

***THEY SHALL NOT ENTER:
ANTI-SEMITISM IN CANADA DURING THE 1930S***

A Senior Thesis

By

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Group: Humanities

“THEY SHALL NOT ENTER’: Anti-Semitism In Canada During The 1930s”

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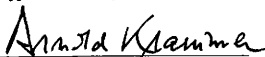
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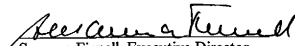
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“THEY SHALL NOT ENTER’: Anti-Semitism In Canada During The 1930s”

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Examination of the historical record reveals that during the 1930s, Canada experienced a particularly vehement form of anti-Semitism across the spectrum of its society. Although anti-Semitism was then world wide, historical events unique to Canada conspired to produce a rise in violent anti-Semitism similar to that seen in Nazi Germany in the early 1930s. The combined influences of the Depression, the massive exodus of primarily Eastern European Jews (*Ashkenazic*), the Canadian Catholic Church and the emergence of Nazi philosophy coupled with the application of policy of a latently anti-Semitic government resulted in manifestations of dormant prejudice. With its dual French-British national heritage, immigration by Jews introduced a third force, a non-Christian religion and a second minority. By researching the prohibitions in areas of immigration, business, education and residential opportunities, it is possible to see the extent of anti-Semitism and its progression through Canadian society. Although the declaration of war effectively ended public anti-Semitism, an epilogue will reveal that the prejudice went underground, demonstrated in the fact that the Canadian government waived its own ban against immigration by potential Nazi military war criminals. It allowed the entire Galicia Division, a Nazi Waffen SS unit to enter.

INTRODUCTION

In Nazi History, Spring 1997, one of the assigned topics was propaganda and how it was used by the National Socialists to consolidate power and compliance in Germany. After discussing radio, movies, newspapers and other printed material, the class went into the ways the Nazis had exploited the educational systems, the professions, and the churches. At that point Prof. Krammer challenged the students for other aspects of daily life that could have been used. There were several responses, one of which was, "Did they, the Nazis, use fraternal or social organizations, such as Lions, Woodmen of the World, or Rotary International and if so, how?"

His response was for me to find out before the next class. The only truly international social organization at that time was Rotary International. What was found was, a small quote from the November 1933 Rotarian. a shock. The Rotarian reported that after meeting with Hitler's representatives, Rotary International would continue to exist in Germany with the government's approval, although they would forfeit Jewish membership. Further searching produced a copy of the magazine, which confirmed the notation previously found.

When the invitation to participate in the University Undergraduate Fellows Research arrived, Prof. Krammer agreed to advise me, if my proposal was accepted to research the relationship between Rotary International and Nazi Germany. In attempting to learn how an organization, with the reputation of Rotary International, could have been acceptable to Nazis, I began looking into the records for information on John Nelson, the Canadian president of RI in 1933. The Canadian National Archives has a policy that

information on individuals is not made public until twenty years after his death. Rotary International did not return calls. When finally reached by telephone and told of the research, Mr. Wilmon White, Editor for Rotarian, agreed to furnish copies of requested files. I had requested access physically and offered to be in Evanston, IL. at their convenience, to do my research; however, they declined my offer. I have not been able to reach Mr. White and no information has been sent.

In August, 1997, I went to Washington DC and Baltimore, MD, where I had been able to locate a documentable scrapbook collection, left by a member of a local synagog to the Jewish Historical Society of Baltimore. This collection contains every article printed in the New York Times, the Manchester Guardian and the Baltimore Sun Times, about anti-Semitic actions by Nazis as well as those reported in Canada and the United States. While checking the Internet for accessibility to Canadian newspapers, I found reports of current political figures discounting their involvement in Nazi and fascists activities during the 1930s. Most were of the opinion that their previous activities were mistakes of youth and should not be considered today.

A telephone call to the Holocaust Center in Montreal, still trying to find information on John Nelson and Rotary International in Canada, put me in touch with Paula Draper at the University of Toronto. Ms. Draper, in turn, put me in contact with the Canadian Jewish Congress. I was advised then that there was very limited access to the type of information I was seeking unless I was able to be in Canada and could go to the archives of various newspapers. However, they were willing to share the names of several other researchers specializing in the 1930s, many of whom are sources for this

work.

Due to the fact that it was early January 1998, and Rotary International had still not forwarded the requested information. Prof. Krammer and I discussed the fact that my research must shift to Canada. Due to the sensitivity of the subject and the reticence of the Canadians, I have limited quoted material to information confirmed by at least two sources. Unfortunately, this resulted in what appears to be a limited information base which is not at all the case. At the conclusion, I have provided a listing of sources researched but not quoted because they provided insight to the social and political environment in Canada during the 1930s. I have divided the listing by primary, secondary and contributing insight groupings.

In an attempt to provide a balanced view of the events, I sought information to refute any portion of the report. Unfortunately, I have found very little other than notations that not all citizens of Canada were anti-Semitic; and that the vocal and violent anti-Semites were actually a minority. They were organized and knew enough about public persuasion to manipulate the natural fear of things and people who were different. When the east European Jews, *Ashkenazics*, came to Canada, they looked like Canadians physically; but they dressed like, spoke like and acted like the imaginary "Jew" that they had been taught to fear and shun. The imaginary Jew could sneak in stealthfully and corrupt them before the Canadian knew there was a danger. The difference, of the *Ashkenazics*, contributed to fact they became the scapegoat for the ills of Canadian society. In many ways the same things can be said of the United States, Great Britain and the rest of democratic world.

