

Canadian Jewish Congress, Ontario Region fonds [multiple media] – 1936-1992.



PART OF	Canadian Jewish Congress, Ontario Region fonds
LEVEL	Fonds
FONDS	17
MATERIAL FORMAT	multiple media
DATE	1936-1992
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	47 m of textual records and other material
ADMIN HISTORY/BIO	<p>By 1919 the plight of post-war eastern European Jewry and the need for a united community voice for Canadian Jewry led to the creation of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Its founding meeting was held on March 16, 1919 in Montreal. Though it briefly maintained a tiny regional office in Toronto, the CJC remained inactive until 1933, when it fully reconvened by opening offices in Winnipeg, Montreal, and Toronto. Egmont L. Frankel was the first president of the new central division in Toronto. While the national office in Montreal focused on the overarching issues of the social and economic rights of European Jewry, assistance for Jewish immigrants, and combating prejudice in Canada, the Toronto office dealt with local, violent anti-Jewish demonstrations as well as continuing discrimination both in employment and in access to public recreational facilities. The structure was based on regular national biennial plenary conferences, at which policies were delineated and national and regional executives were elected. Between plenary sessions, national and regional councils were in charge. These were augmented by the following standing committees: administrative, officers, fersonnel, financial, publications, and educational and cultural. Special committees were created to deal with issues such as: youth, community loans, kashruth, fundraising, Israel, Russian Jewry, and various emergency issues such as refugees, immigration, and housing.</p> <p>During the 1930s the central division office moved several times and occupied offices in the following locations: Yonge Street, the Bond Street Synagogue, Scheuer House, the Zionist Building, and its long-term home at 150-152 Beverley Street, where it remained until its July 1983 move to the Lipa Green Building in North York.</p> <p>The CJC's activities expanded to include taking responsibility for Jewish educational standards, but by 1941 its main efforts shifted to support for Canada's war effort. Immediately after the end of the war, the focus again shifted to Jewish immigration projects and the maintenance of Jewish identity in small communities. By 1950, the CJC's use of the title "division" was changed to "region" to accommodate internal operational divisions within each region. Also, by then, the central region was busy expanding its programs for all Ontario Jewish communities, creating a province-wide council of youth groups, and working with the newly-created Bureau of Jewish Education (later Board of Jewish Education, now Mercaz). Standardization of kashruth rules in Ontario was implemented. As well, regular educational conferences and cultural events were held throughout the province, while province-wide fundraising efforts in support of Moess Chittin for relief projects in Israel and for local Congress activities were expanded. Many of its educational and cultural responsibilities necessitated working with other Jewish organizations such as the United Jewish Welfare Fund, Jewish Immigrant Aid Society (JIAS), Hadassah, the Canadian Legion, B'nai Brith, the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Congress, and the many landsmenshaften (Jewish mutual benefit societies, each formed by immigrants originating from the same Eastern European community).</p> <p>During the 1960s, the central region began sending Moess Chittin relief shipments to Cuban Jews unable to acquire kosher foods for Passover. Its lobbying efforts included</p>

Cuban Jews unable to acquire Russian visas for passage. Its lobbying efforts included participation in the Royal Commissions on Hate Propaganda, and its greatest success came with the introduction and implementation of Ontario's fair employment and fair accommodation practices legislation, an achievement in which Congress played a pivotal role.

From 1971 to 1989 the major focus became international and national lobbying for, and providing support to, Soviet Jewry. Virtually all local and Canadian efforts to assist the Soviet Jewish "refusniks" were organized and coordinated in Toronto by the Ontario region office, which provided staff and funding for the many lobbying activities and public demonstrations that characterized this successful effort.

As of November 1975, the central region's responsibilities in Toronto were radically altered. To improve cost efficiency in Toronto, CJC educational and social service program activities were merged with similar programs already provided by Toronto's United Jewish Appeal. The UJA assumed sole responsibility for these amalgamated programs in Toronto and was renamed Toronto Jewish Congress. The central region still retained province-wide responsibilities for Ontario's smaller Jewish communities, and its office remained in Toronto. Also, following this reorganization, its name was changed to Canadian Jewish Congress, Ontario Region. Although CJC no longer provided direct social and educational programs to Toronto, the TJC's senior executive was, at the time, still obliged to continue to keep it notified about developments concerning previous Congress responsibilities.

From 1983, the Ontario Region's offices were located in the Lipa Green Building at 4600 Bathurst Street. It continued its work of financially supporting various Israeli institutions and fostering Canada-Israel relations. It also spearheaded the movement to support and protect Jews in Arab lands, especially in Syria. Funding for the CJC came from the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy, which redistributed a portion of the funds raised by the local Jewish federations across Canada.

The CJC dissolved in 2011. Today, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) acts as the Jewish community's primary lobby group.

Fonds consists of the records of the Ontario Region office of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Of primary importance in documenting this organization's history are its minutes of the Executive and Administrative Committees and the various standing, and short-term committees such as Community Organization, Finance, Fund Raising, Educational and Cultural, Research, Immigration, War Efforts, and Jewish Education. Most of these records are still managed all together within Fonds 17, Series 1. Fonds 17, Series 2 contains the general subject and correspondence files of these committees. Records in both series require further processing.

