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SPECIAL REPORT

THE EMERGING GENERATION OF CANADIAN JEWISH LEADERS*

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[Editor's Note: This Jerusalem Letter is part of our continuing study of world Jewish leadership. It complements our recent study of attitudes of American Jewish leaders as reported in JL:107 (15 March 1989).]

Who was Surveyed?

Canada's emerging Jewish leadership is well-informed, holds articulate views on major issues, and is probably a bit to the right of center in political terms. These are some of the findings of a 1986 survey of young (i.e., generally under age 40) leadership involved in the country's two major Jewish federations: Toronto Jewish Congress and Allied Jewish Community Services in Montreal. The focus was on the attitudes of the coming generation of Jewish leaders, those who will be likely to occupy key positions in community organizations during the next twenty years. The young leaders, most of

whom are between the ages of 25 and 40, have already demonstrated interest in Jewish communal activity, some aptitude for leadership, and a willingness to accept responsibility.

For comparative purposes, two other groups of Canadian Jews were also surveyed. Questionnaires were sent by mail to the membership of Canadian Professors for Peace in the Middle East and to rabbis on the list maintained by Canadian Jewish Congress in addition to the members of the young leadership groups in the Toronto and Montreal federations. The professors are probably not typical of Canadian Jewish academics because they are more knowledgeable about Israel and Jewish affairs than most and are probably more committed to Jewish life as well. The response rate for the questionnaires was about one-third, which is quite respectable. Data on the responses are shown in the following table:

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Group	Sent Out	Returned	%
Young Leaders	508	188	37
Professors	506	161	30
Rabbis	153	41	27
TOTAL	1,167	390	32.5

Given the manner in which the questionnaire was administered, one must be very careful in interpreting the data. No claim is made that this was a representative sample from which inferences can be made. Nor can one vouch for the accuracy of the lists of people to whom the questionnaires were sent. The lists may have been incomplete or inaccurate. Moreover, the methodology precludes the possibility of generalizing to larger populations. Nevertheless, the data obtained do constitute an unusual source of information regarding the attitudes of key segments of Canadian Jewish leadership in 1986. Therefore, the main focus of the presentation

will be the attitudes themselves.

The picture that emerges from these data is of a leadership with considerable variation in Jewish orientation and political attitudes. Generally the Montreal and Toronto young leaders took a more conservative economic stance than the rabbis and academics, and showed a more conservative voting pattern, especially in the case of the Toronto group. On Jewish issues there was relatively little variation between the four groups, with the young leaders being somewhat more tough-minded than the other two groups. On the matter of Jewish education and religious observance, there were marked differences between the rabbis and the other groups, which is not surprising. However, the need for the Jewish educational development of future leaders is evident. On balance, the respondents displayed considerable diversity but also substantial consensus on key Jewish issues.

TABLE 1 DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

Question		Total %	Rabbis	Prof.	Young Leaders Montreal	Young Leaders Toronto
Sex-male		77	95	82	71	71
Age	0-40	58	39	5	82	88
	41+	42	61	95	18	12
Married		73	100	84	63	62
Divorced or separated		7	0	12	4	6
Education	High school	2	8	1	1	0
	University & post-secondary	24	10	8	32	41
	Post-grad. deg.	74	81	90	67	59
	Jewish Education					
	Afternoon school	52	11	57	54	60
	Day-school	25	5	19	31	35
	Post-secondary & ordination	21	78	23	13	4
Total Family Income	\$0-49,000	33	43	14	40	44
	\$50,000-75,000	33	40	38	23	35
	\$75,000+	25	16	48	36	21
Hebrew Knowledge	Below average	55	13	55	66	56
	Average	19	13	20	18	19
	Above average	26	73	25	16	25
Occupation	Business	16	4	3	24	26
	Professional	79	87	92	71	67
	Other	5	8	5	5	6

In demographic terms, the respondents clearly displayed the characteristics that are definitionally associated with their groups. They certainly do not resemble a random sample of the Canadian Jewish population. Nevertheless there is considerable variation in terms of age, general education, Jewish education, income, and occupation. Thus it is safe to say that the respondents do not constitute a monolithic group by any means.

