part from existence at its base of genuine divisions of opinion and of psychological moods. Israel Rabinovitch, editor of the Eagle and respected columnist, drew attention to one such division:

The established leadership, including the body of Jewish legislators, saw negotiation with the government, necessarily delicate, confidential and unpublicized, as the means of securing immigration. Another viewpoint saw protest, mass expression of popular emotion, public pres-

sure as the instruments. On both sides of the division the favoured technique assumed a value all its own -- philosophical, psychological, political and entire ranges of institutions were formed on these bases. As Rabinovitch put it, "There is often discreet silence in the offices of the Canadian Jewish Congress when there should be loud cries. There is screeching in the People's Committee where quiet and discretion are in order." (Eagle, June 17, 1938)

As H.M. Caiserman wrote to O.B. Roger in Toronto on May 23, 1938:

"Our experience has convinced us that too much publicity has always proved detrimental to any request for the widening of the doors for the entry of our co-religionists to Canada. The situation in Quebec, particularly, is so serious that any public agitation for the entry of Jews would bring with it such a flood of counter agitation that the Government would merely point to the counter agitation and say that nothing can be done. That is why we have allowed our president to negotiate quietly with the government. From a report given to us yesterday by Mr. S. W. Jacobs, K.C., M.P., and Mr. A.A. Heaps, M.P., it looks as if progresss in the right direction is being made."

The very tradition of petitioning government enforced a measure of discreet silence, as the conventions created by government services insisted that such representations be made behind closed doors so that decisions be made in solemn silence, distant from the rumble of street noises.

The immigration question was particularly grave and delicate.

Winnipeg was one of the centres of all this conflict and activity, and A.J. Cherniack was an important spokesman for those who saw value in cooperating with the reddish groups.

From the social history point of view the ideological position of Mr. Cherniack is worth nothing. He was a native of Mohilev, White Russia and came to Winnipeg at the age of twenty with the notable group of migrants of 1905. He was recognized at once as a leader of western Canadian ideology and attended the all-American convention of Zionist Territorialists at Boston in 1908. Together with Sheps and other Yiddishists and Zionists, he helped establish the Peretz School and, in 1919, the Canadian Jewish Congress. Cherniack was among the first of the east European immigrants to pursue professional studies in Canadian universities and graduated from the Manitoba Law School in 1918.

He was a member of a Winnipeg group of very serious and creative intellectual community workers who were socialistic in their general orientation. He was proud to be a disciple of the distinguished Dr. Chaim Zhitlovsky who developed the mystique of Yiddish into a widely recognized ism, particularly in a far-flung school system, in community journalism and in a respect for the language which also grew into academicism. In 1938 he attended the founding conference of the left-leaning Yiddish Culture Ferband (YIKUF)

His son Saul Mark Cherniack, formerly deputy premier of Manitoba, is one of an important group of Manitoba political figures who constitute the second generation of this group of Winnipeg immigrants centred on the Peretz School and on the Zhitlovsky ideology. (Gottesman, Who's Who in Canadian Jewry; Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 10, P.161; obituary in Jewish Standard, Aug. 1, 1972)

Zhitlovsky's intellectual history whirled into many patterns of kaleidoscopic Russian Jewry, from the liberal assimilationism of the Narodnicki, the Russian Social Democrats and the Social Revolutionaries, to Yiddishism, Bundism, Territorialism, Labor Zionism.

As early as 1909 Zhitlovsky was the guest of the Poale Zion of Montreal. At the banquet in his honour the local speakers who welcomed him included S. Schneur, A.A. Roback, J. Sklover and M. Blechman. (Eagle, Dec. 6, 1909)

Belkin refers to Winnipeg as "a Zhitlovsky fortress" by 1913. "His influence in this city was stronger than anywhere else in Canada." By 1917 Cherniack and other Peretz School activists joined the Poale Zion on his urging.

Belkin notes that among Zhitlovsky's admirers in the bourgeois, English-speaking society was S.W. Jacobs, and that he encouraged the Montreal lawyer to stand for the House of Commons, with the assurance of Poale Zion support; this, even though the de Solas, Davises and other leaders of the community did not favour this political initiative.

He provided powerful inspiration for the Canadian Jewish Congress which met in Montreal in 1919 and to its precursor, the Western Canadian Congress Conference of August 1915.

At the national congress Zhitlovsky was particularly effective in securing passage of the resolution urging that Jewish Palestine be based on principles of state ownership of land, resources and irrigation. His closing address rang in the ears of Canadian Jews for years. (The Poale Zion Movement in Canada, Pp. 47-48, 176, 183)

For a number of reasons relating to the early history of western Canadian Jewry, it was here -- of all the corners of the world -- that this philosopher who boasted of Canadian citizenship, Zhitlovsky, found his deepest communal and personal realization. It was here, in Calgary as in Winnipeg, that devoted disciples grew to call him their most revered guide and teacher, and it was they who established good schools where important

paedogogues applied his teachings in their unique curriculum. The names of J. Zipper, A. Golomb, Mark Selchen, B. Sheps, B. Aronovitch, together with Cherniack, are associated with the distint Yiddishist program; intensely socialist but not communist, Yiddish and cool to Hebrew, nationalist but cool to Zionism, populist, syndicalist, dedicated to the highest public good. Cherniack was one of the leaders of this western group.

It was in Calgary that Zhitlovsky passed away and was laid to eternal rest.

In 1936 this life-long opponent of Bolshevism was shocked by developing events into friendship for Soviet Russia and its Biro Bidjan, to the point of blaming German persecutions upon the Jewish middle class in that country. (Encyclopaedia Judaica, S.V.)

During those years with no light at the end of the fearful tunnel he came to feel that he could collaborate with the communists whose ideology he was very far from sharing.

The issue thus raised went very far beyond the advisability of cooperating with one league or committee or another, and even far beyond the tactics most advisable dealing with a given problem. It was the question of Jewish communists within the structure of the Jewish community.

The Congress organizers were aware from the beginning of the dangers to the organization implicit in these groups, if only because the founders were politically sensitized to the anti-Jewish programme deep at the roots of Communism and were aware of the communist destruction of Judaism in the red domain. But the red bacilli were difficult to filter out. A Jan. 13, 1937 letter from Jacobs to M.J. Finkelstein in Winnipeg refers to the problem,

"The fact that several members of the Dominion Council of the Canadian Jewish Congress residing in Winnipeg ignored the decision of your own Executive Committee and became active in the League Against War and Fascism is disquieting. Apart from the fact that these gentlemen could have accomplished more by devoting their time to Congress work; their action might be misinterpreted, may harm the prestige of the Congress, and may serve as an excuse to the various anti-Semitic bodies in your Division to identify the Canadian Jewish Congress with radical political organizations.

"I am bringing these facts to your attention in the belief that they may have escaped your notice. I hope you will use your influence in correcting errors."

Rabbi Eisendrath of Toronto was not among the most reluctant to broaden support of the Jewish case among the liberals outside the community. But in his Kol Nidre sermon of 1937 he called the Jewish communist "one of the firmest enemies of the Jewish people...The murderous, blood-beflecked Stalin is his prophet. The Jew who became a communist has in reality quit the Jewish community. He is a deserter who cannot even be called 'the enemy from within'. From within or from without he is the enemy of the Jewish people." (Hebrew Journal, Sept. 16, 1937)

Similarly the Congress declared, "Communism opposes the principles of democracy which are at the root of Canadian life and of Jewish life. We consider the Communist principles a serious menace for the welfare of our people and for the normal functioning of the democratic liberties thanks to which citizens can live together decently and peaceably.

"The ideals of democracy are the very essence of the concept of the organization of Canadian Jewry as incorporated in the Canadian Jewish Congress. It is our firm conviction that Judaism and Communism are mutually exclusive." (Hebrew Journal, Oct. 4, 1937)

Consequently the Congress refused to accept them, even though the institution carefully refrained from taking a stand on Canadian partisan issues.

Yet that year it warned that "many Jews may unwittingly be influenced to vote for a candidate who may be faithful to principles which will endanger the principles of our Canadian democracy and our welfare as Jews.

"As you exercise your franchise as a citizen, examine carefully with which party the candidate you are supporting is affiliated. Make certain you know what you are doing, and that you understand fully the consequences of your act and its effect upon the liberties and rights you enjoy here. Be careful not to help those who seek to destroy the democratic form of government which ensures your peace and security as a Jew and as a citizen; not to strengthen those whose success will undermine the Jewish condition in Canada and all over the world, and will lead to the disruption of the freedoms which we appreciate as Canadians and as Jews."

Jewish collaboration, in these circumstances, with red front organizations was dangerous and unthinkable, as H.M. Caiserman set out on Dec. 30, 1936 in a letter to Bernard Lecache, guiding spirit of the Parisian Fédération internationale des ligues contre l'anti-Sémitisme,

"In France you have a United Front which is the Government party. Here, the Catholic Church, the Government of the Province of Quebec (where our office is situated), and even the Opposition, are condemning Communism by means of widespread and effective publicity.

"It, therefore, would be folly on our part to have the Canadian Jewish Congress join the bandwagon of the Communist United Front in this country.

"It is elementary that if we are to conduct a campaign against Fascism and Naziism amongst the French Canadians, who are staunch Catholics, we have to use as publicity statements against anti-Semitism, Naziism and Fascism made by Catholic writers."

When J.A. Cherniack informed the Congress on Aug. 3, 1937, that he was named delegate to a world rally in Paris, and inquired whether the Canadian institution would send greetings to that gathering, as it had a year ago, Mr. Caiserman nevertheless responded,

"We exchange confidential minutes with them and we receive articles which are included in their paper, Le Droit de Vivre , from which we extract material which we circularise among leaders of Canadian public opinion.

"I believe you know that they gave us permission to use the name of their newspaper for our own publication.

"We shall be very happy if you will express these sentiments at the meeting." (Aug. 6, 1937)

A report from Mr. Averbach, secretary of the Congress in Winnipeg, to the head office reflects the processes in the community.

"Mr. Cherniack has addressed the conference in connection with his visit to Poland, and in conclusion of his address he advised the conference to organize themselves in a permanent institution, in order to take up also the problem of Roumanian Jewry, and other Jewish political and economical problems.

"I realised immediately that they are intending to establish a similar institution to the Jewish Congress, in order to minimise or belittle our work; but he did not succeed in promoting his idea. Out of the fifteen organizations represented at the conference, twelve were of a communistic outfit.

"Therefore, we, that is Mr. J. Steinberg and myself, intervened in this matter, and the conference was postponed for another session, to discuss the matter of permanency.

"I do not think they will succeed because until that time we shall have our Manitoba Executive well organized, and therefore their endeavour to organize a competitive organization to the Congress will be in vain.

"I am writing an article for the Jewish press in connection with this matter." (Jan. 18. 1938)

Similarly B. Sheps, co-founder of Winnipeg's J.L. Peretz School and the man responsible for (by then) twenty-five years of continuous Yiddish journalism in western Canada, wrote to Caiserman on April 2, 1938,

"We have many problems with J.A. Cherniack, our vice-president and his Anti-Fascist committee...He proposed to set out for a campaign for his League in western Canada, but Congress acted first and sent its secretary there; he is doing very good work."

In October he wrote Caiserman again,

"We still have trouble with the League against Fascism and Anti-Semitism. Cherniack insists that we accept them and cooperate with them, and admit two of their people into our committee on refugees. Of course everybody voted against this. So he is peeved. They will probably explode and will arrange protest meetings, and will send delegations. What shall be our course of action? What are you doing in Montreal? I know that Toronto wants nothing of them. I am afraid that sooner or later we will have to fight them openly." (Oct. 25, 1938)

This issue developed into a crisis impinging on the refugee problem the next summer.

A delegation from the People's Committee against Anti-Semitism and Racism, another leftist front, came to Ottawa to see Mr. Crerar. In line with a tradition that Jewish delegations to a minister be accompanied by a Jewish Member and be introduced by him, the delegation asked S. Factor, M.P., to join them; but the Toronto Member refused, telling them that their unwarranted intervention might injure the ongoing discussion. Of course he was not heeded, and the delegation had no trouble in seeing the minister.

It was understood that the meeting was to be in confidence. The minister confirmed Mr. Factor's words about the discussions proceeding with the three Jewish M.P.'s who were acting for the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society and the Jewish Colonization Association.

As was to be expected, no sooner was the delegation out of his office than they published the news of the meeting. The press coverage was at least as important to the committee as the nature of their representations. (H.M. Caiserman despatch in Eagle from Ottawa, June 16, 1938)

Mr. Crerar stated that he was disappointed by the failure of the committee to keep their word, but the community spokesmen made no secret of their suspicions. The minister's hospitality to a group he had no reason to trust, and had reason to distrust, made it possible to see his actions as intended to discredit the community and to help divide it.

