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*Archives Director, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives*

**Once Is Not Enough: The Canadian Jewish Archives and other Montreal Collections Reconsidered after *None Is Too Many***

It may not be overstating the case to say that *None Is Too Many* was the making of the Canadian Jewish Archives. Prior to the researching of the book in the late 1970s, there was no professional order to the repository once known as the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, and now called the Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives (C J Archives for short). The questions that the authors posed to former Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) officers and staff and the attention which they paid to the CJC and United Jewish Relief Agencies (UJRA) papers piled up in the Samuel Bronfman Building vault in Montreal clearly galvanized the organization to take its historical legacy seriously, prompting the hiring in 1981 of professionally-trained archivist Judith Nefsky to work alongside and complement the talents of historian David Rome. The impetus of the writing of the book also spurred CJC's pursuit of the major Social Science and Humanities Research Council grant that funded the initial cataloguing of these core collections of immigration-related material, and in turn led to the acquisition by the Archives of the vast Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS) collection.

The CJC records, The UJRA collection, the papers of the Jewish Colonization Association and the administrative and case file records of JIAS, all initially catalogued under that three year grant, became the nucleus of the Archives' 20<sup>th</sup> century holdings. Central to the writing of *None Is Too Many*, these holdings have been used for countless studies since then. However, their potential for new interpretations has not yet been exhausted.

What has changed since 1983? On the negative side of the balance, Abella and Troper had the advantage of being able to directly interview the key Jewish community figures of the 1930s and 1940s, all of whom are no longer with us; Saul Hayes, Monroe Abbey, Ben Lappin, David Rome, and others.

On the other hand, in the years since their research was carried out, and particularly in very recent years, additional material has become available through new acquisitions and through enhanced cataloguing methods for existing materials. These developments can deepen scholars' understanding of the assertions of *None Is Too Many*, and lead to additional, more nuanced interpretations.

At the time that the book was being researched, the Jewish Immigrant Aid Services collection was still housed at the JIAS headquarters under the watchful eye of its director Joseph Kage. Since that time more than 1000 boxes of JIAS records have come under the management of the C J Archives and the indexing of tens upon tens of thousands of case files has been carried out, often at a precise enough level so as to enable researchers to identify files pertaining to specific immigration groups and to discern the complex inter-relationship between JIAS, the Jewish Colonization Association, and the UJRA. Joseph Kage's voluminous office records and writings have also been catalogued in detail.

Complementing these community organization records, and compensating for the absent voices of those who have passed away, numerous private collections received at the C J Archives since 1983 tell the personal side of the wartime immigration story. To speak for the German-Jewish internees, we can refer scholars to the memoir writings of orthodox internee Julius Pfeiffer, and to the early 1940s correspondence and graphic materials donated by internment camp veteran Hans-Dieter (Alfred) Haiblen. Personal letters from co-workers and clients make up a collection received from a descendant of JIAS case worker Ethel Stern. The prose poem memoirs of post-war child immigrant Sophie Soil document her reaction to the immigration and adaptation experience. Papers received from travellers on the *Serpa Pinto* (the ship that brought two of the very few Jewish refugee groups allowed into Canada in 1944), and photographs from former Displaced Persons camp residents are a few other examples among many.



Photo from Bergen Belsen Displaced Persons Camp circa 1947, from the Aaron Rosengarten collection donated in memory of his parents Alex and Esther Rosengarten. The family immigrated to Canada in the early 1950s. The presence of a sewing machine in the picture may indicate that these people had applied to immigrate as tailors. Collection P0249, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives.

A Shanghai refugee's papers showing business cards in Chinese, passports meant to be used for one way only, and 1930s Yiddish letters to and from overseas relatives, sometimes donated with translations by the writers' children, all add layers of additional information. In most cases, digitized samples from new collections such as these are available for viewing on our shared web platform, the Canadian Jewish Heritage Network (<http://cjhn.ca>).



Temporary visa issued to Austrian refugee Felix Schlittner in 1946, during his time in Shanghai, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives collection P93/17.

Detailed videotaped interviews with survivors, produced during the Holocaust Documentation Project, a major CJC initiative carried out immediately after *None Is Too Many* was researched, have now been digitized and indexed in detail as part of a joint initiative with the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. These enhancements make it easy to focus on details about the period of postwar immigration and other migration related references in the interviews. An online index is in preparation.

Another cataloguing enhancement of recent vintage is a precise detailed index to Canadian Jewish Congress' weekly newsletter, Inter-Office Information (IOI). These article descriptions allow researchers to follow the course of various immigration-related initiatives as they developed from 1946 onwards.

Complementing the holdings of the Canadian Jewish Archives, Montreal is also home to two other repositories that document aspects of the wartime immigration story. Shannon Hodge, Archivist of the Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal writes:

For the last several years, the Jewish Public Library Archives (JPL-A) has been developing the strategic digitization of areas of its collections. This work also involves the identification of singular moments related to the community's growth through immigration and other major themes. The majority of researchers who contact the JPL-A for archival material on this topic usually hope to find collections that can provide highly synthesized

sets of data such as immigration case files. Through the continued integration of digitization as part of the regular work flow however, the JPL-A can more easily pull materials that are underutilized because of factors such as being “buried” in what was considered an unrelated collection. For instance, in assessing the United Talmud Torah Fonds for digitization, several letters detailing the efforts of staff there to bring over Jewish refugee teachers were found amongst office correspondence. While these letters are by no means exhaustive, if they are used with similar materials they help to document the attempts made by small community organizations and institutions to aid refugees. The increased visibility and accessibility of these brief records could be extremely valuable in creating qualitative narratives and perhaps building details from like materials across archival repositories. (Email with Shannon Hodge.)