Records now found in Series 3 document the efforts of the Committee for Soviet Jewry in coordinating the activities of the many Toronto and Ontario organizations involved in assisting Soviet Jewry during the 1971 to 1989 period.

Series 4 consists of administrative and committee records of the United Jewish Refugee and War Relief Agencies in Toronto from 1938 through 1967. These document its work rescuing the survivors of European Jewish communities, settling as many as possible in Ontario, and providing assistance to those attempting to obtain restitution payments.

Series 5 consists of the records of the Community Relations Committee (1938-1976). Responding to depression-era anti-Semitism in Canada, the Canadian Jewish Congress and B'nai Brith together established in 1938 a new joint committee. Since then this Committee has documented racist threats in Canada; initiated advocacy activities to work for improved civil rights; promoted legislation combating hate; worked to ensure equality of access to employment, education and accommodation; and investigated specific incidents of discrimination. The Committee, for example, played a key role in achieving the Anti-Discrimination Act of 1944, and the Fair Employment Practices Act of 1951, key steps leading to Canada's current Human Rights Code. Although originally named Joint Public Relations Committee in 1938, a series of name changes later occurred; s follows: Joint Community Relations Committee, Central Region (1962-1978), Joint Community Relations Committee, CJC, Ontario Region (ca. 1978-ca. 1991) Community Relations Committee, CJC, Ontario Region (ca. 1991-present) Records in this series were reorganized into 5 sub-series and a further 9 sub-sub-series during the 2009 to 2011 period. For further details please view the database records for Fonds 17, Series 5. Although this series will eventually hold all CRC records up to 1992, only those prior to 1979 are currently fully processed.

NOTES	Physical description note: Includes 1839 photographs, 89 audio cassettes, 11 videocassettes, 4 drawings, and 6 microfilm reels (16 mm). Processing note: Processing of this fonds is ongoing. Additional descriptive entries will be added in future.
NAME ACCESS	Canadian Jewish Congress. Ontario Region
SUBJECTS	Pressure groups
ACCESS RESTRICTION	Partially closed. Researchers must receive permission from the Archivist prior to accessing some of the records
ARRANGEMENT	Partially closed. Researchers must receive permission from the Archivist prior to accessing some of the records.
CREATOR	Canadian Jewish Congress. Ontario Region (1919-2011)
PLACES	Ontario
SOURCE	Archival Descriptions

Joseph Baruch Salsberg fonds [multiple media] – 1914-1993.



PART OF	Joseph Baruch Salsberg fonds
LEVEL	Fonds
FONDS	92
MATERIAL FORMAT	multiple media
DATE	1914-1993
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	1.2 m of textual records (2 v.) and other material
ADMIN HISTORY/BIO	<p>Joseph Baruch Salsberg (1902-1998) was a labour leader, political activist, politician, insurance salesman, and journalist. He was also active in various Jewish organizations, including the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), the Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto, and the New Fraternal Jewish Association. He is well-remembered by contemporaries, such as Sam Lipshitz, as a “champion of the people,” committed to social justice, the plight of the working class, and the preservation of Jewish culture.</p> <p>J. B. was born in Lagov, Poland on November 5, 1902 to Abraham and Sarah-Gittel Salsberg. Abraham immigrated to Toronto in 1910 and J. B. followed with his mother and two younger sisters in 1913. They settled at 73 Cecil Street. Abraham and Sarah-Gittel had additional children in Canada: Nathan (b. 1915), Reuven (Bob or Robert, b. 1917), Betty, and Thelma. Abraham worked as a peddler in Toronto.</p> <p>J. B. briefly attended Landsdowne Public School, but dropped out around 1915, against his parents' wishes, and took a job in a leather goods factory to contribute to his family's income. J. B.'s parents had hoped he would become a rabbi and, despite his full-time employment, J.B. continued to study Torah with scholars at the synagogue on Centre Avenue.</p> <p>In 1917, J. B. decided to pursue the ideas of Zionism and socialism and, abandoning his plans to become a rabbi, became involved in establishing the Young Poale Zion organization, a Labour Zionist youth group dedicated to secular aims. Around 1922, J. B. was made secretary general of the Young Poale Zion of America in New York, where he worked for one year. Shortly after returning to Toronto, he became the organizer for the Hat, Cap, and Millinery Workers Union of North America in Chicago. J. B. married Dora Wilensky in 1927.</p> <p>In 1926, J. B. joined the Communist Party of Canada (CPC). He was an active member of the CPC for 30 years, serving as the head of its Trade Union Department for two decades. In 1929 he was suspended from the party for one year as a dissenter. In 1932, he became the Southern Ontario District union organizer for the Communist Workers' Unity League. It was as a member of the CPC that J. B. entered electoral politics. After a series of failed bids in municipal and provincial elections between 1935 and 1937, J. B. was elected alderman of Ward 4 in Toronto in 1938. He only held the position for one year. In 1943, J. B. was elected to the Ontario Legislature as the representative for the St. Andrew riding. J. B. sat as member of provincial parliament for the Labor-Progressive Party (the provincial wing of the CPC) for 12 years. For several years, he was the only elected Communist in North America. As MPP, he helped create legislation banning discrimination in public places and introduced a bill that would ensure fair employment practices in the province. He lost his seat to Allan Grossman in 1955 and unsuccessfully ran in the federal election later that year. Remembered by journalist Gordon Sinclair as “one of the best debaters in the house,” J. B. was well-respected by members of all political parties. Out of admiration for J. B., Conservative Premier Leslie Frost named Salsberg Township in Northern Ontario in his honour.</p> <p>Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, J. B. had grown increasingly concerned about reports of</p>