As might have been anticipated, there is a noticeable age difference between the rabbis and professors, on the one hand, and the young leaders, on the other. Indeed, this age difference may well account for many of the variations in response patterns that will be noted below. The older median age of the academics was more pronounced than expected, probably reflecting the paucity of jobs in Canadian universities during the 1970s and 1980s. Whether it also reflects a trend away from academic occupations among young Canadian Jews or even a reluctance to join a pro-Israel organization is not clear, though these are issues that ought to be explored.

It is also not surprising that the respondents are predominantly male. The sectors of Jewish life from which they were drawn have been male-dominated traditionally. However, there has been substantial growth of female representation in federation activities, as indicated by the 29 percent of women in the two leadership groups. One would anticipate that such growth will continue into the future, steadily reducing the representation of women in positions of major responsibility in organized Jewish life.

The data on occupations confirms the declining role of business in the occupational structure of the Jewish elite. Only one-quarter of the young leaders list their occupations as business. While it is possible that some of these people may move into the business sector later on, it seems clear that the dominant type of Jewish communal leader in Canada in the future will be the highly educated professional. This trend has important implications, for

style of course, but more significantly for the basis of organized Jewish life, which has frequently relied heavily on wealthy businessmen and their families to provide a major portion of community funds. Furthermore, the access that such levels of giving brings has enabled the large donors to exercise disproportional influence in community decision-making. Consequently, a shift toward professional careers is likely to necessitate changes both in fund-raising tactics and in governing procedures.

In that light the data on incomes, which show the professors to be in the most favorable position, must be examined with caution. While it is true that academic salaries in Canada no longer necessitate a penurious lifestyle (the mean in 1986 was about \$50,000), it should be emphasized that the data report total family income. Given the age distribution of the professors (virtually all over 40) and the increasing tendency for academic families to produce two incomes, the results for the professors themselves are easily understood. In comparison, the young leaders may be only in the early stages of their careers, with the most remunerative years yet to come. Also, the young leaders are less likely to be married than the professors and thus less likely to be part of two-income families. It should be noted that the rabbis are also younger than the professors.

Educationally, the prevalence of post-graduate degrees is noteworthy among the young leaders. Although this may not be typical of the community as a whole, it does indicate something about the character of the future leadership and the environment in which decision-making will take place. With regard to Jewish education, there was considerable variation. It is remarkable that over one-third of the leadership groups attended day school at the elementary level, with about half of those continuing through high school. This reflects the general upswing in enrollments in Jewish day schools in Montreal and Toronto over the past 20 years, and represents a sharp break with the past. On the

other hand, aside from the rabbis, the majority of the respondents had only an afternoon school education, which is sketchy by traditional Jewish standards. Clearly the community has not yet reached a situation where it can boast that all of its leadership has benefited from an intensive Jewish education.

Religious Affiliations and Practices

Knowledge of Hebrew, at least in terms of the self-rankings employed in the survey, could also be improved significantly. Given the level of Jewish education reported, the self-evaluation of Hebrew

language knowledge is surprisingly low.

The respondents' religious orientations and practices did not reflect any surprising developments, though there are some points that are worth noting. Of the religious practices mentioned, the highest levels of observance are found for annual rituals connected with Passover and Yom Kippur. Practices that require a regular and ongoing commitment, such as the Sabbath and kashrut, are much less widely followed. Still, the level of Sabbath and dietary observance reported in general is higher than what might have been expected.

