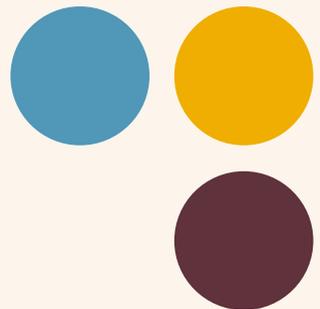




Brief History of  
**ANTISEMITISM**  
in Canada



Musée Holocauste Montréal  
Montreal Holocaust Museum





Musée Holocauste Montréal  
Montreal Holocaust Museum

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\*This Guide is made possible thanks to donations in honour and memory of Ray and Arthur Jaskolka, Holocaust survivors.

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## Montreal Holocaust Museum



The Montreal Holocaust Museum's pedagogical tools are created in accordance with Quebec Education Program guidelines.

Consult the teacher's section of the MHM website to download lesson plans and activities for students from grade six elementary (11-12 years old) to grade eleven secondary (13-17 years old):

<http://museeholocauste.ca/en/resources-training/>

### TO LEARN, TO FEEL, TO REMEMBER, TO ACT

The Montreal Holocaust Museum educates people of all ages and backgrounds about the Holocaust\*, while sensitizing the public to the universal perils of antisemitism\*, racism, hate and indifference. Through its Museum, commemorative programs and educational initiatives, the MHM promotes respect for diversity and the sanctity of human life.

The museum's collection is unique in Canada. It holds more than 12,900 items to date, many of which are historic documents, photographs and objects that belonged to Jewish families from Europe. The Museum acquires new objects that document the life of Jewish communities before the war and the Holocaust\*.

The Montreal Holocaust Museum tells the story of the Holocaust from the unique perspective of Montreal survivors. The Museum brings to life the human story of the Holocaust through survivor testimony, artefacts and historical archival material. Visitors learn the history of the Holocaust, and gain an understanding of events in Quebec, Canada and the world during that time. They are encouraged to consider the implications of prejudice, racism and anti-Semitism.

The exhibition tells the story of Jewish communities before, during and after the Holocaust. It explores the terrible tragedy in which so many lives were lost, and the horrors that were witnessed by the few who survived.

Montreal became home to a large survivor population after the Second World War. As of 2018, approximately 4,000 survivors resided in the Montreal area.

### Facilities & Services

The Museum is located in the main lobby of 1 Cummings Square

5151 Côte-Ste-Catherine  
Montreal, H3W 1M6 (Canada)

Phone: 514-345-2605

Website: [www.museeholocauste.ca](http://www.museeholocauste.ca)

Access by public transportation: Metro Côte-Ste-Catherine, bus 129.

The Museum is accessible to individuals with reduced mobility and/or hearing impairment. All films can be viewed with French or English subtitles.

For Museum hours, group tours and admission fees, please contact our reservation agent at 514-345-2605, ext. 3291

To download the free tablet app for iPad

<https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/montreal-holocaust-museum/id719081593?mt=8>

To download the free tablet app for Android

<https://play.google.com/store/search?q=MHMC&c=apps>

## Introduction and Links to the Quebec Education Program



This document provides teachers with an opportunity to learn about historical antisemitism in order to understand its various manifestations in Canada during the Holocaust (1933-1945). A particular emphasis is placed on the Quebec context – including a brief history of the Quebec Jewish community - while examining how antisemitism influenced Canadian governmental policy, media, public discourse, and action regarding the situation of Jews in Europe and in Canada.

### Learning Objectives

1. Learn about the history of Jewish immigration in Canada and how European Jews integrated into Canadian life;
2. Learn about the history of the Canadian Jewish community and the barriers to inclusion experienced by Jews in Canada and Quebec;
3. Understand how Canadian governmental policies prevented European Jews from immigrating to Canada during the Holocaust;
4. Learn about antisemitism and its various manifestations in Canada during the twentieth century;
5. Nourish discussions of contemporary antisemitism by learning about historical Jewish stereotypes and manifestations of antisemitism throughout European and Canadian history.

This document establishes links to the Quebec Education Program in the following subject areas:

### Ethics and Religious Culture

- Reflect on ethical questions of tolerance and justice
- Describe situations that illustrate the ambiguity of human action
- Appoint benchmarks that support and enrich ethical reflection on the ambivalence of human beings (such as: charters, laws, people, media)

### History and Citizenship Education, Twentieth Century History

- Examine social phenomena from a historical perspective, from the past to the present
- Interpret social phenomena using historical thinking
- Understand population shifts
- Understand civil liberties and rights

### Contemporary World

- Develop critical judgment by studying problems and issues of the contemporary world (re: antisemitism and discrimination)
- Interpret a contemporary world problem

## Defining Antisemitism

Antisemitism is hostility toward or discrimination against Jews. This historical phenomenon has existed for over two thousand years, with the Holocaust the most extreme example of antisemitism. The chronological overview of European antisemitism in this section highlights three forms of antisemitism throughout history; based on religious prejudice, political and economic prejudice, and racial theories. Twentieth century Nationalist-Socialist (Nazi) antisemitism integrated a component of racial theories, which defined Jews as an inferior race, to more historical forms of antisemitism.

### From Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Religiously-based Antisemitism

From as early as the first millennium, the Christian Church held Jews responsible for Jesus' crucifixion. As the Church sought to dominate throughout Europe, Jews – with their divergent religious practices – were perceived as a threat. In seventh century Europe, the Spanish monarchy – aided by the Church – demanded that Jews either choose to be baptized or become slaves. This is one of the countless examples of attempted conversion of Jews to Christianity throughout history, revealing the extent to which the Christian majority would continue to punish Jews for adhering to their own beliefs and customs. By the tenth and eleventh centuries, Jews were a growing minority religious group within Europe, and continued to be persecuted because of their differing religious beliefs and practices.

During the Middle Ages, the *blood libel myth* claimed that Jews consumed the

Front page of newspaper *Der Stürmer*, with a reprint of a medieval depiction of a ritual murder. The headline reads, "Ritual Murder/The biggest secret of world Jewry." Nuremberg, (Germany), May 1939.  
Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



blood of Christian children for ritual purposes. The myth claimed that Jews used this blood in the baking of ceremonial bread made for the Passover holiday, or in substituting it for wine celebrating the Sabbath and other special events. Such notions regarding Jews as bloodthirsty were spread alongside the notion that they despised Christianity. In efforts to promote the Christian religion and as a means of ensuring its dominance, Christian institutions continued to spread hate towards Jews, who were believed to pose a threat to Christianity.

The Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries: Political and Economic Antisemitism

Anti-Jewish prejudice dates back to ancient times, but the word antisemitism was coined in 1879 by German journalist Wilhelm Marr, denoting the hatred of Jews. During this period, Jews in Russia and Ukraine were victims of violent pogroms, organized massacres of helpless people. Often encouraged by governmental and police authorities, such attacks were prompted by economic, political and religious resentment of Jewish people.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, antisemitism was also based on Jews' alleged plans for political and economic world domination. Such conspiracy theories were popularized by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Originally published in Russia in 1905 as an appendix to a book by Russian writer and mystic Sergei Nilus, entitled; *The Great in the Small: The Coming of the Anti-Christ and the Rule of Satan on Earth*, the *Protocols* described the alleged plans of Jewish-led secret organizations and agencies to control and manipulate political parties, the economy, the press, and public opinion. The book was popular throughout Europe and North America. The *Protocols* was almost immediately proven by historians to be a work of fiction, devised to spread lies and cultivate hatred towards Jews.



Front page of newspaper *Der Stürmer*. Nuremberg, (Germany), February 17, 1944. Source: Montreal Holocaust Museum

Influenced by the *Protocols* text, Adolf Hitler's early antisemitic views emphasized Jews' alleged global economic influences and power. Hitler perceived Jews as a threat to the Germany he envisioned, and his ideas were largely based on their alleged allegiances with two opposing ideologies, communism and capitalism. Some of Hitler's earliest antisemitic writings were penned when he was involved with the military propaganda unit of the German army in Munich, and focused on Jews' purported capitalist goals of world economic domination. In September, 1919, just a few months after German leaders signed the Treaty of Versailles, Hitler responded to a letter from a fellow soldier named Adolf Gemlich, who inquired about the so-called "Jewish question" in the following manner:

*"The loftiness of a nation is no longer to be measured by the sum of its moral and spiritual powers, but rather by the wealth of its material possessions. This thinking and striving after money and power, and the feelings that go along with it, serve the purposes of the Jew who is unscrupulous in the choice of methods and pitiless in their employment".<sup>2</sup>*