Soviet antisemitism and privately urged party leaders to pursue the issue. In 1956, when Soviet First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev exposed the transgressions of Stalin's regime, J. B. went to Moscow as part of a CPC delegation. After meeting with Khrushchev himself, it became clear to J. B. that antisemitism was indeed a problem in the USSR and that his efforts to probe the situation were being stonewalled.

J. B. publicly expressed his concerns about Soviet antisemitism in a series of articles published in the *Vochenblatt* from October 25, 1956 to December 13, 1956. He finally left the Communist Party in 1957. However, he remained a member of the United Jewish People's Order (UJPO), a Communist Jewish fraternal organization.

Entering the business world, J. B. established the Model Insurance Agency Limited in 1957, where he served as president for several years. In 1959 J. B.'s wife, Dora, passed away. Around this time J. B. also resigned from the UJPO, along with other members who felt the organization needed to be more critical of the Soviet Union. They founded an alternative, non-Communist, left-wing Jewish organization, the New Fraternal Jewish Association, where J. B. served as president for several terms and edited its publication, *Fraternally Yours*.

In his later life, J. B. was active as an executive member of organizations, such as the CJC and the Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care. He was the first chairman for the CJC Ontario Region's Soviet Jewry Committee and the Committee for Yiddish. He also began writing an award-winning weekly column for the *Canadian Jewish News*. J. B. was awarded the CJC's Samuel Bronfman Medal for distinguished service, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto's Ben Sadowski Award of Merit. A strong supporter of Israel, he was involved in the creation of two Israeli medical centres that are named in his honour. He also helped establish the J. B. and Dora Salsberg Fund and the J. B. Salsberg Fund for Yiddish at the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto. J. B. passed away in 1998.

CUSTODIAL HISTORY

The records were donated to the OJA in a series of accessions. Material from accessions 1991-5-4 and 1992-9-4 were donated by J. B. Salsberg. The remaining material was donated by his estate after his death.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

Fonds consists of records documenting J. B. Salsberg's personal, professional and Jewish communal activities. The bulk of the records are textual and relate to his membership in the CPC (later LPP), election campaigns, and Jewish communal work. Included is correspondence; photographs; reports; political writings; certificates; agendas; pamphlets; brochures; booklets; flyers; campaign literature; campaign notes; posters; newspaper clippings; press releases; articles; transcripts; speeches; telegrams; political platforms, briefs and submissions; statements; constitutions; resolutions; newspapers; meeting minutes; bulletins; periodicals; notebooks; notes; course guides and outlines; medallions; pins; plaques; donation receipts; event invitations and programmes; lists; blank employment applications; a school test; a study; a coin; a drawing; a sketch; an audio cassette; and a delegate card.

Records are arranged into the following five series: 1. Personal ; 2. Labour Zionism and union activities ; 3. Political career ; and, 4. Jewish community involvement. There are also four files and one item attached directly to the fonds.

NOTES	<p>Physical Description Note: Includes 53 photographs, 7 medallions, 11 pins, 4 posters, 2 plaques, 1 sketch, 1 drawing, 1 audio cassette, 1 desk name plate, and 1 coin.</p> <p>Physical Extent Note: Fonds was reduced from approximately 7 metres to 1.5 metres. The culled material consisted primarily of published books, periodicals and pamphlets that had been collected by J. B. Salsberg. For further details about what was culled please view the accession records.</p> <p>Associated Material Note: Queen's University Archive also has a J. B. Salsberg fonds, 14 hours of interview tapes with J. B. Salsberg and records of the UJPO are held by the Multicultural Historical Society of Ontario (MHSO).</p>
NAME ACCESS	Salsberg, J. B. (Joseph B.), ca. 1903-1998
SUBJECTS	<p>Labor leaders</p> <p>Politicians</p>
RELATED MATERIAL	For additional records in OJA's holdings, see: Ben Kayfetz fonds 62, series 8, file 2 ; accession 2008-11-2 ; accession 2004-1-4 ; and oral histories AC 71 and AC 226.
CREATOR	Salsberg, Joseph Baruch, 1902-1998
ACCESSION NUMBER	<p>1991-5-4</p> <p>1992-9-4</p> <p>1998-2-2</p> <p>1998-12-5</p> <p>2004-5-28</p> <p>2010-4-1</p>
SOURCE	Archival Descriptions