Crerar said in sadness that he received many protests from those opposed to the admission of refugees, including an editorial in Le Devoir, immediately following this incident; some had no doubt that this was exactly what he intended.

This is supported by Mr. Mergler of the People's Committee: that Mr. Crerar had not asked that there be no publicity and, indeed, a press agency reporter was in the reception room when the delegation arrived. (Eagle, June 19, 1938)

Suddenly, on June 20, 1938, S. Belkin wrote Caiserman from Regina, the capital of the western operation of the Jewish Colonization Association,

"I was surprised to note in today's newspapers a telegram from Ottawa reporting that a delegation 'representing 10,000 Jews' waited on the Government and pleaded for the admission of a 'certain number of German Jewish refugees.' Neither you nor Mr. Solkin, who promised to keep me posted from now on on what is transpiring in Montreal with reference to immigration, have written me that

such a delegation was planned. Was it a delegation representing the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society or the Canadian Jewish Congress, or both? What are the details of the interview? Did Mr. Solkin send a complete report to the HICEM in Paris?

"I am addressing this letter to you in your capacity as both the Honorary secretary of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society and of the Canadian Jewish Congress, and I trust that I shall hear from you at your earliest convenience."

As Caiserman informed M.A. Gray in Winnipeg, "A serious blow has been given to our negotiations, which had been initiated by our M.P.'s about two months ago and which had been proceeding satisfactorily.

"The Peoples' Committee Against Anti-Semitism, which is the same committee which our Hon. Vice-President, Mr. Cherniack represents in Winnipeg, and their associations in Toronto, despite assurances which you received in Winnipeg and the warnings which were given to them by the Central Division, wrote to the Government, claiming to represent 10,000 Jews, and asked for the privilege of presenting a memorandum.

"The Government, on the principle that as a democratic government it must listen to the complaints of a large group of citizens, invited the delegation to see Mr. Crerar and three other members of the Cabinet.

"No doubt you remember that our understanding with the Government was that no publicity whatsoever be given to our negotiations. The committee selected at the plenary session of the Dominion Council was appointed for the purpose of co-operating with our M.P.'s and if a concession were to be granted, to attend to the necessary details which would enable a large number of immigrants to enter Canada. Also, in case the negotiations were not successful, they were to initiate the necessary measures to bring our request before the Government again." (June 20, 1938)

Gray heard the same day from Heaps in Ottawa,

"Caiserman was here after the delegation of the People's League were here, and we discussed the situation, with the result that statement was sent out, which I understand also went to the Israelite Press. This delegation has done enormous damage. They double-crossed Mr. Crerar, and Mr. Crerar was not either frank or honest with us, I don't know which.

"It might be a good thing if a delegation came; as I feel if we asked for a quota of refugees for Western Canada it would be much easier than asking for the whole of Canada. Think it over. If a delegation did come, we would see Mr. Crerar on this aspect of the question or, if you all felt this desirable, I could personally see Crerar even though he feels very sore after that delegation last week."

Mr. Heaps wrote to Caiserman on July 25, 1938 "with regard to the Delegation that saw Hon. Mr. Crerar recently, I have it from Mr. Crerar himself that he requested the Delegation to regard the meeting as strictly confidential. Not only that, but Mr. Grant MacNeil, M.P., who introduced the Delegation, also warned them to that effect. The story that two newspaper men, well-known to Mr. Crerar, were on the Delegation is a very misleading statement. I can state definitely that Mr. Crerar did not know they were present, and I will venture to assert, even not knowing the facts of the case, that one of the two must have been the representative of the communist party here in Ottawa. The members of Parliament nor the Cabinet Ministers know all the representatives of the Press Gallery because they change from year to year, and I myself certainly do not know half of them by sight.

"The Delegation that saw Mr. Crerar recently, referred to in this communication, has done incalculable harm and I believe they themselves realise that, although I do not suppose they are very much concerned with that aspect of the question."

The refugee aspect was, of course, but one phase of the universal war of ideologies as it was waged on the Canadian Jewish arena. The attack and the counter attack were taking place on every plane which the politicologues could define.

To outline this conflict insofar as it constitutes a chapter in the history of the community we need note several dramatic turning points. In Sept. 1939 the Stalin-Hitler pact radically altered the situation and the way it was seen. Suddenly there was no longer a red war on Fascism. Even as the world war and holocaust soaked Europe and its Jews in bloods, the word went out that Fascism was not a horror but a matter of taste. In Canada the communists and their sympathizers worked hard, from the underground, to slow down the effort to destroy Hitler on the battlefied. Mobilization of the Canadian soldiery was not the business of the communists and their allies.

But another dazzling turn came in the summer of 1941 on German initiative. Hitler attacked Russia, his ally. Suddenly Fascism became the enemy; the Soviets, brave in self-defence, became the allies of Canada and of embattled Jewry, and Russians were seen as fighting at terrifying sacrifice, to save Jews and to destroy their torturers. In this climate the Jewish voters of Montreal-Cartier elected communist Fred Rose as their representative to the Canadian House of Commons, the only communist ever to enter that assembly.

Another turn in the cycle, again on external initiative. From far away came the decision that foreign followers of Moscow must subvert their societies in the interests of Russian policy, whatever it was at that date. The symbol and weapon were new -- a peace dove by Picasso. Characteristically a Jewish Peace Committee in Toronto issued a Shalom Aleichem pamphlet, introduced by Dr. J.G. Endicott, calling particularly upon "the Canadian Jewish Congress to take its place in the front ranks of the peace movement in this country."

"A number of people were taken in by this petition in the early stages before more was known about it. The result is that a number of people have signed it, and are now not only sorry that they signed it but are actually withdrawing from it." (S. Hayes to W.R. Friedman, Sept. 11, 1950)

S. Godfrey wrote from Toronto that "the labor unions are cleansing themselves. It is beyond the comprehension of most of us as to why the Jewish community should continue to carry this load of future dynamite." (Letter to S. Hayes, Nov. 15, 1950)

Hayes wrote to Friedman, This circular "is another attempt of the Communists to use the Jews as weapons in their general propaganda fight."

The Congress saw the tactic as advancing "the Soviet Union at the expense of other powers, and indeed a call to aggression, whoever is responsible."

The Canadian Jewish Congress denounced the peace petition as Communist inspired.

"This Appeal stems from a series of conferences sponsored by communist elements and was given final formulation in Stockholm in March, 1950, by the World Committee in Defence of Peace, a communist-front organization. This appeal is but the latest in a series of moves designed to weaken the effectiveness of the democratic nations of the world. It trades on humanity's innate love of peace to make it appear that opposition to Soviet policy with regard to the controls of atomic weapons is tantamount to warmongering. It deliberately omits reference to other necessary conditions for the resolution of our contemporary problems.

"The true way to peace is to eliminate the basic causes of conflict. In this connection, the Canadian Jewish Congress endorses the joint statement of Catholic, Protestant and Jewish leaders in the United States that genuine peace requires of every people: (a) renunciation of the use of war or threats of force as an instrument of national policy, acceptance of international agreements for the effective reduction and regulation of armaments, including atomic weapons, by all nations through a trustworthy system of international inspection and control, and loyal adherence to the solemn obligations of the United Nations Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security and the peaceful settlement of disputes; and (b) respect for an observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, as well as participation in positive programs of the United Nations for the common welfare and better standards of life.

"The Canadian Jewish Congress urges the Canadian Jewish community to give the fullest measure of support to these objectives. In their genuine pursuit of peace, they should not allow themselves to be misled into signing the so-called Stockholm Peace Appeal, or to join in common effort with those who promulgate it. For that is to strengthen the hands of the anti-democratic forces."

Time summarized the matter in its issue of Nov. 5, 1951:

"Since 1934, the Canadian Jewish Congress has served as the official voice of Canada's 200,000 Jews. Last week, as the congress' ninth biennial session opened in Montreal's Mount Royal Hotel, President Sam Bronfman (boss of Distillers Corporation-Seagrams Ltd.) pointed out a notable change in the organization's makeup. Said he: 'We represent all Jewish bodies -- except the Communists.' With a minimum of fanfare, the congress had expelled the United Jewish People's Order, a small (3,000 families) but nationwide outfit engaged in selling 'people's culture' and the Communist line.

"The U.J.P.O. is not avowedly Communist, but its leaders consistently pop up on Red fronts and expeditions to Iron Curtain countries. It was admitted to the congress in 1943. The Reds never succeeded in penetrating the congress' national executive, although Fred Rose, Communist M.P. later convicted of spying for Russia, sat on the Dominion Council as U.J.P.O. representative until his arrest in 1946. During the past year, the U.J.P.O. broke with the congress, because of its support of Canadian participation in Korea and its condemnation of the Stockholm Peace Petition.

"Determined that Canadian Jews should not be 'smeared by the brush of Communism,' the congress acted quietly and quickly. In selecting delegates to the congress last summer, regional councils voted to deny credentials to U.J.P.O. members on the ground that it is impossible to be a Communist and also favor the congress' objectives.

"As the 500 delegates met last week to discuss the congress' substantial achievements (e.g., an extensive educational program, aid to Israel, help in resettling 28,000 Jewish immigrants in Canada since 1947), they were papered with U.J.P.O. leaflets charging that 'our expulsion is closely linked with the shameful decision of the national executive not to oppose German rearmament.' The propaganda barrage brought no popular support. When a representative of the left-wing International Fur & Leather Workers' Union made one attempt to bring the issue to the floor, he was quickly ruled out of order."

Canadians, so enthusiastic about sport and Hitler's Olympics, paid no heed to the pleas from the Bar Kochba Clubs in Bratislava after Munich, addressed to the Young Judea at Regina on Nov. 25, 1938:

"Our position here is a desperate one; it is impossible to stay here any longer. We are good Jewish sportsmen, and therefore we are writing to you.

"We request you to help us in getting immigration permits for your country. We are the best Czechoslovakian Swimming Club and hold all Czeckoslovak records. We are also affiliated to Maccabi World Union and holders of 80 per cent of the Jewish world records.

"To make you show our performances we give you herewith some results of our best swimmers:

"50 meters Crawl Swimming:	0:27,0
and 3 others	0:27,4
50 meters Breast Stroke:	0:33,0
50 meters Back Stroke:	0:31,8
100 yards Crawl Swimming:	0:52,6
100 yards Back Stroke:	1:07,0
100 meters Crawl Swimming:	1:00,8
100 meters Back Stroke	1:10,6
200 meters Crawl Swimming:	2:20,0
200 meters Breast Stroke:	2:52,0

"Our swimmers are also good Water Polo players, and our team is one of the best in Europe. Three members are, at the same time, Swimming and Water Polo coaches, able to train with good effect an entire team in swimming and water polo.

"Our members are not only good sportsmen but they have also different occupations in which they are capable. We have two engineers, one surgeon, two physicians, dressmakers and clerks."

From Hungary an engineer sent to the "honorable Canadian Jewish Congress" a pamphlet which his father, rabbi in the Sacred Community of Losonc, had published decades earlier, Talmudic studies on history. It opens with a discussion of the mysteries of the wanderings of the Shechina and the peregrinations of the Tanaitic sages. Now his son finds himself forced to narrate to the Jews of Canada.

"The so-called 'Law on the Jews' is shattering the existence of us who are advanced in age. It bereaves our children, the future generation, of all possibilities of life.

"I intended to emigrate anywhere, and applied to several countries. In some of them there are already too many of us; in others immigration is, on account of financial difficulties, without prospects and hopeless.

"You are parents, too. So you will understand our distress and our desperate care concerning our children's future. Thus you will understand also that I apply to your Jewish kindred heart for your care in my son's interest; for our children give contents and meaning to our life, now so full of trials. They are our only hope.

"My son Joseph, 16 years old, is a well developed youngster, who will now finish the 6th class of the secondary school (he has still two years to go). He is extraordinarily talented, in languages, as in mathematics and in all natural sciences, especially in chemistry, in which he is really excellent.

"His highest desire was always to be an engineer, studying this profession for eventual application in Palestine. But I cannot assist him in this for I am freed from my position as municipal engineer, and school fees alone amount to ₤200 annually.

"I should like my son's talent not to be wasted, and I therefore request you to have the kindness to intervene with your religious congregation. Perhaps a wealthy Jewish family would accept him and care for his learning. As far this would not be possible, I would ask for my son -- at least for his partial support -- some stipendium at your congregation, if it would be possible, of some study -- or welfare foundation. Perhaps you would have the kindness to forward money for him by the Anglo-Palestine Bank in Haifa.

