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On Anti-Semitism In Canada 1929 - 1939

A Chapter on Canadian Jewish History

By
David Rome

Section 10

NATIONAL ARCHIVES
CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

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LES JEUNES CANADA AND LAURENDEAU

The most important anti-Jewish movement of the period in Quebec effective in the anti-refugee campaign was the new nationalistic group, Les Jeunes Canada. It suffices to recall that this group, both political and intellectual in import, had actually convened a meeting to protest the participation of Christians in a Jewish-sponsored anti-Hitler rally. No parallel to such moral depravity on this continent comes to mind. (Section 4, Pp.21-31)

Pierre Dagenais, 24 year old geographer with the provincial ministry of industry and commerce, had spoken on the immigration of Jews before this notorious Jeunes Canada rally of April 20, 1933 on"Les Politiciens et les Juifs."

Even as he saw Canada's immigration policy replacing French Canadian emigrants by a drowning flood of European immigrants, he admitted,

"There is no question of shutting our doors hermetically to strangers. For there are honest, intelligent immigrants sound of body and of spirit who are a useful addition to Canada, notably those who derive from the north and centre of Europe. But only provided that they be assimilable in the interest of the health of the nation.

"But the Jews are among the least assimilable races. We carefully avoid expressing any race hatred of the Jew which is repugnant to us as men and as Christians. But when a people becomes dangerous to the national and economic life of another people, it is just and equitable for the latter to defend itself.

"Jews remain Jews wherever they live. If they contribute to the economic and cultural life of a country, they do so primarily in their group interest. They remain Jews in what they are, in what they do.

"There are among them excellent and admirable citizens, but as a people they are incapable of accepting foreign national aspirations because of their religion and their spirit. Victims of persecutions and perpetual exile, without a land of their own, they have become embittered and confirmed in their character...

"Our country needs manpower for agriculture. As for the Jews, do we find them often on the land? On the contrary, they crowd the large cities where they demoralize commerce and industry.

"This poorly controlled immigration of foreigners has not only aggravated the employment crisis for Canadians by birth, but has also sown the seeds of communism here.

"Jewish agitators abound in the great communist movements and rebellions." (Le Devoir, Apr. 21, 1933)

A few weeks later Gilbert Manseau, engineer, of Jeunes Canada wrote,

"We hope that the immigration of the future will conform to the religious character of Canada, to its economic condition and to the rights of the nations who, of old, had founded this country.

"The unity of the country is more precious than its numbers. A land of Christian tradition and population, Canada cannot receive enemies of the Christian spirit like some citizens of Germany or of central Europe. (Devoir, Nov. 4, 1933)

It is particularly painful to note that one of the refined and admirable personalities of this generation of French Canadians has at this time penned one of the most violent and crassest anti-Jewish documents on record.

Speaking on behalf of Jeune Canada and defending this unparalleled anti-anti-Hitlerite demonstration, "Politiciens et Juifs," André Laurendeau addressed himself to the refugee question (Le Devoir, letter to H.M. Caiserman, Jan. 30, 1934),

"We need to recall several sentences which our Thuribe Belzile said Monday evening which seem to have grated on your nerves. Our vice-president affirmed that we are not antisemites and declared, 'That meeting (Politiciens et Juifs) of last April was not antisemitic, for it is not antisemitism to demand that we be masters in our own home. At that meeting we have simply criticized some French Canadian politicians for taking the Jewish side in a question of international law, not a Canadian question....'

"On this matter we have adopted an unalterable position, and we shall retain it in spite of the loud cries of Israel and the influential manoeuvres of their politicians.

"What did we say that evening of Politiciens et Juifs?

"We have attacked this senseless immigration which brings useless mouths to Canada, strangers such as yourself, who do not even attempt to become farmers, ferments of social revolution, creatures that resist assimilation by any race, who constitute a state within a state by virtue of their religion, their interests and their traditions. Do you dare pretend that we have no right to take this stand?

"We have labelled the cowardice of the politicians who flatter you because you are a money power and accord to you an importance you do not deserve. Is this an attack on you?

"We admit, there have been many jokes at your expense. We know that you cannot easily bear even inoffensive jokes. A long history has made your skin very sensitive. We respect the great agony of your rage, sir, and we understand that they have set your nerves on edge over your entire body.

"But why, when blows tear at you so, do you provoke them? Why these crooked attacks on those who wish you no evil and who have given you hospitality? Why do you seek to transform a legitimate self-defense into a bellicose intervention?

"Learn to accept the fact: Jeune Canada are not antisemites. They do not seek to suppress the Jewish fact. They want only that it be what it should be, in all loyalty, and in all justice."

Laurendeau's snide review of Raymond Douville's snide biography of Aaron Hart (Trois Rivières, Editions du bien publique, 1938), one of Canada's first Jews, does not rank among his most distinguished work. (Action nationale, vol. 13, no. 3, March 1939, Pp.271-72)

Laurendeau came to be aware that by writing thus, and by leading les Jeune Canada and other of his followers in this extremist anti-Jewish direction, he had created a lasting and painful problem for the Canadian heritage and for Canadian pride. That this fine patriot and high minded Catholic, the teacher and leader of a generation, should have in the corpus of his writings and statements such anti-fraternal words is to make Canadians despair for many decades. He became sensitive to this and in his own manner sought to expunge the toxic effect of his words. The several pieces he wrote with this intention are memorable documents out of the literature of French Canada.

One of these essays in amende very honorable, signed Candide, tells of the horror he experienced when his young son used racist language in the home dining room -- until he realized that he had himself been teaching and preaching such nefarious approaches to fellow men and to fellow citizens.

Another, a more indirect sketch, records two social meetings. At a relaxed dinner he finds himself uncomfortably in the company of a young wealthy Jew who, urbane and acceptable in most other regards, is constantly and irritably alluding -- quite unnecessarily -- to his Jewish origin and to his experiences with minor intolerances and social discriminations. Nothing to justify the failure of sang froid or to arouse deep sympathy from those at the table.

But Laurendeau looked closely, "There was indignation in his eyes. He had mastered his voice, controlled his gestures, the features of his face -- except the eyes which were young, which said that all was not normal, which protested against the injustice done him. For something in him, in a secret region, something had not finished suffering.

"Then it was that I thanked the Lord that I was unlike the racists who denied the universality of man.

"After dinner, when I was praising myself and the Lord, a memory came to disturb my good conscience."

He recalled another social gathering where a young lady wih an engaging accent touched the political situation of the moment; not Levesque and his program of nationalization but rather Daniel Johnson's flirt with Réal Caouette who had just announced that Hitler was one of his political heroes. This had not frightened Johnson off; therefore the two were alike.

The young lady, Jewish, told Laurendeau,

"I told my grandmother, eighty years of age, 'This time we have to vote; it is important.' She answered me, 'In 1932, I was in Germany. They told me to vote; I voted, but it was of no use. I am going to vote now, but I am afraid it is of no use...'

"After that election my grandfather said, 'This time we have to go.' His friends did not believe him. They tried to hold him back. They said, 'We have seen the likes of him. Things will be straightened out.' But grandfather could not be swayed."

Laurendeau remembered,

"I looked at her and I listened. Suddenly the reality appeared vividly, like a flash of lightning: if this German Jew had not decided that last month of 1932 or early in 1933 to leave his German fatherland, my friend would not be here; she could not urge her grandmother to vote; the entire family would have perished. Those who sought to reassure themselves have disappeared in the crematorium-furnaces.

"But I was around in 1933. What were we doing while this German Jew was taking the exile road?

"I was one of a group of nationalists, Young Turks who called ourselves Jeune Canada... We called a counter-manifestation against the Jews who were protesting the events in Germany, against French-Canadian politicians who joined them, including Senator Raoul Dandurand.

"I know in the finest detail how each of our meetings came to us -- except that meeting. I still ask myself, 'Who had inspired it?' But we had it, doubtless because of the antisemitism that was impregnating the atmosphere. There was the depression; everybody was suffering; everybody was searching for a scapegoat.

"I took part in this meeting, where I spoke much of politicians, little of Jews -- yet all too much. For we made terrible speeches. One of us went so far as to say, 'You cannot step on the tail of this bitch of Jewry in Germany without hearing the barking in Canada.'

"'Forgive them Lord, for they knew not what they were saying.' Indeed we did not know. The speeches of twenty-year old youths reflect the current ideas of their world. Those in the air at this time were neither beautiful nor lucid.

"That is just what is most frightening. My four colleagues were fine men. None, to my knowledge, became bandits or antisemites. They were sincere and passionate. When Hitler was preparing to kill six million Jews they were talking very sincerely of alleged persecutions which they compared with the ill-treatment, 'very real ill treatment -- which French Canadians were suffering here...'

"If they had come here with a Yiddish accent; if they had told us what they had just seen -- who would have believed them? We were not yet prepared to hear them. We still needed other approaches.

"What is happening today which we are refusing to believe and which is yet true?"

Naim Kattan recalled an interesting moment in his friendship with Laurendeau.

He had come to Canada after the war and was exploring the history of Quebec even as he was meeting like-minded French Canadians.During these researches in the National Archives of the Canadian Jewish Congress he came across the Laurendeau file and read of this journalist's hostile writings.

Kattan mentioned this to Laurendeau at their next meeting. The director of Le Devoir reacted with genuine pleasure. "Now that you are aware of the sad position we had taken during those past times, there is no barrier between us in our relationship. You know what we were, and you know what we are." (From address before the plenary session of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Toronto, May, 1980)

Albert Pelletier:

"We brandished our naiveté as Catholic nationalists. The worst act of my life dates from this period, an antisemitic speech." (quoted by Pierrot Léger. "Le Grand Manitou de l'écologie" in L'Actualité, Aug., 1978, P. 27)

It is interesting to compare the reactions of three great articulate French Canadian nationalists brought face to face with the horrors of their antisemitism.

Bourassa died forsaken, meditative, isolated, as his former disciples agonized over what had gone wrong with him; never over what was right with him.

Thus the wrong-ended inquiry began early among his intimates and associates.

We have read the story of Henri Bourassa who heeded the warning of his pope in the twenties on the real nature of the nationalism of the times with its racism: It was not heroism but integrity of character for him to set aside his anti-Jewish record of the first decade of the century and to attack the antisemitic nationalists of the 1930's.

Bourassa sought to steer his younger followers away from the horror abyss of the forties and made a particular point of drawing attention to anti-semitism as a litmus test.

Examples of the painful breach in the nationalist society are told by Groulx. For several years Bourassa did not speak to his most trusted colleague Omer Héroux because the latter continued to read the banned Maurras' Paris Action française and had secured permission to do so from his bishop.

It was the same bishop who commented on Bourassa's departure from Le Devoir, "I believe we should be glad that he has resigned. This man was becoming dangerous."

Bourassa opposed Groulx, who considered himself persecuted by Bourassa, heir to the Urim and Thumim of the high priesthood of the Quebec nationalist advance.

It tells us much of the political climate of the time, and of the period in Quebec nationalism that this cleric,whom Jean-Charles Harvey called a racist and a separatist, whose Directives are the seed of revolution, was considered by the National Party as their candidate for the premiership of the province. (Le Jour, Sept. 16, 1937)

Among the most truly interesting and complex is that of Groulx; interesting whether or not it explains the crisis of his unheeded warning. Like much else in his Mémoires, they constitute as fascinating a controversy as any in Canadiana in either language.

Not to dismiss these by a simple quotation, we may cite a sentence that is curious coming as it does from a canon of the church. As early as 1929 he commented that Bourassa's recent and singular attitudes seem to derive from an excessive fear of an encyclical from Pius XI which was then much spoken of in Rome and elsewhere; an encyclical being prepared against Mussolinism and in general against nationalism; an encyclical which, incidentally, never appeared.

Came Groulx' own turn to face his own record. When he was writing his memoirs in 1955, ten years after Hitler's demise, he felt he could not reaffirm the benediction he gave in various degrees of explicity to nearly the entire battalion of anti-Semitic propagandists during his decades of spiritual leadership.

The mode he used in these memoirs is characteristic of his style. It can be described by his favorite term: evasion. To read the fascinating volumes of summary of a period in Quebec history, neither Jews nor anti-Semitism existed in Quebec. There remain only appreciative and warm appraisals of friends and colleagues whom we know from their own writings as fomenters of race hatred.

Probably the most startling of these evasions is his treatment of les Jeunes Canada. He details their various public meetings, giving dates and themes. But of the unique, horrendous rally of April 8, 1933 to protest against anti-Hitlerism he writes not a word. Nor does he mention the tract Politiciens et Juifs which Les Jeunes Canada published to disseminate the outpourings of that unhappy evening. It is an omission that clouds the value of Mes Mémoires as an important Canadian document and work of literature.

But in his Quebec City address of June 5, 1933 in support of Les Jeunes Canada Abbé Groulx did not fail to repeat at the outset the anti-Jewish Achat chez nous program; he thus clarified his view of the place which the Jews might have in the separated French Canadian state which he foresaw,

"Around us all peoples, all ethnic groups -- Anglo-Saxons, Jews -- practice economic solidarity almost instinctively. There are no few reasons why French Canadians should practice this form of mutual aid at least as much. They cannot fail to notice that by giving their support or their money to foreign commerce or industry they not only shut the door to success, but also close the door to jobs for their sons and daughters. They also cannot fail to notice that by depriving themselves of financial power, they compromise their spiritual life: they set up dictatorships which will weigh heavily upon their life, which will intensify the mentality of the conquered among our little people.

"The French Canadian people know or should know these truths which are the condition of its public salvation. Nevertheless, it is universally recognized that no people practices economic solidarity less than we do. He is in the course of setting up, with his own hands, a régime in this province where there is nothing left for him but the role of customer and laborer." (Action catholique, June 8, 1938, P.4)

There is a failed connection in the geography of Groulx' life that speaks eloquently of Canada's problem and of Jewish history in the country.

The key word is Mile End.

In the annals of Québecois thought there is a sacred quarter of Montreal known even in French by its English name, though pronounced gallically. Mile End was the parish of Father Philippe Perrier, scholar, counsellor, but above all informal host to the intellectual nationalistic leadership of the province. For many years his presbytery was where the finest minds of the province gathered informally to exchange views and experiences.

But Catholic Mile End lost its charm when it became the home of many Jews, as urban mobility brought a vital immigrant community there. Mile End acquired precious meaning to this sector of Canadians as well, with pioneering youth groups, synagogues and schools. But Abbé Groulx, who records the "decline" of his Mile End and the resignation of Abbé Perrier, did not read S. Belkin's Mile End record in the Yiddish Poale Zion Movement in Canada any more than Belkin was familiar with Groulx' Mes Memoires; to the profound detriment of both, and of all Canada.

Another change that took place in Mile End was the coming of Italian immigrants into the area and the establishment of the Italian Parish of Notre Dame de la Défense, an important event in the history of the Italian community of Canada and particularly in the annals of its educational structure. Did this incursion of Catholics contribute to the dissatisfaction of the French-Canadian Catholic institution that had been established there?

There is another Montreal failed nexus in a notable structure sacred to French and Jewish Canada, a fact not widely known to either.

The Monument National is what its French name describes, a monument to French Canadian society and its community ideal, the home of its national institutions, the platform for its spokesmen, the tribune for its orators.

So it also was for Montreal Jewry, its classic meeting place and synagogue, the stage for its theatrical history, the hall where Jabotinsky and Ben Gurion and Ben Zvi spoke, where the Jewish Legion was organized and where its strikers forged solidarity.

But the two audiences passed by intersticially, and never met to compare and to share the many loyalties they had in common.

The sin of Groulx' racism becomes even more severe when we note that it was accompanied by a moral awareness.

Mgr. L.A.Paquet, theologically the most prominent of Quebec antisemites, discussed "particularly ethnic patriotism, whether it is called racism or nationalism -- when it is contained within the limits of prudence, equity and moderation -- its legitimacy cannot be challenged. Are not all races created by God and do they not all have a role to play, according to God's ordering, on the variegated stage of this world?"

He wrote this in Groulx' Action française, in 1937, four years after Hitler's assumption of power in Germany.

Paquet noted that "one of our most distinguished fellow citizens, Abbé Lionel Groulx is inspired by this teaching in his vigorous writings to stimulate and to needle the patriotic fibre and the national pride of our people." (June issue)

Not unnaturally Groulx was greatly encouraged by the approbation of this antisemitic prelate. (Mes memoires, vol. 4, Pp. 177, 344)

BUSINESSMEN

Two brothers in Cernauti wrote to a prominent Quebec City businessman,

"We intend to establish a textile factory in Canada, and, if possible, we would prefer to do also there the business in our present line, viz., we produce here shawls for peasants (printed embroidered, fringed, etc.) and handkerchiefs, towels, etc. If, however, these articles are not suitable for Canada (although we have already buyers in London and South Africa and could export there our goods), we are disposed to produce any other textiles.

"Our company is composed of Austrian and Roumanian citizens and all are Jews. We are manufacturers since 1900. First we had our factory only in Vienna (Austria, but now Germany) and since 1926 we have our factory in this town which belonged till the Great War to Austria-Hungary.

"We dispose of immediate cash of $35,000, further $15,000 are at our disposal after 2, 3 months, and still further $10,000 to $20,000 after about 5 months. If we shall see that our Canadian factory is prosperous we shall transfer from our local factory further $30,000 to $50,000.

"We are also interested not to start a new factory, but we would prefer to buy somewhere in your country an existing textile factory or to take a share in such an industry, and that is why we ask you to inform us whether you don't know of such occasions. If you will be good enough, please bring us into touch with the respective firms.

"If the reports which we await will show us that we can get the permit to immigrate into Canada and that the textile industry seems to be prosperous, one of our partners will leave at once for Canada, to prepare our establishment in your country. If you will be good enough to reply to this letter, although up till now you don't know us, this gentleman will take the liberty

of visiting you too. We dispose of references in England, USA, CSR, France, etc., so that before we shall come in serious contacts we shall legitimate ourselves who we are and that we merit confidence.

"With this letter we try to come in touch with manufacturers in our line, who perhaps by chance could help us to start business in a country where up till now we have no connections."

IMMEDIATE REACTION

The story has already been told how the multiple blows upon Jewry and the Jewry of Canada -- the climaxing of anti-Semitism overseas, the mounting of Hitler to leadership in Germany, the cresting of race hatred in Canada and, not least the stance of Jeune Canada -- hastened the mobilization of Canadian Jewry and the establishment of Canadian Jewish Congress.

A German-Jewish relief fund was quickly formed in Montreal as an affiliate of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee with Rabbi Charles Bender as chairman and with a number of notables on its advisory and executive committees: Mark Workman, Mr. and Mrs. S. Bronfman, Lyon Cohen, S.W. Jacobs and Edgar Berliner. A second meeting was called for July 12, 1933 at which $5,000 was raised.

By September the Canadian Jewish Congress was assuming shape. A vague Canadian Jewish Committee may have preexisted. But Jacobs sent out an invitation to 17 leading citizens,

"I have been requested by several gentlemen interested in certain aspects of the present situation now confronting our people in Germany, to invite you to a meeting in the Board Room of the Shaar Hashomayin on Wednesday the 6th at 8.30 P.M.

"As you are aware, there are a number of committees and other bodies organized to deal with the problem, and the plan to be submitted is from a new angle. It is for this purpose that we would like to have the advice and cooperation of a number of our friends who are asked to come to the meeting."

On the 8th he was able to write to Michael Hirsch,

"The Canadian Jewish Committee is undergoing a change of status, and we are endeavoring to amalgamate with a body known as the Canadian Jewish Congress which has in hand work similar to ours. A meeting is to be held next week for the purpose of completing plans, after which we ought to be in a position to approach all these questions in a united way." (Jacobs Papers)

A letter from the prominent leader of U.S. Jewry, Dr. Harry Friedenwald of Baltimore, to Jacobs, of Sept. 27, 1933, places the Canadian activity in a wider frame,

"Your wife was in Baltimore and she told me of your great activity on behalf of our People in their defence against all sorts of attacks and calumnies. It is heartening to learn this. These eight months have been strenuous ones here too. We have unfortunately not reached the point you have, of a single and unified organization for the protection of Jewish rights. In Baltimore we have formed a branch of the American Jewish Congress and have now some 1500 members and are growing still. But what we here wish to do is to create such local community organizations in all the Jewish centres, for without them it is not possible to get an informed public opinion and a truly effective organization. We are at the beginning of very strenuous times for the Jews and they must learn to protect themselves, not only by awaking general public opinion and especially liberal public opinion and calling on it for our protection, but especially by arousing a clearer consciousness among the Jews themselves, so that they know what it all means -- what it means to be a Jew and that it is worthwhile being Jews -- for this will give them the strength to withstand the onslaught from without. But it is a big job. For there are so many Jews who do not know they are Jews till they feel the vis a tergo!" (Jacobs Papers, Pp. 2792-95)

Jacobs responded with a summary report on Dec. 26,

"Our Committee seeks to raise $10,000 in our district. The earnestness of the appeal is warranted by conditions, and we trust to be able to raise this comparatively small sum, as well as further sums in the middle and Western parts of Canada.

