

EDITORIAL

5715--A Brief Review

No important changes transpired in the life of the largest Jewish community of today, the North American community, in the course of the past year 5715. The prevailing prosperity in the United States also had its effects in the Jewish community which, like all the citizenry, reaped the benefits of the favorable economic climate.

The Jewish community is sinking its roots ever deeper into American soil, and is advancing its integration in American life. The difference between Jewish and non-Jewish citizens is becoming less all the time, not only legally but in actuality. Jews enjoy all the rights and privileges, and they contribute their full share to the progress of the country in all areas—political, economic, cultural, scientific, and so forth. The prohibition of social and economic racial discrimination is gradually being instituted in a number of states, and discrimination is more and more becoming a social attitude of which decent people are ashamed.

There exist favorable signs that the well-being of the American Jewish community has not had a bad effect upon its Jewish consciousness. Undoubtedly there is a wave of assimilation, but simultaneously there also is a counter-stream of rising Jewish consciousness and Jewish pride, which has been evoked in great measure by the terrible Jewish tragedy under the Nazis, on the one hand, and the tremendous historic event, the heroic emergence of the State of Israel, on the other.

A certain "renaissance," even in modest degree, is visible in American Jewish life. Membership in synagogue congregations is on the rise, and, still more significant, more children are attending Jewish educational institutions. New Jewish centers and institutions continue to appear, erected on a generous scale.

The decline in Jewish generosity in North America during the past few years also was halted this year. During the past year the funds raised by the United Jewish Appeal increased slightly for the first time in several years. Other communal funds, too, effected increases.

THE YOUNGER AND SMALLER JEWISH COMMUNITY of Canada is also sinking deeper roots in its own Canadian soil, and it too benefits from the prevailing "good times" and enjoys all the rights and privileges of citizenship. Anti-Semitism and racial discrimination is being increasingly condemned by public opinion, and in a number of cases is banned by law.

The Jewish education of children in this country is generally in a much better state than in our neighboring large Jewish community. We can also boast of better organization of Jewish life through the Canadian Jewish Congress, which unites practically all Jewish Canadians. The construction of several new Jewish schools was marked during the year in various Jewish centers, including completion of the Herzl Academy, and a good start on the new Shaarey Zedek branch school, both in Winnipeg's River Heights district. And the total of children attending the schools continues to grow—especially in the Day Schools.

One of the most important political events in Canadian Jewish life during the year was the appointment of David Croll as the first Jewish member of the Senate. This was one more step in the direction of complete Jewish integration in Canadian life.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN THE OTHER FREE lands had a peaceful year, without any disturbances. In them, also, on the one hand, there is going on a process of assimilation, and on the other, a strengthened sense of Jewish affiliation and a search for forms in which this should be expressed.

In the countries of Western Europe, aside from Great Britain, Jewish communities were sharply reduced in population after the Nazi plague. This also makes their struggle for Jewish survival more difficult.

Behind the "iron curtain" there still are more than two million Jews, who are sundered not only from the general stream of Jewish life, but also from mutual relationships between themselves in the Communist lands proper. Little is known to us of their Jewish life and their Jewish longings.

In the course of the year, however, signs have been evident of a better attitude toward Jews in those lands, and of the weakening of the anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist course of the last years of Stalin's rule. Certain signs of Jewish life have not vanished in Poland, Rumania and Hungary, and recently, for the first time in several years, the Yiddish language has been heard publicly in Soviet Russia. Signs also exist that the new Soviet political climate has influenced its Jewish policy, and there are prospects that the isolation of Soviet Jewry may be somewhat eased.

A new serious problem for world Jewry is the critical situation of the Jews of North Africa, where the nationalist movement has been accompanied by a wave of anti-Jewish pogroms. Plans are being made, therefore, to rescue a large number of North African Jews through "aliyah" to Israel, and Jews in all the free lands during the coming year will be called to make special financial efforts for this cause.

JEWIS THROUGHTOUT THE WORLD ARE DEEPLY concerned about the fate of the Jewish State which, the object of Jewish yearnings for millennia, was won on the fields of battle with the blood of its heroes and with Jewish aid from across the world. Now, in the eighth year of its existence, Israel is still heavily burdened with difficult economic problems and security problems posed by the foes who surround her and seek to destroy her.

The State of Israel, however, has displayed extraordinary resourcefulness in coping with its problems, and extraordinary courage in standing up to the threat of her militant neighbors. With the help of Jews of all the free lands, especially the Americans, and with her own courage and determination, we hope, Israel will gradually solve her problems and assure her survival.

