

**Franklin Bialystok**

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## **NEO-NAZIS IN TORONTO: THE ALLAN GARDENS RIOT<sup>1</sup>**

On Monday May 31, 1965 a one inch headline in *The Globe and Mail* declared: “Mob Beats Suspected Nazis In Outburst at Allan Gardens.” The news reported that day in the nation’s media described an anti-Nazi demonstration that attracted, according to the *Globe*, five thousand protesters, of whom nine were arrested when the demonstration deteriorated into a riot. Protesters had gathered at a park on the eastern fringe of downtown Toronto to oppose an announced rally by the Canadian Nazi Party, at which John Beattie, the self-styled leader of the Nazis, was to have spoken. The riot itself lasted less than 15 minutes, largely due to the rapid reaction of the Toronto police. The rally, if it had taken place without the violent counter-demonstration, would have been an isolated event that would have barely disturbed the calm of a pleasant spring afternoon. At a deeper level, however, the riot was the seminal event in Toronto’s Jewish community in the post-war era. Those fifteen minutes marked a watershed in the community. The anti-Nazi demonstration was a tangible illustration of a new force in the community: the Holocaust survivor.

From 1945 to 1960 there were two Jewish communities, in psychic, if not always geographic terms: the established community, defined as those who were born or raised in Canada in the pre-war period, and the survivors. In the 1960s, a series of antisemitic incidents endangered the mood of security of Canadian Jews. When the established community seemingly

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minimized the gravity of these events, a vocal core of survivors confronted the leadership. Upon being rebuffed by the mainstream organizations, they created their own associations and challenged the establishment to take a more militant profile. Their efforts began to reach fruition in the 1970s when survivors cracked the barriers of the established structures and emerged as the catalyst for Holocaust remembrance and education. Consequently, by the mid 1980s the Holocaust had become one of the pillars of ethnic identification for most Canadian Jews as a response to the changing collective memory of the community about the event. The Allan Gardens Riot was a turning point in this four-decade process. Not only was the riot at the chronological centre, it was more significant as the symbol of the arrival of the survivors as a force both within the Jewish and the wider community and it unleashed a sequence of developments that led to the widening of the corridors of power in the Canadian Jewish Congress.

### I

The proportion of Jews in Canada's population has remained relatively static since the 1920s at 1.5 percent. Today, there are 360,000 Jews in a population of 30 million. In the decade between 1947 and 1956, 30,000 to 35,000 Holocaust survivors and their families immigrated to and remained in Canada. While in absolute terms, this influx was small in comparison to the estimated 250,000 who went to Israel, and the overall figure of 137,500 Jewish immigrants (survivors and non-survivors) who went to the United States, it was significant in proportion to the whole. By the late 1950s, 13 to 15 percent of Canadian Jews were survivors, greatly exceeding the proportion of survivors who made up American Jewry in the same period (approximately 4 percent). Two-thirds of the survivors congregated in Montreal (12,000) and Toronto (10,000).<sup>2</sup>

From 1945 to 1960, the Canadian Jewish community was in transition. The established Jews in the largest cities

(Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg, which housed three out of four Jews) were preoccupied with advancing from the fringes of Canadian society into the mainstream. Whereas the pre-war Jewish neighbourhoods were located in the inner-city cores, the post-war exodus to the suburbs was reflective of changes within the community. The most significant transformation was the emergence of an upwardly mobile professional and business class. Its members distanced themselves from the working class origins of previous generations. They considered themselves to be Canadians and were increasingly accepted as such.<sup>3</sup> Community leaders concentrated on creating a unified voice and gaining recognition by the majority of English and French Canadians. This left little opportunity for established Jewry to comprehend the experiences of the refugees who inundated the community, and even less appreciation of the destruction of European Jewry. The established community, rightly, was most preoccupied with the immediate needs of the survivors, namely relief, restitution and absorption. Canadian Jews felt secure in a tolerant and prosperous post-war nation. They did not feel that the Holocaust was part of their world. Major community organizations were ill-disposed to pressure the government by protesting the entry of Nazi war criminals or sympathizers, or to campaign against hate propaganda.

For the survivors this was also a period of transition. Prior to immigration, many had created new lives for themselves in the refugee camps and cities of war-ravaged Europe. Some had married or re-married, borne children, resumed their education or learned new skills, and prepared themselves for integration into North American culture and society before they set sail. Upon arrival in Canada, they were consumed with finding accommodation and employment and establishing communal networks with other survivors. For the most part, they were not concerned with relating their experiences to established Jews, especially since their memories were so fresh, so painful, and bespoke of their rupture from their families and homes. For those who did speak to established Jews about their experi-

ences, the response ranged from shock to incomprehension to derision. Ultimately their experience created a gap between themselves and Canadian Jews as evidenced by their separation in neighbourhoods, community organizations, and most important, in the articulation of ethnic identification.<sup>4</sup>

## II

A rapid succession of events between 1960 and 1965 swung the mood of the Jewish community from its comfortable perch within the Canadian social fabric to a fear that a re-emergence of anti-Jewish forces was primed to restrict its gains. In the winter of 1959-60 a widespread, spontaneous outburst of swastika daubings occurred in Jewish communities world-wide. Appeals were made to the Canadian Jewish Congress for "immediate action." At its meeting on 9 January 1960 Congress determined, however, that there should be no unnecessary publicity, no panic or hysteria, and that all cases should be referred to police and to Congress. They cautioned against vigilante action. In the words of Maxwell Cohen, dean of law at McGill and an advisor to Congress, the daubings were dismissed as "imitative hooliganism."<sup>5</sup>

Several months later, global attention became focused on the capture of Adolph Eichmann. For the next two years, details of his apprehension, abduction, trial and execution dominated the front pages of the ethnic and national press. In Canada, the months of testimony and the image of the average man in the glass booth transmitted on television screens did more to inform Jews and other Canadians about the Holocaust than any other occurrence in this period. Its effect on the survivor community was somewhat different. The Eichmann trial confirmed what it already knew. For some survivors it was a case of reliving their nightmares during the day. Unlike the jarring impact that it had in Israel in reshaping the collective memory of the Holocaust, the Eichmann trial had minimal bearing in the relations between survivors and the established community.

Local events proved to be far more profound.<sup>6</sup>

In Quebec a fledgling Nazi movement was started that had miniscule support, but succeeded in gaining widespread publicity. The Canadian National Socialist Party was led by André Bellefeuille, a disciple of Adrien Arcand, the long-time Quebec fascist.<sup>7</sup> Its existence was revealed on *Newsmagazine*, a CBC television programme broadcast on 30 October 1960, in an interview with George Lincoln Rockwell of the American Nazi Party. In response, the first organization of survivors in Canada was formed—The Association of Survivors of Nazi Oppression. The term “survivor” is significant. Until then, they had been derisively described as “D.P.s” (displaced persons), or as *greener* (greenhorns), as had earlier Jewish immigrants. As “survivors,” they assumed an identity that was a more accurate reflection of their experience, and, moreover, was one of pride.<sup>8</sup> In the meantime Bellefeuille’s nascent party folded.

In Toronto, dissemination of hate literature began in 1963. It was largely anti-Jewish, but also aimed at Afro-Canadians, native Canadians, and Catholics. Its source was neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups in the United States; its distribution by their Canadian acolytes. It was most prevalent in Toronto where David Stanley, a clean-cut nineteen year old, brazenly stood on street corners in downtown Toronto and handed out the material. In addition, he and a few cohorts stuffed their pamphlets into mail boxes in Jewish neighbourhoods, and audaciously dropped them from the roofs of buildings. By 1964 this scurrilous literature had found its way into classrooms. Congress was not amused. Through its Joint Community Relations Committee (JCRC) the decades long approach of back-room diplomacy and what was euphemistically referred to as the “quarantine effect” was dropped. Sydney Harris, co-chair of the committee, publicly exposed the neo-Nazis leaders and their followers in April 1964.<sup>9</sup>

Harris’ disclosure was made possible due to the JCRC’s clandestine surveillance of Stanley and John Beattie, the neo-Nazi leaders, and their tiny coterie. Harris was a prominent

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Toronto attorney and a symbol of the gains made by Canadian Jews. He was born in 1917, the child of Toronto-born parents, which made them “pioneers” among Jewish immigrants. Harris graduated from Osgoode Hall law school in 1942 and quickly gained a reputation as a bright and energetic figure. By 1964, Harris had served in leadership positions in the leading Jewish organizations and in the Canadian Bar Association. He was elected president of Congress in 1974.<sup>10</sup> His address, before 1500 Torontonians at Beth Tzedec Synagogue at the 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, marked a departure from Congress’ traditional method of counteracting anti-semitism. He stated:

We have come into the possession of certain facts which identify the cowards who have crawled through post office boxes into our homes and lives, who have scrawled obscenities and indecencies on envelopes and postcards, who have littered streets and apartment lobbies with incredible repetitions that ‘Hitler was Right,’ who have created a mythical Col. Fry to induct people into a foreign white supremacy political party.”

