

NAME	J.B. Salsberg
NUMBER	AC 071
SUBJECT	Labor movement Labor unions Women Demonstrations
INTERVIEW DATE	Sept. 1985
QUANTITY	1
TOTAL RUNNING TIME	071A: 44:50 minuets 071B: 35:55 minuets
CONSERVATION	Copied August 2003
USE RESTRICTIONS	Copyright is held by the Ontario Jewish Archives. Please contact the Archives to obtain permission prior to use.
BIOGRAPHY	<p>Joseph Baruch Salsberg (1902-1998) was a labour leader, political activist, politician, newspaper columnist and a man who dedicated his life to Yiddishkeit and the advancement of social justice. He was active in various Jewish organizations, including; the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), the Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto, and the New Fraternal Jewish Association. In 1938 he was elected as Alderman on Toronto's City Council and elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in 1943. 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. This oral history includes Salsberg's personal reminiscences on the Toronto Jewish community, the Polish Jewish community and issues related to women's labour and the unions in the garment industry.</p>
MATERIAL FORMAT	sound recording
NAME ACCESS	International Ladies' Garment Workers Union Salsberg, J. B. (Joseph B.), 1902-1998
GEOGRAPHIC ACCESS	Toronto
ORIGINAL FORMAT	Audio cassette
COPY FORMAT	Audio cassette Digital file
TRANSCRIPT	<p>Side 1:</p> <p>0.0-6.30: Joseph Baruch Salsberg was born in Poland in 1902 to Abraham and Sara Salsberg. Abraham migrated to Toronto in 1910 and Joseph followed with his mother and two younger sisters in 1913.</p> <p>6.30-18.39: Prior to 1913 Poland was primarily a peasant and agricultural society with the majority of the Jewish population living and working as tradesmen in the villages. Salsberg discusses the difficult relationship between the Poles and Jews under the power of the Czar.</p> <p>18:40-24.14: Salsberg discusses the Canadian government's collaboration with the CP Railroad to launch advertising campaigns attracting potential immigrants to come and live in Canada.</p> <p>24.22-33.24: Salsberg discusses the experiences of his mother as a young Jewish immigrant and her adjustment to life in Toronto.</p> <p>33.25-37.30: Salsberg discusses the Ward, an area between University and Yonge as being</p>

the heartland of early Jewish settlement. He describes the area as being the natural choice for Jews to live, the rents were cheap, Synagogues and community centers were nearby as were and their places of employment. The center for Jewish shopping was Kensington Market with shops along McCaul and Baldwin Streets, shopping at Eatons was reserved for “special occasions”.

37.32-39.50: Salsberg discusses the hardships faced by Polish immigrant Jews arriving in Toronto after World War One.

39.52-44.45: Salsberg discusses his father an Orthodox man who eventually went into the junk business and became one of the founders of the first Talmud Torah, his mother was active in the Ladies Auxillary of the School and remained it’s President for 50 years.

End

Side 2:

0.03-5.37: Salsberg discusses the religious and cultural divisions that dominated social and communal living in Poland under Czarist rule and the resulting division between Jews and non- Jewish Polish immigrants in Toronto

5.38-8.28: Salsberg discusses the example set by his mother on matters of religious observance and importance of the woman’s role in the family.

8.29-11.08: Salsberg discusses his mother’s activities outside the home. Sarah Salsberg was the first woman to challenge the burial custom of not allowing husband and wife to be buried side by side. Sarah won her challenge and was buried alongside her husband.

11.10-12.28: Salsberg discusses his orientation towards labor Zionism and his parent’s reaction to his political views. Sarah Salsberg was a “broad-minded” woman and friendly with those active in the movement, while his father clung to his own group.

12.29-13.53: Salsberg discusses the garment trade and the organizers who become members of the Ladies Garment Workers Union. Salsberg goes on to speak of his mother’s approval and secret admiration of the women in the Ladies Garment Union.