"You will always be able to control, by this bank, that this sum has been used for this purpose. My son will consider this help as a loan that he will repay when he will succeed in his career, or he will repay it to other Jews who are in need of help.

"It is the last distress in my sad plight that led to this request. I ask you very heartily to favour me the more, that my wife is a daughter of a rabbi. By helping my son you would save the future of the grandchild of a rabbi who in his life worked very much in welfare and religion and created many perennial works in Jewish literature."

The Jewish M.P.'s did not, of course, know of the fate-laden game being played by sophisticated, dishonest diplomats orchestrated by the craftsman who was president of the United States.

As Abella and Troper describe the state setting,

"In March of 1938, just when Canada was further restricting Jewish immigration, Hitler marched into Austria and several hundred thousand more Jews became refugees -- some, those who had escaped from Germany, for the second time. As a response to this, and to quiet the storm of protest raised by more liberal elements in the United States, President Franklin Roosevelt took the bold step of issuing an invitation to most of the nations of the world to meet together to discuss possible solutions to the refugee problem. No one at the time knew -- but some suspected -- that the purpose of the conference was, according to the author of the plan, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, to give the United States the initiative 'to get out in front and attempt to guide the pressure primarily with a view toward forestalling attempts to have immigration laws liberalized.'

"Had Canadian officials been aware of the American's real motives they would have been relieved. They were not, however; and thus, when the formal invitation to attend this conference arrived in late March, they were decidedly uncomfortable. Even though the Americans had assured Canada that no country would be

expected to 'receive a greater number of emigrants than is permitted by its existing legislation' and that private organizations would be expected to fund this emigration, the Canadians felt Roosevelt was baiting a trap. Once committed to attending the conference, the Canadians would be expected to do something to alleviate the refugee problem. And this, King dreaded, meant 'admitting numbers of Jews.' His fears were reinforced by Skelton who warned that the publicity generated by the conference would likely result in strong 'domestic pressure' in Canada to do something for the Jews.

"The Prime Minister of Canada was obsessed with the notion that the admission of Jewish refugees might destroy his country. As he confided to his diary: 'We must...seek to keep this part of the Continent free from unrest and from too great an intermixture of foreign strains of blood...' Nothing was to be gained, he believed, 'by creating an internal problem in an effort to meet an international one.' Allowing Jewish refugees into Canada, he told his Cabinet, might cause riots and would surely exacerbate relations between the federal government and the provinces. In effect, any action permitting an appreciable number of Jews to settle in Canada would, in King's mind, undermine the unity of the nation. This was no time for Canada to act on 'humanitarian grounds'. Rather, said the Prime Minister, Canada must be guided by 'realities' and political considerations.

"The realities King had in mind were the attitudes towards refugees in general, and Jews in particular, within Quebec. He was absolutely convinced that that province would react violently to the admission of Jewish refugees. And with reason.

"Many French Canadian politicians spoke out -- both within and without the confines of Parliament -- against Jewish immigration. These Liberal members, in particular Wilfrid Lacroix, C.H. Leclerc and H.E. Brunelle, led the anti-refugee onslaught. Indeed in a speech in the Commons several months later, Brunelle denounced Jews as having caused 'great difficulties' wherever they lived.

"King was reluctant to attend the conference on refugees. For the better part of the next month, while almost all the nations of the world were replying positively to Roosevelt's invitation, and despite the anxious inquiries of the Americans, Canada did not respond. No one in government circles was enthusiastic about attending, least of all the Prime Minister. Who knew what evil would emanate from the conference? A country -- and a Prime Minister -- wedded to the doctrine of no commitments, could hardly relish the thought of a conference in which some sort of Canadian commitment would be expected."

The Canadian Jewish Congress was following as closely as possible the dominion reaction to the American initiative. H.M. Caiserman, general secretary of the Congress, wrote to B. Sheps, chairman of its Manitoba executive committee on Apr. 4, 1938,

"As to the approach of our Government regarding the Roosevelt declaration, I wish to inform you that the Canadian Jewish Congress, through our President, Mr. S.W. Jacobs, and the ICA and Jewish Immigrant Aid Society, have met and discussed the matter, which is of extreme delicacy.

"The Government has been contacted to ascertain its feelings on the subject...When we have arrived at a definite decision, and delegates decided upon, we shall inform the divisions fully and ask their co-operation.

"The initiative was taken by the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society and the ICA. In view of the fact that the matter, in the last analysis, is one relating to immigration, this was best. As soon as more information is available I shall write to you again."

The form of S.W. Jacobs' communication to Prime Minister King on April 27, 1938, is significant. Addressing himself to the prime minister, an intimate friend, for a favour dearest to his heart, Jacobs had recourse to a joint letter signed also by the two other Jewish members of the Commons -- A.A. Heaps of Winnipeg and S. Factor of Toronto -- instead of writing to King personally and directly; Jacobs' failing health is betrayed by his wavering signature as he wrote,

"The persecution in certain parts of Europe of large numbers of people on account of their race or creed has created an almost unprecedented situation and problem.

"The seriousness of the problem is exemplified by the international appeal made recently by the President of the United States, Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"No doubt the Canadian Government has been the recipient of a request from Mr. Roosevelt in regard to the refugee question, expressing the hope that the Dominion Government would collaborate with the United States and other governments, and on purely humanitarian grounds do what is possible to alleviate the situation and permit a number of political and religious refugees to enter the Dominion of Canada. The undersigned respectfully request your favorable consideration of such proposals.

"If permission is given by your Government for these refugees to enter Canada, we will undertake to cooperate in every way with the officials of the Federal

Government to see that only a type of refugee will come forward that will become an asset to Canada, and who would be located in such provinces where their absorption would be most readily achieved." (King Papers, Pp. 214732-33)

Mr. King acknowledged to Heaps that the,

"Canadian Government duly received an enquiry from the Government of the United States as to whether it would be prepared to cooperate in setting up a special committee to facilitate the migration from Austria, and presumably from Germany, of political refugees. It was added that it was the idea of the United States Government that any financing of the emergency immigration referred to would be undertaken by private organizations within the respective countries, and that it should be understood that no country would be expected or asked to receive a greater number of emigrants than is permitted by its existing legislation.

"The Canadian Government has replied to the enquiry, indicating that it shares the concern of the Government of the United States for the victims of changes of régime and of racial and class conflicts in many countries today, and that while it must, of course, reserve fully the decision as to future policy on the subject of immigration, it will be prepared to take part in the work of the proposed committee with a view to the freest exchange of information and consideration of the problems involved in the present situation." (King Papers, Pp. 214,732-36, May 3, 1938)

The Prime Minister did meet with the three Jewish M.P.'s (S.W. Jacobs, Samuel Factor and A.A. Heaps) together with two other members, J.S. Woodsworth and Col. T.A. Vien, "in reference to the question of political and religious refugees from Austria and Germany," as A.A. Heaps reported to Alderman M.A. Gray in Winnipeg on May 25, 1938.

In their agonized quest for means of rescuing their kin and their fellow Jews, Canadian Jews were still gagged into silence.

As late as June 17, 1938 the roles of the Canadian Jewish Congress and of the Jewish political figures who happened to be members of the House of Commons were discussed by the Congress and it was concluded "That under no circumstances are we for the present at least, to interfere with the work already commenced and followed up by the three M.P.'s. In other words, it is felt that the Congress should not do anything to discourage the wonderful work they have already accomplished up to now. Certain work has been done here, in a confidential way, at the request of Mr. Heaps, securing the aid of a number of influential non-Jewish representatives in all walks of life, who have petitioned the Premier."

The Congress noted regretfully an unpleasant personal conflict between Heaps and Benjamin Robinson of Montreal and sought to mitigate its sharpness. "The matter, in the opinion of the Committee, is too serious, and we should not take any chance to create the slightest friction and injure the cause." (Letter to H.M. Caiserman, from M.A. Gray, June 17, 1938)

The very painful incident is recounted by Heaps to M.A. Gray,

"At the last meeting I attended in Montreal, Ben Robinson inferred very definitely that I was a racketeer, etc., so you can understand when I say, that I refused to attend any meetings again at which he was invited. On Thursday evening Laz Phillips and Carl Goldenberg called to see me. Phillips who called previous meetings promised to call meeting for Sunday.

"Well, to my surprise a meeting was called yesterday (Sunday) but it was called by Robinson; but I heard of it indirectly. Of course, I was not asked to be there, but would not have gone in any case as I have nothing but contempt for men like Robinson. I may say Factor feels very much like I do. However, you can all rest assured that I will do all humanly possible." (June 20, 1938)

A few days later A.A. Heaps, M.P., who was sensitive to the problem, proposed to "Mr. Lazarus Phillips that a small committee of three or four persons from Toronto and Montreal be appointed so that they could keep in continual touch with the Jewish members at Ottawa and be informed of all the latest developments. I feel that this should be done because I am here alone most of the time in Ottawa, and would like to have someone to discuss the problems with as they arise.... As the House is likely to finish its deliberations at the end of next week, I will be glad if you will take immediate action in reference to the suggestion I have made in respect to a small committee, as it may be desirable for us to meet before then, as afterwards, it is hard to get the interested parties together." (Letter to H.M. Caiserman, June 25, 1938)

The initiative of President Roosevelt did raise hope and positive repercussions, though no results commensurate with the scope of the issue. The voluminous files of pleas from desperate Jews in Europe reflect this.

From Vienna a despairing Jew apologized to the secretary of the Canadian Jewish Congress "for molesting you again with a letter. But you were so kind to assure in your last letter of May 27th that you understand well our deplorable situation. You will also understand that my pressing is not importunity, but fear for coming accidents. A rising desperation is the motive for all my actions and my repeated letters.

"I am now also in an agreeable contact with Mr. King, the leader of the branch of the Canada Pacific in our town, who is also, too, a sort of consular agent for your country. He takes interest for my fate and he promised me to help in his way for my desire to come to Canada. He is also informed, like you have written, that certain facilities for immigration would be possible.

But he says always that the first impulse for our deliverance must be coming from friends and patrons in Canada, who demand by the government explicitly and by name our immigration and give kindly certain formal guarantees. He told me, that in the last time Austrian Jews, who had not relations in Canada, in few cases have already received a permit, because in such way benefected.

"These lucky Jews were also people without special abilities and without fortune. That is the same procedure like in U.S.A. There are also wealthy benefactors, who give their unlucky unknown Jewish brethren in Austria, who have not relations in U.S.A., such called 'affidavits.' Therefore this lucky people can leave Austria as soon as possible.

"Mr. King told me also, that likely after the conference in France, convoked from President Roosevelt and beginning July 6th, would be given certain facilities; but he means, that also already now exists possibility, in such manner to be quickly demanded. At all events it would be now time, already to be noted down by the government, and enregistered for the case of licence from such permits with facilities.

"Also the Jewish community in Vienna must receive a equal information, in order to reserve already now one of the coming permits for me and my family.

"Dear Mr. Caiserman. I know, that my everlasting and imploring supplications must be already onerous and monotonous for you. But I beg you to consider our fate. People with culture and education, industrious, prepared for every work, in a short time probably without income and food, expelled, despised, destined for the old 'Ahasveros-curse' to wander and to wander; in such a situation you must pardon my impatience. I will be quiet and content, if I had only an answer from the JIAS that I am noted down and enregistered, and that, if it would be possible, to bring Jewish people to Canada, we are certainly under these.

"May I hope, that you, dear Mr. Caiserman will speak once personally with the people of the JIAS over my case. If I receive one good message I will wait with patience and to try, to suffer all need and humiliations. I am always thankful for your goodness. I cannot express in words my thanks because words are too poor, but I ask you to feel that behind the words lays a good Jewish heart. I beg you always to remember to me and to remain our patron." (Canadian Jewish Congress Archives)

A summary of Toronto reactions to the developments exists in a document in the Ontario Congress archives:

"The Hull invitation, issued to 29 nations with regard to a conference sponsored by the United States, on the question of absorbing political refugees from Austria and Germany within the framework of present immigration regulations, was published on March 25th.

"The Congress sent telegrams to the American Jewish Congress and American Jewish Committee on March 29th requesting information concerning the action those bodies had taken with regard to the Hull invitation and any further available data.

"The refugee problem was discussed at an executive meeting on March 31st and it was decided to call a conference of members of the Jewish community interested in bringing refugees into Canada in order to estimate what could be expected in the way of assistance for a project of this kind. At the same time it was suggested that a communication be sent to the National Office requesting information as to what headquarters was doing and indicating the opinion of the Central Division.

"A reply was received from the general secretary on April 5th. The National Office of the Congress indicated that the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society and the ICA were handling the refugee situation and were negotiating with the government.