“‘They Shall Not Enter’: Anti-Semitism in Canada during the 1930s”

The first recognized anti-Semitic publications in Canada appeared in 1866 and later in 1872. At that time, Alphonse Villeneuve, a Quebec City priest, published a series of anti-Semitic articles. This marked the beginning of eighty years of Roman Catholic ultramontane teaching of anti-Semitism as part of their doctrine. The Catholic Church in Quebec “permitted an intensive, though mostly academic, teaching of contempt and hostility toward the Jewish people.”¹ Ultramontane literature was instrumental in the development of a public perception responsive to propaganda messages vilifying the mythical Jew.²

One of the first Catholic anti-Semites was Zacharie Lacasse who began his campaign against the Jews in 1880. Lacasse linked Jews to Freemasons who were especially distasteful to Quebec Catholics.³ Two of the publications owned by the Canadian Catholic Church were *La Semaine religieuse*, which regularly printed works by Edouard Drumont, a notorious French anti-Semite; and *L'Action sociale Catholique*, which “began attacking Jews in its first issue and maintained that stance for many

¹Jacques Langlais and David Rome. *Jews & French Quebecers: Two Hundred Years of Shared History*. (Waterloo: Laurier University Press, 1991) xiv.

²Ibid., 57.

³Ibid., 62.

decades."⁴ *Le Semeur*, owned by the *Association catholique de la jeunesse canadienne (ACTC)* proved to be a fountain of anti-Semitic propaganda.⁵

In the 1908, Monsignor Louis-Adolphe Paquet began his writings against Jews. Paquet characterized Jews as evil oppressors of Christians:

Certainly 'we must not hate these remnants of faithless Jerusalem over whom Jesus Christ weeps' (L. Veuillot...), but neither must we, through ill-conceived charity, deliver our society and the treasure of our religious and national traditions into their perfidious and rapacious hands. The Jew, for us, is an enemy (not each individual, but the nation in general as it exists today). It either persists in nurturing its secular hatred of Christ's followers with Talmudic nonsense, or it sustains the corrosive action of free thought and places its hopes no longer in the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, but in the advent of God-mankind glutted with gold and pleasure....when its influences penetrates and dominates any Catholic people or group, it threatens them as well.⁶

Paquet's position was particularly pernicious because of his influence on society; but, more importantly, on Lionel Groulx.

Groulx and most of the Catholic clergy subscribed to the ultramontane philosophy

⁴Ibid., 64.

⁵Ibid., 65.

⁶Ibid., 66-67.

that had been endorsed by Pope Pius IX. Ultramontanism believes that authority flows from God to the pope, through the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and settles finally in the parish priest. As infallible, the pope is viewed as ultimate arbiter on every issue, religious or secular.⁷ The influence of the Roman Catholic Church can not be overstated when considering anti-Semitism in Canada. The parish priest was viewed as the last vestige of French authority and received complete loyalty from his parishioners. "The parishes were so closely knit that whole communities were known to pull up stakes and follow their priest to settle in the United States or western Canada."⁸ Under ultramontane influence, anti-Semitic teaching was a part of church doctrine. Indeed, the Canadian Catholic Church was "highly influential...by charging Jews with deicide and arguing that Christianity supersedes Judaism."⁹ This influence took on a progressively more conservative flavor as technological and social advances increased. "Many Quebecois felt ill at ease...and their discomfort often had political, intellectual and religious repercussions: for example, ultramontanism..." which was at its height "during the interwar period."¹⁰

The greatest influence on French Canadian society was that exercised by Lionel

⁷Marvin R. O'Connell, "Ultramontanism and Dupanloup: The Compromise of 1865." *Church History* 53 (1984): 201.

⁸Langlais and Rome, *op. cit.*, 2.

⁹Robert J. Brym and Rhonda L. Lenton, "The Distribution of Anti-Semitism in Canada in 1984." *The Jews in Canada*. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993) 114.

¹⁰Pierre Anctil. "Interlude of Hostility: Judeo-Christian Relations in Quebec in the Interwar Period, 1919-39." *Antisemitism in Canada: History and Interpretation*. Ed. Alan Davies. (Ontario: Laurier University Press, 1991) 136.

Groulx. Born in 1878, Groulx completed graduate studies in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. He was greatly influenced by Charles Maurra, founder of the fascist newspaper *L'Action Francais*.¹¹ During his studies, Groulx developed a form of nationalism “that was anti-democratic and racist.”¹² He taught history at the University of Montreal from 1915 to 1949. *Jeune-Canada*, a youth organization which was fascist and anti-Semitic, drew most of its membership from the university.

Groulx elaborated the myth “of a Golden Age; an idyllic era prior to the conquest whose people were exclusively catholic and French...Out of this myth grew a kind of nationalism with racist overtones...”¹³ Groulx wrote thirty historical works, including some based on the original French orders for the establishment of the colony. Cardinal de Richelieu’s orders also included the *Code Noir*, 1685, which stated in part:

We charge all our officers with driving from our Islands any Jews who have settled there. They are enemies of the Christian name, and we therefore order them to leave within three months, under penalty of confiscation of individuals, property and galleys.”¹⁴

Groulx’s writings, histories and fictions, wove a myth that the original colonialists were not only French and Catholic, they were Norman and completely free of Jews. Using

¹¹Lita-Rose Betcherman. *The Swastika and The Maple Leaf: Fascist Movements in Canada in the Thirties*. (Toronto: Fitzhenry, 1978) 32.

¹²Ibid., 32.

¹³Langlais and Rome, *op. cit.*, 2.

¹⁴Ibid., 2.

poetic license, he simply wrote out of Quebec's history those who failed to meet his criteria. "Right from the beginning of his myth...Groulx slides into one of the themes which will ultimately feed his Fascism: the purity of the race."¹⁵ For example, of mixed marriages, he recorded that in two hundred years there were only ninety-four. Then he purified the race by announcing that there were no living descendants of those marriages.¹⁶

Reflecting other European influences, Groulx's quasi-fascist nationalism resonates with tones of Maurice Barrès and Gustave LeBon. Both Barrès and LeBon taught that "socio-psychological characteristics are transmitted through the blood and union between people of different 'races' engenders first the degeneration of the individual and ultimately...the 'race' itself."¹⁷ Groulx kept a copy of LeBon's *Lois psychologique de l'évolution des peuples*, by his bedside, and quoted it frequently in his own works.¹⁸

Using one of thirteen known pseudonyms, Alonice de Lestres, Groulx wrote in *L'Appel de la race*, "The blood of the race remains the same through the centuries..." as his protagonist acknowledges his responsibility for personal tragedy because he had marrying outside of his race.¹⁹ His belief in purity of the race's blood was reminiscent of

¹⁵Ester Delisle. *The Traitor and The Jew*. (Montreal: Davies Publishing, 1993) 33.