13.54-14.44: Salsberg discusses the role of Jewish immigrant women using the example of the Eatons strike in 1911 led by Jewish tailors, both men and women.

14.45-15.00: Salsberg discusses the Triangle Fire in New York as the impetus that led to the birth of the ILGWU in America and the ILGWU’s influence on the Canadian Garment industry.

15.03-15.40: Salsberg discusses the New York Yiddish Dailies the “Forward” and Tagblat delivered and read daily by Toronto’s Jewish community as another factor in the establishment of the Ladies Garment Workers Union in Canada.

15.41-20.39: Salsberg discusses the introduction by Eatons to changes in production methods that would have tailors, mostly men, taking on the job of women finishers. The refusal by the tailors to take away the jobs of women would lead to the first sit down strike by tailors in Canada.

20.40-21.20: Salsberg discusses the recognition of women’s rights in the early garment workers unions. The Dressmakers section of the ILGWU in Toronto was predominantly women who led strikes and fought on picket lines.

21.21-23.44: Salsberg discusses Union sentiment within the Jewish community and the enforcement by some of the more militant women on community shopkeepers to use Union labels on their products.

23.45-24.39: Salsberg discusses single Jewish women who confronted with financial hardship worked in predominately Jewish factories.

24.40-26.07: Salsberg discusses the economic nature of the garment industry, the competition and undercutting in the industry factories and the continuous strikes and stoppages by employees opposed to wage cuts.

26.08-31.15: Salsberg discusses the important contributions in the areas of the labor force

29.00-31.15: Salsberg discusses the important contributions in the areas of the labor force, education and social responsibility made to Ontario by Jewish immigrant women. Women worked alongside men in order to improve their economic position and establish themselves within the community. Jewish women placed a great emphasis on education and as a result a high percentage of their children would graduate from institutions such as Harbord Collegiate and Jarvis Collegiate with scholarships. Salsberg speaks of his late wife Dora Wilensky who graduated from Jarvis Collegiate with the highest mark of any girl student in Ontario earning a five-year scholarship to McMaster University and becoming a prominent Social Worker within the Jewish community.

31.16-33.09: Salsberg discusses the differences in opportunity for young Jewish men and young Jewish women. As the only boy in the family he was expected to set the path by going to a theological school in NY but to the dismay of his parents he became radicalized in leftist politics.

33.10-35.55: Although Salsberg's parents were never involved in the labour movement and disagreed with his leftist philosophy, they were pleased by his election in 1938 as Alderman on Toronto's City Council and his election to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in 1943.

End

Oral Histories

SOURCE

In this clip, Joseph Salsberg discusses the events that led to the birth of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) in America and the ILGWU's influence on the Canadian Garment Industry.

In this clip, Joseph Salsberg discusses the first sit down strike by tailors in Canada in recognition of women



Chaim Weizmann at rally at Varsity Stadium, Toronto [graphic material] – [ca. 1937].



LEVEL	Item
ITEM	6703
MATERIAL FORMAT	graphic material
DATE	[ca. 1937]
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	1 photograph : b&w ; 21 x 26 cm
SCOPE AND CONTENT	<p>Item is a photograph depicting Chaim Weizmann speaking at a rally in Toronto at Varsity Stadium on Bloor Street. The photo was taken by Mel Hundert, the donor, who was present at the rally.</p> <p>Pictured from left to right are: Rabbi Samuel Sachs; J. J. Glass; Chaim Weizman; David Dunkelman.</p>
NAME ACCESS	Weizmann, Chaim, 1874-1952 Glass, J.J Dunkelman, David Sachs, Samuel, Rabbi
SUBJECTS	Demonstrations Presidents--Israel
REPRO RESTRICTION	Copyright is in the public domain and permission for use is not required. Please credit the Ontario Jewish Archives as the source of the photograph.
ACCESSION NUMBER	2004-9-1
SOURCE	Archival Descriptions

