

"You'll Get Used to It!":  
The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940–43

by

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## Abstract

After the fall of France in 1940, when German invasion of the British Isles seemed imminent, some 2000 Jewish refugees from Nazi oppression were detained by the British Home Office as dangerous "enemy aliens" and sent to Canada to be interned for the duration of the war. While the British government admitted its mistake in interning the refugees within months of their arrest, the Canadian government continued to keep them behind barbed wire for up to three years, reflecting its administration's anti-semitic immigration policies more broadly. Instead of using their case as a signpost in Canada's liberalizing immigration history, this dissertation situates their story in a longer narrative of class and ethnic discrimination to show the troubling foundations of modern democracy. As one tool in the nation state's normalizing project, incarceration attempted to mould the Jewish men in the state's eye. How the refugees pushed back in a joint claim of selfhood forms the material basis of this study. Through their relationship with the spaces of internment, work and leisure, sexual desire and gender performance, and by protesting governmental power, the refugees' identities evolved and coalesced, demonstrating the fluidity of modern selfhood despite the limiting power of nationhood. The internees' evolving sense of self played a large role in their experience and the development of their collective postwar narrative which trumpets their own success in Canada; while the state differentiated them from its own citizenry, the Jewish refugees pushed back in order to be seen as valuable contributors to the national body. Consequently, their collective memory of internment as a continuation of that project and, finally, as evidence of its fulfillment constitutes a critical part of internment history. By broadening the framework of Jewish internment during WWII, a pattern of differing and detaining under the mores of modern democracy emerges.

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## **Introduction** **The Optics of Modernity**

In the confusion of their first days as internees in Trois-Rivières, the Jewish refugees from Nazi oppression devised a plan that would help authorities see them for who they were instead of the fifth columnists the British Home Office suspected them to be when they were detained as dangerous enemy aliens and given over to Canadian custodianship. The Director of Internment Operations, General Panet, was due to visit the temporary camp shortly after their arrival, the inspection presenting itself, or so the internees thought, as their opportunity to be recognized as refugees. When Panet arrived, he was greeted somewhat curiously by all the orthodox Jews in camp who had gathered by their enclosure's entrance in the hope that by glimpsing their physical markers of religious difference, the General would acknowledge their internment as a case of mistaken identity. Initially the internees' plan appeared to work. General Panet was shocked by the orthodox Jews' appearance, leading the internees to believe that their release would be imminent. Instead, a few days later a parcel arrived from Army Headquarters addressed to the "Orthodox Group" of Trois-Rivières; inside the package were 1000 razor blades and with them, a clear message from Internment Operations. Being Jewish was not cause for release, at least not within Canada.<sup>1</sup>

This is the story of some 2000 German and Austrian male refugees from Nazi oppression who arrived in Canada in the sweltering heat of a July summer in 1940 to a cold reception of jeering local observers and antagonistic military guards.<sup>2</sup> Predominant among the new arrivals

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<sup>1</sup> *Jewish Life* (July 1973): 38-49, "Pfeiffer, Julius (1980-1991)," The Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives (CJCCCA), P91/04.

<sup>2</sup> In total, 2,354 Austrian, German, and Italian refugees were sent to Canada by the British Home Office. This study focuses in particular on those Austrian and German born for their shared language and culture and because Italian refugees were separated into their own camp on St. Helen's Island. For a more thorough analysis of Italian internees in Canada, see Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, Angelo Princip, eds., *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad* (University of Toronto Press, 2000).

were Jews who had found refuge from Nazism in Great Britain before the outbreak of the Second World War, where they were screened by tribunals and classified as "friendly enemy aliens." However, with the Allied retreat from Dunkirk in the spring of 1940, fears of a German invasion of the British Isles grew and with it, fears of suspected fifth columnists within its borders. Those refugees who had been categorized as "friendly" were arbitrarily rounded into British internment camps while the government sought a more permanent solution to its problem. Flexing its influence over the Dominions, the government eventually convinced Canada and Australia to accept and incarcerate over 4000 prisoners of war and "dangerous enemy aliens."<sup>3</sup> Those Jewish refugees who had been temporarily interned in Britain were placed on ships with genuine Nazi POWs and shipped to the former colonies as dangerous enemy spies. Their cold reception in Canada, then, reflects this brief mix-up in status, but their continued incarceration until 1943 reflects more deeply seated issues of anti-semitism, discriminatory immigration policies, and government surveillance.

The exchange between the orthodox group in Trois-Rivières and the Director of Internment Operations reflects the optics of modernity—the politics of seeing and being seen in a shifting contrapuntal world.<sup>4</sup> The state's vision of the Jewish internees rubbed up against their own developing collective identity and desire to be seen as refugees. These competing visions traversed one another on the terrains of internment where the contradictions of late modernity sharpened to form new subject positions against the backdrop of a fragmenting world and the

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<sup>3</sup> Alexander Paterson, "Report on Civilian Internees Sent from the United Kingdom to Canada During the Unusually Fine Summer of 1940," Library and Archives Canada (LAC), MG30 192 Vol. 2.

<sup>4</sup> "Modernity" refers to both the period of time that followed the Enlightenment (roughly from the French Revolution to the postwar years) and a framework of thought that characterized the period. Most importantly to this study, reflexivity was a central feature of modernity so that identity was constructed from a series of shifting self-narratives in response to, among other factors, the tension between nationalism and globalisation. For more on modernity, see Simon Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2006), 107-130; Callum G. Brown, *Postmodernism for Historians* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2005), 6, 13.

Holocaust. The Jewish internees in Trois-Rivières believed that if the state could see them, using the orthodox among them as their sign-post, then their collective identity would be understood, revealing an important relationship between sight and selfhood. If the modern *flâneur*, popularized by Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin, symbolizes the potential of modernity through his observations of urban aesthetics, then twentieth-century internment represents its perils through a more sinister form of spectatorship and ordering that occurred outside of modern city centres.<sup>5</sup>

The optics of modernity frames this study of Jewish refugees interned in Canada to highlight visuality as an important way of knowing and being known. It does this in two key ways. First, it argues that the Jewish refugees' evolving sense of self was constructed behind barbed wire through their collective effort to manage the state's discriminatory vision of them. This was a convoluted process that required significant self-reflection and push-back against internment's normalizing class, ethnic, and gender strictures. It did not end with their release, but continued to evolve as they narrated their story, assigning new meaning to the past with shifting presents. Secondly, the material source base of this project reinforces its basic premise by drawing on visual sources where available. Not only was the politics of sight critical to the refugees' future in Canada, it remains an important point of contestation in the field of history which has traditionally drawn upon written sources, privileging certain forms of knowledge over others. This framework helps blur any neatly imposed barriers between past and present, allowing me to draw upon a large source base that extends beyond the immediate timeframe of their internment and to conclude with a former internee's assessment of its legacy. This supports

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<sup>5</sup> Françoise Meltzer, *Seeing Double: Baudelaire's Modernity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011); Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Kevin McLaughlin, trans. Howard Eiland (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

the case for Jewish internment as more than a blip in Canada's liberalizing immigration history; it speaks to universal experiences of discrimination and detainment under the mores of democracy.

### ***Contextualizing Jewish Internment***

As a case study in twentieth-century internment, this dissertation takes as its subject the politics of nation-building and belonging. Under the leadership of Frederick Charles Blair, the Canadian Immigration Branch trumpeted a strict immigration policy based on racial discrimination during the interwar years. Prior to the internment of refugees, Canada had permitted fewer than 5000 Jews to enter Canada since the rise of Nazism in Germany.<sup>6</sup> The government did not intend to allow the back door immigration of nearly 2000 more through the "wartime blunder" of internment.<sup>7</sup> Defining its citizenry ran chief among Canada's nation-building tools and helped create the powerful structures within which Jewish refugees made sense of their shifting transnational identities.

More broadly, this study analyzes modern incarceration as the ultimate form of government surveillance. While much has been made of the government's mishandling of the refugees given it anticipated receiving POWs and dangerous enemy aliens only, internment as a way to monitor, shape, and define its citizenry was not new to Canada, Great Britain, or the United States.<sup>8</sup> During the First World War under the War Measures Act, so-called "enemy

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<sup>6</sup> Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> Eric Koch, *Deemed Suspect: A Wartime Blunder* (London: Methuen, 1980).

<sup>8</sup> William B Glidden, "Internment Camps in America, 1917-1920," *Military Affairs* 37, no. 4 (December 1973): 137-41; Kay Saunders, "'The Stranger in Our Gates': Internment Policies in the United Kingdom and Australia during the Two World Wars, 1914-39," *Immigrants & Minorities* 22, no. 1 (March 2003): 22-43; George Buri, "'Enemies Within Our Gates': Brandon's Alien Detention Centre During the Great War." *Manitoba History*, no. 56 (October 2007): 3-11; Panikos Panayi, "Forgotten Prisoners of the Great War." *History Today* 62:11 (November 2012): 34-35; Joerg A. Nagler, "Enemy Aliens and Internment in World War I: Alvo Von Alvensleben In Fort Douglas, Utah, A

aliens" were subject to internment and in the interwar years, the "red scare" presented a new threat to the limits of good citizenship.<sup>9</sup> In both instances, Ukrainian Canadians were the state's primary targets as working-class immigrants with Austro-Hungarian citizenship.<sup>10</sup> Although they were not the only ethnic group categorized as such, they were separated from German-speaking internees and sent to work sites in Canada's hinterland where they performed physical labour.<sup>11</sup> During the Great Depression, unemployed young men were sent to relief and youth training camps in the wilderness of Canada where they laboured for room and board while receiving instruction in the duties of responsible citizenship. Between 1932 and 1939, the federal government established these camps across Canada in partnership with the provinces as a way to offer subsistence to out-of-work men. In practice, however, they targeted low income, often ethnically "undesirable," immigrants for geographical separation from society.<sup>12</sup> They also had the opposite effect of further radicalizing the working-class men given the camps' poor working and living conditions and meager wages. Only one year after closing, at least some of these sites were re-opened to house the Jewish refugees.

Drawing on this history of internment as the only precedent or mental map for dealing with the unique refugee situation, the guards who stood watch over the internees treated them more as problematic citizens than as menacing POWs as the years of incarceration toiled on. Like the "enemy aliens" of WWI and the unemployed men in the intervening years, the Jewish

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Case Study," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 58:4 (October 1990): 388–405; Gerhard P. Bassler, "The Enemy Alien Experience in Newfoundland 1914-1918," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 20: 3 (September 1988): 42–62.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Hiebert, "Class, Ethnicity and Residential Structure: The Social Geography of Winnipeg, 1901–1921," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 17: 1 (January 1991): 56-86.

<sup>10</sup> "War Measures Act," <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/war-measures-act/> (accessed May 1st 2016).

<sup>11</sup> Lubomyr Luciuk, "InfoUkes: Ukrainian History -- Internment of Ukrainians in Canada 1914-1920 -- A Time for Atonement" <http://www.infoukes.com/history/internment/booklet01/> (accessed May 1st 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Lara Campbell, *Respectable Citizens: Gender, Family, and Unemployment in Ontario's Great Depression* (University of Toronto Press, 2009), 5; Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came: Deportation From Canada, 1900-1935*, (University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 1-10.

internees were not desirable citizens, which similarly made them subject to geographical separation and surveillance. Towing the line behind barbed wire became a crucial prerequisite for gaining entry into Canadian society, and it also served the government's purpose of moulding potential citizens as internees were gradually released. During WWII, this experience was not unique to the Jewish refugees as Canadian citizens and recent immigrants were once again detained under the War Measures Act. This time, German, Italian, and Japanese Canadians were interned as "enemy aliens" because of their shared ancestry with the Axis powers. Most infamously, Japanese-Canadians and Americans were forcibly relocated from the western coast to the interior and threatened with mass deportation.<sup>13</sup> The redress campaigns of Japanese and, to a lesser extent, Italian Canadians in the 1980s helped canonize WWII internment as a racist miscarriage of justice.<sup>14</sup> However, the story of the Jewish refugees remains relatively unknown despite its significance to internment, immigration, Holocaust and diaspora history.

Situating the specific history of Jewish internment in Canada against the broader context of modern nation-building and incarceration speaks to the tension between migration and belonging, borders and networks, *heimat* (homeland)<sup>15</sup> and away. Though "diaspora" as a way to describe a dispersed community pre-dates modernity, the rise of modern nationalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contributed to the formation of nationalities as subject positions from which one made sense of the world and one's place in it. The language of

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<sup>13</sup> Jordan Stanger-Ross, "Telling a Difficult Past: Kishizo Kimura's Memoir of Entanglement in Racist Policy," *BC Studies* 181 (Spring 2014): 39–62; Catherine L. Cullen, "The Education of Japanese-Americans, 1942-1946," *American Educational History Journal* 38: 1/2 (Spring 2011): 197–218; Pamela Sugiman, "'A Million Hearts from Here': Japanese Canadian Mothers and Daughters and the Lessons of War," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 26:4 (Summer 2007): 50–68.

<sup>14</sup> Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, Angelo Principe, eds., *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad* (University of Toronto Press, 2000); Alexandra L. Wood, "Challenging History: Educating the Public about the Japanese Canadian Experience in British Columbia," *Historical Studies in Education / Revue D'histoire de L'éducation* 25:2 (November 4, 2013): 65-85.

<sup>15</sup> Although *Heimat* is a specifically German concept, it can most closely be translated in English as homeland; it denotes a place towards which has a strong feeling of belonging.

citizenship and rights produced the power to name and categorize people into hierarchies of belonging and exclusion. The ultimate consequence for failing to assimilate into the body politic, whether a result of so-called sexual, moral, or racial degeneration, was detention or segregation from society.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, globalisation through advances in transportation and telecommunications helped build transnational networks that penetrated the perceived rigid borders of nation states, complicating the binary between home and away.

Consequently, modernity created the structures of diaspora that defined and constrained the Jewish refugees' path from Nazi occupied Europe to Canada. At the same time, their path also failed to conform to the teleology of exile and return typical of Diaspora Studies. Some arrived in Great Britain to wait for their American visa quotas, others intended to remain in England after completing their higher education at the prestigious Oxbridge, and some did become involved in Zionist organizations. Given the ramifications of the Holocaust, very few intended to return to Germany or Austria, their modern *heimat*. And yet their collective cultural heritage was a point of pride in Canadian internment camps where internees frequently noted their guards' provincialism.<sup>17</sup> Their story demonstrates the fluid and entangled reality of modern selfhood in spite of the limiting and defining power of nationhood. Their internment in Canada serves as a way to interrogate the nation state's normalising project from within one of its most constraining structures, the prison.

### ***Historiography: Twentieth-Century Immigration & Anti-semitism***

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<sup>16</sup> My analysis draws on Michel Foucault's critique of the modern penal system published in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977).

<sup>17</sup> For example, see Interviews by Harry Rasky: Fred Schlessinger, 1980, LAC, MG30 C-192 vol. 3.

My approach to the history of Jewish internment departs significantly from existing studies that recount their story as a tragic episode in Canada's immigration history. While it was undoubtedly that, unsurprisingly current studies start with the knowledge that approximately half of the internees chose to make their lives in Canada following release, some going on to win Canada's most prestigious honours.<sup>18</sup> Their success in Canada functions as tragic evidence of the potential value to Canada of Jewish lives lost in the Holocaust due to its closed door policy in the interwar and Second World War years. However, this narrative limits our possibility to dwell in the historical moment when the internees' fate was precarious and their admiration for Canada yet developed. If historians of immigration have effectively taken up questions of immigration and internment policy, they have been relatively slow to implement some of the themes and methods coming out of the larger field of migration history, specifically diaspora theory.<sup>19</sup>

As a category of analysis, diaspora offers an alternative to teleological understandings of immigration and assimilation that can normalize the nation state. By following the movements of modernity, it allows us to explore the "unfinished identities" that are constructed from multiple senses of belonging.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, this study follows a large body of immigration histories, but it

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<sup>18</sup> Ontario Jewish Archives (OJA), "Ex-Internees Newsletter 1969, 1996-2000," *fonds* 93, file 9.