"In the period covering my whole life I have never seen anything so virulent as the campaign which is being propagated against Jews in the Province of Quebec. We have no doubt whatever that the money required for that purpose is being supplied by Berlin. Some of the literature is published under the Swastika legend, but it loses a great deal of its effect through its virulence.

"An article which appeared in the November Harpers indicates the progress of the fever in the United States. The language, however, used by the American Jew-baiters is mild compared to that here.

"I have little doubt that we are but going through a phase of insanity, and that we shall in due time return to normal conditions. 'The moon is near the earth and drives men mad.'" (Jacobs Papers)

CRYING OUT THE AGONY

S.W. Jacobs cried out the agony of Canadian Jews in the face of the German situation,

"It makes all our own economic worries sink into insignificance in the shadow of the great disaster that has overtaken them. A strange fate has made them the beggars and us, the givers. They suffer for a crime of which we too are guilty: the crime of being born Jews. It makes our responsibility all the more evident. We owe it to them as we owe it to ourselves to align ourselves with them in their struggle to survive and to save Jewish values for all humanity.

"Most of us hate change. As life goes on we wear it like an old garment -- in comfort. We hate to be uprooted, even to take a holiday. We fear the holiday will be spoiled by the time we have got used to our new environment.

"How much harder then, when life has passed its meridian and we are already comfortably settled in our stride, to have to make a complete change! How terrible, after years of study and years of hard work to achieve a certain honored position, to be suddenly despoiled of everything! To be left destitute! To face starvation! To see one's children starving and cut off from their fellowmen! To know that unless you can turn your hand to something, you will not even have bread!

"But what can you turn your hand to? You have been a lawyer, a judge, a research worker, the head of a great establishment, which you yourself had built up, a scientific explorer, a man of substance? What can you do that will help you to earn the bare necessities of life?"

The newly-convened Canadian Jewish Congress inquired from the Department of Colonization about the aid that might be available to place refugees on the land.

A fortnight after the reorganizing session of the Congress, on Feb. 12, 1934, General Secretary Hanania Meir Caiserman conveyed to the Hon. Wesley A. Gordon, Minister of Immigration,

"...the official resolution adopted at the Canadian Jewish Congress in general session, held in Toronto, Jan. 27th, 28th, 29th, 1934, with regards to the possible immigration of German Jewish refugees, which the Government may in its wisdom see fit to allow into Canada.

"The resolution reads as follows:

"'WHEREAS James G. MacDonald has been appointed by the League of Nations as Commissioner to take care of the problem of German refugees,

"'BE IT RESOLVED that this Canadian Jewish Congress representing every type of Canadian Jewish citizen, inform the government of the Dominion of Canada that the Jews of Canada will accept responsibility for the proper maintenance in Canada of any German Jewish refugees which our government may in its wisdom see fit to allow into Canada at the request of Commissioner James G. MacDonald.'"

The subsequent experiences of High Commissioner James G. MacDonald were not surprising. He appealed personally to Prime Minister Bennett.

In preparing for his visit to Ottawa, Mr. MacDonald told Mr. H.H. Wrong of the Canadian ministry in Ottawa that "the immediate purpose of his visit is to examine the possibility of the permanent admission to Canada of a limited number of Jewish refugees. He had in mind a total of between one and two thousand, and stated that he believed that it would be possible to give a guarantee against any person so admitted becoming a public charge.

"He tells me that the total number of refugees is about 50,000, of whom three-fourths at least are Jews. A considerable proportion of these are either likely to be absorbed where they now are or may seep back into Germany. There is, however, always the possibility of a new exodus being forced, either by action of the Nazi Government or by local outbursts of anti-Semitism. He has recently been in Berlin, and is now on a pilgrimage to explore the possibilities of emigration for the refugees. He wishes to discuss in Ottawa both the possibility of admitting some refugees to Canada and technical questions concerning the acceptability of travel documents issued in place of passports where these are not available.

"You will find him an interesting person. I think that it would be desirable for the Prime Minister to see him, if only for a few minutes." (Wrong to Dr. D.O. Skelton, Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, March 6, 1934)

In point of fact, Mr.MacDonald discussed a short list of refugees for whom he sought admission. There was not even much respect for the cause or for the title held by Mr. Macdonald in the curt reply sent by Bennett on November 3, 1934. (Section 5, Pp. 39-40)

A Montreal Jewish delegation met with Mr. MacDonald in New York at his invitation upon his arrival in America in early 1934: S. Belkin, H.M. Caiserman and Lazarus Phillips.

His efforts to find a home for a handful of threatened men and women failed ignominously and tragically. Among the rejected at the gate: the son of Sigmund Freud.

When the American Jewish Congress later inquired about the possibilities of settling Jewish refugees in Canada, Caiserman cited MacDonald's sad experience. (Canadian Jewish Archives, New Series, no. 7, Pp. 79-80; no. 8, Pp. 116-20)

On March 21, Y.I. Fanaberia, of the Congress economic committee, followed up Congress interest, in a letter to Ottawa,

"The Executive Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress has asked me to get your opinion on the matter of placing Jewish families on land. What we want to know is to what extent will your Government help to the establishment of each family, financially.

"Your opinion on the matter will be greatly appreciated."

To which the department responded on March 25, 1934,

"Federal assistance for settlement purposes under present conditions is limited to the provisions of the Dominion-Provincial Relief Settlement Agreements. The Relief Settlement Plan is primarily an Unemployment Relief Measure -- not a Colonization Scheme -- but it is anticipated that the Plan will be so administered by the respective Provincial Governments with whom that responsibility rests that a reasonable degree of permanent settlement will ensue.

"Enclosed is copy of the Agreement between the Dominion and Province of Quebec. Similar Agreements have been entered into with all other Provinces with the exception of Prince Edward Island. It will be noted that clause 4 of the Agreement states:-

> "'4. All families who may be assisted under terms of this agreement shall be residents of Canada, and shall be selected from those who would otherwise be in receipt of direct relief. The selection of families shall be made without discrimination by reason of political affiliation, race or religious views.'

"The Relief Settlement Plan may be said to be a development of the Back-to-the-Land Movement undertaken in the Fall of 1930 by way of a coordinated effort between the Federal Department of Immigration and Colonization, the Colonization Departments of the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National Railways. This Movement has as its object the settlement of families with a background of farm experience and sufficient personal capital to enable a start on the land. No financial assistance was granted by the Government or any other Agency. In the

three year period, to December 31st 1933, the Agencies mentioned were instrumental in the settlement of 13,048 families of the class mentioned. During this period most of the Provinces were engaged in similar work and their settlement results are not included in the above.

"In the course of this work it was the experience of the Department, the Provinces and the Railways that there were many families in towns and cities with previous experience but entirely without funds desirous of earning subsistence on the land. Having regard to this situation, the Federal Government in May 1932 offered to all Provinces the Relief Settlement Plan above referred to whereby public monies that would ordinarily be spent on direct relief would be applied to assist selected families to settle on land where they would have an opportunity of self-support. A sum not exceeding $600 per family is provided jointly and equally by the Dominion, Province and municipality concerned. The question of financial participation by any municipality is purely a matter for the municipality to determine based upon the need for such settlement in meeting the local unemployment problem.

"The present Agreements expire March 31st but the Federal Government, based on recommendations of the various Provinces, has stated its intention of renewing existing Agreements subject, of course, to appropriate legislation.

"The Dominion Government is now administering two purely State-aided land settlement projects in Soldier Land Settlement and the Three Thousand British Family Settlement Scheme. Having regard to the large losses already sustained to date in these two ventures, the Government has advised the various Provinces it is not disposed to embark upon further State-aided colonization schemes at the present time.

"If your Society is interested in Relief Land Settlement as an Unemployment Relief Measure, it is suggested that the matter should properly be taken up with the civic and provincial authorities." (P.A.C., vol. 391, P.541782; and response.)

Rabbi M.N. Eisendrath's address at the Canadian Jewish Congress session in Toronto, in which he repeated the guarantees for the complete maintenance of any immigrants who would be admitted into Canada, evoked an attack from Omer Héroux,

"It is always unpleasant to seem to oppose aid and help to others. But for peoples, as for individual persons, it is important in the final analysis to remember that well ordered charity begins at home."

The conjuncture of Rabbi Eisendrath's address and some misleading signs of fitful life by the League of Nations Commission on Refugees led Mr. Héroux to warn about a concerted movement of refugees to Canada at a time when it had no absorptive capacity. (Devoir, Feb. 1, 1934)

Following the tactics employed in the anti-Jewish economic boycott campaign, the hostile propaganda avoided mention of Jews; the talk was of the unemployed; (in the boycott propaganda the talk was about protecting the corner grocer who habitually supported such charities as the St. Vincent de Paul). But the meaning was clear to all.

The name of journalist Omer Héroux (1876-1963) in this context is significant in exemplifying the death-dealing opposition of a school of French journalists who were seen to speak for "patriotic" French Canada and who were influential in the formulation of Canadian immigration policy. If the prime minister was slow in recognizing them as the spokesmen for the francophone portion of Canada, there were political personages to clarify matters for him.

When Henri Bourassa founded the Devoir in 1910, Héroux became one of its editors; he became editor in chief and was listed as such until his passing at the age of 87; he remained at the newspaper under Georges Pelletier who followed Bourassa as its directeur. During these Montreal years he was a member of the group of nationalistic thinkers centering about Abbé P. Perrier of Mile End.

Héroux is connected with nearly every anti-Jewish agitation since his father-in-law Jean-Paul Tardivel's La Vérité and the Association canadienne de la jeunesse catholique. A loyal friend of Abbé Lionel Groulx, they were in Paris together for the anniversary congress of the French La Croix.

He was editor of the Quebec City Action sociale (later Action catholique), daily of the ancient bishopric. Similarly Héroux helped initiate the Ligue des droits du français and established Action française, forerunner of Action nationale.

Never absent from an anti-Jewish forum, Héroux joined the contributors of Le Pionnier whose conflict with Jules Helbronner marked the opening of twentieth century Quebec anti-Semitism. (Canadian Jewish Archives, new series, no. 11)

It says something of the continuous influence of Héroux that for Chanoine Groulx, Tardivel's La Vérité, with Héroux as assistant editor, was the first independent periodical the young seminarist at Valleyfield was able to subscribe to in 1900. It was for Héroux that Groulx wrote of his months at Fribourg. (Le Devoir, May 7, 1963)

As early as 1906 Héroux concluded from the Dreyfus case that the power and cohesion of the Jews in France was a menace. (La Vérité, July 21, 1906)

In 1907 he was disseminating French anti-Jewish ideas in the Quebec press. The July 13 issue of La Vérité already carried his long article "On the Jewish Question" in which he praised Henry Lucien-Brun's La Condition des Juifs en France depuis 1789. Les Archives israelites found the book full of violent diatribes against our coreligionist.

When Omer Héroux visited France he fed anti-Semitic H. de Rauville of La Libre parole there with a summary of Jewish growth, their influence, Bourassa's anti-Jewish comments and their Masonic connections, which accorded perfectly with Drumont's preachments in Paris. (Reprinted in La Vérité)

It would be unfair to Chanoine Groulx to exaggerate Héroux services to him, but from the earliest days of the clergyman's career Héroux did his no small best to draw attention to Abbé Groulx and to his programme of thought and of action -- services which Abbé Groulx appreciated and acknowledged gratefully in his Mémoires and elsewhere.

One of the first issues of Action sociale carried his report on anti-Christian freemasonry which had Jews as its ally. (June 1, 1908)

"The invasion of the English lodges by the Jewish element cannot but have considerable effect. We have before us the membership list of one of the principal lodges in Montreal. In the last four or five years some forty Jews have been admitted, and not only some ordinary citizens but a number who have already succeeded in acquiring a certain position in Montreal. Thus far the lodge has

rather been a club of no great importance, although evil in principle and in its potential. But under the pressure of the Jewish element it will soon become an active and powerful factor."

A week later he returned to the Dreyfus case. One Gregori had attempted to assassinate the Jewish army officer whose martyrdom had become a symbol of French anti-Semitism. By a logic peculiar to the pathology of contemporary racism, the attempted murder became an occasion for Héroux to attackDreyfus as a traitor. It reminded the Quebec journalist of the attack on Dreyfus' lawyer during the Rennes trial, to the detriment of the victim. If these shots are fired by Dreyfus' enemies, Héroux reasons, they are driving their foolishness beyond the probable.

Out of Mafia fiction Héroux adduces more evidence for the defence. Léon Daudet, editor of Action française, reports that before a demonstration in favour of Emile Zola it had been suggested to him that Dreyfus be assassinated. The knight of the Catholic faith and of French literature rejected the proposal.

Susan Robertson notes that of all the members of the Quebec Ligue des droits du français, Héroux followed most closely and with most enthusiasm the activities of the anti-Semitic Action française in Paris. She remarks that during his 1909 visit to France Héroux was fascinated by the anti-Semitic tribune, Léon Daudet. (Thesis. Laval University, 1970, Pp. 37, 59)

He joined Le Devoir when it was founded in 1910 after pouring anti-Semitic preachments in Quebec City's Action sociale (later Action catholique). Bourassa trusted Héroux implicitly in spite of his deep disagreement on such questions as Action française.

Héroux introduced anti-Semitism into the pages of the Devoir during its first months, notably in a commentary on the Austrian Hitler of his day,Carl Lueger "who alone, without means, undertook to free Vienna from the Jewish-liberal coalition which had at its disposal the press, money, and nearly all influence." (March 12, 1910)

During the crucial 1930's this francophone voice represented by Héroux and all his traditions proved decisive for the fate of Jews pleading for their lives. For the Prime Minister was convinced without great difficulty that the admission of Jewish refugees would be violently opposed by French Canada and would contribute to the destruction of Canadian unity.

Now Héroux was alarmed. "What is happening, or at least, what is being prepared?"

He read in the Gazette that the League of Nations Commission on Refugees from Germany had decided to open an information office, and the Toronto Mail and Empire was reporting that Canadian Jews were prepared to accept responsibility for the proper maintenance of all German refugees whom the Canadian government will admit. Furthermore, Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath had proposed a committee to study the nation's absorption capacity and a national protest against Hitlerism.

"If we put these texts side by side, and if we consider what has been happening here during the past thirty years,and the natural reactions of the Jewish people, is it too much to fear that a new immigration is being prepared, if it has not already begun?

"We cannot but admire the energy and the solidarity of the Jewish people and the care they take to protect their own.

"But however we may feel about what is happening in Germany, we must also think of our own country.

"When a country is at the point where it has no work for hundreds of thousands of its sons, when thousands and thousands of men must live from public funds, when thousands of its young people reaching maturity ask with anguish where they can find work, is it not clearly evident that it has exhausted its absorptive capacity?"

The frantic pre-holocaust atmosphere was not relieved by the inaccurate information emanating from Ottawa, and absence of an adequate channel machinery of communication with the threatened Jewish groups, failing a Jewish Congress until 1934.

So the Canadian minister had occasion to write to Alexander Grau-Wandmayer of Lodz "...in reference to a report emanating from the Jewish Telegraph Agency of a speech I am said to have delivered in Parliament advocating unrestricted immigration into Canada.

"The only difficulty with this report is that it is not true. Neither in Parliament nor outside, have I advocated unrestricted immigration for reasons which you touch upon in the second paragraph of page 2 of your letter.

"I hope that the time is not far distant when Canada will be able to receive a larger number of selected immigrants whose coming will be beneficial alike to themselves and to Canada. At present we have more workers in the country than are being employed, and until this condition clears up there can be no return to any influx of workers from Europe." (P.A.C. Immigration file 541782, Apr. 2, 1932)

By 1934 it was no secret that the concentration camps were in operation in Germany.

"Do not bring people who will keep our own from their proper places in the national economy.

"For truth to tell, it is no more pleasant to be unemployed in your own country than in Germany; to be deprived of needs by an economic crisis than by Hitlerite policy.

"It is always disagreeable to seem to oppose meritorious aid and charity. But for nations as for citizens, we must always remember, well ordered charity begins at home." (Le Devoir, Feb. 1, 1934)

The setting for this reasonable front-page editorial: just below it a continuation of a controversy on "The Jew Pullitzer, the Father of Yellow Journalism."

Moritz Haltrecht was puzzled and indignant when he expressed himself at a meeting of the Congress Committee on Economic Questions on October 30, 1935, about "the contradiction between the (English-language) press of Canada, practically unanimous in condemning the German government for persecuting its Jews, and the Canadian government, which refuses to admit any German Jews."

Simon Belkin narrates a parallel experience at this time in nearby Newfoundland, not yet Canada.

At the suggestion of the Jewish Colonization Association in Paris, Mr. Belkin made a study of settling a small number of Jewish doctors, farmers and manufacturers on the island which critically needed this infusion of capital and initiative.

The power figure with whom he discussed these possibilities happened to be Sir John Hope Simpson who had by this time entered his name sadly in the history of Jewish Palestine. In an official report to the British government some five years earlier he had laid it down that the Holy Land was so overcrowded that "you cannot swing a cat" in the country, and thus had sought to close the main door to the rescue of Jews fleeing from Europe. Now he was the key man on the Commission of Government which was ruling the northern island.

He very courteously and carefully heard Belkin offer doctors for St. Johns and for the outports. He seemed sympathetic when Belkin listed manufacturing industries which refugee Jews could establish to meet the current needs of the existing population. He was interested to learn that a Mr. Cohen was running the only modern poultry farm on the island, and that Jewish immigrants could expand the colony's dairies and truck gardening; Sir John all but promised to approve and to recommend the proposal.

Soon after the well-bred English aristocrat wrote a letter of rejection which he did not even trouble to sign. (S. Belkin. Through Narrow Gates, A Review of Jewish Immigration, Colonization and Immigrant Aid Work in Canada, 1840-1940. Montreal, Canadian Jewish Congress, 1966, Pp. 182-87)

Canadians -- and others -- averted their eyes, after turning the keys, in full knowledge of what was happening. Before the first shells fell over Danzig and Warsaw the concentration camps in Germany and the horrors of the Austrian union were on the public record and had been published in the press of the west.

Everything seemed to militate against the admission of the threatened and the victims -- even the profession of human welfare and of systematic and scientific work for the socially deprived.

Surprisingly, even Saturday Night joined the Devoir in reporting that Jewish immigrants were being sneaked into the country by the C.P.R.

It is depressing that such aberrations from character always come from friends who betray; never from enemies who relent; these are consistent in their murderous applied mythology. Jews learned during those decades that there is a fatal attraction in the poison of evil which will sometimes subdue the good but will never fail the satanic.

H.B. Neatby notes that "Hitler's persecution of Jews created another political problem for the government in 1939. Mackenzie King shared the ambivalence of many of his contemporaries towards Jews; he thought of them as aggressive and clannish and disturbingly prominent in international finance, although at the same time he deplored any overt discrimination against them. His first reaction to the Jewish refugee question was that Canada had no responsibility, Jewish organizations and civil liberties groups in English Canada had demanded the admission of refugees but French Canadians had objected to any increased immigration, especially of Jews."

A report prepared for Dr. O.D. Skelton, undersecretary of External Affairs, in June 1938, summarizes "the Number and Categories of Refugees Accepted by Canada" and the measure of success and failure of projects on behalf of Jews, White Russians in China and in Turkey, Mennonites, orphans, Armenians and others unclassified: total -- in the estimate of Director of Immigration F.C. Blair, altogether about 10,000 refugees admitted to Canada in twenty years. (Public Archives of Canada, External Affairs, 342-33c, June 7, 1938)

Not even in 1941, when Hitler was at his most hideous, did the immigration department at Ottawa discard its anti-Jewish bias. The Polish government was concerned lest its Jewish nationals who were refugees in Portugal and in Japan fall into Nazi hands. The Poles, therefore, appealed to Canada and to other of their allies in war to admit a number of these refugees. Canada agreed, but its immigration department sought to limit the number of Jews among the refugees thus admitted to the 12% which Jews constituted of the Polish population. Hitler at that time was not setting such limits in his camps and ovens.

It was left to the Polish government to insist upon, and to secure, a much more generous use of these entry permits by the Jewish refugees.

We should note that the immigration department holds a unique record; the only department with an anti-Jewish bias in all the ministries of Canadian federalism. It is tragic that this bias should have taken the form of lives not saved.

The information on this problem is very difficult to analyse, largely because of the variety of definitions of the terms and even of the nature of the question. It is misleading, in terms of time, to think of the problem arising with the accession of Hitler to power; it is misleading to think of the problem as localised in Germany or of motives of Germany; it is misleading to differentiate between the Austrian Hitler power base in Germany and the areas he was soon to occupy in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Danzig, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, etc.; it is misleading to differentiate between Jews fleeing the brown dictator in the 1930's, those fleeing the red dictator a decade earlier and the Polish antisemites during the intervening years. Indeed, it is useful to remember that there is not even a demographic or familial distinction, as we note the high percentage of Jews from the east residing in Germany in 1933.

The only valid categorization in migration was between those coming from lands of security like the United States and those fleeing the plague of persecution that was infecting the European continent.

Indeed the plague they were fleeing was international and had its nucleus in Russia's Nilus and in Poland's Haller troops no less than in Berliner Goebbels.

In its annual survey of Jewish migration the Jewish Colonization Association reported from Paris for 1933 that during the year only 420 Jews were admitted from overseas. "Special efforts were made, without great success, to facilitate access to the country for refugees from Germany. We still hope that certain facilities may be accorded there in due time."