### Twentieth Century: Racial Antisemitism

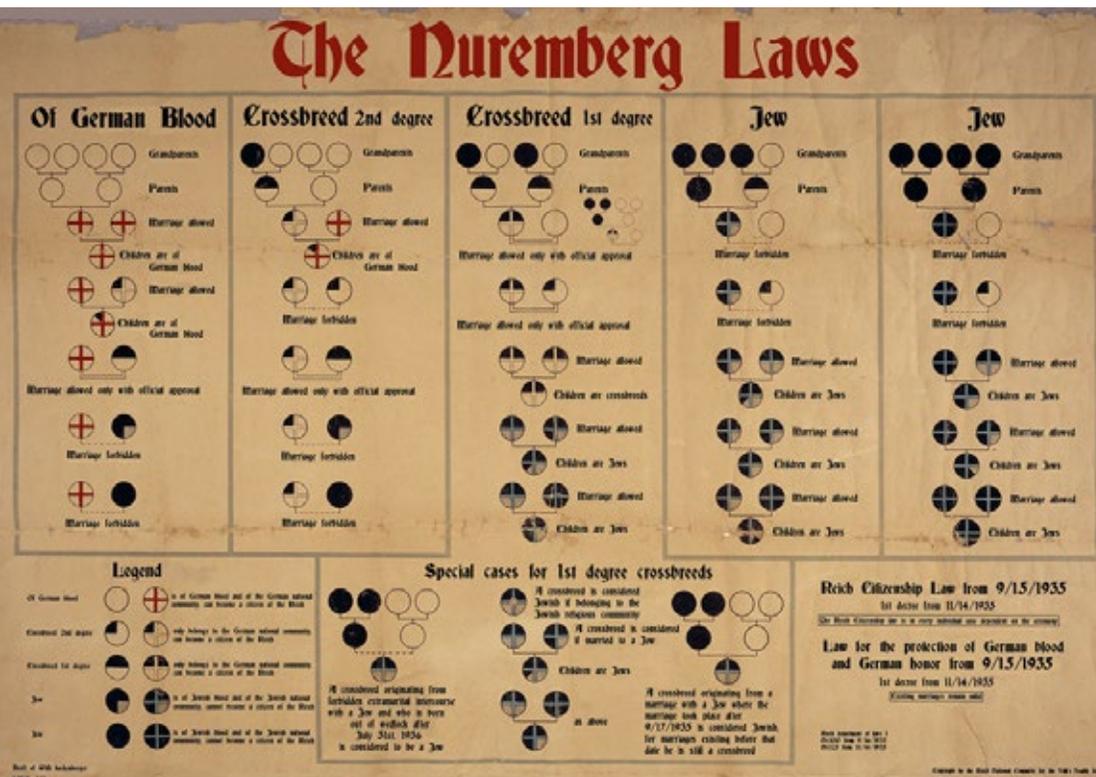
The National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazi Party) was founded in 1919, one year following Germany's defeat during World War I (1914-1918) by France, Great Britain, Russia, and the United States. Adolf Hitler became the leader of the Nazi Party in 1921 and in 1923, members of the Nazi Party attempted a violent overthrow of the Munich government in a failed action known as the Beer Hall Putsch. Hitler served nine months in prison for high treason. While in prison Hitler wrote his political manifesto, *Mein Kampf* ("My Struggle"). In 1925, the Nazis turned their attention towards electoral politics, exploiting Germany's fragile democracy. Nazi ideology was based on militaristic, racial, antisemitic and nationalist policies. Germany was suffering from the effects of the Depression, and by the late 1920s, high levels of unemployment and economic despair influenced many Germans to turn to the Nazi party for hope. The Nazi party obtained 43.9% of the federal parliamentary elections in 1933, with Hitler appointed as Chancellor the same year. Following the death of President Paul von Hindenburg in 1934, Hitler seized complete control of Germany and became its dictator.

Nazi racial theories were heavily influenced by late nineteenth century (Western) pseudo-scientific theories known as eugenics; the practice of genetic selection as a means for eliminating societal problems by "purifying" the human race. Eugenics theories judged marginalized groups in society, such as people of colour, as well as the physically and mentally challenged as inferior or sub-humans. Hitler and his German allies drew upon such claims to scaffold their racial theories about Jews and marginalized groups. After Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany in 1933, Nazi racial theories received greater public exposure in Germany.

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/hitler\\_jews.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/hitler_jews.htm)

The specificity of Nazi racial theory was that it divided humans into racial categories defined along genetic lines, with Aryans (German peoples) believed to be the biologically superior “master race”, destined to rule the world. The Nazis appropriated the word Aryan – a term used to describe an ancient Indian tribe – and applied it to themselves, claiming that the Aryan race was superior to all other racial groups. Jews were considered non-Aryan, an inferior and sub-human race. The mentally and physically challenged, Roma and Sinti peoples, Slavs, Jehovah’s Witnesses and homosexuals were also considered inferior and were persecuted by the Nazis.

Race-based antisemitism in Germany was institutionalized by the adoption of the Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935. The Reich Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor were introduced on September 15th, 1935 and defined who was Jewish, introducing systematic discrimination and persecution of Jews. These laws stipulated - among other things - that German citizenship was determined based on blood and so-called racial distinctions. The laws also determined that a Jew was identified not by religious convictions, but by whether one or more grandparent was Jewish. A traceable Jewish bloodline signaled racial impurity. German citizenship was withdrawn from Jews, and intermarriage was forbidden, as were relationships with non-Jews. Increasing restrictions governing all aspects of life for German Jews would eventually ensure that they lost all of their basic human rights to earn a livelihood, own property, receive formal education, and move about freely. Such restrictions would be introduced throughout Nazi-occupied Europe throughout the Second World War.



Translation of a chart from Nazi Germany used to explain the Nuremberg Laws which state that Jews and Germans are not allowed to marry. Germany, 1935. Public domain, source: WikiCommons

## Early Jewish life in Canada



Horse-drawn wagon in front of Beth Hamidrash Hagadol-McCaul Street Synagogue, Toronto. Public domain, source: WikiCommons

The first known Jews to settle in Canada were a handful of men who arrived in what we now know as the province of Quebec in 1760, as part of a British army regiment. Settling primarily in Trois-Rivières and Montreal, perhaps the most well-known of these individuals was Aaron Hart. Hart came to North America (New York) from England in 1752, perhaps as a commissary for the British army, settling in Quebec in 1760. In 1807, Hart's son Ezekiel was elected to represent the voters of Trois-Rivières. However, Hart was not permitted to attend, sit, or vote in the legislature. He was barred from the assembly by a resolution signed by members of the opposing party. Hart was excluded because he was Jewish. However, in 1832, the legislature of Lower Canada passed an historic act entitled the *Act to Grant Equal Rights and Privileges to Persons of the Jewish Religion*, which afforded Jews in Lower Canada full civil and political rights. Lower Canada was the first jurisdiction in the British Empire to grant such rights to Jews. By 1851, there were approximately 451 Jews in Canada. The majority lived in present day Quebec, and approximately 100 Jews lived in present day Ontario.

## Jewish Immigration to Canada during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries

The first substantial wave of Jewish immigration to Canada occurred during the end of the nineteenth century. From 1871-1901, Canada's Jewish population rose from 1,333 to over 16,000 individuals. Attempting to escape mounting persecution and violent pogroms, the vast majority of Jewish immigrants during this period came from the Russian Empire. Increasing antisemitism and pogroms in Russia, Poland and Romania during the early twentieth century prompted the largest wave of Jewish immigration ever recorded in the country. More than 60,000 Jews immigrated to Canada between 1901 and 1911, and more than 30,000 of those individuals lived in Quebec by 1911. This period also denotes one of the largest waves of immigration in Canadian history. During this decade, more than 1.5 million individuals immigrated to Canada<sup>3</sup>.

During the years prior to and following the First World War, Canada received several thousands of immigrants from Eastern Europe - including a large number of Jews – who were escaping famine, poverty and increasing persecution. By 1931, there were approximately 156,000 Jews living in Canada. Distinct from those Jews such as Aaron Hart and others that immigrated to Canada during the eighteenth century from Britain, Jews from Eastern Europe had a more difficult time being accepted by the larger Canadian population, in part because they spoke neither French nor English as their mother tongue. Further, the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, mounting Nazism, and increasingly right-wing (global) political ideologies impacted the way people perceived Jews in Quebec<sup>4</sup>.

Beliefs of a Jewish-led conspiracy proliferated in Quebec during the 1930s, with fears that Jews were out to dismantle the leadership of the Catholic Church in the province. Moreover, Quebec – like the rest of the country – was devastated by the Great Depression, and Jews were an easy target. Consequently, they were often scapegoated and accused of controlling finances and dominating the fragile job market<sup>5</sup>.

In nineteenth century Quebec society, Jews were instrumental in helping to build the Quebec economy. For example, Jews founded the first chartered bank- the Bank of Montreal, in 1817.

Jews were also responsible for founding the Board of Trade in 1822, and establishing the first Telegraph company in 1847. In 1861, Jesse Joseph – a prominent businessman - founded the Montreal Street Railway Company, Montreal's first public transit service.

<sup>3</sup> Kage, 1962.

<sup>4</sup> Monière, 1977.

<sup>5</sup> Moisan, 2015.

### Portrait of the Jewish Community in Quebec (1920s-30s)

From the turn of the twentieth century onwards, Montreal had the largest Jewish population in the country, swelling from almost 7,000 in 1901, to more than 60,000 by 1931. At that time, Jews represented 2% of the population of Quebec, and 6% of Montreal's population. A few of these individuals – primarily from Russia and Poland - established farmsteads in rural areas, though the majority worked in the garment industry or owned small shops. Despite their abilities to integrate and contribute to the Quebec economy during the early twentieth century, by the 1930s, Jews experienced barriers to full inclusion in Quebec society.

During this period, Quebec's economy was primarily based on agriculture, and many French-speaking Quebecers – in particular elite Catholic clerics and politicians - had a deep mistrust for the forms of industrialization that were introduced mostly by Anglophone Protestants. During the interwar period, Jews in Quebec were perceived as “harbingers of new and dangerous forms of modernity, dominated by materialism and immortality”<sup>6</sup>. Additionally, as Jews gradually integrated into English-speaking society, they represented – along with Anglophone Protestants – increasing domination of the English language, which was perceived by Quebecers as a “symbol of misery and submission”<sup>7</sup>.

Portrait of Jewish employees working in the textile factory Ideal Upholstering. Montreal (Canada), circa 1920. Source: Montreal Holocaust Museum

<sup>6</sup> Anctil (in Davies (ed.), 2012, p.161.

<sup>7</sup> Moisan, 2015.



## Antisemitism in Canada during the 1920s and 30s

During the 1920s and 30s, Canadian organizations such as the Social Credit Party and the Native Sons of Canada were public about their antisemitic views. Jews were also subject to job discrimination and admission quotas at universities across the country. The Depression during the 1930s, faced by Quebec as elsewhere, had an impact on political discourse. Maurice Duplessis' Union Nationale Party was elected into power in 1936. Duplessis was a staunch proponent of the Catholic religion, provincial autonomy, and conservative ideology. He openly accused Jews of being communists, sparking anti-Jewish sentiment amongst the people of Quebec during a fragile time. Duplessis and his party were in power from 1936-1939, and then again from 1944-1960.