Envisioned Vancouver Island as Haven for Jews

LOUIS RIEL — PROPHET OF THE NEW WORLD

By RABBI ARTHUR A. CHIEL

On November 16, 1885 Louis Riel was hanged in the Regina jail yard in punishment for "high treason," a charge which had arisen out of the Métis revolt of which Riel was the leader.

The Riel trial had excited great interest in Canada—the sympathies for Riel aroused among French-Canadian and the Indian half-breeds; the antipathies against him stirred among Canadian Protestants, particularly of the Orangemen in Ontario whose fellow Orangeman, Thomas Scott, had been killed in the first Riel uprising of 1870.

Seventy years have passed since Louis Riel's trial and hanging and hardly a year moves by that does not produce a considerable number of articles and studies evaluating the career of this strange prairie mystic and self-appointed prophet.



LOUIS RIEL A Mission ...

ber of articles and studies evaluating the career of this strange prairie mystic and self-appointed prophet.

ONE-EIGHTH OF INDIAN blood, Louis Riel was born and reared in what was to become the province of Manitoba thanks in part to the first uprising which he kindled and led in Red River Valley.

Riel received his early education under the personal guidance of Bishop Alexander Taché and at the age of 14, in 1858, was chosen by Taché to continue his studies for the priesthood at Montreal College. A sensitive, deeply thoughtful and independent youth, Louis Riel struggled with Catholic theology and Church authoritarianism rebelling, at first inwardly, in due course quite openly against Catholic dogmas.

In 1864, Louis Riel's father died. Louis Riel, who had a tremendous admiration for his proud and fiery father, was sorely grieved by his father's death and suffered a severe depression of mind and spirit. Unhappy also with his theological studies Louis Riel determined to break with the priesthood and turned instead to the study of law.

SHORTLY BEFORE HE LEFT his studies for the priesthood he shocked his Catholic instructors at Montreal College by announcing to them one day that he was not Louis Riel in reality but rather Mordecai, a Jew.

When challenged by his bishop for an explanation for this irrational statement Louis Riel explained that it was a momentary whim. But Riel added further, "All the same it could be."

Louis Riel's self-identification as a Jew persisted with him for some time even after he had left Montreal College and was articulated as a law student to Rodolphe La Flamme.

Corresponding with a priest at St. Boniface he reiterated his presumed Jewishness. He informed the priest that he was not Louis Riel but rather David Mordecai of Marseilles, France. He went on to explain that he came to Canada at an early age and resembled the authentic Louis Riel like a twin brother.

But the original Louis Riel had been drowned in the Mississippi River and that he, David Mordecai, was adopted in Louis Riel's stead. He was therefore entitled to none

of his father's property.

Furthermore because he was David Mordecai, the Jew, he appealed to mankind to assist his race and offer them redress for the wrongs committed against them. In truth, he, David Mordecai, was a new messiah whose mission it was to save the Jews and the Gentiles.

LOUIS RIEL RETURNED FROM Montreal to Red River in 1868. He was then twenty-four and unknown except to his immediate family. He was sent in by Canadian authorities to survey the land.

The Métis were exceedingly disturbed. What guarantees were to be given them as to their lands? Louis Riel now found expression for his messianic aspirations. This he sincerely believed to be his appointment with destiny, the opportunity to champion the course of the underdog, his Métis people.

IN DECEMBER, 1869 WAITING at the doors of Red River Valley and ready to enter as the first appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the territory newly acquired by Canada was the Hon. William McDougall. Thanks to McDougall's bungling in having a messenger post an unauthorized royal proclamation in the Red River Settlement, Louis Riel was given the springboard for an uprising.

Proclaiming the Red River Settlement as independent, Riel was elected president of the Métis Council, the governing body of the region. Riel's leadership was taken seriously by the Métis, the English residents and the Canadian government in Ottawa. At age twenty-five Louis Riel was a young man of outstanding achievement.

Unfortunately one hot-headed opponent, Thomas Scott, foreshadowed challenged Riel's authority and was sentenced to be shot. Scott's death fanned the flames of animosity against Riel in Ontario among the Orangemen from whose midst Scott had come to the Red River.

WANDERER OR NOT, RIEL ran for parliament in Provencher, Manitoba, and though absent from the district was elected to parliament. In March, 1874 Riel arrived in Ottawa and while police were alerted to take him prisoner he managed to be sworn into office and quickly made his escape. But because he could not take his seat, Riel was eventually expelled.

In 1875 a complete amnesty was proclaimed by the Canadian government to all involved in the uprising of 1870, except Riel and two of his aides. Riel was officially banished for a five-year period and his political rights taken from him for life.

