

Book Reviews/Comptes Rendus 189

in the war years record of Canadian Jewry. The book explains the significant role of the Congress in gaining approval for the appointment of Jewish military chaplains.

I also agree that Gershon Levi is a worthy guest author for the *Canadian Jewish Archives*. It is to be hoped that this will be a precedent for publication of other worthy contributions to Canadian Jewish history. The *Canadian Jewish Archives* should be continued as a tribute to its founders: Saul Hayes, long-time executive director of Congress; Louis Rosenberg, its first editor; and David Rome, in appreciation of his prodigious output since 1974.

While Rabbi S. Gershon Levi was Canada's first Jewish military chaplain, the practice of appointing Jews as civilian chaplains dates back to the 1890s. The first Jewish civilian chaplain was Rabbi Hartog Veld of Montreal's Temple Emmanuel, appointed by the federal government to tend to the spiritual and social needs of Jews who found themselves in penal institutions. Rabbi Veld was one of the rabbinic advisers to the Baron de Hirsch Institute. The Institute began to extend service to Jews in prison and in other Institutions soon after its establishment, in 1891, in cooperation with the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society.

Abraham Arnold
Winnipeg

Martz, Fraidie. *Open Your Hearts. The Story of the Jewish War Orphans in Canada*. Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1996. 189pp.

Fraidie Martz has written an engaging book about the process that made it possible for Jewish War Orphans to come to Canada in the aftermath of the Shoah. What makes this book all the more useful for the reader is that it places the story into the context of Canadian child welfare policy of the time. Further, the prevailing attitudes that social workers held about how well or poorly those who suffered personal losses could cope in a

new setting, is also discussed.

It comes as no surprise that the policies of the Canadian government towards the plight of Jewish War orphans was shameful. While orphans had been identified early in the war, they were denied access to this country and hundreds were known to have died as a result of the Canadian government's denial of permits to come to Canada. What is also interesting is the collusion of the leading Canadian child welfare advocates, including Charlotte Whitten, whose antisemitic attitudes contributed to discouraging the government from accepting these children. Canadian officials overseas also placed roadblocks in the way of expediting the procedures for accepting the applicants.

Martz, herself a social worker, does an excellent job in identifying these obstacles and provides many examples of delays. She names people who despite knowing the plight of the children, did little to help. She provides insight into how ill-formed were Canadian child welfare policies that in some provinces, for example Saskatchewan, the Minister of Mines was responsible for children's services.

The drama told in the book concerns the history of the work of many Canadian Jewish advocates, social workers and volunteers. The orphans would never have made it to Canada had it not been for the dedication of people such as Greta Fischer, Lottie Levinson, Ethel Ostry, Rose Wolfe and Manfred Saalheimer among others. Martz documents their work as well as that of Saul Hayes and Joseph Kage, whose initial plan to help for several months led to distinguished careers as social advocates in the Jewish Community.

She also describes the efforts of many families who, on short notice, accepted the orphans and provided them with a loving home environment. She recounts community organizing that took place throughout Canada's Jewish community to provide resources for the children. Not all placements were successful, but the community did its best to reach out and make the sacrifices necessary to meet the needs.

Most of the orphans defied what had been the then prevailing perspective of some leading social workers. While they encouraged adoptions, they also warned adoptive families that many of the children would suffer emotional breakdowns from the trauma they had experienced. Thankfully, most did not, and used the opportunity of being cared for in a new country to build creative and successful lives. Early memories of the love they had experienced in their families and the acceptance they felt by their new families, caused most to overcome and to build new lives. Examples are provided based on interviews with orphans and their adoptive families.

Martz provides the reader with a compelling book. It is well written and is a useful addition to the history of Jewish war orphans in the aftermath of the Shoah, Jewish communal services, and Canadian child welfare.

Jack S. Kugelmass
York University

Naves, Elaine Kalman. *Journey to Vaja*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996. 269pp.

The tenacity of Jews and the persistence of Judaism to survive extraordinary millennial vicissitudes is always astonishing. Undoubtedly one factor in this survival is the unique role of memory which in the Jewish scheme of things is much more than remembrance or memorial. Rather it is recall, recollection, recovery and reconstruction. It is also fulfilment of commandments. For Jews and Judaism memory is ever an existential affective fact and protean life force.

Genealogy, the chronicle of familial descent, the life, deeds, and frustrations of ancestors is an important element of this special kind and special purpose of memory. Quite a bit of the first book of Moses is devoted to Toldot—the history of generations chronicling the genealogy of Abraham, his predecessors and descendants. Moreover, the Bible constantly enjoins, and a ubiquitous part of the entire Jewish liturgy is