Publications such as *Le Devoir* and *L'Action catholique* also presented antisemitic discourse. During the early 1930s, the weekly publication (non-commercially distributed) *La Semaine religieuse* spread anti-Jewish attitudes, mainly in church institutions of the Quebec diocese. During this same period, certain Catholic Church leaders propagated antisemitism in the province. For example, Catholic priest and historian Lionel Groulx spoke in secular venues in the province, disseminating antisemitic messages to his audiences, many of whom had very little interaction with the Jewish community. Groulx also voiced his antisemitic opinions in the monthly journal, *L'Action nationale*.



Maurice Duplessis. Canada, July 1952.  
Credit: Library and Archives Canada/PA-115821

## Anti-Jewish Discrimination at Quebec Universities

McGill University had a sizeable Jewish student population in the 1920s. By the early 1930s the University's newly introduced Jewish quota curbed Jewish enrolment substantially. Jewish applicants were required to demonstrate higher high school matriculation marks than non-Jews. Further, a personal communication written on July 21, 1933, by the Dean of Arts regarding Jewish scholars from Germany attempting to flee persecution read: "Jewish people are of no use to us in this country [...] as a race of men, Jews do not fit in with high civilization". Jews were not subjected to antisemitic policies at the Université de Montréal during the 1930s, though concerns regarding Jewish enrolment at the university were vocalized by some French Canadians who "assailed the university to obtain information on the number of Jews in its midst"<sup>8</sup>. The university functioned as a Catholic institution.

## Barriers to Jewish Inclusion in the Quebec School System

The British North American Act (promulgated in London in 1867), led to the independence of Canada as a nation. Article 93 established that publicly funded schools in the province must be either Catholic or Protestant. This law applied to Quebec and to some measure in Ontario. At that time, the Jewish population of Quebec numbered about five hundred people and the majority of the province was Catholic. A few decades later, on April 25th, 1903, the Provincial Education Act was passed, which forced Jews to attend Protestant (English) schools. The implications of the latter law would ultimately ensure that Jews and Francophone Catholics mixed very little in early and mid-20th century Quebec society. In June 2000, Bill 118 was adopted and ensured a non-denominational school system in Quebec<sup>9</sup>.

By 1916, Jews made up 44% of the total enrolment in Montreal's English-language Protestant schools. Jewish participation, however, was forbidden on school committees and at the Board, and Jewish teachers were discriminated against in terms of employment opportunities. Increasing Jewish enrolment in Protestant schools prompted the Protestant community to respond by attempting to ban Jewish students from their schools, citing tax burdens as the reason. Persistent discrimination and exclusion in the Quebec denominational school system prompted the Jewish community to establish their own schools as early as the late nineteenth century. In 1913, the Peretz School was founded, and the Yidishe Folks Shule (Jewish People's School) was founded the following year.

<sup>8</sup> Anctil (in Davies (ed.), 2012, p. 145.

<sup>9</sup> The passing of Bill 118 on June 14, 2000, abolished Catholic and Protestant committees in the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. The Bill ensured that parents of children from 6-14 years old were able to choose between Moral Education, Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction and Protestant Moral and Religious Education at school (<http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/travaux-parlementaires/projets-loi/projet-loi-118-36-1.html>)



**PARENTS HEUREUX QUI ADMIRENT LEUR "PETIT DERNIER"**

**HARENG BOUCANE:** "Oh ! sa mère, qu'il est donc beau notre petit dernier ! Mon enfant a l'air encore beaucoup plus Juif que moi."  
**ATHANASA DAVID:** "C'est sa mère en peinture, c'est le fruit de mes rêves, de mon amour et de mon sang. Vois comme il est fort !  
Quand il sera grand, il pourra battre les petits Canayens."

Antisemitic caricature of a Jewish family published in newspaper *Le Goglu*, showing the Bill as the child of Jewish parents. Montreal (Canada), April 25, 1930.  
Source: Canadian Jewish Congress CC National Archives.

## Canadian Governmental Responses to European Jews during the Holocaust

### Canadian Immigration Laws in the Early twentieth Century

Canada's first immigration law, established in 1869, did not define which people were to be allowed to immigrate. Further policies, however, were discriminatory. For example, in 1885, Chinese immigration was restricted and a head tax for all Chinese immigrants was imposed. In 1906, handicapped individuals were prevented from entering the country. The 1910 Immigration Act further enabled the government to obtain the right to reject any groups it deemed undesirable. Following WWI, in 1919 an amendment to the 1910 Act was passed and stated:

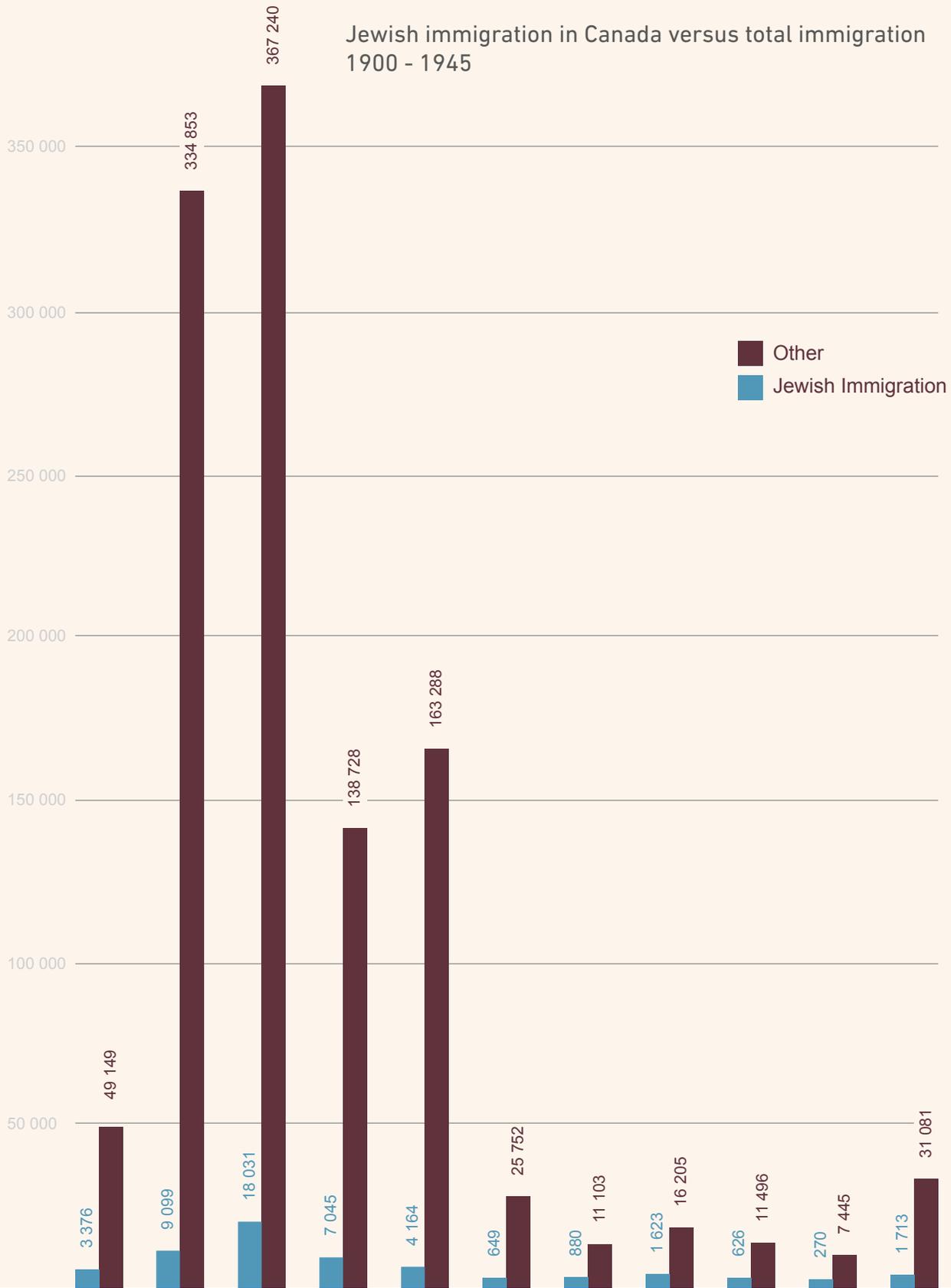
*"The governor-in-council (i.e. federal cabinet) was additionally authorized to prohibit immigrants of any nationality, race, occupation and class because of their "peculiar customs, habits, modes of life and methods of holding property."<sup>10</sup>*

The early 1930s marked the beginning of the Great Depression, when crashing global financial markets sparked worldwide economic devastation. By 1933, nearly a third of the Canadian labour force was unemployed. In 1929, more than 163,000 individuals immigrated to Canada. By 1935, that number dwindled to less than 12,000. In response to the growing economic crisis, from 1930-1935 nearly 30,000 immigrants were deported back to their countries of origin<sup>11</sup>. As antisemitism spread throughout Germany in the early 1930s, German Jews – as well as other European Jews – were desperate to leave the continent. The Canadian government's immigration laws during the Holocaust (1933-1945) made immigration to the country nearly impossible for European Jews. The government skirted accusations of antisemitism during this period by claiming that allowing tens of thousands of Jewish immigrants into Canada would have exceeded the proportional representation of Jews in the country as a whole. For a number of reasons, Canada's immigration policies during the Holocaust were vastly curtailed. Such decisions by the Canadian government would have devastating consequences for Jews fleeing persecution in Europe.