Harris then proceeded to identify “these scum”: David Stanley, John Beattie and Neil Carmichael, and gave their addresses, their supporters and their supporters’ addresses.<sup>11</sup>

For decades, the main Jewish organization in Canada had worked behind the scenes in combating antisemitism. It rarely publicized its efforts to the general public, preferring to work with politicians and law enforcement officials to clamp down on the activities of antisemites, much to the consternation of more militant individuals and groups. Harris openly broke with this tradition in his address:

First, we have for the time being abandoned the policy that has said ‘Don’t publicize the hate-monger.’ We have done so not only because he is so insignificant in stature and in meaning that we

must know what small and futile enemies we now have, but also because the ever widening tidal waves of his influence, if unchecked by the barriers of public disavowal, disfavour and illegality, may spread to inundate our society before we recognize the disaster.”

Harris maintained that the prime avenue for combating the Nazi groups was through changes to the law for which Congress had been lobbying, without success, for several years.

This important address should have removed all doubt that Congress was moving away from the “*sha shtil*” (don’t rock the boat) policy of the past. He warned that

it is no longer a time for us to be silent—it is a time for us to speak, to speak to our government and to the world, to speak to the tiniest spreaders of the typhoid germs of hatred and to the largest oppressors of racial and religious minorities in the same voice...We must ensure that the sacrifice for freedom made by the brave fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, whose “*Yahrzeit*” (annual commemoration) we observe tonight, need never be repeated.<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, the decision to disclose the information was not unanimous, nor was it taken quickly. According to Harris:

we [the Joint Community Relations Committee (JCRC)] had been fighting for a long time on the *sha shtil* approach and there was a large element in the community that said ‘don’t make a noise.’ That did not wash well with me...was never an ideal that appealed to me. Now [at the time of the riot] we were accused of that mentality, but if anyone looks at the record they would know. We had vetted these things [the Nazis and their supporters] and we had inside information.<sup>13</sup>

The “inside information” was attained through an informer who, according to Harris, provided the material “for a ‘consid-

eration'...before we decided to give that speech...Once we had it [the information] enough was enough, the best way to shut him [Stanley] up was to shine a bright light on him. It didn't shut him up, but it certainly satisfied the community."<sup>14</sup>

Harris was correct on one count: public exposure did not lessen the activities of the neo-Nazis. Their distribution of hate literature continued. The white supremacist groups in the United States continued to gain notoriety and, in the fall of 1964, Rockwell and the American Nazi party were provided with wide exposure to the Canadian public on the CBC. These actions heightened the tensions within the Jewish community. Survivors and their supporters were outraged. The National Joint Community Relations Committee (NJCRC) of Congress responded in traditional fashion. It worked together with a Board of Review created by the Postmaster General, John R. Nicholson, and headed by Mr. Justice Dalton Wells to look into denying the National States Rights Party the use of the mail to send its literature to Canada. This would cut off Stanley's main source of hate propaganda. Its representatives also met with David Orlikow (M.P.-NDP) who had introduced a private members' bill on this issue, which was then referred to the House Standing Committee on External Affairs.

The NJCRC made a submission to this committee. In addition, it lobbied the Minister of Justice on amending the Criminal Code to indict neo-Nazis and publicly protested the airing of the Rockwell interview.<sup>15</sup> Congress, however, misjudged the mood of some elements in the community, who were not "satisfied" by the turn in the organization's tactics. In the months following Harris' address, some survivors overcame their internal displeasure with the apparently tame response to Stanley, Beattie and Rockwell, and began to take action themselves. The rising militancy among a vocal and active group of survivors and their supporters in the winter of 1964-5 heralded a break in the Toronto Jewish community. They became politicized, challenged Congress to take a stronger line, while countering the neo-Nazis with their own brand of action.



In early 1965, JCRC's surveillance of the neo-Nazis was boosted when a young man "of Italian ancestry" came to the office of Myer Sharzer, the Executive Vice President of Central Region, offering to infiltrate Beattie's group together with two of his friends. After attending a meeting at Carmichael's house, the informant contacted Sharzer to report on the group's plans. He stated that Beattie and Stanley had split because the latter had stopped supporting Rockwell. Beattie had only a few active followers at this point, mainly young men in their late teens and early twenties. In a confidential memo written on February 18, Meyer Sharzer, executive director of Congress (Central Region), reported that "M. [the code name for Beattie] says that he is going to be the leader of the Canadian Nazi Youth Party, which he is forming, and which will come 'into the open' on April 20. (Why April 20? We must find out)." Sharzer was apparently unaware that April 20 was the anniversary of the birth of Adolf Hitler. The insignificance of Beattie's group was reinforced by a report it received after the riot, in October 1966. An article written by John Garrity, a private detective hired by Ben Kayfetz, the venerable executive director of the JCRC, revealed that "early in 1965, when there was just Beattie and a couple of teenagers, Jack DeCock [J. de C. in Sharzer's memo] and Peter Riedel, in the Nazi business, they...caused riots and demonstrations just by declaring themselves Nazis.... 'Just think,' Beattie once told me, 'three or four kids, that's all we were, and we had the country up in arms'."16

### III

While the JCRC was busy gathering information on the Beattie gang, survivors were also becoming involved. Until the early 1960s, the survivor community in Toronto, smaller and less politicized than in Montreal, was content to yield the arena of anti-racism to the JCRC. Survivors were either apolitical with respect to the Jewish community, or had joined *landsman-shaften*, Zionist groups, and/or ideological movements in the

city that tended to reinforce their insularity. While not comfortable with the apparently passive approach of the established organizations to the spread of antisemitism, survivors were not ready or confident to take public action themselves. One survivor, Mike Englishman who came from Holland in 1952, had not been involved in communal affairs for the first decade of his life in Canada. He recalls that one day

‘Irv’ walked in [to his store]. [He asked] if I would be interested to know that a new Nazi party was being planned in Toronto. I never found out why ‘Irv’ came to see me. [I replied] you must be stark raving mad....He said ‘I have proof’.’ From that point I was interested. ‘Irv’ and I, just the two of us...went to the Yonge St. meeting place. One of the back doors was unlocked...We heard them. They were planning to form a Fascist party....Now I got my back up and went to the Jewish Congress. Ben Kayfetz said we know all about it. [I asked] what are you going to do about it? [Kayfetz said] ‘no sir, we’re not going to give them the publicity, we’re not getting the Jewish people upset.’ I said that the Judenrats [the Jewish councils appointed by the Nazis in the ghettos] did exactly the same thing as what you’re doing right now.<sup>17</sup>

Another survivor, Mike Berwald, immigrated in 1952 from Hungary. When the hate literature began to proliferate, he met with another survivor, Charles Wittenberg, who had served in the French underground during the war. He also met with two Canadian Jews, Rabbi David Monson who had been a chaplain in the Canadian army during the war, and Harvey Lister of the Jewish War Veterans, Wingate Branch. Berwald remembers that “we had to do something. [We] met Kayfetz, Harris and [Sydney] Midanik (chairperson of JCRC Central Region), and they said not to do anything, it was their job, not to stick our noses in it, [they were] doing everything possible.”<sup>18</sup> Rebuffed

by Congress, Englishman and Berwald independently decided to take matters into their own hands.