TABLE 2 RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS AND PRACTICES

Question		Total %	Rabbis	Profs.	Young Leaders Montreal	Young Leaders Toronto
Do you think of yourself as	Orthodox	16	38	13	18	10
	Conservative	44	30	36	43	58
	Reform	16	16	16	15	19
	Other	16	13	21	17	9
	No denomination	7	3	13	7	4
Of your three closest friends how many are Jewish?	1 out of 3	10	3	14	11	5
	2 out of 3	27	19	33	24	25
	3 out of 3	63	78	52	64	70
Do you belong to a synagogue?	Yes	68	97	70	62	60
Do you participate in Passover Seder?	Yes	94	100	93	93	95
Do you light Chanukah candles?	Yes	84	100	83	77	80
Do you light Sabbath candles?	Yes	54	89	60	40	48
Do you attend synagogue on the Sabbath?	Yes	34	84	36	24	26
Do you attend Yom Kippur services?	Yes	82	97	79	76	87
Do you use separate dishes for milk and meat?	Yes	44	78	36	39	48
Do you have a Xmas tree at home?	Yes	3	0	3	6	2
Do you fast on Yom Kippur?	Yes	80	92	71	80	86
Are you in favor of provincial aid to parochial schools?	Yes	65	79	46	78	68

The bulk of the respondents, with the exception of the rabbis, designate themselves as Conservative. Whether this reflects actual synagogue membership or simply a desire to place oneself in the middle is not clear. But the proportion of those identifying as Orthodox or Reform is small compared to the Conservative group. It should be noted that Reform synagogues are less common in Canada than in the United States. Also, in Orthodox synagogues, the support of Orthodox institutions may require the kind of commitment from members that limits the time available for broader communal activities, such as those engaged in by the members of the young leadership groups. It is also noteworthy that whereas only 68 percent of the respondents belong to a synagogue, 76 percent identify with one of the three main religious groupings. Perhaps surprisingly, 70 percent of the professors held synagogue memberships, though that group had the highest proportion listing no religious denomination. Thus, taking into account religious practices as well, the professors who responded are very far from the conventional image of the alienated, marginal academic with no ties to the community or Jewish life.

The two leadership groups, even if young, and highly educated, follow the general Jewish pattern of social segregation. Jews continue to mix primarily with other Jews, and this pattern is more likely to be voluntary rather than the result of

exclusion by non-Jews. About two-thirds indicated that their three closest friends were Jewish. This does not mean that they lacked social or professional contacts with non-Jews. Such contacts are possibly more frequent now than in the past. But moving beyond such contacts to the worlds of intimacy and trust may be another matter. Moreover, it is likely that Jewish leaders in Montreal and Toronto grew up there and retain many childhood friends into their adult years.

Finally, there was broad support for the idea of government aid to Jewish schools, the professors aside. The issue is important both in Montreal, where such aid is available, and in Toronto, where it is not but where the Jewish leadership has been trying to obtain it. Nevertheless, a not insignificant proportion of the respondents oppose such aid. Notably the professors are skeptical, presumably because of principled stands.

Charitable Practices

The data on charitable contributions confirm that the respondents do not represent the major donors to Jewish causes. In particular, only about one-seventh of the young leadership groups donate over \$3,000 per year to charity, compared to about 40 percent for the rabbis and professors. Of course, this could be an age-related phenomenon. In addition, it is possible that some of the young leaders are the children of wealthy families that give

TABLE 3 CHARITABLE PRACTICES

Question		Total %	Rabbis	Profs.	Young Leaders Montreal	Young Leaders Toronto
What were your total charitable donations last year?	\$0-3,000	76	58	62	87	86
	\$3,001+	24	42	38	13	14
Of that amount how much was donated to Jewish causes?	0-60%	28	13	37	30	21
	61%+	72	87	63	70	79
How much was your gift to your central Jewish fundraising organization?	\$0-1,499	83	78	73	91	86
	\$1,500-4,999	13	22	20	6	10
	\$5,000+	4	0	7	3	4

large donations or give through family firms. These data tend to support an observation made previously, that community leadership will increasingly be drawn from professionals who, although relatively affluent, are not in a position to make the major donations that are at the core of community fund-raising. In the long run, this development may have implications for the ability of the Jewish community to raise the revenues that are necessary to support the range of activities that it runs.