¹⁶Ibid., 24-25.

¹⁷Ibid., 25.

¹⁸Ibid., 25.

¹⁹Ibid., 26.

Hitler's Aryan society. Groulx, in *Directives*, sounded even more like Hitler's *Blut und Boden*, (the blood and the soil), cant when he wrote:

We are bound, inescapably bound to a part of the physical universe...From the soil to ourselves flows a determinism, not absolute, but considerable.

As it is with the past, with history, the soil is our master. We are the sons of our land, as we are the sons of our race, of our time...The land of our dead forefathers becomes, in its own way, an immense page of history.²⁰

Groulx's influence was widespread as can be seen in the words of Andrea Laurendeau, a follower and a member of *Jeune-Canada*. Laurendeau issued a warning in the publication, *Le Devoir*: "The hour is too late for equivocation. It is time to make them [the Jews] fear the indignation, the rage of a people that awakens from its deep lethargy....one day, we will do...what they did to the Jews in Germany...."²¹

The fear of racial extermination was common, not only in Canada and Germany, but was frequently alluded to by philosophers in France. The combination of the French Revolution, the works of Rousseau, Hegel, and Marx, and the modernization of society produced a new mindset regarding anti-Semitism. It took on an aspect of racism rather than religion. Groulx wrote copiously under many names resulting in the perpetuation of the pure French Catholic myth that fed the French Canadian paranoia. Like Hitler, he envisioned disastrous results because of a lack of purity of the society. "...[In] a century

²⁰Ibid., 61.

²¹Ibid., 42.

or two, our original soul, half-destroyed, would leave us with the dubious and fugitive traits of half-breeds or those on the verge of disappearing.”²² Groulx exercised enormous sway over the people of Quebec and indirectly over the policy makers of Canadian government through the 1930s and 1940s.

As French Catholics were coping with the shift from an agricultural society to an urban industrial one, they were forced to come to terms with a new radically different element in Canadian society, the *Ashkenazic* Jew. “The timing of the *Ashkenazic* emigration...placed the newcomers on a collision course with Francophone aspirations.”²³ There had been few Jews in Canada prior to 1880. Those who had immigrated with the British takeover were Sephardic and westernized. They settled more often in the Anglo communities of Ontario. In 1871, there were 1,300 Jews in Canada.

Anti-Semitism in eastern Europe, primarily in Russia, forced the exodus of thousands of *Ashkenazic* Jews. The majority moved westward only to encounter more anti-Semitism as they entered Poland, Austria, and Germany. Many began looking across the Atlantic to the new world for a possible home. In only 30 years, the Jewish population of Canada grew to 16,401.²⁴ Unlike their Sephardic co-religionists, the *Ashkenazics* wanted to remain segregated from both the French and the Anglo societies. With their strange black clothes, untrimmed beards, ear curls, and incomprehensible Yiddish, these

²²Ibid., 64-5.

²³Pierre Anctil, *op. cit.*, 137.

²⁴Ibid., 21-23.

Jews fit the description of eight years of French Catholic teaching and preaching. Although, in many cases, they were as blond, blue-eyed and fair skinned as their gentile neighbors, their self-imposed isolation gave credence to the mythological Jew pictured in Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which the Catholic church had used in its teaching.

The *Ashkenazics* generally settled in the area between the French Catholics and the Anglo Protestants. They found that they were shut out of positions of authority. Certain professions, such as teaching, medicine and engineering, were closed to them. Since they were unable to obtain employment, many started their own businesses and prospered. The massive influx of Jewish children, from the more orthodox *Ashkenazic* society, into the Anglo school system proved to be the impetus for the anti-Semitic violence that flared in 1933. As their children entered the school system, the Jews naturally began pressing for representation on the school boards and in the teaching profession.

Ashkenazic Jews were as submissive to their religion as the ultramontane Catholics of Quebec. Both believed that their secular lives must conform to their religious beliefs. In response to their demands, the Canadian Parliament created the Jewish School Commission in April 1930. The commission, in turn, established a committee of Jews "to deal with the Protestant and Catholic school boards regarding the education of Jewish children."²⁵ Jews could neither vote nor hold a position on the boards. Opposition was immediate.

²⁵Betcherman., op_cit., 8.

The controversy over this issue united a plethora of anti-Semitic groups. Four forces which were previously working in harmony were Lionel Groulx, priest, teacher and historian; *L'Action nationale*, a weekly publication; *Jeune-Canada*, a fascist youth movement; and *Le Devoir*, a highly anti-Semitic French newspaper. Adrien Arcand, a Canadian Nazi, threw his support and influence to Lionel Groulx and company. Arcand, a gifted and talented writer, was the editor of three of the most offensively anti-Semitic publications of the decade: *Le Goglu*, *Le Miroir*, and *Le Chameau*. The Swastika Clubs of Ontario and the unorganized fascist movements in the western provinces also joined the opposition. The issue of the education of Jewish children united opposition in the fascist extreme right, "...the Conservative party and the episcopate, neither of which wanted to see a separate Jewish School Commission, even one with such limited power."²⁶ With the massive outcry from Quebec, the proposed legislation died. This issue also marked the beginning of Arcand's goal of making Canada over in the image of Nazi Germany.