Detailed facts on Canada's admission of Jewish refugees are difficult to procure since no statistics were kept on refugees as a defined group. For not all who fled from Germany or from its threat were Jews, and not all Jewish immigrants into Canada were fleeing German Hitlerism. But there seems to be agreement that in the six years before the war -- while Palestine became the haven for 60,000 Jewish refugees, the United States for 90,000 and Great Britain for 48,000 -- Canada admitted 382.

Jewish immigrants from enemy countries: year ending March 31, 1939 (whatever the term meant at a time when Canada was at peace), 588. During the year ending March 31, 1940 -- 1317.

During the years 1933 to 1941 some 7,000 or 8,000 Jewish refugees were admitted to Canada, about 1% of all who were resettled. (A. Tartakower, "The Jewish Refugees, A Sociological Survey." in Jewish Social Studies, vol. 4, no. 4. Pp. 311-48)

The records of the decade scattered over the world speak eloquently of Canada's heedlessness to Nazi-created violence.

This becomes statistically evident in figures Rosenberg adduces:

"Jews born in Germany constituted only 1.75% of all Jewish immigrants to Canada between 1931 and 1938. There were only 23 in 1937-38! (Canada's Jews. Montreal Canadian Jewish Congress, 1939. P.145) This, while all concentration was on the victims of Hitler's persecution.

The complex social and psychological circumstances about this concentration on the plight of the Jews in Germany in relation with the concern for the Jews in other sites of agony deserves close examination on another occasion.

Inescapably the statistics are confusing, as are the terms by definition Watson Thomson cites, on one page:

"Jewish refugee immigrants since Hitler's advent to power: 1933, 14; 1934, 23; 1935, 25; 1936, 28; 1938, 28; 1939, 239." Estimate of Jewish refugees settled in Canada, 1933-39: 382. (J'Accuse. Winnipeg, 1943, P.20)

By any reading of statistics, "The meager help that Canada gave the Jews may be likened to the drink of vinegar given to Christ. Why? Because most governments do not act until they have reasonable assurance that the electors will support them. As long as discrimination is practiced by individuals, the government cannot be expected to do much." (Douglas MacLennan. "Racial Discrimination in Canada," in Canadian Forum, Oct. 1943, Pp.164-65)

After the war Sen. Roebuck told the Standing Senate Committee on Immigration of the continuation of this tragic development: in 1935, 624; in 1936, 880; in 1937, 619; in 1936, 584; in 1939, 890; in 1940, 1634; in 1941, 626; in 1942, 388; in 1943, 270; in 1944, 238; in 1945, 330.

Not all of these Jewish immigrants were from overseas and not all were refugees.

In spite of so much hostility about them, the Jewish community and its friends kept petitioning for the admission of refugees -- each possibly the last that may get out. The results were sparse. The anti-immigration regulations had built impenetrable walls. Unemployment in the country was tragically high, with few prospects for a return of reasonable prosperity. Sympathy for the uprooted and the threatened was mild. The admission of even economically independent and useful refugees was secured only after titanic efforts.

Frustration was met by irritation. Officials grew impatient, or even annoyed, with the interminable requests from Canadians to bring unqualified friends or distant relatives to this country. Because the persecution in Europe was primarily of the Jews, the majority of such requests originated with Canadian Jews. This situation prompted the director to comment: "It is a curious fact that so many of our Jewish applicants are utterly selfish in their attempts to force through a permit for the admission of relatives or friends. They do not believe that 'no' means more than 'perhaps,' and they keep on appealing and appealing in the hope that the merit of the case lies in the circumstances, rather than in the applicant."

In their agonized quest for means of rescuing their kin and their fellow Jews, Canadian Jews were still gagged into silence.

The very tradition of petitioning government enforced a measure of discreet silence, as the conventions created by government services insisted that such representations be made behind closed doors so that decisions be made in solemn silence, distant from the rumble of street noises.

The following May a delegation from the Confederation of Catholic Workers of Canada asked Prime Minister Bennett to keep German Jews out of the country. (American Jewish Year Book.)

The province-wide campaign to secure similar resolutions from other municipal corporations did not do well at Piedmont, as we learn from the Canadian Jewish Chronicle of Feb. 23, 1934:

"It seems that the time-worn and threadbare resolution which has been going the rounds of all cities, towns and hamlets, found its way to Piedmont, and the aldermen were requested to act upon the 'threatened invasion of the 700,000 Jews who are about to enter Canada'.

"Things did not go well with the resolution, for Mr. B. Goldberg, a Jewish farmer in that vicinity, undertook to enlighten the people about the hoary fabrications upon which the resolution is built. Piedmont redeemed itself by voting against it, in spite of the frantic appeals against Communism and anti-Christianity."

During the decade under our discussion the internal Jewish debate on the issues of expression and of decibles was crucial as Jewry divided deeply on ideological and social lines between those who were prepared to act in the spirit of the rules of the diplomatic game, and those who felt that only strong and public expression on various Jewish concerns then urgent can inform the public and can mobilize a requisite pressure deriving from an understanding of the nature of the problem.

A GRANDMOTHER AND HER GRANDDAUGHTER

A Jewish mother, Mrs. Esther Stermer, spent her last years in Montreal. One summer at Val Morin, happily surrounded by a dozen grandchildren, this unschooled woman sat at a lawn table and wrote in a flowing Yiddish, into a scribbler, with scarcely a single inked correction in her text, the saga of her years in Poland under Hitler, an epic of heroism, of family loyalty, of endurance, of cataclysm, of murder, of treachery, of starvation, of ingenuity that has few equals in the writings of mankind -- except in the scores of other recollections of holocaust.

She wrote of her family hiding out in bunkers and in speleologists' caves, of Crusoe lives in months of darkness, of towns destroyed, of a total Slavic society gone mad in years-long murderous hunt for Jews in hiding, of losing one after another of family, friends, neighbours -- and of millions of fellow Jews -- to the purposeless, unmotivated lust to kill which seized ordinary men and women.

Here is an epic with a happy ending.

Her last years were in tranquil Quebec, surrounded by her children and grandchildren who miraculously survived Odyssean hardships. The three-year-old little girl who was the darling

of the cave world is a very attractive matron who is devoted to the Mizrachi cause.

But the recollections or the grandmother are the essence of Jewish martyr history.

"The barn was no longer safe and he had been looking for a better hiding place.

"In the meantime he would take us to our old home until he found a better hiding place. The forest was becoming very dangerous. They were continuously looking for Jews there and were finding them one at a time.

"Those found were shot.

"We came back to our home at night. The house was already forsaken. The doors and windows were gone, the rooms were windy. Nissen boarded up some of the openings.

"I looked through the cracks of our attic bunker and I saw our neighbors coming out of church, well dressed, happy. It was their Easter.

"Most of them were dressed in fine clothing which had belonged to Jews. In most cases they had stolen them; some had gotten them as gifts. Every Jew had had a Christian friend wo whom he had entrusted his valuables until after the war.

"But these Christians knew that the Jews were all condemned. They knew who had already died, and that those who were still alive had escaped the angel of death but for a moment. Soon they, too, will die. Without shame or fear they promenaded at ease wearing the Jews' clothing.

"There could indeed be no doubt that Jews were doomed and that the murderers will kill us to the last man and child.

"We were not surrendering to this fate and desperately sought means of escape.

"Our family in particular would not let the Germans have their way easily. We had vigor, ingenuity and determination to survive. Above all, our family would stand together. When one of us was in danger, the others would not cower to escape. They proved their personal strength and character time and again. ...

"There were two peasants' huts not far from our barn. Through the cracks in our walls we could see the women and their children cleaning and whitewashing their houses, readying for the Easter festival.

"The spring days were bright, the sun was warm. But there was no peace for us. We were lying hidden in an attic because we were Jews! We had committed no crime and done no ill. Yet we were being hunted and threatened with destruction. All were pursuing us -- the Germans, the Ukrainians, the Poles. All were persecuting us.

"Even little children knew to point us out as Jews, and we fled from them in fear.

"Outside the sun warmed the fields, which were beginning to turn green. All was awakening to life. But we sat there like condemned men.

"While we had been still hiding in the barn, the Germans carried through another of their 'actions' in Borszczow. They would not let the occasion of the Jewish Passover go by without making merry. The sadistic criminals particularly enjoyed torturing and killing Jews on Jewish festival days....

"At night our men came back and told us that there had been a roundup. The Germans had found very many Jews, had taken them to the cemetery and had shot them. Among these there was, indeed, the entire Kavalek family. One of their daughters had sought to run away, but they saw her fleeing and shot her.

"The catastrophe was shattering. Only two sons out of the four families had escaped. They had all been shot in the cemetery and were buried half alive.

"Witnesses later told that the ground heaved and spurted blood. The murderers were afraid of a cholera epidemic and fresh graves were dug and the victims were buried again.

"Our situation was desperate. Where can we survive? Clearly, there was no place on earth for us....

"They would always bring back news. This Jewish man had been shot in the forest. Another family was found hiding in the home of a peasant and all were shot. Of course, we didn't know who was hiding out safely or where they were. It was only when we heard of a family being discovered and killed that we learned that other Jews, too, were desperately fighting for their lives and for their existence.

"The murderers had their willing helpers, the Ukrainians, who would very diligently look for traces of Jews hiding out and who would reveal their tracks to the Germans. Then the Germans would come and shoot their victims on the spot. The Ukrainian police were particularly industrious in searching out our people in hiding and shooting them....

"Every time Nissen would come from the city he had 'good' news for us. This one was shot, that one was killed, this one was taken, these were sought out and done to death in the forest. We would continue to hear such news without cease until our eventual liberation. To the very final day of their defeat, to the moment of their very destruction, the Germans continued to search out Jews and to kill them. Our very 'good neighbors' the Ukrainians were very helpful to them in this work....

"Jews were constantly fleeing from the ghetto. They knew of our bunkers and would hide there because the ghetto was being constantly searched. More and more men were being seized and sent to destruction. Every living person was constantly exposed to this terror.

"While still at home I remember a surprising expression I heard from a peasant, 'If there is no accuser there will be no judge.' He meant that if they kill all the Jews, who will remain to accuse the Ukrainians and the Germans of their horrible atrocities?

"It reminded me of the traditional Jewish cry of protest and outrage, 'There is no law and no judge', the world is anarchic, immoral, irresponsible and murderous.

"Before the eyes of the entire world, the Hitlerites, the German master-race, murdered an entire nation that had been living for centuries in the countries that these Germans now occupied.

"Our entire city of Jews lies slaughtered. Possibly one out of a hundred survived.

"Several friends from our city had gone to Canada some ten or twelve years before the war. Each of these friends had left behind him parents, brothers, sisters, children in his home town who had already married and have had children of their own. Each of these migrants must have left an extended family.

"Not one of them survived; not one. My husband and I, too, had more than thirty members in our family; of them not one is here today.

"Who can describe the misery and the outrage which the murderer and his helpers have committed against the Jewish people? May their names and all that is theirs be erased from the knowledge and memory of man!....

"We spent months in this underground cave.

"All this time we did not see daylight or the sun's rays. Except for those who would come to us and would bring us our necessities, we were isolated from the outside world. We

were afraid of the outdoors and sought to mask our presence and to hide the more deeply, so that no one would ever suspect that the cave held a group of Jews.

"The air in the outside world was poisoned by Nazism which spurred all peoples to kill as many of the surviving Jews as they could. Even above the grotto there was no sunshine for pursued, persecuted Jews....

"Suddenly we saw a ray of light, the sunshine. My grand-daughter Simale began to scream that we should put out the kerosene light. The child had forgotten about daylight and had become accustomed to the dark. The strange daylight was too strong for her eyes.

"The sunshine at first blinded and immobilized us. Our eyes had been so unaccustomed to daylight and to sunshine that we could barely stand God's sun. We had not seen any light which went beyond several yards distance for many months. We had become accustomed to a life in darkness; the daylight hurt us like pins stuck in our eyes....

"We did not trust the Ukrainians; we were afraid that after seeing us all in the town they might come at night and kill us. We were waiting until sufficient authority was established to protect us.

"When our men came into town they saw the great ruin and destruction. When we had left for our cave, our houses and all the buildings in town were still there. The houses of our neighbors had also been untouched.

"At the edge of town there were still several houses which had belonged to Jewish people and where Christians were living now. The survivors whose homes still remained went there for some of their household belongings, but nobody would return anything to them.

"Our men went again to retrieve the furs which we had given a friendly peasant to hide when the Nazis had ordered that all fur garments were to be surrendered. The man refused to return them.

"We had left a sewing machine at a neighbor's, a machine that cut straw, a bed and other furnishings. But they would return nothing to us.

"His wife even screamed at us,

"'Everybody has machines and other things which they took from Jews and they don't have to return them. Why do we have to give them back?' She added that had she known the outcome, she would have taken from other Jews instead of from us.

"I asked her, 'Is it our fault that you are not lucky, and that we survived? If others would have survived, you would have had to return their things too.'

"Nothing helped. They gave us nothing."

"When the Germans were liquidating the Jewish community, the Christian peasants began to take the Jewish houses apart. They began by removing the doors and windows. Then they pulled off the metal coverings, the bricks, the woodwork, until nothing remained but chimneys as memorials to the destruction.

"It was frightening to look at the naked, staring chimneys. It was impossible to tell which house had stood where, or who had owned it.

"The peasants told us that, as they were taking our house apart, a boy who was taking part in this ravaging fell and was killed.

"Much more horrible was it to know that the people who had lived in those homes were dead. They had all been murdered and destroyed in the most frightening, inquisitorial, and nightmarish manner. They had all been erased and uprooted. The city where Jews had lived for many generations was completely destroyed.

"My sons dug in the earth and found the cement steps that led to our house. It was thus they recognized where they had been raised and where they had passed the years of their youth....

"A few more Jews appeared in town one by one. They were like the walking dead, stooped so they were scarcely able to take a few steps. They had remained in the bunkers all this time, bent over almost into rolls, their feet had become atrophied and they were unable to straighten out."

CRUEL PAPERS

An endless amount of officialese concern went into such man-hampering activities as Jews fleeing from Hitler-land not having "proper" passports.

The nations of the world were designing special travel documents, and discussions on these pre-occupied foreign offices in lieu of dragging the living victims from the flames and from the inquisitorial rooms. In Ottawa this discussion filled the files.

In 1922 Canada had refused to adhere to arrangements regarding certificates of identity to Russian refugees; in 1924 for Armenian refugees.

The Canadian government did not even consider the agreements recommended by the League in 1928, which recommended extension of benefits to Turkish, Assyrian and Assyrian Chaldean refugees.

The Canadian record of refusal, of long standing, has probably contributed to its insignificant record of sheltering refugees, and is concomitant in motivation.

A statement by the ministry of immigration on April 12, 1929 is brutally revealing of Canadian policy to the threatened and to the stricken.

"We are not in such need of immigrants from central Europe that we are warranted in stretching the Regulations in any way to make it easier for a movement of refugees than for other people...

"The provision that the issuing state is willing to take the refugee back within five years is not sufficient. What we contended for all along is that return must be allowed for cause arising within five years of entry. It frequently happens that an immigrant within the five year period becomes a criminal and deportation is not possible until the sentence has been served. When a sentence extends beyond the five year period from entry, the proposal would mean that we would be without power to deport the immigrant who was in goal when the five years expired. What we require is that the League of Nations Passport or any other Identity certificate shall be as valuable in negotiating return by deportation as is the general national passport." (Public Archives of Canada. External Affairs, file 160-26)

The dominant consideration in regard to each refugee seeking asylum: as a potential charge upon the public purse (even disregarding fiscal and other guarantees on his behalf) and as a potential candidate for deportation through mental, moral, physical and other disability.

All stateless applicants are to suffer because no state would be prepared to take the insane and physically defective.

In the words of the deputy minister of Immigration (August 10, 1934), "Our attitude in the days when we were receiving many foreign immigrants was that, if the state issuing the Nansen passport to refugees was unwilling to take a chance on the return of a few who might become deportable, their best course was to keep them all."

Through some inter-departmental misunderstanding Immigration signed the 1926 Arrangements for such refugees, without the knowledge of External Affairs. The recommendations of this "Arrangement" were never ratified, even though such ratification was requested by the High Comission for Refugees. Since Canada had not the slightest intention of either issuing or accepting such certificates, it is hard to understand why the 1926 Arrangement was signed. In a letter of April 12, 1929 (on file 160-26)

the Deputy Minister of Immigration made it clear that the 1926 Arrangement did not commit Canada to acceptance of certificates of identity. (Report on the Refugee Problem. Public Archives of Canada. External Affairs. 342-33c. June 7, 1938)

The Canadian government did not even consider the agreements recommended by the League in 1928, which recommended extension of benefits to Turkish, Assyrian and Assyrian Chaldaean refugees.

When a League-sponsored conference recommended a Convention relating to the International Status of Refugees in October 1933, the Ministry of Immigration wrote to External Affairs opposing accession to the Convention.

The moral confusion -- at best -- of the situation appears from a 1930 bureaucratic incident. The League had routinely inquired whether "your government will find it possible to give effect to the recommendations concerning the application of the Inter-governmental Arrangements." The Canadian government replied that it would be glad to give effect to these recommendations. As Canada had, with one exception, refused to subscribe to the Arrangements, it is not clear what was intended by our statement that we would give effect to the recommendations. The Canadian Dr. Riddell, who had been instructed to reply thus to Geneva, and the Nansen Office, successor to the League's High Commission for Refugees, were also puzzled as appears from Dr. Riddell's letters.

On Jan. 30, 1934 the Permanent Committee authorized "the High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Others) Coming from Germany to enter into negotiations with the Governments concerned for the issue of permits to work in their respective countries to a reasonable proportion of the refugees who are qualified to work.

"It is recommended that every Government represented on the Governing Body of the High Commission should grant facilities for the apprenticing in industrial enterprises of a reasonable number of refugees in their country, or for placing them as students in technical institutions of the country."

The High Commission also recommended that "the Government of the countries represented on the Governing Body should issue to a German national who is unable to obtain a renewal of his German passport, or a fresh German passport, from the German Consular Authorities, the Document of Identity and Travel recommended by the Conference of the League of Nations in 1927, or a similar document be employed by them for persons who cannot obtain a national passport.

"The Governments should issue a similar document to those refugees who hold passports issued in Germany to stateless persons or to persons who have not a national passport, when the document with which they left Germany expires.

"The Document of Identity and Travel, or similar document issued to a refugee, should be valid for a period of one year and should bear the mention, 'Good for Return' to the country issuing it.

"All other States should give effect to the documents so issued to refugees, whether for purposes of definite entry into their country or for purposes of transit.

"An arrangement should be made with the German Government by which, in any case where the German Consular Authority abroad is unwilling to renew a passport or issue a new passport to a German refugee, he should give a statement to that effect. Failing such an arrangement, it is suggested that the passport authorities of the State in which the refugee is living should accept written proof from an officer of an organization, represented on the Advisory Council of the High Commission or delegated by the High Commissioner, that the applicant is unable to obtain a document from the German authorities; or they should satisfy themselves otherwise to that effect.

"The Governments should allow stateless refugees to stay on the same conditions, and to have the same opportunities of obtaining employment in their country, as are accorded to refugees who are German nationals; and should not take steps to make such stateless refugees leave the country before the term of their passport expires."

The Canadian government was informed of the view of the British government on these recommendations. In general, the British attitude was approving. Indeed, in regard to the one involving the German authorities the British viewwas stronger than that of the High Commission on Refugees.

"His Majesty's Government would not, as at present advised, consider it desirable themselves to approach the German Government on the lines indicated in the first sentence of this recommendation. They presume, in this connexion, that every care would be taken to avoid giving the impression that other Governments would view with indifference the institution by German Consular Authorities abroad of a general practice of refusing to renew German passports for German refugees, since such a practice would be contrary to ordinary international usage, and would merit strong condemnation. As regards the second part of the recommendation, His Majesty's Government would point out that it has not hitherto proved difficult for the competent authorities in the United Kingdon to satisfy themselves whether the renewal of a German refugee's passport will be refused....

"It may be explained that almost all the aliens admitted to the United Kingdom come for some purely temporary purpose, such as a visit to friends, or a course of study; although such persons may be granted prolongation of stay from time to time, they are regarded merely as visitors and are expected to leave the country in due course; and consequently the prolongation of their stay must be contingent on their possession of a document of sufficient validity to ensure that they can leave the

country at the expiration of any period allowed. For this reason, His Majesty's Government could not agree that they should be precluded from making stateless refugees leave the country before the term of their passport expires; the recommendation, in this wide and categoric form, would not conform to the Administration of the Aliens Order, and would give stateless persons unduly favourable treatment compared with that given to the nationals of other countries. It may, however, be noted that if a stateless alien applies for permission to take up his residence in the United Kingdom, his application is decided upon the particular facts of his case, and the governing consideration is not the nature of the passport or travel document in his possession. If it is decided to accede to his application, the requirement that he must renew his foreign travel document is not insisted upon, where it cannot be fulfilled."

But when this exchange between the High Commissioner and the British Government came under a Canadian eye (Letter from Norman Bentinck for the Secretary General to the Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office in London, Feb. 6, 1934; copy in P.A.C. Immigration Department files), a clear reaction was pencilled on the document.