<sup>19</sup> William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies," *Diaspora* 1:1(1991): 83-99; James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9:3(Aug. 1994): 302-344; Rogers Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28:1 (Jan. 2005): 1-19; Khachig Tölölyan, "The Contemporary Discourse of Diaspora Studies," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27:3(2007): 647-655; Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin, "Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 19:4 (1993): 693-725; Rebecca Kobrin, "Rewriting the Diaspora: Images of Eastern Europe in the Bialystock Landsmanschaft Press, 1921-45," *Jewish Social Studies* 12:3 (Spring 2006): 1-38; Paul Gilroy, "The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity," in *Theorizing Diaspora*, eds. Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, 49-80 (Malden: Blackwell, 2003); Marianne Hirsch and Nancy K. Miller, "Introduction," in *Rites of Return: Diaspora Poetics and the Politics of Memory* (New York: Columbia UP, 2011): 1-20; Celia Haig-Brown, "Decolonizing Diaspora," in *Decolonizing Philosophies of Education*, ed. Ali A. Abdi, 73-90 (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2012); Shona N. Jackson, "Introduction," in *Creole Indigeneity: Between Myth and Nation in the Caribbean* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 2012): 1-39; David Eng, "Epilogue: Out Here and Over There: Queerness and Diaspora in Asian American Studies," in *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America* (Durham: Duke UP, 2001): 204-28; Jarrod Hayes, "Queering Roots, Queering Diaspora," In Hirsch and Miller, *Rites of Return* 72-87.

<sup>20</sup> Gilroy, "The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity," 50.

employs a transnational lens to get at internees' fluctuating sense of self before they became Canadians. While diaspora as an identity or practice constitutes a specific experience of displacement, it has recently been used interchangeably with transnationalism because they often refer to the same categories of people who have migrated voluntarily or by force.<sup>21</sup> In this study, transnationalism is employed more broadly to refer to the networks of connectivity that exist across supposedly rigid borders rather than the formation of specific (and multiple) identities.

With the turn of the twentieth century, Sir Wilfred Laurier made his now famous prediction that the century would belong to Canada. While Canada failed to emerge as the economic and political powerhouse that Laurier imagined, eclipsing the United States, the era is commonly remembered as giving birth to *the* nation. So-called "defining" historical moments, such as the victory at Vimy Ridge in 1917, are frequently cited as evidence of a unifying national identity, this mantra rubbing up against the reality of a colony of divided immigrants and subjugated indigenous peoples.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, two world wars and the fall out of numerous ethnic conflicts drove thousands more migrants, displaced persons, and refugees to Canada. As a result, historians of twentieth century Canada are tasked to make sense of what it means to be Canadian, if such a prescription can exist, while incorporating evolving stories of displacement, migration, and, sometimes, return. Looking back on one hundred years of immigration, historians have tended to focus on the evolution of policy to get at important issues of inclusion and exclusion (used here broadly to encompass class, cultural, linguistic, and racial discrimination).<sup>23</sup> While

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Faist, "Diaspora and Transnationalism: What Kind of Dance Partners?" in *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*, eds. Rainer Bauböck & Thomas Faist (Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 9.

<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997); David Koffman, "Recent Trends in the History of Jewish-First Nations Encounters in Canada," presented at the Association of Jewish Canadian Studies conference (Ottawa, June 2015).

<sup>23</sup> For example, see Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern*, 2nd ed. (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988); Reg Whitaker, *Canadian Immigration Policy since Confederation*, Canadian Historical Association Booklet # 15, 1991; Gerald Tulchinsky, ed., *Immigration in Canada: Historical Perspectives*

this endeavour is a worthwhile and necessary one, it also risks developing into the self-congratulatory teleology of multiculturalism because any analysis of policy development can only draw one's attention, either deliberately or not, to the present situation—one which is presumably better than what came before. An antidote to this may be to shift our focus not only to the experiences of immigrants, a task carried out by social historians in the 1990s, but to see them as more than Canadians or groups to be absorbed into a single national identity.<sup>24</sup> Diaspora theory, most closely associated with Jewish history, promises to break through Laurier's normative nation-building narrative to see the transnational networks at play in many immigrants' multi-conscious sense of belonging.

Neither the refugee experience nor diaspora were unique to the rise of the nation state. However, the solidifying of national borders as barriers of belonging and refusal created "statelessness" as a mode for understanding the self and "stateless persons" as a group in need of intergovernmental attention. Although Canada's adoption of the Multicultural Act in 1971 has traditionally led to assumptions in popular memory of Canada's long-time role as harbourer of the stateless, Gerald Dirks argues Canada as a moral nation is a rather recent invention, one which he sees as emerging in response to the post Second World War and the Holocaust induced

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(Toronto: Copp Clark Longman, 1994); Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (University of Toronto Press, 1998); Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2006*, Revised Ed. (Dundurn Press, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> For example, see Norman Hillmer, Boydan Kordan and Lubomyr Luciuk eds., *On Guard For Thee: War, Ethnicity and the Canadian State, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1988); Agnes Calliste, "Canada's Immigration Policy and Domesticity from the Caribbean: The Second Domestic Scheme," in *Race, Class and Gender: Bonds and Barriers*, ed. Jesse Vorst et al, 135-65 (Between the Lines, 1989) reprinted in *Canadian Women: A Reader*; Stephen Constantine, "Introduction: Empire Migration and Imperial Harmony," in *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars*, ed. S. Constantine (Manchester University Press, 1990); Marilyn Barber, *Immigrant Domestic Servants in Canada*, CHA Booklet #16 (1991); Susan E. Wurtele, "Assimilation through Domestic Transformation: Saskatchewan's Masonic Scholarship Project, 1922-23," *The Canadian Geographer*, 38:2 (1994): 123-133; Franca Iacovetta, Paula Draper & Robert A. Ventresca, eds., *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s* (University of Toronto Press, 1998); Gerald Tulchinsky, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1998).

displaced persons crisis.<sup>25</sup> Up until that point, according to Dirks, Canada's official stance on international crises was inconsistent, at best, and one of indifference, at worst.<sup>26</sup> Historians taking up the issue since have shown his initial analysis to be too generous; according to Howard Palmer and Donald Avery, Canada was a "reluctant host" to ethnically diverse immigrants.<sup>27</sup> Far from indifferent, then, Canadians took a vested interest in globalization as it impacted them at home in terms of "preferred" immigrants. Pockets of racism and anti-semitism, which Dirks singles out as especially problematic in interwar Quebec, were not isolated occurrences on the peripheries, driven economically by external sources in Germany and the United States.<sup>28</sup> Instead, emphasis should be placed on the long history of discrimination at home.

Taking up the issue of how Canada arrived in the early 1970s at an official policy of multiculturalism, historians of the mid 1990s deemed Canada a nation of "reluctant hosts" to account for the simultaneous influx of migrant workers, in particular, and the persistence of racial discrimination in choosing "preferred" immigrants.<sup>29</sup> While Howard Palmer charts the evolution of Anglo-Canadians attitudes towards how new immigrants should be incorporated into Canadian society, from assimilation to "melting pot" assimilation before arriving finally at multiculturalism, Donald Avery examines the underlying economic and racial factors that drove this perceived progress in approach. In sum, Canada had to reconcile its need for foreign workers during times of economic prosperity, spurred on predominantly by the unskilled labour industries, with its reluctance to welcome newcomers from outside Anglo-Saxon Britain.

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<sup>25</sup> Gerald Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism?* ( McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.

<sup>27</sup> Howard Palmer, "Reluctant Hosts: Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century," in *Immigration in Canada: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Gerald Tulchinsky (Queen's University 1994); Donald H. Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1986-1994* (McClelland & Stewart, 1995).

<sup>28</sup> Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy*, 54.

<sup>29</sup> Palmer, "Reluctant Hosts: Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century"; Avery, *Reluctant Host*.

Consequently, during economic depressions, foreign-born workers were seen by the unemployed as stealing jobs from Canadian-born citizens, putting pressure on the government to tighten immigration quotas and deport recent migrants who drained the relief system.<sup>30</sup> Where Dirks sees altruism in the post-WWII influx of DPs and Holocaust survivors in Canada, Avery cautions that the opening of immigration gates in the 1950s had more to do with an economic boom and self-interest than morality. Instead, he acknowledges, improvements in Canada's human rights' record were reflected in the gradual emergence of the welfare state.

The specific case of Jewish immigration in the twentieth century was largely impacted by xenophobic stereotypes of Jews as, contradictorily, both money-lenders and communists. In his comprehensive account of the Canadian Jewish community, Gerald Tulchinsky explains that the government used the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike and the accompanying "red scare" to tighten the inflow of non-preferred immigrants, confirming in some ways Avery's link between labour unrest and immigration policy.<sup>31</sup> While assumed to be communists, Jews were also accused by Frederick Blair of being unsuccessful farmers who would always revert back to "traditional" Jewish professions in cities. In other words, they were prevented from filling the large farming colony quotas out West. For the following twenty-five years, Canada infamously maintained the worst record among western countries for admitting Jewish refugees while the noose tightened around them in continental Europe. The extent of Canada's anti-semitic immigration policy was brought to light as early as 1982 by Irving Abella and Harold Troper's *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*, which made public Blair's now well known 1938 response to the plight of Jewish refugees from Nazism. The salience of their text has to do with its claim for Jewish specificity in understanding immigration policy. Would-be Jewish

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<sup>30</sup> Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada, 1900-1935* (University of Ottawa Press, 1988).

<sup>31</sup> Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*.

immigrants were not just one group among many turned away from Canada in the interwar years due to a failing economy and worldwide anti-semitism.<sup>32</sup> This does not explain, they argue, Canada's poor record in comparison to other countries that suffered from the same depressions.<sup>33</sup>

Although Canada closed its doors to other minorities, especially those visibly identifiable, the issue of official anti-semitism has garnered special attention given how the Holocaust makes apparent the scope of Canada's moral failing to solve the interwar refugee crisis. Those few Jewish refugees who were permitted entrance to Canada and the Holocaust survivors who were permitted entrance following 1945 have been very vocal in narrating their own immigrant stories since the Eichmann trial made popular "Holocaust" as the word to describe the genocide of six million Jews.<sup>34</sup> Following Tulchinsky's sentiment that things "could have been worse in Canada," as a whole, Jewish memoirs tend to shine favourably on their "host" society that did not, after all, perpetrate the Holocaust directly.<sup>35</sup> Instead, monographs and memoirs alike cite the arrival of postwar Jewish immigrants as evidence of Canada's transition "from a bicultural to a multicultural" landscape.<sup>36</sup> The cultural, political, and economic contribution of Jewish immigrants to Canadian society often serves as a testament to what Canada lost by turning away hundreds of thousands more.<sup>37</sup> In focusing in particular on the case of the "accidental" Jewish immigrants who first came to Canada in 1940 as internees, only to be absorbed into Canada following their release, historians often unintentionally feed into

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>33</sup> Abella & Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948* (Lester & Orpen Denny, 1982).

<sup>34</sup> See also Paula Draper, "Surviving Their Survival: Women, Memory, and the Holocaust," in *Sisters or Strangers Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History*, eds. Epp, Iacovetta, & Swyripa, 399-414 (University of Toronto Press, 2004).

<sup>35</sup> Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 202.

<sup>36</sup> Modris Eksteins, *Walking Since Daybreak: A Story of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Heart of our Century* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1999), 93.

<sup>37</sup> Tulchinsky, *Branching Out*, 60-62.; Paula Draper, "The 'Camp Boys': Interned Refugees from Nazism," in *Enemies Within: Italians and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*, eds. Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, & Angelo Principe (University of Toronto Press, 2000).

multiculturalism's normative nation-building narrative.<sup>38</sup> Where the group of two thousand were once stateless following the rise of Nazism, they were regretfully held as dangerous "enemy aliens" in Canada on behalf of Britain before forgiving their gatekeepers and becoming Canadian citizens themselves.

Admittedly simplified, this narrative nevertheless demonstrates how the history of Jewish immigration also follows the common diaspora binary of "there" then "here." First they were cast out from Germany and Austria, their citizenship as an official marker of nationhood and belonging stripped. Then they arrived here, in Canada, and adopted Canadian citizenship. In this narrative, there is no space to dwell in between when the internees' fate, and the ending of this story, was yet written. One sense of belonging is quickly replaced by another rather than examining what W. E. B. DuBois identified as "double consciousness"—in this case, their multiple identities as Jewish Germans and Austrians seeking a place of belonging in the English-speaking West. Perhaps the most well-known published history of the accidental immigrants is an autobiographical account, supplemented with significant archival and oral research, written by Eric Koch. *Deemed Suspect: A Wartime Blunder* weaves the history of internment policy with his personal narrative, focusing on the relationships formed between "camp boys."<sup>39</sup> After charting significant injustices that he and his fellow internees endured in Canadian internment camps, Koch ultimately concludes with a familiar national trope; following their release, "many of us even passed the ultimate test of true Canadianism: a passionate interest in hockey."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Paula Draper, "The Accidental Immigrants: Canada and the Interned Refugees" (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1983).

<sup>39</sup> Eric Koch, *Deemed Suspect: A Wartime Blunder* (Methuen, 1980); Walter W. Igerscheimer, *Blatant Injustice: The Story of a Jewish Refugee from Nazi Germany Imprisoned in Britain and Canada during World War II* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005); Harry Loewy, *Days Behind Barbed Wire* (unpublished manuscript, Canadian Jewish Congress Archives); Erwin Schild, "A Canadian Footnote to the Holocaust," *Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 5:1 (Spring 1981): 31-44.

<sup>40</sup> Koch, *Deemed Suspect*, 259.

Whereas the narrow definition of diaspora would have Koch rejected by his "host" society, Koch instead sees his as a story of immigration into a society in the process of becoming multicultural.<sup>41</sup> His point of view speaks to broader analyses of Jewish acculturation that argue modern Jews sometimes tapped into contemporary discourses on patriotism to convey a sense of loyalty to the state or trustworthiness. In other words, they performed the nation.<sup>42</sup> Because my analysis departs from the historiography represented by Koch, former internees may disagree with my representation of them here as more than would-be Canadians, but I have attempted to show the complexities of internment, both its miseries and its pleasures, as they were experienced at the time and then later remembered.

### ***Methodology & Diaspora Theory***

One of this study's aims is to demonstrate that distinctions between 'home' and 'away' served the nation-state project. Historians of British Empire and Postcolonial Studies have led the charge in transnational approaches to cultural exchange, as opposed to one-way cultural transfers, but the project has yet to take root in the Canadian context.<sup>43</sup> This is due in part to the emphasis placed on immigration in North American Diaspora Studies, which erases the lands and the histories of the indigenous people in the places where they arrive.<sup>44</sup> While my study points to this issue without claiming to rectify it, it employs diaspora theory as a method to

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<sup>41</sup> William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies," *Diaspora* 1:1 (1991): 83-99.

<sup>42</sup> For example, see Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Performing the State: The Jewish Palestinian Pavillion at the New York World's Fair, 1939-1940," in *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times*, edited with Jonathan Karp (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Derek Jonathan Penslar, "An Unlikely Internationalism: Jews at War in Modern Western Europe," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 7:3 (2008): 309-323.

<sup>43</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Empire in Question: Reading, Writing, and Teaching British Imperialism* (Duke University Press, 2011); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>44</sup> Celia Haig-Brown, "Decolonizing Diaspora: Whose Traditional Land Are We On?" in *Decolonizing Philosophies of Education*, ed. Ali A. Abdi, 75 (Sense Publishers, 2011).

critique both the structures created by nation-building that defined and constrained social experiences and classical Diaspora Studies which has its own heteronormative narrative.

"Diaspora" is a Greek term that originally emerged to describe the dispersions of Jews, Greeks, and Armenians—what is often referred to as the "classical" diasporas. It gained traction in the twentieth century as a way to describe all mass movements of populations from their homeland to multiple communities abroad. Given the history of global movement in the last century, the term was picked up by scholars in multiple academic disciplines dealing with questions of nationalism, ethnicity, race, migration, and postcolonialism.<sup>45</sup> By examining movements and dislocations, diaspora theory challenges disciplinary paradigms that hinge on the homogeneity of cultural identity and determinate places. As an approach it asks us to "challenge postcolonial diasporic narratives that imagine diaspora and nation through tropes of home, family, community that are invariably organized around heteronormative, patriarchal authority."<sup>46</sup> Applied to the case of the Jews interned in Canada, this sort of critique disrupts any notion that the refugees simply acculturated and cut ties to their homeland. Their convoluted path to Canadian citizenship instead shows, at various and overlapping moments in time, a colonial view of Canada, a benign national pride usually exhibited in soccer matches or in the camp kitchen, and a gratitude for escaping Nazi occupied Europe, whatever the method. In pointing to the heteronormative assumptions of Diaspora Studies, diaspora theory also shows the importance

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<sup>45</sup> Khachig Tölölyan, "The Contemporary Discourse of Diaspora Studies," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 27:3 (2007): 647-655.

