

Klein, L. Ruth, ed. *Nazi Germany, Canadian Responses: Confronting Antisemitism in the Shadow of War*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012. xxiii + 302 pp.

The late 1930s was a grim period for Jews in Canada. The Canadian Jewish community faced a government whose negative policy regarding Jewish immigration has been thoroughly examined in Abella and Troper's seminal study, *None Is Too Many*. It faced as well a pervasive antisemitism within Canadian society, both English and French, so serious that a Canadian Jewish Congress report of 1937 relates:

During the past few years we have witnessed an amazing growth of anti-Semitism. Manifestations of an intensified anti-Jewish sentiment have been springing up everywhere...Jews have been barred from hotels, beaches, golf courses and parks...many signs posted in front of parks and beaches to the effect that Gentiles only are admitted...a startling increase in the number of individuals and companies who refuse to rent living quarters to Jews...a spreading policy of not employing Jews; the boycott of all Jewish firms; the sporadic attempts by various organizations to involve Jews in disturbances and violence...¹

On the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of *None Is Too Many* Ruth Klein published this volume containing a number of excellent studies by noted Canadian scholars. The volume had its genesis in 2009 in a conference held in Toronto under the aegis of the National Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research and with support from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the B'nai Brith Foundation. The conference, entitled "The St. Louis Era: Looking Back, Moving Forward" was meant to examine the era marked by the ill-fated voyage of the German steamship St Louis in 1939 from a variety of perspectives.

The authors included in this volume responded to their mandate with aplomb. Doris L. Bergen begins the volume with an article on German Jewry under Hitler from 1933 to 1939. Richard Menkis and Harold Troper write of the 1936 Olympics held in Hitler's capital, Berlin, and its coverage in the Anglo-Canadian press. Amanda Grzyb examines the Canadian press coverage of the 1939 St Louis affair. Rebecca Margolis details the ways in which the Yiddish press covered Nazi Germany in the thirties. Michael Brown deals with the issues faced by Jewish students at Canadian universities in this period. Norman Ravvin evokes the impact of the era on the English Canadian literary scene. James Walker, finally, speaks of the efforts made by Canadian Jewry to face its formidable challenges in its struggle for true inclusion into Canadian society.

This volume is a poignant and detailed evocation of an era and is much greater than the sum of its parts. The one area relatively lacking in the volume's otherwise

comprehensive coverage of the period is French Canada, whose press and public discourse constituted an important part of the political and social milieu in which the Jews of Canada lived and struggled in the 1930s.

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Cited in Irving Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada* (Toronto, Key Porter Books, 1999), 180.