The High Commission noted that every state is reluctanct, for obvious reasons, to allow a stateless refugee to remain in its territory; and therefore there is a tendency to try to make the holder of a pass for stateless persons to move on to another country before his passport expires.

The Canadian authority added, "And more so, to return if in trouble."

"No" was pencilled on the document initialled by the ever-negative "B" (not Mr. Bronfman), specifically at the final paragraph requesting "your country to recognize an expired German passport bearing a Swiss visa as an adequate document of travel for a refugee."

The same Mr. B. commented on the Document of Identity and Travel recommended by the conference of the League of Nations in 1927 -- the British Government accepted its own Home Office document as a document of identity -- as"of no value except as a one way document, good to leave, not good to return."

The deputy minister of immigration therefore told Dr. Skelton on May 7, 1934,

"The problem of travel documents is troublesome because they cannot be deported to the state issuing them if they become deportable. Some years ago, when the problem first rose, Canada decided to accept such immigrants if the issuing country regarded the document like its own passport." (Public Archives of Canada, RG 76, vol.391, P.541782)

"This is a subject that I understand has been raised many times since the war by those who have sought to find new homes for refugees. We have never been able to provide a solution since the difficulties lie with the documents themselves and their value in the eyes of the issuing authorities. Apart altogether from the question of Canada's ability to find employment for these refugees or to arrange their admission to attend technical schools or serve as apprentices in industrial undertakings, the fact that a refugee travels on a document seldom valid to return to the country which issued it, and almost never valid to return after the first few months, makes it impossible for these people to comply with the Canadian passport regulation which calls for the issue of a passport by the Government of the country to which a person belongs.

"You will observe that the High Commissioner for Refugees says, -- 'Every state is reluctant, for obvious reasons, to allow a stateless refugee to remain in its territory; and therefore there is a tendency to try to make a holder of a pass for stateless persons move on to another country before his passport expires.'

If the foregoing quotation defines, as it undoubtedly does, the attitude of most Governments to keeping the refugee, it as clearly indicates that there would be no hope on the part of Canada or any other country receiving stateless immigrants to return those who got into trouble and became deportable from Canada.

"Some years ago when this question first arose, the attitude taken by Canada was that where the refugee passport was the only difficulty, we would accept refugees holding a special passport issued by some other country than the one to which the refugee belonged, providing the country of issue would regard the passport as of the same value as the national passport issued in the regular way, and thus allow for the return to the country of issue any refugee who might have to be deported from Canada. This has remained the attitude of this Department during the years, and I cannot see how it is possible to recede from that position.

"At present there is also the exclusion of general immigration as provided in P.C. 695. This means that from Continental Europe the only classes admissible now are -- (a) wives and unmarried children under 18 joining family heads legally established in Canada and in a position to care for them; and (b) agriculturalists with plenty of funds to begin farming on their own account. Any other classes or individuals could be admitted only on the authority of an Order-in-Council."

When the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees asked Ottawa's attention to its recommendations concerning travel documents for refugees, the response was negative. (Letter from Secretary General of the High Commision to the Secretary of State for External Affairs for the Dominion of Canada at Geneva, May 25, 1934, P.A.C.)

Canada was invited by the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Other) Coming from Germany to a conference in July 1936 concerning the status of such refugees. But Canada took no action on the invitation, nor is there any indication that the Canadian government considered the July provisional arrangements that emanated from that conference.

The High Commissioner for Refugees convened another conference on February 9, 1938. He invited Canada to attend and sent the draft to be discussed at the conference together with the invitation. The Immigration Branch commented unfavourably on January 18, 1938 on the draft conventions on the by now familiar grounds of possible public charge developments and on deportation procedures. Six weeks after the conference External Affairs asked Mr. Blair, Director of Immigration, to reconsider the possibility of signing the Convention with or without reservations.

Right through the thirties, as more and more Europeans found themselves disowned by their unconscionable states, bereft of documents and protection from the governments of their native states and from the nations among whom they were living, these Canadian reservations cost lives.

It seems that, if there were any differences between federal ministries, External Affairs would have wished a relaxation of such rules, especially in concert with other members of the society of nations. But Immigration (Mines and Resources, which had an Immigration Branch) insisted on creating difficulties for the stateless. Immigration emphasized that Canada never did subscribe to such proposed international conventions.

Thus on May 14, 1936 Immigration reminded External Affairs that only five countries accepted the Convention then being proposed, and raised further serious objections to Canada accepting it. (F.C.Blair to Dr. O.D. Skelton, Jan 18, 1938)

In the same 1938 letter Mr. Blair explained, "Stateless immigrants have presented a very serious problem to Canada since the (first) War owing mainly to the fact that, once they are admitted to Canada, they must continue to reside here whether they become inmates of institutions or otherwise public charges, since no other country will recognize their right of return."

Even when proposed certificates of identity issued by countries of residents to stateless citizens, intended as substitutes for passports, were valid for a time, e.g., for one year or 18 months, and could receive deportees during this period, Mr. Blair was not satisfied; since "deportation from Canada may take place for cause arising within five years, it becomes apparent that the certificate of identity cannot be accepted by us as a valid passport since return to the country of issue must be within the period of validity." (Public Archives of Canada. External Affairs, R.G. 25, vol. 1661, file 342-2)

Dr. Skelton persisted discreetly, particularly since a new proposal for a convention came from the League of Nations on March 2, 1938. He again wrote Blair on March 21,

"In view of the importance of this question at the present time, and the likelihood that the general question of emigration of refugees will be discussed at the Assembly at Geneva in September, I should be glad if you could have careful consideration given to the question of Canada's attitude to the Convention, and to the general question of the emigration of refugees. It may be possible after a careful study of its provisions for your Department to recommend signature of the Convention, with or without reservations. If it is not considered practicable for Canada to sign the Convention -- and I can see from our previous correspondence the kind of difficulties which arise -- it will be desirable for the Canadian delegates

to be fully informed with respect to Canada's attitude to the question so that, if necessary, they may take part in the discussion and adequately present the Canadian view, for the question to be decided -- whether or not Canada is prepared to cooperate with other countries in rendering some assistance to the victims of persecution in Germany by waiving or modifying certain conditions of entry -- is more than a question of administrative convenience and cannot well be allowed to go by default."

The Director of Immigration replied on March 29,

"Various aspects of Jewish immigration are at present being inquired into by our Minister and today we have been discussing with him your communication of the 26th instant with memorandum from the U.S. Legation in Ottawa. As the two communications relate very largely to the same subject, I think it will be necessary to defer for a short time a reply to your letter of the 21st instant, but the matter will not be lost sight of and, at the earliest possible date, I shall write you further."

That was the manner of the death of this effort.

TO BE ABANDONED
by
FRANK B. WALKER

"The guilt does not lie only on this continent. It lies with the citizens of most of the nations we regard as civilized, yet who were guilty of contributing to what happened.

"What was not done in those years is not as bad as what was done in Germany, but it laid an indelible stain upon continents and nations."

(Montreal Star, June 16, 1979)

..... "After the horrible transport into the death camps, when confronted with the gas chambers and crematoria the life drives in the Jews, who were deprived of everything that had given them security, robbed of all hope for themselves and, worst of all, deserted by the entire world, were no longer able to keep their death drive in bounds."

(Bruno Bettelheim,
Surviving and Other Essays)

COMMONWEALTH

On the Commonwealth level Mr. Simon Marks of London had asked the Rt. Hon. J.H. Thomas, Secretary for the Dominions, to take up at the Economic Conference in London the question of finding an asylum "for Jews who are in trouble because of the actions of the Hitler government." (July 14, 1933) He urged,

"Your sympathy with the oppressed and your generous response to an appeal in the name of humanity are so quick and spontaneous that one naturally turns to you for advice and assistance in connection with the tremendous tragedy in which the whole of German Jewry is now involved.

"The magnitude of the catastrophe is beyond exaggeration, as resolute, deliberate and persistent effort is being made to reduce to ruin and penury more than half a million people who have been settled for many centuries in Germany, and who have made most memorable contributions to the intellectual and integral upbuilding of that country. Although the outward manifestations of this ruthless policy may vary, it must be accepted as a fact that the policy will be persisted in as long as the rulers of Germany are obsessed by their present philosophy. Some twenty or thirty thousand Jews have left that country permanently as refugees, and, for the most part, have found temporary lodgment in neighbouring lands. This number is certain to increase under an inexorable pressure, while those who still stayed behind in Germany face a miserable and hopeless prospect.

"As you know, the Jewries of the World are grappling with this terrible problem. All sections of the Jewish people are in this matter united in thought and aim. The task imposed upon them is immense, and it is not possible for them to provide even an imperfect solution without the collaberation, as well as the sympathy, of other peoples.

"The record of the British race in every part of the world, and for centuries, is one of broad understanding and generous response whenever men are persecuted for their race and their religion. We all know that the economic crisis has affected severely the British Dominions and has reduced their power to help in this hour. But I know also that it has not weakened their understanding and their sympathy, and that they will be both anxious and able to offer some assistance in finding homes for these unhappy fugitives. I am convinced, although I think that argument is unnecessary to fortify the sympathies of the British race, that, in this matter, a generous policy would prove to be a proven and statesman-like policy.

"In the past, the economic and intellectual development of England have owed a great deal to successive waves of the oppressed, who found asylum under British rule. The Jews who have been driven out of Germany include very large numbers of men of exceptional scientific, technical, industrial and commercial gifts and knowledge, and these gifts are certain to add strength to the reserves of any country which allow them free play and free employment.

"There is no person more competent than yourself to bring this matter before the Governments of the Dominions, and there could not be a better occasion for such a step than the present, which finds the principal representatives of the Dominions assembled in London.

"I am writing to ask you to be good enough to consider this matter, and to take such action as your experience and your understanding suggest to you as likely to lead to fruitful results. I cannot conceive any greater single act to humanity that could be performed in this hour than to help in finding asylum for some of the persecuted Jews of Germany."

Mr. Thomas did indeed pass the representation of Mr. Marks to Prime Minister Bennett on July 20.

On Sept. 13, Thomas wrote to the Canadian government through the agency of the Canadian High Commissioner in London, appending a copy of Mr. Marks' letter of July 13th to his own,

"I am writing to you in connection with the problem which has been created by the exodus from Germany of Jews who find it no longer possible to secure their livelihood under the existing regime in that country. You are, of course, aware of the nature of this problem, and of the difficulties which it presents. What I am anxious to do is to enlist the sympathetic co-operation of your Government in the measures which are being sugested for coping with the situation; and this is where I need your help.

"So far as we ourselves are concerned, the position is as follows: Refugees from Germany are admitted to this country in the ordinary way as visitors, and are required,like any other foreigners, to satisfy the Immigration Officer that they comply with the requirement that a foreigner seeking admission must be in a position to support himself and his dependents. In many cases guarantees of maintenance are provided by the Jewish Refugees' Committee, which has been formed in this country to assist the refugees; and guarantees of this body, or in proper cases by private individuals, are accepted as sufficient compliance with the requirement as to means.

"The refugees are largely of the professional classes and include eminent scholars, men of science and university teachers, doctors, dentists, lawyers and students of various kinds. Permission has been given to a number of doctors, dentists and lawyers to study here with a view to securing a British qualification in their profession. A number of applications for the appointment of some of the more distinguished German refugees -- scientists and professors - to colleges, universities, or for research work, has also been received and permission has been freely granted.

"We are in close touch in this respect with a body known as the Academic Assistance Council, which has collected funds from which the appointments of such persons are subsidized. In regard to students permission is freely granted for those who are in a position to do so to complete their education or pursue a course of study in this country. Business people are also included among the refugees, and permission has been given in many cases for them to engage in business in this country, e.g. in manufacture, import and export trading, in the fur trade, etc.

"The question of employment is, of course, a difficult one, in view of the unemployment situation in this country, and persons who are admitted as refugees are required to obtain specific authority before taking up employment. It has, however, been possible to give sympathetic consideration to applications on behalf of the refugees where the employment is of a minor character, or the post is in effect being created in special circumstances. For instance, Jewish women have been allowed to take up posts of a domestic or semi-domestic character, e.g. as domestic servants, nursery governesses, and teachers of the German language, in private houses. In certain cases, too, firms have been prepared to take on a refugee as an extra employee over and above their actual requirements, and this has been authorized.

"In addition to the above, arrangements have been made with the Jewish Refugees' Committee whereby, for an experimental period, young Jewish refugees may be placed in industrial employment for the purpose of receiving training, with the idea that they should proceed in due course to Palestine or some other part of the world. This scheme, which has only just started, covers 100 individuals in the first instance. Thirty have already been placed in this way and the arrangements are working satisfactorily.

"I should like to add that the Jewish refugees who have come from Germany to this country are in the main of a very good type.

"You will see that we have made, and are making, a solid contribution to the solution of this problem. The refugees from Germany consist, however, to a quite considerable degree of students and professional men, and the number of such men who can be absorbed in any one country is necessarily limited.

"We have been informed that some of them may desire, either now or later, to seek openings overseas; and the Jewish Refugees Committee, Woburn House, Upper Woburn Place, with which we have been in touch, is aware that any application for admission of persons to a Dominion is entirely a matter for the Dominion Government concerned and must be taken up with that Government direct.

"This letter has been written with the idea that it may be useful to your Government to know the lines upon which the United Kingdom Government is attempting to deal with this very difficult matter, and with the hope that in suitable cases it may be possible for the Canadian Government to consider sympathetically the admission into Canada of a limited number of refugees of the type I have mentioned, in the event of an application being made either by the persons concerned or by some organization such as the Jewish Refugees Committee in their behalf."

How Canada received the proposal to discuss the issue at the London Conference can be gauged from an internal memorandum from A.D.M. to the Hon. Mr. Gordon of October 4,

"Mr. Marks states that the magnitude of the catastrophe that has befallen the German Jew is beyond exaggeration. I notice that a Canadian correspondent of the Gazette, writing some two or three weeks ago from Germany, commented on the evident exaggeration of the German Jewish situation. The stories that were told some few weeks ago gave the impression that many thousands of Jewish people had lost their lives in the persecution. This correspondent (Echlin) said that most of these stories had been written in Paris, London, New York and other centres quite outside of Germany, and that the maximum number of Jews who had lost their lives, so far as he could ascertain, was 30, and he questioned whether that number was not too high.

"However, apart altogether from the exaggeration that has characterized a good deal of the propaganda, it is evident that Jewish people in Germany are suffering from many and grievous ills. The question is whether Canada can open its doors to some quota of these persecuted Jewish people.

"Mr. Thomas in writing to Mr. Ferguson on the 13th ultimo explained what the British Government is doing. He says that refugees from Germany are admitted to Great Britain in the ordinary way as visitors and, in addition, arrangements have been made with the Jewish Refugee Committee for the training in England of a number of young Jewish refugees with the idea that they will later proceed to Palestine or to some other part of the world. The maximum number of such refugees accepted for training is 100 but the number may be increased.

"The admission of German Jews to England as visitors includes more classes than we would call visitors. They are evidently admitted there for an indefinite period

on being able to show that they are in a position to support themselves or that the Jewish Refugees Committee assumes that responsibility. They are required to obtain specific authority before taking up employment, and it is mentioned that a number have been allowed to take up posts as domestic servants, nursery governesses, teachers of languages, etc. It is also explained that the refugees are largely of the professional classes including university professors, scientists, doctors, dentists, lawyers and students.

"It is apparent that the Conference in London did not consider the application. I doubt whether even now it is necessary to send anything more than a formal acknowledgment. However, we have been expecting for some time that a concerted effort would be made to get the doors of Canada opened for a group of these refugees, and because of this I am commenting on the issue involved.

"The efforts to get Jewish quotas into Canada dates back to September, 1923. At that time we were informed that there were many thousands of Jewish people in South Eastern Europe, particularly in Roumania, who were facing starvation, persecution and death. A quota of 5,000 was given and by the time it had been about two-thirds completed, it became evident that the privilege of belonging to the quota had become a matter of barter and was being controlled largely by Jewish interests centred in New York. I need not say more about the quota feature as it stinks to high heaven and I would like to forget it.

"The Department has been approached many times in past years for quotas for other suffering peoples. The Armenian people, two-thirds of whom were annihilated during the war, have appealed time and again. We did accept two small groups of Armenian boys and one small group of Armenian girls. Various efforts have been made to find an asylum in Canada for Chaldeans or more properly Assyrians. There is at present an approach for an open door for some of the descendants of these ancient people coming from Mesopotamia where they are having trouble with the Iraq authorities.

"A number of approaches have come from the League of Nations, for quotas. You may remember that Nansen, the Norwegian explorer was appointed by the League of Nations as High Commissioner for Refugees. Apart from the Jewish quota and the Armenian quotas we have been fairly free from quotas, although not free from efforts to get other groups into Canada.

"I think it would be most inadvisable to embark further on Jewish or other quotas. It would be better to deal with cases on their respective merits. I noticed in the Press not long since that at a recent meeting of the American Zionist organization held in Chicago, plans were discussed to settle hurriedly 250,000 German Jews in Palestine and to raise two million dollars annually for four years to accomplish that objective. I hope this effort will be successful."

When this background material was placed before the deputy minister of immigration, his reaction took the form of a letter to Dr. Skelton (Nov. 6, 1933),

"It is quite apparent that a strict administration of the existing immigration regulations will not offer any solution so far as Canada is concerned, of the problem of Jews or other refugees.

"The immigrants admissible from the Continent are, (a) wives and unmarried children under eighteen years of age, joining family heads established in Canada, and (b) agriculturists with ample funds to begin farming in this country. Once a refugee has left Germany and gone to live in some other country, the passport difficulty is likely to arise as well. The admission of any immigrants not holding proper passports or not belonging to the two classes above mentioned involves an Order-in-Council authorizing admission notwithstanding certain provisions of the Immigration regulations.

"The matter of admitting refugees is, of course, a matter of Governmental policy. Neither the regulations, nor conditions prevailing here, are favourable to granting the request. We have a considerable file of papers on which there are many protests from organizations and individuals in Canada against a movement to this country of German Jews reported to be coming our way."

But by April 23, 1934, Thomas wrote to the High Commissioner,

"I have myself received no further communication in the matter from those who originally asked for my assistance, and on the whole I am inclined to think that further communication with Ottawa is unnecessary, at any rate at present." (Public Archives of Canada)

On July 30, 1934, Deputy Minister of Immigration J. Magladery wrote to Dr. Skelton,

"There is nothing new presented, and the suggestion in brief is that Jewish refugees admitted to several countries of Europe constitute an economic, financial and social problem that, it is suggested, can be solved only by 'international collaboration,' which term is intended to cover the transfer of a number of these refugees to countries such as Canada where they are expected to find permanent homes. If these refugees have created 'economic, financial and social problems' in the countries to which they have been admitted, it is perfectly reasonable to suppose that these problems would merely be transferred to Canada by the transfer of the refugees.

"As the admission of these refugees would be contrary to existing Immigration regulations, I cannot see that we can offer any solution."

The broad outlines of the government's attitude to the refugees is so disorienting that it must have encouraged Hitler and the other persecutors of the world to spur their torturers to deeper horrors.

The interest which Canada held for the Rt. Hon. Viscount Samuel was well known in higher English circles. His Memoirs (London, Cresset, 1945, Pp. 236 -) record,

"When Parliament rose for the summer recess of 1933, I went to Canada and the United States to attend three conferences.

"The first conference was that of the Institute of Pacific Relations. It holds conferences, as a rule every fourth year, at some convenient centre; one was to take place that August at Banff in the Canadian Rockies. Chatham House -- the Royal Institute of International Affairs -- which is the British member of the organization, had asked me to go out as leader of its delegation, and I was glad to accept the invitation.

"The summer climate of Banff is delightful and the scenery unsurpassed. The Hon. J.P. Maclay, one of our Liberal members in the House of Commons, came with me as an honorary private secretary, and before the meetings began we had two or three days' walking together in the lovely forest country round about Lake Louise.

"On my return journey eastward I crossed the border to Chicago. Then back into Canada to fulfil my second engagement -- to take part in a Summer School which the Canadian Liberal Party were holding at Port Hope, Ont. This was a new experiment for them, modelled on the schools we had been holding in England for some years, and it proved a very successful one. My speech was on the British Liberal Party and its aims.

"I had the pleasure of staying with Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Massey at their house a few miles from Port Hope: he was then President of the National Liberal Federation of Canada, becoming later High Commissioner for Canada in London for many years. It was a very enjoyable visit. I remember walking for exercise one day the six miles from the Masseys' house to Port Hope -- to the astonishment of my hosts and their friends, for no one in Canada ever walks from one place to another except when he must -- and when crossing a broad concrete motor-road, seeing a large sign with the words "The King's Highway". The name was significant, and rather touching, so far away in the heart of rural Ontario.

"The third conference was at Toronto, organized by Chatham House and similar bodies in the Dominions and in India, to discuss the constitutional relations of the parts of the British Commonwealth to one another.