Riel suffered mental depressions, even breakdown and at one time was confined to Longue Point Asylum near Montreal. Recovering his health Louis Riel eventually settled in St. Peter's, Montana, where he married a half-breed girl and taught school. Two children were born to Riel and his wife and he might have remained in the quiet Montana town for the rest of his life. But destiny had a further appointment for Riel.

From Saskatchewan there came in 1884 a delegation of Métis. The Canadian government was following the earlier pattern in Manitoba. The Métis were alarmed over their future and the disposition of their lands. Would Riel come back and lead them in their fight against Ottawa? Riel responded.

ON ARRIVAL IN SASKATCHEWAN, Louis Riel addressed gatherings, drafted a new bill of rights, sent petitions to Ottawa. He counseled patience. But again Ottawa bungled and the Métis were aroused to bitter anger. Riel set up once more a provisional government and an order was sent to the superintendent of the Mounted Police at Crozier Lake urging the surrender of all supplies.

Superintendent Crozier was angered by the challenge and with ninety-nine men met Riel and his armed Métis at Duck Lake. A short battle followed in which twelve of Crozier's men were killed and twenty-five wounded.

This was spring, 1885. Shortly thereafter an Indian massacre inspired by Gabriel Dumont, Riel's hot-headed adjutant, took place at Frog Lake.

The Canadian government suddenly realized the proportions of the Saskatchewan uprising and dispatched General Frederick Middleton who raised an army of 5,000 soldiers, to quell the revolt.

DUMONT, RIEL'S MILITARY adviser, advocated an active offensive against the oncoming Middleton army. He urged that they be handled as the Métis would handle the buffalo of the prairie, in a hunt. The Métis could easily stampede the soldiers. It was easily possible to harass them to attack their detaining depots, dynamite the railroad. But Riel, who always disdained bloodshed, adamantly refused to allow Dumont to carry out

In studying the strange career of Louis Riel and in examining the Riel trial proceedings, Rabbi Chiel has discovered interesting facts concerning the prairie rebellion leader. Of particular interest to Jewish readers is the hitherto unrevealed fact of Riel's interest in Jews. Rabbi Chiel now shares his interesting discoveries with readers of "Louis Riel, Prophet of the New World."—Editor's Note.

the justice committed against his people.

For five tense days the trial proceeded. Riel tugged at the bit as his lawyers attempted to build up the picture of an insane man, wholly irrational, completely irresponsible for his acts. Frequently Riel arose and attempted to speak his piece, to protest his sanity. Riel's lawyers appealed to the court to have their client silenced.

Mr. Justice Richardson promised Louis Riel the full opportunity to speak, to present his case but in the meanwhile he urged Riel to allow his lawyers to proceed on his behalf.

AT LAST, ON SATURDAY morning, August 31, 1885 after Charles Fitzpatrick had made an excellent two-hour plea of insanity on Riel's behalf, Louis Riel was permitted to address the court. "It would be easy," began Louis Riel, "for me today to plea insanity, because the circumstances are such as to excite any man under the natural excitement of what is taking place." Here Riel apologized, "I cannot speak English very well, but I am trying to do so, because most of those here speak

God I am the founder of Manitoba—I believe by what I have suffered for 15 years, by what I have done for Manitoba and the people of the North-West that my words are worth something."

Nor did he wish to offend his listeners. "If I give offence I do not speak to insult. Yes, you are the pioneers of civilization, the whites are the pioneers of civilization, but they bring among the Indians demoralization."

WHAT OF HIS RELIGIOUS views which had been considered during the trial? What was so insane about his views?

"My insanity, Your Honor, Gentleman of the Jury, is that I wish leave Rome aside inasmuch as it is the cause of division between the Catholics and the Protestants."

Riel went on to say that he hoped some day even if two hundred years later his "children will shake hands with the Protestants of the New World in a friendly manner. I do not wish those evils which exist in Europe to be continued, as much as I can influence it, among the half-breeds. I do not wish that to be repeated in America ..."



THE DECISIVE BATTLE OF BATOCHÉ, fought from May 9 to 13, 1885, is shown in artist's sketch above. It was in this battle, on the Saskatchewan prairie, that the forces of Louis Riel met final defeat, and two days later the Métis leader surrendered, choosing captivity in the hope his trial would, as related in the accompanying article by Rabbi Chiel, "focus attention upon the unhappy lot of the Métis and the Indians ..."

his proposed military tactics. Thus did Riel permit Middleton and his army to arrive at Fish Creek, some eighteen miles from Batoché, Saskatchewan, where Riel's headquarters were situated. On April 24, 1885 the Battle of Fish Creek constituted the first contact between Riel's modest forces and Middleton's sizeable army. The Métis succeeded in staving off further battle until about two weeks later. Fish Creek was a Métis victory.