ADDRESS  
IMMIGRATION INSPECTOR-IN-CHARGE  
1152 ST. ANTOINE STREET  
CENTRE No. 3

IN YOUR REPLY REFER TO  
No. 142275  
IMMIGRATION  
BRANCH

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
MINES AND RESOURCES

EM/MT.

MONTREAL, P.Q. May 2nd, 1949.

Mr. J. S. Caplan,  
261 St. James Street West, Suite 30,  
Montreal, P.Q.

Dear Sir,

Further to your interview with out Inspector Murphy concerning the application of the United Talmud Torahs of Montreal, for the permanent admission to Canada of one, \_\_\_\_\_, a citizen of Poland now residing in the United States.

I wish to call your attention to the time our Inspector Murphy had his last interview with you when it was arranged that you would supply him with the names of the teachers that were applied for by your congregation, for the purpose of being employed as teachers, and in the event of any of the teachers having left their employment with you, their whereabouts was also to be given. To date this office has not received this information and no further action can be taken until this data is supplied.

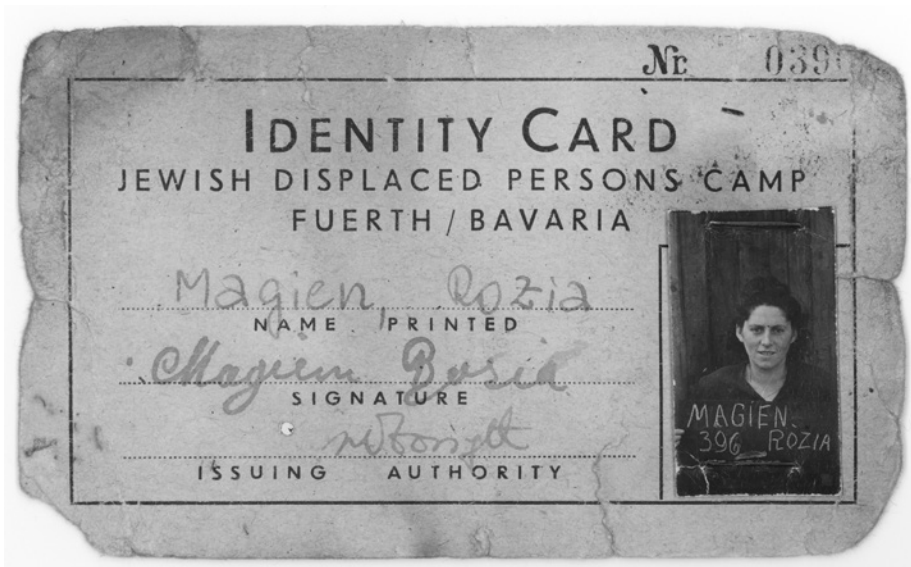
Yours very truly,  
*J. M. Langlois*  
J. M. Langlois  
Immigration Inspector-in-Charge.

*Edward Murphy - Chief*  
*Zelma - Chief*  
*Freig*  
*Shubert - Chief*  
*Leff Kopel*

Letter from the Department of Mines and Resources of Canada to Joseph Caplan of the United Talmud Torahs of Montreal, regarding the Talmud Torahs' role in facilitating Jews to immigrate to Canada. United Talmud Torahs Fonds (1047), Series 2, File 00042, Jewish Public Library Archives.

And Andrea Shaulis, Museum and Collection coordinator of the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre notes:

The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre is the only recognised museum in Canada on this subject. It has a collection of over 11,600 artefacts. While the majority of objects, photographs and documents relate to Jewish life before and during the Holocaust, the Centre also collects items pertaining to survivor immigration and integration. These documents allow researchers to gain insight on a process that was often challenging. Objects such as boarding tickets and immigration papers give an understanding of travel to Canada while government correspondence sheds light on individual efforts to facilitate immigration of relatives, despite highly restrictive policies. The Centre's collection includes much correspondence between individuals in North America and Europe and focuses, at times, on progress in the emigration/immigration process. In general, it offers opportunities for researchers to study the trials, concerns, and hopes and issues related to resettlement of those who wished to start anew in North America and of those who were concerned for the safety and ability of Jews to rebuild lives in Europe. (Email with Andrea Shaulis.)



Displaced person identification card for Rosa Magien, a Holocaust survivor originally from Lodz, Poland. This card was issued to her in the Fürth Displaced Persons camp, Germany, where she and her husband, Emil Kroo, resided before immigrating to New York in 1950. They eventually settled in Montreal. Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, 2001.17.04, donated by Emile Kroo.

In recent years we have noticed that many of the scholars who seek out our war-era immigration related records come with a background of direct involvement in the story; sometimes a parent who recalls her treatment by JIAS social workers, at other times the story of a relative who was turned away. We have also noted an increase in interest by young scholars coming to us from universities in various European countries. These personal insights and new perspectives add additional nuances to their scholarship, and ensure that the impact of *None Is Too Many* on the archival records of this community will continue to inspire new growths and new branches of inquiry.