"Lord Cecil was the leader of the delegation from Great Britain and met us there: most of our other members, as well as the delegates from Australia and New Zealand, came on from Banff. In addition to an enlarged Canadian contingent, India, South Africa and the Irish Free State sent representatives. Many of those who attended the conference had had experience as Ministers or Members of Parliament in the various parts of the Commonwealth; and here again the discussions were to the point and helpful.

"There is little public knowledge of the non-official gatherings such as these that are continually taking place, and little recognition of their value in promoting the smooth working of the vast and complicated political machinery of the British Commonwealth and Empire. The personal contacts are very useful. Further, the reports of the proceedings are circulated widely among those who are specialists in these matters, in the Parliaments, in the Universities or in the Press; they help to spread a knowledge of facts and tendencies, of problems and possible solutions, and so to give guidance to public opinion throughout the English-speaking countries and beyond.

"From Toronto I went on to Ottawa, where Lord and Lady Bessborough had kindly invited me to stay at Rideau Hall, the Governor-General's house. I paid a short visit also to Mr. Mackenzie King, whom I had met in London at the Asquiths'. He was then leader of the Opposition, his Liberal Government having been defeated three years before by the Conservatives led by Mr. Bennett. But it was generally expected that he would soon return to power -- as proved to be the case.

"Mackenzie King was then at his country house in the Laurentian Hills, a dozen miles from Ottawa. It is situated on a height with fine views, surrounded by woods, which then were just beginning to show the marvellous autumn tints for which Canada is famous -- flaming crimson and brilliant yellow and orange. We had a long walk through the woods together; guests came in to every meal, and politics were discussed all the time. We continued our talks next day during the beautiful drive back into Ottawa and finally at Mackenzie King's home, Laurier House. That is where the great Canadian leader had lived; now full of documents and relics that make it a museum of Canadian history....

"In the course of my tour I had spoken at various Canadian Club luncheons and other gatherings. Several of these were Jewish meetings; mostly on behalf of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in which, as one of the Governors, I have long been closely interested. Some thousands of pounds were collected in aid of the University's funds. One speech was to a vast audience at a "Pageant of Jewish History", performed in an immense drill-hall in New York -- the largest audience I have ever addressed, apart from broadcasting.

"My last letter home ended with a survey of the tour, only parts of which I have referred to here:

"After six weeks in Canada and four in the United States, I have in my memory a kind of composite impression: of hundreds of miles of straight railway track, with unending wheat-fields on either side; of

ranges of mountains with bare, craggy tops; of walks through woods, with spacious views from time to time; of simple log-cabin chalets by the side of remote little green-coloured lakes; of rooms with thirty or forty earnest and intelligent people, sometimes of various nationalities, sometimes all British and Indian, discussing very seriously big political issues; of walking with Mackenzie King through his woods, and talking politics with him; of ceremonious dinner-parties with the Bessboroughs; of immense Canadian Club luncheons, with hundreds of intent faces listening to what one had to say; of many different kinds of American audiences, some crowded and enthusiastic; like election meetings in England, some academic and demure; of thousands of eager Jewish people listening emotionally to facts about Palestine and about the persecution in Germany; of the crude buildings and mass colouring of the World's Fair at Chicago, with vast crowds of people filling the wide main avenues and slowly and unendingly passing along; of the dimly lighted passages of the Hall of Science there, with brightly illuminated displays, like tanks in an aquarium, showing many of the discoveries of the modern sciences; of splendid picture galleries with first-rate examples of all the great masters (except Leonardo); of the outline of the marvellous buildings of New York, and the city lighted at night, and the views from the summits of the sky-scrapers; of the splendid buildings of Washington, and the broad, tree-lined avenues of that very noble capital; of all kinds of American historical sites -- battlefields, military memorials, statues, houses of great writers, and their graves; of conversations about American conditions with leading business men, and about American or Jewish conditions with leading Jewish people -- elderly, keen, philanthropic; of the pleasing scattered buildings of the Universities of Harvard and Philadelphia..."

So Viscount Cecil wrote to Viscount Samuel for the eyes of the Canadian prime minister,

"I wonder whether you would feel it possible to let him know how anxious many of us here feel about the whole future of the League's work for refugees.

"As you know, there is a movement afoot among certain Governments to bring that work to an end altogether after 1938. This would be a disaster. As the victims of national and political intolerance are on the increase, so it is more than ever necessary to maintain the principle that the League should protect them...

"The Nansen International Office for Refugees is due to close on December 31st, 1938, according to the decision of the Assembly of the League of Nations, and the mandate of the High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany is to come to an end on the same date. Those who -- like the Executive Committee of the League of Nations Union -- have always taken an interest in the many hundreds of thousands of human beings who, in consequence of revolution counter-revolution, wars or tyrannical methods of government, have had to fly from their homes, are profoundly distressed at the probable consequences of this decision.

"The Office may in the past have had certain administrative and political defects that made for friction rather than for harmonious working, though it is satisfactory to note that the best relations now exist between Judge Hansson, the President of the Office, and the Secretariat and the International Labour Office.

"The High Commission for Refugees coming from Germany has so far been able to do little for the immigration of refugees from Germany into other countries.

"However, these international organisms, imperfect as they may be, do give expression to a principle of great importance. That principle is that to protect the human victims of great political upheavals, and especially of the intolerance of arbitrary governments, is an essential function of the organized society of nations...

"The exodus of some 115,000 people from Germany, of which at least 100,000 are Jews and the remainder political exiles, created a new task for the League of Nations and one which is likely to be increased in the future, as autocracies aiming at the 'totalitarian' state make life

intolerable for sections of their population. The temporary restriction on Jewish immigration into Palestine owing to the recent disorders, and the restrictions imposed for economic reasons upon immigration in South Africa, Australia and many parts of the American continent, suggest that it will be some time before even those who have already fled from Germany can be settled with home and livelihoods.

"But there is reason to fear that the exodus from Germany has not finished...The Kulturkampf throughout Germany threatens to become more intense. In Danzig the violations of the Constitution by the National Socialist Governement become more flagrant. The protection of the refugees under the care of the Nansen office and the German High Commission is but a part of a much greater international problem.

"We cannot believe that it would be right for the League of Nations to wash its hands of the problem of the refugees."

Viscount Cecil felt that,

"It will probably be best for the League of Nations Union, which had hoped to use the opportunity of the presence of the various Dominion Statesmen in London in order to persuade them to adopt a rather more liberal attitude towards the refugees, to refrain from bothering Mr. Mackenzie King. They could have no better nor more authoritative advocate than yourself."

Viscount Samuel did place the information and the views of Viscount Cecil before King, as well as a request from the Council for German Jewry which he headed, on the settlement in Canada of Jews from Germany.

By this time the holocaust was blazing clearly within the sight of both King and of Sir Herbert. After recalling the basic stark facts challenging humanity out of Germany and the human quality of the persons bearing the brunt of humanity's indifference to violence, the Council noted for the attention of the Canadian prime minister,

"Hitherto there has been an emigration of only a few individuals from Germany to Canada, because of the difficulties that stood in the way of all emigration in the last years. During last year there was a small but steady migration from Germany to the Commonwealth of Australia and also to the Union of South Africa. It is hoped that the Dominion of Canada, likewise, will be able to receive a small flow of carefully selected and qualified immigrants, and will be willing to give facilities for their admission to the country and their settlement." (Viscount Cecil to Sir Herbert Samuel, May 19, 1937; Aide-Memoire on the League and the Problems of the Refugees; Memorandum on the Settlement of Jews from Germany in the Dominion of Canada. In King Papers, Pp. 207685-96)

The wall did not reply.

The relationship between King and Sir Herbert deserves close examination as an aspect of the psychological problems of the King person and as a case study in the relationships between men in government.

But from a historical point of view it is remarkable that Sir Herbert seems to have felt that their profound friendship of decades could not stand the test of a death-or-life petition. This was generalized into a universal Jewish experience during those years, as others of the character of a Sir Herbert in Poland and elsewhere proved with their lives.

King's response to all pleas can be read in the statistics. They are also found in the minutiae of the Canadian internal mechanism of government in regard to the Evian conference.

In London, Otto M. Schiff, Chairman of the Jewish Refugee Committee, spoke, and then wrote, on February 11, 1936, to Mr. Vincent Massey, High Commissioner for Canada in the Commonwealth capital,

"I have looked through our statistics, and it may interest you to know something about the position of the German Jewish refugees in this country.

"At the present moment, between 5,000 and 6,000 Jews from Germany are staying in this country. They have spent, on rent, food, etc., approximately £8,700 a week, which is equivalent to about £500,000 a year. This amount must benefit the United Kingdom, by increasing the power of consumption and consequently, helping trade generally.

"In addition to this amount of £500,000 per annum which has been spent here, Jewish refugees from Germany have brought with them, or invested in this country, at least £3,000,000, and established approximately 500 new businesses, factories, export and import agencies, etc., during the last two and a half years.

"The News Chronicle, on the 17th October, 1935, estimated that the German Jews, who have started new industries in this country, have given employment to British unemployed estimated at between 4,000 and 5,000.

"For instance, in the case of the fur trade, which was largely centred in Leipzig, this is now predominant in London; and Leipzig, from what I am told, would appear to occupy quite a secondary position in this industry.

"Between 150 and 200 German doctors have been allowed to study here and, after having obtained their British degree, to enter into practice in this country. The same applies to about 60 dentists.

"There are a number of engineers and chemists, persons who were formerly employed in industry, who have found an opening in this country, as some of the modern German methods were not known in various branches of industry here.

"Moreover, in this country, as well as in other European countries and overseas, quite a number of prominent academic persons, such as medical, chemical, and other research workers, professors of mathematics, history, literature, etc., have found new homes, and the Academic Assistance Council here, the head of which is Lord Rutherford, are still anxious to place some men who are prominent in the academic world.

"Amongst the people who have been placed in employment -- and, on the whole the Ministry of Labour have been very helpful with labour permits, as long as we could prove that there is a demand for persons who do not displace British labour -- there are a large number of secretaries who can speak, write and type English, French, German, and, in some cases Spanish and Italian as well.

"It has occurred to me that the Dominions might benefit from the admission of selected and suitable refugees. At the same time, it would give these unfortunate people who have had to leave the country in which their families have resided for many generations, through no fault of their own, purely on account of racial prejudice, an opportunity of building up a new existence.

"We do not desire to swamp Canada, or any other country. It is simply a question of finding out what openings exist, and where such immigrants might be admitted, both to their own advantage and to that of the country in which they settle.

"I should think that Canada would probably wish to accept persons who, if not perfect in English, can make themselves understood. We have here training classes for our German refugees. Not only could we guarantee that the immigrants would be able to speak English, but we would also be prepared to send them, if you so desired, to Canada House, in order to give your officials an opportunity of selecting the proper persons.

"I am well aware that it is impossible for you to give me a decision without referring the matter to Ottawa. But, if it is not too much trouble, I would be most grateful if you could put my views before the competent authorities who deal with the question of immigration."

Mr. Massey did forward this letter from "the prominent member of the Jewish community of London" and added "that in his conversation with me he made it quite clear that he had in mind no extensive movement of Jewish refugees to Canada. He felt, however, that from time to time a limited number of these refugees from Germany with proper qualifications might be absorbed to the mutual advantage of themselves and the communities in which they would settle.

"I understand that among the German refugees in Great Britain there are persons with very high academic qualifications as well as others with valuable experience as scientists in different branches of industry.

The manner of its death was as follows,

"The matter is being referred to the Hon. Mr. Crerar as he received a delegation of prominent Jewish people in January last who brought this matter personally to his attention." (Letter from T. Magladery, Deputy Minister of Immigration, March 26, 1936, to Dr. O.D. Skelton, Under-secretary of State for External affairs.)

Mr. Schiff was persistent. On July 14, 1937 he wrote to Lyon Cohen in Montreal.

"As chairman of the Jewish Refugees Committee, which looks after all the German Jewish Refugees who came here, I am taking the liberty of writing to you, with regard to the possibility of immigration into Canada.

"We have, within the last few months, made very satisfactory arrangements with Australia, and have emigrated suitable, specially picked Refugees from Germany, from Holland and from this country. You may be interested to know about our modus operandi in this connection: the Communities in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth have formed local Committees, who endeavour to find employment for suitable persons -- artisans as well as farmers and academic persons -- always provided that there is a scarcity of people capable of filling the position and that no national labour is displaced.

"Mr. Dennis Cohen, who is in charge of all emigration to countries within the British Empire, would take charge of emigration to Canada. In the case of Australia, Mr. Cohen went to Germany and Holland to select suitable candidates from those countries. I send you a Questionnaire which is sent out to Australia; only after the Australian Committee has found a situation for the person in question do they approach the Government in Canberra which issues the necessary Immigration Visa.

"The High Commissioner for Refugees has expressed his willingness to approach the High Commissioners of the Empire with a view to obtaining similar facilities in other Dominions. But before he does so it is essential to know that some Committee in the country in which emigrants want to settle has been formed and is willing to adopt the same procedure as is adopted in Australia.

"I may add that we have retrained in this country a large number of young people in all sorts of handicrafts, such as carpentry, locksmiths, electrical welding.

"If the scheme can be carried through you should insist, just as Australia does, that all emigration of German Jews from European countries to Canada should pass through the London Committee, as we are most anxious not to send out unsuitable candidates."

Sir Herbert Samuel was planning to take up the matter of Jewish refugees with King, but Lord Cecil discouraged this procedure. He wrote him on May 19, 1937,

"I hear from Mr. Bentwich that you will probably be having a talk with Mr. Mackenzie King on the subject of the possibility of admitting German Jewish refugees into Canada. If that is so, it will probably be best for the League of Nations Union, which had hoped to use the opportunity of the presence of the various Dominion Statesmen in London in order to persuade them to adopt a rather more liberal attitude towards the refugees, to refrain from bothering Mr. Mackenzie King. They could have no better nor more authoritative advocate than yourself.

"But, apart from the actual question of immigration, I wonder whether you would feel it possible to let him know how anxious many of us here feel about the whole future of the League's work for refugees. As you know, there is a movement afoot among certain Governments to bring that work to an end all together after 1938. We feel that this would be a disaster and that as the victims of national and political intolerance are on the increase, so it is more than ever necessary to maintain the principle that the League should protect them." (King Papers, P.207,685)

Lord Cecil had reference to an Aide-Mémoire prepared by the League of Nations Union on this problem which was"profoundly distressed at the probable consequence of this decision" to end the functioning of the Nansen Office and the mandate of the High Commissioner for Refugees, although "The High Commissioners, with their restricted mandate, have so far been able to do little to second the activities of the Jewish and other voluntary relief organisations or to secure facilities for the immigration of refugees from Germany into other countries.

"It is felt, however, that these two international organisms, imperfect as they may be, do give expression to a principle of great importance. That

principle is that to protect the human victims of great political upheavals and especially of the intolerance of arbitrary governments is an essential function of the organised society of nations; and that it is no less the duty of the League to protect its Member States and to save the world from the grave economic and political inconveniences which a large population of destitue exiles is bound to occasion. Whether the problem of the refugees be considered from an humanitarian, a political or an economic standpoint, it cannot be denied that it is an essentially international problem.

"Further, the League of Nations Union feels obliged to draw attention to the fact that the problem of the refugees is neither static, nor is it one of which the final solution can certainly be foreseen within a fixed period. Unpredicatable economic crises or political developments may impede or ruin even the most promising plans for the settlement of foreign refugees.

"The exodus of some 115,000 people from Germany, of which at least 100,000 are Jews and the remainder political exiles, created a new task for the League of Nations and one which is likely to be increased in the future, as autocracies aiming at the 'totalitarian' state make life intolerable for sections of their population. The temporary restriction on Jewish immigration into Palestine owing to the recent disorders, and the restrictions imposed for economic reasons upon immigration in South Africa, Australia and many parts of the American Continent, suggest that it will be some time before even those who have already fled from Germany can be settled with homes and livelihoods. But there is reason to fear that the exodus from Germany has not finished.

"But there is reason to fear that the exodus from Germany has not finished...The Kulturkampf throughout Germany threatens to become more intense. In Danzig the violations of the Constitution by the National Socialist Government become more flagrant. The protection of the refugees under the care of the Nansen Office and the German High Commission is but a part of a much greater international problem.

"We cannot believe that it would be right for the League of Nations to wash its hands of the problem of the refugees."

The Union recommended that a "'Refugees Settlement or Liquidation Commision' of the League should be set up. As in the case of other special Commissions of the League, permanent or temporary, it should consist not of Government delegates but of impartial experts chosen for their special competence. None of them should be refugees. In this case experts in labour legislation, migration, organized relief, as well as in economic and legal questions, would obviously be required."

It was for this initiative that Lord Cecil sought King's support.

In the meantime the devoted men of the Jewish Colonization Association in France were working ceaselessly in their chosen area of Jewish agriculture.

In August 1935 Louis Rosenberg visited the Paris offices of the association and discussed the complex problems of the Jewish farmers in Canada with Mr. Oungre and Mr. Honigsberg. The following month he submitted a lengthy report on the questions raised there, including the possibility of securing the admission of twenty or more families annually to settle on land.

Mr. Rosenberg outlined the Canadian situation,

"Every one of the political parties in Canada if officially on record as being opposed to immigration. The only difference between the attitude of the various parties is that some of the parties stand for permanent exclusion or restriction of non-British elements, while others claim that there must be no additional immigration until Canada has fully recovered from the economic crisis.

"Public opinion in general, and particularly the opinion of the various farm organizations, is very much opposed to the immigration of new farm settlers at the present time, especially in view of the fact that the farmers already settled upon the farm are passing through such a critical period, and in view of the fact that Canada's agricultural production is so very much in excess over its own consumption needs.

"Under such conditions, neither the present government nor any group likely to form the government is anxious to go on record publicly as favoring additional immigration at the present time.

"Nevertheless, it is quite possible that the Canadian Government would permit of the immigration of twenty or more Jewish farm families each year even during present circumstances, provided that no publicity accompanied such immigration and provided that the Jewish Colonization Association would guarantee that these families would establish themselves upon farms and would not become a public charge for a period of at least five years.

"The possible change in government after the coming election on October 14th, 1935, would facilitate such an arrangement. I have discussed this matter with Mr. S.W. Jacobs, K.C., M.P. and with the officials of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society when in Montreal and I understand that they will communicate with the HICEM giving further particulars to this connection.

"From what I was able to gather during my conversation with the staff of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society in Montreal, I understand that there has been no formal and dependable change of policy in the attitude of the Department of Immigration twoards Jewish immigrants to Canada. It is purely a matter of the decision of the Deputy Minister of Immigration and his officials in each individual case.

"The Deputy Minister and his officials during the past six months or so have been more ready and willing to use their discretionary powers in permitting the entry of all kinds of immigrants, including Jewish immigrants. Such an attitude has been quite common in the past during the months preceding a general election."

As the colonization association wrote to their colleagues in Montreal, following discussions with Louis Rosenberg in Paris,

"No doubt, you are not ignorant of the fact that we have undertaken the colonization of German families in Argentina and Brazil. Canada can be another outlet, and even if the heads of the families have admittedly not been properly prepared to work on the land, we have the hope of seeing their children adapting themselves in all quietude to tilling the soil.

"It would be our intention to make the first attempt with some twenty families. Following the results, we would increase the movement. We are taking into consideration the observation made by Mr. Rosenberg, that the operation of a farm in Canada does not require more than two grownup adults.

"As to the question of the admission of German families, would it encounter any difficulties from the point of view of legislation governing imigration? You have written us that it would indeed be possible to admit some twenty families per annum under certain conditions, the principal of which being the possession of certain capital. Mr. Paull of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society of Montreal has advised us, on his part, of this possibility. We perfectly understand that under the present circumstances, the authorities are desirous of assuring themselves during a certain time. But, if we prove to the government that we are installing our protégés immediately upon their arrival, that we furnish them with the means to put themselves to work immediately, and if we give them, in addition, our moral guarantee that they will not become a public charge, may we hope that the required guarantee deposit would be dispensed with?

"On the other hand, you write us that we can only obtain the admission of a small number of farmers.

"The element which we can recruit will consist mainly of persons who have been engaged in cattle buying, and who have farmed a few hectares of land, adjoining their homes for the pasture of cattle and the growing of some vegetables. These elements which we will select, always with the greatest care, are physically adapted to hard work of the soil. Furthermore, the actual tendency in Germany is towards the preparation of an important group of youth for agriculture, and for that purpose agricultural training centres have been created in Germany or in neighboring countries to permit these young people animated with a profound idealism to acquire the necessary training.

"You will please oblige us by summarizing all these questions so that we may know if all these difficulties can be surmounted, and so that we may be protected against any surprises. As usual, we count on the generous and enlightening collaboration of your President, Mr. Lyon Cohen, as well as of Mr. S. Jacobs.

"Your agents after having advised against extensive colonization have declared themselves in favor of suburban colonization, this being capable in their opinion of giving results.

"This again is a statement which has to be proved.

"If it can be proved that this form of colonization can be more fruitful than the one on rural lots, we shall not refuse to try similar enterprises parallel to the extensive agriculture which has made the prosperity of farming in Canada for many years.