On 24 January 1965, about forty people met at the headquarters of the Hakoah Soccer Club, whose president was Mike Berwald. They watched a movie on the rise of Nazism, organized themselves to confront Stanley, who was holding a rally that night at the CBC studios, and elected an executive. One week later, the group met at the same place. After some deliberation, it chose N3 to be the name of the nascent organization. The name, which was suggested by two university students at the meeting, referred to Newton's third law, "to each action there is an opposite and equal reaction." Berwald remembers that "we came out with the name N3, I didn't even know what it meant, the university students named it." After the formal meeting, about twenty people met and volunteered for action groups, and were divided into cells. Berwald led one of the cells. They had lists of 35 neo-Nazis, and mentioned that there were at least three independent vigilante groups already in existence.

The newly-formed executive committee of N3 met on February 3rd. While there was still no clear-cut direction in the organization, Charles Wittenberg, who eventually became its president, recommended that it should be a public organization with a defence element. Five days later, N3's next meeting attracted sixty-five people. A tape recording of a meeting of the neo-Nazis at Carmichael's home was played and they discussed mounting a protest against the German Statute of Limitations against Nazi war criminals. Ironically, the source of information on these meetings of survivors was a JCRC informer who reported directly to Kayfetz. Kayfetz then relayed the news to Midanik and Harris. Thus, not only had the JCRC infiltrated the neo-Nazis, but also its most strident critic in the Jewish community. Berwald claimed that N3 officials knew the meetings were bugged. He explained: "We went to New York to buy a bugging device [to infiltrate the neo-Nazis]...and this equipment picked up Congress' bugging device, so we knew."<sup>19</sup>

N3 opened a second front within the Jewish community in response to the neo-Nazis. Its membership was unique within the community. Berwald and Wittenberg were among a small core of survivors who had emerged as spokesmen outside the established organizations. N3, however, was not strictly a group of disgruntled survivors. Unlike the homogeneous background of members of the *landsmanshaften*, survivors from many different European countries joined the group. This both allowed a wider representation from the survivor community and determined that English, rather than Yiddish, was to be the language of operation. Further, many members of N3 were born or raised in Canada. Disenchanted with Congress policies and enraged by the rising tide of antisemitism, they were not content at being relegated to the sidelines.

Meanwhile, Mike Englishman and his acquaintance “Irv” were also infiltrating the neo-Nazis. Englishman went to Carmichael’s residence on the pretext of applying for membership. While Carmichael was distracted Englishman loosened the dead-bolt lock on the back door. Later, he and “Irv” returned, kicked in the door and removed the membership files. “As soon as that was done nobody came to that building anymore....That threw the party into shambles....They killed themselves from any further support.” Another meeting place was the apartment of Henryk Van der Windt on Admiral Road in central Toronto. Englishman, posing as a hydro inspector, gained the lay-out of the apartment.<sup>20</sup>

At the same time, yet another anti-Nazi group was created. Canadian-born Jewish students established the Canadian Organization for the Indictment of Nazism (C.O.I.N.). Its aims were to “instill an acute awareness of the menace...of anti-semitic groups in the Jewish Youth of Toronto; to inform of the many incidents and actions which have occurred (sic)...; to initiate an all encompassing organization of Jewish Youth; to work...with other organizations.” Cyril Levitt, one of C.O.I.N.’s founders, remembered that the leaders had first contacted Ben Kayfetz.

[We] had the backing of Congress for a rally that

we wanted to hold in Toronto at the Y.M.H.A. (2 May 1965). [We] contacted most of the Jewish youth organizations...Over one thousand showed up...It [the auditorium] was packed from wall to wall...[We] tried to keep channels of communication open between those who favoured a strong response, even a violent response and those that preferred to do it through the *shtadlanist* [the traditional approach], working behind the scenes, and we did that. I can recall a meeting within the N3 that was more extreme...[I also met] Mike Englishman and 'Irv' who were interested in more strong-arm things.<sup>21</sup>

Levitt, however, admitted that “we decided to run the organization on two levels, that there would be a public face...and then there would be a much smaller group that could work with people who favoured more direct kind of action.” As with N3, this “defence element” was not officially part of C.O.I.N. It gathered intelligence about the Nazis with the help of three non-Jewish students at the University of Toronto. They contacted Van der Windt, who by this time had become a double agent, and were allowed to photograph Beattie’s files who had entrusted them to Van der Windt. The files included correspondence with Colin Jordan and George Lincoln Rockwell.<sup>22</sup>

This low level espionage by amateur sleuths in the Jewish community was sophisticated surveillance in comparison to the stupidity, carelessness, and naivete of the neo-Nazis. The contacts between the surveillance teams and their prey had some bizarre moments. Sydney Harris tells one story about monitoring a meeting outside Carmichael’s house (probably while Englishman and “Irv” were eavesdropping at the back door). Slouched in his car with other leaders of the JCRC, “as we were making notes about who was coming out some drunk came careening up Yonge Street and crashed into my car and drew everybody’s attention.” On another occasion, the JCRC learned that the homes of Jewish community leaders who lived on the same street, including the Harris residence, would be

daubed with swastikas. Having alerted the police who were hiding in the bushes, Harris waited for the intruder:

What happened was that my house was the last to be decorated...We had a dog, who had to be let out at 11 P.M. We purposely stayed home that night. At 11 it appeared that nothing had happened, I let the dog out, and as I opened the door, this stupid bugger appeared on the verandah, the dog tore after him, he tore down the street, the cops chased after him and they grabbed him...In any event he was charged with mischief, and convicted to three months...I think it was Stanley.<sup>23</sup>

#### IV

At least four groups—JCRC, N3, Englishman/“Irv,” and C.O.I.N.—had succeeded in infiltrating the neo-Nazis. Apparently, concerned Jews had more inside information about the neo-Nazis than did members of the movement themselves. Aside from some co-operation by the defence element of C.O.I.N. with N3 and Englishman, however, there was no communication between the organizations, and presumably little awareness that each group was gathering the same information. In the winter and spring of 1965, the distrust between the JCRC and its critics in the Jewish community was palpable and growing. The JCRC justifiably felt that it had the inside track and the political connections to take appropriate and timely action. N3, the militants in C.O.I.N., and other so-called vigilante squads, also had the same information, but were alarmed by it, and felt that only a strong, public display against the actions of the neo-Nazis would act as a deterrent. This distrust deteriorated into open competition when word circulated that Beattie would speak at a public rally at Allan Gardens on May 30.

According to a city by-law passed in June 1963, anyone had a right to speak on condition that one received a permit issued by the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation. The only

stipulation was time and place.<sup>24</sup> When Beattie announced that his new “party” would hold a rally at Allan Gardens on 30 May, the JCRC immediately contacted City Hall. Philip Givens, the Mayor of Toronto, was an active member of the Jewish community, having served as a president of a B’nai Brith Lodge and a member of the JCRC among a host of organizations.<sup>25</sup> Givens recollected that “the parks department could only regulate the time of the permit, but not the subject, and [we] could not refuse [Beattie]. [It] was hard for me to explain to Sharzer and Kayfetz and the community that we could not deny him a permit.” When asked about petitions from survivors, Givens replied: “I couldn’t do things that were extra-legal, I couldn’t do that.”<sup>26</sup>

On 28 May, Congress issued a statement with respect to the planned rally at Allan Gardens:

Toronto apparently faces the gross provocation of a public Nazi demonstration some time this weekend. The Canadian Jewish Congress feels that the very threat of attempting such a demonstration...is insulting and provocative to the great majority of the citizens of this city. It indeed poses a threat to the peace and good order of the community .... For the citizens of Toronto, there can be only one response: to condemn completely and unreservedly the acts of the self-styled Nazis, and to bring to bear the weight of an outraged public opinion against the provocations they plan.<sup>27</sup>

The position of the CJC was somewhat ambiguous. Did complete condemnation mean that a counter-rally would be supported? Or did it imply that the public authorities had the sole responsibility to prevent the Nazi rally from taking place? Seeing that City Council could not stop Beattie legally from holding the rally, what was Congress advocating? Sydney Harris says that “[We were] still hoping that our people would practice restraint, that we would be going as observers, that none of the leadership of the community would participate in the affair, but we were there.”<sup>28</sup> The Congress statement did not

deter its critics. In the days leading up to the rally, N3 sent letters to Jewish organizations and synagogues urging mass attendance at the Beattie rally.<sup>29</sup>

On the day of the rally, one leaflet distributed by some *landsmanshaften* implored supporters:

Where Is Our Pride!  
Where Is Our Dignity!  
Where Is Our Self-Respect!  
Come to Allan Gardens.  
Experience Nazism In All Its Flourishes.  
See If You Can Maintain A Calm And  
Dispassionate Attitude.  
Join Your Fellow Citizens In A Non-Violent  
Demonstration Against This Cancer In Our  
Midst.