The worsening economic conditions made the prosperity of the Jewish minority apparent. "Some...sought to purchase homes in better residential areas,...to join social and sporting clubs, and...to enroll their children in private schools. The Anglo-Saxon upper-middle class especially was revolted by the prospect."²⁷

Catholics were not the only anti-Semites in Canada. They were only more vocal, obvious, and fascist. "The literature of other Canadian churches contained a more implicit

²⁶Ibid., 7.

²⁷Stephen Speisman, "Antisemitism in Ontario," *Antisemitism in Canada: History and Interpretation*. Ed. Alan Davies, (Ontario, Laurier University Press, 1992) 120.

antisemitism.”²⁸ The anti-Semitism in Ontario, for example, was as serious and encompassing as that in Quebec. Jews were more assimilated and prosperous in the Anglo society. However, once they began pressuring for the right to representation on school boards and in teaching positions, the specter of Anglo prejudice took on more public manifestations. In order to prevent access to better residential areas, a restrictive covenant, much like the ones used in the United States against Blacks and Hispanics, was employed. In some areas, a ‘silent gentleman’s agreement’ allowed each property owner agreed to refrain from selling to anyone considered unacceptable.²⁹ Evidence of anti-Semitism could be seen in the publicly posted notices of “Gentiles Only,” “Christians Only Need Apply,” “No Jews Wanted,” or the advertisement for Clapperson’s Camp, a well known vacation spot, “...excellent fishing, low rates, gentiles only.”³⁰ Leased cottages on city-owned Toronto Island had a clause in their contracts forbidding such signs; but, it was simply ignored.³¹ Government officials either failed or refused to enforce the laws.

The situation was not without irony, as when an atheist voiced his worry regarding the “Christian Only prohibitions. “He was advised that the restriction applied to Jews

²⁸Marilyn F. Nefsky, “The Shadow of Evil: Nazism and Canadian Protestantism,” Antisemitism in Canada: History and Interpretation. Ed. Alan Davies, (Ontario, Laurier University Press, 1992) 210-211.

²⁹Speisman., op.cit., 121.

³⁰Ibid., 121.

³¹Betcherman, op.cit., 50-51.

only. Atheists were welcome!”³² Although liberals complained about the practice of excluding Jews socially, they acknowledged the owners “right to discriminate.”³³ While the passive but public anti-Semitism increased through Canada, its implications were prompting alarm within the Canadian Jewish communities. The Jewish politician E. F. Singer issued a warning at a Zionist meeting about the profligation of anti-Semitic signs and their relationship to Nazi propaganda. Singer warned:

Unless something is done quickly, the Jewish people may well meet the same fate in Canada that the Jews are meeting in Germany....No fire is so easily kindled as anti-Semitism. The fire is dormant in Canada, it has not yet blazed up, but the spark is there. Germany is not the only place with prejudice. Look at Quebec.”³⁴

The “Buy At Home” campaign, fueled by propaganda written by Lionel Groulx to promote a boycott of Jewish-owned businesses began in Quebec and spread to Ontario. Swastika Clubs sprang up in the provinces with membership usually composed of teenage and unemployed men in their early twenties. The original club was located in Toronto and had a membership of thirty-five Anglo Canadians. One of the founders was a young man, who “studied at the University of Montreal...and may have picked up ideas from...pro-fascist students there.”³⁵ The club was viewed as an outlet by which the

³²Speisman, *op. cit.*, 121.

³³*Ibid.*, 121.

³⁴Betcherman, *op. cit.*, 52.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 54.

citizens of Ontario could "...assist civil authorities to exclude from their district all obnoxious and undesirable elements that tend to destroy the natural beauty of property values of their residential district."³⁶ In the course of actively discouraging Jews from using public beaches, especially Balmy Beach, roving gangs of "Anglo-Saxon youths sporting swastikas..." threatened and intimidated Jewish bathers.³⁷ The ideology of the swastika was clear to both the armband wearer and the people harassed. News accounts of Nazi violence against Jews, including the symbolic meaning of the swastika, was extensively covered in all three major Canadian languages: English, French, and Yiddish.³⁸

The increasing tension between Canadian Gentiles and Canadian Jews finally erupted in the summer of 1933. Leadership within the Jewish community had, for years, urged restraint and passivity in response to provocation from the fascists and Nazis. But that summer, following the Balmy Beach incidents and other similar run-ins, a riot took place. A baseball tournament was entering the play-offs, with the final two teams reflecting the social environment: one team was predominately Jewish and the other was Anglo Protestant. The next-to-the last game was being played at Christie Pits, located on the fringe of one of Toronto's largest Jewish districts.

³⁶Ibid., 55.

³⁷Speisman, *op. cit.*, 123.

³⁸Cyril Levitt and William Shaffir, "The Swastika as a Dramatic Symbol: A Case Study of Ethnic Violence in Canada." *The Jews in Canada*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), 78.

As the Jewish team pulled ahead, fans on the opposing side displayed a blanket, fashioned as a flag, with a large swastika sewn on it. Anglo fans began crying 'Heil Hitler' and giving the Nazi salute. Jewish fans charged the field and police were called to disperse the crowds. Since both teams would be in the final game, each announced that re-enforcements would be present for the August 16th game. True to their word, both sides were ready when the Nazi flag next appeared.³⁹ A fight on the playing field quickly involved all of Willowvale Park and then spread outside the park.

...the quick appearance of make-shift weapons...testify to the planning and organization....As spectators struggled for a better view, "truckloads of young Jews [arrived and] the battle escalated. Outside the park, several Jewish pedestrians,...were assaulted by roving gangs and badly beaten. The few police...were totally unequipped to control the riot...Fighting did not cease until two o'clock in the morning.⁴⁰

Reports in the *Toronto Star* noted that many citizens, Gentile and Jew, were injured and two were arrested on weapons charges. The reporter declared that the riot was one of racial violence and raised the question as to why so few police were assigned to the park. The police were aware of expected trouble and had chosen instead to assign officers to control a meeting of un-employed Ex-Servicemen because they feared potential communist involvement. The Police Commissioner demanded to know "Why...can so

³⁹Ibid., 77-79.

