

there is actually a fair bit of material. Informal literary activity, relationships between writers, the effects of the secular Yiddish schools on their graduates, and other such phenomena all yield quite rich material from memoirs and the press. Margolis pieces her sources together with great skill. Overall, this study admirably fills a gap which has truly hampered the study of Canadian Jewry, and does so lucidly and readably.

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Mendelson, Alan. *Exiles From Nowhere: the Jews and the Canadian Elite*. Montréal : R. Brass Studio, 2008. xviii + 411 pp.

Alan Mendelson's *Exiles From Nowhere* has two aims. One is to examine the pervasive antisemitism displayed by the Canadian elite from the late nineteenth century through the aftermath of World War II. The other is to explore how growing up in this milieu molded the noted Canadian intellectual George Grant on issues regarding Jews and Judaism. The result is a fascinating and heartbreaking book.

Mendelson states at the outset that "words have power" (xvii); he then goes on to follow the spoken and written words of the Canadian elite and their ripple effects upon history. In pursuing his investigation, Mendelson introduces his readers to the men and women of money, class, and intellect who wielded influence on the world around them, including Goldwin Smith, Vincent Massey, Waldorf and Nancy Astor, and William Lyon Mackenzie King. The reader is introduced to a world of deep-seated "genteel" antisemitism, in which a deep disdain for both Judaism as a religion and Jews as a people suffused people's thoughts and actions, even as they distanced themselves from the more overt, "vulgar" antisemitism of direct violence, destruction of property, and assault. With persuasive attention to detail, Mendelson demonstrates "that genteel antisemitism had tangible consequences in the real world" (3). Words spoken

at house parties, written in letters, and published in newspapers or journals had a real influence on the opinions of the masses and a real impact on Canada's public policy. At the heart of Mendelson's argument lies the tragedy of the Canadian governments' disregard for the looming crisis of the Holocaust and its refusal to admit Jewish refugees during the buildup to World War II. The chapters detailing the indifference of Vincent Massey and Prime Minister King in the face of ballooning tragedy are particularly devastating.

After completing his tour of the Canadian political and cultural elite as a whole, Mendelson then focuses his attention on George Grant in particular—the books that he read, the thinkers that he admired, and their effect upon his own opinions. We follow Grant to Oxford at the onset of World War II, when he believed in pacifism and appeasement. In the aftermath of the war, Mendelson explores Grant's admiration for Arnold Toynbee and Martin Heidegger, including Toynbee's beliefs in Judaism as an outdated and "fossilized" religion, and Heidegger's unrepentant past history with Nazism. Finally, Mendelson investigates Grant's scholarly and teaching career at McMaster University, including Grant's ambivalent friendship with the younger, Jewish writer, Matt Cohen, which ended when Cohen left McMaster, due to his discomfort over Grant's stated opinions regarding Judaism (307).

In some ways, despite the terrible seriousness of Mendelson's subject matter, the effect of reading *Exiles From Nowhere* is a delightful surprise. As a whole, the book's execution has an "old school" feel to it—looking at the "great" men of a period and how their thoughts, their actions, and the salons they attended left indelible stamps on history, with echoes reverberating down through time. In a discipline where popular culture has been in vogue for so long, this type of analysis serves as a salutary reminder to readers that studying the thoughts and actions of the elite remains important. There is such a thing as one man bringing the force of his ideas and opinions to bear upon his generation in ways that the ordinary man

on the street never will. Unfortunately, as Mendelson takes us through Canada's elite in the first half of the twentieth century, he also shows us the squandered opportunities of many men and women who could have done more good with their power and influence than was the case.

Nowadays, most Canadians take pride in the image of their country as one that values a multi-ethnic society, more welcoming and accepting of minorities than most. *Exiles From Nowhere* serves as a daunting reminder that Canada's recent past includes many dark shadows. With scholars and intellectuals like George Grant casting the influence of nineteenth century prejudices forward into the twentieth, Mendelson does his best to let in light on this subject, giving us all a clearer picture of who we are as Canadians so that we may understand our "great" men better.

**Sara Libby Robinson**

Olazabal, Ignace. *Khaverim: Les Juifs ashkénazes de Montréal au début du xxe siècle, entre le shtetl et l'identité citoyenne*. Québec: Editions Nota Bene, 2006. 276 pp.

D'entrée de jeu, l'auteur se situe par rapport à son sujet de recherche: non-juif, Ignace Olazabal s'intéresse à l'étude de l'intégration des minorités dans la société québécoise et à l'édification de ponts intercommunautaires. La minorité juive l'a particulièrement interpellé, étant donné la richesse de sa contribution plus que bicentenaire à la collectivité montréalaise, et la valeur emblématique qu'elle a acquise en ce qui a trait aux relations entre minorités et majorités, au Québec. Ainsi, Olazabal a décidé de lui consacrer sa thèse de doctorat, dont la forme remaniée et publiée fait l'objet de ce compte rendu.

Afin de bien cerner la vie juive à Montréal depuis le début du vingtième siècle, Olazabal a d'abord dû se plonger dans l'étude des traditions, du yiddish et de tout ce qui constitue l'univers juif. En plus d'absorber ces nouvelles connaissances, Olazabal a arpenté les rues des quartiers où les Juifs ont vécu et/