"We have during the years 1926 and 1935 proceeded with fifty-eight new installations, and if we have not settled more, you must realize that it was because of the restrictive laws governing immigration into Canada and the insistence of the authorities of the admission of suitable elements and the difficulty of finding such elements. You will recall that it was as a result of several interventions that you have succeeded in obtaining the admission of a small number of our protégés, and that in spite of this permit, the Canadian Consuls in Europe have shown themselves from time to time very strict in granting visas, and in some cases have refused our candidates, the Consuls claiming that there was not sufficient proof that these people were actually farmers." (Letter, Aug. 6,1936)

BRINGING THE NOBEL TO CANADA

In his analysis of the Canadian social structure, John Porter notes "the striking absence of Jews from the higher level of the intellectual community."

Using the Royal Society of Canada, and in particular its two sections grouping the humanities scholars, he notes only one Canadian-born Jew in its membership -- in the event, in the French language and culture sector.

"It is unlikely that there are so few in any other western society. The absence of Jews at the top of the intellectual community cannot in itself be taken as evidence of exclusiveness, but it would seem that Canada did not benefit, as did the United States for example, by inviting or harbouring refugee intellectuals. It may also be that Canadian-born Jewish intellectuals have found Canadian intellectual life oppressive, and have emigrated." (The Vertical Mosaic, An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1968. P.501)

Dr. Lawrence D. Stokes detailed the story of "Canada and an Academic Refugee from Nazi Germany: The Case of Gerhard Herzberg," in the Canadian Historical Review, (vol. 57, no. 2, 1976, Pp.150-70).

In the course of time, Dr. Herzberg won the Nobel Prize for chemistry in recognition of his work on the structure of molecules and free radicals, work carried out in the laboratories of the National Research Council in Ottawa. When he was given his award Prof.

Stig Claesson of the Royal Swedish Academy stated that he was generally considered the world's foremost molecular spectroscopist "and his Institute in Ottawa is the undisputed centre for such research. It is exceptional in the field of science that an individual, however distinguished, should be the leader of a whole area of research.

This was in 1971. But when Hitler came to power in Germany, young Herzberg, a Christian married to Louise Goettinger, one of his Jewish students, was in very grave danger.

Stokes cites a March 1935 pamphlet by the Hon. James G. MacDonald, the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany, to the effect that only two out of a total 366 temporarily placed scholars received help to continue their research in Canada, while an additional four among 248 were permanently located at Canadian universities. (Norman Bentwich, in his Refugees from Germany, P. 197, reports that two of 335 were placed in Canada along with another three temporary placements. E.Y.Hartshorne in his 1937 work The German Universities and National Socialism notes four permanent and one temporary in Canada)

Dr. Stokes wonders,

"Why did so few displaced German scholars find new positions in Canada during the 1930's? There were a number of reasons for Canada's failure to seize this opportunity to add to its skilled resources.

"In the first place, successive Canadian governments after 1933 never seem to have distinguished political, or racial, refugees from among the myriad individuals regularly seeking admission to Canada. All were equally regarded as potential immigrants, whether or not some were actually fleeing for their lives from Nazi oppression.

"Although strenuous efforts were made by interested organizations (such as the Canadian Jewish Congress and later the Canadian National Committee on Refugees and Victims of Political Persecution) to impress the distinction upon the government between ordinary immigrants and those immediately endangered by Hitler's rule, they experienced little success.

"This meant, secondly, that refugees were subjected to the same entrance regulations as were all other would-be immigrants to Canada. After the summer of 1930 those regulations were interpreted by the government and its responsible officials in a highly restrictive fashion. For the next fifteen years and more, only a very select group of persons were de facto eligible for immigration to Canada, including financially secure British subjects and United States citizens, close relatives of individuals already living in Canada, and bona fide farmers with their own capital. Virtually none of the German refugees from Nazism, however, fell within the accepted categories, and they were therefore systematically excluded from emigrating to Canada."

Among "the factors which contributed to a restrictive Canadian immigration policy after 1930, and its retention (despite increasing pressure to the contrary) until after World War II, were persistent economic dislocation, and especiallly high unemployment as a result of the Great Depression; popular anti-foreign and specifically anti-Jewish sentiment, vigorously expressed in the province of Quebec but by no means absent elsewhere in Canada; and the conscious desire on the part of the government not to alter radically the existing ethnic balance among English, French, and other native-born in the Canadian population. Operating behind Canada's immigration laws, these forces together ensured that only a trickle of the nearly penniless, almost entirely urban, very largely Jewish, and mostly non French- or English-speaking Germans escaping Hitlerism ever reached Canada's shores...

"Prof. Norman MacKenzie in a discussion of refugee scholars at the National Conference of Canadian Universities early in 1939, declared that the advancement of Canadian students must not be blocked by those from other lands. All foreign research workers should be supernumerary and must not displace Canadian scholars.

"Aside from the possibility of changing Canada's overall immigration laws, as was done in 1947 amidst general public approval (which likely would not have been as readily forthcoming earlier), every member of the Canadian cabinet and parliament could have used his influence to bring individual refugees into the country. Their apparent reluctance to do so, strikingly evident in the case of the displaced German scholars, coupled with the widespread apathy, and even hostility, of the Canadian people towards the refugees from Nazism, constitutes Canada's co-responsibility for the extent of the devastation of human lives and values Hitler was able to wreak."

Fortunately for some individuals, Dr. Stokes notes, there was the peculiar arbitrariness of Canadian immigration practice. Whereas the overall regulations and their application governing immigrants were restrictive almost to the point of being exclusionist in certain respects between 1930 and 1947, specific individuals were able to gain entrance to Canada regardless of their general eligibility or otherwise. The federal cabinet, by order-in-council, could and did grant permission to immigrate to anyone it chose; which in effect meant, in the first instance, to persons, whatever their backgrounds, whose cases were sufficiently well represented to its advisory officials and who also, but secondarily, promised to contribute usefully to their newly-adopted country.

Dr. Herzberg was ineffably fortunate. One of the scientists who had worked with him in Germany was Dr. J.W.T. Spinks. This scholar was able to persuade the president of the University of Saskatchewan to invite Dr. Herzberg to Saskatoon to work there, in spite of all too common difficulties in financing and placing the new man.

Dr. Herzberg entered Canada in September, 1935, on a temporary visitor's visa, obtained chiefly thanks to the support of the president of the University of Saskatchewan; and he would very possibly have been expelled from the country in 1937, when his two-year Carnegie scholarship expired, had he not in the meantime fortuitously been taken on the permanent staff of the university. (He held on to his return steamer tickets until 1938.)

The Hamburg-born scientist managed to stay on, and was long treasured as the lecturer "who made complex matters seem clear and simple."

Since 1949 the physicist was on the staff of the National Research Council at Ottawa, first as director of the chemistry division and later as Distinguished Research Scientist.

His award for work on free radicals, "which has in a way been more appreciated by chemists," was the first Nobel Prize in Canada for the natural sciences; Sir Frederick Banting and Dr. John Macleod had worked in medicine, Lester Pearson contributed to peace efforts in the Middle East. The prize encouraged Herzberg's intention that Canada be "recognized throughout the world, and through history, as a country that has advanced in a significant way the progress of science, art and literature." (Time, Nov. 15, 1971)

Rescue efforts were continuous. In Feb. 1939 Belkin inquired from the Coordinating Committee for German Jewish Refugees in New York,

"Our correspondents in Halifax, Nova Scotia, advise us that there may be a possibility of placing refugee professors in pathology, physiology and biochemistry. These professors will, of course, have to be English speaking, and will have to work as assistant professors and lecturers and not as research workers. The universities desire to receive a list of professors available in these fields giving information as to their ages,

degrees, experience, lists of published work. The Universities would be prepared to instruct their representatives in Europe to examine or contact the prospective candidates either in London or in Paris.

"The Universities are unable at present to pay the salaries of these professors, and would expect that they be paid at least in part by the American organization which has undertaken sometime ago to place refugee professors on such a basis. It is possible that these positions will be temporary, but they may work into permanent ones. The average salaries of professors in the Nova Scotia universities are from $2,500 to $3,000 per annum. Once the Universities will receive such a guarantee and select their professors, they will apply to the Federal Department of Immigration and obtain a permit for their admission to Canada.

"Before writing to our correspondents in Europe for a list of available professors, we would appreciate it if you would advise us whether we can count on the assistance of the American committee as regards their salaries."

The response came from the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars in New York,

"I had heard <u>unofficially</u> that there might be a possibility of obtaining favorable consideration from the Carnegie Corporation of New York (522 Fifth Avenue) on applications addressed to it directly by Dominion universities for stipends for two-year periods for displaced scholars. It is my understanding that the Corporation will consider only those applications which are addressed to it by administrative officers of the universities concerned. I do not believe that they would be interested in appointments of a purely temporary nature; on the contrary, their grants can only be made on certain conditions, and one of these conditions is that permanent appointment for the scholar be contemplated by the university making application...The most desirable course to

follow, I believe, would be to have the universities themselves communicate with the Corporation. Dalhousie, I know, has had at least one scholar under this arrangement in previous years--Dr. Lothar Richter. (Feb.17,1939)

Only several years after the rescue of Dr. Herzberg, when the war was already raging, Rabbi M.N. Eisendrath told his congregants at Toronto's Holy Blossom Temple of the desperate "call of the British Red Cross for hundreds of doctors wherewith to heal the wounds and to save the lives of our own Imperial soldiers.

"Months will have to elapse, so say the heads of the American Red Cross, before this S.O.S. can be answered; meanwhile British Tommies and antipodes Aussies, and perhaps some of our own Canadian lads as well, will be denied the full measure of care which might have been theirs had not someone at Ellis Island or at Ottawa, listening more attentively to the virus of prejudice than the appeal of mercy, denied entry to hundreds of the finest medical minds of Europe; had not august academies of medicine, forgetful of their Hippocratic Oath pledging their first loyalty not to themselves and their financial security, but to humanity, harshly repudiated the applications of some of the most skillful surgeons of all Europe to continue their practice here."

He told of the case of a"distinguished European scientist who, by the way, did not himself seek entry into Canada but who was urged to come here by those who beheld in him a chemist of such extraordinary capacity as could not but richly bless Canada, in peace or in war.

"His specific contribution to the present grim struggle was a secret process which might have revolutionized the production of certain indispensable accoutrements of battle.

"But because his principal possessions were not in his pocketbook but in his brain; because he could not flash several million dollars worth of 'liquid' assets into the faces of the omniscient ones who sit in judgment on who may or may not share our exclusive company; because in addition -- sin of all sins -- he was designated as non-Aryan by those racial laws against which, incidentally, we are supposed to be fighting; because of such good and proper considerations for a democratic nation to keep constantly in mind, his departure, which might have preceded the outbreak of war, was so unnecessarily delayed that, when finally, due to the most extraordinary intervention, the authorities did deign to grant him that vigilantly guarded visa, the boat upon which he set forth was torpedoed in mid-ocean."

from THE HITLERIAD
by A.M. Klein
Section XXVI

Let them come forth, those witnesses who stand
Beyond the taunt of perjury, those ghosts
In wagons sealed in a forgotten land,
Murdered; those phantoms the war-tidings boast,
Those skeletons still charred with the gestapo brand!

Let them come forth and speak, who lost their speech
Before the midnight gun-butt on the door,
The men made dumb with their last voiceless screech
In ghetto-yard, and on the Dachau floor--
Let them accuse now, who did once in vain beseech!

Summon them, bailiff of the dead, the ghosts
Who once were brave men stood against a wall,
Summon them, all the exsanguinated hosts,
Hero and martyr, liquidated; call,
Call forth the witnesses, the uninterred ghosts,

And let them speak. And let the dead attest
Their murder and its manner and its cause--
From shattered jaw, from perforated breast
Speak out their mauling at the bestial claws.
Speak out, or neither we, nor they, again know rest.

Let them in all their thousands speak the shame
Visited on them, and the ignoble death,
The nameless ones, and those of a great fame:
With wounded whisper and with broken breath
Speaking the things unspeakable, and the
unspeakable name!

Then from such evidence, such witnessing,
Surely the anger of the world will burst,
Surely the wrath of nations will outfling
Against this culprit, multitude-accursed
Doom indexed by the black gloves of their reckoning!

Thief, perjurer, blasphemer, murderer,
Let him be blotted out, and all his crew.
Efface the evil; let it be no more.
Let the abomination cease; and through
Implacable Justice let emerge the world, clean, new!

Bold malefaction brought at last to bay!
Avenged the martyrs! Mankind truly purged!

Returned at last the spectres to their clay!
And over the green earth, at last emerged,
After the cock-crow of the guns, the cloudless day!

CONGRESS EFFORTS

In the fall of 1935 the Jewish Congress again petitioned for the admission of more refugees. As Benjamin Robinson reported to the Congress Dominion Council on November 25, a delegation promised the premier that the community would settle refugees admitted by our government in the smaller communities of the Dominion where they would not become a factor in the labour market. Mr. Crerar, Minister of Immigration, assured the delegation that the matter would receive serious consideration by the government and that we should have patience. (Canadian Jewish Archives, new series, no. 7, Pp.3-4)

On February 18, 1936, Mr. T.A. Crerar, Minister of Immigration, received another plea on behalf of the persecuted from Germany from the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society of Canada,

"On January 20th, you were kind enough to receive a delegation representative of Canadian Jewry who placed before you the position of the Jews in Germany.

"In the period of three years since the advent to power of Chancellor Hitler's party, the Jewish population of Germany has been subjected to a most brutal and ruthless persecution. This persecution has been gradually and steadily intensified, and has culminated in the far-reaching repressive legislation passed in the autumn of last year at Nuremburg.

"The persecution of our people goes on relentlessly and it is becoming increasingly evident that official government policy aims not only at the pauperization of the nearly half million German Jews but their complete destruction. It has become almost impossible for Jews in Germany to sustain life, and in the considered opinion of well-informed observers of the German scene the victims of this cruel and ghastly persection can only escape oppression by fleeing the country.

"Tens of thousands of unfortunate people have already left Germany and have been absorbed by sympathetic countries in many parts of the world. France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and other European countries have accorded hospitality to a considerable number of refugees. Palestine has taken nearly 40,000, the United States about 10,000, the United Kingdom, South Africa and Australia a considerable number.

"Even a casual reference to the authoritative and unbiased report that Commissioner James MacDonald made to the League of Nations, a copy of which report was left with you, will doubtless convince you that the unfortunate Jews left in Germany today merit some humane consideration.

"Motivated by a natural desire to save at least some of these victims of racial and religious persecution, we respectfully request that a limited selected number be permitted to come to Canada.

"Before the world-wide depression extended to our Dominion, immigrants from Germany and other Northern European countries seeking admission to Canada were granted the same entry privileges and preferences as immigrants from Great Britain and the United States. It is on behalf of this type of immigrant that we pleaded with you when we interviewed you recently.

"World conditions generally have improved, and our own Canada has been making progress and is on the road to recovery; and while we recognize that the time may not be yet altogether ripe for a broad immigration movement, we believe that a small number of specially and carefully selected men would not materially accentuate the present employment situation.

"Under these circumstances, and having regard to the calamity which has befallen our German co-religionists whom neither sex nor age exempt from every type of persecution and humiliation, and having further regard to the limited number whom we are seeking to bring out, we hope that early action will be taken so that at least some suffering might be mitigated.

"We undertake to distribute throughout the country those who may be brought over, to properly take care of them, and to prevent any of them from becoming a charge on the public. We have in the past kept faith with the authorities and have always honored our pledge to provide for immigrants who have been brought in under our auspices." (Belkin, Pp. 218-19)

The appeal was signed by Lyon Cohen, S.W. Jacobs, Samuel Bronfman, Samuel Factor, A.J. Freiman, A.A. Heaps and Benjamin Robinson.

On another level it is a historic document: the last to bear the Lyon Cohen signature; the first representations on behalf of Canadian Jewry from Samuel Bronfman.

In modern Jewish history the term "selection" was given a life-and-death meaning by the German or Polish ghettoes and concentration camps. In Canada the selection process was working as fatefully. Belkin describes the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the selectors in Ottawa,

"The Liberal Government continued the policy of the Bennett Government, and declined to grant special considerations. Permits were issued only in special cases by Privy Council Orders, and only if the refugee was in possession of capital to initiate new and non-competitive industries. Those who intended to establish themselves in competitive industries were not desirable even when they had large financial resources. The officials of the Department of Immigration continued to place technical obstacles and to find excuses for refusals of most applications submitted to them.

"The following two instances illustrate their resourcefulness and ingenuity. A small community in Western Canada was in need of a shochet and religious teacher. The writer submitted their request and pointed out that as there were no Jewish religious seminaries in Canada, Canadian Jewry always had to fill its needs with immigrants from overseas. We also guaranteed that the refugee for whom we applied would not become a public charge. Back came the answer that it was about time that Canadian Jews establish their own religious seminaries for the training of personnel required by the community. Our request was therefore declined.

"Very typical was the wording of a letter issued on representations of the JIAS for the admission of Dr. Ernest B., a German refugee, a veterinary surgeon and his wife, in possession of $4,000. Their admission was conditional upon the immigrants' possession of proper passports and complying with other regulations which might be applicable to them. The Commissioner of Immigration then went on to say: 'I wish to impress on you that Dr. B. is to have at least $4,000 capital in cash, or its negotiable equivalent, accompanied by incontestible documentary evidence to be produced by the proposed migrants for the inspection of the Canadian Immigration Officers who examine them both at the European and Canadian ports, establishing that it is their own money derived from, and having its source of origin, entirely in the country from whence the

aliens are coming. This condition is to be fulfilled to the letter, and there is to be no room for question as to the validity of the passports carried by Dr. and Mrs. B.' The only thing which the Commissioner forgot to stipulate was whether Dr. and Mrs. B. should bring whatever cash they had on their persons in large or small denominations..." (Belkin, P.174)

The efforts to ameliorate the condition of the Jews in Poland continued, but fruitlessly. The delegation to the Polish consul-general headed by Jacobs on Apr. 23, 1936 might as well have stayed home. (Canadian Jewish Archives, new series, no. 8, Pp. 71-73; 104-7)

Another attempt was made by the German-Jewish Economic Committee in Canada in the fall of 1936.

"Their approach was to the Department of Trade and Commerce, which was headed at the time by the Hon. W.D. Euler. On Sept. 4, Mr. Haltrecht, President of the Committee, wrote Mr. Euler requesting an interview with him in their search for information and market facts. "We have been investigating the possibilities of establishing new enterprises in Canada by German-Jewish manufacturers and by businessmen looking for rehabilitation outside Germany, in industries not yet sufficiently represented in this country; we have compiled a list according to our aims. As we are anxious to agree with the general policy of the country, we have been advised by Sir Edward Beatty to contact the Department to ascertain which industries Canada is especially interested in; what limitations of size exist, and which existing industries could well be expanded; if barter will become necessary, what products are preferable for Canada; what districts are recommended; would the immigration department admit such businessmen, experts, keymen and their families."

Three weeks later the minister wrote that an interview is unnecessary, and referred immigration questions to that department.

The Acting Deputy Minister of Immigration picked up the ball on October 1: "Mr. Crerar had met a very influential delegation of Jewish people who presented this problem to him. With all sympathy with the difficulties faced by the Jewish people in Germany, he was unable to offer any solution. The best course is to pursue the matter of establishing new industries. The difficulty will be in the impossibility of exporting capital from Germany. What is needed is something concrete. A supply of labor can be got in Canada for almost any industry now established here. We will gladly consider any application made for the establishment of a new industry. When you have developed anything along that line, it would be well to send it in for consideration."

Mr. Haltrecht replied on the 7th: "The Committee is cooperating with the Berlin Association for Administration of the Economic Interests of the Jews in Germany, which negotiates with German officials and transacts the transfer of capital abroad. If your department will facilitate the immigration phase, we could furnish in due course concrete information as to numbers, etc."

A week later there was a meeting at which the discussion centred on the problems of fiscal transfers from Germany. The same day Mr. Blair wrote to outline entry regulations and to ask about the industries planned. "We would not be particularly interested in the development in Canada of industries already represented here or of industries which would have an adverse effect on trade between Canada and Britain."

In the light of later developments, vast in pain and in conflict and completely altered in the instruments of democratic action, questions arose as to the wisdom and adequacy of the procedures in Canada of the champions of the refugees.

It is well not to become anachronistic in the questions that we put to the past. Under the circumstances of the period faith in the word of the government was taken for granted, faith that a government, composed of Canadians of good will, heeds appeals and will act justly and humanely despite political pressures.

Even those Jews whose ideology led them to question the moral and intellectual honesty of the major political parties accepted the convention of moral appeal to Ottawa. It might be noted that the moderation of the Anglo-Saxon socialist tradition as concretized in the Canadian Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.) contributed to adhesion to the processes of appeal and precluded more spectacular procedures. Even the communists and the fronts which they manipulated proposed no further reaching mechanisms of expression.

For theoretical purposes we may note that even the more radical elements in the active Jewish community were excluded from the socialist organization in Canada largely because the anti-Zionist Bund-inspired Jewish socialists kept the Poale Zion from affiliating, formally by some scholastic of an organizational nature. Consequently there was no contact between the structured Jewish community -- there was even strong hostility -- and the Jewish radicals. The liaison of contact between the governing parties and the Jewish petitions went unquestioned, even by Heaps, only recently leader of the Winnipeg General Strike and now a personage in the political society of Ottawa where Master of the Hunt Mackenzie King was exercising his genius of gamesmanship.