<sup>46</sup> Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 68.

of sexuality and gender identity in critiques of the nation state; in this case the internees' varying sexualities serves as a metaphor for their alterity within Canada.<sup>47</sup>

"Diaspora" has suffered from a saturation in use given its connection to migration and global communications, the increase of which has led to more dispersed populations claiming diaspora status. As a remedy and an attempt to maintain the relevancy of Diaspora Studies, some scholars have proposed tightening the definition of who qualifies as a diaspora community, turning to the classical Jewish diaspora as a measuring stick against which all others' claims are to be measured.<sup>48</sup> The inevitable result is an exclusionary checklist of relative victimhood, which some groups of Jews do not even meet, especially the criteria that all want to return to a physical homeland.<sup>49</sup> A more fruitful solution has been the transition from "diaspora" as a group identifier to its use as a historical tool to "reflect the sense of being part of an ongoing transnational network that includes the homeland, not as something simply left behind, but as a place of attachment in a contrapuntal modernity."<sup>50</sup> "Diaspora" as a stance, then, is also a category of analysis that offers an alternative to the nation-state teleological understanding of immigration and assimilation.<sup>51</sup>

At the same time, as diaspora theory becomes increasingly fused with transnational approaches, it is important to stipulate that neither represents a transition beyond the nation state and its structures to supra-nationalism. To the contrary, states have gained rather than lost their capacity to monitor and control the movement of people thanks to advancements in modern

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<sup>47</sup> George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); *Confronting the Nation: Jewish and Western Nationalism* (University Press of New England, 1993); *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>48</sup> William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies," *Diaspora* 1:1 (1991): 83-99.

<sup>49</sup> James Clifford, "Diasporas" *Cultural Anthropology* 9:3 (1994): 302-344.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 311. See also Donald H. Akenson, "The Historiography of English-Speaking Canada and the Concept of Diaspora: A Sceptical Appreciation" *The Canadian Historical Review* 76:3 (Sept. 1995): 377-409.

<sup>51</sup> Rogers Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28:1 (Jan. 2005):1-19.

technologies of identification and control: "Any shift towards a postmodern condition should not, however, mean that the conspicuous power of these modern subjectivities and the movements they articulated has been left behind. Their power has, if anything, grown."<sup>52</sup> This view helps defuse the tension in Diaspora Studies between boundary maintenance and boundary erosion perspectives by showing borders to be at once physically rigid and also porous in terms of cultural exchange and conceptions of selfhood.

With this broader theoretical framework, it becomes apparent that the Jewish refugees did not see their plight as part of an old diaspora or their acculturation into Canadian society as self-evident.<sup>53</sup> Instead, they continued to have significant relationships with their homelands and with their more recent homes in Great Britain. Sometimes this was maintained through letter writing to loved ones or schoolmates left behind, other times it was imagined in poetry, paintings, and plays. Although historians have tended to write their story according to the marching beat of chronological time, the refugees experienced internment apart from linear time. The monotonous routine of camp life with no apparent release date meant that days ran into one another and the internees felt as though the outside world was leaving them behind. For this reason, storytelling strategies are especially important in the historiography of the refugees. Linear narratives naturally place emphasis on the internees eventual release and, for some, their immigration to Canada as an end point. This study proposes writing their story according to thematic chapters to de-centre immigration and acculturation as the final or most important word on Jewish internment.

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<sup>52</sup> Gilroy, "The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity," 50; Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora," 9.

<sup>53</sup> For other interpretations of Jewish migration through contemporary Diaspora Studies, see Jeffrey Shandler, *Adventures in Yiddishland: Postvernacular Language and Culture* (University of California Press, 2005); Rebecca Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora* (Indiana University Press, 2010).

## *Organization & Collective Memory*

This study is organized into thematic chapters that speak to some of the binaries created and normalized by the nation state. It moves from the internees' initial impressions of Canada and how they re-made their internment spaces into places of refuge to their transformation into productive, yet resistant, internees. In this sense the study at times appears to follow a loose temporal structure, but it intentionally avoids ending with an account of the internees' release and immigration to Canada.<sup>54</sup> It also does not claim to be a social history of everyday life. Instead it focuses on the ways in which internment moulded men and how the Jewish refugees pushed back against internment's normalizing structures. Doing so reveals how the prison system works, and fails, to fulfill the nation state's project to make "good" men.

As a way to explore the theme of multiple-consciousness or shifting identities, each chapter begins with a postwar narrative of Jewish internment, starting in 1980 when former internees were interviewed by CBC reporter Harry Rasky and ending with a contemporary museum exhibit of the same theme that is also digitized. While serving the practical purpose of providing the dissertation with a temporally progressive rhythm that avoids reinforcing the teleology of multiculturalism, it also demonstrates how memories of the past are given new meaning with shifting present contexts.<sup>55</sup> The collective narrative changes in subtle ways between 1980 and 2016 with former internees making sense of their experiences through contemporary political climates and events. Consequently, charting the collective narrative's thirty-five year life tells a secondary story about cultural heritage: "Which past becomes evident

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<sup>54</sup> For a detailed account of the internees' release and integration into Canadian society, see Draper, *The "Accidental Immigrants"* and Koch, *Deemed Suspect*.

<sup>55</sup> Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," reprinted in *New German Critique* Vol. 65 (Spring-Summer 1995):130.

in that heritage and which values emerge in its identificatory appropriation tells us much about the constitution and tendencies of a society."<sup>56</sup> By 1980, the former internees whose narrative forms the empirical basis of this study had become Canadian citizens, causing them to recall internment as perhaps more pleasurable than it was actually experienced. Together the experiences and memories of internment demonstrate that the Jewish refugees' identities were not made, a *fait accompli*, behind wire where many came of age. Instead, their identities were made and remade through the memorialization of that past in the shadow of new and evolving presents.

Chapter one examines the five internment camps where the Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria were concentrated, especially following the designation of refugee camps and the reorganization of POWs and enemy aliens into separate sites. More than a backdrop, the location and original purpose of each site—whether an abandoned fortress or unemployment relief camp—shaped the internees' experiences and demonstrate how their mistreatment was part of a longer trajectory of ethnic and class discrimination. Internees found that most camps were without running water and indoor plumbing upon their arrival, confirming for some their preconceived notions of Canada as a rural former British colony and country of pioneers. I show how within this framework, internees began making use of their internment spaces to re-create a semblance of their normal lives in Europe while also adapting to the literal and figurative Canadian landscape.

Chapter two examines how internment transformed unwilling internees into productive refugees in the eyes of the state. While many of the younger internees lamented the loss of their academic lives in Europe, the authorities focused on moulding men's bodies through physical work and recreation. Good physical health was linked to good morals and, following on from

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

this, good citizenship. Connecting all the chapters is a shared focus on the regulation of bodies and their movements through spaces and internment as a gendered experience. That the male internees arrived in Canada without their spouses or families contributed to the state's perception of them initially as dangerous spies and then as wayward men in need of state intervention, not unlike the unemployed youth of the interwar years. Through daily routine and giving them "useful" physical work, the government drew on familiar strategies to make heteronormative men.

Chapter three picks up the themes of heteronormative masculinity and place by focusing on how the loss of freedom compelled internees to re-think the importance of space in conceptions of sexual selfhood. It addresses sexuality and the lack of privacy in overcrowded camps to argue that the sexual self is not formed along the binary of hetero and homosexuality. Being identified in camp as "gay" had more to do with one's gender performance than with sexual acts carried out in the darkness of sleeping dormitories or communal shower rooms, though being "gay" was seen abhorrently by fellow internees. The men's shifting sexual identities as a signifier of modern morality shows the link between good citizenship and sexual "normality" to be a false construct. Following, this chapter contributes to a vast body of research on sexuality in modernity that argues that sex was not simply a private act performed between citizens behind closed doors; the state made the sexual acts of its citizenry subject to public discussion and normative policies. That the Jewish internees' sexual desires registered across a broad spectrum from hetero to homosexual, and that these identities did not always match their gender performance, further demonstrates the importance of sexuality to the modern nation-building project, in this instance, as a way of pushing back rather than reinforcing it. At the same time, the absence of privacy made one's sexuality visible not only to the guards, but to fellow

internees who sometimes policed one another's behaviour to restore moral "normalcy," cultivated equally by their home and host nations, to their diasporic community.

Lastly, chapter four transitions away from spaces as potential sites of hook-ups to spaces of protest and power. Despite later recollections that interment in Canada was a better alternative to the concentration camps of Nazi occupied Europe, internees cautiously protested their unjust and indefinite prison sentence. Sometimes they organized strikes in order to secure better living conditions, but more often than not, their resistance was deliberately passive. When the internees organized protests, camp commandants threatened to send instigators back to POW camps housing Nazis in other parts of Canada and warned them that their lack of cooperation would reflect poorly on Canadian Jews more broadly. Blatant anti-semitism, in other words, kept them in check. This chapter argues that internees used art and handicraft as a form of claims-making that the state could accept. Whereas the newly arrived internees in Trois-Rivières attempted to use the visual appearance of orthodox Jews to force Internment Operations to recognize them as refugees, this chapter shows how visibility remained an important part of claims-making while internees adapted over time to the discriminatory and restrictive realities of modern incarceration.

Through the optics of modernity, the chapters collectively point to the politics of seeing and being seen.<sup>57</sup> How the Jewish refugees were seen by the Canadian state and its citizenry remained important after their release. This is evidenced by their collective memory of internment which developed alongside their position in Canadian society in order to promote a particular group consciousness. In charting the life of their narrative, this study draws on the work of Maurice Halbwachs and Thomas King. Halbwachs first developed the idea of

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<sup>57</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

"collective memory" between the two world wars as separate from an individual memory.<sup>58</sup> A collective memory develops and lives beyond the individual when a group shares a similar understanding of their past, placing collective knowledge into a cultural framework. Thomas King's writings on First Nations offers a contemporary compliment and critique of Halbwachs, though the link is admittedly tangential.<sup>59</sup> King's work emphasizes the importance of narratives to collective identity, advancing Halbwachs' notion that identity is a result of social interaction and customs. However, by employing indigenous storytelling methods, King's work also points to the ways in which western knowledge, or ways of knowing, have become synonymous with modernity. With limited success given my own subject position, this study attempts to acknowledge the colonialism built into the structure of western histories by drawing on a source base that materially reflects the optics of modernity. It is not enough to write about ways of knowing and being known; we must practice alterity too.

### *A Note on Primary Source Collections*

This study draws on a range of archival sources produced by government departments, former internees, and Canadian Jewish and international aid organizations. The Department of National Defense records, housed in Library and Archives Canada (LAC), include the Army Headquarters Central Registry, the Directorate of Internment Operations, and the Secret War Diaries *fonds*. Collectively their files shed light on internment policies and the daily operations of camp life from the perspective of each camp commandant. The detail of each war diary varies

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<sup>58</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>59</sup> Thomas King, "The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative," 2003 CBC Massey Lectures (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003); *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2012).

by commandant, resulting in some that read as a collection of standing orders while others give more insight into the mood of each camp and its commandant's own anti-semitic inclinations. The *fonds* also contain inspection reports which were carried out separately by the Department of National Defense and the International Red Cross. Both focus on the deplorable living conditions that internees first faced upon their arrival to the haphazardly constructed or dilapidating buildings.

The internees made their own records of internment as it occurred through letter writing to loved ones and to aid organizations, especially the Central Committee for Interned Refugees. As one might expect, outgoing letters were heavily censored and any one critical of internment operations was duly returned to its writer with a stern warning that his criticisms could be read as indicative of his lack of loyalty to Canada and Great Britain. Testaments of the injustices of internment are more likely found in diaries that some internees maintained and in letters written immediately following their release. These files are located in multiple archives, including private collections housed at LAC, the Ontario Jewish Archives, and the The Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives (formerly known as the Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives).

In researching and writing his book *Deemed Suspect*, Eric Koch collected internment "memorabilia" from former internees which is now located in his *fonds* at LAC. This exchange of letters and phone calls between old friends eventually led to a sort of class reunion of former internees in Toronto in 1980 and the CBC documentary "The Spies Who Never Were." A common theme emerging from Harry Rasky's interviews with the congregated men is their collective indebtedness to Canada for providing them a home after internment. Taken together, the documents produced during internment, in the years following release, and the interviews

conducted some forty years later show a shift in attitude among former internees that speaks to broader social expectations of refugees and immigrants. Therefore, in addition to reading these sources for what they tell us about everyday experiences of camp life, this study also attempts to read the lives of the stories as they changed over time to reflect contemporary social norms and memory politics.

Lastly, to occupy their days, some internees painted and made handicrafts with the limited supplies provided by the YMCA. This study makes an effort to draw on these visual sources where available as a commentary on the privileging of written documents in the field of history. Where letters were often written strategically, given the restrictions on the length, scope, and number of letters permitted, to help secure one's release, internees produced artwork for fellow internees that better reflected their subjectivities. Often their artwork employed humour as a coping mechanism and, as chapter three reveals, women appear as frequent symbols of that which was lost through internment. Where other historians have pointed to these sources for illustrative purposes, I propose reading them as sources on par with and not in support of written sources.<sup>60</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

Analyzing the tensions between internment experiences, nation-building narratives, and post-WWII memory culture helps uncover the significance of anti-semitism and the Holocaust in Canada. Whereas the internment of Jewish refugees has been described variably as "Canada's

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<sup>60</sup> Kirsten McAllister, "Photographs of a Japanese Canadian Internment Camp: Mourning Loss and Invoking a Future," *Visual Studies* 21: 2 (October 2006): 133-156; Marianne Hirsch & Leo Spitzer, "'There Was Never a Camp Here': Searching for Vapniarka," in *Locating Memory: Photographic Acts*, eds. Annette Kuhn and Kirsten Emiko McAllister, 135-154 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

footnote to the Holocaust," a case of "accidental immigrants," and "a little-known chapter" in Canadian history, it actually speaks to a much longer tradition of exclusionary nationalism that other accounts seem to minimize. More broadly than that, as a case study in the normalizing agenda of modern incarceration, the history of Jewish internees reverberates global networks of exclusion, racism, and migration—the "movements of modernity."<sup>61</sup> This is especially true given that Great Britain called on its former colonies to act as an outpost for its unwanted refugees, making the connection between the histories of colonial expansion, genocide, and immigration that much more visible. In that sense, this study aims to expand our current understanding of the Holocaust by situating Jewish internment in a broader, global, framework that examines modern state power and violence. It concludes by evaluating the legacy of internment in the context of contemporary migration. Despite the lessons of the twentieth-century, western democracies continue to treat those fleeing terror as "undesirable" immigrants who fail to meet the state's vision of its citizenry.

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<sup>61</sup> Gilroy, "The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity," 50.

## Chapter 1: Place-making in the Canadian Hinterland

When former internees gathered in Toronto for a reunion forty years after they were initially interned, the sentiment shared by the aging men was overwhelmingly positive. One of their own, Eric Koch, had just published a book on their internment experiences, and the research process of gathering former internees' memories and memorabilia helped to re-establish connections lost over decades spent building careers and families in Canada, leading to multiple calls for a formal reunion.<sup>1</sup> Among those in attendance was acclaimed filmmaker Harry Rasky who interviewed the attendees individually and documented what appeared like a high school class reunion, only the crowd was made up mostly of men.<sup>2</sup> When asked to summarize their feelings on having been interned in Canada, two dominant themes emerged. First, the men expressed gratitude that Winston Churchill made the misinformed decision to "collar the lot" and to ship them to Britain's former colonies because it saved them from further bombings in England and a worse fate in the Holocaust in central and eastern Europe.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, many men recalled their first months in Canada as a grand adventure in an unknown land, revealing a feeling of nostalgia and the centrality of the Canadian landscape in their treatment of the past.<sup>4</sup> Yet reading the sources as opposed to listening to the interviews yields a more complicated picture of their collective experience than the stories shared at the reunion might indicate.

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<sup>1</sup> "Ex-Internees Newsletter 1969, 1996-2000," Ontario Jewish Archives (OJA), *Fonds* 93, Box 1 of 2, file 9.