"The Inner Executive committee met on April 6th. It was the unanimous opinion of this meeting that the refugee matter was an affair which affected Congress and that immediate action must be taken. During the course of the meeting, Mr. Roger telephoned Mr. S. Factor in Ottawa who stated that the Jewish members of parliament had conferred with the Minister of Immigration and that any public action at the present time would jeopardize any chance of Canada's participation in the Hull Conference. Mr. Factor urged that no action whatsoever be taken until his return to Toronto at the end of the week.

"Mr. Roger endeavoured to telephone Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Caiserman, but neither were available. The meeting decided that no action would be taken until Mr. Factor's return to Toronto on the 9th of April.

"Mr. Roger subsequently communicated with Mr. Jacobs in Montreal who said he was not au courant with the situation but that he would telephone Mr. Roger from Ottawa the next day after conferring with Messrs. Factor and Heaps. Mr. Jacobs did not go to Ottawa that week, however.

"Mr. Factor called a small meeting in Toronto on April 9th at which Congress representatives were present. He indicated that the three Jewish members of Parliament had been called in by the Minister of Immigration who made it clear that, while certain members of the cabinet were in favour of participating in the Hull conference, the Quebec faction were strongly opposed to any such action. The Minister thereupon appealed to the Jewish members of parliament to prevent public meetings and deputations to parliament from taking place since such occurrences

would tend to intensify opposition to any action on the part of the government. The Minister also pointed out that this problem could not be considered as an immigration measure, but purely as a measure dealing with a refugee situation. Mr. Factor asked for the co-operation of the community and stated that the only action which would help would be petitions of non-Jewish organizations to the government urging participation in the Hull Conference.

"The Congress Public Relations committee met on April 12th when it was decided to co-operate with Mr. Factor, and to endeavour to have favourable expressions of opinion on the refugee question forwarded to the government by non-Jewish bodies. A statement was also issued to the Jewish press requesting Jewish organizations to take no independent or public action in this connection.

"The Congress executive met on May 5th and the refugee question was again discussed. The Public Relations committee had been instrumental in securing action by a number of non-Jewish organizations which had forwarded appeals to the government urging participation in the Hull conference.

"The Executive again met on May 9th and it was reported that several Congress officers had met with Mr. Factor who had intimated that, contrary to newspaper reports, Canada had definitely accepted the Hull invitation. The Executive decided to request the calling of an emergency national executive meeting. It was also decided to issue a statement to the Jewish press indicating that the newspaper reports of Canada's refusal to participate in the Hull conference were fallacious.

"A national executive meeting was arranged for the 29th. Inner Executive meetings were held on May 15th, 23rd and 25th at which the refugee problem was discussed and all available information considered.

"At the meeting on the 25th it was reported that a parliamentary committee had been appointed to deal with the refugee question and was meeting with the Jewish members of parliament on the 26th or 27th. This information was confirmed in a letter from Mr. B. Robinson who felt that the national executive meeting should be postponed until some decision was forthcoming from the government. The Inner Executive was unanimous, however, that Congress policies with regard to the refugee question must be formulated without delay, and the decision of the meeting was immediately communicated to Mr. Robinson and to the Congress offices.

"Several possible courses of action have been suggested at the various meetings at which the refugee question had been discussed.

"One suggestion concerned an extension of the action taken by the Public Relations Committee of the Central Division in securing the co-operation of non-Jewish bodies.

"The executive meetings were in favour of calling a small conference of the most influential members of the Jewish community in order to enlist support in the event that action by the Canadian government would place considerable responsibility upon the Jewish community. The Canadian government would require certain guarantees, it was felt that we would be in a position to make definite commitments on the strength of the support which, it was assumed, would be forthcoming at a conference such as was contemplated."

The state of Jewish thinking at this time in Canada is reflected in Belkin's report to HICEM in Paris on June 2, 1938,

"The Canadian Government has not given a favourable answer to the invitation concerning refugees extended by the United States Government. We have been in touch with the Prime Minister through our Honourary President, Mr. S.W. Jacobs, K.C., M.P., and the other Jewish members of Parliament. These negotiations had to be conducted very quietly and without any publicity.

"We do not expect any legislative change in favour of Jewish immigrants, nor is there much hope of any modification in the rules and regulations at present governing immigration to Canada. It must be pointed out that the French Canadian section of our community is opposed to any immigration and, while certain Provinces of the Dominion such as British Columbia and the Maritime Provinces would welcome an influx of new arrivals, political conditions are such that the Federal Government does not want and cannot antagonize the French Canadian element in Canada.

"Our negotiations are directed for the admission of a limited number of Jewish refugees over a period of four years. Unfortunately, there are no Canadian Jewish organizations or local communities which are strong enough financially to undertake any collective guarantee that such immigrants will not become a public charge. Such a guarantee can only be given by the J.I.A.S. and the J.C.A. of Canada if they will be backed by the parent body or other large Jewish organizations. In that case, it would be possible to avoid depositing an individual guarantee for each immigrant. We, of course, shall endeavour to have any special permit granted issued in the name of our Society. Negotiations have not yet advanced to a step where we could specify that prospective immigrants may not have any relatives in Canada but we believe that, should a special concession be granted, there will be no limitation in that respect.

It is difficult to state the number of Jewish immigrants which our country can absorb within the next four or five years.

"We are trying to obtain a concession for the admission of 5,000 people (families?) and may say that it would be a very difficult task for our community to absorb 1000 immigrants a year.

"We have not yet made a survey as to how these immigrants will be distributed or established in this country as we have been waiting to first receive the Government's decision. Generally speaking, we intend to follow the same method which was used when over 3,000 Russo-Rumanian refugees arrived in Canada in 1923-24. We intend to approach all the Jewish communities throughout Canada asking each of them to receive and help the settlement of new arrivals in their midst. The local Jewish residents will be called upon to guide the new immigrants in choosing their settlement arrangements, it being understood that if any money will be required to set up new arrivals in business it will have to be furnished by outside sources. However, few immigrants can be absorbed in industry as workers, but a certain number can be settled as artisans if in possession of a small capital of say $1000 to $1500. Those who would engage as small merchants would require from $1500 to $2500. Those who would become manufacturers would require from $2500 to $5000 depending on the nature of the trade and upon the district.

"It goes without saying that some of the immigrants might be settled on farms if found qualified and willing. The cost of such installation, if made in Eastern Canada, would amount to approximately $5,000 and, if made in Western Canada, would be about $6,000."

M.A. Solkin of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society reported to the HICEM in Paris,

"We regret to inform you that no tangible progress has been made in the matter to this date. If anything, the chance for a successful conclusion of these negotiations have received a severe setback, as a result of unauthorized and harmful interference by elements which seem to have only the object of capitalizing politically on the problem. Details of these interferences are reported on the attached newspaper clipping.

"On the whole, the future does not look too promising. The lid is being clamped down tighter every day. Until only a week ago we had no particular difficulty, for instance, in obtaining permission for entry of people with a capital of $10,000 or over. Following the appearance in Ottawa of the delegation mentioned above, favourable consideration is no longer given to capitalists, no matter what amount they may have at their disposal.

"Even if this newest restriction should only be of a temporary nature, as we hope it will be, it acquires particular significance coming as it does on the very eve of the International Conference on Refugees. In the light of the present attitude of the Canadian Government, it is rather hard to believe that Canada will agree to a tangible general relaxation of its immigration restrictions at a time when they are now excluding persons who are more than desirable from a practical point of view.

"Canada will be represented at the Conference in Evian by an official from its immigration headquarters in London, probably by the Commissioner-in-Charge, Mr. Little. I could not learn very much about the personal qualities of Mr. Little, except that outside of his office he is a liberal minded man. His presence at the Conference will hardly be of any value in ascertaining

the exact attitude of our Government for the reason that he is sent there merely as an observer. All my efforts to learn anything about the nature of the instructions Mr. Little received from the Government have been in vain. Under the circumstances, it is quite possible that more will be found about the intentions of our Government in France that we can learn on this side." (June 23, 1938)

With Jacobs' health failing, Winnipeg's A.A. Heaps necessarily became more active in Ottawa and communicated more frequently and fully with the Jewish Congress committee in Montreal. On June 25, 1938 he wrote Caiserman,

"Yesterday, Mr. Laz Phillips, K.C. was in the city and I discussed the refugee situation with him for a few moments; possibly by the time this letter reaches you, you may have heard from him...

"I may state that I had a conversation the other day with regard to the refugee question, and an International Conference will be held on French territory near Geneva on July 6th. The Government of Canada will be represented at this conference by Mr. Wrong, whose adviser will be Mr. Little, the man in charge of Immigration at Canada House, London. Immediately after the conference is over, Mr. Little will return to Canada and give his report to the Government. Until then I presume no action can be taken, except to keep in close touch with the situation...

While torturing went on in German camps, Heaps was sorry to learn that the Prime Minister was suffering from sciatica. He regretted, "with all the responsibilities which rest upon your shoulders, to again have to ask you to give consideration to the question of political and religious refugees.

"I am receiving insistent requests from all parts of Canada as to what action the government has taken on the question.

"You no doubt will remember the non-partisan delegation that met you during the session. Then you notified us that a sub-committee of the cabinet would be set up to deal with the problem. This delegation subsequently saw the sub-committee, but to date no definite action has been taken.

"I can say that eight members of your cabinet have expressed sympathy with the idea of allowing a reasonable number of refugees to come to Canada.

"The existing regulations are probably the most stringent to be found anywhere in the whole world. If refugees have no money they are barred because they are poor, and if they have fairly substantial sums, they are often refused admittance on the most flimsy pretext. All I say of existing regulations is that they are inhuman and anti-Christian.

"I think it is not in keeping with good Liberal doctrine to refuse right of asylum to a limited number of political or religious refugees. Practically every nation in the world is allowing a limited number to enter their countries, and, even though the International Committee dealing with the question has not concluded their deliberations, large numbers are being absorbed in the meantime. As an example, I would point out that the United States are allowing many thousands to enter their territory.

"The lack of action by the Canadian government is leaving an unfortunate impression in many quarters. I regret to state that the sentiment is gaining ground that antisemitic influences are responsible for the government's refusal to allow refugees to come to Canada. It is hard for one to combat such feelings, but I write to you as head of the government, and knowing your own personal sentiments in the matter, to take such immediate action as would dispel such ideas.

"I have discussed the whole question recently with the Hon. Mr. Crerar, who states he is sympathetic, but it requires an order-in-council to amend existing regulations.

"May I ask your immediate and favorable consideration to my request. If your government is agreeable to permit those suffering from persecution and terror to come forward to Canada, I will undertake to see that a representative non-sectarian national committee is created to take care of the situation.

"Your tolerance, desire for justice, and achievement for good throughout your lifetime in themselves bespeak your sympathies in this vital issue. I realize, too, the political implications attending the entry of immigrants to Canada at this time.

"But I know you concur with me when I say that the responsibilities involved, where life and death and persecution and intolerable suffering are at stake, must transcent political implications.

"Faith in Canada, her resources, her industries, and her institutions give emphasis to the fact that she could proffer succour to thousands in dire distress, not merely to the three hundred odd within the last five months, which the Honourable Minister of Immigration told us about this morning.

"In the long suffering history of our people, in the pageant of tribulations that unfold themselves therein, no Haman nor Torquemada has caused such stark tragedy as presents itself today.

"Upon those few, of whom you are one, on whose words hangs the destiny of our civilization, the obligation is awesome. May God grant you and your Ministers inspired counsel in your deliberations in this critical hour of our people, that justice and liberty shall survive." (King Papers, PP.213348-49, Sept.9, 1938)

At the age of 48, W.D. in Vienna is already a "formerly" -- formerly a bank employee and editor of a commercial newspaper. Now,

"I cannot write all the vexations and tormentings. Our situation has daily been worse, and it is for me and my family the only hope and a single light in a horrible darkness that you (The Canadian Jewish Congress) have promised not to forget us and our fate. In the meantime our master of the house has already been forced to give me a notice for our lodging. The only reason is we are Jews, and one cannot demand that German people live together under a common roof with Hebrews! It is naturally impossible to find other lodgings, apart from the fact that we are without the smallest income. My little pension is also stopped. And the world looks at that, all what is nearly to compare to the persecutions of the Jews in the Middle Ages in Spain, and remain silent. I will not lose the hope that especially your government also will open the frontiers for a small lot of refugees, who are not capitalists or farmers. I think a small lot of diligent and modest people will find in your country surely a work or a job without a detriment for the Canadians."

W.D. apologized for being importunate.

"I know that my everlasting and imploring supplications must be already onerous and monotonous for you. But I beg you to consider our fate. People with culture and education, industrious, prepared for every work, in a short time probably without income and food, expelled, despised, destined for the old 'Ahasverus-curse' to wander and to wander, in such a situation you must pardon my impatience. I will be quiet and content, if I had only an answer that I am noted down and enregistered, and that, if it would be possible to bring Jewish people to Canada, we are certainly under these.