Another leaflet was addressed “To All Jewish Youth.” It stated: “On May 27 they [the Nazis] received a permit from the city to speak and demonstrate from 2 P.M. to 5 P.M. You are required, as a citizen of Toronto and as a Jew, to be there no questions asked by parents...Your lives are at stake...Your parents’ generation has failed you.”<sup>30</sup>

In fact, Beattie was never granted a permit because he had failed to apply for one. This was known by Congress and N3 two days prior to the rally. Beattie had asked John Garrity, who was a paid informer for Congress, to go to city hall for the permit, but Garrity had “conveniently” forgotten. Mike Berwald went to City Hall on the 28<sup>th</sup> to implore Givens to revoke the permit. Givens, the honorary president of the Hakoach Soccer Club, told Berwald: “‘He hasn’t got a permit, and he never got a permit’, and I knew that at that time he could have had a permit.”<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, neither Congress nor N3 informed the public of this news. If Beattie would have tried to speak, he would have been charged with public mischief. Instead, the city was inflamed with the news that weekend that the rally was to be staged, and the temperature was further raised by public service announcements in the media urging citizens to demonstrate against the rally.



V

Allan Gardens is a small space of green, one large block square, in a seedy area on the fringe of downtown Toronto. For decades its denizens have been down-and-out alcoholics, drugpushers, addicts, prostitutes, and the hopeless and homeless. On May 30, on a glorious spring day, a crowd began to form in and around the park just after noon. By 1:30, it had swelled to between 1500 to 5000 people.<sup>32</sup> At one corner of the park a group of teenagers from the Habonim Zionist Youth Organization were dancing to Israeli folk music. N3 later claimed that 200 of its members, specially trained in demonstration tactics, were strategically placed through the park. The crowd was made up of Ward 8 residents (Beattie's neighbours) who had formed an anti-Nazi group, curious onlookers, Gentiles whose families had been persecuted by the Nazis, Jews, the regular patrons of the park, and passersby. A radio report between 1:30 and 2 p.m. stated that all was calm at the park. Fifty of Toronto's finest, headed by Sergeant of Detectives Harold Adamson, were there to keep order. Mayor Givens and Alderman David Rotenberg, both Jewish, were the only municipal politicians present.

Shortly after 2 p.m., six youths, one wearing a black leather jacket, were stopped by police on Gerrard St. on the southern edge of the park. A crowd of several hundred gathered, and when the police let the youths continue, the crowd swelled. Some people began to attack the youths and were urged on by others who yelled "Kill them," "Get them." Meanwhile, Beattie had appeared, alone, under police protection. Nevertheless, he was detected immediately, attacked despite the police cordon, and hustled into a waiting paddy wagon before any serious injury could be inflicted. Adamson and Rotenberg appealed through a loud-hailer for calm. Rotenberg told the crowd that there were no Nazis in the crowd, not realizing Beattie's presence. The mayhem lasted no more than fifteen minutes as the police rescued the victims. For the next two hours, the crowd milled around before leaving. A tragedy was averted by the

quick response of the police and because only a small portion of the crowd resorted to violence.<sup>33</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the riot, the city was in shock. In the civil, conservative climate of “Toronto the Good,” a riot in a public park was outrageous. Eight of the attackers were arrested, and while none of them were on the N3 executive or appear to have been connected with the organization, N3 provided the bail. All eight were Jewish. Beattie was also arrested. They were all charged with creating a public disturbance; one with assault, one with possession of a starter’s pistol, and Beattie with unlawful assembly. One of the Jews and Beattie were convicted of the first charge; Beattie was acquitted on the second charge because there were no other persons assembled to act in concert with him.<sup>34</sup> The victims of the attack were members of a motorcycle club from northern Ontario who happened to be passing by.<sup>35</sup>

The shock waves were understandably most powerful within the Jewish community. Berwald recalls: “We [N3] were very disappointed....total strangers did it attacking innocent people....It hurt us in the Jewish community with the *landsmanshaften*.”<sup>36</sup> Cyril Levitt remembers that “it was pandemonium, it was bedlam, it was jammed, there were all kinds of rumours floating about.”<sup>37</sup> One issue which gripped the community in the immediate aftermath was whether the violence was spontaneous or premeditated. One report categorically stated that “from all the evidence, the anti-Nazi groups did NOT plan last Sunday’s 10 violent minutes in Allan Gardens.” Quoting Max Chikofsky, the report stated that at a meeting of N3 on May 28, three hundred people “unanimously voted that there should be NO violence—that there should be a turnout for a silent protest.”<sup>38</sup> Berwald stated: “Period, no violence was planned....We wanted to get a big demonstration, wanted to have a crowd...That’s why we had the kids dance the *Hora* [an Israeli folk dance]...our plan was not to let Beattie speak...The only thing we wanted to do was to take the sign [swastika].”<sup>39</sup> Mike Englishman concurred. It was “totally spontaneous,

nobody was actually prepared for violence...People started to run after them more a chasing party than a violent party, then the police came...definitely not a planned way for physical action.”<sup>40</sup> Cyril Levitt provided another perspective. He recalls that the riot was both planned and spontaneous. “Both, absolutely both, I think that groups within the N3 planned to get this guy, even within C.O.I.N. people were prepared to do that....As far as I know none of them were involved...but much of the emotion was spontaneous, people were working themselves up to a pitch.”<sup>41</sup> Beattie’s appearance and the presence of the misidentified and unfortunate bikers sparked an emotional outburst, and provided an outlet for the pent-up frustrations of some of the demonstrators. They had been the targets of public antisemitic outrages for five years. The anti-Nazi groups may not have planned the violence, but neither did they call off the demonstration when their leaders knew that Beattie did not have a permit. They were prepared for a confrontation. For them, the issue was not the legalities of municipal by-laws, but the unfurling of a swastika in a public park in their adopted haven.

The riot was a major setback for Congress. It had undone the years of good-will that had brought the Jewish community into the Canadian mainstream. Congress, despite its surveillance of its critics, could not control them. Tragically, the riot justified Congress’ decision not to work with the militants (or vigilantes, as they were called in Congress correspondence). According to Sydney Harris: “N3 wouldn’t talk, they weren’t interested in us, and didn’t give a damn what the general Jewish community thought was right. I don’t think they were being fair in calling us the *Judenrat*...they were not ready to accept the fact that there was a different climate in Canada than in the old country.”<sup>42</sup> Givens echoed this sentiment. He told the survivors that “this is not the old country. I told these persons that our police operated under democratic institutions and were prepared to preserve the law.”<sup>43</sup> For Harris and the other leaders and staff of Congress, the riot was proof that the community had not understood that the “quarantine” approach of earlier

times had been abandoned, and that Congress had done everything in its power to inform the community about the neo-Nazis, and to prepare for the rally. Nevertheless, Congress did not have a clear strategy. It also did not inform the public that Beattie did not have a permit, and it was not prepared to address the crowd. Its leaders were at Allan Gardens as observers and not as representatives of Toronto's Jewish community.

Congress' frustration expressed itself with force in its *Report on Neo-Nazism and Hate Literature*, released on 8 June 1965. The report, also referred to as the "communiqué," created unanticipated tremors in the Toronto Jewish community that threatened to rip asunder any pretence of unity. This was because of the language of the report, its untimely public release, and the vitriolic reaction to it by both militant critics and hitherto moderate supporters of the established community.