<sup>2</sup> "'The Spies Who Never Were' by Harry Rasky Part I & II," Library and Archives Canada (LAC), MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Harry Greenfield, Walter Curtin, Kurt Swinton, Klaus Scheye, Dr. Joseph Kates, Jack Hahn, Helmut Kallmann, Helmut Blume, Fred Hermann, Erwin Schild, Eric Seidler, Eric Exton, Emil Fackenheim, Arno Cahn, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Peter Field, Gustav Bauer, Gregory Baum, Ernst Oppenheimer, Bob Herald, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

Unlike in the documentary, in their letters, diaries, and artwork, most internees showed contempt for having been uprooted from lives just begun in Britain. Their uncertain fate was cause for serious anxiety and depression which was exacerbated by the monotony of daily camp life. This discursive space between the experiences of internment and the gathered men's memories reflects the process of giving meaning to the past through the creation of a cohesive narrative, one which developed over time to incorporate shifting present moments.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of sharing their memories with Rasky through oral history interviews was not only to reveal a little known past to the Canadian public; creating a collective narrative helped former internees concretize their self image.<sup>6</sup> By giving their reflective testimonies, which have contributed significantly to the cultural heritage of Canadian internment, the former internees became visible to themselves and to others.<sup>7</sup>

Understandably, the broader context of the Holocaust looms large in these narratives. But the men also made sense of their internment by adopting the familiar national trope of newcomers in Canada as pioneers who endured living and working in harsh conditions as a prerequisite to citizenship, thereby situating their unique experience within a broader narrative of immigration and nation-building. In this romanticized story, camp spaces—both sites and buildings—are prominent actors, revealing the importance of place-making in reconstructions of

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<sup>5</sup> Jan Assmann identifies cultural memory's capacity to reconstruct the past as one of its defining characteristics. Although memories of the past may be fixed, how every contemporary context or generation relates to them differs. The meaning assigned to memories, in other words, shifts with new perspectives and frames of relevance. This preoccupation with meaning-making as a cultural process also reflects the general shift in oral history practice from the drive to collect data or knowledge to a concern with the creation of narratives, particularly as a performance of the self.

Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity" reprinted in *New German Critique* 65 (Spring-Summer 1995):130; Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> This cultural approach to oral history departs from Maurice Halbwachs' assessment of the practice, which he saw as part of everyday "communicative memory" rather than as a part of the historical process.

Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. & trans. Lewis A. Coser, (The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," 133.

the past and thereby, the self. Consequently, this chapter tells the story of not only the spaces the internees occupied, but how they narrated those spaces over time. It assumes that the truth in the stories they tell lies not simply in one historical moment, but in the accumulation of many that together allowed some former internees to remember their harsh introduction to Canada as an adventure.<sup>8</sup> In making sense of their past, former internees inadvertently tapped into a history of colonialism, class exploitation, and ethnic discrimination that were all a part of early and on-going nation-building. Of course, the internees' connection to this past is largely imagined, a significant act in and of itself, but by examining the history of the camp sites we can also see a physical link between the troubling truth of pioneering and internment. Contextualising the experiences of the Jewish refugees between early twentieth-century settlement and their 1980 reunion helps us see their internment in Canada as more than a brief transgression in the nation's self-made identity as multicultural.

As with any first chapter, "Place-making in the Canadian Hinterland" lays much of the groundwork for what is to come in the remaining chapters. Its first priority is to establish the former internees' 1980 collective narrative as a springboard for understanding how and why certain internment themes have become prominent in the historiography produced since their reunion, while other themes, represented in the remaining chapters of this dissertation, have not. The former internees foregrounded the Canadian landscape and the myths that accompany it in their collective narrative. For that reason, this chapter makes place its primary actor; the voices and experiences of the internees are noticeably absent until the chapter's second half. The first half historicizes the relationship between landscape and heritage in the context of Canadian nation-building as a racist and classist process, before giving readers a more specific overview of

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

the historical significance of the sites chosen for internment camps. In doing so, it attempts to show that the former internees' were correct in 1980 when they envisioned continuities between the grand narrative of Canadian history and their interment, but that these connections were different and far more troubling than they imagined them to be. The second half of the chapter moves more directly to an analysis of the internees' encounters with camp spaces, weaving between sources produced during internment and their oral histories collected in 1980. Doing so speaks to the ways in which historical sources are not stagnantly entombed in archives, but are continually made and given meaning even after the events they represent have long since passed. The chapter's last section uses the National Forestry Program's 1939 instructional manual for unemployed youth, titled "Woods Travel," as a metaphor to explore how internees transformed their camps into places of consequence for their material and mental needs. It reinforces the continuities between Canadian history, the former purposes of the sites, and internment established early on in the chapter while also pointing to themes of masculinity and labour to follow in chapter two.

### *Creating a Collective Narrative: Between Adventure and Colonialism*<sup>9</sup>

The former internees' reunion came at a significant moment of transition in Canada's history when the nation began to be re-imagined through multiculturalism and antiracism,

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<sup>9</sup> "Collective," "cultural," and "social" memory have been used by scholars in different fields of the humanities and social sciences to define the same concept of communal memory. Where scholars differ is in their approaches to studying it. Drawing on Halbwachs work, I use "collective" to emphasize its socially constitutive aspects. Whereas other scholars have tended to use "memory", I use "narrative" more frequently to emphasize the historiographical component of sharing memories. This also emphasizes the collaborative and circulatory process of producing histories between multiple authorities, exhibited most clearly through the oral histories collected by Harry Rasky. Universiteit Leiden, "Memory: Concepts and Theory," "Tales of the Revolt: Institute for History," <http://www.hum.leiden.edu/history/talesoftherevolt/approach/approach-1.html> (accessed April 13th, 2016).

drawing on powerful international human rights rhetoric.<sup>10</sup> The international human rights movement to address injustices and abuses carried out during WWII varied in form from country to country. In Canada several ethnic communities organized redress campaigns through political activism, culminating in Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's 1988 apology to Japanese Canadians for the government's wartime policy of relocation and internment.<sup>11</sup> Given the suspension of their individual rights during internment, the Jewish refugees could have made a similar appeal for recognition and space within this "nation-affirming" process.<sup>12</sup> Instead, when Rabbi Pfeiffer, himself a former internee, welcomed the group gathered in Toronto he gave thanks to the country that gave them their freedom and citizenship, reflecting the overall tone of the reunion and Rasky's subsequent documentary.<sup>13</sup> Rather than imagining their place in Canadian history through the redress movement, the former internees deliberately focused on how they collectively fulfilled the responsibilities of citizenship after they became Canadians. Being a "good" Canadian was an important symbol of not only the contribution Jewish refugees made to their new home, but of the millions who perished in the Holocaust and who never had the chance to become citizens of another country. Their memories are framed by this burden to remember the larger context of their internment.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ian Radforth, "Ethnic Minorities and Wartime Injustices: Redress Campaigns and Historical Narratives in Late Twentieth-Century Canada," in *Settling and Unsettling Memories: Essays in Canadian Public History*, eds. Nicole Neatby and Peter Hodgins, (University of Toronto Press, 2012), 404.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *The Spies Who Never Were*, directed by Harry Rasky (Canadian Broadcast Corporation, 1981).

<sup>14</sup> Holocaust survivors who immigrated to Canada after the war were by and large publically silenced until the 1980s and 1990s. When they tried to share their stories upon arrival, with the Canadian-Jewish community and beyond, few believed them. Although the internees were not Holocaust survivors in the traditional use of the word, their narration of their internment may reflect the milieu of Holocaust remembrance too. Gerald Tulchinsky, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1998).

Internees arrived in Canada in June and July 1940 by way of one of three ships: the S.S. Duchess of York, the S.S. Ettrick, and the S.S. Sobieski. The degree to which the cross-Atlantic voyage factored into an internee's account of his internment often had to do with the conditions of the ship upon which he was thrust. Where Nazi POWs and internees endured the crossing together on the S.S. Duchess of York, significant overcrowding on the S.S. Ettrick meant that Nazis and POWs were separated, but with the consequence that internees were relegated to the ship's bowels where they were contained by barbed wire. Those who arrived on the S.S. Sobieski experienced better conditions than the previous two; with its safe and relatively comfortable passage, internees from the S.S. Sobieski rarely dwelled on the crossing in their recollections. By contrast, the former internees collectively remembered their first encounter with Canada as a rift between Old World Europe and the New World, the ship voyage representing a travel in time as well as place.<sup>15</sup>

In his interview with Rasky, Eric Koch evoked images of Britain's former Empire to describe how arrival in Canada could be experienced with an awareness of danger and an undeniable sensation of excitement. Sailing up the St Lawrence River, he remembered, soldiers wearing shorts showing their knees and "funny hats" could be seen by passengers. They "looked like soldiers in the Indian army...We thought we had just landed in India!"<sup>16</sup> Another's connection between Canada and British colonialism was more tangible. When an internee questioned if an officer on board his ship beat prisoners because he was anti-semitic, the offender

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<sup>15</sup> Gert Baumgart, "Trois Rivieres," Scrapbook, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 2.

<sup>16</sup> *The Spies Who Never Were* (CBC, 1981).

replied in the negative; instead, he was "just a colonial officer who's used to beating natives."<sup>17</sup>

In these two examples, which appear together in the documentary under the rubric of first encounters, the Jewish refugees could be imagined as both the colonizers and the colonized. In the first instance, the refugees' internment and eventual immigration to Canada are made possible by the history of British colonialism, which created outposts for exiles and migrants. In the second instance, the refugees' plight is understood by comparison to that of natives' who suffered physical assault at the hands of newcomers. Although likely referring to "natives" of India in this case, the internees broadened this mental map to apply to their specific situation. Taken together these two narratives form an interpretive framework for seeing Jewish marginality as a productive force rather than through the limited lens of victimhood.<sup>18</sup>

As would-be European immigrants, the internees could, and as this chapter will demonstrate, did, claim a cultured and Enlightened past in their interactions with Canadian guards who they often referred to patronizingly as colonial.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, internees identified with Canada's indigenous peoples, relegated to reserves not unlike, as they saw it, their barbed wire camps or diasporas. Occupying this malleable space between the binary of colonized and colonizer allowed the former internees, gathered in Toronto, to create a narrative of internment that drew on Canadian immigration patterns as it suited the historical moment.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Rebecca Kobrin's work demonstrates how Jewish entrepreneurs exploited their marginal position in the United States to move within and outside dominant capitalist paradigms, contributing to the growth of North American capitalism. See "The Chosen People in the Chosen Land: The Jewish Encounter with American Capitalism," in *Chosen Capital: The Jewish Encounter with American Capitalism*, ed. Rebecca Kobrin, 1-13 (Rutgers University Press, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> "Loewy, Harry-Memoirs WWII, Internment Camp. 'Days Behind the Wire'," CJCCA, CJC ZB.

<sup>20</sup> George Colpitts discusses moving beyond the binary of colonized and colonizer in his work on Jewish traders in inter-war Canadian frontier settings. "Itinerant Jewish and Arabic Trading in the Dene's North, 1916-1930," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 24:1 (2013): 163-213.

While other ethnic minorities drew on an international human rights movement and a national rebranding drive to launch their redress campaigns, the former internees situated their past between the broad history of Jewish exile and indigeneity to trumpet their success as "accidental immigrants" despite facing questions of belonging and difference, dispossession and dispersal.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the parallels former internees imagined between their experiences as a minority group on the margins and Canada's First Nations taps into a longer history of Jewish identity building.<sup>22</sup> Where Jewish immigrants in the first half of the twentieth-century drew on indigenous models of resistance to assimilation by maintaining some form of cultural continuity in the process of becoming Canadian, following the Holocaust parallels between Jews and First Nations "portrayed Native experience in Canada as one of devastation in connection with the genocide of European Jewry in a language of loss."<sup>23</sup> The history of the Jewish refugees represents the moment of transition between these two uses of the past. Following Halbwach's theory of collective memory as the concretization of identity through the contemporary reconstruction of a shared past, how the former internees would come to conceptualize their internment experiences was transformed by knowledge of the Holocaust.<sup>24</sup>

The imagined bond between Canada's First Nations and Jewish immigrants in the twentieth century is significant because it helps situate the history of Jewish diaspora into the larger frame of colonialism.<sup>25</sup> One of the 'movements of modernity' involved the relocation of European Jewry to its peripheries where Jewish settlers "reaped the benefits of a process that was

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<sup>21</sup> David Koffman, "Recent Trends in the History of Jewish-First Nations Encounters in Canada," presented at the Association of Jewish Canadian Studies conference (Ottawa, June 2015).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>23</sup> Rebecca Margolis, "Jewish Immigrant Encounters with Canada's Native Peoples: Yiddish Writings on Tekahionwake," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43:3 (2009): 188.

<sup>24</sup> Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," 127.

<sup>25</sup> Koffman, "Recent Trends in the History of Jewish-First Nations Encounters in Canada."

unspeakably harmful to First Nations people."<sup>26</sup> In other words, the separation of Jewish history from Canadian history is a false construction. When former internees thought about the meaning of their internment, they certainly did not draw explicit connections to colonialism and pioneering. But by remembering their first months in Canada as an adventure tied to the landscape and its natives, with whom they identified differently over time, they inadvertently related their experience to that of Canada's first settlers. Far from quaint, the history of pioneers pushing the western frontier, which the former internees saw as a central component of Canadian identity, relied on class exploitation and ethnic discrimination. The internees were not above or beyond this pattern, but became a part of it on the heels of the Great Depression.

### ***"Heritage Lies in Hinterland"***<sup>27</sup>

“Place” is a broad concept defined variably across disciplines and time.<sup>28</sup> However, most definitions employed by sociologists, geographers, anthropologists, and historians alike over the past twenty years have built upon the work of Pierre Nora and Benedict Anderson, examining “place” as it relates to memory and national identities.<sup>29</sup> As James Opp and John Walsh explain

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 1. Koffman also probes the extent to which Zionism as a form of pioneering could be considered a colonialist project.

<sup>27</sup> "Heritage Lies in Hinterland: Future of Dominion is in North Country, Speaker Avers," *Hamilton Spectator* (November 22nd, 1939), LAC, MG28 I 124 Vol. 145

<sup>28</sup> Peter Brooker explains that “place” is “an inevitable cultural condition, if not always as consciously recognized as others. However, the concept has been re-articulated in relation to the co-ordinated themes of postmodernism, postcolonialism, and the developing interests of the new area of Social of Cultural Geography. The familiar features of this epoch—the global reach of capitalism, new information technologies, modern transport, enforced or voluntary social mobility, migrancy, precarious patterns of employment and so on—have, so it is argued, radically altered the common experience and symbolic associations of place.” Peter Brooker, *A Glossary of Cultural Theory* (London:Arnold, 2003), 190.

<sup>29</sup> Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History,” *Representations* 26 (1989): 7-25.

in their edited collection *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, “place” is a site to which meaning is ascribed through memory and commemorative practices.<sup>30</sup> In this sense, Nora’s notion of *lieux de mémoire* and Anderson’s theory of national identity as an “imagined community” are widely understood as officially constructed, often national or collective, memories. Yet, Opp and Walsh’s work belongs to a growing literature that problematizes the concept of place as simply imagined or constructed for political purposes. Instead, the significance of place addresses a scale of meaning from local to global, vernacular to official, and individual to collective.

Long before the Jewish refugees arrived in Quebec in 1940, Europeans developed a social imaginary of Canadian lumber camps as iconic of a supposedly adventurous lifestyle in the North American wilderness.<sup>31</sup> This was supported by immigration recruitment posters that solicited working-class Germans to emigrate to the “land of opportunity” and by nineteenth century German travelogues that described Canada’s remote forests as a *Wunschtraum*, a sort of unattainable dream.<sup>32</sup> In this fantasy, Canadian shantymen (later referred to as ‘lumberjacks’) live and toil in secluded all-male communities alongside wild animals, the grizzly bear chief among them.<sup>33</sup> As with most myths, there is some truth to be found in Germans’ turn of the century vision of Canada. During the nineteenth century, the forest industry remained one of the largest

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Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

<sup>30</sup> James Opp & John C. Walsh, eds. *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 4.

<sup>31</sup> Judith Kestler, “Discovering Canada. German merchant seamen in Canadian internment camps, 1940-1946,” presented at Civilian Internment in Canada: Histories and Legacies workshop (Winnipeg, June 2015).

<sup>32</sup> Recruitment poster “*Kanada: das Land der Gelegenheit*” (1910), LAC, e008222651; Kestler, “Discovering Canada”; Gisela Sigrist, “Kanada--Wunschtraum, Kanada-Wunschtraum,” in *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 45:2 (1995): 208-218; “160 ACRES (250 MORGEN) FREI” (1900-1905), LAC, MIKAN no. 2945662.