"May I hope, that you will speak once personally, with the people about my case. If I receive one good message, I will wait with patience and to try to suffer all need and humiliations. I am always thankful for your goodness. I cannot express in words my thanks because words are too poor. I beg you always to remember me and to remain our patron."

A young girl in Krasnystaw, Poland, appeared to be more fortunate. Her family in Sonenfeld, Sask., was at the final stages of the long process of securing her admission to Canada by the summer of 1939.

Her last letter from Poland is an unselfconscious mirror of the final moments of Polish Jewry:

"Your letter brought out all kinds of feelings. My parents acted as if I were leaving any day now. They were already seeing me parting from them. They could see me on my journey by ship over the great ocean, the arrival of my ship at the Canadian shore, the great welcome at your home and all the events connected with my coming to you. They tried to picture my life in a strange country, among strange people.

"I do not know if they are seeing it all in a rosy hue. I have an idea that the reality is a little more gray. However, I see faith in their faces and the certainty that I will be able to attain something better in life in Canada than here.

"Our existence here does not shut out the possibility that one can be happy somewhere, somewhere, somewhere else; that is, if in fact, there is such a thing as happiness in this life. For seldom is it attained in these countries. It is very easy to doubt the possibility of its existence. We Jews in Poland, therefore, cannot be optimists. In our daily life we see discrimination against Jews continuously, in all phases.

"Lately the Christian engineers have included the Aryan paragraph in their program.

"A school sponsored wholly by a Jew, V..., has been forced to refuse to accept Jews. The students were afraid not only that they would lose a year but that they would be prevented from continuing their studies in the future. Fortunately Mr. V...intervened by paying 10,000 zloty for all the Jewish students, and now they will be able to continue. However, we do not believe that their acceptance now will end the discrimination.

"For other students in Poland it is no different. Not long ago gangster students from the Lemberg Technical School murdered a Jewish student!

"You could not believe what followed! Across the length and breadth of the country a wave of protest flowed. The Jewish young people felt it most of all. They swore that they will not surrender, but they will fight for all the Jews of Poland!

"You have to understand the great role played by the present generation of our youth. They are the avant-garde of the Jewish nation, a nation beaten, choked and destined to wander forever.

"If we would have our own country where 75% Jews could live, I am sure that anti-Semitism would disappear forever. In order to destroy the psychological, political and economic causes of anti-Semitism we must become a nation.

"I always dreamed of this. To go to Palestine and to stand in the ranks of our self-sacrificing pioneers.

"Even today I have not given up this idea. I always think about it. It is hard to realize this ideal now, for I must momentarily resign from it. But never give it up.

"In the meantime I want to get out of here. Then we will see.

"It would be good for my brother Leo to leave as well. He is also living through the tragedy of today's time for youth. He has hands for working; he is capable of doing much. But no one will give him a job.

"Possibly next year the tragic situation of Polish Jewry will change so radically that there may be no need for me to leave. However, now it is not like that. And because of this I ask you please to continue your efforts to get me out of Poland. I thank you very sincerely for acting so energetically to get me to Canada; and I hope that you will succeed."

Her letter was dated July 24, 1939.

Much more paper needed to be inked yet, and many more officials had to be convinced.

She never made it to Canada.

She was one of six million. So were all her family.

AT THE CONFERENCE

G.E. Dirks records Canadian participation in the Evian conference, (Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism? Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977, Pp. 56-57; O.D. Skelton to King, Apr. 21, 1938; Blair to Skelton, Apr. 14, 1938)

"On the receipt of President Roosevelt's invitation in late March, Prime Minister King asked the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, O.D. Skelton to prepare two possible replies, one accepting, one rejecting the invitation. Which would be sent would depend upon the attitude of Canadian public opinion, and the reception the conference idea received in world capitals.

"Skelton emphasized to the Prime Minister that the only states to reject the American invitation were Italy and Germany; therefore, Canada would occupy an embarrassing position should she also decide to reject the invitation. During the week preceding the final Canadian decision to accept the American invitation Blair, in a lengthy memorandum, argued the meeting was unnecessary as the Roosevelt administration had not exhausted all the means in its power to ease the German refugee problem. He claimed that the American immigration quota for Germany and several other central European states had not been filled for 1937, but if it were, some of the apparent urgency for international action to cope with the refugee situation would be dispelled. Moreover, the director observed that since 1930, the percentage of German Jews

entering Canada on a per capita basis exceeded the American figure by three times. The director had previously asserted that 'Ever since the war, efforts have been made by groups and individuals to get refugees into Canada, but we have fought all along to protect ourselves against the admission of such stateless persons without passports, for the reason that, coming out of the maelstrom of war, some of them are liable to go on the rocks and, when they become public charges, we have to keep them for the balance of their lives.'

"By late April, it became obvious that most of the countries of western Europe and the British Commonwealth favoured a conference to discuss the world's refugee situation. Accordingly, Canada sent its acceptance to Washington and appointed Hume Wrong of the Department of External Affairs as the official delegate and W.R. Little of the Immigration Branch as his chief advisor.

"Prior to the convening of the Evian Conference on July 6, 1938, the prime minister informed his delegates of the position they were expected to take. This country should remain cool toward any idea of creating a permanent structure to handle refugee matters. While remaining 'correctly cool,' Canada should be prepared to participate in the dissemination of refugee information. If the United States should press for specific promises or quote admission obligations, it would be necessary for Canada to differ, but not desirable that Canada should take a lead in this opposition. Prime Minister King preferred a resolution of good intentions rather than a draft convention."

Blair attended the meeting where decisions were reached and expressed himself freely.

Attending the conference might involve "the admission to Canada of many who by training and manner of life are not fitted for the development of any of our primary industries, but would add to the congestion and competition of our cities." More to the point, it was not feasible, he said, "to encourage the influx of immigrants of one race and not of others." He privately told Skelton that it was unfair "to let down the immigration barriers for the benefit of any particular race or class." Personally, Blair did not feel that the problem was all that serious. As he put it: "No problem exists except for the Jewish people", and the refugee situation, he added, was much worse immediately following the Great War. He warned that the government's first priority must now be to decide "whether Canada can afford to open the door to more Jewish people than we are now receiving" since "there is going to be a general Jewish drive for admissions to other countries." Little good for Canada, he predicted, would come out of attendance at the conference. Canadian policy, he stated, should be not to change its restrictive immigration practice, but simply to announce at the meeting that the government would "show sympathetic consideration where possible to prospective refugee immigrants."

What apparently most disturbed Blair was the possibility of a successful conference. "If the nations now asked to cooperate to save the Jews of Germany and Austria manage, by sacrifice, to accomplish this purpose it will please the Germans who want to get rid of this group...and it will encourage other nations to do likewise, and this is probably the greatest danger. Can immigration countries afford to encourage such an eventuality? It is akin in a sense to the paying of ransom to Chinese bandits."

"Blair had just been advised that the German government had officially announced that it would no longer allow Jewish immigrants from Germany back into the country. At once Blair informed Skelton that Canada had no alternative but 'to refuse the admission of German nationals without presentation of passports endorsed as valid for return to Germany...If we accept people from Germany on one-way travel documents, we have no excuse for refusing a like class from other countries, and we will soon reach the place where the only persons we can deport will be British subjects and U.S. citizens...I wish the immigration countries would take united action in refusing to admit nationals of countries who will not allow return by deportation.'

"In fact, Canada probably had no choice. As Skelton warned the Prime Minister: 'It would not look too well to be the only country, except Fascist Italy, declining even to sit on a Committee'. On April 26, the Canadian Government officially announced that it would attend the conference which was to be held in the small French resort town of Evian on the Swiss border. At the same time King informed the Americans that he thought it wrong to encourage countries such as Germany which were trying 'to throw upon other countries the task of solving their internal difficulties.'" (Abella and Troper)

Early in June 1938 the "Canadian Government accepted membership on the international committee to consider the migration of political refugees and agreed to a meeting at Evian on July 6," as Hume Wrong was informed when he was named Canada's representative, together with W.R. Little, Canadian Commissioner of European Emigration at London, as his technical advisor. In his memo to Wrong the Prime Minister wrote,

".... thus far we have not received any evidence of a willingness, on the part of private organizations in Canada, to become financially responsible for any immigrants, though the situation may change..."

He also suggested that, since

"... the majority of the Jewish immigrants now resident in Canada are natives of Poland, Russia and Rumania rather than of Austria or Germany.... The interest of this Jewish population is therefore centered on Eastern rather than on Central Europe."

The instructions sent on June 30 could well have suggested adjournment of the committee before it was convened:

"We wish to avoid obstructionist attitude and keep clearly in mind the basis on which Canada has agreed to participate, namely, 'exchange of information on the present situation and consideration of problems which it involves.' While it will be necessary to differ from United States if they press for definite undertaking to receive quotas or for permanent organization, it is not desired that Canada should take lead in this opposition. We are today advising Simmons verbally of our view on these points in quite explicit terms...

"As to specific matters on Agenda proposed by the United States, we stress the point that there is no provision under Canadian law for immigrant quota, and no commitments could therefore be made to receive any specified number of refugees. Any contribution that Canada might be able to make to solution of Committee's problem would have to take form of special administrative exemption.

"Discussions should contemplate a resolution making recommendations to the participating governments, rather than conclusion of a convention or an agreement...

"Insofar as Canada is concerned the terms of our participation in meeting do not involve undertaking to accept any obligation."

Similarly, in his instructions to Little, Blair suggested that he go on the offensive and point out to the other delegates that Canada had done much more than was required to help solve the Jewish refugee problem. Fully 35 percent of all special Orders-in-Council had been given to Jews, he said. In an attempt to halt the Jewish exodus from Germany in its entirety, Blair suggested that, since Jews were being robbed of both their assets and their citizenship, Little should approach the other delegates to persuade their governments to take a united stand against accepting immigrants without either capital or recognized citizenship. In a personal letter two days later, Blair emphasized that there was "not much enthusiasm in many quarters here for any increase in our Jewish immigration."

Wrong predicted a most unpleasant affair and his participation in it was an unwelcome duty. The proceedings, he feared, 'look very amateurish, and the entire concept clearly was 'not the product of any well thought-out scheme'; simply 'one of Mr. Roosevelt's sudden generous impulses.' Though he realized that there was not much support for the admission of refugees into Canada, he begged the Prime Minister not to make his instructions 'entirely negative'.

"King reminded the Canadian delegate that Canada was at Evian only to 'exchange information'. To forestall any American action, King forcefully informed Washington that Canada would neither support,nor be a member of, any committee which would formulate and carry out a long range program to solve the refugee crisis. Canada, he reminded the Americans, could make no commitments to accept any refugees as this would 'raise real difficulties from the point of view of Canadian Immigration Service'.

Like most Jewish communities aside from the Palestinian and the British, Canadian Jewry was very indirectly represented at this important gathering by tenuous relationships with the World Jewish Congress. In substance it was the Jewish Colonization Association which could -- if it cared to -- speak for Canadian Jewry because the members of its Canadian Committee were most nearly identical with the leadership of the Canadian community, because it was nearest to having an established and current working relationship with the Canadian government and a good record of actual work in immigration and settlement in Canada. Its reports from E. Oungre are the only information or analysis which the Jewish community received; these constitute an important immediate reflection of what appeared to occur there. These documents are the more interesting since the J.C.A. played a leading role among the Jewish activists at Evian.

The representatives of the major institutions concerned -- the J.C.A., the Jewish Agency, the Joint Distribution Committee and French Jewry -- coordinated their representations and, indeed, Mr. Oungre was heard as

their spokesman by a committee of the plenary conference. But the less weighty interested delegates -- including those from Poland, Lithuania and Hungary, and those from the ORT, OSE, etc. -- were contemptuously ignored.

Under these conditions there could be no thought of a Canadian Jewish voice there, or such a voice, or even an ear, near the Canadian delegation there. (Report of E. Oungre submitted to HICEM in Montreal by J. Bernstein from Paris, Aug. 1, 1938, 19 p.)

Although the Jewish delegates worked tirelessly with the conference and with many of the diplomats gathered there, noone felt it worth a breath to plead with the Canadian envoy. There is no indication that he or his principals were offended at being thus ignored.

Wrong's first report, of July 7, suggests the tone of proceedings.