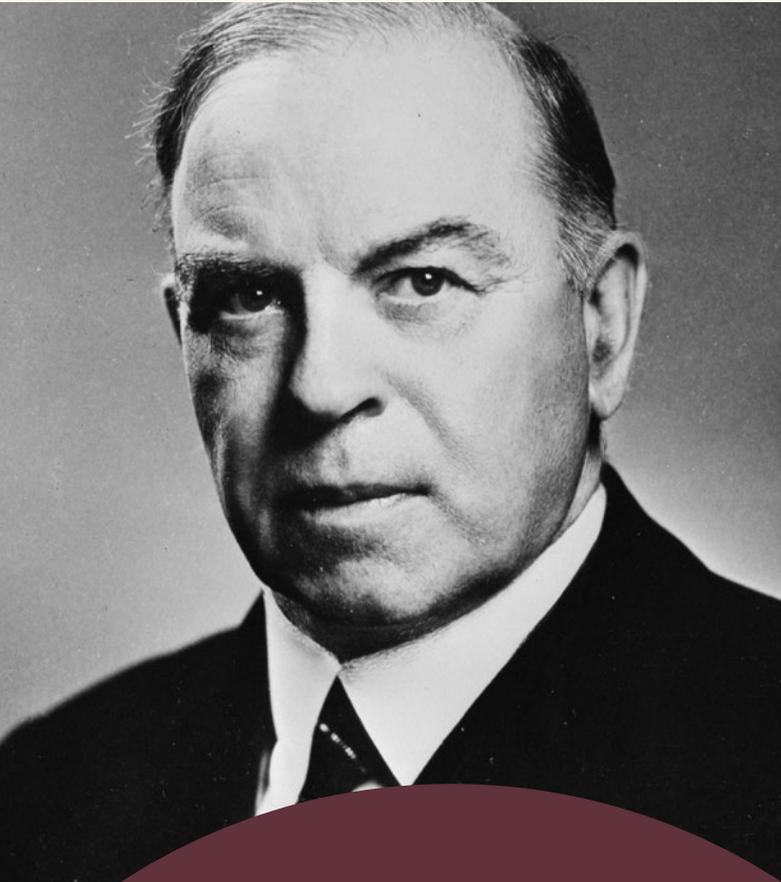
<sup>10</sup> <http://www.pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/canadian-immigration-acts-and-legislation>

<sup>11</sup> <http://ccrweb.ca/en/hundred-years-immigration-canada-1900-1999>

Jewish immigration in Canada versus total immigration  
1900 - 1945



From: Kage, Joseph. (1962). *With Faith and Thanksgiving*. Montreal: The Eagle Publishing Co., Limited.



## Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King

William Lyon Mackenzie King was the longest-serving Prime Minister in Canadian history, serving three terms between the years of 1921-1948 (twenty-two years in total). King was greatly influenced by a well-known nineteenth century Canadian intellectual of British origin, Goldwin Smith. Smith was a fervent antisemite who believed that Jews were a negative influence who sought world domination. Smith also exercised a considerable influence on King's perception of Jews<sup>12</sup>. Under King's leadership, Canada strove to affirm political independence from British and American influences. National unity and maintenance of relative peace between French and English speaking Canadians were also preoccupations given the conscription crisis. These contextual elements contributed to the Canadian government's response to Jewish immigration during the Holocaust.

Prime Minister Mackenzie King,  
1942.  
Source: Library of Congress

Diary entry written by W.L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, 1935-1948. Ottawa, 29 March 1938.

*"We must nevertheless seek to keep this part of the Continent free from unrest and from too great an intermixture of foreign strains of blood, as much the same thing as lies at the basis of the Oriental problem. I fear we would have riots if we agreed to a policy that admitted a number of Jews".*

<sup>12</sup> Moisan, 2015.

## The Evian Conference

Canada was represented at the Évian-les-Bains, France, Conference from July 6 -15, 1938, as thirty-two countries were invited to discuss the situation facing German and Austrian Jews. Convened by the United States, discussions focused on the threat of Nazism to the survival of the Jews of Europe. When delegates were asked how they would respond to the current situation, the Canadian delegation – represented by Mr. Wrong, stated: *“Unfortunately, persistent grave unemployment as well as uncertainty and disturbance of an economic nature limit in a severe measure the capacity which Canada has to absorb any considerable number of immigrants”*. Wrong’s statement during the Evian conference encapsulated the Canadian government’s dispassionate response to European Jews during the Holocaust.

## Frederick Charles Blair

From 1936 -1943, Frederick Charles Blair was the Director of the Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources, working under Thomas Crerar, the Department’s Minister. During part of Prime Minister King’s tenure, Blair was responsible for enforcing Canadian immigration policy, which reflected the opinions of King and his cabinet. Both Blair and King remained virtually silent on the issue of Jewish immigration. Their personal feelings regarding Jews, however, are well documented in private and internal communications. From 1893-1950, King wrote more than 30,000 pages in his personal diary. Some of the excerpts from his writing relay sympathy for Jews during the Holocaust. However, during the Holocaust, King and his Liberal cabinet ensured that Canada’s immigration policies did not yield to the thousands of immigration requests from European Jews.

A memorandum issued by King and Blair three weeks after *Kristallnacht* reveals their opposition to Jewish immigration:

*“We do not want to take too many Jews, but in present circumstances, we do not want to say so. We do not want to legitimize the Aryan mythology by introducing any formal distinction for immigration purposes between Jews and non-Jews. The practical distinction, however, has to be made and should be drawn with discretion and sympathy by the competent department, without the need to lay down a formal minute of policy”*.

# Canada Will Not Adopt Open Door to Refugees, Premier King Intimates

Headline from the Globe and Mail. Toronto (Canada), January 31, 1939.

The majority of Jews hoping to immigrate to Canada during the Holocaust did not meet the established admission criteria for possessing an agricultural background. Desperate to flee Nazi persecution, some forged their qualifications, and Blair was quick to call out these individuals. The following is an extract from a letter written by Blair and addressed to Robert Manion (leader of the Conservative party of Canada from 1938-1940):

*“The situation is bad enough with the German refugees without adding to it the idea that the Jews of neighbouring countries have to be regarded as being in the same dangerous position. 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”.*

During the Holocaust (1933-1945), approximately 150,000 individuals immigrated to Canada, 8,000 of who were Jewish. Important to note during this period is that the percentage of Jews in the flow of immigration to Canada was superior to the earlier period from 1918-1933<sup>13</sup>. The steep decline in Jewish immigration during the Holocaust is concurrent with a decline in overall immigration to Canada during this period. Despite increasing persecution of Jews in Europe, pleas from opposition party constituents across the provinces could not sway the Liberal government to modify its immigration policies in order to save more Jews during the Holocaust. The Canadian government's actions during the Holocaust sent a clear message to the Canadian public: *Jews are not welcome here.*

<sup>13</sup> Rosenberg, 1959.



Antisemitic sign. Canada, circa 1930s.  
Source: Canadian Jewish Congress CC National Archives.

### Kristallnacht : A Turning Point for Europe's Jews

The word *Kristallnacht* is a German word given by the Nazi leadership that means “Night of Crystal”, and is often referred to as the “The Night of Broken Glass” in English. The word refers to the thousands of glass windows that were broken in synagogues and in Jewish-owned businesses during the pogroms of November 9-10, 1938. It is an important historical event which marked the escalation of state orchestrated persecution against Jews. Anti-Jewish rioters acted upon direct orders from SS officials throughout Germany, annexed Austria, and in parts of German-occupied Czechoslovakia to destroy 267 synagogues. Fire marshals received strict orders from the Nazis to prevent individuals from attempting to stop the destructive fires that burned the centuries-old synagogues to the ground during Kristallnacht. 91 Jews were killed and 30,000 arrested and sent to concentration camps. Never before had the Nazis unleashed this level of mass violence.

On September 1, 1939, German troops invaded Poland, and two days later, Britain and France declared war on Germany. Throughout the Second World War, Jewish persecution continued to escalate and culminated with efforts to annihilate Jews throughout Nazi-occupied Europe. The world's response remained minimal and ineffective.

Onlookers watch the Frankfurt synagogue burning to the ground during Kristallnacht. Frankfurt am Main (Germany), November 9-10, 1938.  
Source: Center for Jewish History, New York City.



## The Holocaust in the Canadian Media

**LA PRESSE**  
Le plus grand quotidien français d'Amérique

55e ANNEE—No 24  
MONTREAL, SAMEDI 12 NOVEMBRE 1938  
PRIX : CINQ CENTS

# La colère nazie masque quelque chose

**A Londres on se demande si la nouvelle explosion de l'antisémitisme allemand n'est pas destinée à préparer le peuple à de nouveaux sacrifices ou à quelque aventure.**

## Douteuse spontanéité

Londres, 12. (U.P.) — Alors que la Grande-Bretagne cherche à protéger les Juifs britanniques en Allemagne et projette une protestation officielle contre les journaux allemands qui attaquent des hommes d'Etat britanniques, on se demande si ces pogroms contre les Juifs et ces attaques à l'adresse des chefs anglais ne sont pas le début d'une campagne nazie pour préparer le peuple allemand à de nouvelles entreprises à l'intérieur et à l'étranger.

Les observateurs diplomatiques ont convenus que les explosions anti-sémitiques ne sont pas uniquement une manifestation spontanée pour venger l'assassinat du Dr. Frick de l'ambassade de Paris.

Des observateurs prudentes expriment l'opinion que cette campagne de propagande, si elle est réellement commandée, est probablement destinée à détourner l'attention publique allemande d'un réajustement possible de la politique nazie de

## Mort durant une tempête

Lethbridge, Alberta, 12. (P.C.) La première tempête de neige survenue dans le sud de l'Alberta a été cause de la mort d'un jeune homme. Plusieurs personnes ont dû être traitées pour des engelures et les communications sur les routes ont été interrompues.