It is interesting that the academics are fairly generous when it comes to charity, and not just for universalistic causes. They give a lower proportion of their gifts to Jewish causes than the members of the other groups, but not by much. It should also be noted that about a quarter of the academics are making substantial annual

gifts to their central Jewish campaign organization. Even with the incomes reported, gifts of over \$1,500 (20 percent) and over \$5,000 (7 percent) are remarkable. When viewed in conjunction with the data on religious practices, a picture of a Jewish professoriate with strong Jewish commitment and involvement emerges. However, that description must be qualified by a sampling from a group of self-selected professors with a strong Jewish commitment. Still, the existence of such a core of Jewish academics in Canada represents an important, if underused, resource to the Jewish community.

Political Affiliations

When interpreting the data on political affiliations, one should bear in mind that the overall data are skewed somewhat by the marked preference of Montreal's Jews

TABLE 4 POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS

Question		Total %	Rabbis	Profs.	Young Leaders Montreal	Young Leaders Toronto
For federal purposes, do you think of yourself as a:	Liberal	41	22	22	61	48
	Conservative	21	22	19	13	33
	NDP	15	22	26	10	5
	Independent	22	33	32	15	14
How did you vote in the last federal election?	Liberal	31	20	24	40	33
	Conservative	38	20	32	43	46
	NDP	15	17	23	11	8
	Did not vote	15	43	20	5	11
For provincial purposes, do you think of yourself as a:	Liberal	47	23	30	74	46
	Conservative	20	12	22	8	36
	NDP	16	23	24	11	8
	Independent	15	38	21	7	9
For whom did you vote in the last provincial election?	Liberal	47	23	30	73	46
	Conservative	20	12	22	8	36
	NDP	16	23	24	11	8
	Did not vote	15	38	21	7	9
Would you describe yourself as:	Liberal-very Liberal	56	53	60	53	42
	Centre	16	16	13	16	21
	Conservative-very Conservative	25	30	27	22	36

for the Liberal party, in both the federal and provincial arenas. Jews there have a long historical connection with the federal Liberals, who were seen as more welcoming to immigrant groups. In the 1984 election, a higher proportion of Montreal Jews voted Conservative than in the past, but most continued to identify with the Liberals. In the provincial arena, the alternative to the Liberals is a separatist party that is anathema to almost all Jews.

In Toronto, the greater affinity of the Jews for the Progressive Conservatives is evident from the data on that community's young leaders. The rabbis and professors displayed a much different pattern of identification, however. In federal politics, about one-third of those two groups identified as independents, while the rest were evenly split between the three national parties. In provincial politics, the rabbis tended to identify more with the Liberals, and the academics more with the social democratic NDP, with substantial numbers of both groups in the independent category. In terms of voting, the PC success in 1984 was reflected in the votes of the Toronto and Montreal leadership groups, which gave about 45 percent to the Tories, following the trend in the general electorate. The rabbis and professors were less likely to vote for the two large parties, with noticeable support for the NDP in provincial elections. The relatively high proportion of non-voting among rabbis may be explained by large numbers of non-Canadians within their ranks.

Attitudes on Canadian Political Issues

Respondents were asked their opinions on a host of political and public policy issues. It is apparent that there are differences between the rabbis and academics, on the one hand, and the young leaders, on the other, though not on all issues. Generally, the young leaders adhere to more conservative positions, while the other two groups pursue a more liberal agenda. But the differences vary in magnitude. Generally the views are not polarized.