<sup>33</sup> Kestler, “Discovering Canada”; Ian Radforth, “The Shantymen,” in *Labouring Lives: Work & Workers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario*, ed. Paul Craven (University of Toronto Press, 1995), 204-5.

sources of waged employment in Ontario, where men worked seasonally in camps far away from the norms of community life. Their unique lifestyle was romanticized not only by outsiders but by the shantymen themselves who celebrated their rugged masculinity in camp songs.<sup>34</sup> The men who occupied these roles were frequently farmers who needed to subsidize their living with a cash income, but the ethnic diversity of the woodsmen reflected immigration patterns and the racialization of space.<sup>35</sup>

The Department of Immigration and Colonization<sup>36</sup> cultivated spaces of racial division in their efforts to settle Canada. "Desirable" and "undesirable" immigrants inhabited separate spaces with marginal groups often pushed to the physical peripheries of Canadian society. Aboriginal reserves, Jewish ghettos, and the planned ethnic agricultural communities that supplied shantymen in the winter season were just some of the regions and neighbourhoods that became geographical markers of difference.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, the men who migrated annually to fell wood were often low income recent immigrants. In fact, the exploitation and alienation of immigrant workers between 1896 and 1914 helped excel Canada's economic progress not only through lumbering, but also railway construction, mining, and secondary manufacturing.<sup>38</sup> This

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<sup>34</sup> Radforth, "The Shantymen," 205-206.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>36</sup> Canada's current Department of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship changed names more than half a dozen times in its nearly one hundred year history. It was known as the Department of Immigration and Colonization between 1917-1936 when it was first established as its own federal Department. Prior to 1917, immigration fell under the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture followed by the Interior.

<sup>37</sup> Barrington Walker, "Space and Racialized Communities," in *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada: Essential Readings*, ed. Barrington Walker (Canadian Scholars' Press: Toronto, 2008), 67-68. See also in the same volume, Sarah A. Carter, "Two Acres and a Cow: 'Peasant' Farming for the Indians of the Northwest, 1889-97," 109-124; Ruth A. Frager, "'Mixing with People on Spadina': The Tense Relations between Non-Jewish and Jewish Workers," 142-157.

<sup>38</sup> Donald Avery, "European Immigrant Workers and Labour Protest in Peace and War, 1896-1919," in *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada: Essential Readings*, ed. Barrington Walker (Canadian Scholars' Press: Toronto, 2008), 125.

made it important for the government to think about the character of the men working in these largely remote communities and the process by which they would become Canadianized while living a life apart. One solution to this problem came from Frontier College who sought to make "good citizens of new Canadians by instruction in camps."<sup>39</sup> Through their unique education program that brought teachers to live and work alongside their student woodsmen, core values such as democracy were taught in conjunction with lessons on the importance of hygiene and physical fitness.<sup>40</sup>

However, the outbreak of the First World War raised suspicion of unemployed and impoverished enemy alien workers, and it put pressure on some employers to dismiss their foreign-born employees. This was exacerbated by the economic recession just prior to the war; the last to be hired—often foreign labourers—were the first to be fired. At the same time, under the War Measures Act, internment camps were established to house prisoners of war and enemy aliens. Who ended up interned often had very little to do with actual suspected fifth column activities; instead, internment camps became a way for municipalities to get rid of their unemployed who were, in most cases, recent immigrants of undesirable ethnicity.<sup>41</sup> They also created a pool of reserve labour which could then be easily exploited as cheap or free labour. In many ways, the lumber camps and internment camps overlapped one another. In some cases

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<sup>39</sup> "Frontier College is Making Good Citizens of New Canadians by Instruction in Camps," *Canada Lumberman* (May 1st, 1938), LAC, MG28 I 124 Vol. 145.

<sup>40</sup> Larry Krotz, Erica Martin, & Philip Fernandez (eds.) *Frontier College Letters: One Hundred Years of Teaching, Learning, & Nation Building* (Frontier College Press: Toronto, 1999).

<sup>41</sup> Avery, "European Immigrant Workers and Labour Protest in Peace and War, 1896-1919," 133; George Buri, "'Enemies Within Our Gates': Brandon's Alien Detention Centre During the Great War," *Manitoba History* 56 (October 2007), [http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb\\_history/56/aliendetention.shtml](http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/56/aliendetention.shtml) (accessed April 15th 2016).

former lumber camps were transformed into temporary detention centres, while in other cases it was the shared inhabitants who linked the two.<sup>42</sup>

Low income immigrants continued to be targeted for geographical separation during the Great Depression when the federal government coordinated unemployment relief projects with the provinces and when zealous bureaucrats orchestrated the extralegal deportation of non-desirable immigrants.<sup>43</sup> Again, the central concern was not necessarily providing subsistence to families in need, but had more to do with curtailing anti-capitalist sentiment that increased during economic hardship. Unemployment Relief Camps were established across the country between 1932 and 1936 to employ men in physically demanding jobs, such as road building and tree felling, in exchange for room, board, and a meager salary. Although men enrolled into the camps voluntarily, the program quickly became a source of controversy. Rather than solve the unemployment problem at its root cause, reasonable work for reasonable pay, the program was a Band-Aid solution that alienated working class men from mainstream society. It exploited the unemployed in order to advance Canada's nation-building project which had as much to do with the making of places and ordering of spaces as it did with teaching "good" citizenship.

When Germans envisioned Canada as a *Wunschtraum*, drawing on images of rugged shantymen and wild forests, they romanticized the connection between Canadians and their landscape. This is understandable given that immigration policies solicited foreigners to come

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<sup>42</sup> Shantymen worked in gangs responsible for constructing their own accommodation. Given the nature of the work, camps were built haphazardly with minimal supplies to last only one or two seasons before all the trees within walking distance were felled. However, more permanent headquarters were also constructed in the forests and served different purposes over time, such as the Acadia Forest Experiment Station in New Brunswick. Radforth, "Shantymen," 204-277; LAC, RG39 Vol. 28,29, 40.

<sup>43</sup> Lara Campbell, *Respectable Citizens: Gender, Family, and Unemployment in Ontario's Great Depression* (University of Toronto Press, 2009), 5; Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came: Deportation From Canada, 1900-1935* (University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 1-10.

work the land, creating a nation of immigrants whose identity relied, at least in part, on place-making. Few would have imagined the reality of camp life as exploitative. Yet the history of place-making in Canada shows a continuity of class and ethnic discrimination tied to the hinterland from at least the mid nineteenth century to the arrival of the Jewish refugees in 1940. When they disembarked in Quebec to travel to the camps that would house them for the foreseeable future, they arrived to spaces already embedded with meaning. A former lumber camp, railway shed, and experimental farm were just some of the places internees lived whose history conjures the ghosts of Canada's most iconic figures. Although the internees may not have been fully aware of their camps' previous uses at the time of their detainment, they are nonetheless significant because they help us see their internment as a continuum of a larger history and to make sense of their collective narrative that incorporated knowledge of Canadian identity later learned and lived.

### *"Selecting a Camp Site"<sup>44</sup>*

In 1939, the National Forestry Program for unemployed youth developed a lecture titled "Woods Travel" as a "how-to" guide for camping in the Canadian wilderness. Subdivided into the processes of "selecting a camp site," getting "lost in the woods," and "camp making," as a survival manual for Canada's wayward youth, it was also a metaphor for making good choices, overcoming hardship, and working with what you have in life. Given the Program's ties to relief camps and the physical spaces inhabited by some internees, drawing on the lecture is also a

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<sup>44</sup> "Woods Travel," National Forestry Program Dominion Section, Issued by Department of Mines and Resources, "National Forestry Program - Training, Education and Recreation," LAC, RG39 vol. 30, file 49209D.

useful way to introduce how the refugees came to live in and make sense of Canadian internment camps. It reinforces the continuities of ethnic and class discrimination, while its language, when applied to the situation of the refugees, points to the irony of their internment. Whereas "Woods Travel" is about freedom in the wilderness and self-determination, "choice" did not factor into any of the internee's arrival to Canada in 1940. "Selecting a Camp Site" is the first set of instructions that makes the relationship between their loss of liberty and the landscape as an actor in the production of internment apparent: "There is nothing that reflects better the character of an individual than the selection of the site for a camp. There is nothing also which reacts so favourably upon the tired traveller as a well-selected site to spend the night. Of course, this means when any choice is available. Sometimes one is forced through circumstances to camp in a bad place."<sup>45</sup> To say that the refugees arrived to a "bad place" when they were introduced to the camps that they would call home, in some cases for three years, would be to take too lightly the circumstances that persuaded Internment Operations to select sites unsuitable for habitation.

During WWII, Canada established twenty-eight internment camps across the country to detain prisoners of war and enemy aliens, predominantly German and Japanese-Canadians. For the most part camps were located in the interior, in Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta, to keep prisoners from the country's coasts, where it was thought their presence would be most dangerous in the event of an invasion. That is, the nation's geography played a decided role in the location of camps, which would become, next to the issue of privacy, the most dominate theme of former internees' memories of camp life. When Canada acquiesced to Britain's request of May 30th 1940 to house "dangerous enemy aliens" and German POWs, the Director of Internment Operations was given less than a month to locate and prepare suitable

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

accommodations for the new internees' arrival in late June and early July.<sup>46</sup> The result was a small network of abandoned buildings and haphazardly built shacks, not unlike those of shantymen, that would not be able to stand up to a Canadian winter. In fact, most of the "permanent" camps were not ready to receive their prisoners in July, so the Jewish refugees first lived in the temporary receiving stations in Trois-Rivières and Monteith, among Nazi POWs, and Cove Fields. They were then divided and transferred between July and October to five "permanent" camps that would house them for the duration of their internment: Île aux Noix (Camp I), Farnham (Camp A/40), Sherbrooke (Camp N/42), Fredericton (Camp B/70), and St. Helen's Island (Camp S/43), which housed Italian refugees and POWs. Each camp had its own culture which emerged in response to the varying condition of sites and the hardship endured to "get used to it."<sup>47</sup>

Although officially designated a temporary camp, some 793 internees were housed in Cove Fields for nearly four months before being moved elsewhere.<sup>48</sup> Cove Fields was the camp closest to civilization that many of the internees would experience during their internment. Located on the Plains of Abraham overlooking Quebec City and the St. Lawrence River, the site was an apt introduction into the history of Canada as a conflict between two European colonial powers—British and French. More than the site of a decisive battle in the Seven Years' War, the park setting was designated for public recreation at the turn of the century. Overtime it was home to several other male-dominated spaces including a golf club, a rifle company, and an

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<sup>46</sup> "Report on Civilian Internees from UK to Canada, 1940 by Alexander Paterson May 13, 1941," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 2.

<sup>47</sup> One of the internees' most popularized songs, "You'll Get Used to It," penned by Freddy Grant became a sort of anthem of enduring internment. "Behind Barbed Wire" Scrapbook, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 2.

<sup>48</sup> "Inspection Reports Camp L (Cove Fields)," LAC, RG24 11253 (file 11-2-11).

athletics ground to help recruit ranks for the militia who, it was thought, would be made better men through physical fitness.<sup>49</sup> Of course, the main attraction was the former military barracks that would become home to the Jewish refugees. Constructed of wood, each hut was filled beyond its capacity with upwards of 100 internees whose interests were represented by a nominated hut leader.<sup>50</sup> While overcrowding was a problem, the camp's proximity to citizens was the ultimate security risk that led to its closure in October of the same year.<sup>51</sup>

Located some 300 kilometres further into the Canadian interior was Camp Île-aux-Noix on the Richelieu River. It was the first permanent camp to open, in mid July, and the last to close, in December 1943. When Major E.B.D. Kippen arrived at Fort Lennox to survey what needed to be accomplished in order to turn the abandoned barracks into an internment camp, he determined that it would be a race against time to bring the electric and hot water supply up to contemporary standards for the internees' arrival fifteen days later.<sup>52</sup> The fort, abandoned in the 1880s, was built by the British in the first half of the nineteenth century to ward off a possible American invasion; an ironic fact given that at least one internee hoped that the Americans would come to his rescue in Canada.<sup>53</sup> It was later designated a National Historic Site in 1920 with a museum. In figure 1.1, a nod to this past—the Union Jack—flies over an entrance to the fort as internees watch a horse drawn carriage enter the camp.

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<sup>49</sup> Lt. Col. Walter J. Ray to Minister of Militia and Defense (10 March 1903), LAC, RG9-II-A-1, vol. 361, file 22717; W.G.J. Hall to Minister of Militia and Defense (12 August 1902), LAC, RG9-II-A-1, vol. 356, file 22000.

<sup>50</sup>"Inspection Reports Camp L (Cove Fields)," LAC, RG24 11253 (file 11-2-11).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> War Diaries, No. 41 Internment Camp, Île-aux-Noix, 1940-1943, LAC, RG24-C3 15399, 2283.

<sup>53</sup> Wihl, Fritz: autobiographical note on his internment, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.



Figure 1.1 "Winter scene at Fort Lennox (Camp "I"), Canadian internment camp. Sled drawn by heavy horses coming through gate while internees look on. Union Jack visible flying over gate. [graphic material] – c1940-1943," Jewish Public Library Archives, The Boukkind Family Fonds, 1062; 017685.

The island was an appealing place for an internment camp for the same reasons it made a good location for a fort. The surrounding river provided natural security, a barrier to intruders and serious obstacle to anyone wanting to leave. When 400 internees arrived July 15th, a small hired barge was waiting to transport them in groups of 35 across the river, a process that took more than five hours.<sup>54</sup>

Two more camps opened in Quebec in October of that year to redistribute the German and Austrian internees as their status as refugees from Nazi oppression became more apparent.

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<sup>54</sup>War Diaries, No. 41 Internment Camp, Île-aux-Noix, 1940-1943, LAC, RG24-C3 15399, 2283.

Camp Farnham was located on seven acres of the Dominion Experimental Farm.<sup>55</sup> The Tobacco Station was just one part of the Dominion Experimental Farm system established at the turn of the century to improve and systematize farming practices across Canada.<sup>56</sup> As the internees filtered in from temporary camps in the fall of 1940, their role in carrying on this nation-building work began. Major Kippen was also given the task of opening Farnham, having transferred from Camp Île-aux-Noix. He imagined that the internees would be grateful for the flat open land, conducive to hosting a variety of recreational activities, and the opportunity to plough the fields: "It is hoped that the facilities of the camp will be fully appreciated by its present and future guests. If these facilities are not appreciated it goes to show there is no such thing as gratitude."<sup>57</sup> While the internees were promised that they were leaving behind the worst of it, they were bitterly disappointed when they arrived in Farnham to a camp that was, once again, unsuitable for habitation. Military style H-huts provided the internees shelter, but upon their arrival there were no bunk beds to sleep in and the plumbing was only partially finished. The opportunity to farm, physical labour that the authorities believed would improve the internees' moral state, was little consolation for the refugees, many of whom came from urban centres.<sup>58</sup>

Camp Sherbrooke was opened simultaneously in October and gained place in the former internees' collective memory as the camp with the most deplorable living conditions. Though the camp came to be called Sherbrooke, the abandoned Quebec Central Railway buildings that would become home to the internees were actually located about one mile outside of the city in

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<sup>55</sup> War Diaries, Oct. 1940: No. 40 Internment Camp, Oct. 1940-April 1941, LAC, RG24 15397, 2282, folder 1.

<sup>56</sup>HON. W. R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture, "The Dominion Experimental Farms," (Ottawa, 1925), [http://agrienvarchive.ca/download/dominion\\_exp\\_farms\\_1925.pdf](http://agrienvarchive.ca/download/dominion_exp_farms_1925.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> War Diaries, Oct. 1940: No. 40 Internment Camp, Oct. 1940-April 1941, LAC, RG24 15397, 2282, folder 1.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

Newington. The main building was originally constructed as a mechanic's shed, so when the internees arrived from Camp L they found that their "sleeping quarters" had large pits in the cement floors where mechanics used to stand under the broken train cars.<sup>59</sup> As part of the Canadian Pacific Railway beginning in 1912, the Quebec Central Railway serviced the Eastern Townships of Quebec south of the St. Lawrence River. Its headquarters were based in Sherbrooke where General Manager G.D. Wadsworth met with Major D.J. O'Donahoe late in September 1940 to settle the terms of their lease agreement for the establishment of the internment camp just three short weeks later.<sup>60</sup> Because the sheds were not intended for permanent accommodation, their floors were covered in dirt and no provision had been made to damp- and draft-proof the buildings. When the internees arrived to camp Sherbrooke during an autumn downpour and were instructed to sleep in the sheds, they found the roofs leaking so badly that it was impossible for everyone to find a dry spot to lie.<sup>61</sup>

The only internment camp in the Maritime provinces was located nearly an hour east of Fredericton on the Acadia Forest Research Station. Once the site of a Depression era Relief Camp followed by the youth National Forestry Program, the remote forest made a significant impression on the internees who picked up where the other schemes left off, felling trees and planting new saplings.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps more than any other camp, Fredericton encouraged internees to imagine themselves as pioneers through their surroundings and the dangerous nature of the work, which often required the hierarchical relationship between guards and internees to dissolve.