⁴⁰Betcherman, *op. cit.* 57.

many police be marshaled for suppression of Communists and not the Swastika Clubs?"⁴¹

The entire incident, judging by the government's reaction, was not to be taken seriously. It was thought that the riot was motivated by unemployment rather than from a commitment to any of the fascist movements. In response to Jewish complaints of the swastika, they were told it "was nothing more than a good-luck charm associated with Indian tribes who had once lived in the area."⁴² Jewish confidence in the legal system was further eroded when the judge, upon releasing the Anglo-Saxon youths arrested for the Christie Pits Riot, stated that he viewed their swastika "as a joke."⁴³ The condition for Canada's Jews deteriorated as "1933 revealed to Toronto Jews that some of their Gentile fellow-inhabitants felt profound hatred and contempt for them."⁴⁴

Canadian Christian churches generally remained silent. Many failed to grasp the seriousness and gravity of the situation. By 1935, some "prominent church leaders made conscious and conscientious attempts to inform their constituencies about the Jewish refugees,"⁴⁵ but,

the churches were well aware of the sheer indifference of a large section of the Canadian public to the entire crisis. They were also aware of the

⁴¹Ibid., 58.

⁴²Cyril Levitt, *op. cit.*, 79.

⁴³Betcherman, *op. cit.*, 58-59.

⁴⁴Levitt, *op. cit.*, 81.

⁴⁵Nefsky, *op. cit.*, 204.

presence of antisemitism in Canada. That so many of the victims were Jews was cause enough to do nothing....The Quaker, G. Raymond Booth encapsulated the attitude of much of Canadian society toward such refugees: 'Between Nazism which drives them forth and a certain kind of Canadians which seeks to bar their coming there isn't much to choose from morally.'⁴⁶

There were "some clergy predisposed to disbelieve [the reports of Nazi violence] because of their own Germanophilia; a few even professed to understand how Germany could harbour such a deep distrust and hatred for the Jews."⁴⁷ While many church leaders called for limited easing of Canada's restrictive immigration policy. The Canadian Churches did not explicitly request that the government open the doors indiscriminately, instead, they sought token increases by using expressions of "limited number of," and "qualified individuals." Marilyn Nefsky, author and researcher for the era, summed up her findings as: "That prominent church leaders...did speak out, and a number of ecclesiastical bodies passed resolution, does not preclude the fact that their constituencies as a whole did not follow their example. There was no mass outcry, no moral outrage from the Christian public at large,"⁴⁸

Canadian theologians often showed a remarkable sympathy with their German

⁴⁶Ibid., 207.

⁴⁷Ibid., 205.

⁴⁸Ibid., 214.

brothers. For example, Germany's Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influences on German Church Life, founded by theological scholars in Germany "sought the eradication of Judaism and the creation of an Aryan Christianity;... a transformation of the church, using antisemitism to create an Aryan Christianity."⁴⁹ In turn, Canada's Reverend H. B. Hendershot felt Jews had 'pushed themselves to too great prominence during a period of dislocation and unrest;' the right Reverend A. C. Headlam wrote that the Nazis were having 'a natural reaction to the Jewish problem;' and Dr. D. C. Kerr felt that 'the German Jews were receiving what they had previously given to others who had endangered the Jews - extermination.'⁵⁰

As previously mentioned, one of the most prominent anti-Semites in Canada during the 1930s was Adrien Arcand. Arcand's career began at *La Presse*, Montreal's largest daily newspaper. He was fired because he tried to organize a union. He came into contact with Joseph Ménard, who set Arcand up as editor of two small but effective publications, *Le Goglu*, *Le Miroir* and *Le Chameau*. In 1929, Arcand-Ménard printed little that was actually anti-Semitic; however, that was changed by 1930. By the time the Jewish School bill was introduced, Arcand was committed to anti-Semitism. Political support from Arcand-Ménard publications was actively sought by members of the Conservative Party during elections. In the 1929 election, Joseph Rainville promised Arcand-Menard "\$25,000 and further support as necessary, on condition that the *Goglus*,

⁴⁹Susan Herschel, "Nazifying Christian Theology," *Church History* 63, 1994, 590.

⁵⁰Nefsky, *op. cit.*, 202-203.

a Nazi political organization headed by Arcand, could help the party gain more than twelve seats in the upcoming election.”⁵¹ When Bennett and twenty-four other conservatives won the election, Arcand-Ménard received \$18,000. These publications regularly published verbatim speeches, articles, and other propaganda provided by the National Socialists.⁵² *Le Goglu* was transformed from a political satire format to “an organ of hate...previously Jewish politicians were caricatured in the same manner as others, now they were depicted in loathsome stereotypes of the kind associated with Julius Streicher’s *Der Sturmer*.”⁵³

By 1933, Dr. Ludwig Kempff, German consul general 1921-1937, had recruited Arcand and was furnishing him with propaganda literature.⁵⁴ Recruitment would hardly seem an applicable expression in the cases of Adrien Arcand and Joseph Ménard. After Hitler’s 1930 political victory, he was praised by Arcand-Ménard as a protector of Christian society. Arcand-Ménard congratulated Hitler’s moves against Jews, from boycotts, to the intermarriage bans, to the cycle of pogroms, and added, “What is being accomplished in Germany at the moment can also be accomplished in the province of Quebec, where live the vast majority of Canadian Jews.”⁵⁵

⁵¹Betcherman, *op. cit.*, 10.

⁵²Martin Robin, *Shades of Right: Nativist and Fascist Politics in Canada, 1920-1940*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 256.

⁵³Betcherman, *op. cit.*, 11.

⁵⁴Martin Robin, *op. cit.*, 256.

⁵⁵Warren Kinsella. *Web of Hate: Inside Canada’s Far Right Network*. (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1994) 301.