The liberal-conservative split is apparent on matters involving government regulation of the economy. In general, Jews oppose government regulation to a lesser extent than the general population, but the Jews in this survey are certainly not united in their views. About 30 percent of the rabbis and professors agree that there is too much government regulation, compared to some 50 percent of the young leaders. If one would wish to generalize about positions on economic issues, the rabbis and professors appear to support government intervention in the economy through spending and regulation more than do the young leadership groups. This is a fairly consistent pattern in the data that helps to explain a number of policy attitudes.

On most of the issues examined in this section, there was considerable consistency in the pattern of responses of the four groups. For the most part, the respondents favored an active government role in society, supporting such programs as health care, education, old age pensions, and protection of the environment. However, on issues with a clearer social dimension there were noticeable differences between the rabbis and professors, on the one hand, and the young leadership groups, on the other. Thus the young leaders were more likely to support the death penalty, more spending to combat crime, and a balanced budget, and to oppose spending on welfare, while the clergy and academics tended toward opposite positions. On the matter of abortion, the respondents, aside from the rabbis, heavily opposed stricter law enforcement. Some 30 percent of the rabbis supported such action.

On foreign affairs, the respondents tended toward moderate, as opposed to hard-line, positions. They heavily supported the idea of a nuclear freeze, generally opposed testing of American cruise missiles over Canada, advocated being less forceful in dealings with the Soviet Union, and opposed government aid to anti-Communist groups in Central America. With regard

TABLE 5

POLITICAL ATTITUDES

Question		Total %	Rabbis	Profes.	Young Leaders Montreal	Young Leaders Toronto
<u>Are you in favor of:</u>						
More nuclear power plants in Canada?	Yes	22	26	23	17	24
The death penalty for convicted murderers?	Yes	47	44	30	55	58
Job quotas to ensure equal opportunity?	Yes	30	24	28	34	28
A US-Soviet agreement for a nuclear freeze?	Yes	90	87	92	93	85
Testing cruise missiles over Canada?	Yes	40	48	40	34	44
More government spending on welfare?	Yes	41	54	48	36	34
Less government spending on welfare?	Yes	25	8	20	28	35
More government spending on defence?	Yes	22	26	19	24	22
Less government spending on defence?	Yes	36	29	43	35	30
More government spending on health care?	Yes	61	63	60	69	50
Less government spending on health care?	Yes	6	0	9	3	12
More government spending on old age pensions?	Yes	60	65	65	56	56
Less government spending on old age pensions?	Yes	6	0	7	4	8
More government spending on education?	Yes	78	81	91	75	65
Less government spending on education?	Yes	3	3	4	1	5
More government spending on foreign aid?	Yes	22	31	29	19	15
Less government spending on foreign aid?	Yes	38	32	35	45	36
More government spending to combat crime?	Yes	57	76	44	65	55
Less government spending to combat crime?	Yes	4	0	6	2	5
Government should be more forceful with the USSR?	Yes	24	32	23	23	21
Government should be less forceful with the USSR?	Yes	60	63	62	62	54
Government should enforce abortion laws strictly?	Yes	9	30	7	7	7
There is too much government regulation?	Yes	42	32	30	48	55
Government should be required to balance the budget?	Yes	51	42	41	57	60
Government should be tougher in environmental protection?	Yes	80	79	86	75	79
Government should aid anti-communist groups in Central America?	Yes	30	45	25	34	28

to defense spending and foreign aid, no clear pattern emerged, though in both cases more respondents backed reduced spending than backed increased spending.

Attitudes on Israel and Jewish Issues

On specifically Jewish matters, including those dealing with Israel, there were some interesting contrasts. On one of the key issues, Israeli policy toward the occupied territories, the rabbis and especially the academics favored trading land for peace. The Toronto young leaders were opposed by a narrow margin, while the Montreal group was in favor by a similar margin. The other side of the coin was that 40 percent of the Toronto group advocated permanent Israeli control of the territories, compared to only about 20 percent of the professors and 30 percent of the other two groups. The idea of shared rule of the West Bank also gained support from the rabbis and professors but was opposed by the two leadership groups. Most of the respondents, aside from the Toronto group, supported a moratorium on West Bank Israeli settlements, and there was a willingness in all groups to contemplate a non-threatening home for the Palestinians in the territories.