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<sup>59</sup> War Diaries, Oct. 1940: No. 42 Internment Camp, Oct. 1940- Sept. 1941, LAC, RG 24 15399, 2284, folder 1.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> National Forestry Program, LAC, Department of Forestry RG39, Vol. 48; Department of Labour RG27, Vol. 2133.

Chosen largely for their existing structures, however dilapidated, these sites of national historic significance were the internees' first introduction to Canada. It is unlikely that internees gave much thought to the sites' historical ghosts at the time of their arrival except in the most exceptional cases. Where the internees' occupation of an abandoned Canadian Pacific Railway building could be read as a symbolic continuity of exploitative immigration policies (given the railway construction's abuse of Chinese labour), this connection was likely lost on the internees trying to stay warm and dry. Conversely, when internees arrived to Fort Lennox they were given a summary of the site's history including how the fort served "in the skirmishes with the Iroquois Indians."<sup>63</sup> When the internees' attentions were drawn to the broader significance of their internment locations, the stories they heard and their own encounters with "Canadianness" confirmed their pre-existing stereotypes of Canada as colonial. Much later, after some went on to become Canadian citizens, this fact worked its way into the "accidental immigrants'" subconscious to help them recall their internment as an adventure in pioneering.

### ***First Impressions of the "New World": "Lost in the Woods"***<sup>64</sup>

How the refugees' first digested their arrival in the summer of 1940 can be likened to the bewilderment of getting lost in the woods. As the National Forestry Program's "Woods Travel" guide explained to unemployed youth, the best way to find one's bearings is to take pause: "Sitting down on a comfortable log or other place will have an immediate effect upon any tendency to become panicky. Fear and panic are the death of calm reasoning. If you can rest

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<sup>63</sup>Loewy, Harry-Memoirs WWII, Internment Camp. 'Days Behind the Wire' CJCCCA, CJC ZB, 285.

<sup>64</sup>"Woods Travel," National Forestry Program Dominion Section, Issued by Department of Mines and Resources, "National Forestry Program - Training, Education and Recreation," LAC, RG39 vol. 30, file 49209D.

quietly for a few moments, or take out your pipe and have a smoke before beginning to consider your dilemma, so much the better."<sup>65</sup> Drawing on heteronormative stereotypes of "reasonable" or "rational" men, the text instructed the lost youth, both literal and figurative, to take stock of their situation before deciding upon the best course of action. The Jewish refugees embarking in Quebec as internees felt a similar sense of displacement. When they took pause, their pre-existing social imaginary of Canada as colonial and densely wooded kicked in to help them find their place within the internment system, making their sympathies with natives all the more interesting. On the one hand, some viewed themselves as the inheritors of imperial Europe—enlightened and cultured, especially when compared to colonial Canadians. On the other hand, as new wards of the former British empire's outpost, they identified as victims of colonialism, not unlike the First Nations who were displaced by European settlers. From both perspectives, their minority status as diasporic Jews intensified how they felt as either intellectual superiors, victims, or both. Their fascination with natives was largely connected to the wild Canadian landscape, which was often the subject of their artwork and writing.

The internees approached the idea of Canada as a British colony or out-post with a range of perspectives, which often stemmed from their socio-economic backgrounds and their history of flight before being arrested in Britain. For those who narrowly escaped Germany and Austria, often after *Kristallnacht* and a stint in a concentration camp, the "New World" could mean a positive new start. Helmut Kallmann was living in a hostel in England with about thirty refugee boys between the ages of 14 and 20 when he was picked up by local police. After years of worrying what would become of him, Kallmann was finally able to sleep restfully in Kempton Park's transit camp where the burden of decision making, at least, was removed from him.

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

Before being shipped to Canada, his only knowledge of the country came from a magazine he read in a barber shop in Germany: "...and there was a picture of some contraption somewhere way up north in Canada and it was, um, about the size of a mailbox or so, and there were loaves of bread and cigarettes and that kind of thing and, um, the caption said, people in that area have no stores so they just go there, put in their money and pick up what they want and that's how honest Canadians are. Now that stuck in my mind."<sup>66</sup> Kallmann went to Canada willingly and experienced it as a "country that allows you to be a pioneer."<sup>67</sup> For him this meant developing a career path following his release that would not have been possible in Europe.

Yet for others, colonial Canada represented something backwards and barren and was approached with more trepidation. Erich Koch was a third year law student at Cambridge University in 1940, having moved to Kent at the age of 15 to attend a boarding school.<sup>68</sup> While interned in Canada, he exchanged numerous letters with his family, located in the United States and England, discussing his future. One common theme stringing the letters together is his desire to leave Canada for the US: "America is certainly a more civilized country than this very colonial Canada."<sup>69</sup> His identity as a Cambridge scholar remained with him through internment and his release to a prominent sponsoring Jewish family in Westmount, Montréal where he remarked, "I am being treated like a son, really,—and I am sort of taking all this luxury and good living with true Cambridge nonchalance."<sup>70</sup> His socio-economic status prior to the war gave him

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<sup>66</sup>Interview by Harry Rasky, 1980: Helmut Kallmann, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup>Eric Koch, *Deemed Suspect: A Wartime Blunder* (Goodread Biography, 1980).

<sup>69</sup> Erich Koch to his siblings (Nov. 11th 1941), "Correspondence to Otto Koch November 1941," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

<sup>70</sup> Erich Koch to his siblings (Nov. 12th 1941), "Correspondence to Otto Koch November 1941," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

the impression that Canada had a lot of catching up to do to its protectorate and the U.S. despite his positive homestay experience.

Kallmann and Koch represent the spectrum of attitudes towards Canada that internees carried with them as they disembarked in Quebec. Even though nearly all of them thought of Canada as a colony (many Canadians still did too), what "colonial" meant to each of them varied greatly. However, in one way or another, all of them tied their image of Canada to its vast landscape, which most first glimpsed sailing down the St. Lawrence River.<sup>71</sup> Before the internees were recognized as refugees, they were divided as any other group of arrivals between temporary camps. Many were moved to Trois-Rivières where Nazi POWs were already being held and they were greeted by locals with anti-Nazi jeers. In his poem "Trois Rivières," Gert Baumgart contrasts their cold and confusing reception to the charming and picturesque landscape; in his assessment, their ugly maltreatment contradicted Canada's beauty.<sup>72</sup> Because the waiting soldiers were told to expect dangerous fifth columnists, the Jewish refugees were treated as enemy spies despite the appearance of the orthodox among them indicating that there had been a mistake. The remoteness of the country—both in terms of distance from Europe and its scenery—combined with their new guards' "funny dress" and inexplicable contempt told the internees that they had truly arrived in a world apart.

The places to which the internees then travelled varied greatly in surroundings and purpose, as described above. The physical settings of the camps determined the nature of the

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<sup>71</sup>The Sobieski first arrived in St. John's before continuing up the St. Lawrence River. However, this first encounter is rarely mentioned in internees' recollections, perhaps because those who arrived via the Sobieski had a much more pleasant journey than those who didn't. Interviews with Harry Rasky: John Newmark, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>72</sup>Gert Baumgart, "Trois- Rivières," in "Behind Barbed Wire" Scrapbook, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 2. Bob Herald expressed similar shock over their treatment in his interview with Harry Rasky forty years later. LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

work the internees would eventually carry out when the Works Programme was established by Major O'Donahoe (see chapter two). Despite the wide-range of living and work experiences, one camp in particular stood out as emblematic of "Canadianness": the forestry station in New Brunswick. Nearly half of the Jewish refugees spent just under a year in this, the remotest of camps, felling trees outside of the barbed wire fence.<sup>73</sup> The density of the forest impressed the internees, some artists among them making the landscape the subject of their work. "Canadian Landscape" (figure 1.2) was painted by Oscar Cahén in 1942 as a thank you gift to Clarence Halliday, appointed Welfare Officer of Camp N. It reflects the centrality of the forest to Canadian identity, not unlike the work of "The Group of Seven" whose paintings the artist may have come across in a library book.<sup>74</sup> Similar to Frederick Varley's "Stormy Weather," a single tree stands alone, its movement capturing the season's weather and with it, the passage of time. This was especially important in Camp B where most outdoor work occurred in the winter and internees experienced the north's harsh climate for the first time. In another example, a Christmas greeting card (figure 1.3) printed by the YMCA depicts the dense Acadia forest that lay outside of the barbed wire of Camp Fredericton. A deer in the foreground gazes back at the artist through the wire that divides them. In this scene, it is the internee who is caged and the animal who is the unhindered observer, calling into question what is "normal" about nature's hierarchy. The composition of the greeting card emphasizes the power of seeing and the vulnerability or

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<sup>73</sup> On August 10th 1940, 700 refugees arrived at Camp B from Trois-Rivières. In June 1941 they were moved to the remaining camps in Quebec. War Diaries, "Aug. 1940: No. 70 Internment Camp, Aug. 1940-Nov. 1942," LAC, RG24 15404, 2287, folder 1.

<sup>74</sup> Cahén himself went on to become a famous Canadian abstract painter as part of the Group of Eleven, active between 1953-1960.

impotence of being seen. For the interned men, being caged made them the object of the state's gaze (and on occasion, the public's), which, as chapter three explains, could be demasculinising.



Figure 1.2 Oscar Cahén, "Canadian Landscape," The Cahén Archives.

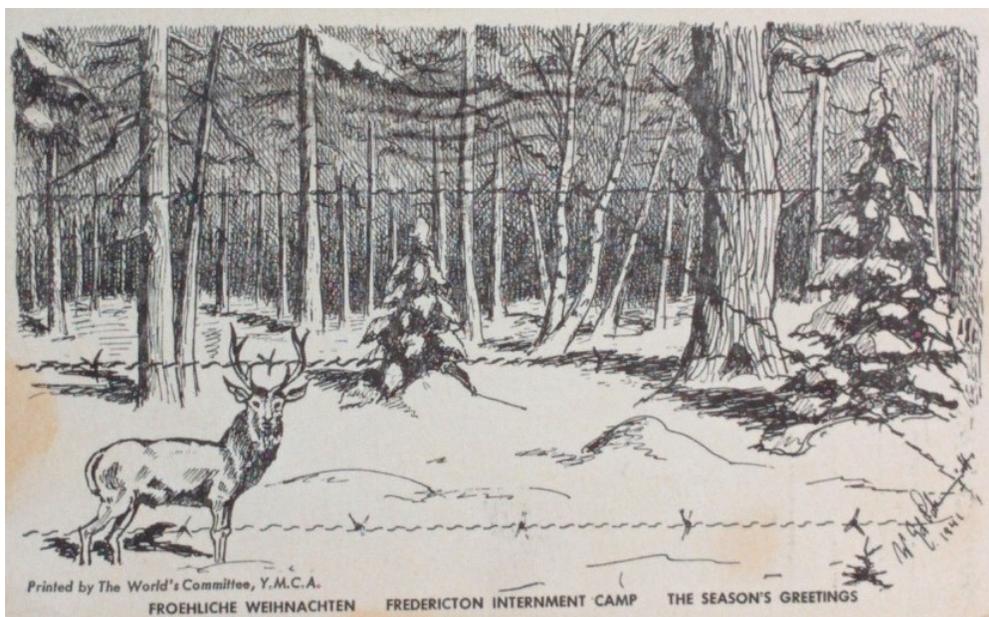


Figure 1.3 "Correspondence with wife, June-Dec. 1941 (3)," LAC, MG30 c153 1.

Part of why former internees remembered this work so vividly forty years later, apart from the frigid temperatures, was because it gave them the unique feeling of being part of a larger pioneering tradition. Learning to be a lumberjack, several of them recalled, was a humanizing experience that gave them a reprieve from life as a prisoner, however physically demanding the work.<sup>75</sup> It gave them a sense of purpose and being beyond the barbed wire fence in an isolated area meant that their relationship with the guards transformed too: "[I] like everybody else, learned how to be a lumber jack...we were guarded by some of the old French Canadians...we made friends with them..it was a healthy life in a way, we went out in the snow and we cut down the trees and I learned a skill that I never forgot..."<sup>76</sup> In this setting the image of a Canadian as a lumberjack solidified for some internees who watched "expert" "strong legged" guards demonstrate how to swing an axe and who played with bear cubs for entertainment.<sup>77</sup> Of course, being put to work was not all a positive experience and many protested doing so (see chapters two and four). However, the sense some gained that they were making a contribution to the country while improving their physical health was not coincidental, but a historically significant method for dealing with perceived societal pariahs as the interwar relief and unemployed youth camps demonstrate.

### ***"Camp Making"***<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Harry Rasky interviews, 1980: Edgar Lion, Gustav Bauer, Jack Hahn. LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>76</sup> Harry Rasky interview, 1980: Jack Hahn. LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>77</sup> Harry Rasky interviews, 1980: Edgar Lion, Eric Seidler. LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3. "Loewy, Harry-Memoirs WWII, Internment Camp. 'Days Behind the Wire'," CJCC, CJC ZB, pgs. 155 and 238.

<sup>78</sup> "Woods Travel," National Forestry Program Dominion Section, Issued by Department of Mines and Resources, "National Forestry Program - Training, Education and Recreation," LAC, RG39 vol. 30, file 49209D.

Like the campers described in "Woods Travel," the internees had to make do with their limited resources in order to transform the sites into habitable places that would meet their material and mental needs. The 1939 guide describes this process of "camp making" as a collaborative one:

In a party of two the work should be divided, one man getting the wood and the other pitching the tent or lean-to and preparing the bough bed. A well prepared bough bed may be made by the use of small balsam or spruce branches laid in thickly overlapping layers. There is a certain trick to making these beds, but it is easily learned. Nothing can be compared in comfort to a freshly-made bed of balsam boughs on which blankets or sleeping bags are laid—at least it seems that way after a hard day's travel.<sup>79</sup>

The internees discovered that "getting used" to internment required a similarly creative re-purposing of camp spaces and collaboration between like-minded individuals or small groups. Accepting and dealing with the lot that they had been given was a mentally important survival strategy, making camp spaces not only sites of detainment, but places of assembly, celebration, and learning.

'Place' is a site to which meaning is ascribed through memory and commemorative practices, which have been exercised by former internees and historical professionals variably since the early 1980s.<sup>80</sup> In his theoretical discussion of place as a concept, Cliff Hague further clarifies that, "it is interpretation and narrative that give identity and it is identity that transforms space into place," shifting from a navigational understanding of place to an understanding of place as a process.<sup>81</sup> This view turns away from Benedict Anderson's understanding of national identity as an "imagined communities" constructed through official channels in favour of a vision of identity formation as localized through meanings of place and memory.<sup>82</sup> If "place is all

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Opp & Walsh, eds. *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, 4.

<sup>81</sup> Cliff Hague, "Planning and Place Identity," in *Place Identity, Participation and Planning*, edited by Cliff Hague & Paul Jenkins, 5 (New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

For an analysis of how identity differs when associated with national and local place attachment, see Maria

over the place” then memory is mobile, its significance shifting in relation to contemporary events and knowledge, complicating the notion of memory work.<sup>83</sup> “In order to explore how people have historically made their memories with, in, and through the material culture of place,” Opp and Walsh explain, “scholars need to confront the institutions where these resources have been ‘re-placed’,” whether in “official” institutions or “vernacular” collections.<sup>84</sup> By theorizing 'place', we are able to draw connections between the history of the sites, the former internees' use and later recollections of them, and how this impacted their sense of belonging in Canada over time. The sites, in other words, are the physical links between collective memory and identity.