Even Simon Belkin, leader of the socialism-in-Palestine Poale Zionism was silenced by his position as employee of the Jewish Colonization Association.

There was only one who had doubts on the validity of the petition process, stemming from his ideological and political convictions and his observations of the western Canadian scene: Louis Rosenberg, one of the founders of the C.C.F. and director of its profoundly influential research group even before the unpronouncable words became initials and a name in Canadian political history. ("Louis Rosenberg -- Unsung Intellectual Hero in the Priesthood of Science," in Viewpoints, vol. 2, no. 3, 1967. Pp. 25-32)

Rosenberg had deep reservations about the parties to whom the Jewish appeals were directed and even about the community leaders -- he was particularly unhappy about "the young lawyers" who were articulate in speaking for the community. But he, too, felt unable to speak out because on the vocational level he was even lower in gradation than Belkin. Indeed Rosenberg told with some bitterness of one of his encounters with Jacobs.

Somehow it transpired to the open ears of the Liberal Party that the Watt Hugh McCallum, author of the articles in the C.C.F. Research Review, Jan.-Dec. 1934 which were collected in the pamphlet Who Owns Canada? (three editions in 1935, 60 p., other editions later in 1947 and 1948, 102 p.), was none other than the Jewish Colonization Association man in Regina. The Scottish pseudonym was for What You May Call Him. Mr. Jacobs in eastern Canada, head of the Canadian Committee of the J.C.A. was designated to the case.

On Rosenberg's next visit to Montreal he was invited truly graciously by Mr. Jacobs for dinner at his home. After a very pleasant meal, Mr. Jacobs explained to his guest that this really would not do. That was all.

The question is often asked, usually by persons born after 1939, why there were no more violent demonstrations, broken windows or heads, etc. to punctuate the tragedy of the case and to reflect the nature of the European condition.

The response must lie in an analysis of the Jewish and Canadian society of the time, the feasibility of such concepts, the confrontation of the forces of the period, but even more crucially in an understanding of the question.

The forcefulness of the activism underlying the question arises from its place in the history of North American freedoms, the matrix of the world's freedoms. In the 1960's the expansion of these freedoms, born in California one might specify, broke existing frames of society, family, political expression, and this violence of expression was the newest alphabet of the bursting of frontiers for women, for the imprisoned, the gay, the insane, the blacks limited by the whites of Selma, the artists imprisoned by prosody and by the sculptors' stone and by X-ratings of cinema, by the CIA as cultural policeman and the pharmacist as policeman of sensation. The violent demonstrator of today is a junior member of this family of freedom which followed the destruction of racism, the raising of barriers in employment, housing etc. for negroes, rendering anti-Semitism disreputable, equality for women, etc. But all this could occur after 1945, after Hitler was destroyed, and was predicated upon the destruction of that demon and his widely spread band of agents. All this had to follow the vast outpouring of blood which the world sought desperately to avoid. There were many Canadian processes from the advent of Hitler in 1933 to his end in a burrow in 1945. To ask why 1935 did not act as in 1980 is not a useful exercise in understanding.

Le Devoir "secured" a copy of the 1935 annual report of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society and reprinted it as if it had uncovered a secret conspiracy; just as a year earlier it had made a similar "discovery" that the Canadian Jewish Congress was being organized. It did not bother to tell its readers that large quantities of community reports were always appearing, in mimeograph and in print, telling of the progress and activities of the various Jewish institutions.

Similarly Le Combat National reprinted "The Secret Action Plan of the Jewish Kahal of Canada for the Year 1939," its label for the public report submitted by the Congress to its fourth central region session of Jan. 21-23. (Le Combat, July 1939)

As so often Le Patriote, which seemed to act as the anti-Jewish digest of Le Devoir, reprinted these revelations. ("How Jews Help Each Other", in issue of June 18, 1936)

In the spring of 1936 the alarm sounded again about a flood of Jews threatening Canada.

The Jeunes patriotes du Canada français are described as "doubtless the first of the Quebec independence movements, born spontaneously, in the streets of Montreal -- to be specific at the foot of the Chenier monument, in 1935.... The Jeunes patriotes counted such well known indépendantistes as W.P. O'Leary, J.-P. Robillard, Michel Chartrand, P. Vaillancourt, D. O'Leary, Jean-Louis Gagnon, Jean Séguin, Abbé Brouillard, François Hertel, etc. (W.O'Leary. Petite histoire de l'indépendance du Québec. 1961, cited by A. Comeau)

The leader of Les Jeunes patriotes, Dostaler O'Leary was the author of Le Séparatisme, doctrine constructive in which he described communism as a"world with an Asiatic face, drawn partly from the theories of 1789 by a filthy, tottering Jew." (E. Roger, Clarté, May 8, 1937; C. Fournier, Communisme et anti-communisme à Québec, Pp. 139-40)

Abbé Laurendeau ascribes the inspiration of les Jeunes patriotes, as of Jeune Canada, to Abbé Groulx. (La Nation, Oct. 1, 1936)

The assembly of the Jeunes patriotes, convened to mark the first anniversary of the passing of Armand Lavergne, greeted with thunderous cheers the call of their president Walter O'Leary to the federal government to ban the immigration of Jews from Germany.

Réal Denis told how strangers are abusing the great Canadian generosity by managing to obtain public assistance even while working and sending the money to their families in Europe. Youth, he declared, opposes any immigration as long as there is one unemployed in Quebec.

Ivanhoe Valiquette used the occasion of the Maisonneuve Market rally to preach achat chez nous. (Le Devoir, March 19, 1936)

Again Action nationale led the campaign. Its secretary, Hermas Bastien, officer in the Canadian Armed Forces, professor in the faculty of philosophy, Université de Montréal, and at the St. Georges Institut de paedogogie wrote to the Hon. T.A. Crerar on March 13 against the entry of Jews, "at all times known to be unassimilable... Now that Germany is expelling the Jewish element, we

have a further reason to keep our frontier hermetically sealed. There is no room here for those whom the centuries could not assimilate into the Germanic nations... If the present government will betray our people in this matter, such an act will dominate the domestic politics of Canada for a long time to come." (Action nationale, vol. 7, March 1936)

In May, 1936 Action nationale editorialized, "An unthinking immigration policy has thrown waves of strangers into our cities. A goodly number of these are imbued with subversive ideas. The others fall under the first influences which they happen to experience.

"In a good environment some of them may well be honest citizens. Left to themselves they quickly become the prey of creators of disorder....

"Communism is within our gates. This is what is contaminating these strangers whom it is turning into men of revolt, whom it inspires to hate all that is dear to us... If these groups, abandoned to themselves, sabotage the work of our ancestors -- what a heavy responsibility will be ours." (Pp. 257-58)

Like so many of the influential voices who spoke so loudly against the victims of European anti-semitism, Bastien derived from Action française; indeed, he served consistently on its comité de direction.

Again, Le Devoir was the most frightened and was the most effective in spreading fright.

Benôit wrote from Ottawa; "the Hon. T.A. Crerar, who had jurisdiction over many ministries -- Mines, Colonization, Immigration and the Interior -- certainly entertains a particular friendship for the Jewish member for the Montreal constituency of Cartier, S.W. Jacobs; unless it is Jacobs who has such a friendship for Mr. Crerar.

"In the latter case, it is not quite clear -- although we can guess -- which of the ministers he is courting in Mr. Crerar. Is it Mines? Could it rather be the Interior or Colonization? Some, evil tongues they probably are, claim that it is Immigration that Jacobs is most interested in.

"The Cartier member is always thinking of Sir Herbert Samuel's plan for the humane and Jewish transhumance from Nazi Germany to Commonwealth countries. In this cause he will continue to interest Mr. Crerar in season and out.

"One fact is clear. Mr. Jacobs spends more time than ever with the Hon. Crerar, Minister of Immigration. The Minister and the Member can be seen in the legislative quarters. They sometimes lunch together in the parliamentary restaurant, for example. In other words, their friendship is not hidden but open for all to see.

"What we have already written sometime ago of Mr. Jacobs' plan by the importing of cantors and other means has already brought the first salutary reaction from those of our parliamentarians who do not believe in immigration,and still less in the immigration of the type envisaged by Mr. Jacobs,in order to resolve our economic and social problems.

"Quite without fanfare Mr. Jacobs and his associates continue their insidious propaganda with ever more ardour not only among the ministry but even among francophone members.

"One of them spoke of the readiness of Jewish immigrants to work at the tasks which English and French speaking Canadian disdain to touch. He cited the case of a Jewish resident in his own county who made a fortune in green skins. For noone but a Jew would enter this trade because of the odour.

"This is not valid reasoning. Are there not Canadian tanners, both Anglophone and Francophone, who work in tanneries in conditions similar to the green skins trade?" (March 20, 1936)

In the meantime, he reported, many German Jews are entering Canada as cantors to meet synagogual needs which Canadian Jewry cannot fill. These newcomers then enter other occupations.

The Patriote added "information": Its Warsaw dispatches told of a Canada-Poland immigration pact with a Canadian immigration service at Gdynia. The Montreal weekly concluded that the intent is to bring Jews to Canada. "We are not unaware that the Poles are making life difficult for Jews. Immigration from Poland is likely to be mainly Jewish, which is why our department of immigration is preparing such facilities for immigrants from Poland, Mr. Crerar being on such familiar terms with Mr. Jacobs, M.P.; which is why Mr. Crerar, anxious to keep the Jews' game secret, refuses information on the racial origin of those recently immigrated. (Apr. 30, 1936)

Omer Héroux reported that Jewish lawyers were enlarging their offices to deal with the expanding immigration practice, in part through the importation of cantors for synagogues!

A voter from the Lower St. Lawrence saw four railway cars full of Jewish immigrants attached to the Atlantic Express. (March 5, 7, 1936)

Benoît wrote from Ottawa on Apr. 27, 1936, "Is this not the time to tell Mr. Crerar, Minister of Immigration, that immigration -- German, Jewish or any other -- is inopportune?"

The reporter repeatedly questioned the accuracy of the official figures on Jewish immigration, convinced -- and convincing his readers -- that a Jewish conspiracy was hiding a large flow of Jewish settlers in the country. (March 20, 1936, quoted in Le Patriote, March 26, 1936)

Benoît called for an inquiry into immigration into Canada, following the hostile questions posed by Joseph Jean, Member for Montreal-Mercier, and Dr. Pierre Gauthier of Portneuf.

Jean pressed Crerar for details on the race and nationality of immigrants who entered Canada by special permits, on how many of the British subjects among such immigrants were not British by birth but had recently acquired this British citizenship while residing in other Commonwealth countries.

Benoît added, "If the minister of immigration has nothing to hide, why will he not reply to questions such as Mr. Jean's? He does not indicate, in all the columns of his statistics, how many special permits were accorded to obviously privileged immigrants who avoid the general rules.

"According to information which came to us from a good source, the ministry has recently multiplied the number of special permits, mainly at the request of Jews and of Jewish associations, on the representation of S.W. Jacobs, M.P., himself Jewish, in favour of German Jews who wish to find refuge here; more precisely those whom Sir Herbert Samuel wishes to send us.

"Under the arrangements we have for preference for British products, our markets have been flooded with Czech leather goods. A brief transit through British territory, long enough to acquire a deceptive label, enables them to reach here under the British preferential tariff. Is a similar preference being established for Jewish immigrants from Germany, Russia and other continental European countries?" (Apr. 21, 1936)

This demand was echoed by his editor, Georges Pelletier, successor of Henri Bourassa to the direction of the Devoir. ("Open Doors or Closed Doors?" Mar. 7,1936)

He opposed the discretion allowed to the minister to admit "hundreds and hundreds of newcomers by special permits on the request of this or that Member or of this or that group, for the benefit of well-connected strangers. As a result, hundreds of immigrants enter readily under the label of specialists, technicians or whatever, admitted on we don't know whose petition -- but at any rate at the request of men of influence behind the scenes, whose pressures seem powerful on the hesitancies of political chiefs.

"The coming of thousands who have been driven from Germany, Poland and central Europe reinforces the warning of the Toronto Star of March 4, that Canada needs to beware from becoming involved in foreign, quite ruinous wars; for can one believe that we can admit here thousands of people banished from Poland, Germany, Austria or other countries,where political and national passions are in a state of paroxysm,and at the same time contribute to domestic peace and harmony and avoid here the whirlpool of European belligerence?

"Will we be contributing to order, national tranquillity, full employment and cohesion of the groups which constitute our nation by opening wide our frontiers to all who come with passions -- however explicable, even legitimate if you wish?

"They will either become part of our nation, and this will result in our becoming even more involved in the European quarrels; or they will not assimilate into our population; in which event -- what need have we of unassimilable elements who will have nothing in common with the mass of Canadians, either English or French?

"If we continue an underhanded policy, are we not running the danger of waking up one morning to a violent movement of xenophobia? Who wants that?"

Emile Benoît's hostility to Jewish refugees was durable, and so was Le Devoir's in giving it currency.

A decade and a holocaust later Benoît heard that 59 rabbis who had been trapped by Pearl Harbour in Japanese and Shanghai camps were to be admitted to Canada -- six years after permission had been given initially. He was alarmed, for their predecessors, he was told, had made Canada a centre of study of the ancient Talmud. "Has it become, and will it remain, one of the centres for the study of the ancient Talmud? It would be desirable for the government, through its immigration ministry, to inform us." (Le Devoir, July 16, 1946)

The Montreal daily agreed with the Ottawa journalist L. Richer of Le Droit who commented,

"The Canadian immigration authorities are mocking popular feeling which is hostile to mass immigration, whether British or other. We had doubted that there is a Soviet within the federal ministry and within its many services, in Canada and overseas, whose acts are recognizable by its anti-national tendencies. We no longer doubt this. Such a Soviet exists. It is active under all governments. It facilitates, by all means at its hand, the entry of thousands of these people of all races. This Soviet is the master. It administers our immigration laws at its pleasure. It violates them most easily. It has recourse to special permits. It was very active under Mr. Bennett; it is still active under Mr. King. It can be said that our rulers are powerless before it."

Pelletier comments, "Without any doubt, this Soviet dictated to Mr. Crerar his reply to Mr. Jean. Whom was Mr. Crerar obeying? His Soviet civil servants? The small group of members interested in bringing into Canada, in clear violation of the law, groups of strangers, of whatever apparent origin, who should not come here, who have no place here, whom old-time Canadians do not want in Canada?

"In truth, Mr. Crerar is not replying as he should; he clearly shows ill will. Such an attitude cannot last long... He must learn that this Canadian element does not propose to be mocked indefinitely by him; nor by the immigration regulations for the benefit of bustling groups, even intriguers, whose behind the scenes activities can well bring serious embarrassment for him and for his entire ministry.

"What does Mr. King think of all this? It is time he gave this some thought." (Apr. 22, 1936)

Editor Pelletier warned the readers of his Le Devoir that behind such names as Esther, Reizel, Miriam, Sura, Shleyma, Herman, Judka, Moritz, Hersh, Sholem, Jasko, Moishe, Misza, Feldman and others he found in immigration records there lurk -- Jews.

"And these people are coming to our cities where, Heaven knows, we already have a population too cosmopolitan." (May 15, 1936)

"On May 12, 1936 it dealt with the lists of Jews who entered under order-in-council, including a number with Jewish names; few are farmers, some are Hebrew teachers, one was a rabbi accompanied by his family. Its analysis showed, on May 15, that nearly half of the immigrants who thus entered, some 112 out of 253, were Jews. At the rate things are going, the country will be infested with Jews within several years." (reprinted in Patriote, May 21)

Eugène L'Heureux, lawyer turned journalist, who was soon to be named editor-in-chief of Action catholique, summarized the position of "the good press" in that Quebec daily on March 26, 1936:

"Ever since the dictator Hitler came to power we hear talk of hundreds of thousands of German Jews coming to Canada and to some other countries ready to receive them.

"Each time the rumour made the rounds here all the most profoundly Canadian papers expressed the most energetic protests, and a number of our national societies spoke out in no uncertain terms their opposition to any such plan.

"This week the rumour threatens to become real. International Jewry, with all its power, is now performing well behind the curtain of Ottawa...

"The Jews of Germany are surely no more desirable than other immigrants. They are certainly no more law-abiding or more interesting than other descendants of Abraham.

"It is possible not to love Hitler who has made grave errors. But he must be credited with up-rooting communists from his country with an iron hand on the agents of disorder, in too many cases in Germany -- as in Russia -- Jews... The Jews driven from Germany are very likely to be communists."

Came a time much later when L'Heureux rejected anti-Semitism.

By 1953 the extraordinary Quebec priest Louis O'Neil (later politician and Parti québecois minister of the crown) was attacking Duplessism and the evils of the ultramontain church.

Abbé O'Neil recalled in Action catholique during the Octave of Unity that "our Catholic record is not completely without blame on the matter of anti-Semitism, when we think of the troubled years from 1933 to 1936 when the question of the admission of Jewish immigrants fleeing Hitlerite persecution was placed before us. Catholic writing at that time was not the last to take a stand on this, and not always in a language which confirmed to justice and truth. The miasma of anti-Semitism has been hovering too long over our society not to have left some trace."

Now, nearly twenty years after the event, L'Heureux accepted O'Neil's strong condemnation of anti-Semitism and elaborated "The Anti-Semitic Contradictions" in a long article which was distributed by his L'Opinion Libre and also appeared in the Quebec Le Soleil of March 30, 1953:

"Anti-Semites claim to be performing a Christian work when they hate and even when they persecute Jews; yet the first teaching which Christ brought to earth from heaven is to love God and to love all men, the unlovable ones as much as the others.

"We all love peace and abhor war; but how can an anti-Semite sincerely love peace and truly detest war if he simultaneously wages at least a cold relentless war against the Jews?

"We are right to be horrified at the persecutions inflicted on Catholics and French Canadians. But how can some of the same people hate the Jews to the point of seeking to ostracise them everywhere after making them the scapegoats for their own negligence?

"Can one expect Jews to become Catholic converts when they note that Catholics -- who are taught to be examples of charity -- hate them and make their lives untenable?

"When an anti-Semite wants to express his deepest detestation of capitalism, he calls it a system established by Jews to dominate the world. When the same anti-Semite wishes to condemn communism he speaks of it as a Jewish creature. It takes more imagination than logic to think of both systems as conceived by Jews as Jews.

"If our anti-Semites want to advance the Christian cause, and the patriotic cause -- for nationalism and racism, which are contrary to Catholicism and Christianity, live in the heart of the anti-Semite -- they should so love Catholics, Christians and their blood brothers as to make it possible to serve their coreligionists and their compatriots fraternally without hating Jews or anyone else.

"No, hate and love are not forces to be equally commended; even if some souls which have not been raised to be sufficiently Christian, sufficiently humane, sufficiently civilized, more easily respond to the call for hatred than to the exhortations of love."

The repentance of the ill-doers of the 1930's is an impressive and significant Quebec fact which cannot be dismissed. Yet no living man can forgive in the name of even one of those who died at the hands of the Nazis because certain hands of authority clanged the gates of rescue in the face of the threatened man.

For at that moment of 1936 we note -- among those sharing the dishonour with Action catholique -- the Parish committee of Mont-Joli and the local Cercle Léonard Inc. of the Association catholique de la Jeunesse canadienne-française, who wrote identical letters on March 25, 1936 to Prime Minister King, Immigration Minister M. Crerar, Justice Minister Ernest

Lapointe and Sir Eug. Fiset, M.P., for Rimouski, to "inform them of certain rumours which are current, and to ask you to inquire immediately and to exert your influence to ensure that the rumours listed herewith do not become realities.

"Some candidates elected in Jewish constituencies in Canada are said to have promised during the recent elections to use their influence to permit the immigration into Canada of thousands of Jews from other countries. And it is said among the general public that strong pressures are being exerted at Ottawa at the ministry of immigration towards securing special immigration papers for these Jews.

"We want to draw your attention to the danger that the realization of such uncontrolled immigration would constitute for Canada.

"We ask you to utilize influence and to oppose with all your power any such immigration and any immigration as long as our unemployed are not at work.

The Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta wrote to the Minister of Immigration on March 26, 1936, that its 38,000 members in the province opposed all immigration into the country, whether on a mass basis or by special permits. "We have reason to believe that there is being exerted, or soon will be exerted, a strong pressure for the admission of thousands of German Jewish immigrants through permits.

"We have been hearing communist and radical ideas only since the immigration of earlier years... We consider it illogical that immigrants should come to take the positions which can be filled by the unemployed of our country.

"We are not alone in opposing this immigration. Right-thinking Englishmen share our opinion and express it when appropriate. The slogan seems to be: no immigration until all our people are working! ...

"The Hansard, vol. 72, P.1351, tells us that 21,996 immigrants entered the country between March 1934 and January 1936. Of these, 2,121 entered under the present administration. We affirm that 1,561 Germans and 1,390 Jews are included in this report.