Un homme dont l'identité n'est pas encore connue a été trouvé mort gelé à Mowbray 12 milles à l'ouest d'ici. Quelques heures auparavant, son compagnon avait été trouvé souffrant du froid.

15 tonnes de neige sont tombées au cours de la tempête qui a commencé de bonne heure, hier matin.

Le service de la circulation des tramways a été interrompu au cours de l'après-midi et dans la soirée. Quelques réaménagements pourraient faciliter.

## 800 Juifs bannis à Vienne

## La bénédiction du scoutisme

## Bourgeois écroués en Allemagne

La campagne antisémitique se tourne contre les Juifs des carrières libérales.

1,400 arrestations à Menich

Plusieurs des établissements pillés jeudi appartiennent à des étrangers.

Berlin, 12 (P.A.) — M. Paul-Joachim Griebel, ministre de la propagande, a déclaré hier que

Successors de Beals?

Caption reads: "Nazi anger is hiding something". Front page of *La Presse* newspaper featuring several articles discussing the events of Kristallnacht. Montreal (Canada), November 12, 1938.

In the aftermath of *Kristallnacht*, the *Globe and Mail* published twenty front page headlines about the violent incidents in Europe. Some of the accompanying articles discussed the spread of antisemitism across Germany and Austria, often emphasizing the brutality of Hitler and the Nazi party's targeting of Jews:

*"Never in modern times has a sovereign power bent itself so savagely on the extinction of its own inhabitants or so deliberately transgressed every tradition of culture and humanity" ( J.V. McAvree, "Planned Atrocities aimed at Jews", Globe and Mail, 1 September 1938, 6).*

At least seven other English Canadian newspapers including the *Winnipeg Free Press*, the *Toronto Daily Star* and the *Montreal Gazette* published articles on *Kristallnacht*, describing mounting persecution of Jews in the affected countries. During this same period, some French language Quebec media reported on *Kristallnacht*. However, as of March, 1939 - and throughout the summer of that same year leading up to the beginning of the Second World War - the Canadian press had all but ignored the Jewish plight in Europe<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Grzyb (in Klein (ed.), 2012.

The country's most prominent English language magazines, *Maclean's* and *Liberty* never featured a cover story on the Holocaust. The French media did not frequently report on the Holocaust, though the public's perception of Jews may have been influenced by opinions expressed by the little coverage that existed. For example, antisemitic opinions were a regular feature in *Le Devoir's* 'Carnet du grincheux', as well as in editorials written by the paper's editor, Georges Pelletier. In December, 1937, Pelletier's editorial critiqued Hitler for promoting totalitarianism and silencing free speech<sup>15</sup>. While condemning the impossibility for intellectuals and journalists to express themselves freely, Pelletier did not mention anything about the suffering incurred by European Jews, something that was well known at the time. Through his editorials, Pelletier also expressed how Jews were a distinct race, incapable of assimilating into Quebec society. Pelletier was equally vocal regarding his opinions regarding Jewish immigration during the Holocaust.

We have welcomed thousands from Russia and Central Europe - Why should we receive in addition those from Nazi Germany? No offense to Mr. Kerillis...

*"Whatever compassion one may have for the German Jews, dispossessed and brutalized, Canada cannot forget, however, that the Jewish presence in Europe constitutes a very serious problem, but this is not a valid reason to impose this problem upon a new country in the form of a massive immigration of fifteen to twenty thousand German Jews who speak neither French nor English, while proportionately, Canada already has more than two or three times, perhaps even five times more Jews than England, France, and Germany. Have we not already received in this country - from 1896-1914 - tens of thousands of Jews following the pogroms of Russia and central Europe? That is enough."*

Georges Pelletier (Editorial); *Le Devoir*, December 3rd, 1938.

\*This editorial was published one month after *Kristallnacht*.

Source : Anctil, P. (2013). *Soyons nos maîtres: 60 éditoriaux pour comprendre Le Devoir sous Georges Pelletier -1932-1947*. Montreal: Septentrion.

The Canadian government's virtual non-response to European Jews during the Holocaust, the media's inconsistent coverage, and the antisemitic depiction of Jews in the media affected the larger Canadian public's perceptions of the Holocaust, as well as the Canadian Jewish population. Abella and Troper (1983) suggest that while King and his cabinet did nothing to help Jews attempting to flee imminent persecution in Nazi Europe, the Canadian public's complacency – in part influenced by the media - was equally troubling:

*"There was no groundswell of opposition, no humanitarian appeal for a more open policy. Even the outbreak of war and the mounting evidence of an ongoing Nazi program for the total annihilation of European Jewry did not move Canada. Its response remained legalistic and cold"* (p. 280).

<sup>15</sup> Anctil, 2013; Côté, 2006.

## Reports of Antisemitism in the Canadian Media

Reports of antisemitic attacks were recorded in Canada around the time of *Kristallnacht*. On November 9, 1938, in Brantford, Ontario, the *Globe and Mail* reported that the front window of a Jewish-owned home was smashed, with the words “Jew , you can’t stay here” painted on the wall. In 1939, Quebec newspaper *La Presse* reported on sermons delivered by certain Catholic priests that spoke about the “Jewish presence” in Sainte-Agathe, encouraging a campaign against them. On July 15, 1939, Robert McLachlan – journalist at the Montreal newspaper *The Standard* - reported that in the town of Saint-Faustin, Quebec, signs read: “No Jews Allowed” and “Christians Only”. Two weeks later, on July 31, French Canadian newspaper *Le Canada* reported that the police and Jewish citizens of Sainte-Agathe, Quebec, together removed over two hundred posters from the town that read “*Jews are not wanted here in Ste. Agathe, so scam while the going is good*”<sup>16</sup>.

Antisemitic sign posted in the Quebec village of Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts. Canada, July, 1939.  
Source: Canadian Jewish Congress CC National Archives

**NOTICE**  
**Jews are not wanted here in Ste. Agathe, so scam while the going is good.**

<sup>16</sup> CJCCCNA, ZA1939, 6/58.

## Antisemitism in Canadian Society

### Canadians against Jewish Immigration

*Kristallnacht* sparked responses from Canadians fearing an onslaught of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Europe. For example, a letter addressed to Prime Minister King on November 22, 1938, on behalf of the British War Veterans and Business and Working Men and Woman of Canada, draws on historical stereotypes in its antisemitism:

*“If these sewer rats the Jews are not stopped from coming into our Canada, there will be far more blood than all the bloodshed in the 1914 World War. The squealing Jew always makes himself heard when he is got after and driven out of the other fellows country for their crook business dealings [...] We demand that the Jews, ALL of them now enjoying their FREEDOM in our Country, be driven out quickly before we have a few Hittlers [sic] rise up and cause the governments a surprise.”*

Another letter urging the Canadian government to keep its doors closed to Jewish immigration was written to Prime Minister King by the Canadian Union of Fascists and the National Christian Party on November 24, 1938. The letter states:

*“Under no circumstances shall Jewish “refugees” be permitted entry into Canada. We further urge that future immigration be confined to peoples of the white race of types suitable for life in the Dominion.”*

Mr. Wilfrid Lacroix (Member of Parliament for Québec - Montmorency) – on behalf of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society (SSJB) – presented two petitions before the House of Commons signed by individuals from communities across Quebec. The first dated January 30, 1939 contained 127,364 names, and was specifically against Jewish immigration. In response, an op-ed piece published in *La Presse* stated *“The Jew can neither adapt nor assimilate and he will therefore never be a citizen in the country where he lives; he is an inevitable case of trouble and disturbance”* (31 January, 1939, p. 13). The second petition, dated March 2, 1944, contained 162,889 signatures and was against all immigration. The majority of signatures on both of these petitions were from individuals living in towns without Jewish inhabitants.

## Antisemitism across the Provinces

# Horseback Riding

(11 Horses)

AMATEUR HOUR  
Every Sunday  
Night

18 MILES STRAIGHT NORTH OF OSHAWA

Table Accommodation for 1000 Persons . . . .  
Government-approved. Lifeguard in attendance.  
See the animals. ~~Gentiles only.~~

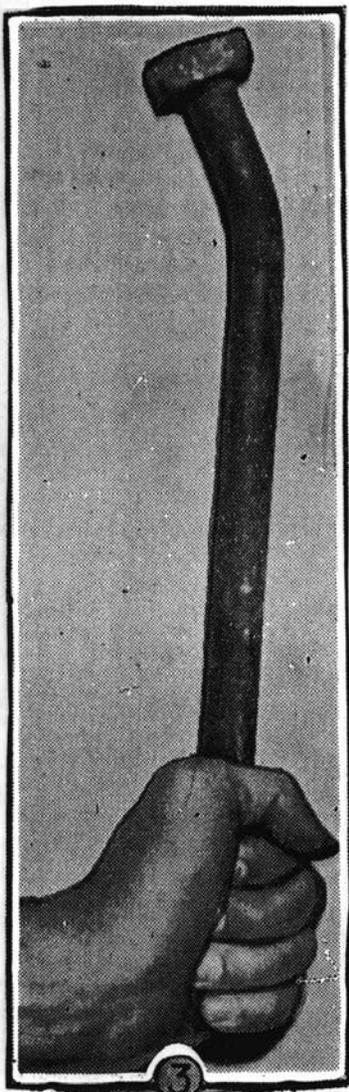


### Ontario

During the 1930s, Ontario's Jewish population numbered approximately 45,000 individuals who were mostly centered in Toronto and its outskirts. Jews were prevented from holding positions of authority in banks, educational institutions, and other professional associations. Ontario Jews were also subject to antisemitic discrimination in social and recreational arenas. Signs reading "Christians Only Need Apply", "Gentiles Only", and "No Jews Wanted" appeared in certain areas of the popular vacation spot, Toronto Island, as well as at various resorts along Lake Ontario.