"The United States delegate emphasized the proposed continuing of the organization in his opening speech. Its creation will be widely supported, and I understand that both Hansson and Malcolm think that it could be useful. The United Kingdom delegation, while not enthusiastic, will support it because such a body might be a most effective channel of approach to the German Government for modification of present confiscatory policy towards emigrants. No one here contemplates that this unwieldy Committee could approach Germany. We feel that we should not oppose the establishment of the continuing body, which may be only concrete result of this meeting. It seems certain that the United States suggestion that each country might state number of refugees it would receive will not be generally accepted."

The reaction from Ottawa,

"While the proposal would seem to be more appropriate at the conclusion of the Conference, after the whole situation had been examined and discussed, than at the beginning, and while its establishment would complicate Assembly's objective of coordinating and centralizing international assistance to refugees, we should not actively oppose the establishment of such a Committee, if the proposal meets with general approval.

"Our acceptance, however, would depend on its purposes and implications. If it is to gather detailed information on the refugee situation and negotiate with the German Government through diplomatic channels, it would doubtless be a more effective body than an intergovernmental Conference of thirty-two countries.

"If, however, its establishment would include assumption of obligation on the part of the participating nations to receive refugees whose release (with a portion, at least, of their property) the Committee may succeed in effecting, it should be made clear at some stage that our acceptance should not be interpreted as changing our view, which we made clear in accepting the invitation to the Conference, that we must reserve fully any decision as to future policy on immigration, and that we are unable under our immigration law and regulations to undertake any quota or specified number of refugees."

On July 12, 1938 Wrong informed Mackenzie King from Evian that "The present refugee situation is so appalling that I feel we cannot afford to oppose any scheme that might assist in the alleviation and improve the situation somewhat."

The prime minister replied: "We are not enthusiastic about this proposed permanent organization. We are prepared to accept it, however, if the conditions previously mentioned are met."

Canada had thus endorsed the establishment of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, the headquarters of which were to be in London, and the purpose of which was to negotiate with the German government for the release of confiscated property and funds. If a release of property and capital could be brought about, this would enable the refugees already crowded into western Europe to gain permanent entry into lands of resettlement and assist those persecuted peoples in Germany to emigrate.

On the 12th Dr. Wrong reported, "A Committee is to be established in London of the representatives of all countries here represented. It would hold its first meeting very shortly, but might meet only annually thereafter. Its main purposes would be to provide a basis for United States participation in problems of refugees and to approach German Government.

"No Secretariat is contemplated, but incidental expenses would be met by participating governments.

"Everyone here is conscious of danger of inspiring other countries to imitating Germany. Present conditions are so appalling I feel that we cannot oppose any scheme presenting some prospect of alleviation which is likely to be generally approved."

Even this little was almost too much for Ottawa. The official response of July 13:

"For reasons outlined in earlier telegrams and correspondence we are not enthusiastic about proposed continuing organization. If, however, recommendations outlined meet with general approval and points covered in my telegram of July 7th are safeguarded, we would be prepared to accept." (King Papers. Pp. 223084-94)

The government coolness to the Evian conference was endorsed by the editor of the Quebec Liberal Soleil, Georges Langlois, author of a work on Canadian demography. No matter how harsh the lot of Jews under Hitler, it was no reason for welcoming them in Canada when even British immigrants are kept out.

As M.H. (Marcel Hamel) put it in La Nation of July 7, 1938, Georges Langlois, editor-in-chief of Le Soleil rejects "the aim of the Evian Conference which decided to place the sons of Abraham in the British dominions, and particularly in Canada.

"This conference can have the best and worst effects. It is true that anti-Semitism has never been very effective in Canada, except perhaps about 1891, when mass immigration of Jews awakened the old reflex of legitimate defence. But if we are to transport here all the Jews of Germany, of Poland and of Czechoslovakia, heaven only knows what will happen.

"In any case, we should watch the Evian conference closely. It can mark a decisive phase in our nation's destiny."

Roger Vezina concocted alarms about programmes to settle many Jews in Alberta ("Jewish Immigration" in the Nation of August 11, 1938, and again, "Jewish Immigration in Canada" on September 1, 1938). Bouchard wrote in his weekly La Nation, and headlined, "More Filth from the Liberal Party: Canada, a Refuge for Jewry." (Nov.24, 1938) Next week, another headline, "The New Promised Land" over an article by Jacques Légaré, and another by Rosaire Beaudoin, K.C., on "Immigration of Jews".

In all this equivocation, was Paul Bouchard of La Nation, exercising pressure, or was he confused when he wrote on "Ernest Lapointe and Jewish Immigration"? (Sept. 1, 1938) His cry of alarm:

Lapointe was being sent to Geneva to head the Canadian delegation at the League of Nations where, Bouchard feared, the Jewish refugee problem would be placed, now that the Evian Conference was over.

Great Britain, the most philo-semitic western European power -- the great protector of world Jewish interests, and therefore the beneficiary of the great secret internationals controlled by the Jews: communism, Judeo-freemasonry and world finance -- will seek to force such colonies as Canada to welcome 80,000 Jewish refugees from Germany. The Devoir has recently reported on the increased Jewish immigration during the past three years.

Bouchard continued, There is much to disquiet true Canadian patriots in Lapointe's trip in the light of his sympathy for the people of Israel. For if Britain will demand that Canada become a second Palestine, Lapointe will not oppose it.

Bouchard quotes the Devoir, "It is not anti-semitism to oppose Jewish immigration... The Jewish shop-keeper on St. Lawrence Blvd. does nothing to increase our natural resources."

The place of Marcel Hamel's La Nation in the annals of Quebec thinking and of its politics is on the historic record. We need only note that Chanoine Lionel Groulx, so discreet in his political commitments when not restrained by his mitred and unmitred' authorities, had consented to give a public lecture during the summer of 1937, the proceeds of which were to go to the maintenance of the journal. Following protests of moderates the sponsors cancelled the lecture. (Robert Comeau. "Lionel Groulx, Les Indépendantistes de la Nation et le Séparatisme", in Revue de l'histoire de l'Amérique française, vol. 26, no. 2, June 1926, P.91)

It was the editors who sought to protect the priest from the taint of association with them. Groulx himself was not loath to consider "compromising himself with them. Would I accede to their request? A perilous adventure," he recalled years later when the full import of their fascism and anti-Semitism was clear to the whole world. (Mes Mémoires, t. 6, 1931-39. Montreal Fides, 1972. Pp. 289-96)

"I dislike refusing young people my shoulder. On the other hand, who is unaware of the ways of the small capitals of the province, of the spirit of the civil servant, placidly conservative in their horror of the firecracker, with its jostling and stepping on toes and its readiness for flaying alive?"

Robert Rumilly counts Cardinal Villeneuve among the forces operative towards moderation in this phase of the abbé's life. (Histoire de la Province de Québec, t. 36, Pp. 189-90)

Groulx dedicated pages of admiration to the rabidly anti-Semitic group in his great work of autobiography and summation, "witness to the battling state of the spirit of the explosive youth of its day...its aspirations, its thirst, its will. Its bitter tone, angrily bitter, derived from the disappointments of 1936, the abortion of so many hopes.

"When we reread the final pages of this little newspaper we cannot help but think of these nights of lost battles, where the wounded left on ground, seized by nightmares, shoot their last bullets at random."

This was Groulx' final summary of one of the most rabid anti-Semitic periodicals to appear in North America.

A theological note on the pages of La Nation clarifies where the influential canon of the Canadian Catholic Church decided to place his support:

The weekly's P.B. reported with pleasure that a very rich American woman had a very patriotic idea in offering a statue of Jean d'Arc to the city of Quebec. P.B. suggests that the Maid of Orléans replace John the Baptist as the patron saint of French Canada. "French Canadians can hardly explain the queer choice that had been made (of John the Baptist), whom in their secret heart they dislike because of his lamb, and because he is a Jew."

It took Claude Hurtubise, a layman, to respond to the protégé of Chanoine Groulx at length in La Relève (ser. 4, cahier 3),

"It is an astonishing declaration, to say the least, and be taken for a good joke. Unfortunately it is serious...St. Joseph, declared the patron saint of all Canada from its very beginning by Urbain VIII, was another Jew."

The point had also been made by Olivar Asselin before the Sir Wilfrid Laurier Club in a 1933 address on the Jews. French Canadians would do well, he suggested, to remember that their patron saint Jean Baptiste was also of the kike race.

La Patrie noted that, judging by the anger of the canaille, it took a certain courage so to contradict the prejudices of the majority. (Le Canada, Dec. 7, 1933)

To place Canada in the international framework of the moment we might usefully turn to the pages of the Correspondance juive issued in Paris by the World Jewish Congress. Its issue of Dec. 13, 1938 surveys the plight of German Jewry and the reactions of country after country to this tragedy.

It is not a very encouraging total. Yet is records the voices of the governments of the free world, its political figures, its parliaments, its churches, labor men, littérateurs, war veterans, pacifists, the exiled friends of Germany, the press, the men on the street, the Jews -- on several continents.

Canada figures in this parade of protestation.

"The Canadian government, informed of the problem, has not yet announced any plans to welcome refugees. The government has, nevertheless, declared that it is studying the question, and that the House of Commons will discuss it next January."

The pious conversation of the time: the priest of the Czechoslovak Church on Chenneville St. told a group of Catholics that to follow Roosevelt's plan and to admit"Austrian Jewish doctors would mean that they would continue the crimes they are perpetrating in Austria, namely, that Jewish doctors in the Austrian hospitals have murdered 12,000 children.

"These murders, so he said, are part of a plan to create a Jewish majority in Austria." (Letter from Caiserman to B. Robinson, Apr. 4, 1938)

There were 340,000 Jews still in Nazi Germany, not to speak of the many millions threatened just a cannon shot from the elastic German frontier, facing torture and death. Canada's response to them was addressed to President Roosevelt: "Prime Minister King was reluctant to absorb any large number of European refugees...Canada would be reluctant to bring in large numbers of people who would enter the competitive labor market." (Globe and Mail, Nov. 19, 1938.

Dr. Hume Wrong's message to those who were menaced,

"Unfortunately, persistent grave unemployment as well as uncertainty and disturbance of an economic nature limit in a severe manner the capacity which Canada has to absorb any considerable number of immigrants."

Capacity to absorb! During those years these were death dealing sentences for Jews coming from empty Palestine and empty Canada, echoing and resounding as justification for blocking new life for the Jews trapped east of France.

This was no mere phrase. During those desperate years of the decade that phrase was the code developed by the hostile elements in the British government to mean closure of mandated Palestine to Jews seeking to escape German, Polish, Hungarian, Rumanian - continental European -- genocide on the excuse that there was no place for them in land designated most recently after World War I as the homeland of the Jewish people.

When the intergovernmental Committee on Jewish refugees met in February, 1939, a ridiculous and macabre minuet was played by the diplomats on rear stage, while in front Dachau was in full frenzy. Auschwitz was abuilding and armourers were loading the bombs. A 5-year plan was being negotiated with the Germans who were promising retraining of emigrants; "Old persons and those unfit for emigration were promised tranquillity unless some extraordinary circumstances should occur; the Haavarah method of transfer would be permitted to operate. This agreement would greatly strengthen the hand of the more moderate elements in Berlin, whereas partial or half-hearted acceptance of the plan might present powerful arguments to extremists in Germany." (Massey dispatch, Feb. 13, 1939)

But Canada was not in step in this dance. While other players made meaningless but approving statements, Ottawa scarcely acknowledged Massey's reports. He decided to absent himself from the meetings and sent Mr. Mayrand as an observer to represent the silent nation.

The Evian conference was an occasion for multiple equivocation by the Canadian government. At the conference it spoke the warmest words of concern while careful to make no useful commitments or promises. General press was encouraged to report that no alarm was warranted: Canada would admit no refugees. At the same time the Jewish legislators were led to believe -- and to tell the Jewish voters -- that the government was sympathetic, and would act soon to admit some Jewish refugees. At the same time the government told Mr. Factor and Mr. Heaps (Jacobs was unwell) that public silence was essential for the success of the beneficent plans.

The documents do not cohere; they contradict each other, most clearly as hypocrisy, self-justification and bureaucratic polysyllabic obfuscation added up to non-action by smug gentlemen and to moral pathology.

Not surprisingly Edouard Oungre, who was there on behalf of HICEM, noted, "Canada's declaration produced an unpleasant impression." One of the government delegates compared the conference to a new Wailing Wall against which fell the most varying lamentations.

By June 1938 local Congress committees were set in Winnipeg, with Heaps, M.A. Gray and B. Sheps; in Toronto where Congress secretary Oscar Cohen and Rabbi M.N. Eisendrath were very active; and in Montreal with Benjamin Robinson and Michael Garber; all closely coordinated.

Robinson wrote Oscar Cohen on July 14,

"It is quite obvious that something should be done, but it is my opinion that before anything can be done, something more definite should be known of the results of the Evian Conference. Apart from this, I am informed that Mr. Crerar is away for a week or ten days.

