

CANADA'S FIFTH COLUMN

By ALBERT MILLER

TODAY, Canada is a nation at war with Nazi Germany. As in other nations, Canada, too, has its fifth column of traitors. Nevertheless, the country has not yet realized that anti-Semitism is one of the most powerful weapons of the Nazis in their efforts to confuse public opinion and immobilize the government. Despite recent arrests of fascist leaders, the government has done little to overcome anti-Semitic propaganda, the smokescreen for more traitorous Nazi actions.

Canada is a democracy that has grown up in the deeply-rooted British tradition of freedom. It has lived on terms of cultural intimacy with free America. Because of the heterogenous composition of the Canadian nation, tolerance has been a *sine qua non* for peaceful government. The French Canadians are devoutly Catholic and the English Canadians devoutly Protestant. Such conditions could scarcely be said to provide fertile soil for a philosophy which is the antithesis of democracy and religion. And yet, the hard fact remains that since the outbreak of the war, anti-Semitism in Canada has grown to alarming proportions.

The situation is all the more remarkable in that the Jews play a very minor part in the economic and political life of the country. Canada was the first section of the British Empire to establish full political equality for the Jews. The bill which elevated them to the status of citizens with full rights was passed in 1832, twenty-six years before the British Parliament at Westminster introduced a similar statute. Such a beginning augured well, but the same innate conservatism which checked the introduction of social legislation has also militated against Jews.

The Jewish population of Canada today numbers some 160,000, or roughly 1.5% of the total population of the country. Of this number, approximately 65,000 are concentrated in the city of Montreal and another 50,000 in the city of Toronto. The remainder are scattered in urban communities from Halifax to Vancouver.

While the occupational structure of the Jewish section of the population shows a much greater middle class concentration than do Canada's other groupings, the difference is less marked than it is in such countries as England and the United States. According to the Canadian census of 1931, 70.2% of the Jews gainfully occupied were either white-collar workers or skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled laborers; only 5.1% of the Jews gain-

fully occupied are listed as practicing professionals as against a figure of 6.1% for the nation as a whole.

Nevertheless, economic discrimination against the Jews is perhaps more extensive in Canada than in any other English-speaking country. The bulk of the Jewish wage earners are concentrated in the needle trades industries, which were pioneered and organized by Jewish enterprise. In banking, large-scale industry and transportation there exists a *de facto* ban on Jewish employment. Only a handful of Jews have been able to enter the upper ranks of the business world. But even here they meet with discrimination. Only .94%, less than 1%, of the directors listed in the *Canadian Directory of Directors* are Jews, and these account for only .74% of the total number of directorates. According to Louis Rosenberg, who has made a thorough investigation of the status of the Jews in Canada, "there has not been even one Jewish director of any chartered bank in Canada since the opening of the twentieth century, nor is there even one mortgage company director. . . . There is not and has not been during the last forty years even one Jew upon the board of directors of any of the railway, ocean or air transportation companies of Canada, nor of the telephone and telegraph companies, public utility corporations or pulp and paper corporations." Furthermore, there is not a single Jew on the Montreal or Toronto Stock Exchange.

A parallel situation exists in the sphere of politics. In Britain there have been Disraeli, Lord Reading, Sassoon, and Hore-Belisha; in the United States there are Brandeis, Morgenthau, Frankfurter, and Lehman. But in Canada no Jew has ever risen above the rank of cabinet member in a provincial legislature, which was the position occupied by Mayor David Croll of Windsor, Ont., before Premier Hepburn forced his resignation over the General Motors strike of 1937. With the exception of Croll and Justice Samuel D. Schultz, who was appointed assistant county court judge in Vancouver in 1913, "no Jew has ever been appointed a member of the Senate, minister in a dominion or provincial government, deputy minister, or judge of any district court, Court of King's Bench or higher judicial office."

Anti-Semitism in Canada: 1933-1939

ORGANIZED anti-Semitism in Canada first began to flourish after Hitler took power in Germany. Prior to this time, there had been sporadic and ephemeral manifestations of anti-Jewish sentiment, such as the rabidly ultramontane papers, *La Croix* and *Le Vérité*, which commenced publication about 1900. These journals found no reading public. Between 1933 and 1935, however, there sprang into existence perhaps a score of anti-

Semitic organizations. In the maritime provinces there was the Blue Shirts of Canada, which at one time boasted of an active membership. In Toronto there was the White Shirts. In the western provinces there was the Canadian Nationalist Party, headed by one William Whitaker. And in the province of Quebec there was the *Parti National Social Chrétien* (National Socialist Christian Party, usually referred to as the P. N. S. C.), the organization of Adrien Arcand, the recently imprisoned *Führer* of Canadian fascism.