Shown ABOVE are portraits of (1) Earl Perrin, (2) Charles Baustead, (3) Jack Peppy, (4) an iron pipe and nut used in the rioting at Willowvale Park last Wednesday night (August 16), (5) another of the injured, and (6) a hammer which were used in the fracas; and (6) a pipe, all of



### Christie Pits Riots

Perhaps the largest public display of Canadian antisemitism before the Second World War occurred on August 16, 1933, in Toronto. The city witnessed a massive riot in which Jewish baseball players in Christie Pits Park were taunted by an antisemitic youth group that called themselves the "Pit Gang". The two opposing groups engaged in violent fighting, supported by individuals on both sides. Newspapers reported that ongoing shouts of "Heil Hitler" were heard amongst the crowd of nearly 10,000, the biggest riot in the city's history.

### Alberta: The Social Credit Party

The Social Credit Party (SCP) of Alberta was founded in 1932 and was elected as a majority government in 1935, under the leadership of William "Bible Bill" Aberhart. Aberhart's radio sermons - rooted in capitalist ideology - rallied Albertans to believe that capitalism was the only way out of the Depression, and that Jews and communism were to blame for it. The Party remained in power until 1943. The SCP used antisemitic propaganda to scapegoat Jews as responsible for Canada's economic hardship. During the 1930s, Jews accounted for less than half of one percent of Alberta's population.

## Jewish Youths in Rowdy Conflict with Swazi Gangs

Three Toronto youths, Charle Baustead (18 years), Jack Peppy (17 years) and Earl Perrin (21 years), have been arrested on charges of unlawful assembly, as a result of the rioting at Willowvale Park last Wednesday night (August 16).

They are alleged to have been the ones who flaunted the white quilt, on which a black swastika was emblazoned, from a knoll in the park—the act which precipitated six hours of rioting, and fanned into flame the spark of racial feeling.

Toronto police state that Baustead was the one who had provided the quilt for the demonstration. The swastika had been painted on in Peppy's garage.

Minor disturbances have become the aftermath of the swastika riots. Visitors to Conboy Park were "nazit-ated" when they beheld swastikas covering the fences.

It is now known that Chief of Police Draper had been requested by letter to provide additional police protection for the occasion. This extra protection was not provided at Willowvale Park on August 16. It is quite evident that certain unruly elements in Toronto display the swastika emblem purely for purposes of race-provocation. Nothing else

will account for the "Swazi" gang making a ball game the centre for a riotous field fight that only terminated several hours later, after much visible disorderly conduct and open fighting.

"I had been a spectator of the ball game," David Fisher of Spadina Ave., who was admitted to the Toronto Western Hospital with scalp wounds, and was just preparing to go home, when I was struck over the head by some fellow who started to shout 'Hall Hitler'."

I fought back to the best of my ability, but was knocked to the ground and trampled on. A police officer pulled me to my feet and escorted me to the edge of the park and hailed a car, which brought me here. Personally I think the Swazis are all a bunch of toughs looking for a scrap, and here's hoping they get it—proper.

An eye-witness of the incident in which Goldstein was injured, made the statement that "A group of Gentle boys were talking about what they were going to do to the Jewish boys. Goldstein stepped up to them and said: 'I'm a Jew, what are you going to do about it?' For a time the argument was mostly

wordy, with a lot of talk about fair play and picking one opponent for Goldstein. Then somebody said: 'The Jews didn't give the Gentiles fair play, so why should we give him fair play,' and then somebody hit him on the head with a club."

Goldstein, outnumbered five or six to one, ran about two hundred yards, blood streaming from his white shirt,

Article from the *Canadian Jewish Chronicle* regarding the Christie Pits Riots. Canada, August 25, 1933.

that two men up following-gather- were on going to e traffic, ding their sidewalk. amount to said. "Goldstein was over I guess the mob was afraid of what they had done. But I tell you I didn't waste much time getting him to shelter."

Up on the steps of the Garfield home Cancelli was followed by a crowd and physical force was necessary to clear the steps. Mrs. Garfield (Continued on page 14)



#### Winnipeg: The Canadian Nationalist Party aka The Brown Shirts

In 1933, the Canadian Nationalist Party was a small yet powerful group of patriotic ex-soldiers that promoted antisemitism by wearing swastika tiepins and by speaking publicly about their beliefs regarding a global Jewish conspiracy. Led by war veteran and former Klu Klux Klan member William Whittaker, the Shirts' publication entitled *The Canadian Nationalist* featured antisemitic propaganda that replicated the images and messages communicated in Nazi Germany at the time. The Shirts' activity was legally halted in 1935.

William Whittaker, Canadian National Party leader, wearing his brown shirt uniform. Winnipeg (Canada), circa 1939. Source: Canadian Jewish Congress CC National Archives.



#### Quebec - Adrian Arcand

Adrian Arcand was a fascist and antisemite who came to the fore in Quebec of the 1930s. Arcand referred to himself as the *Canadian Führer*, a German word meaning leader that was popularized by Hitler. A staunch federalist, Arcand was opposed to Quebec nationalism, siding instead with British imperialism out of a desire to build a fascist Canadian state. Arcand's anti-Jewish beliefs were informed by the twentieth century *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Arcand founded a number of fascist publications such as *Le Patriote*, *Le Fasciste canadien* and *Le Combat national*. Popular with his supporters, they were mostly ignored by the professional and nationalist press, and did not reflect the opinions of the public at large. Arcand was also anchored in Quebec politics, founding the *Ordre patriotique des Goglus* in 1929, a party that promoted antisemitism. As the Minister of Justice in Quebec, MP Ernest Lapointe ordered Arcand to be arrested. On June 22, 1940, Arcand was imprisoned (until 1945) for insurrection, under the War Measures Act, for claiming that his newly formed National Unity Party would soon take over the country.

Adrian Arcand, leader of the National Unity Party of Canada, addressing a public audience. Note the swastika on the wall, as well on Arcand's left upper arm. Montreal (Canada), 1939. Source: Canadian Jewish Congress CC National Archives.

## Rescue Efforts in Canada

During the Holocaust, Jewish and non-Jewish groups alike engaged in advocacy efforts to assist European Jews wishing to immigrate to Canada. There are a few examples of public dissent, such as a demonstration attended by 4,500 people in Montreal. Such mass support from the public at large, however was uncommon during the Holocaust.

1938: The Canadian National Committee on Refugees and Victims of Political Persecution (CNCR)

The CNCR was created on November 15, 1938, in Montreal. The goals of the organization were to: educate the public about the plight facing European Jews; to lobby the Canadian government on behalf of European Jews seeking to immigrate, and to assist recent Jewish immigrants. Canadian Francophones were perhaps less likely to pay attention to such efforts, as all of the CNCR's publications were printed in English. Led by Director and Senator Cairine Wilson, the CNCR, despite their best efforts, were only able to assist a few individuals during the Holocaust.

1944: The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration

On September 18th, 1944, the World Jewish Congress (WJC) was represented at a meeting in Montreal. International delegates – along with Jewish groups from all over the world - convened in order to discuss how those individuals affected by war could be assisted. Lester B. Pearson chaired this meeting in which the WJC urged that Jewish people be considered distinct from other nationals displaced by war. The WJC illustrated how ninety percent of the Jewish survivors of Europe were displaced persons in Nazi-occupied Europe. The Canadian government's immigration policies were not modified in the aftermath of the conference.

The Anglican Church of Montreal condemn the violent actions against Jewish property and Jewish individuals during Kristallnacht, in newspaper *The Gazette*. Montreal (Canada), November 12, 1938.

**PRAYERS SAID HERE  
FOR HARRIED JEWS**

**Anglican Churches Join in  
Supplication for Protection  
of Sufferers**

## Canadian Jewish Community Responses to the Holocaust

### Abraham Albert Heaps - Jewish Elected Official

English born Abraham Albert Heaps was a Canadian politician and labour leader from Winnipeg. Representing the riding of Winnipeg North from 1925-1940, Heaps was one three Jewish Members of Parliament during the Holocaust. He was also one of the few politicians that pressured King and his caucus on the matter of accepting Jewish immigrants from Europe. A letter written by Heaps in 1938 urged King to consider the increasing dangers facing European Jews and pressed for modifications to the immigration laws at the time.

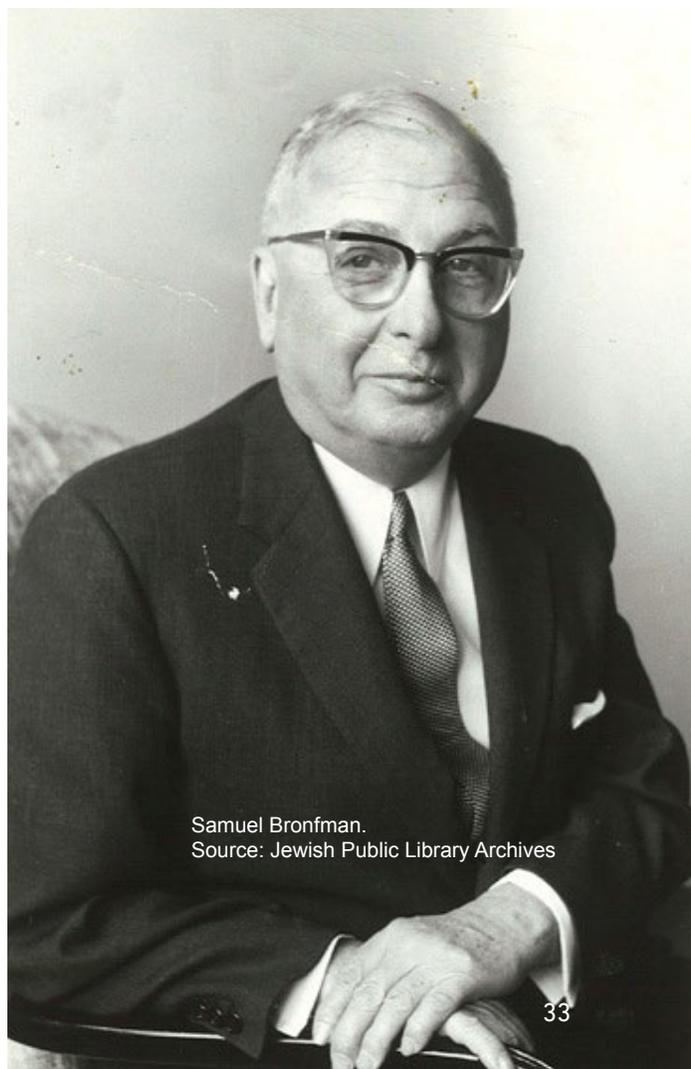


Campaign poster for Abraham Albert Heaps, Member of the Canadian Parliament for Winnipeg North, Winnipeg (Canada), 1930. Public domain, source: WikiCommons

### The Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC)

The CJC was founded in 1919 as a central organizing and lobbying group for the Jewish community in Canada. One of the first tasks of the CJC was to help Jewish refugees immediately after the First World War. Following a thirteen year hiatus, the CJC resumed in 1933 under President Samuel W. Jacobs. The organisation's primary activities during this period were to counter antisemitic propaganda in Canada.