"But it is a known fact that there is no Jewish farmer. If, in the future, we are forced to have recourse to immigration, we should admit people who will settle on the land, and not those who will live in cities already too overcrowded... We ask that the special permits be cancelled." (King Papers, Pp.183841-42)

The Montreal Ligue d'action nationale supported this position. (March 13, P.183744)

When the Immigration Department sent a courteous message of greeting to a Jewish immigrant social welfare agency -- the statistics make it clear how meaningless the courtesies were -- La Province denounced both the Jewish organization and the government department,

"As for this Jewish society, whose activities we suspected already for some months, have been revealed to the public, the indiscretion of its propaganda will doubtless be fatal to its enterprise.

"This society dedicates itself to the immigration of Jews into Canada. Our nationalistic sentiments make it unnecessary for us to point out that all immigration into our country is condemned for the time being, and that Jewish immigration will always be opposed in Canada.

"Let the officials who wrote words of encouragement to the 'Jewish Immigrant Aid' (probably without anticipating the indiscretion of their friends who elected them to office) -- let these officials know that we have noted their names. Mr. Magladery, deputy minister, and the actual minister should understand that one cannot be a friend of the Jews and French-Canadians at the same time.

"Let these two and all the other officials, members of parliament and functionaries who approve their action, consider us as their adversaries.

"We note also that Messrs. Jacobs, Cohen, Bercovitch and Bronfman are members of this society which has already brought into and naturalized about 500 Jews in Canada. These gentlemen have acquired for themselves in our memory a new severe reason, a little more weight, in the 'accounts payable' between the French Canadians and those who oppose them." (June 13, 1936)

A moment in parliamentary history: In reply to an interpellation by a Montreal member, the Minister of Immigration produced a list of immigrants who entered the country by special permit during four months; 250 of them, 80 of them Jewish. With classic insensitivity Le Devoir wrote of this "very considerable number of people whom Canada has scarecely any interest to admit." (May 12, 15, 21, 1936) This at a time when it was well known to the free world that torture camps were in full operation in Germany for Jews, and that in Poland Jews were beyond the protection of even Polish law.

It dealt with the immigrants who entered under Order-in-Council, including a number with Jewish names; few are farmers, some are Hebrew teachers, one a rabbi accompanied by his family. Its analysis showed that nearly half of the immigrants who thus entered Canada, some 112 out of 253 were Jews.

Reprinting these reports faithfully, the more strident Patriote foresaw that within a few years the country will be infested with Jews, arriving, as these Jews do, by the carload and the shipload. (May 21, 1936)

The literary style of the Devoir and the Patriote was emulated by the Nation of Quebec City. Its heading of March 21, 1936: "1,000 Kikes Smuggled into Canada" "1,000 kikes, thieves and anarchists have come here as contraband. At the rate of $100 per circumcised man, the ministry of immigration has entered the racket, injecting one more revolutionary virus into the nation and adding to the fabulous statistic of Canadian unemployed... The new ministry admits 1,000 kikes fraudulently and issues an order for another 9,000 whom Hitler was careful to remove from Goebbels' and Goering's hunting grounds."

Again the Action catholique's L'Heureux affirmed, "It is not too much to say that the Jews driven from Germany by Hitler are very likely to be communists." (Editorial, March 26, 1936: "The German Jews.")

On this theme the Devoir did not differ greatly from Le Patriote which constantly quoted it.

A typical expression of this thinking: "Whereas the English and the American members of the Great Sanhedrin are at this moment scheming to send thousands of their coreligionists to Canada, mainly those driven from Germany by Hitler because of their Communist activities or their detestable ways; whereas they are proposing to deal with Jews in other European countries, particularly in Poland, in the German manner; whereas from time immemorial Jews have conducted themselves in a manner intolerable to the peoples who have accepted them --" from the resolution of the Citizens' Association of Villeray. (Le Patriote, Feb. 20, 1936)

One anti-Jewish theme that recurs, but not very frequently, is that the Communists now in Quebec are Jewish in substantial numbers. One writer who does say so is Joseph-Léopold Gagnier in his J'ai vu les communistes à Montréal. (Nos problèmes, 1938, P.29) In his exposé the former member of the Young Communist League wrote,

"The Communist mass is not French Canadian but Jewish, a foreign mass. This is how we are repaid for admitting so many strangers coming from Europe, who have taken the places of our own French Canadian and English Canadian people here."

Without necessarily identifying exclusionist tendencies with antisemitism, certainly those who were antisemitic also opposed the entry of Jews to Canada.

Indeed, they proposed the disenfranchisement of the Jews already here, and otherwise limiting their rights and freedoms. They saw the efforts of Jews in Canada to bring their kith into the country as a conspiracy against Christianity, and they saw the concern of Jews elsewhere in this dominion effort at rescue as proof of a world conspiracy.

In spontaneous reaction to this Nazi howling on the heels of the tortured Jews in Germany -- a hand-written letter from a W. Goldstein to the Hon. Mr. Gordon, Minister of Immigration,

"Are we as Canadians, whether Jew or Gentile, callous and hard-hearted enough to permit such an act as the Article as shown in Saturday's Star headed -- 'Quebec Council Vote to Bar Jewish Exiles' to pass unchallenged?

"Are all Canadians, French or English, who have really enjoyed more freedom than most countries in the past years, as heartless as to wish to debar fellow creatures who are suffering tortures and degradations from a creature such as is now ruling a country which this despised race has helped to build up?

"Anyone going to the Germany of today and investigating conditions fair-mindedly, would have his heart stirred if he could see for himself what untold misery and trumped-up accusations are meted out to this unhappy and unfortunate race.

"Moreover it seems highly illogical as well as unjust that a French-Canadian Province should deny refuge to a persecuted race since the French Canadians have felt themselves to be the object of discrimination on more than one occasion in the past -- vide the language question in Ontario and Manitoba to which the French Canadians bitterly objected and did all in their power to obviate. Surely they should be more understanding, more tolerant even than the people from their sister provinces. As to assimilation, it is well-known that the Jewish race is very plastic and adaptable, and readily mould themselves to fit the conditions and regulations of the country in which they live. How else could they have existed all these centuries of constant persecution?

"No one denies the bad economic conditions existing here as elsewhere, but it is a notable fact that the Jews look after their own more than does any other race; hence to raise this as an objection for exclusion is likewise rather far-fetched.

"And is such a vote as is asked by the Quebec Council to pass unchallenged by the rest of a race who should open its doors with its thousands of acres of land, where a downtrodden people could live and breathe without the fear of persecution and death? Is there no pity among those who compiled such a resolution? Can they not put themselves in such a situation to realize there is, in these supposed civilized days, such cruelty going on which we, as Canadians, could feel we can do a bit by drawing the blessings of a poor tortured people?" (P.A.C., Departmental file 541782)

In the entire archives of the ministry this seems to be the only unacknowledged letter and the only one not replied to.

PEN PALS

And what ever happened to Sarah V. Vilno pen-pal of the Montreal Jewish People's School sixth-grader, also Sarah?

"You have probably heard of what is happening to the Jews in Poland, but I want to give you some more details.

"Anti-Semitism is always rife in Poland, but recently it has become especially strong. For example, the Endek students feel free to beat up Jews, break the windows of Jewish stores, place bombs, and other such activities...

"Recently terrible things happened at the Vilno university. The Endek students want to set up ghettoes in the university. Since no one stops them in their wild acts, they are free to do as they will. Awhile ago they kept the Jewish students from courses. It finished off with twenty Jewish students injured.

"Four hundred Jewish students declared a hunger strike for a day as a protest against the persecution of the Jews.

"The entire world knows the terrible events in Poland. They are finding new ways to provoke our people. Now they have closed down the only serious Jewish daily in the city, the Vilno Tog."

Mira K. wrote from Vilno to Malcah in Montreal,

"Late in the day we cannot go out in the street, for you will come across some roughnecks who will beat you quite undisturbed, will bloody you, and go peacefully on their way to beat other Jews.

"Things are lively at the university. Jewish students have to stand at lectures for they refuse to sit on the benches (assigned to them) on the right, and they are not permitted to sit on the left."

But, age 12, she is optimistic,

"This is still the time of the anti-Semites here in Poland. But this will end soon. They will not run wild for long."

Naomi T. wrote Naomi in Canada,

'Europe is being swept by Fascism. The Jews in Roumania are suffering the fate of the Jews in Hitler's Germany. They now greet each other not with 'Hello' but with 'Rescue'. What do you think of the new Fascist government in Austria? We must stand up against these dark forces as you call them with all our might. Let us hope that the masses of enlightened people will fight off the Fascists. They must fight them!"

Whatever happened to these little girls?

The probable answer to these questions is the saga of the century, its accusation and its mystery reaching beings suffering, death, holocaust and continued eternity.

CLOSER TO HITLER

In the climate created by violence on the part of an outstanding sovereign state, the Prime Minister of Canada chose to make a pilgrimage to Hitler and Minister of Trade and Commerce W.D. Euler, not the fiercest enemy of Hitler in Canada, introduced a new trade agreement with Germany.

Even loyal Liberal Samuel Factor, M.P. for Toronto Spadina, found it a little much. He decided to waste a bit more breath by reminding the House of Commons of one of the great frustrations of the century: that of the Hon. James G. MacDonald named by the League of Nations as High Commissioner for German Refugees. The futility of his office in the face of the indifference of such governments as the Canadian led him to direct a devastating memorandum of resignation addressed to the conscience of Christendom.

Factor told the Commons,

"Mr.MacDonald has been chosen by the League of Nations to investigate and deal with the problem of Nazi persecution of Jewish and other liberals. He is, I need not mention, a forthright gentleman of Scottish extraction, as everyone knows who had occasion to meet him when he was in Canada a couple of years ago. I wish I had time to read the entire letter, but I will not impose upon the house. I will give only a few paragraphs, and I should like hon. members to listen carefully to them, because I am sure Mr.MacDonald is not prejudiced one way or the other in this matter. This letter of resignation is dated December 27, 1935.

"'In the period of over two years since the establishment of the office, conditions in Germany which create refugees have developed so catastrophically that a reconsideration by the League of Nations of the entire situation is essential. The legislation and administrative and party action against "non-Aryans" were steadily intensified and culminated in the autumn of 1935 when a series of new laws and decrees initiated a fresh wave of repression and persecution of a character which was not envisaged in 1933.

"'The intensified persecution in Germany threatens the pauperization or exile of hundreds of thousands of Germans -- men, women and children -- not only Jews but also the "non-Aryan" Christians treated as Jews, and Protestants and Catholics who, in obedience to their faith and conscience, dare to resist the absolute will of the national socialist state. Apart from all questions of principle and of religious persecution, one portentious fact confronts the community of states. More than half a million persons, against whom no charge can be made except that they are not what the national socialists choose to regard as "Nordic", are being crushed. They cannot escape oppression by any act of their own free will, for what has been called "the membership of non-Aryan race" cannot be changed or kept in abeyance.

"'Relentlessly the Jews and "non-Aryans" are excluded from all public offices, from the exercise of the liberal professions, and from any part in the cultural and intellectual life of Germany. Ostracized from social relations with "Aryans", they are subjected to every kind of humiliation. Neither sex nor age exempts them from discrimination. Even the Jewish and "non-Aryan" children do not escape cruel forms of segregation and persecution. In Party publications, directly sponsored by the government, "Aryan" children are stirred to hate the Jews and the Christian "non-Aryans", to spy upon them and to attack them, and to incite their own parents to extirpate the Jews altogether.'

"I shall not take time to read more. I think hon. members are quite aware of the terrible conditions prevailing in Germany. I do want, however, to read the last paragraph of Mr. McDonald's letter:

"'I feel bound to conclude this letter on a personal note. Prior to my appointment as high commissioner for refugees coming from Germany, and in particular during the fourteen years following the war, I gave in my former office frequent and tangible proof of my concern that justice be done to the German people. But convinced as I am that desperate suffering in the countries adjacent to Germany, and an even more terrible human calamity within the German frontiers, are inevitable unless present tendencies in the Reich are checked or reversed, I cannot remain silent. I am convinced that it is the duty of the High Commissioner for German Refugees, in tendering his resignation, to express an opinion on the essential elements of the task with which the council of the league entrusted him. When domestic policies threaten the demoralization and exile of hundreds of thousands of human beings, considerations of diplomatic correctness must yield to those of common humanity. I should be remiss if I did not call attention to the actual situation, and plead that world opinion, acting through the league and its member states and other countries, move to avert the existing and impending tragedies.'

"If time permitted I should like to have read to the house an analysis of the measures passed by the German government against non-Aryans, from facts contained in Mr. MacDonald's memorandum. However, here is the memorandum, a document thoroughly authentic, which has caused hundreds of noble Canadian ministers of the gospel sleepless nights with its stark challenge to Christian sensitiveness. A group of Toronto leaders of the church who read the MacDonald letter of resignation together with the annex and other information therein contained were horror-struck, and in their mood of pain, humiliation and indignation, they caused a number of copies to be distributed among their fellows in Christian service, so that their feelings of utter shame and commiseration might be shared by others in whom the ideals of humanity are not yet dead.

"If I had time I should like to have read the manifesto issued and signed by leading clergymen and laymen in the city of Toronto, protesting against conditions in Germany. However, here is this document, the most comprehensive and drastic indictment of a government of a nation ever presented at the bar of public opinion. Every intelligent Canadian should read it and inform himself of the outrages practised against people belonging to the race, not of Isaiah or Amos or the chanter of the Psalms, but of the race of Siegfried and Goethe and Schiller, a people who have lived in that land for a thousand years or more and have helped to build up its commerce and its industry, who have contributed magnificently to its art and its literature and its science, who have shed their blood and given their lives in the great war. This document is a searing reproach to the languishing conscience of our civilized community.

"If time permitted I should like to submit to this house the terrific arraignment of Nazi-ism contained in the statement issued by the German Evangelical Church -- the German protestant church. There are still many courageous, noble people in Germany, many who are ready to risk their freedom and even their lives to give utterance to their thoughts. There are still Christians there who love their God and their religion more than worldly advantage. They look with dismay at the profanation of their sacred beliefs by rulers who place their secular chief above or on a parity with God. This booklet is the outcry of the leaders of the German Christian religion against the ravaging of their faith by the neo-paganism of the nazis. Every God-fearing and God-loving person who reads this booklet issued by the heads of the Evangelical church, the Protestant church of Germany, will be upset. It will cause them pain and grief, so that they may not be in the frame of mind to pay due heed to the question of barter with the destroyers of religion. I have not time to submit to the house the statement issued by His Holiness the Pope

on the ungodly effort to destroy the Catholic church and everything that is holy and sacred to those who profess the Catholic religion. Just the other day hon. members read the press dispatch issued from Berlin which announced that the neo-pagan doctrines were given the official status of a religion by the Nazi régime. The statement is an insult to the word 'religion'.

"I hope, Mr. Speaker, that you and hon. members of the house will appreciate my feelings and the feelings of thousands of people, Jew and Christian alike, who recoil from contact with a government that burns books and maintains concentration camps and tortures people who believe in the right to think for themselves. I hope hon. members will understand and sympathize with the feelings of thousands of people baited and hounded by the present German administration, and who shrink from the touch of any commodities bearing the stamp of German Nazi production. I should like to remind the house that in Canada and other civilized parts of the world, particularly in the United States and England, there are countless people who refuse to purchase German Nazi-made goods. Organized labour, the American Federation of Labour and the Trades and Labour Council of Canada, mindful of the havoc wrought by the Nazi rulers to the great labour unions in Germany and the principles of trade unionism which they represent, are averse to buying goods made under conditions of totalitarian slavery. These two large bodies of organized labour stand on record by repeated commitments at their annual conventions as favouring the boycott of goods made in Nazi Germany.

"These are facts, sir. I have made an analysis of the trade relations between Canada and Germany during recent years, and although time does not permit me to submit it to the house, there are many points in relation to which one could discuss the treaty on its merits. I merely want to say that I am forced to the conclusion that Germany will permit itself to buy as little as possible from Canada, will confine its purchases to such commodities as it stands in absolute need of, and from an interpretation based on indications discernible in statistics it seems clear that

we stand to gain very little from the operation of the agreement, and that little perhaps at the sacrifice of trade with the United Kingdom. But that is not the purpose of my remarks this morning. If necessary I can go into that phase of the matter on some future occasion....

"Conscience, human feelings, loyalty to traditional democracy; these considerations weigh heavily with legions of good Canadians who will not suffer themselves to be overborne by the appeal of the various isms. There are many people in Canada, and I say thank God for that, who think more of the ideals of right and justice than of appeals to passion and prejudice.

"In connection with our trade relationships with other countries is it too much to expect that this parliament should attach more significance to these cultural values than to the bare, cold items of barter and profit? The other day the Globe and Mail of Toronto in an editorial comment said that I did not concern myself with the fact that this German pact was in the interests of Canada. Well, sir, supposing that is so; is that the only consideration? Supposing it is profitable to Canada to sell frozen eels, sausage casings, salmon caviar, ice hockey equipment and even wheat and other commodities; are profits and balance sheets the only considerations? What about the ideals of right and justice, of liberty and freedom; what of our conscience? I want to make this final appeal to the conscience of every member of this house, to my fellow Canadians, lovers of French chivalry and traditional British freedom. Do not disregard, do not stifle the challenge of Mr. James McDonald, of the German Evangelical church, of the Catholic church, of the Jews, all of whom have been outraged by pagan Nazi-ism. Do not stifle the challenge of humanity at bay that will persist in echoing in our ears until its destiny is once again redeemed.

"It may be that it is utterly futile to talk about a fait accompli. The agreement has been entered into; its provisions have been in effect since November 15 last. It may be that in discussing matters of trade and commerce, considerations of sentiment and human amenities must not be given play. It may be that in dealing with transactions that may spell profits to some of our citizens one is expected to shut one's eyes to the character of the source from which the hoped-for profits will flow. I fully realize that under present world conditions it is extremely difficult, almost impossible, for Canada to restrict her trade relations to countries that believe and practise our form of democratic government. Indeed, I am not advocating such a step. I readily concede that in negotiating trade agreements with other countries we cannot concern ourselves with the forms of government prevailing in those countries. It is certainly not our business to dictate to Germany or to interfere with Germany's domestic legislation. That would be resented, just as we should resent any interference by Germany or any other country with the internal affairs of Canada.

"I should like to distinguish, however, between forms of government in countries with which we are trading or entering into agreements -- which is none of our business -- and the actions of governments, particularly when those actions are offensive to human civilization. Since the establishment of the dictatorship in Germany thousands of human beings have suffered persecution and outrageous offences against civilization. Medieval barbarities have been perpetrated against hundreds of thousands of people, which have shocked the moral conscience of the world. So far as Germany is concerned, it is no longer a question of internal legislation. Mr. Speaker, there are laws that are broader than domestic German legislation, laws of humanity and of God which are the foundation of all other laws; and if in any legislation they are violated, all civilized nations have a right to speak aloud in protest.

"Under the circumstances I feel that I have a right as a Canadian to stand up in this house and utter my protest. Indeed, I believe it is my duty to thousands of my constituents who have been insulted and humiliated beyond words. May I add this observation. My decision this morning to speak on this subject was arrived at after a good deal of consideration and some hesitancy. I hated to impose on this house and provoke a discussion at this stage of the session. In fact, I do not think there is any need of a long discussion. I have no desire to stir up and fan racial and religious prejudices. I would be the last man to say or do anything which would in any way embarrass the government, especially in the delicate and difficult task it has to perform in international affairs. But, Mr. Speaker, the fanatical policy of the present administration in Germany compels me to speak, and if I failed or hesitated I should be lacking in self-respect, unworthy of the race to which I belong and what is more serious, unworthy of being a freedom-loving Canadian.

"The German government has seen fit to heap calumny and abuse upon members of an historic race the world over. The German government has passed ghoulish ordinances in scores of German municipalities against the sale of milk to non-Aryan children and medicines to suffering human beings because of their religious profession. The German government has subjected thousands of Germans to frightful sufferings and has practised inhumanities against them because they believe in the ideals of government which are the very life-blood of this glorious democracy of ours." (Hansard, Apr. 8, 1937)

There was not even an acknowledgement that he had spoken. Motion agreed.

A group of Toronto clergymen led by the Rev. C.E. Silcox petitioned in 1936,

"It is perhaps impossible now to secure many refugees with capital either from the former Germany, the

former Austria, the former Czechoslovakia; the problem of the refugees has expanded and must now embrace more than two million persons; unless the democracies show that they mean business, it will soon include the victims of Hungary, Rumania, Poland and perhaps Lithuania. We may even have to take refugees from France and the United Kingdom. Who knows?

"The countries of the world which knew how readily Canada might have absorbed large numbers of the people must look askance at us, and our moral credit has not been increased...

"But there may still be time to rescue some of these people. We should at least relieve the European countries which have provided temporary sanctuary to many of these people; surely the children under sixteen and the aged over 60 should be removed as expeditiously as possible from the danger zones; that is the least we can do. It may still be possible to speed the work of bringing some of these people to Canada where they can make an economic and cultural contribution of the first magnitude. We must find ways of adding to our population those who can be both producers and consumers. Whatever way we look at it, our duty lies clear and the work of the Canadian National Committee on Refugees deserves the unstinted support of the Canadian people.

"The issues today are drawn; as a Christian people, it is ours to see that those whom the spirit of anti-Christ has bruised, whether they be Aryans or non-Aryans, are healed by the compassionate spirit of Him, in whom 'there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Greek, nor Barbarian, bond nor free.'"

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