"I may say that information has come to me unofficially, from the Department of Immigration, that the Government intends to do nothing whatever for our people for at least two months, and until they have some definite report from their representative at the Conference. From the way the conference is going, it is quite obvious that the most that can be expected of Canada is to be more lenient in its application of the present regulations.

"I believe that a delegation consisting not only of representatives of Congress, but representing other Jewish and non-Jewish bodies from all parts of the country should be organized to interview the Cabinet and prevail upon the members thereof to allow the entry of some refugees. It may be advisable to have the Members of Parliament with us. Mr. S.W.Jacobs is away on a holiday and will not be back for at least two or three weeks.

"However, before a delegation goes to Ottawa, it must be prepared to give the Government some definite ideas as to what it wants. What kind of immigrants should be asked for? Are they to be limited only to relatives or friends of residents of Canada? What sort of guarantees will be given, and who is to give them? In other words, it is not enough merely to ask for the entry of refugees, but the delegation must be prepared to go further to convince the Government that these people who would be allowed to come would be taken care of properly either by relatives in Canada or by other responsible bodies who will assume responsibility that none of them will become public charges.

"Possibly it would be a good idea to call a meeting of presidents and representatives of, say, the ICA, the JIAS, the Federations, the Zionist Organizations, Bnai Brith, and large labour bodies, in order to obtain united support for the delegation so that it can say it represents not ten thousand Jews, as the People's Committee pretended to represent, but that it is really representative of entire Canadian Jewry."

Citizens' mail, both signed and anonymous, literate and illiterate, reflected and supported this negative movement.

Mr. Lamontagne of Montreal's West Island wrote to Mr. King as a private citizen,

"Let us hope the Jew-sponsored demonstrations of yesterday will not influence the Ottawa Government in favor of more immigrants of this universally detested race, which makes itself hated wherever it goes.

"We have altogether too many Jews now, and Canada will rue the day the ones that are here now came in. Africa and Asia for the Jews. -- Canada for Gentiles. Were a plebiscite taken there is no question about what the answer would be.

"It is significant that the U.S.A. will not enlarge her quota, despite Mr. Roosevelt, whose high-mindedness unfortunately seems to divorce him from the realities of life, the facts of existence. --

"The'plain'people never gave their views yesterday, -- the Jews did. This letter is to beg you to lend your great influence against the incoming of these accursed Asiatics, who chisel everything." (Nov. 21, 1938, P.A.C., MG 26, J2, vol. 148, file I-211)

Toronto's Mr. McArthur echoed his Quebec confrere,

"Your Government is digging its own grave by having anything to do with the Jews of Europe. We got far too many Jews in Canada now, and your government should instead find employment for the thousands of Canadians and Britishers starving along the highways, sleeping in box cars, parks and church halls. The highway from Toronto to North Bay and other towns in the north is lined with men from 18 to 60 years of age in search of employment who have to exist on what they can beg along the highway."

"A Canadian" was less coherent,

"If you want to avoid trouble in Canada please do not have the Jew come here. There is not one Christian who wants them, and you know that well; they are talking already, saying if our Jewish refugee come we will let some Christian out to take some in. They did not know I could hear, but I did, so now you know where we're at. That will mean the City will have to look after us, because the Jews are here, and it won't be long before they're in business. What is going to become of us if they do come? Can't you send them on farms out west, and make sure they stay there, and that they never become lawyers and doctors. We have enough crooks lawyers here now."

An Anglophone from Toronto, also anonymous, wrote to the prime minister,

"We the British people of Canada, are tired of all this false and dangerous lying propaganda that the swines of Jews are circulating in our country about the German peoples who are of our own race.

"If these sewer rats the Jews are not stopped coming into our Canada, there will be far more bloodshed in our Canadian streets with Jewish blood than all the blood shed in the 1914 world war. The squealing Jew always makes himself heard when he is got after and driven out of the other fellow's country for their dirty rackets and crook business dealings. But the thousands of Anglo-Celtic people that has been ruined and driven to suicide through the crook Jews, we hear little or nothing about.

"Are we Britishers expected to be driven out of our homes into the backwoods while the swines of Jews take over all our homes and businesses in the towns and cities???

"We demand that the Jews, all of them now enjoying their freedom in our country, be driven out and quickly before we have a few Hitlers rise up and cause the governments a surprise. Are our governments in power to protect the dirty Jews, or to protect the peoples of the British Empire! Why call upon God or Jesus where the swines of Jews are concerned! They laugh at us behind our backs after they have swayed some of our people on their side with telling us about our Jesus and God. The Jews would kill our Lord again and as they are killing our people daily with their swindling crooked business methods. You should find out more about the tricks of the Jews, then you would know of their robbing our war veteran and dependents and the sick and aged of all their earthly wealth. The Jew is not fit to live under the protection of a white man's flag.

"Down and out with the Jews before we Britishers start on them!!!

The anonymous "Canadian Born" wrote to Mr. King,

"Having voted for the Liberal Party for the last thirty-eight years and lived in Montreal all my life-time, may I say to you that the Jews have been too well treated in this country and have taken advantage of privileges to the extent of exploiting the Canadian people and **are** the cause of propaganding communism in Canada. They are the enemies of Christians in Europe and everywhere they go. In Montreal, Jews have been the instigators of all measures of increasing communism and should be stopped before it is too late. If not, the Canadian born will be their victims.

"Under no reason should they be received in Canada. Laws or decisions should be taken immediately to stop immigrations of European people undesirable, including Jews. The latter is an element which cannot be assimilated to us. They ignore laws and cannot be compelled to observe bylaws in cities where they are well treated." (P.A.C. MG 26, J2, vol. 147, file I-205, Apr. 15, 1938)

The recollections of Prof. Harry Crowe bring the 1938 political atmosphere in Canada very vividly to life.

"'Isn't there some place they can hide?'

"At the age of fifteen, that was the question I asked my father when he said that Hitler was going to kill the half million Jews in Germany and in Austria which he had occupied a few weeks before. We were walking across the pasture on our farm in western Manitoba and,quoting Marcus Hyman, a Winnipeg lawyer, he made this horrifying statement which sent my mind searching for places where I would try to hide if the government of Canada was going to kill me.

"It was July 1938. My father's remark was prompted by a story in the Free Press Prairie Farmer saying that Canada's representative at a world conference, called together by President Roosevelt, had said that Canada could not admit Jewish refugees trying to flee from Nazi Germany because they were not farmers. That was the first time I had heard of the Evian Conference. Later, when I was writing about it in an essay at university, I located Evian-Les-Bains on a map of France on the south side of Lake Geneva, across from Lausanne, Switzerland.

"The question which I asked, I was to discover, was one which had been at the center of Jewish life for two thousand years: where to hide from pogroms, Christian and Islamic? Hide by assimilation? Hide by pretending conversion? Hide by moving somewhere else? At the Evian Conference the nations of the world, prompted by the man who called it into session, and who is admired on so many counts, said to the Jews of Germany and Austria, 'You can't hide with us.'

"My father ridiculed the requirement that immigrants had to be farmers. More agricultural production was the last thing Canada needed in 1938. Entrepreneurs, professional people and intellectuals would make more sense if it was a matter of occupational choices; but it was a much more fundamental issue of acting as a civilized nation.

"He had spoken to J.A. Glen, the M.P. for the area and later a member of Mackenzie King's cabinet, putting forward the idea that if Canada would admit several thousand Jews, and the United States a proportionate number, then the British government would have to admit some into Palestine, and other nations would fall into line and the Jews of Germany could be saved. Although the newspapers were still full of the horrors being inflicted upon Jews in Vienna, Glen's response was that anyone who would want more Jews in Canada must be out of his mind." (Middle East Focus, vol. 1, no. 4, Nov. 1978, Pp. 17-18)

But there were more sensitive, even heroic citizens in Canada.

There was Charles Grant, Toronto Scottish Presbyterian, successful diamond merchant who had been initiated into the gem trade by elderly Jewish diamond broker, Paul Treyfus.

Grant recalls"'sitting with an old friend, in one of the most hospitable homes in Vienna, when the dining room door was thrust open and five uniformed young Nazis marched in. They strutted across the beautiful dining room floor, grabbed my Jewish host by the collar, and dragged him out of the house. The man was as fine and distinguished an old gentleman as you'd ever hope to meet.

"'After the first moments of paralysis, I regained my sense and dashed out after them. My British passport, I suppose, protected me...It was cold and windy and the people on the streets were well wrapped up. I ran back into the house to fetch my coat to put it around the shoulders of my friend. He was an old man and I knew his heart was weak.

"'But the police pushed me away and swore at me. They threw my friend to his knees on the sidewalk, gave him a pail of water and a scrub brush, and told him to get to work.

"'They began kicking him as he scrubbed, and then one of them went into a house and came out with another pail of water. He poured it over the fellow as he knelt there.

"'That was the last straw for me. I landed a good haymaker on the jaw of the young savage with the second bucket. The gauleiter (squad chief) drove up and there was a lot of screaming and shouting, but I was finally able to get my friend home.

"'However, that fixed me with the Nazis.'

"Grant was arrested shortly after, on May 10, 1938, as a 'Judenfreund.' By the time he had his fifth hearing in court it was September, 1939. War had broken out and he was interned as an enemy alien for the duration.

"For Grant, that meant seven years in various Nazi concentration camps, where he saw first hand how the Jews were being treated. His entrance to his first concentration camp, Mauthausen, was accompanied by a macabre and foreboding sight: he and 20,000 other prisoners were herded out at 2 a.m. and forced to watch at attention the hanging of a young Jewish boy who had been caught trying to escape.

"But by then, Grant had managed to provide false passports for about 650 Jews to flee Austria. Exactly how, he never fully explained...He knew many people in high places in those pre-war days. One was a ranking official in Austria's state department. He allowed Charles the complete use of his office -- documents, stamps, everything -- for several evenings. Without him, Grant would have accomplished nothing.

"The Gestapo caught on and sent a team to arrest Grant. He was in his hotel room, shaving, when they entered. He should have been prepared, but he wasn't; lying on top of his desk among all his other papers was a list of people for whom he was getting the next batch of passports. It spelled instant death for him and all the others.

"What he did, also described in one of the CBC episodes, was like a corny scene out of a spy movie. The Gestapo agents settled down to wait for him to finish in the bathroom. He splashed and sang to distract them. Then, coming out lathered and half-dressed, he whisked the paper off his desk and ran back into the washroom.

The Nazis jumped to their feet, but it was too late. Grant locked the door behind him and flushed away the paper. Just to make sure it went down, Charles pushed his hand down the toilet bowl as far as it would go.

"He was beaten from head to toe by five gestapo agents and flung into jail. But his life -- and those of his 'clients' -- were saved. He was not charged with spying or sabotage.

"This incident in August, 1938, was the second in a series of trials and incarcerations that lasted a full year. Among his losses in the process was his entire fortune. Close to $250,000 in diamonds and cash were taken from him by the Nazis. After the war, the insurance company refused to make good his loss.

"His status as a British subject allowed him to receive Red Cross food parcels, a privilege few other concentration camp inmates had, and he managed to survive until the war's end. His weight, however, in May, 1945, was down to 106 pounds, less than half of his 30's prime.

"His seven years in concentration camp, through his own suffering and through seeing the atrocities committed on other human beings, allowed him to realize like few other non-Jews, the depths of evil inherent in racial discrimination.

"He passed away at the age of 79." (David Birkan in Canadian Jewish News, Aug. 21, 1980)

FROM THE DAY'S MAIL TO THE CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

From J.A:

"I beg your kind pardon if I, in my plight and trusting into human kindness, take hereby the liberty to draw your kind attention to the enclosed career of my life.

"As you will kindly see from it I am a well versed specialist of international reputation in forest works and the most rational exploitation in the sawmill industry.

"Besides I am a scientist in the above mentioned sphere who has written three important books therein.

"Further I have good abilities as instructor.

"Therefore I am sure that I could render me useful also to your country and I request you, dear Sirs, kindly to promote my endeavours thereon in giving me any respective hints and kindly recommending me to the competent factors.

"I should take any occupation and I should be thankful to you for ever if you would kindly help me who has supported himself many Jewish people in his better days!"

Of his career:

"Born 1884 in Vienna, Jew, unmarried, of German nationality; passed his final examination at the Commercial Academy of Vienna; speaks and writes German, English and French.

"J.A. was front-officer in the former Austrian-Hungarian Army and has been decorated several times.

"J.A. is in full healthy.