The report was a four-page document reviewing the formation, structure, and support of the Nazi Party; the current situation regarding hate propaganda legislation; the Allan Gardens "Incident"; and the most contentious section, "Vigilantes." It was signed by Jacob Finkelman, National Vice-President of CJC, Meyer Gasner, Chairman of Central Region, Sydney Harris, Vice-Chairman, and J.S. Midanik, Chair of JCRC (Central Region). Harris was the author of the report. With respect to the Nazi Party, the report stated: "The volume of this [hate] propaganda was such that the 'quarantine' technique of refraining from publicizing this activity was no longer effective and we had to confront and expose the distributors," referring to Harris' speech of April 19, 1964. The party was "absurdly small," and was marked by "financial instability." Regarding the "Vigilantes," the report declared:

Some of them sincerely avow non-violence, others pay lip-service to non-violence but from their actions seem bent on violence. During the few days before the event, meetings were held and irresponsible leaflets circulated all of which helped whip up some groups within the Jewish

community to the pitch of fear and frenzy that assisted in creating the atmosphere that led to the mob violence...The Canadian Jewish Congress accuses these persons and groups of irresponsibility creating a tense and inflamed situation which involuntarily was bound to erupt into violence and which unfortunately did so erupt...There are some individuals—fortunately very few—of these self-appointed *shomrim* [watchmen/defenders] who have mistaken noise for action and rabble-rousing for militancy...Our firm and aggressive policies both in opposition to neo-Nazism and in support of legislation will continue. We must above all exercise that restraint and self-discipline that is absolutely indispensable if we are to avoid the climate of terror, mob-rule and intimidation which can only serve the purposes of the neo-Nazis.<sup>44</sup>

Reading the report thirty years later, Harris stated:

What upset them most was that if there were any self-appointed *shomrim*, it was us, forgetting that we were the representatives of the total community...we were speaking on behalf of the community. Perhaps it was an infelicitous phrase, today I might have phrased it differently, I don't know....The 'self-appointed *shomrim*' was a bit of hyperbole that I could have done without, not so much as *shomrim*, but as self-appointed, because the truth cuts close to the bone.<sup>45</sup>

The inflammatory wording of the report was bound to upset organizations such as N3 and other critics of Congress. Unfortunately, the report was leaked to the press prior to its release to community organizations. This faux pas significantly exacerbated the hostility toward CJC and widened the split within the community. The bulk of the report had been written prior to the riot. The report was then edited to reflect the position of Congress after the riot, and was to have been sent out by mail to the Jewish community on Tuesday June 8. Ralph Hyman of

*The Globe and Mail* and a member of the JCRC knew of the letter, asked for a copy, and was given one. Unfortunately, the letters did not arrive until the Friday or the following Monday, whereas the *Globe* printed excerpts of the letter the next day (Wednesday) on the front page. The headline read: “Jewish Congress Blames Jews for Fomenting Mob Violence” focusing on the section of the Report that discussed the “vigilantes.”<sup>46</sup> The article was picked up by other newspapers and received prominent exposure. A sample of the headlines of Ontario newspapers included: “Jewish Congress Denounces Riot” (Brampton); “Jews Asked To Show Restraint, Discipline” (St. Thomas); “Jewish Congress Accuses Jews For Anti-Nazi Riots” (Oshawa); “Our Own People Helped Incite Riot” (Peterborough).<sup>47</sup> Thus not only did the Jewish community first learn of the report denouncing Jewish vigilantes from the press, but the rest of the country did as well.

Criticism of Congress intensified to unprecedented proportions. A private citizen, Linda Silverberg, wrote Gasner:

I don't like violence, but if violence will help us rid ourselves of Nazis, let's get violent!...your Congress is against the Jewish people and their views. We need an organization who thinks with us and for our best interests. The Jewish Congress has shown that they will only voice a 'safe' opinion.

The Zaglembier Society, an important *landsmanshaft* that heretofore had been a supporter of Congress wrote a *Letter of Protest* to the Central Region Office:

We Protest that the C.J.C. chose publicly to call those Jews Irresponsible Vigilantes...We do not have to be pitched to Fear and Frenzy, as a group of Nazi Concentration Camp survivors we do not need anymore sympathy. It is action we want...We say Nazism is not a Political party and speaking about genocide against people and in particular Jews, is NOT FREEDOM OF SPEECH. As long as there are no laws

against these things, we shall be “SHOMRIM”  
for all the Jews.

Rabbi Gunther Plaut, a member of the JCRC, wrote a resolution on behalf of the United Zionist Council that “deplores the release of the letter of June 8th to the press...intemperate wording on vigilantes in this letter....urges a broader representation on this committee.”<sup>48</sup>

The Association of Former Concentration Camp Inmates Survivors of Nazi Oppression of Montreal, the first and most important organization of survivors in Canada, wrote a nine page “Open Letter to the Jewish Community Of Canada.” It referred to June 9th as “ ‘Black Wednesday’ for the Jewish Community in Canada.” It said:

The blame is laid on the Jews and not on those poor Nazis of whom only a pitiful three wanted to hold a harmless little rally! Indeed, their statement means that, in this instance, *the Nazis were right, the Jews were wrong*....Let it be stated categorically that this is *the first time* in the history of the Jewish Community in Canada that a statement by or in the name of the Canadian Jewish Congress, condemning and insulting a segment of the Jewish population, has been made in public...It is indeed sad and tragic that a people who barely survived the worst holocaust in its long and painful history and which devotes so much of its energy to protect itself against outside enemies, should be plagued by such unfair and damaging actions from within.<sup>49</sup>

## VI

For the Jewish community of Toronto the CJC Report and the reaction to it marked the nadir of community relations in the post-war period, and perhaps in the history of the community. By the mid 1960s, it was clear that the membership of the JCRC

was not representative of the community and in some ways had lost touch with significant segments of Toronto Jewry. A socio-economic profile of the committee members who attended a meeting on June 24 is illuminating. Of the thirty-one members, eighteen were listed in the 1964 edition of *Who's Who In Canadian Jewry*, the most comprehensive guide to community leaders ever published. Two were the editors of the two largest English-language papers in the Toronto Jewish community; five were lawyers (and another three, not listed, were Queen's Counsel); one doctor; two more professionals; two rabbis, both from the same synagogue; two politicians and three industrialists. Thirteen were born between 1900 and 1920, and eight were born in Europe, with the most recent immigrant having arrived in 1926. Needless to add, there were no survivors, no small businessmen, no tradesmen, no women, no-one under thirty-five, and no representatives of the Orthodox community.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, the committee was divided over the riot and the report, and its leaders, chairman Sydney Midanek and vice-chairman Sydney Harris, had to defend Congress' response.

The debates and suggestions of the JCRC meetings speak volumes about the mind-set and composition of the established community of Toronto twenty years after the end of World War II. At the June 24 meeting, JCRC member Julius Hayman was correct in stating that there was "a cleavage in the community." What is astonishing is that it had taken so long for Congress to recognize the fact. The arrival of the survivors in the late 1940s and early 1950s, their adaptation to Canadian society in the following decade, and their concern and then outrage over domestic and international events that threatened to resuscitate the evil of Nazism, were outside the experience of the established majority. Even though the threat was more real in the minds of the survivors than in the affairs of state, it was the seemingly tepid response by Canadian Jews to the events that was most hurtful. These Canadian Jews had blithely gone on with their own affairs, though ever mindful and somewhat aware of the growing antisemitism in a few isolated circles of



Canadian society, without reaching out to the survivors. It was only the shock of the riot, and the after-effects of the report, that woke some members of the Congress to the realization that there were two elements in the community. Harris was correct in stating that the JCRC did not create the cleavage. The split was due to almost two decades of separation by two groups who had different experiences. At that meeting, Rabbi Gunther Plaut recommended that the JCRC needed wider representation. One only had to look at the socio-economic profile of the committee to ascertain the veracity of his assertion.

Plaut's recommendation did not go unheeded by Congress. Within two weeks, it was determined to implement "an active and vigorous anti-Nazi program in the Toronto area" to continue and intensify the campaign for laws against hate propaganda; to plan political action toward this end; to secure the co-operation of the widest sections of the Canadian public toward these ends; to [establish] the "Special anti-Nazi Committee."<sup>51</sup> A steering committee under the aegis of CJC Central Region and the JCRC decided on July 22 on the composition of the Special anti-Nazi Committee. There were to be eighty representatives chosen by congregations, labour, ideological groups and women's societies, B'nai Brith youth, the JCRC, and members "at large."<sup>52</sup> Congress had committed itself to rectifying the error of attacking its critics publicly. Of greater significance, the leaders of the established community had recognized that the rupture in the community had widened to such a dimension that whatever mandate they had been given was rapidly eroding. To heal the rift, it was incumbent upon them to create as inclusive a group, however diverse and fractious it might be, to advise Congress on matters relating to incipient antisemitism. The birth of what was called the Community Anti-Nazi Committee (CANC) was the first step in bringing survivors and their supporters into the corridors of power in the Toronto Jewish community.