There was a fairly strong consensus that Israel should be prepared to talk to the Palestine Liberation Organization if the right conditions were met and that Canada should also await the fulfillment of those conditions. On both questions, the Toronto leadership group took a harder line than the other three. That was also the case with regard to Canadian Jewish criticism of Israel, a proposition which was most heavily endorsed by the rabbis and was opposed by the Toronto leadership group.

The majority of the respondents felt that the political environment for Jewish interests was hostile. Only a minority felt that anti-Semitism was not a serious problem in Canada. Most felt that in times

of crisis, few non-Jews would aid Israel. Perhaps as a result, strong majorities felt that Jewish political campaign contributions should legitimately be directed to helping Israel's friends. At the same time, large majorities endorsed the strategy of trying to forge coalitions with other ethnic or religious groups. As Ukrainian-Jewish tensions during the Deschenes hearings on Nazi war criminals revealed, that was often easier said than done. Large, if somewhat smaller, majorities also favored getting more Jewish candidates to run for public office.

Overall, the respondents tended to be knowledgeable, with well-developed positions on the issues of the day. In general, they supported the welfare state trend of Canadian public policy, though the young leaders were more likely to express doubts about some of the prevailing assumptions. They also expressed a moderate stance on foreign affairs, and a willingness to develop independent views about Israel within the context of strong support for the Jewish state.

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* This Jerusalem Letter is based on a survey conducted in 1986 by the independent Canadian Jewish magazine, Viewpoints. The results were published in Harold Waller and Morton Weinfeld, "A Viewpoints Survey of Canadian Jewish Leadership Opinion," Viewpoints, vol. XV, no. 4 (November 1987), pp. 1-2. Permission to use the material from that article is gratefully acknowledged.

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TABLE 6

ISRAEL AND GENERAL JEWISH ATTITUDES

Question		Total %	Rabbis	Profs.	Young Leaders Montreal	Young Leaders Toronto
<u>Do you believe that:</u>						
Anti-Semitism is not a serious problem in Canada?	Yes	32	50	31	31	26
Soviet Jewry activities should be broadened to include other oppressed groups?	Yes	45	57	47	45	38
Canadian Jews should not publicly criticize Israeli policies and actions?	Yes	36	29	36	36	38
Canadian Jews should publicly criticize Israeli policies and actions?	Yes	56	65	59	57	44
In time of crisis few non-Jews will aid Israel?	Yes	70	71	65	76	71
Israel should offer Arabs territorial compromise in West Bank in exchange for peace?	Yes	60	68	72	55	46
Israel should maintain permanent control of West Bank?	Yes	28	28	19	29	40
Israel should offer to share rule over West Bank with Jordan and Palestinians?	Yes	47	51	65	34	40
Begin's government policies strengthened Israel?	Yes	31	22	21	32	46
Palestinians have a right to a home in West Bank if Israel is not threatened?	Yes	58	57	64	56	53
Israel should place a moratorium on further West Bank settlement?	Yes	54	54	65	52	40
Israel should talk to the PLO if it renounces terrorism and recognizes Israel?	Yes	72	78	80	71	61
Canada should not have any contact with the PLO until it recognizes Israel?	Yes	79	84	78	77	82
Jewish campaign contributions should be used to elect Israel's friends?	Yes	70	73	69	66	76
The Jewish community should work to build alliances with other ethnic and religious groups?	Yes	90	84	92	88	91
An effort should be made to get more Jews to run for political office?	Yes	74	68	73	75	76
The Jewish community organizations should work on both Jewish issues as well as issues of concern to all Canadians?	Yes	90	94	88	92	89