During the summer of 1934, there sprang up in Toronto a movement which called itself the "Swastikas," whose announced purpose it was to drive the Jews from the city's beaches. The agitation of this group culminated in a street riot that September in which some two thousand Jews and Christians were involved. The storm of condemnation which this incident provoked caused the city authorities to clamp down on the youthful anti-Semites, and their organization went quietly out of existence. A few years later, the movement was resurrected as the Canadian Union of Fascists, headed by Joseph Farr.

But Quebec proved to be the most fertile soil for anti-Semitism. The French Canadians constitute the most agrarian and impoverished of Canada's ethnic groupings; according to the statements of Laurentian nationalists, they possess no more than one-half of their proportionate share of the national wealth. The fault for this situation lies primarily with an educational system that permits 75% of the children to leave school before the age of twelve. But this, the French Canadians cannot see. What they do believe is that most of the wealth of the province is now in the hands of English Canadians, Americans and Jews.

The P.N.S.C. first began to attract attention in 1933-34. It modelled itself openly after the National Socialist Party of Germany, drilled storm troopers in black shirts, flaunted the swastika as its emblem, and acted as a clearing house for the Nazi propaganda which poured into Canada. Taking advantage of the believing nature of the French Canadian masses, its leader, Adrien Arcand, was able to stretch his vicious fantasies to limits which often approached his German models. In September 1934, for example, Arcand's paper, *Le Patriote*, "scooped" the world (according to its own claim) with a headline story which announced that Leon Trotsky had come to America via Shanghai disguised as the valet of the Baron Maurice de Rothschild and that the "infamous Jewish cutthroat" was conferring secretly in the "Red House" with Bernard Baruch and other members of the Brain Trust in preparation for the coming American revolution. When the revolution failed to materialize as per Arcand's information, the latter conveniently forgot all about his headlined scoop. And his followers asked no questions.

Though the membership of the P.N.S.C. never exceeded three to four thousand, it had many influential friends. Arcand was on intimate terms with important members of both the Federal and Provincial Governments. The Hon. Samuel Gobeil, M.P., member of the Federal cabinet under R. B. Bennett (1930-35), was a crony of Arcand's and even wrote an anti-Communist and anti-Semitic pamphlet over his own name (*La Griffé Rouge sur L'Université de Montréal*) which was printed by the P.N.S.C., swastika cover and all. Senator P. E. Blondin, Speaker of the Senate under Bennett, was frequently seen at Arcand's home in Montreal and in turn, frequently received him at his Ottawa residence. Arcand's influence in Conservative Party circles is attested to by the fact that he was placed in charge of their publicity for the Province of Quebec during the federal election of 1935. As editor of the Montreal daily *L'Illustration Nouvelle*, semi-official organ of the administration of former Premier Maurice Duplessis, Arcand was also able to play an important part in provincial politics.

Arcand found further support among certain members of the Catholic clergy. In a pastoral letter, Archbishop Gauthier of Montreal did say that "the doctrines of this party are very confused and a Catholic must consider them very carefully before subscribing to them." Yet, the Fascists were sometimes able to obtain the use of certain church halls for their meetings and conventions.

At a convention held in Kingston, Ont., in 1938, the P.N.S.C. merged with the Canadian Nationalist Party (Whitaker) and the Canadian Union of Fascists (Farr) to form the National Unity Party of Canada. Arcand, previously self-styled *pontifex maximus*, was appointed its "leader" or *chef*. Apart from the P.N.S.C., there was a whole host of organizations which, while they were not distinctly pro-Nazi, combined anti-Semitism with a program of French-Canadian super-nationalism and muddle-headed "corporatism." There were *La Jeune Canada*, *La Jeunesse Patriote*, *Le Parti Autonomiste*, *La Fédération des Clubs Ouvriers*, etc.