On May 9, 1885 the Middleton forces began their attack on Batoché. For four days the battle continued. The odds which included a large army and the introduction of the Gatling machine gun for the first time in military warfare, were overwhelmingly against the modest Métis forces.

By May 13 the fighting was over and on May 15 Louis Riel walked into the Middleton army encampment and surrendered himself. He could easily have escaped, as did Gabriel Dumont and others, but he chose captivity instead. Why? It was Riel's hope that his trial would focus attention upon the unhappy lot of the Métis and the Indians which, in turn, would finally achieve for them—justice.

HELD AS A PRISONER IN THE Regina jail, Louis Riel's trial began on July 28, 1885. High treason, which carried with it the penalty of death, was the crime with which Riel was charged. Tried before Mr. Justice Hugh Richardson, a stipendiary magistrate, and a jury of six, Louis Riel was defended by F. S. Lemieux and Charles Fitzpatrick.

But Riel and his lawyers were strongly at variance with each other. Riel's legal defenders were determined to prove their client innocent and therefore wholly irresponsible for the uprising against the government. Louis Riel was determined to convey to the world

English. "The excitement which my trial causes me would justify me not to appear as usual, but with my mind out of its ordinary condition. I hope, with the help of God, I will maintain calmness and decorum as suits the Honorable Court, this Honorable Jury."

RIEL RELATED CAREFULLY the history of the Métis cause and his own role in it. On his arrival from Montana in 1884 he found abject poverty among the Métis and the Indians. "When I came into the North-West in July, I found the Indians suffering, I found the half-breeds eating the rotten pork of the Hudson's Bay Company, and getting sick and weak every day."

Riel found, too, that the whites were unprivileged. "I saw they were deprived on responsible government, I saw that they were deprived of their public liberties."

He had tried to the utmost of his ability to achieve redress for these injustices by peaceful means. "We have made petitions, I have made petitions with others to the Canadian Government, asking them to relieve the condition of this country."

THE ATTEMPT HAD BEEN made to prove him insane because he believed he had "a mission." Even now he reasserted that he had a mission now was there anything insane about it?

There were others who had faith. Archbishop Bourget had said, "Riel has no narrow views, he is a man to accomplish great things." Father Bruno of Worcester had said to him, "Riel, God has put an object into your hands, the cause of the triumph of religion in the world. Take care, you will succeed when most men believe you have lost."

For fifteen years he had suffered. He had been labeled, "I know that through the grace of

MENTION HAD BEEN MADE by witnesses during the trial that Louis Riel had advocated a division of the North-West among seven nationalities. Was that so insane? Not at all, protested Riel.

"We will give them each a seventh to show that we are not fanatics, that we are not partisans, that we do not wish only for the Catholics, but that we have consideration for those who are not Catholics."

He had a vision of Italians, Irish, Bavarians, Poles, Belgians, Danes and Jews settling on the land so plentifully available.

"There is a beautiful island, Vancouver, and I think the Belgians will be happy there and the Jews who are looking for a country for 1,800 years, the knowledge of which the nations have not been able to attain yet. Perhaps they will hear my voice one day and on the other side of the mountains while the waves of the Pacific will chant sweet music for them to console their hearts for the mourning of 1,800 years."

IN CONCLUDING HIS ADDRESS to the court Louis Riel said, "If they declare me insane, I have been astray, I have been astray not as an imposter, but according to my conscience."

Mr. Justice Richardson gave his charge to the jury and on the afternoon of August 1, 1885 the jury, after deliberation, announced to the court that they had found the defendant, Louis Riel, guilty.

Unsuccessful appeals were made on Riel's behalf to the Court of Queen's Bench in Manitoba, to the Privy Council in London, England.

Louis Riel was hanged in the Regina jail-yard on November 16, 1885. Riel had said to the court, "If I am guilty of high treason I say I am the prophet of the new world."

Little Boys Shouldn't Worry ...

A Personal Experience By Henry Kressel Jr.

A Seven Arts Feature

It was the second day of Rosh Hashonah 1942. The Pyrenean fog was just beginning to lift, revealing the ugly grey barracks which lined the parade ground, and the barbed wire line which extended as far as the eye could see, only broken here and there by the guardhouses.