The CJC's public profile rose when international businessman Samuel Bronfman was elected President, serving from 1939-1962. Saul Hayes, Executive Director of the CJC from 1940-1965, also played a critical role in issues of civil rights, ensuring that Jewish refugees received aid. A large part of the CJC's work during the 1930s involved lobbying the Government to transform immigration policies, while keeping a close watch on fascist activities in Canada. Shortly after *Kristallnacht*, in 1938, the CJC lobbied the Canadian government to allow some 10,000 Jews from Europe to immigrate to Canada. Their efforts, however, were futile. In 1942, the CJC launched an initiative to bring approximately 1,000 Jewish French children to Canada. On September 10th of that year, CJC president Samuel Bronfman sent a letter addressed to Prime Minister King, citing that these children were facing persecution, and likely murder. The efforts of the CJC were in vain.



Samuel Bronfman.  
Source: Jewish Public Library Archives

## Canadian Post-War Response to Jewish Refugees



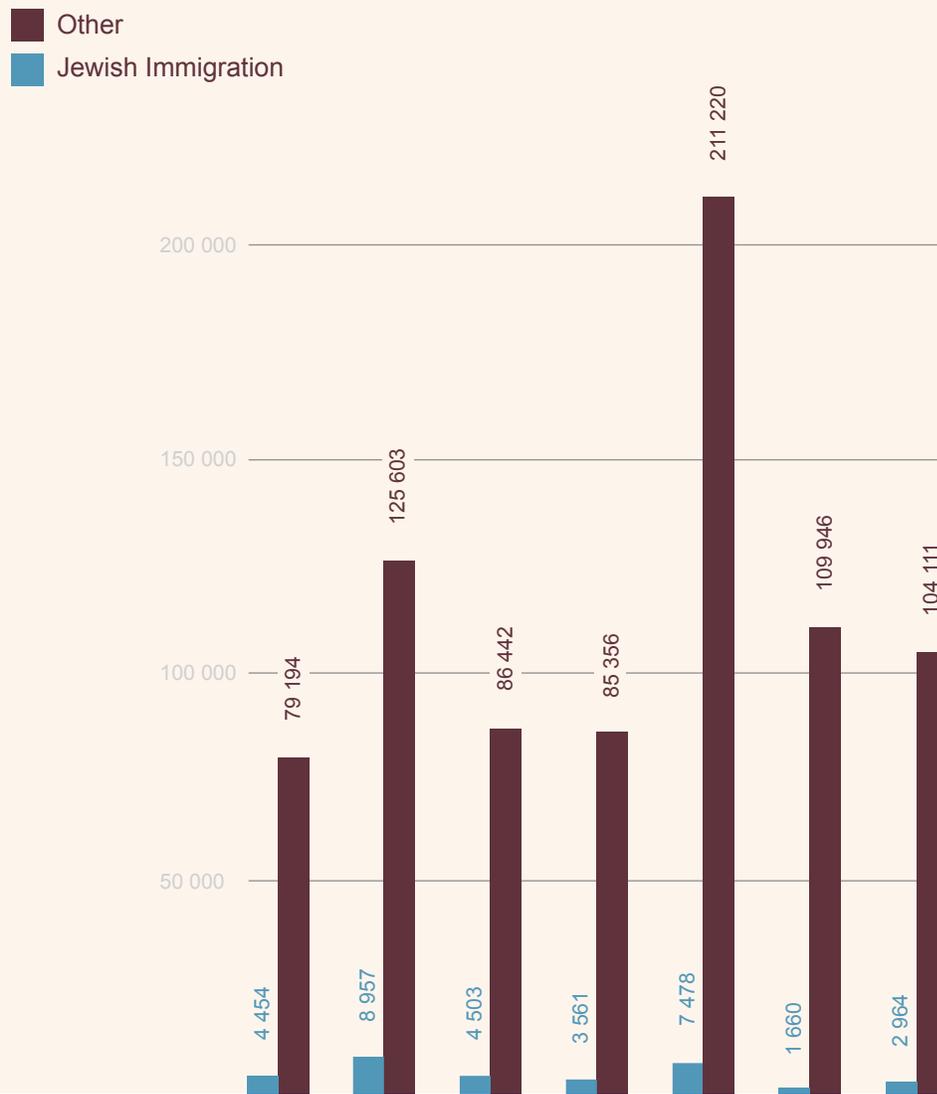
On January 1st, 1947, the Canadian Immigration Act came into force and conferred a common Canadian citizenship for all Canadians, whether or not they had been born in Canada. Canadian citizenship could also be acquired by immigrants who had been naturalized in Canada. Establishing a form of Canadian citizenship was in fact an important step in paving the way for increasing immigration during the post-war period, during which time the Canadian economy had improved. Canadian immigration would consequently steadily increase as of 1947. From 1946-1951, 19,873 Jews immigrated to Canada. From 1951-1956, 20,193 Jews immigrated to Canada<sup>17</sup>. Many of these individuals were survivors that settled in Montreal. Following the Second World War, Montreal became home to one of the world's largest communities of Holocaust survivors and persons displaced by the war. The Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) – along with the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society (JIAS) aided approximately 11,000 displaced European Jews from 1946-1951<sup>18</sup>.

Jewish War orphans on the day of their arrival in Canada aboard the USS General SD Sturgis. Halifax (Canada), 1948. Courtesy of Paul Herczeg.

<sup>17</sup> Kage, 1962.

<sup>18</sup> Tulchinsky, 2008.

### Jewish immigration in Canada versus total immigration 1947-1960



From: Kage, Joseph. (1962). *With Faith and Thanksgiving*. Montreal: The Eagle Publishing Co., Limited.

## Contemporary Antisemitism



Holocaust deniers protesting in Toronto, Canada, May, 1981. Photographer: Ben Lechtman. Source: Canadian Jewish Congress CC National Archives.

Antisemitism remains present in today's world and has three main manifestations: the use of historical Jewish stereotypes, Holocaust denial, and hatred expressed towards all Jews rooted in anti-Israel rhetoric. The Global Forum for Combatting Antisemitism – an active coalition of political leaders, educators, clergy and diplomats - notes that increasing attacks on Jewish religious practices - such as adhering to kosher dietary laws and ritual circumcision for male infants - may also be considered manifestations of contemporary antisemitism. The information in this section illustrates these manifestations through some key examples of contemporary antisemitism. Some of the examples highlighted reflect more than one of these forms. They are a small sample of events that have occurred in recent times.

### Resurgence of Historical Jewish Stereotypes

Increasingly, in several countries, historical antisemitic stereotypes such as Jewish goals of world domination and the destruction of Jewish property are prevalent. The European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia, an agency of the European Union, notes that contemporary antisemitism - much like historical antisemitism - is manifest in verbal or physical attacks on Jewish individuals, Jewish-owned property, and religious and cultural institutions (i.e. schools and synagogues). There has been a recent surge of antisemitic activity in many European countries. For example, Hungary's *Jobbik* political party uses antisemitic discourses that draw on historical stereotypes of Jews, such as the accusation of blood libel. Increasing antisemitism in Hungary has also given rise to attacks on Jewish property, such as the May, 2014 desecration of more than fifty Jewish graves in the town of Szikszó.

A 2014 shooting at a Jewish museum in Brussels, Belgium that took the lives of four individuals, and a 2012 shooting at a Jewish school in Toulouse, France, in which one adult and three children were killed, reveal the extent to which Jewish individuals and institutions are not entirely safe in Europe. The Pew Research Center on Religion and Public Life recently published the results from a study on the rise of intolerance towards religious minorities in Europe. The results state that European Jews are increasingly harassed and intimidated for wearing religious garb – such as the kippah - and for practicing their religion<sup>19</sup>.

In the fall of 2014, a conference in Iran promoted antisemitic propaganda<sup>20</sup>, while a recent report about antisemitic activity in Turkey cites Jews as the number one target for hate speech in that country<sup>21</sup>.