Perhaps the most dangerous development during this period was the growth of the *Achat Chez Nous* movement (Buy from French Canadians), an economic boycott directed against Protestant and Jewish merchants. The movement had a dual purpose, to protect the French Canadian merchants and to isolate the French Canadian masses from other influences. In a phenomenally short time, it swept the province. The St. Jean Baptiste Society (the biggest social and cultural organization in the province), the Catholic labor unions, the Catholic Commercial Travellers, and many other important organizations gave it their endorsement. Its agitation resulted in one of the most threatening outbursts of anti-Semitism, which

took place last summer when Father Maisonneuve of St. Agathe called upon his parishioners to drive the Jews out of the town.

Anti-Semitism: Spontaneous or Product of Propaganda

OUTSIDE of French Canada, organized anti-Semitism did not appear to be a very effective force. And yet, there was an undeniable intensification of anti-Jewish feeling among the populace at large, an intensification that was altogether incommensurate with the ostensibly puny membership of the fascist organizations. It would be fatuous to explain this on the basis of any innate hostility toward the Jews. The question poses itself: why should Canadian Christians who lived in comparative peace with their Jewish compatriots up until 1933 suddenly suffer an attack of "judophobia" shortly after Hitler took power in Germany? It is true that anti-Semitism tends to breed under conditions of economic or political stress. But the scope of the epidemic in Canada was sufficient to indicate that it was not entirely of domestic origin. There is abundant evidence at hand to show that during this period the virus of Nazi anti-Semitism was smuggled into Canada by agents of Hitler, both German and Canadian.

The connections of the P.N.S.C. with Germany were so open that its leader, Arcand, did not even trouble to dispute the charges made against it. Photostatic copies of correspondence between Arcand and Nazi leaders in Germany were made public by the Canadian Jewish Congress, which also drew up a catalogue of four hundred books, pamphlets and other publications in English, French, German and other languages. These had been imported from Germany and were being circulated in Canada by the P.N.S.C. The ex-Nazi agent, Kurt G. W. Lüdecke, speaks of Arcand as a foreign comrade in his book, *I Knew Hitler*.

The effectiveness of a movement cannot be gauged by its membership alone. The Communists have made more than one demonstration of how a cohesive and disciplined minority can obtain control over a mass organization and of how it can ultimately come to exercise an enormous influence through the periphery it has thus built up. A single diseased person may infect scores of others with the affliction that he bears. And a single Nazi can, by dint of perseverance and repetition, infect whole circles of friends and associates with the virus of anti-Semitism. A nucleus of half a dozen Fascists in a large factory can influence hundreds of workers. If their propaganda is carried on skilfully, the people they are trying to influence will not even be aware of the fact that they are being propagandized; they will feel convinced that anti-Semitism is the natural conclusion of their own mental processes. Once this has been accomplished, the stage is all set for a "spontaneous manifestation" of anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism and the War

DURING the months that preceded the outbreak of the war, the National Unity Party worked overtime to convince Canadians that only the Jews wanted to fight Germany and only the Jews stood to gain from such a war. Their activities, or at least their overt activities, came to an abrupt halt when Canada declared war on Germany. Arcand and some of the other leaders hid in the Laurentian Mountains. They closed down all their halls with the exception of their headquarters at 517 St. Lawrence Boulevard, Montreal, which remained open with one person in charge.

But when it became apparent that the authorities did not intend to take any immediate action, the Fascists took heart again. Arcand crept back to the office of *L'Illustration Nouvelle* in Montreal, from whence he issued fiery anti-war editorials in support of former Premier Duplessis during the war election of last October. The staff at headquarters was enlarged by some dozen legionnaires. The squads and sections and companies began to drill again under the direction of Major Maurice Scott. Plans were made for a practice mobilization. Bonds ranging in denominations from twenty-five cents to five dollars were issued against the security of the future fascist government of Canada. Voluminous propaganda was disseminated.

The outbreak of the war was also the signal for an intensification of the *Achat Chez Nous* boycott movement. Father Archambault, head of the *École Sociale Populaire*, recently warned the French Canadians that anyone who bought from a Protestant or a Jew was "a traitor to his race."