Ida dropped the valise near a small pile of bricks. "No sense going any further," she said. Mother nodded and placed her bag next to it. We sat down on the bricks.

The field was just beginning to get filled with the groups which were continuously leaving the barracks, the men weighed down by suitcases, the women leading children by the hand. I watched the scene absently, still half asleep. "Are you cold?" Mother asked me. I shook my head. She removed her shawl and wrapped it around me.

The mountains slowly made their appearance, first the forests, then the bare rock, then the snow, brilliant in the morning sun, and finally the blue sky. It was going to be a beautiful day.

A MAN WHO HAD SAT down next to us took out a small book from his pocket and, his lips slowly forming every word, he began to sway back and forth, his shadow dancing behind him on the bricks. It took me a while to recognize him as the man who had led the prayers in our barracks the night before. He had later gotten up on a chair and had made a speech about the "everlasting Jewish values" and the coming of the messiah.

I had not understood a word of it, but I had seen enough to know that this was a solemn moment indeed. People all

around me were sobbing quietly. A few women had cried out loud. The man next to me looked disappointedly puny. Was he the one who said the things which made everybody cry?

His vibrating voice, his inspired features in the solemn semi-darkness of the barrack had made him look a little like the picture of Moses which I had seen in a book back in the school in Antwerp. But this man had a pockmarked face, a flat nose, bloodshot eyes and a greasy black suit.

"Mother," I asked her, "why did everybody cry last night?" "Because we are going away," she answered.

GROWNUPS ALWAYS seemed to cry when they go someplace. Mother and Ida had cried when we left Vienna. That

was quite a long time ago, but I still remembered the train and the steaming locomotive which had passed very close to us.

It was the first time I had ever seen a train. It was even more impressive than I had imagined it would be. We had been in many trains since then but the thrill of seeing a locomotive at close range had never worn off.

"Are we going to ride in a train again today?" I asked Mother.

"Yes darling," she answered. "Are all these people going too?"

"Yes, but little boys shouldn't worry about these things. Are you hungry Alex?"

"I don't know where we're going. You must be very hungry." She took out a box of biscuits from her bag and gave one to Ida and me.

I MUNCHED ON THE STALE biscuit while looking around me. The parade ground extending in front of us looked like an ant hill. People were milling around, moving from group to group.

"They're probably looking for friends and relatives," Ida exclaimed and then she will bring look for our relatives. Uncle Ernst had been taken away with Father when we were still in Antwerp, and Grandmother had died in Marseilles.

"My attention focussed on some white figures moving through the crowd. A woman dressed completely in white came over to me. "Quelle age a tu, moi chou?" she asked bending down to my level and smiling very sweetly.

"Sept ans et demi," I answered without hesitation. Somebody was always asking me my age.

It was getting pretty annoying. She patted my cheek and taking Mother by the arm gently pulled her away a few feet. They came back after a few minutes.

"Do you want to go with this lady for a little while Alex?" Mother asked me. "You'll have lunch and then she will bring you back here. All right?"

"Why don't you come with me, Mother?" I asked, a little afraid of the lady in white, who was standing looking at me with k

"No, Alex," she answered, putting her arm around me, "I don't stay here to see that nobody takes our valise away. ... is nothing for you to be afraid of. You'll be back in a little while and then we'll all be together again." She kissed me and then Ida kissed me too, and before I could make up my mind to cry, the lady took my hand

and led me away.

WE WALKED FOR A WHILE between the barracks until we came to a two-story brick building situated next to the gate to the camp. As we walked up the steps, a long line of open khaki trucks with swastikas painted on their sides was rolling into the camp.

The room we entered was filled with boys and girls about my own age, seated on benches lined around the wall. A little girl was hollering amidst the patient "shunush" of two ladies in white fusing over her.

My guide sat me down next to the window facing the gate and left me, saying that she would be back shortly. I looked outside for a while and watched as the trucks passed the gate. Then I moved over to a corner and leaning against the wall closed

my eyes and fell asleep.

I woke up to find the lady who had escorted me before standing in front of me. "Viens, Alex," she said, "il faut que tu mange quelque chose." She led me upstairs to a dining room, filled with children, sat me down in front of a bowl of soup and told me to eat.

A RUMBLING SOUND CAME in through the window. I looked up to see the khaki trucks leaving the camp in close order, loaded with people.

"Where are they going?" I asked. "To the railroad station," the lady answered.

"Is mother waiting for me?" I continued. "Mais naturellement," she stroked my cheek. "Mange, mange." I resumed eating, gulping down each spoonful. The soup was so good.