Arcand and Ménard were not the only Canadian publishers used by the Nazis for propaganda purposes during the 1930s. There were numerous small German language weeklies used to promote the Nazi agenda, one of which was the Winnipeg Norwestern, circulation 13,000. Norwestern regularly carried editorials in support of the National Socialist. One of the most successfully exploited was Der Courier, a liberal Catholic publication. Bernhard Bott, a German immigrant who became a Canadian citizen in 1929, was the editor. His loyalties were unquestionably with Germany. When he left Der Courier, Bott took over Deutsche Zeitung fur Canada, owned by Gutenberg Publishing Company. Investigation of the ownership of Gutenberg Publishing Company demonstrated the extent of Nazi involvement. Shareholders included a couple of consulate clerks, the German vice-consul and “[The] company’s executive committee included C. P. Franke, manager of Winnipeg North German Lloyd Steamship Lines; Otto Gruenbichler, [Canadian] Bund leader and vice-president of German-Canadian League; Hugo Carstens, honorary president of the League, former imperial consul for western Canada, and part owner of Nordwestern.”⁵⁶

Joseph Goebbels, Nazi propaganda minister, stated that propaganda is “The art of continuous repetition, of the unceasing driving home of these, slogans and captions, not necessarily in the same words but certainly long enough until even the stupidest had grasped them.”⁵⁷ One of the themes used by the Nazis consisted of a “desire for unity

⁵⁶Martin, *op. cit.*, 258-261.

⁵⁷Willi A. Boelcke, “The Secret Conferences of Dr. Goebbels.” The Nazi Propaganda War (New York: Dutton & Co., 1970) xvii.

[which] drew its strength from an idealized past rather than from the present. In an age of industrialization and class conflict, man...had to transform his feeling of alienation into one of belonging to a 'pure' community, or *Volk*."⁵⁸ Goebbels's plan worked to a great extent in Quebec because of the eighty years of teaching by the Catholic Church. By understanding the success and failure of propaganda in Germany, an extension can be made to its effectiveness in Canada. Propaganda in Germany "could depend on the pre-existence of extensive latent anti-Jewish feeling...quite apart from the activist hatred...within the Nazi organisations."⁵⁹ This was precisely the atmosphere in Quebec and to a lesser extent in Ontario. Although there were other writers, their influence is represented in Lionel Groulx and Adrien Arcand, their combined effectiveness depended on exactly the same conditions as Goebbels, i.e. repetition of slogans, desire for unity, and sense of belonging to an elite community within the society.

The Nazi government actively recruited supporters in German communities of western countries. It was part of the propaganda ministry to establish Bund and Friends of Germany Clubs in these communities. Canada was no exception. Karl Gerhardt operated in Canada from 1934 until exposed as a Nazi agent by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Gerhardt actively recruited among German immigrant communities in the western provinces. His greatest success was in the Minnonite communities. Gerhard

⁵⁸David Welch, *Propaganda and Indoctrination in the Third Reich: Success or Failure?* *European History Quarterly*, V 17, No. 4, October 1987, 411.

⁵⁹Ian Kershaw. "How Effective Was Nazi Propaganda?" *Nazi Propaganda: The Power and The Limitations*. Ed. David Welch. (Beckenham: Croom, 1983) 191.

was instrumental in establishing Canadian Bund and Friends of Germany Clubs. In concert with Nazi government and private German business representatives, he was able to organize German Days to remind the new Canadians of their home land. Re-enacting Germany's Nazi gatherings, Gerhard and his operatives celebrated "Germany" with flags, portraits of Hitler and war stories from World War I. Among the songs chosen to set the mood was "*ich hat einen kamaraden*," (I had a comrade), which was virtually the theme for building solidarity between the Nazis and the German people. The German government furnished text books, libraries, desks, and school supplies to many small towns at no charge in their efforts to elicit support.⁶⁰

By 1937, there were calls from the Trades and Labour Council for investigations of fascists and Nazi activities. Even though the government representative, Ernest Lapointe attempted to reassure his constituency that both groups were under observation, the *Globe and Mail* assigned an investigative journalist. The articles which resulted revealed the depth of Nazi involvement. It revealed that

Canadian fascist groups were distributing vast quantities of Nazi propaganda. Literature...poured out of Germany to their headquarters and was...offered free...to readers of *Le Fasciste Canadien* or *The Thunderbolt*...[A]dvertisements offering information which, on reply, brought forth packages of the most vicious anti-Semitic material.⁶¹

⁶⁰Martin Robin, *op. cit.*, 234. The activities of Karl Gerhard were covered in many of the sources in this paper. Robin was quoted because it was the most detailed.

⁶¹Betcherman, *op. cit.*, 106.

Rather than curbing their activities, the publicity brought Adrien Arcand to national attention. Prior to 1937, Arcand was a Quebec aberration. He was presented by the *Globe and Mail* as “the brilliant young French Canadian...” and reported that he had eighty thousand followers. Following the *Globe* report, Arcand became an international phenomenon and was interviewed by the *Toronto Star*, *The Nation*, *Foreign Affairs* and *Life* magazine “The image Arcand projected at this stage was that of a charismatic leader, able to elicit the adoration of his followers.”⁶² One follower stated that every member of the Order of *Goglus*, one of Canada’s Nazi parties, was prepared to die for Arcand. While speaking to Anglo Canadians, Arcand spoke of loyalty to Great Britain, but when speaking to the French Canadians, “he was full of nationalistic rhetoric of the Abbe Groulx school.”⁶³

At the time the *Ashkenazics* flooded into Canada, the government, like the rest of the world, reacted by restricting the number of acceptable applicants based on work skills and race. While it is true that because of the Depression Canada had nearly thirty percent unemployment in the early 1930s, these restrictions merely perpetuated policies that were started the previous decade.⁶⁴ It was commonly believed that “Bolshevism,” “Russian” and “Jews” were synonymous terms, the government was determined to keep out all foreigners if they posed even a perceived threat to its stability. In a speech before the

⁶²Ibid., 107.