The activities of the Fascists since the war began have not succeeded in recruiting large numbers to their ranks, but they have resulted in numerous spontaneous "manifestations" of anti-Semitism. The canard has been going the rounds in Canada that the Jews are not enlisting in the army. Since the Department of Militia has issued no statistics on the ethnic composition of the army, a definitive rebuttal is impossible. The record of the Jews during the last war is to their credit. Whereas, in the nation as a whole, 31% of the males over twenty-one were in the armed forces, the Jews were represented by 37.8% of their males of military age. Of the Jewish officers and men whose records are available, 4.52% received decorations, a figure that compares favorably with that of the army as a whole. Yet these facts are not taken into account. One Jew or two Jews among a hundred soldiers are a bit hard to find—especially when many of them have used assumed names because of the obvious disadvantage of a Jewish name in case of capture in the present war. And so the story continues to pass from mouth to mouth, while resentment grows apace.

Assailed on the one hand for not enlisting in sufficient numbers, the Jews do not always find enlisting the easiest task in the world. While the bulk of the recruiting officers and staff officers are scrupulously fair, anti-Jewish feeling does exist in the army. In one city, a group of ten Jewish doctors applied as a unit for service with the medical corps; their application was not even acknowledged. The author has also spoken to a Jewish soldier (a veteran of the last war who left his family and his job to enlist again), who received a small sentence by a court-martial because he punched his sergeant when the latter called him a "damn Jew." These acts of prejudice reflect the attitude of individuals only and not that of the army itself, yet they are factors in the situation.

The Internment of Arcand

ONE of the most amazing features of the entire situation has been the failure of the authorities until recently to take any action against organized anti-Semitism. While the Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested scores of Communists throughout the country for distributing "peace" leaflets, up until May 29, not a single Fascist was arrested for distributing anti-Semitic propaganda.

On May 29, the R.C.M.P. arrested Arcand, Farr, Major Scott and eight other leaders of the National Unity Party. But at the time of writing—more than one month after these first arrests—a number of the most prominent leaders of the party are still at liberty and unmolested. Among them are Dr. Lalanne, chief contributor to the party funds; Lionel St. Jean, provincial organizer and virtually second in command to Arcand; Jean Tissot, in charge of the Ottawa district; Dr. Davidson of Toronto, and others.

Before Arcand's trial was opened, rumors were current that he would be tried for high treason, and that further arrests, some of them in high places, were being contemplated. The trial itself opened sensationally enough. The prosecution presented correspondence between the N.U.P. leaders and Nazi officials in Germany as well as with Fascist officials in Italy; a document bearing the Shanghai address of the notorious Nazi agent, J. H. Becker; a letter from Farr to Arcand which informs the *Führer* that the boys in Toronto are anxiously awaiting his command and "they bar nothing"; and other incriminating evidence. After forty-five such exhibits had been recorded, Chief Justice Deserres stopped the proceedings with the statement: "Some of the exhibits lead me to believe that there has been a conspiracy against the state." He instructed the prosecuting attorney to submit the evidence for the further advice of the provincial attorney general. It was at this point that Federal Attorney

General Lapointe intervened, stopped the trial, and ordered the accused men interned for the duration of the war.

The action of the Attorney General was subsequently questioned in Parliament by Dr. Herbert Bruce, one of the leaders of the Conservative Party. The explanation of Lapointe on this occasion was that "they are interned in order that we may know that they are safely in custody. They are being held to await any further proceedings or prosecution to which they may be liable."

The internment of Arcand and Co. has not put an end to Nazi propaganda in Canada. With the apparatus still at its disposal and with thousands of members still on its books, the National Unity Party is still in a position to carry on. The Fascists are discreet enough, however, to steer clear of an open attack on Canada's war effort. But there can be no mistaking the implication of their propaganda. The fact that the Nazis openly applaud each new gain registered by the forces of anti-Semitism in the Allied countries should be sufficient to give pause to those individuals who unfortunately attempt to reconcile patriotism with anti-Semitism.

There is, however, a brighter side to the picture. Increasingly, Christians are appraising anti-Semitism for what it is—a weapon of the fifth column within the country—and are combating it as a measure of national defense. In the Province of Quebec there are a number of Catholic priests who are doing their best to bring about a Jewish-Catholic understanding. The liberal paper *Le Jour* has carried on a persistent campaign against anti-Semitism in the province. Elsewhere in Canada, Protestant clergymen of various denominations have mounted the same platform with rabbis to plead for harmony and unity among the peoples of the nation. The Canadian Jewish Congress, for its part, has carried on an almost heroic labor of education. There is yet hope that the forces of light may triumph over the forces of darkness.