The internees added their own layer of meaning to the places they inhabited through the re-invention of their original purposes. Wherever the internees were sent, from the temporary to the permanent camps, they arrived to sites that were either neglected for decades and deteriorating or altogether incomplete. The poor physical conditions of the camps combined with overcrowding sometimes led internees to creatively re-interpret the original purposes of spaces: the boiler room becomes a more private meeting space; the shower room is transformed into a place fit for a Christmas party; the gun room of Fort Lennox is converted into a synagogue. Practically these transformations filled a need that the camps failed to provide in their haphazard conditions, but they were also much more significant than that. How the internees made use of the limited space provided to them reveals a great deal about who they were and what they

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Lewicka, “Place attachment, Place Identity, and Place Memory: Restoring the Forgotten City Past,” *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 28:3 (2008): 209-231.

<sup>83</sup> Opp & Walsh, eds. *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, 8-9.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 11

valued. It also suggests the ways in which space itself played an active role in the internees' incarceration experiences.

### *The Boiler Room & the Illicit Correspondence*

Upon their arrival to Cove Fields (Camp L), Frederick Lycett, Gerhard Arnold, and Ernest Guter—the Three Musketeers—were assigned the position of boiler room stoker. Together they used their privileged position of trust to turn the boiler room into a meeting room or club. There they would serve food "organized" from the camp kitchen and alcohol gifted by the more friendly guards.<sup>85</sup> In the boiler room the hierarchical relationship between internee and guard faded as it became a place of leisure and reprieve from daily routine. During this brief period in Cove Fields, the boiler room stokers befriended one guard in particular, Corporeal Bernhard Henson, nicknamed "Barney." After sharing many private chats and the occasional prohibited beer, Barney announced to the boys that his 16 year old daughter Winifred, nicknamed "Winkie," was coming to visit him. Knowing how pretty the girl was, Barney having shared a picture of her with the group, Fred inquired as to whether the Corporeal would pass a note along to her.<sup>86</sup> And so began the illicit correspondence between the Three Musketeers and Winkie, her father acting as intermediary, that would bypass the censors and continue for months even after the boys were separated and move to different camps. Initially Winkie acted on youthful innocence, sending the boys gifts, most commonly cigarettes, which her father would

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<sup>85</sup> Ernest Guter to Erich Koch (March 24th 1982), "Correspondence between Koch & former internees 1979-1982 (G-K), LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

<sup>86</sup>"Internment Camp 'N', Canadian Provost Corps A.F. RE: Illicit Correspondence," (January 25th 1941), "Edmonson: Correspondence & other material relating to individuals who had been interned & to the condition of Jews in occupied Europe, n.d., 1940-1941," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

deliver to them in the boiler room. Gradually, however, their relationship turned more threatening to internment operations as the boys asked Winkie to contact outside help on their behalf and Winkie shared top secret military information learned from her father around the family dinner table.<sup>87</sup> The boiler room, a space Fred continued to work after his transfer to Sherbrooke, became a connection to the outside world through the cover it offered both internees and guards from the panopticon of the guards' tower.

### *The Shower Room Christmas Party*

Without a doubt, the holidays were one of the most difficult times to be interned. But by the time Christmas of 1941 rolled around, the internees' status had been recognized and so "internment" camps became "refugee" camps, at least in name. Internment Operations presented the internees of Sherbrooke with twenty-five turkeys for their Christmas meal and permitted two to three internees, under escort, to cut down a few Christmas trees for the camp.<sup>88</sup> Internees also held their own celebration in the shower room on Christmas Eve, where they sang carols and ate cakes. Describing the scene to his family, Erich Koch added as an afterthought, "This is a 99% Jewish camp!" followed by "Last night I went to the Chanukah festivities, the food, I regret to say, was not as good, but there was a sermon instead..."<sup>89</sup> Although Sherbrooke had a large recreation hut, the internees opted for a private celebration in addition to that offered by authorities. Therefore, the shower room served multiple functions and carried significance beyond its intended use. In this case, the use of the shower room gives us an idea how the

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Ernest Guter, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>88</sup> Eric Koch to family (December 26th 1941), "Correspondence from Otto Koch to family & friends July-Dec. 1941," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

internees identified predominantly as secular Jews, save obligatory holiday services, and what was valued most when incarcerated—good food.

### *The Gun Room & the Torah*

Although Koch's letter to his family remarked on the Jewish internees' Christmas celebration, there was a relatively small, but vocal, group of orthodox internees who the authorities eventually consolidated into one camp. As chapter four will further illuminate, the orthodox group continually posed a significant challenge to authorities given their unique dietary and religious customs regarding work hours. The group's needs were often met only through their own insistence. In Camp Île-aux-Noix, the Yeshiva students turned part of the fort's casemates into a synagogue and study hall. Below (figure 1.4) we see a group of students studying in the synagogue with the Torah ark centred between two windows. The photograph, which was taken by the Montreal Standard, depicts the young men mostly hiding from the camera, undoubtedly not used to being the object of the public's gaze. Even more so than the boiler room and shower room, the former gun room's reinvention as a place of religious study and worship is indicative of the considerable ways people imbue spaces with their own meaning, sometimes connecting distant and unrelated pasts. What once served as a place of armed defense in the name of nation building became some internees' sanctuary from oppression by the same state.



Figure 1.4 "Jewish internees at Canadian internment camp reading in the camp synagogue. The Torah ark visible between two long tables with benches. [graphic material]— c1940-1943." Jewish Public Library Archives, The Boulkind Family Fonds, 1062; 017699.

These three examples of how internees turned uninhabited spaces into places of comfort and comradery are mere illustrations of the myriad ways internees engaged their surroundings. To be sure, it is unclear how much conscious thought they gave to these processes as they unfolded; it is likely that they were simply "camp making"—using what limited resources were available to them to create a temporary home. Yet in transforming these spaces for their own purposes, the internees (granted, unknowingly) added a layer of meaning to sites of national

historical significance.<sup>90</sup> In other words, in inhabiting these camp sites and by making camp, the internees were part of a longer trajectory of nation building that often relied on exploited immigrant labour and ethnic segregation. The physical spaces of internment serve as an intersection between the various pasts, in which the former internees were better versed when it came time to construct their collective internment narrative.

### ***Conclusion***

"Woods Travel," a lecture presented to the unemployed youth enrolled in the National Forestry Program, was more than a "how-to" guide for exploring and surviving the Canadian hinterland. It was also a guide to manhood. Trainees were supposed wayward boys that the government anticipated would soon be a drain on the welfare system if they were not transformed into productive citizens. Consequently, the main goal of the program was to build "good" men through physical work. "Woods Travel" serves as an apt metaphor for the refugees' internment because their experiences in the hinterland paralleled those of the unemployed youth. Far from coincidental, the Forestry Program was one mental map the guards possessed for dealing with their unique internees as potential citizens. For the internees themselves, seeing the camp sites for the first time was a jarring encounter that quickly alerted them to the ways they would have to adapt in order to survive internment mentally, if not physically. How the former

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<sup>90</sup> For examples of place-making in other contexts, see Todd Presner, *Mobile Modernity: Germans, Jews, Trains* (Columbia University Press, 2007); Jennifer V. Evans, *Life Among the Ruins. Cityscape and Sexuality in Cold War Berlin* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

internees chose to narrate their wartime experience during their 1980 reunion is indicative of their success in doing so. Rather than dwell on their mistreatment and the sometimes appalling living conditions they endured, they used the mythic icon of the Canadian lumberjack or pioneer to see their internment as an adventure in becoming Canadian.

## Chapter 2: Producing Productive Refugees: Work, Sport, & the Masculine Body

Sixteen years after the camp boys gathered for a reunion in Toronto, Helmut Kallmann penned the first issue of the "Ex-Internees Newsletter." Over the next five years he would produce at least five more to a circulation of over 180 former internees spread across Canada and the United States.<sup>1</sup> More than a way to keep in touch with one another, this mobile archive transcended national institutions to collect memory fragments and to solidify a self-initiated group narrative of internment. Their most pressing issue was to "take stock" of what had become of them during the intervening years in order to stretch their narrative beyond the barbed wire. As Kallmann put it, "the youngest of us are now 72, so perhaps the time for stocktaking is at hand. The 'Kochbuch' and the Jones-book deal with our internment history almost exclusively. Should not the contribution of the 'campboys' to Canada and other countries during more than 50 years form the subject of another study?"<sup>2</sup> Echoing Holocaust survivors' imperative to remember in the face of an aging population, former internees wanted to draw additional attention to their collective story of success following release. An unusually high number among them had gone on to earn doctorates and to receive the Order of Canada, significant accomplishments which many attributed, at least in part, to the education system the internees established in camp.<sup>3</sup> As the former internees considered what the legacy of their internment would be, the newsletters' 'who's who' signaled the victory of education over ignorance and false imprisonment.

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<sup>1</sup> "Ex-Internees Newsletter #4" (March 1998), "Ex-Internees Newsletter 1969, 1996-2000," Ontario Jewish Archives (OJA), *Fonds* 93, Box 1 of 2, file 9.

<sup>2</sup> "Ex-Internees Newsletter #1" (September 1996), "Ex-Internees Newsletter 1969, 1996-2000," OJA, *Fonds* 93, Box 1 of 2, file 9. The two books to which Kallmann is referring are: Eric Koch, *Deemed Suspect: A Wartime Blunder* (Goodread Biography, 1980) & Ted Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp, Vol. 1 & 2* (Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> "The Spies Who Never Were" by Harry Rasky Part I & II, Library and Archives Canada, MG30 c192 Vol. 3. According to Kallmann's calculations, 75 former camp boys went on to become professors in Canada and abroad while nine belonged to the Order of Canada. "Ex-Internees Newsletter #1" (September 1996), "Ex-Internees Newsletter 1969, 1996-2000," OJA, *Fonds* 93, Box 1 of 2, file 9.

Accordingly, education has emerged as a predominate theme in the historiography of Jewish internment to date.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter takes education during internment as its starting point to show how Internment Operations and former internees thought differently about the refugees as an untapped pool of labour. Whereas the former internees recalled the success of their camp schools as evidence of their intellectual capacities which could have been put to better use outside of the barbed wire, the authorities' focused on putting their masculine bodies to work through labour and sports. Internment Operations worried that under the restraints of incarceration, "naturally" aggressive men would become violent and revolt, making it imperative to channel their restlessness into more productive physical pursuits. By developing and supporting work and sports programs, Internment Operations reinforced hegemonic masculinity which emphasized the men's physical capabilities over intellectual ones, suggesting that suitable Canadianness is visible. This rubbed up against the Jewish tradition of intellectualism that some internees brought to camp with them and that became an important part of their postwar collective identity. This helps explain not only the cultural gap between the guards who were mostly retired veterans and the young Jewish students, it also accounts in part for the transformation of memories over time to emphasize, by the 1990s, the role of education in camp. This chapter underscores the physical tasks that the internees took up to make sense of the disparities between lived experiences and the legacy of Jewish internment developed over decades of reunions and correspondence.

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<sup>4</sup> David Carter, *Behind Canadian Barbed Wire* (Calgary, 1980); Paula Draper, "The Accidental Immigrants: Canada & the Interned Refugees" (PhD diss. University of Toronto, 1983); Ted Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: the Fredericton Internment Camp* (Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1988); Eric Koch, *Deemed Suspect: a Wartime Blunder* (Goodread Biography, 1980); Erwin Schild, "A Canadian Footnote to the Holocaust" *Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 5:1 (Spring 1981). The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's online exhibit "'Enemy Aliens': The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-43" also devotes a section to the education programs run by internees: [http://www.enemyaliens.ca/les\\_gars\\_des\\_camps-camp\\_boys/leducation-education-eng.html](http://www.enemyaliens.ca/les_gars_des_camps-camp_boys/leducation-education-eng.html).

Following from chapter one which uses place to draw continuities between unemployment relief camps and Jewish internment, chapter two uses the same pre-war camps to argue that the state's concern with producing productive refugees was part of a continuum of earlier exploitative policies that constructed gender and class norms through the labouring bodies of male immigrants. It first analyzes the significance of the camp schools to internees at the time and in their later recollections before moving to a brief social history of Canadian immigration and labour. Drawing on the case of the National Forestry Program for unemployed youth, it demonstrates how differentiation and geographical separation were used by the state to exploit an untapped labour pool under the moral guise of producing "good" male citizens. It then examines how some internees already experienced this state-produced mantra of purpose through labour in Britain's Kitchener Refugee Camp in the years between their flight from Nazi Germany and their deportation to Canada. Some internees did find work and sport physically and mentally valuable as it returned a sense of "normalcy" to camp life via the class hierarchies and gender norms it reinforced behind barbed wire. After analyzing what "work" meant to different internees, the chapter identifies three work schemes that exploited internment labour in ways that were not unfamiliar to ethnically "undesirable" immigrants in the first half of the twentieth century: farming, felling, and the works programme. Finally, it ends with an account of sports behind barbed wire. Whereas Internment Operations encouraged physical recreation to channel the so-called aggressive instincts of men, the Jewish refugees more often used sports to explore and express their new national loyalties in the face of displacement and the persecution of European Jewry. From both perspectives, playing sports was an important part of identity formation, but what was at stake for the refugees was much greater than their masculine sensibilities.

## *The Camp Schools*

The camp schools became a meaningful part of camp life not simply as a way to pass the time, though that was an important strategy for managing one's mental health; using internment as an opportunity to make something of oneself was a driving force behind the boys' voluntary enrollment in the schools—a mantra that carried even more weight for the former internees as the scope of the Holocaust became apparent in the post-war decades. When queried by CBC journalist Harry Rasky why so many of the camp boys turned into scholars, the former leader of the Farnham camp school, William Heckscher, curiously recalled,

[...]I was just saying forget about masturbation, forget about sexuality, and do things with your brain and the spirit. Now I think this played a very important part in the lives of these students who suddenly realized that they were deeply motivated perhaps more than people who are just have the money and the parents expect, there were no parents, there was no expectation there was just voluntary work[...]<sup>5</sup>

The camp school was a good "moral" channel for the boys' energies, which the paternal Heckscher remembered worrying would be directed towards sexual "deviance" given the absence of women, but it also served the boys who wanted to learn and to continue their studies in Canadian universities on the student release scheme. There can be little doubt, therefore, that education was a central component of the internee experience for the youth who attended the variety of classes on offer. The legacy of the camp schools is equally important because, as the former internees and other historians have suggested, their success speaks to what could have been had more Jewish lives been saved from Nazi Europe through more open immigration schemes.<sup>6</sup> More specifically, focusing on internment education speaks to the history of

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<sup>5</sup> Interview by Harry Rasky, 1980: William Heckscher, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>6</sup> See for example, Paula Draper, "The 'Camp Boys': Interned Refugees from Nazism," in *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*, eds. Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, and Angelo Principe (University of Toronto Press, 2000), 189-190.

twentieth-century Canadian immigration and reinforces the narrative of Canada's restrictive anti-semitic wartime policies as a shameful hiccup in the nation's progressive march towards tolerance and multi-culturalism. It is possible that by narrowing in on this particular message, however important, former internees and historians have eclipsed ways of seeing and assigning meaning to Jewish internment outside of a specifically nation-building framework. This chapter attempts to widen this scope by offering additional ways of thinking about the legacy of internment through the lens of productivity.

Following the formal change in their status in July 1941 from POWs second class to refugees from Nazi oppression, images of the internees began to circulate in local newspapers to alert the public of their extraordinary situation. To some degree the photographs were also a portal to the internment experience that the guards were willing to let reporters document and share with the public. Naturally, the story angles varied from the Montreal Gazette to the Canadian Jewish Review, for example, but all representations of internment life were filtered through the lens of productivity.<sup>7</sup> Internment Operations wanted the internees to be seen by the public as useful, especially to the war effort, and the internees equally wanted to be seen as having use in the hopes of securing an early release. By producing productive internees, the blunder of Jewish internment could be turned into a constructive force for Canada and for the young men who wanted to contribute to the fight against Nazism. Two means of measuring productivity were the internees' involvement in camp work and sports. Where the camp schools were touted as commendable on the part of internees, they operated apart from rather than a part of Internment Operations. Work programs and organized sports kept the internees busy, channeled their frustrations into acceptable physical activities, and, supposedly, made 'good' men

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<sup>7</sup> Jewish newspapers had a special interest in shedding a positive light on the internees given that the public mood of the time was still largely anti-semitic. Canadian Jewish organizations worried that any bad press about the internees would rock the boat and jeopardize the Jewish community's precarious status in the country.

of them. Focusing on work and sports rather than education helps situate the history of Jewish internment into broader patterns of class and ethnic discrimination which often played off of narrow constructions of manhood. The internees were not simply victims of this process, enacted by a national institution of surveillance; they were also agents of it, bringing into camp with them their own social hierarchies and ideas of masculinity. The lens of productivity, therefore, allows us to see internment as a microcosm of the world beyond the barbed wire where social norms and expectations are created through a push and pull between the state and its citizens.