The formation of CANC was not universally applauded. In retrospect, Mike Berwald felt that the committee was "in the

front of the Jewish community, to sweep it [the concern about Nazism] under the rug...They [CJC] wanted to stop the lobby [N3]...They didn't do anything." Cyril Levitt, who was C.O.I.N.'s representative on CANC states:

At the time, [I felt] it was a kind of sop that the established community had thrown, a kind of bone thrown at the survivors .... Today I don't think so...I thought that essentially the established interests in Congress thought of these people as a potential embarrassment to the community...In retrospect, I'm a little more sympathetic to Congress. The passion of the survivors got in the way of realizing what the reality was."<sup>53</sup>

Other members were more lenient in their judgment. Mike Englishman felt that "it was an effective committee because lines of communication were open between the two groups." Sydney Harris maintained that "it was not a sop. It was a reaction." Even N3 was somewhat mollified. Its chairman, Charles Wittenberg, the chairman of N3, wrote the following to the chair of the committee:

We welcome the establishment of your special Anti-Nazi Committee which has finally given proper recognition to the menace of neo-Nazism." He continued: "N3 now as in the past...is prepared to listen and work with every active anti-Nazi group interested in an active fight against neo-Nazism, but in addition expects that our point of view must be listened to and taken cognicance [sic] of."<sup>54</sup>

CANC was an active committee of Congress for several years, but its most significant work was done in 1966, in its initial year of operation. While the anti-Nazi group acted only in an advisory capacity to the JCRC, its function was primarily to bring a wider representation to Congress to open—as Englishman states—the lines of communication, and to act as a sounding board for the variety of views presented. For the first

time in the post-war Jewish community, representatives from the same committee brought different agendas, backgrounds and experiences to the table. This assemblage included the brilliant young lawyer, Alan Borovoy, soon to become counsel to the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, who took a strong line on the dangers in preventing Beattie and his followers full rights to expound their noxious views; militant survivors such as Jacob Egit and Wolf Rosenblatt who warned Congress about pursuing a timorous and weak-kneed line in combatting anti-semitism; and former radicals such as unionist Max Federman and journalist Sam Lipshitz, who had tempered their anti-establishment criticisms over the years. The ultimate value of CANC was that it provided a forum for contentious debate before decisions were made by Congress. Whether one takes the view that Congress co-opted its critics or seriously sought an avenue for discussion of the problems facing the community, CANC was an important first step in the healing process.

## VII

The primary issue for CANC and the JCRC was the Parks By-law. The existing by-law regarding public speaking provided the approval of any application for a permit, with the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation stipulating time and place.<sup>55</sup> On 25 July 1965, Beattie, this time with seven supporters and their Nazi regalia, again entered Allan Gardens. They were attacked and were charged with unlawful assembly, while the attackers were not charged.<sup>56</sup>

City Council had created a chaotic situation with its decision. Beattie's repeated applications and the contradictory decisions by the municipal authorities again put the Jewish community to the test. At first, CANC resolved that "it would not be politic to become embroiled in this issue as it would distract from the main goal of national legislation and would present us in the image of preventing free speech."<sup>57</sup> This hands-off approach was abandoned when the Parks and Recreation

Committee discussed changes to the existing by-law. The issue for Congress was whether to take a public position on the deliberations. At a meeting on March 10, 1966, after furious debate, the JCRC passed a motion that no action be taken before City Council met.<sup>58</sup> At CANC's meeting later that day there was also no consensus on the issue, but some members expressed disgust with the fact that JCRC had determined the path not to be taken before CANC's opinion was sought.<sup>59</sup>

Two significant points are salient in these deliberations. First, there was a diversity of opinion among community leaders about how to deal with the perceived neo-Nazi threat, and about the appropriate manner to appeal to the municipal authorities and the general community. Despite the inclusion of the survivors and their supporters in the JCRC, the traditional approach of moderation and low public profile remained in effect. Second, there was open competition between CANC and the JCRC over ownership of the issue. Not surprisingly, given the mandate of CANC as an advisory body to the JCRC, it was the latter committee that ultimately recommended policy to the Congress executive.

CANC's existence did not stifle the work of N3, even though the anti-Nazi Committee was designed to be a vehicle for diffusing criticism of Congress. CANC had allotted one seat on its committee to an N3 member (although there were N3 supporters from other organizations on the committee) on the understanding that it "had undertaken to submit to discipline."<sup>60</sup> While the JCRC refrained from lobbying City Council during the deliberations on the by-law, N3 had no such qualms. In a brief to City Council, it wrote: "Incitement to hate, the whole area of racial hatred...cannot be considered or set aside as deserving of different valuations...because it is essentially the fountainhead of the most serious menace to our enjoyment and practice of all freedoms. Moreover, it leads to civil disturbances, to violence, even to war and genocide."<sup>61</sup> After months of debate, City Council finally determined on 25 May 1966 that the original by-law would stand, with a subsection that "pro-

fane, indecent or abusive language...that is likely to stir up hatred” was illegal.<sup>62</sup>

Meanwhile Beattie obtained a one-hour permit to speak at Allan Gardens for 5 June 1966. Although drowned out by a crowd estimated at four thousand, he ranted for twenty-five minutes in his first public speech in a Toronto park. Two weeks later, on June 19, he spoke again, protected by two hundred police, to a hostile crowd of 1200. The next day, a furious James Mackey, Chief of Police, wrote Mayor Givens urging that Beattie not be allowed to speak again. Five days later, after listening to the tape, Mackey charged Beattie under the new sub-section on the promotion of hatred.<sup>63</sup> Charles Wittenberg, chairman of N3, contemptuously referred to the two rallies as “ ‘lawful’ by our current standards.”<sup>64</sup> For N3, Mackey was a hero, and William Archer, the controller who had voiced opposition to the sub-section, was a villain.

The sub-section still had to be approved by the Board of Control, the executive of City Council, at its meeting on 6 July. Congress and N3 had each sent delegations to meet with members of the Board. Upping the ante, N3 organized a demonstration in Nathan Phillips Square, outside Council chambers, the night before the Board meeting. Harvey Lister told a cheering crowd: “We will never forget or forgive the Nazi atrocities! That will never happen in this country!”<sup>65</sup> Archer, who refused to speak at the rally, likened the mobs at Allan Gardens to “any vigilante group.” At its meeting the Board of Control “voted to initiate a policy that no person charged under the parks by-law for inciting racial hatred would be granted a permit to speak while his trial was pending,” effectively excluding Beattie from speaking for the next several months.<sup>66</sup> Despite this minor victory, the established leaders were not amused by N3’s tactics. Sydney Harris stated that N3 had no place on a Congress committee if it planned its own activities. Others maintained that “N3 and survivors have another approach and this is why they exist.”<sup>67</sup>

Even though Beattie was silenced by municipal authorities the affair was kept in the public eye due to the exposure of

the Nazis by John Garrity in *Maclean's* on 1 October 1966.<sup>68</sup> Garrity was the private investigator who had infiltrated Beattie's group at the behest of N3 and when he ran into loggerheads with N3's leaders after the riot, was hired by Ben Kayfetz to continue his sleuthing for the JCRC. In the article he referred to N3 as a "lunatic fringe" and "the Jewish mafia," and an organization "who, in their attempts to destroy Beattie, provide him with most of the publicity he craves." The Nazis were "misfits," but "the most visible part of a growing right-wing movement in Canada which, I have come to believe, could represent a threat to our national stability." Beattie himself was unemployed, bereft of funds, and had been evicted from five apartments for non-payment of rent. He had been careful to stay within the law, and it was Garrity's hope that legislation outlawing hate literature would limit his capacity to spread his propaganda. Nevertheless, Garrity was far more sympathetic to his prey than he was to N3. He concluded: "I have spent so much time with Beattie in the past 16 months, that I've felt pangs of disloyalty... But he, or rather what he stands for—must be destroyed. To Beattie I can only say, 'I'm sorry, John, but you deserve it'."<sup>69</sup>

Despite initial outrage in the Jewish ethnic press over the appearance of sympathy for Beattie, the Garrity article had little effect on the dynamics within Toronto's Jewish community, or on the fortunes of the Canadian Nazi Party. By the fall of 1966, the rift between CJC and its more moderate critics had been paved over, and the community's concern with Nazis, antisemitism, and remembering the Holocaust were now focused on the proposed Statute of Limitations on Nazi war criminals in West Germany and the coming visit of the leader of a German neo-Nazi party to Toronto.

