



## Why We Published a Book of History

BY MICHELLE SHULMAN

Every few years, we at The Lola Stein Institute and The Toronto Heschel School put our vision to work in the community. In 2008, we brought Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, z"l to speak in Toronto and awarded him the A.J. Heschel Humanitarian Award. In 2015, we celebrated "Social Justice in the Classroom" with an international contest and awarded the Prize for Teaching Excellence to Erin Buchmann at the Kirkland Lake District Composite School in Ontario. In 2017, as Canada celebrated its 150th anniversary, we began a commemorative history project and are thrilled to announce publication of *Northern Lights: A Canadian Jewish History*.

### Creating an Artefact that Celebrates a Milestone

Our way to teach history is to inspire students to think like historians in courses that focus on artefacts made by the people who lived in the times they are exploring. Junior High students study the Spanish Inquisition through drawings of ecclesiastical trials and the Edict of Expulsion, evicting the Jews in 1492. Grade 3 students inquire into the lives of early Canadians by examining the tools and ritual objects that our First Nations and pioneers left behind. To celebrate Canada's 150th birthday, we chose to create an artefact that will endure through generations beyond us and carry with it stories of Jewish history in Canada.

We asked what artefacts reveal Canadian Jewish history? What objects and writings portray the evolution of Canada as it shaped the Jewish experience across the continent and how Jewish Canadians shape our nation and national culture? Can we provide a bird's-eye view of Jewish lawyers developing Canadian labour and constitutional law; Jewish artists and writers expressing Canadian perspectives in sculpture, painting, literature, and song; Jewish architects and builders constructing skyscrapers and homes to shelter

families and businesses? How fun is it that Jewish Canadian musicians almost won a Yiddish Grammy and can even claim a role in basketball glory? There are so many artefacts that the Jewish generations of Canada have deposited as they passed through time. How much more clearly do we see the whole Jewish story if these pieces are brought together?

### The Process and the Gift

And what better artefact of Jewish Canada to help shape this documentation project than *The Canadian Jewish News*? The paper gathered and reported stories of Jewish Canada in two incarnations for over six decades.

The Lola Stein Institute began a collaboration with *The Canadian Jewish News* in 2017. The goal was to document Canadian history through the prism of its Jewish community, and to combine Jewish stories, testimonies, creations, and achievements in a beautifully illustrated book. The project was driven by Pam Medjuck Stein, the editor of THINK magazine and chair of The Lola Stein Institute, Yoni Goldstein, Editor in Chief of the CJN, and Ira Gluskin, co-chair of the Editorial Committee of the CJN Board of Directors with Pam.

*Northern Lights: A Canadian Jewish History* was published as a gift from The Lola Stein Institute and The Toronto Heschel School to its school community, and from *The Canadian Jewish News* to its subscribers. It shows the opportunity and camaraderie that Jews have experienced in this country, some of the hurdles and crises they faced, and the ingenuity with which they rebounded. We trust its stories will intrigue and entertain our community today and help the next generations of Jewish Canadians to navigate the years ahead. May it educate and may it inspire!

NB: Books are being shipped in June.

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# NORTHERN LIGHTS