⁶³Ibid., 109.

⁶⁴Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many*, (New York: Random House 1982) 5.

Canadian Club of Toronto, Sir Clifford Sifton, former Minister of Immigration, declared, "We are told there are enormous numbers of people on the continent of Europe who want to come [here],...I want to say I regard it of the [dimensions] of a national menace that there is any danger whatever of the bars being let down."⁶⁵

Canada seemed to have little idea of the problems at work in Europe, the growing strength of numerous dictatorships and the problems of the refugees caught in their midst. A chronicle of Canada's deepening isolation is evident by looking at its rejection of international appeals: rejection of an Armenia mandate; refusal to participate in Russian famine relief; declined to sell wheat seed on credit to Russia; refused to contribute to Albanian famine relief; declined to attend the Geneva Protocol; and insisted that the Dominions be exempted from the Locarno Agreement ⁶⁶

Canada's immigration policy was minutely adjusted from its ethnic criteria during times of economic necessity. Even then, the policy contained a descending order of preference. At the top were British or American applicants, followed by northwestern Europeans, and south and east Europeans. The least desirable were Jews, Orientals and Blacks in that order. On the rare occasions of their admittance, the government actively encouraged the least favored groups to settle in western provinces, if allowed to immigrate at all, because they were not welcomed in the cities of the east Canada.⁶⁷

⁶⁵James Eayrs, "A Low Dishonest Decade," *The Growth of Canadian Policies in External Affairs*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1960) 64.

⁶⁶Ibid., 65-5.

⁶⁷Abella and Troper, *op. cit.*, 5.

The MacKenzie King government reacted to what it perceived as pressure to continue enforcement of its restrictive immigration policies. King was well aware that his government continued only with support from Quebec. Any hint of dissatisfaction from Quebec brought him to their side of an argument. As with many political leaders of the 1930s, King was himself “quietly anti-Semitic....”⁶⁸ quite possibly the result of the influence of the bluntly vocal anti-Semite, Goldwin Smith.⁶⁹ King’s diary reflected his influence:

I recall Goldwin Smith feeling so strongly about the Jews. He expressed it at one time as follows: that they were poison in the veins of a community...the evidence is very strong, not against all Jews...that in a large percentage of the race there are tendencies and trends which are dangerous indeed.⁷⁰

Officials in various positions frequently expressed anti-Semitic comments. Frederick Charles Blair was an Assistant Deputy Minister of Immigration from 1924 through 1935, and was appointed the director of Immigrations in 1936.⁷¹ Although Immigration was part of the Ministry of Mines and Resources headed by Thomas Crerar;

⁶⁸Kinsella, *op. cit.* 300.

⁶⁹Gerald Tulchinsky, “Goldwin Smith: Victorian Canadian Antisemite.” Antisemitism in Canada. (Waterloo: Laurier University Press, 192) 67.

⁷⁰Ibid., 84.

⁷¹Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many*. (New York: Random House, 1982) 5.

however, the power for immigration rested solely with Blair. He made and implemented policy as he saw fit. "Blair's ideas were entirely compatible with those of the Canadian government, which kept him in his sensitive position as long as it could."⁷² Blair's opinion of Jews reveals the contempt in which he held them:

I suggested recently to three Jewish gentlemen with whom I am well acquainted, that it might be a very good thing if they would call a conference and have a day of humiliation and prayer,...where they would honestly try to answer the question of why they are so unpopular almost everywhere....I often think that instead of persecution it would be far better if we more often told them frankly why many of them are unpopular....Just because Jewish people would not understand the frank kind of statements I have made in this letter to you, I have marked it confidential.⁷³

Blair played off King's real fear of political instability. Additionally, King endorsed Chamberlain's policy of appeasement and believed that persecution of the Jews would stop if compromises could be reached with Hitler. King met with Adolf Hitler in 1937, after their governments concluded a trade agreement and returned to Great Britain. King described the Führer as "very sincere" and "sweet." He felt there was more danger to Canada from refugee Jews than from Hitler in 1938. Further, he reasoned, "if accepting Jewish refugees could threaten Canada's national cohesion, could there not be merit in

⁷²Ibid., 8.

⁷³Ibid., 9.

Hitler's fears about Jews in Germany?"⁷⁴ Even when the specter of war was obvious, King believed that had Hitler acted differently he would have been viewed as a savior.

Blair's ally in keeping the doors firmly closed to Jews was Ernest Lapointe. Lapointe was King's lieutenant and Quebec Minister of Justice. As an elected representative for Quebec, Lapointe was keenly aware of the progress of anti-Semitic activists in the province. He underscored Blair's continuing resistance to admitting refugees. At a time when western provinces needed laborers for the railroad expansion, Blair refused to admit Jews willing to work as laborers because he feared they would migrate to the cities. He stated "the worst culprits, those most likely to settle in the cities were Jews...it was impossible to keep them on the farms or in the bush; every attempt to do so had failed."⁷⁵ Although refugees, who had substantial funds and/or relatives in Canada, theoretically should have had easier access, it was not the case for Jews in the 1930s. For example, a Czechoslovakian Jew, with \$100,000 to invest, was denied entrance by Blair who suggested "this money could be used to [better] advantage in Great Britain during the present emergency than in Canada."⁷⁶ Knowing that Canada was, like the rest of the world, recovering from the Depression, the government's handling of Dr. Maximilian Wiernick appears ludicrous. Scientists worldwide petitioned Canada to

⁷⁴Ibid., 36-7.

⁷⁵Abella and Troper, *op.cit.*, 5.