Beattie and his coterie were neutralized by the Board of Control's decision that one could not apply for a permit to speak while awaiting trial. Beattie's trial, stemming from his speeches in June 1966, was held on 18 October, and he was acquitted on 7 December. His acquittal was based on the residual power

given to the federal government under Section 91 of the BNA Act and reinforced by the Bill of Rights. Simply put, once Beattie was given authority to speak there could be no restriction imposed by City Council on what he said. As Mark MacGuigan—professor of law at Osgoode Hall and a member of the Cohen Commission which was dealing with the issue of hate propaganda—wrote at the time:

With the utmost good will, whatever the Toronto City Council tried to do seemed to turn out badly. Perhaps this suggests that a municipality is not the proper forum in which to grapple with the problem...It is important that such legislation be at the national and not at the local level.<sup>70</sup>

In the next two years, Beattie continued to speak at Allan Gardens, but with little publicity from the media or response by Toronto's Jews. On 30 June 1968 he spoke to about 125 persons who jeered and heckled him. Aside from twelve members of the JCRC, there were almost no Jews in the crowd. Ben Kayfetz reported that "the Jewish community again stayed away en masse. This time the media gave it the smallest attention yet, the radio and two of the three Toronto dailies not mentioning it, and TV giving it minimal attention."<sup>71</sup> By 1970, Congress files on Beattie, N3, and CANC were empty.

## VIII

The disappearance of John Beattie, David Stanley and the Nazi Party from prominence is not surprising. The group never numbered more than fifty, and the hard-core activists were but a fraction of the movement. A poor orator, Beattie had no organizational skills, published nothing, and was totally naive about security, surveillance and infiltration. Other right wing elements in the country, such as the racist fringe of the Social Credit Party, and Ron Gostick and his Intelligence Service, had little connection with the Nazis, and probably viewed them as a hindrance because of their visibility and the hostility they

engendered. While Beattie was able to work around municipal laws with some success, his most enduring ‘achievement’ was providing a catalyst for the emergence of those in Toronto’s Jewish community who had heretofore been excluded from the centres of communal power.

The cleavage in the community widened, however, because of tactics, misconceptions, contests of will. There was no division, however, over the fury felt by Toronto Jews about the neo-Nazis and their brazen antisemitic activities. Holocaust survivors, Canadian Jews, and many non-Jews would not countenance Nazis in their midst. The events of the early 1960s, from the swastika daubings of 1960 to the Rockwell broadcast in 1964, had so angered the community that the appearance of Stanley and Beattie on the local scene necessitated an immediate response.

Congress had little alternative but to respond on two fronts—pressing local authorities and undertaking its own surveillance. The information it gained determined its decision to publicly disclose the racists. Dissatisfied with this response and angered by CJC’s rejection of their pleadings to do more, survivors used their considerable organizational skills to mount their own counter-attack. The riot in Allan Gardens was predictable given the swelling tension. The events at Allan Gardens, however, were not inevitable. The demonstration could have been averted had community leaders, both from Congress and the anti-Nazi organizations, informed the community in advance that Beattie did not have a permit.

One view is that the riot could have been avoided if the community would have strategically turned a blind eye to the neo-Nazis. Thirty years later, Sydney Harris still felt that

if we had simply ignored these guys [the Nazis] they would have died...but in the climate of opinion people couldn’t care less about them in the general community, but unfortunately the Jewish community didn’t feel that way. The net result was that we got them all the publicity that they



wanted through our own actions, and that's why the whole Allan Gardens thing was an unnecessary situation.<sup>72</sup>

But the Nazis—however inconsequential they may have been—could not have been ignored. In ‘the climate of the day,’ community leaders, whether elected, appointed or self-appointed, had their own agendas. In retrospect, had the riot not taken place, the established forces would not have had to confront the reality that there was a cleavage within Toronto Jewry, that it had existed for years, and had now widened to such a degree that only by bringing the discordant elements together could the healing process begin. For this reason, the riot was arguably the most significant event in the post-war Toronto Jewish community.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>This paper is a revised and shortened version of a chapter in my *Delayed Impact: The Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community, 1945-1985*, forthcoming from McGill-Queen's University Press.

<sup>2</sup>J. Torczyner and G. Goldmann, “Demographic Challenges Facing Canadian Jewry,” in *The Canadian Jewish News*, 12 December 1993, pp. 1-2. Joseph Kage, *With Faith and Thanksgiving—the Story of Two Hundred Years of Jewish Immigration and Immigrant Aid Effort in Canada (1760-1960)* (Montreal, 1962), p. 261, 262. John J. Sigal and Morton Weinfeld, *Trauma and Rebirth: Intergenerational Effects of the Holocaust* (New York, 1989), p. 6. William Helmreich, “The Impact of Holocaust survivors on American Society: a socio-cultural portrait” in *Remembering for the Future: Jews and Christians During and After the Holocaust* (Oxford, 1988), p. 363.

<sup>3</sup>Irving Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada* (Toronto, 1990), pp. 209-223. Canadian Jewish Congress [CJC] Memo #524,15 November 1968, Ottawa: National Archives of Canada (NAC), B'nai Brith Canada Papers, MG 28, V 133, 36/21.

<sup>4</sup>Author's Interview with Philip Weiss, Chairperson, Holocaust Remembrance Committee of Western Canada, 1979-1992, Winnipeg, 21

November 1995. Interview with Mike Englishman, Member of the CJC Anti-Nazi Committee, 1966-1970, Toronto, 8 May 1995. Author's Interview with Nathan Leipziger, Chairperson, Holocaust Remembrance Committee, Toronto Jewish Congress, 1980-1988, Chairperson, National Holocaust Remembrance Committee, 1989-present, Toronto, 10 November 1995.

<sup>5</sup>Ontario Jewish Archives (OJA), JCRC Papers, MG8S, 1960, 12/32. Maxwell Cohen to Abraham Arnold, Editor of *The Jewish Western Bulletin*, 8 January 1960, Winnipeg, Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM), Abraham Arnold Papers, P5128, File 20.3. Author's Interview with Ben Kayfetz, Toronto, 7 November 1995.

<sup>6</sup>OJA, JCRC Papers, Eichmann Files, 1961, 12/13A, 1962, 14/14, 1963, 15/15. Montreal: Jewish Public Library Archives (JPL), Canadiana Collection, "Holocaust and Canada," Box 3. Kayfetz Interviews, 6 April 1994, 7 November 1995. For the impact in Israel, see Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, translated by Haim Watzman (New York, 1993), Part VI.

<sup>7</sup>For information on Adrien Arcand see Martin Robin, *Shades of Right: Nativist and Fascist Politics in Canada 1920-1940* (Toronto, 1992), pp. 87-206. Lita Rose-Betcherman, *The Swastika And The Maple Leaf: Fascist Movements in Canada in the Thirties* (Toronto, 1975). Pierre Antclil, "Interlude of Hostility: Judeo-Christian Relations in Quebec in the Interwar Period, 1919-1939" in Alan Davies, ed. *Antisemitism in Canada: History and Interpretation* (Waterloo, 1992), pp. 135-165.

<sup>8</sup>PAM, Arnold Papers, P 5138, File 90.3. CJC Archives, ZC 1, Organization Files, Association of Survivors of Nazi Oppression, ZF, Publication Files. JPL Archives, Canadiana Collection, Box: CJC National Holocaust Committee. Author's Interview with Lou Zablow, a founder and first president of the Association, Montreal, 29 May 1995. Author's Interview with Isaac Piasetski, a founder of the Association, and Aba Beer, first chairperson of the National Holocaust Remembrance Committee, Montreal, 19 July 1994.

<sup>9</sup>David Stanley interviewed by Larry Zolf, "This Hour Has Seven Days," 17 January 1965, Toronto: CBC Film Archives. Author's Interview with Larry Zolf, CBC Producer, 3 November 1995. Sydney Harris, "....And Now the Facts," address to Warsaw Ghetto Memorial, Toronto, 4 April 1964, OJA, JCRC Papers, 1964, 18/39. CJC National Confidential Memo, 24

November 1964, OJA, JCRC Papers, 1964, 18/39. Author's Interview with Ben Kayfetz, Toronto, 13 November 1995. Author's Interview with Judge Sydney Harris, Toronto, 10 May 1995.

