

their lives economically and financially, to put everything into me. To go to school, high school, other education, music, you name it, I had it. Because they wanted a better life for me.

They really didn't know what that life was. They dreamed of, you know, America, the North American concept of life, the Golden Future, that if you worked hard, study hard, there was a pot of gold in the end of the rainbow. I don't mean gold in the sense of gold in your pocket, but a great future, and there was! Because, my parents got to see me sworn in as mayor, as a member of parliament, they saw me on TV. They had one hell of a time!

I wasn't unique or unusual. There were so many others who became doctors, lawyers, pharmacists, businessmen, some wound up in jail. But, you know, there were dozens, scores, of success stories that were just absolutely terrific.

Later immigrants had it much rougher, because there was discrimination. It was tough enough being Polish or Ukrainian. But by that time, when they started coming in—the visibles—they were much more militant. They weren't prepared to put up with the kind of crap that the people that came around the time my parent came did. Maybe it's because of the countries they came from. They were already militant, they were escaping from oppression and didn't want to put up with that kind of jazz.

They adjusted too, because by this time the kids that were born in Canada in my generation didn't want to do some of the menial jobs. They wanted to be white-collar workers, salesmen—they wanted to be managerial people.

**Q.** Do you think that people have some fear about this? I recall stories that there was a riot once in the '30s, or a big fight anyways, at Christie Pits.

**A.** Oh, yeah, well that was of course confined particularly to the Jewish community. It was the pre-second world war era. Hitler was elected in 1933 as the Chancellor of Germany, and Nazism started rearing its ugly head here in Canada. There were Nazi demonstrations in Christie Pits and in Kew Beach.

You say why. I don't know why, except that Christie Pits—that's at Grace and Bloor—that's where baseball games were played, softball games which drew a lot of people.

Kew Beach was a beach way out in the east end where a lot of Jewish people used to frequent at that time.

So, the Nazis came out—I can remember very vividly—I can remember in my mind's eye when they wore the sweatshirts with swastikas. They used to demonstrate and that would provoke members of the Jewish community. And they hauled up the Nazi banners in Christie Pits and Kew Beach.

At Christie Pits in particular, young Jews used to gather at College and Spadina in big trucks. They used to gather a bunch of guys with truncheons, lead pipes, and rubber hoses. They used to drive them up to Christie Pits and they'd fight with these guys.

It became very ugly and a lot of people were hurt. And their idea was, you know, we weren't going to take that kind of crap. I was just a kid at the time. I told you I was born in '22, so I was about 12, 13 years old at the time. It was very ugly.

The police were very good at warding this off. Our police were always good that way. And this kept festering. It was like we had here a few years ago, and like they had in the United States with the new Nazi parties just recently. You know, history keeps repeating itself. And, of course, when war broke out in September of 1939 all that stopped because of the war. But that had to do with Nazism and the Jewish community.

At that time, if you were a Jewish medical student, I think they took one medical student at the Toronto General Hospital, or any of the big hospitals. The other kids had to go to the States. They wouldn't let them in here. There was a numerous clausus, a quota. You couldn't get in here, you couldn't get in there.

Universities wouldn't hire professors who were Jewish, they had a quota system. You had nowhere to turn, it was the same thing in the faculty of dentistry. And, of course, that whole thing in turned around now. No matter what hospital you go into now, I think the Chief physician of Toronto General has been Jewish now for some years.



From left: Phil Givens, Ed Broadbent (from further left), Ambassador Ignatieff, and other member of UN delegation.

**Q.** You've been able to successful without having the quotas stop you, and you lived through those times.

**A.** No, I came just as things were beginning to turn.

**Q.** Oh, I see.

**A.** And I was one of those that started turning them. You see, the first Jewish Mayor was Nathan Phillips, but, at the time that I was starting, or just before, if you were a Catholic or Jew, you couldn't get into City Hall.

At that time, if you were Jewish, for instance, you couldn't possibly get elected in a non-Jewish area. Since then, I was elected as a mayor of Toronto when there were very few Jews living in Toronto. I was elected to Parliament in York-West where I don't think there were a hundred Jewish votes.

This has been so with respect to other Jewish candidates who have been elected. But that was not possible when I was 10, 15, 20 years old. I used to be hounded through the streets where I

lived and called a "sheeny," and a "jew," and everything else. It was just awful.

**Q.** That's what Toronto was like for Jewish people?

**A.** Ah! It was very traumatic, very humiliating, very shameful, and there was nothing you could do about it. And the taunts of "go back to Jerusalem," and "kike," and "sheeny," and "jew," and everything else . . . just absolutely horrible.

And "no jews allowed," like when I started searching titles when I was a law student, which commenced in 1945. I came across many titles where there were covenants in the deed, "this property not to be sold to . . ." These covenants had various forms, but the substance was "not to be sold to anybody of the Jewish, Black, or undesirable . . ."

**Q.** And that would hold up in court?

**A.** Oh, yeah. It held up in court, and it wasn't until (name of case), if you know anything about these legal cases. (Name of judge) was the judge. They were ruled legal by (name of judge), and subsequently (name of judge) ruled against them in these cases. I think the (name of case) was one case, and the (name of case) was another which had to do with a cottage. He was a test case. And subsequently (name of premier), who was then premier, passed a special law, an Ontario law, a provincial law, which has to do with property and civil rights, which made all such covenants and clauses illegal thereafter. And that made it completely illegal in all other Canadian provinces to follow suit. And we're only talking, I think, that was in the 1950s. So you're only talking, like, 30 years.

I remember searching my brother-in-law's title of a cottage up in Georgian Bay, which clearly said this. Of course I requisitioned, you know, and they said, "Well, this no longer applies," or "Satisfy yourself," something like that. So it applied to blacks, or when you went into a hotel up in Muskoka or other places, "no Jews and dogs allowed," you couldn't get in. You couldn't get in the — club.

**Q.** Were there actually signs that said that?

**A.** Oh, yeah. I saw them, personally.

**Q.** Because I've heard of that, but I was just wondering if that's actually like, literally, what the signs . . .

**A.** Literally! Believe me. Out in Sunnyside, which no longer exists, around there. You went to the west of there and there were hotels and little motels and stuff like that, and you couldn't get in.

And up in Muskoka, and various hotels, you couldn't get in. Social clubs, you couldn't get in, the —, a notorious example of social clubs that wouldn't let you in . . . Yacht clubs, golf clubs, that were established separate but equal facilities. now who the hell cares?

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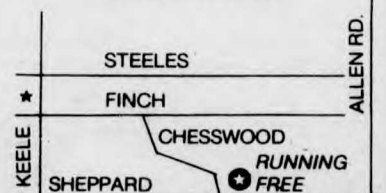
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