⁷⁶Ibid., 73.

permit Dr. Wiernick to immigrate. The Canadian Pacific Railroad confirmed to Blair that Dr. Wiernick was sufficiently well funded to rebuild his pharmaceutical manufacturing plant in Canada and would be able to employ many Canadians. Despite continued pleas and after holding the application for a year, Blair told the head of CPR that “there [was] no particular advantage to Canada in our [admitting him].”⁷⁷

Clearly, the official position of the government was to resist every attempt by Jews to immigrate. This policy extended to circumstances that defy understanding. In one incident, three hundred Polish Jewish students and their teachers had escaped through Russia and were promised entrance to the United States. However, they had to cross Canada to get to the United States. Because there was a fear that the students were communists, the United States refused to honor its promise. Faced with the certainty of death should they be returned to Russia, Americans and Canadians, Jews and Gentiles, petitioned Blair’s office to permit the rabbis at least to enter. Blair grudgingly agreed to allow seventy-nine of the refugees to enter, but they could enter in complete family units (both parents and children) only.⁷⁸ The remaining 221 were shipped back to Russia where they presumably perished.

One of the most condemning of events involving Jewish refugees is found in the final chapter of the USS St. Louis. Having been granted entrance to Cuba, 907 prominent German Jews boarded the St. Louis. They had received notice that the Cuban government

⁷⁷Ibid., 73.

⁷⁸Ibid., 84-9.

had changed its mind and that entrance would no longer be granted; however, the ship sailed from Hamburg anyway. No country would accept these refugees. Having been refused by all South and Central American countries, the St. Louis sailed north only to be escorted by a U. S. Navy ship to prevent its docking in an American port. Their final appeal was to Canada. Both London and Washington attempted to pressure Mackenzie King into allowing the ship to dock in Canada because she had accepted so few refugees. King referred the situation to Blair, who responded on June 8, 1939, "The readiness with which a German liner took these people on board,...creates the impression that this is but another of Germany's methods to get rid of unwanted refugees, and if...successful it is likely to be followed by other shiploads."⁷⁹ The St. Louis returned to Germany where the passengers, 907 prominent and highly trained professional Jews, were sent to Auschwitz. On June 16, 1939, after the requests had been denied and the St. Louis sent on her way back to Germany, Blair added that had Canada allowed the 907 Jews in, more would have followed. "It is manifestly impossible for any country to open its doors wide enough to take in ...[all the] Jewish people who want to leave Europe; the line must be drawn somewhere."⁸⁰

In August 1940, during a conversation concerning 100 Polish orphans Dr. Ignacy Schwartzbart was told by Mr. Little, chief immigration officer at Canada House in

⁷⁹David Rome, Clouds in The Thirties: On Anti-Semitism in Canada 1929-1939, Final Section, 13 (Montreal: National Archives Canadian Jewish Congress, 1981) 788-792. The story of the USS St Louis can be found in many of the sources in this paper.

⁸⁰Ibid., 792.

London, "He [Little] pointed out that the Jews cannot be treated as a nation or as a religious group, but as a race. And the interest of Canada is to prevent people of Jewish race coming to the country."⁸¹

Nazi and fascist propaganda continued unchallenged in Canada until Hitler moved against Poland in 1939. Anti-Semitism was toned down but still present, for example, in May 1943, Toronto magistrate Kelso, while hearing a suit by a Jewish landlord against a Gentile tenant, reportedly commented on the landlord's objection to name calling by the tenant, saying, "Well then don't be a Dirty Jew."⁸² As Canada became involved with the war, Arcand and many others were arrested as security threats. Arcand's influence, like Lionel Groulx, must not be underestimated. In 1961, he converted Ernst Zundel, who is one of the most effective propagandists today.⁸³

It must be re-stated that however, that many Canadians objected to the fascists and Nazis. Petition drives resulted in Canada being more receptive to assisting refugees through Displaced Persons. Even then, the anti-Semitic policy was evident, when in the face of strong Jewish opposition, Canada waived its own prohibition of and background checks of the Galicia Division. This Ukrainian, white Russian, military unit became a Waffen SS unit in 1943. It was permitted into Canada as a group in 1950.⁸⁴ In 1982, a

⁸¹Ibid., 800.

⁸²Speisman, *op. cit.*, 133, footnote 60.

⁸³Betcherman, *op. cit.*, 45.

⁸⁴Harold Troper and Morton Weinfeld, "Jewish-Ukrainian Relations in Canada Since World War II and the Nazi War Criminals Issue," Antisemitism in Canada: History and Interpretation. (Waterloo: Laurier University Press: 1992) 283.

former member of this unit was deported as a Nazi war criminal.

Many Canadians opposed the actions of the vocal minority of fascists, Nazis and prejudice citizens; but they never organized adequately to resist the political pressure of the minority. As a result, untold thousands went to the death camps. Canada was not alone in this situation and reaction. In all the research regarding anti-Semitism in Canada, there was nothing to compare with a report in the August 24, 1936 *Time* magazine portraying anti-Semitism in the United States. It was reported by the *New Masses* that “James True announced that a general massacre of U. S. Jews had been scheduled for September, ‘We’re not going to drive the Jews out of this country!...We’re going to bury ‘em right here!...’ The article went on to discuss True’s patented “Kike Killer (both man’s and lady’s sizes available) and that he could supply handguns at wholesale prices for participants.”⁸⁵

Anti-Semitism was world wide during the 1930s for many complicated reasons. Canadian anti-Semitism grew from the influences of Roman Catholic teachings, the propagation of a pure French Catholic original colony myth, the Depression and propaganda provided from within, as in the case of Lionel Groulx and other Catholic writers, and from Nazi Germany, as in the case of Adrien Arcand and Joseph Ménard. Extreme nationalism, espoused by men like Groulx and Arcand, found fertile ground in the latent anti-Semitism in both Anglo and French Canadians. But they were not alone in their actions, the entire western world closed its doors to the majority of the refugees in

⁸⁵Porter Niles, “*New Masses*” *Time*, August 24, 1936, 41.

the 1930s and 1940s. Many Canadians organized after the war to take steps to prevent the possibility of a recurrence of such apathy.

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