



THE PEACOCK

GLOSSARY / HISTORICAL NOTES

antisemitism—Similar to racism, this term means “discriminating against Jews.” It has led to vicious attacks against Jews for thousands of years. In Canada, both before and after World War II, some businesses put up signs saying “No Jews Allowed.” Many people believe antisemitism was one reason the Canadian government let in so few Jewish survivors after World War II. It is still common in Canada and around the world today.

barracks—A group of military buildings where soldiers live and sleep.

Canadian flag—The red-and-white maple leaf flag only became Canada’s official flag in 1965.



In 1947, the flag that Barbara would have known was mostly red with a Union Jack, the flag of the United Kingdom, in the top left corner and Canada’s coat of arms centered on the right. (You’d need a lot more crayons to color it in than you do today!)

Canadian Jewish Review—A weekly newspaper published in English between 1921 and 1966. Before televisions, newspapers were very important to Canadians, especially during World War II. After the war, Jewish newspapers offered an in-depth look into important issues, like displaced persons, the State of Israel and the struggle for better conditions for Jews and others in Canada and around the world.

concentration camp—A place where a government forces people it considers its enemies to live.

These are often people from a certain religion, race or ethnic group, such as Jews. During World War II the Nazi leaders of Germany set up over 1,000 concentration camps all over Europe. Besides Jews, prisoners included LGBTQ+ people, Roma people and people with

disabilities. Nazi Germans killed millions of people in concentration camps.

displaced persons—After the war, many Jews who had survived the Holocaust couldn’t return home for a few reasons. First, their homes, possessions and, in many cases, entire villages had been taken over or destroyed. Second, many non-Jews actually threatened or attacked Jews who did return. These people who were left with no home to go back to were called *displaced persons* (also *DPs*); today, we would call them *refugees*.

Exodus—The *Exodus 1947* was a ship built to hold up to 600 people but set sail from France carrying 4,515 Jewish DPs. When it reached its destination of Palestine, British sailors attacked the ship, killing a volunteer sailor from the United States and two passengers and injuring others. The British sent the passengers back to Europe, where they were eventually taken to DP camps in Germany.

Great War, The—In 1947 many people could still vividly remember World War I (1914–1918). Until World War II started, it had simply been called “The Great War” or “The World War.” (In this case, “great” means it was large, intense or important, not that it was a good war.)

Hitler, Adolf (1889-1945)—The leader of the National Socialist (Nazi) Party from 1933, Hitler then became Chancellor of Germany, until his death in 1945. Hitler was a dictator, meaning he alone controlled the government. The war began when Hitler ordered his army to take over Poland in 1939. During the war, Hitler controlled the powerful German army but also worked toward his plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe.

Holocaust—During World War II, Hitler and his Nazi party attempted to kill all of Europe’s Jews and murdered nearly six million Jewish people in total. These events are called the *Holocaust*, also known as the *Shoah*, a Hebrew word for “catastrophe.”



Jewish Immigrant Aid Society (JIAS)—Founded in Toronto in 1920, JIAS provided European Jews who fled to Canada with food, clothing, money and housing. They also tried to convince the Canadian government to allow in more Jewish immigrants, both before and after World War II, unfortunately without much success. Today JIAS still serves newcomers to Canada from around the world, regardless of their religion or country of origin.

Kensington Market—An area of Toronto which was home to so many Jews that at one point it was actually called “the Jewish market.” It later became a home to immigrants from many other parts of the world: the Caribbean, Asia, Central America, Africa and more!

Mussolini, Benito (1883-1945)—Prime minister of Italy from 1922 until 1943. He was the leader of the National Fascist Party. Like Hitler, Mussolini was a dictator, meaning he used force and fear to keep himself in power. Near the end of World War II, Mussolini tried to escape Italy and was killed by his enemies.

Red Cross—A movement created in Switzerland in 1863 to protect the life and dignity of war victims. It also provides aid after large-scale emergencies. Today, almost every country in the world has a Red Cross or Red Crescent Society (in Israel, it is known as Magen David Adom, or “Red Star of David”).

Second World War (or World War II)—A war that involved fighting in most parts of the world. The war in Europe lasted from 1939 to 1945, but fighting started earlier in Asia. Most countries were either part of a group called the Allies (with France, Poland and the UK) or one called the Axis powers (with Germany, Italy and Japan). World War II involved more countries, cost more money, involved more people and killed more people than any other war in history.

Sunnyside Pool—The Sunnyside Bathing Pavilion in Toronto was built in 1922 as a public changeroom for the lake, and the city added a pool—Canada’s largest—in 1925. Later, a midway was added with rides, including a carousel and a roller coaster. While the midway is gone today, Sunnyside is still Toronto’s largest public outdoor swimming pool.

Tailor Project—An effort led by businesspeople after World War II to bring Jewish DPs to Canada. Since the Canadian government would not let Jews in if they did not have jobs, these businesses sent representatives to DP camps in Europe to find experienced clothing workers and offer them jobs and shelter so that the government would allow them to immigrate.

telegram—A written message transmitted along wires. The text was written or printed at the receiving end, then usually delivered by hand. Before private telephones became common, telegrams were very popular. It took only minutes or hours for them to arrive, while a letter might take weeks. Because you originally paid for telegrams by the number of words, people generally kept them very short.

Union Station—First opened in 1927 and still in use today, this is Toronto’s grand main railway station. By the 1940s, people often drove or even flew for longer trips, but even today, for a trip from Toronto to New York or Montreal, you can still take a train just as Barbara’s parents did—if you have some time to spare, it can be a real pleasure.



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