### Examples from Canada

The Statistics Canada June, 2014 report regarding hate crimes reported to police across the country in 2012, cites the following as such crimes: incitement of hatred against an individual or a group based on colour, race, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation; hateful messages communicated by telephone, printed publications, or the Internet; as well as damaging or destroying religious property<sup>22</sup>. 58% of all religiously based hate crimes reported in 2012 were perpetrated against Jews, totaling 242 crimes. The report also revealed that the Jewish community was the most frequently targeted by religiously-motivated hate, and the most commonly reported offense was uttering threats (46%)<sup>23</sup>. Some examples of antisemitic attacks in Canada during the past decade include: a 2004 fire-bombing of a Jewish school in Montreal; in 2012, the spraying of a home belonging to a Toronto Jewish family with antisemitic graffiti; swastikas and other antisemitic graffiti sprayed on the walls of an apartment building housing many (Jewish) Holocaust survivors in Vancouver (2013), and the desecration of several tombstones at a Jewish cemetery in Winnipeg (2014). Antisemitic remarks also appear in contemporary Canadian media. On August 7, 2014, Quebec radio host and columnist Gilles Proulx wrote in his *Journal de Montréal* column that “*Jews impose their will over world governments*”<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/02/26/sidebar-religious-hostilities-and-religious-minorities-in-europe/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.adl.org/press-center/press-releases/anti-semitism-international/iranian-hatefest-promotes-anti-semitism-draws-holocaust-deniers.html#.VL1-KMsg85t>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/51/8381.htm>

<sup>22</sup> <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/PDF/C-46.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2014001/article/14028-eng.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.journaldemontreal.com/2014/08/07/le-hamas-hydre-de-lerne>

## Holocaust Denial

Holocaust denial is a prominent form of contemporary antisemitism, defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) as: accusing Jews of exaggerating facts about what happened during the Holocaust, inferring that the Holocaust was the result of a Jewish-led conspiracy, and public denial of the means used to commit mass murder during the Holocaust (i.e. gas chambers, mass shootings, torture)<sup>25</sup>. An example of contemporary Holocaust denial is the notion that the deaths that occurred in the concentration camps were not the result of Nazi policies, but rather disease or starvation. Even during the Holocaust, some believed that reports of Jewish persecution were designed to ensure special treatment for the Jews of Europe. Two landmark cases illustrating contemporary (post Second World War) Holocaust denial in Canada are as follows.

In 1984, James Keegstra - a secondary school teacher and Holocaust denier in Alberta - was charged under s. 319(2) of the Criminal Code for illegally fomenting hate and antisemitism toward an identifiable group to his students. In 1990, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC)<sup>26</sup> upheld the conviction, stating that hate propaganda does not infringe upon freedom of expression. In Canada during the 1970s and 1980s, German citizen Ernst Zundel published and distributed brochures, videos and other objects purporting white supremacy. Zundel – a Holocaust denier - was charged under s. 181 of the Criminal Code for wilful publication of false statements in the booklet entitled *Did Six Million Really Die?* Zundel was charged numerous times for diffusing antisemitic texts. In 1992, in appeal the SCC<sup>27</sup> declared that s. 181 of the Criminal Code violated freedom of expression and Zundel's conviction was overturned. In 2005, the Federal Court of Canada ruled that Zundel represented a national security threat. For this reason he was extradited from Canada. Upon his arrival in Germany, Zundel was charged and sentenced to five years in prison (serving until 2010) for incitement to racial hatred and Holocaust denial.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.holocaustremembrance.com/index.php/working-definition-holocaust-denial-and-distortion>

<sup>26</sup> <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/fr/item/695/index.do>

<sup>27</sup> <http://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/fr/item/904/index.do>

## Antisemitism behind the Mask of Criticism of Israel

Violent actions against Jews around the world are being justified by the conflict in the Middle East. Antisemitism rooted in anti-Israel rhetoric increasingly informs how individuals around the world see Jews. This growing form of antisemitism includes: the belief that the Holocaust was a “hoax” created to serve the interests of the State of Israel; the differential judging of the Government of Israel’s actions; as well as justification and promotion of hate against Jews all over the world based on disproportionate focus and inflammatory interpretations of Israeli government actions. This form of antisemitism has been called the “new” antisemitism.

The Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism (ICCA) is an organization comprised of more than one hundred parliamentarians from around the world who are working to identify and combat global antisemitism. Following an ICCA conference in Ottawa in November, 2010, member countries adopted “The Ottawa Protocol”, a document that urges all countries and their governments to identify and combat all manifestations of antisemitism, including comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis, and holding Jews around the world collectively responsible for the actions of the state of Israel<sup>28</sup>. In response to the rise of global antisemitism, on February 25, 2015, the House of Commons reaffirmed the importance of the Ottawa Protocol as a model for domestic and international implementation in combatting antisemitism.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.antisemitism.org.uk/icca>;  
<https://files.graph.cool/cj3e6rg8y906h0104uh8bojao/cj944bsaa00kf0141ub2h748g>

## Conclusion

As this final section of the tool illustrates, antisemitism is increasingly prevalent in today's world. Holocaust education asserts a critical role in combatting antisemitism and racism, by providing opportunities for students to learn about the past while making links to the current environment in which Jews and other minorities - such as the Roma and Aboriginal Canadians - continue to be discriminated. Teaching about the Holocaust enables teachers to eradicate the myths regarding this complex history, while also debunking many of the historical and contemporary Jewish stereotypes illustrated in this document. Such learning opportunities establish the foundations for citizenship and human rights education because they enable students and teachers alike to think about fundamental issues in society, such as the impact of racism, discrimination and hate in the contemporary world, how such injustices impact the lives of individuals, and what actions can be taken in order to contest and combat such injustices.

## Glossary

**Antisemitism:** Hostile and discriminatory doctrine and attitude with regard to the Jews. German journalist Wilhelm Marr coined the term in 1873 in his pamphlet *The Victory of Judaism over Germanism*.

**Aryan:** The Nazis seized this term, which had been used to describe an ancient people, to define themselves. They falsely proclaimed to be the “Aryan race”, superior to all other races. The Nazis considered the typical Aryan to be tall, blond, and blue-eyed.

**Genocide:** Defined by the UN in the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), the word “genocide” (from the Greek *genos* meaning “race” and the Latin *caedes* meaning “to kill”) was first coined in 1943 by a Polish lawyer of Jewish descent, Raphael Lemkin, to describe the official policy of a government whose objective is the annihilation of an entire people (according to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, United Nations, 1948). It is an act intended to exterminate (in whole or in part) a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. The current legal definition does not include political opponents. Members of the targeted group are systematically killed or persecuted by whatever means necessary: murder, measures to prevent births within the group, forcible transfer of children of the group to another group, etc. The crime of genocide is committed by State authorities, in their name and with their consent, be it expressed or tacit.

**German Antisemitism:** A nineteenth century “racial science” that added a false and dangerous “biological” dimension to the traditional hatred of Jews. Jews were stigmatized as being different and of an inferior race that could never evolve. They were falsely accused of conspiring to dominate the world. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, radical forces of the political right – in Germany especially – targeted Jews as the “racial enemy” responsible for all the problems of the modern world. The Nazis then used this new definition of “Jew” to justify the creation of a “new Germany” and launched a war against Jews, the culmination of which would be the “final solution”, an attempt to annihilate all the Jews of Europe.

**Hate crimes:** Crimes where the victims are targeted because they belong, truly or supposedly, to a particular social group, most often defined by race, religion, sexual orientation, handicap, ethnicity, nationality, age, sex, sexual identity, or political party. A heinous crime can take many forms: physical attack, intimidation, harassment, verbal attack or insults, graffiti, or vandalism.

**Holocaust:** A word of Greek origin meaning “sacrifice” by fire. The Hebrew word for Holocaust is *sho’ah*, a Biblical term signifying “catastrophe” or “destruction.” The Holocaust was the systematic persecution and murder of 6 million Jews, organized by the Nazi State and its collaborators from 1933 to 1945. In addition to committing genocide against the Jews, the Nazis committed genocide against the Roma and the Sinti. Other marginalized groups were also persecuted during this period: people with disabilities, homosexuals, Slavic people, political opponents, and Jehovah Witnesses.

**Jew:** Person of Jewish faith, invoking the Jewish people or Jewish culture. Jews today define themselves as belonging to a community rather than to an ethnic or religious group.

**Judaism:** In religious terms, Jewish monotheism and its laws; generally Jewish culture. Judaism first appeared in the territory of Judea (today Israel) in the Middle East. Jewish communities later appeared at varying times in almost all parts of the world, as a result of migrations, forced exiles, and expulsions.

**Nazism (National Socialism):** German political movement led by Adolf Hitler. In 1933, the Nazi party took political control of Germany in a democratic election. It was violently antisemitic, and it believed in the supremacy of the "Aryan race." The Nazi ideology included the following motives of discrimination: origin, ethnicity, skin colour, sex, handicap, religion, language, sexual orientation, political convictions. It was characterised by strong authoritarianism and "leader cult" (Führerkult). The Nazi objective was to purify the race and expand the "vital space" needed for the German race. This was to be attained by exterminating the Jews of Europe and invading the neighbouring countries.

**Nuremberg Race Laws:** Series of laws adopted by the Nazi government as of 1935 to define the "Jews", discriminate against them, and restrict their liberties. Jews were gradually excluded from the German nation through measures such as the obligation to include the name of Sarah (for women) and Israel (for men) on their identity cards (1938) and to wear the yellow star (1941).

**Prejudice:** A judgment formed or taken about an individual or group without prior examination. In modern usage, the term usually denotes an unfavourable or hostile attitude toward people who belong to a different social or ethnic group. Prejudice is based on stereotypes, simplistic generalizations concerning groups of people.

**Stereotypes:** A simplistic image or cliché attributed to a category of persons, an institution, or a culture (from the Greek stereos meaning "sturdy" and typos meaning "mark"). Stereotypes are generally used negatively to denounce accepted ideas; they are false and as such negate true knowledge. The persistence of stereotypes in modern societies, especially those that refer to ethnic characteristics or to foreigner status and lead to racist and xenophobic attitudes, shows the difficulty that still exists today of accepting a non-stereotypical idea of human beings, whose liberty and unique identity cannot be confined in ready-made categories.

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