<sup>10</sup>"Sydney Harris" in Gottesman, Eli, ed., *Who's Who In Canadian Jewry* (Ottawa, 1964), p. 22. Harris Interview.

<sup>11</sup>Sydney Harris, "....And Now For the Facts," 19 April 1964, JCRC Papers, 1964, 18/39.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Harris Interview.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Confidential letter from Michael Garber, President of CJC to NJCRC national officers, 24 November 1964, JCRC Papers, 1964, 18/39. In 1964 a Private Member's Bill to criminalize the distribution of hate propaganda (the Klein-Walker Bill) reached second reading. A year later, a committee was created by the Minister of Justice to report on the problem. The so-called Cohen Committee's report led to a bill to amend the criminal code in 1966. It was passed into law four years later.

<sup>16</sup>Confidential Memo, M.S. (Myer Sharzer) to S.M.H. (Sydney Harris), J.S.M. (Sidney Midanik), B.G.K. (Ben Kayfetz), 18 February 1965. Ibid., 1965, 3/160. Mark R. MacGuigan, "Hate Control And Freedom Of Assembly: The Canadian Nazi Party In Toronto, 1965-1966," *Saskatchewan Bar Review* 31 (1966): 232-250; p. 233; 21. John Garrity with Alan Edmonds, "I Spied On The Nazis," *Maclean's*, 1 October 1966, p. 38.

<sup>17</sup>Englishman Interview.

<sup>18</sup>Author's Interview with Mike Berwald, 7 May 1995, Toronto.

<sup>19</sup>Kayfetz file, 25 January 1965; Kayfetz to Midanik and Harris, 1 February 1965; Kayfetz to Midanik and Harris, 5 February 1965; Kayfetz to Midanik and Harris, 9 February 1965. JCRC Papers, 1965, 3/160. Berwald Interview.

<sup>20</sup>Englishman Interview.

<sup>21</sup>C.O.I.N. File, JCRC Papers, 1965, 21/31. MacGuigan, "Hate Control," p. 235. Author's Interview with Prof. Cyril Levitt, 9 May 1995, Toronto.

<sup>22</sup>Levitt Interview.

<sup>23</sup>Harris Interview. Actually, it was Beattie, not Stanley, who was arrested. This occurred one year after the riot in Allan Gardens.

<sup>24</sup> MacGuigan, "Hate Control," pp. 233-4.

<sup>25</sup> "Philip Givens" in Gottesman, ed., p. 309.

<sup>26</sup> Givens Interview.

<sup>27</sup> Association of Survivors of Nazi Oppression, *Open Letter To The Jewish Community of Canada*, 17 June 1965, p. 4., Jewish-Canadiana Collection, Jewish Public Library Archives, Montreal, Box—Association of Survivors of Nazi Oppression, File—Open Letters.

<sup>28</sup> Harris Interview.

<sup>29</sup> MacGuigan, "Hate Control," p. 234.

<sup>30</sup> JCRC Papers, 1965, 21/5.

<sup>31</sup> Special JCRC Meeting, 18 June 1965, at which Sydney Midanik stated: "It was known that Beattie had no permit." JCRC Papers, 1965, 21/36. MacGuigan, "Hate Control," "Hate Control," p. 235. Berwald Interview. Harris Interview. Garrity and Edmonds, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> CJC estimated the crowd at 1500; police at 3000; the media from 3000 to 5000.

<sup>33</sup> *The Globe and Mail*, 31 May 1965, pp. 1-2. Arnold Bruner, "Hate in Our City" in *Toronto Daily Star*, 5 June 1965, p. 8 in JCRC Papers, 1965, 24/110B. Givens interview. Minutes of Special Meeting of JCRC (Central Region), 18 June 1965.

<sup>34</sup> MacGuigan, "Hate Control," "Hate Control," p. 237. Minutes of Meeting of JCRC (Central Region), 26 January 1966, *Ibid.*, 1966, 25/2.

<sup>35</sup> Berwald Interview.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Levitt Interview.

<sup>38</sup> Dick Brown, "The anti-Nazis planned no violence," *Toronto Daily Star*, 8 June 1965, p. 8, JCRC Papers, 1965, 24/110B.

<sup>39</sup> Berwald Interview.

<sup>40</sup> Englishman Interview.

<sup>41</sup> Levitt Interview.

<sup>42</sup> Harris Interview.

<sup>43</sup> *The Globe and Mail*, 31 May 1965, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Canadian Jewish Congress, Central Region, *Report On Neo-Nazism And Hate Literature*, 8 June 1965, JCRC Papers, 1965, 21/5,

<sup>45</sup> Harris Interview.

<sup>46</sup> *The Globe and Mail*, 9 June, 1965, pp. 1-2, in JCRC Papers, 1965,

21/5. Minutes, Special JCRC Meeting, 18 June 1965.

<sup>47</sup>Kayfetz to Midanik, 27 June 1965, JCRC Papers, 1965, 21/5,

<sup>48</sup>Silverberg to Gasner, 9 June 1965; Gelbard, Chairman of Zaglember Society to Canadian Jewish Congress (Central Region), 13 June 1965. JCRC Papers, 1965, 21/5. Minutes of Special JCRC Meeting, 18 June 1965, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup>Association of Survivors of Nazi Oppression, "Open Letter," pp. 2 and 9.

<sup>50</sup>Gottesman, ed. Separate entries for the eighteen members are scattered throughout the text. Minutes of the JCRC, Central Region meeting, 24 June 1965. JCRC Papers, 1965, 21/35.

<sup>51</sup>Draft Resolution, Community Anti-Nazi Committee, 6 July 1965, JCRC Papers, 1965, 21/35.

<sup>52</sup>Sharzer to Kayfetz, 3 August 1965, Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Berwald Interview. Levitt Interview.

<sup>54</sup>Englishman Interview. Harris Interview. Wittenberg to Lipson, 13 December 1965, JCRC Papers, 1965, 26/37.

<sup>55</sup>MacGuigan, "Hate Control," p.233.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 235-6. Berwald, Levitt and Englishman Interviews.

<sup>57</sup>Minutes, CANC Meeting, 2 February 1966, JCRC Papers, 1966, 26/37.

<sup>58</sup>Minutes, Meeting JCRC Central Region, 10 March 1966, Ibid., 1966, 25/2.

<sup>59</sup>Minutes, Meeting of CANC, 10 March 1966, Ibid., 1966, 26/37.

<sup>60</sup>Minutes, CANC Meeting, 2 February 1966.

<sup>61</sup>N3, Fighters Against Racial Hatred To Toronto City Council, *A Brief To Safeguard And Preserve The Principle of Freedom Of Speech*, March 12, 1966. Ibid., 1966, 26/37.

<sup>62</sup>MacGuigan, "Hate Control," p. 238.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 237-9. Minutes of CANC Meetings 9 June, 29 June, 1966, JCRC Papers, 1966, 26/37.

<sup>64</sup>Charles Wittenberg, "Nazism is not a Jewish concern only" in *Menorah* (a Jewish weekly printed in Hungarian, article in English), JCRC Papers, 1966, 26/31. See also "Who Threatens Freedom?," by Max Chikofsky, the editor of the N3 newsletter *Shomrim*, in the same issue of *Menorah*.

<sup>65</sup>“1,000 anti-Nazis call city free-speech policy stupid,” *Toronto Daily Star*; 6 July 1966, JCRC Papers, 1966, 27/108.

<sup>66</sup>MacGuigan, “Hate Control,” pp. 241-2.

<sup>67</sup>Minutes, CANC Meeting, 20 July 1966. *Fighters Against Racial Hatred, Newsletter*, 22 August 1966. JCRC Papers, 1966, 26/37.

<sup>68</sup>Garrity and Edmonds, “I spied on the Nazis.”

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 9-11, 38-43.

<sup>70</sup>MacGuigan, “Hate Control,” pp. 244, 249.

<sup>71</sup>Ben Kayfetz to CANC and JCRC, *Report on Allan Gardens*.

<sup>72</sup>Harris Interview.