Abilities:

"1) A rountinated specialist in forest-manipulation (felling, haulage and afforestation-work),

"2) A well versed specialist of international reputation in the sawmill industry, knowing all details of the most rational exploitation of lumber and the most economical organization of the sawmill work,

"3) Perfectly versed in all details of woodwool-production,

"4) Knowing all details of box-making.

"J.A. is a keen finder of measures to effect important savings and economies on the whole line of production.

Activities:

"1) Since 1909 in leading positions Central-Europe, viz: 1909-1920 Union-Forstindustrie - A.G., Cucuresti (Rumania); 1921-25 Unter-Radlberger Holzindustrie, St. Polten (Austria); 1926-1938 David Hartenstein's Erben, Gloggnitz, Austria.

"2) Permanent sworn expert of the Court of Commerce of Vienna,

"3) Member of the Board of Rationalisation for the Austrian Sawmill Industry,

"4) Special writer and author of the following books: (a) Technics of the softwood-trade and sawmill industry, published by Paul Parey in Berlin, issued already in 3 editions (Parey is the greatest publisher of Germany for the forest-literature) (b) Bookkeeping Organisation in the Sawmill Industry, published by Carl Gerold's Sohn of Vienna, issued in 2 editions, (c) The ABC for sawmill-officials, published by the 'Carpathia' Association for timber production of Slovakia, Pressburg.

"5) Correspondent of 'The Timber Trades Journals', London."

To understand the statement of candidate D. in its historic context, we must listen to this silent spokesman for millions facing torture and death as in dialogue with the trusted Canadian humanist Vincent Massey writing privately and confidentially from his office of High Commissioner for Canada in London to Prime Minister King in Ottawa on Feb. 3, 1939,

"A great many cases come my way of individuals from Germany or Czeckoslovakia or Hungary who want to find asylum in Canada. Some of these are impossible to consider and are discouraged at the outset; other cases are sent through in a routine manner by the Immigration Department here, but a few selected cases which I regard of special importance I deal with personally, and give what support I can to the applications sent through to Ottawa. I only do this in the case of people whose admission, as far as I can see, would be of real advantage to our community. Some of these have considerable wealth, others intellectual distinction. The latter qualification, of course, if of little use unless the migrant can find a job.

"There are a fair number of persons, however, of means and education who wish to move from Central Europe to Canada, and these I feel we should not discourage unless for some very good reason. Sometimes the routine machinery of the Department of Immigration is apt to be a bit wooden in its approach to personal applications in these abnormal times.

"Fortunately the Commissioner of Immigration here is extremely wise in his dealings with applications for admission. I am not so sure that the Commissioner at Ottawa is quite as constructive. This is a time when we can admit to Canada now and then men and women who really will enrich the country of their adoption in both the material sense and otherwise.

"I am not thinking primarily of Jews but of the numerous non-Jewish people who find life quite intolerable under the Nazi régime or in countries where Nazification is gaining ground."

THE PRIVATE MR. KING

H. Blair Neatby feels that "in March 1938, at the time of the Austrian Anschluss, King had seen national unity as an excuse for inaction; 'my own feeling,' he wrote, 'is that nothing is to be gained by creating an internal problem in an effort to meet an international one.' After Munich, however, Hitler's intensified persecution of Jews was less easily ignored. King was influenced in part by the tragedy of the Jews, brought home to him in conversations with A.J. Freiman, a prominent Ottawa Jew, and with Abraham Heaps and Samuel Factor, both respected Members of Parliament. He also noted that Great Britain and the United States were admitting refugees and that it would be embarrasssing if Canada did not cooperate. In November, 1938, he decided that Canada should do her part even though it was 'going to be difficult politically.'"

So, Neatby notes that in November 1938 "King tried to persuade his colleagues by stressing the government's moral obligation. 'The time has come,' he told them, 'when, as a Government, we would have to perform acts that were expressive of what we believed to be the conscience of the nation, and not what might be, at the moment, politically most expedient.' Norman Rogers and T.A. Crerar warmly supported him, but Lapointe and Cardin 'looked glum.' The eventual policy showed more expediency than King would have admitted. The onus was shifted to the provincial governments by asking them how many Jewish refugees they would admit. Those who were admitted would still have to satisfy the existing immigration regulations although Crerar, the responsible Minister, assured King that these regulations would be interpreted liberally."

One Canadian citizen who felt for the menaced Jews in Europe was William M. Birks. Later, when concerned Christians mobilized to help a group of refugees who found themselves in Canada, but interned, he was among the first to be helpful. He intervened with the Canadian government for the release of one of those interned and, in this course of action he came actually to establish the procedure for the release of other internees on the scholarship plan.

He was also active on the Central Committee for Interned Refugees together with Senator Wilson, B.K. Sandwell and Rev. C. Silcox. (Saul Hayes memorandum)

When Mr. W.M. Birks asked Prime Minister King for permission to bring into his home a 17 year old Jewish boy from Mainz as late as June 1938, he was told by King that "conditions in Europe have increased manifold the numbers of those seeking permits for entry into Canada, and economic and other conditions in the Dominion itself make it more than ever necessary that particular care and scrutiny be observed in the granting of applications." (King Papers Pp. 210459-60)

There are certain rewards of satisfaction for even basic humane acts. After their successful intervention the Birks sought to share theirs with the Hon.T.A. Crerar on February 23, 1939, for the happier ending of the epic of this rescue.

"This afternoon my wife and I had quite a thrilling experience in meeting here, in London, the cultured Jewish refugee family who escaped from Germany three days ago, arriving in England yesterday. All three took tea with us in our flat at Grosvenor House this afternoon.

"They are such charming, refined people, and will enrich our Dominion. I must confess that at most times tears were not very far from the surface with any of us today.

"The two ladies were not allowed to bring a single piece of jewellery, their engagement rings even being taken from them. All family silver was taken except one spoon and fork per person. They were very wealthy but were compelled to leave 97% of their estate and take 3% out.

"They cross on the S.S. Duchess of Richmond Friday and will at first occupy our own flat, The Chateau, on Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal.

"I met yesterday casually another old business acquaintance, a stone cutter from Idar, Germany, the stone-cutting district I used to visit before the War. He had simply handed his entire plant over to his German foreman and came to London with his mother and sister, and opened up a new plant here.

"Other German Jews of my acquaintance have opened up factories for leather goods, which used to be made exclusively in Offenback in Germany, and are now employing hundreds of English hands...

"I hope Canada is acting in a wise way in permitting the entry of such people and not allowing any bigoted nationalism to keep our Dominion in the shallows." (King Papers, Pp.225725-26). It would be nice to know that Mr. Crerar was sensitive to such shared rewards.

Mrs. A.J. Freiman was given an explanation by F.C. Blair, Director of Immigration, why her protégée could not remain in Canada: her parents, three brothers and a sister were residing in Germany.

But this Alice-in-Wonderland-inferno reasoning was set aside, and the story ended happily when it was proved -- at the end of December, 1938 -- "that the young woman's parents had been lost track of in Germany." In view of this she was allowed to remain in Canada from month to month for another six months in order that time may be afforded to enable her to locate her parents. (King Papers, Pp. 210515-20)

There are interesting aspects to the several cases of King's interventions on behalf of friends seeking the admission of individual migrants. There is nothing morally abhorrent in a prime minister exerting his powers at friends' behalf in such cases of urging and mercy.

And it was not always wielded on behalf of the powerful friends of the powerful prime minister.

H. Carl Goldenberg was only 31 when his aunt at Vienna was given ten days to leave the country. "You can well image the alternative if they do not leave," he wrote to Mr. King. (King Papers, Aug. 20-25, 1938, Pp. 213715-20)

Upon the energetic intervention of Mr. King, the immigration department did grant permission to Mr. Goldenberg's family. But it is significant that in the conversation about the case Director of Immigration F.C. Blair dared say, when told that King "wished everything possible to be done to meet this request," -- "there are thousands of such cases." What was the ultimate power that emboldened a secondary level official to speak thus to a powerful premier in his prime against his exercise of clemency?

An even more remarkable case of King the compassionate is the tale of the illiterate Montreal shoeshine man desperate to secure the admission of his niece. Inarticulate to the point of incoherence in all languages -- barring a doubtful Yiddish -- he persisted on long distance telephone wire that he would speak only to "Mr. King at Ottawa" until passed through all operators and secretaries and private secretaries. Mr. King took the telephone and the incoherent dialogue began.

From Montreal came a sound like "I want my niece"; and in Ottawa Mr. King patiently kept on asking what it was all about. The prime minister finally won the debate, and managed to learn it was an immigration case; he found out the name of his caller -- and eventually he secured the admission of the petitioner.

Abella and Troper reveal a remarkable tergiversation in King's attitudes, recalled in the premier's diary,

"On December 1, it seemed as if the Jewish community had won over its most important convert. On that day during a Cabinet meeting, Thomas Crerar, obviously troubled by his government's behaviour, announced to his stunned colleagues that he was prepared to recommend the admission of 10,000 refugees. The Cabinet would not budge. Disassociating himself from the hapless Immigration Minister, whose proposal he thought was made without consideration of the problems involved, King found a convenient solution. He suggested to his colleagues that they make use of the B.N.A. Act to justify their inaction. He would publicly announce that nothing could be done for German Jews until the provinces were consulted since immigration legislation was concurrent. At the same time he chided Crerar, told him to do his homework and to prepare a statement which the Cabinet would discuss.

"Crerar's defection clearly troubled King. Even more bothersome, however, was the announcement on the same day by the Australian government that it was now prepared to admit 15,000 refugees over the next three years. At once Crerar warned the Prime Minister that Canada would be put under a good deal of pressure to follow suit. As well, King received a trenchant letter from A.A. Heaps that the Australian decision had made him 'ashamed' as a Canadian and that the government's policy was 'inhumane' and 'lacking principle'.

"On December 13 the Cabinet took up the refugee issue once again. Aware that he had no support either from his Cabinet colleagues or his departmental officials, Crerar read a statement -- drafted by Blair -- which said nothing about the admission of 10,000 refugees but which simply recommended the easing -- ever so slightly -- of the present immigration regulations.

"After straying somewhat, Crerar had again been brought back into line. A relieved Cabinet accepted the new position not to change the regulations but to interpret them 'as liberally as possible'. What this meant in practice, according to the Prime Minister, was that Jews already landed in Canada as tourists would be allowed to remain. However, no more Jewish refugees would be admitted to Canada 'lest it might foment an anti-Semitic problem... and (create) a new problem'. Thus, after months of wrestling with the question of Jewish refugees, the Cabinet had at long last found an answer: keep them out.

"Ironically, at the same meeting at which it was decided not to allow in Jews, the Cabinet agreed to permit the entry of Czechs and Sudeten Germans since, it felt, they 'had been sacrificed for the sake of the world's peace of which (Canadians) were beneficiaries.' Perhaps the real explanation for the Cabinet's devious choice of Czech over Jew, however, lay with the person King had appointed as High Commissioner in Great Britain.

"For Jewish refugees anxious to come to Canada it was unfortunate that the Canadian representative in London was, to say the least, no partisan of Jewish immigration. Vincent Massey, scion of the Massey family, had in fact become part of an anti-Semitic, pro-Fascist set centred around Lord and Lady Astor. When it became evident, following Munich and the Nazi annexation of the Sudetenland in October, 1938, that there would now be a new group of refugees, King asked Massey to gather whatever details he could concerning their numbers, and political and religious background.

"Massey was enthusiastic about these anti-Nazi Sudetens, most of whom were Social-Democrats or Catholics.

"By the onset of 1939 an unofficial unholy triumvirate had been forged in the Immigration Service, the Cabinet and the Department of External Affairs against refugees in general and Jewish refugees in particular. In Immigration, the intransigent and morally obtuse Blair gave vent to his anti-Semitism by placing every possible bureaucratic encumbrance in the path of refugees. In Cabinet Ernest Lapointe, King's trusted Quebec lieutenant, scuttled any Cabinet backsliding -- including that of the Prime Minister -- on the refugee issue. In External Affairs, Vincent Massey flirted with the proto-Fascist aristocratic crowd in London, while doing what he could to keep Jews out of Canada. Individually, each had immense power; collectively they were beyond challenge. Each had his own sphere of influence, but on the refugee issue these spheres overlapped. Though there is no evidence that they consulted on this issue -- and they likely did not -- what united them was a common conviction: Canada did not need any more Jews.

"When the foremost immigration authority, the leading French-Canadian politician in the country, and the nation's senior foreign diplomat spoke, King listened, especially since they were all saying the same thing. King himself vacillated. At times his humanitarian and religious instincts led him to argue the refugee case; yet always his political instincts overcame these arguments. His sympathy for the refugees was genuine. He sincerely wanted to find them a home -- anywhere but in Canada.

"Nonetheless Jewish leaders still made the effort."

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