

The Centre for Holocaust Education and Scholarship  
Teachers' Workshop  
**Identity Charts**  
**"Saul Hayes"**

**Hayes, Saul (1906–1980), Canadian Jewish community official, lawyer. Born in Montreal, Hayes was the voice of the Jewish community of Canada from the late 1930s through the 1960s.**



A graduate of McGill University and a lawyer, Hayes' first job was as a lecturer in the university's School of Social Work in 1934. He soon joined a prominent Montreal law firm.

But law was not Hayes' primary interest; Jewish community service was. And so when industrialist Samuel Bronfman became president of a struggling and ineffective Canadian Jewish Congress in January of 1938, Hayes eagerly accepted his invitation to become its director. Through the cjc's United Jewish Refugee Committee, which he headed for many years, Hayes led the battle against the antisemitism that permeated Canada in the 1930s and 1940s. As well, and perhaps more importantly, he organized Canadian Jewry – along with a very small number of non-Jewish organizations – to lobby a hostile government to let in some of the desperate Jews of Europe looking for a haven from Nazi persecution.

Hayes was the Jewish community's first native-born civil servant. He was a passionate and eloquent spokesman for its interests. For almost 40 years he appeared before

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parliamentary committees, met with hundreds of cabinet ministers, legislators, and bureaucrats, wrote countless speeches and articles, and represented Canadian Jewry at international meetings, including the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945 and the Paris Conference on Post-War Peace Treaties in 1946. He well deserved the description of him by Yaacov Herzog, Israel's ambassador to Canada in the 1960s, as "the foremost civil servant of the Jewish people."

What Hayes was most proud of were his contributions to the modernization of a highly restrictive Canadian society. He was instrumental in forcing federal and provincial governments in the postwar period to adopt laws against racial and religious discrimination in housing and employment, was an early proponent of multiculturalism, was highly influential in persuading dubious Canadian authorities to allow into the country thousands of Jewish immigrants following the war, and was a member of an innovative royal commission which crafted legislation against hate-mongers. He also lobbied successfully to create a Jewish education system in Quebec largely funded by the provincial government.

A lifelong Zionist, Hayes created the Israel Bond Association in Canada, paved the way for Canadian investment in Israel, and led the fight against the \*Arab boycott of the Jewish state. In representing Israeli interests in Canada, Hayes often played a more important role than Israel's ambassador in Ottawa.

Hayes retired from the Canadian Jewish Congress in 1974, the same year he was appointed to the Order of Canada, the nation's highest honor.

**The above information is found at:** "Hayes, Saul." [Encyclopaedia Judaica. Encyclopedia.com.](http://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/hayes-saul) (September 21, 2017). <http://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/hayes-saul>