### ***Unemployed Men and Ethnic Discrimination***

As in other national contexts, Canadian social history has been shaped over the last fifty years by the histories of race, class, and gender oppression and the points of convergence between them.<sup>8</sup> This chapter is no different in its suggestion that, like other male dominated spaces, internment camps were structured by experiences of ethnic and class consciousness that reinforced patriarchal systems of rule.<sup>9</sup> Constructions of difference were a guiding principle of

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<sup>8</sup> E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1963) was the seminal text that marked a significant break from political history to social histories driven "from below." In particular, he argued that the working class were agents of their own lives and not passive victims of history. For examples of seminal texts in the Canadian context, see: Bettina Bradbury, *Working families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (University of Toronto Press, 1993); Paul Craven, ed., *Labouring Lives: Work and Workers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (University of Toronto Press, 1995); Irving M. Abella, "Labour and Working-Class History" in Granatstein and Stevens, eds. *A Reader's Guide to Canadian History: Confederation to the Present* (University of Toronto Press, 1982), 114–36; Franca Iacovetta, Paula Draper, and Robert A. Ventresca, eds., *A Nation of Immigrants: Readings in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s* (University of Toronto Press, 1998); Ruth A. Frager and Carmela K. Patrias, eds., *Discounted Labour: Women Workers in Canada, 1870-1939* (University of Toronto Press, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> For case studies in male segregated societies and male dominated industries, see: T. Dunbar Moodie, *Going for Gold: Men, Mines, and Migration* (University of California Press, 1994); Ian Radforth, "The Shantymen," in *Labouring Lives: Work & Workers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario*, ed. Paul Craven (University of Toronto Press, 1995): 204-205; Angus McLaren, "Males, Migrants, and Murder in British Columbia, 1900-1923," in *On the Case: Explorations in Social History*, eds. Franca Iacovetta and Wendy Mitchinson (University of Toronto Press, 1998):159-180; Jennifer V. Evans, "The Moral State: Men, Mining, and Masculinity in the Early GDR," in *German History*, 23: 3 (August 2005): 355-370; Robert McIntosh, "Boys in the Mining Community," in *Home, Work, and*

Canadian internment camps from their first conception during WWI. At that time, Ukrainian Canadians were the primary suspects of fifth columnist activities, but their indiscriminate round-up reflected current labour tensions and the "Red scare" rather than actual treasonous activities.<sup>10</sup> The same can be said of those groups targeted during WWII, primarily Japanese, Italian, and German Canadians, especially those who were left leaning. With the exception of Japanese Canadians and Americans who were interned regardless of age and sex, internment policies in the United Kingdom and North America targeted working age men, particularly recent immigrants.

While the Canadian government continued its efforts to settle immigrant families on Western farms at the turn of the century, industrialization had also dramatically expanded the economy creating the need for foreign workers in industries such as mining, forestry, and railway construction.<sup>11</sup> The new immigrant workforce consisted mostly of class-conscious men whose socialist and communist ideals were awakened by the conditions of industrial Europe, contributing to the public's perception of working class immigrants as "dangerous foreigners" in general, and Russian Jews, in particular.<sup>12</sup> During economic downturns, foreign-born labourers were the first to be let-go from employment, making them primary candidates for "voluntary" relief camps that segregated and put men to physical work as a solution to the growing

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*Play: Situating Canadian Social History, 1840-1980*, eds. James Opp & John Walsh (Oxford University Press, 2006):152-168; Pamela Sugiman, "Privilege and Oppression: The Configuration of Race, Gender, and Class in Southern Ontario Auto Plants, 1939 to 1949," in *Home, Work, and Play: Situating Canadian Social History, 1840-1980*, eds. James Opp & John Walsh (Oxford University Press, 2006): 185-200; Suzanne Morton, "A Man's City: Montreal, Gambling, and Male Space in the 1940s," in *Home, Work, and Play: Situating Canadian Social History, 1840-1980*, eds. James Opp & John Walsh (Oxford University Press, 2006):312-339.

<sup>10</sup> Frances Swyripa, and John Herd Thompson, eds., *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada During the Great War* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1983); Lubomyr Luciuk, *In Fear of the Barbed Wire Fence: Canada's First National Internment Operations and the Ukrainian Canadians, 1914-1920* (Kingston: Kashtan Press, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> Barrington Walker, ed., "Dangerous Others: Non-Citizens and the State," in *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada: Essential Readings* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2008):107-108.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 107. Ian McKay, *Reasoning Otherwise: Leftists and the People's Enlightenment in Canada, 1890-1920* (Between the Lines, 2008).

unemployment problem.<sup>13</sup> Immigrant men's work outside of the home made them more valuable to the state, but it also made them more vulnerable to detention and internment, particularly when class tension coincided with ethnic discrimination, such as anti-semitism.

Productivity, or the unemployed men's lack thereof, drove the establishment of relief camps and the National Forestry Program in the 1930s. But being productive was a broad umbrella that encompassed more than wage labour. If the camps were to turn the men into productive citizens, they would also have to make 'good' men of them. As a result the enrollees received training not only in a specific area of work, there were also lectures in citizenship and personal hygiene and fitness. Programs sought to "rehabilitate" a man's whole person because unemployment, according to the state, had caused the men's physique and morale to deteriorate.<sup>14</sup> To make 'good' men of them, the training officers encouraged competition between groups, held Labour Day track and field meets, and scheduled daily physical drills. The programs drew a clear line from men's healthy bodies to the health of the national body. Photographs taken of the National Forestry Program branch in the Acadian forest, New Brunswick, reveal the physically transformative process the young men underwent from wayward youth to disciplined men.

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<sup>13</sup> Donald H. Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1995).

<sup>14</sup> "HO Supervision Dept. of Labor: National Forestry Program (General Organization 1939-1940), " LAC, RG39 vol. 29, file 49209 vol. 3 & 4.



Figure 2.1 "Group of enrollees as they arrived," "Final Report on National Forestry Activities 1939: Acadia Forest Experiment Station," LAC, RG39 vol. 48.



Figure 2.2 "The same group of enrollees as above in their uniforms," "Final Report on National Forestry Activities 1939: Acadia Forest Experiment Station," LAC, RG39 vol. 48.

The two photographs above appear together in the National Forestry Program's final activity report for 1939. They picture the same group of nine enrollees upon their arrival to the camp in New Brunswick and on completion of the program. The difference between the men's attire,

posture, and facial expressions in the two photographs is a physical representation of the ways in which the youth have become disciplined men through productivity. More broadly, they reflect the vested interest the state took in constructing manhood around ideals of rugged moral strength. These unemployment camps proved to be important precedents in the handling of unproductive men whose bodies represented significant labour potential.

The internment of Jewish refugees, and indeed, other "enemy aliens," during WWII, followed on the heels of these unemployment programs and, in some cases, even occupied the same spaces. It is worthwhile, then, to investigate how Internment Operations viewed and practiced internee 'productivity'. In the case of the Jewish refugees who were not Canadian citizens at the time of their internment, being productive had less to do with becoming a good citizen than the interwar camps (even though much of the language used by the authorities in each case overlapped). Nevertheless, given the context of WWII, the internees' productive potential was valued by the Department of National Defence. Moreover, authorities worried that the confinement of the men would lead to violent eruptions and 'deviant' sexual activities, so they took measures to ensure that their frustrated energies would be channelled through more productive outlets, namely work and physical recreation. For that reason, analyzing how the internees were turned into productive men situates their internment into a longer immigration narrative of labour and ethnic exploitation. At the same time, making 'good' men was a universal concern of male segregated societies, from traditional prisons for criminals, to mining and forestry camps, to internment operations across the globe. In other words, it was not specific to the Canadian context but transcended national structures to make the male body a site of moral and political reform.

## *Labouring Bodies: Farming, Felling, and the Works Programme*

What it means to work is not a constant, but varies according to contemporary values and assumptions.<sup>15</sup> The internees brought with them to Canada a wide range of work experiences and some had no work experience at all. Accordingly, their expectations of internment work varied with some jumping into assignments enthusiastically while others found the idea indignant and avoided them when possible. Underlying their attitudes towards camp work were different expectations for their own futures driven by multiple variables including age, education level, previous occupation(s), and connections to the outside world in Canada and the United States. Perhaps with the exception of age, social class cut across how each internee defined and assigned meaning to work in that given moment. Like other prisons, internment did not level the playing field, so to speak, in all the ways that one might imagine. Instead, social expectations and distinctions continued to mediate the internees' interactions with one another and with work, making camp a microcosm of the world around them.<sup>16</sup> This, however, was complicated in internment camps where work was imposed unilaterally by guards who were often in awe of the internees' intellectual and cultural backgrounds. Once their status as refugees became apparent, guards often fraternized with internees during their work duties, defying state imposed strictures of proper conduct between authoritarian and prisoner. This proximity between guards and internees only further differentiated, in the minds of internees, the colonial Canadians, whose masculinity was constructed through physical strength, from the acculturated European Jews,

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<sup>15</sup> For a concise social history of work in Canada see "At Work," James Opp & John Walsh, eds. in *Home, Work, and Play: Situating Canadian Social History, 1840-1980* (Oxford University Press, 2006): 116-117.

<sup>16</sup> Several internees echoed these sentiments in their interviews with Harry Rasky, explaining that camp life was a training ground for post-internment life because it gave them the opportunity to interact with men from a wide variety of backgrounds and learn what motivates people to act. Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Toni Obert, Joseph Kates, Emil Fackenheim, Gerry Waldston. LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

whose sense of self worth was largely derived from their intellectual aptitude. Given the fluidity of the camp social hierarchy, internment work could be a source of agency as well as victimhood, privilege and oppression.<sup>17</sup>

When internees entered the permanent camps, they were surprised to learn that they would be required to help build their own prison. Existing structures were in place before the sites were designated to open, but they were either dilapidated or insufficient to house the number of internees expected. In some cases civilian contractors had been hired to upgrade essential services such as sewage and electricity, but given the short timeframe commandants were allotted to make their camps suitable for habitation, work was on-going when the internees arrived.<sup>18</sup> For example, in the case of the most remote site, Camp B, there was only one tap of running water to supply the 700 new arrivals. The internees represented a large source of cheap labour and the commandants expected that they could employ them to fix-up the camps, sometimes replacing the civilian workers, without having to pay them. At the time, the internees found the idea of constructing their own prison repugnant; at least being paid for the work would give them a semblance of dignity. Despite their protests, which reached all the way to the Department of Justice, the Deputy Minister ruled that the "maintenance" of the camps fell within the Geneva Convention's terms and that internees could be made to construct their own camps without pay.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the internees first experienced work in internment as an assault on their freedom which took some time to "get used to."

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<sup>17</sup> "Privilege and Oppression: The Configuration of Race, Gender, and Class in Southern Ontario Auto Plants, 1939 to 1949," in *Home, Work, and Play: Situating Canadian Social History, 1840-1980*, eds. James Opp & John Walsh (Oxford University Press, 2006), 185-200.

<sup>18</sup> "Oct. 1940: No. 40 Internment Camp, Oct. 1940-April 1941," LAC, RG24 15397, 2282.

<sup>19</sup> E. de B. Panet to the Deputy Minister (Militia Services) Department of National Defense (August 30, 1940), "Treatment of Enemy Aliens - Ile-aux-Noix, 1940-1944," LAC, RG24-C-1, file 7236-18, C-5377.

There were a number of reasons why Internment Operations wanted the men to work and why some men reciprocally found work valuable. At least in the beginning, both sides viewed productivity as a key way to channel the agitated men's energies. Drawing on lingering Victorian norms of masculinity, men were assumed to be brutish in their "natural" state and work was essential to their transformation into respectable, law-abiding men. The authorities worried that without work to keep the internees busy, they would resort to violent riots.<sup>20</sup> The Kitchener Refugee Camp in Kent, England, which housed the Jewish refugees who had fled Nazi Germany and Austria following *Kristallnacht*, imagined a similar connection between men's work and peace in their publication, "Some Victims of Nazi Oppression."<sup>21</sup> In an ironic self-congratulatory piece of propaganda, the British government touted its role in giving the men their freedom and, equally important, a sense of purpose through work. Two full spread pages with the captions, "They find Happiness in their new Work," and "Where Every Man Has a Job" depict refugees performing mostly manual labour (figures 2.3 & 2.4).

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<sup>20</sup> "Treatment of Enemy Aliens - Accommodation - Exhibition grounds, Three Rivers, 1940," LAC, Army Headquarters Central Registry, RG24-C-1, 7236-8, C-5376. "June 1941: No. 40 Internment Camp, May 1941-Dec. 1941," LAC, War Diaries, RG24-C-3 15397, 2282.

<sup>21</sup> "Some Victims of Nazi Oppression," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 2.



Figure 2.3 "Some Victims of Nazi Oppression," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 2.



Figure 2.4 "Some Victims of Nazi Oppression," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 2.

Having a job was a crucial component to restoring the men's physical and mental health. Many of the occupations illustrated in the Kitchener camp—farmer, factory worker, carpenter—and the duties being performed—road maintenance, camp repairs, tailoring—carried over to internment camps in Canada where "idle hands [were] once again employed usefully."<sup>22</sup> From the perspective of the government, useful work pertained to the engagement of men's bodies in some form of labour—"Fine specimens of manhood are to be found everywhere in the camp."<sup>23</sup> By calling into question their masculinity as unemployed men, authorities hoped to mobilize the refugees as a labour force. Reinforcing gender norms helped Internment Operations exploit the men's labour for projects deemed valuable to the state. For the younger internees who had their studies interrupted, it was more important to put their minds to work, partly explaining the friction between not only the authorities and the internees, but also laterally between different social groups. Whereas the young students did not have the sense that internment saved them from Nazism until much later, the Kitchener Camp men, who stayed together for the most part in Île-aux-Noix, were often released from German concentration camps on the condition that they flee to England. England, despite its humanitarian claims, agreed to have them for their productive potential. Therefore, despite its exploitative terms, work could be mutually beneficial as it provided refugees a way out of Nazi occupied Europe.

As far as the internees were concerned, work was one way to prevent "barbed wireitis," the feeling of going stir-crazy with the loss of freedom.<sup>24</sup> However, this had more to do with mental health than physical health or idleness. Volunteering for work assignments beyond the required rotation of fatigue duties meant that internees would have a schedule to keep, giving

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<sup>22</sup> The phrase captions the bottom right photo of figure 2.4. *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> "Sept. 1941: No. 41 Internment Camp July 1940-December 1941," LAC, War Diaries, RG24-C3 15399, 2283.

them some semblance of purpose and normality.<sup>25</sup> Developing a work routine was important to the internees' well being while interned, but it was also clear to them that it was essential to their release. Volunteering demonstrated the ability to cooperate with Canadian authorities and enthusiasm for contributing to the Allied war effort, while also advertising one's productive value in skilled trades. Combined, these factors contributed to the likelihood that an internee would be released.

Release considerations varied over time for Internment Operations, but with the change in camp status in July 1941, the newly recognized refugees expected to be released en masse. It is little wonder then that Lt.-Col. Fordham's notice to the refugees one month later caused considerable stir. Explaining why wholesale release in Canada was still not possible, Fordham cited three factors:

- a) The policy of the Director of Immigration for Canada;
- b) The state of employment conditions in the Dominion;
- c) The attitude of Canadian labour unions.<sup>26</sup>

The joint issues of immigration and the labour market, particularly of the working-class, mediated the refugees' entrance into Canada, replicating immigration schemes in the first half of the twentieth century which solicited foreign workers during economic growth and interned them as "enemy aliens" or social pariahs during economic downturns.<sup>27</sup> The implication of Fordham's notice to the refugees was twofold: first, some internees began exaggerating their skills in the hopes of appearing useful to industries capable of sponsoring their release.<sup>28</sup> At the same time,

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<sup>25</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Emil Fackenheim; Eric Exton, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>26</sup> "Notice to Refugees," Lt.-Col. Fordham, Commissioner of Refugee Camps (Aug. 26th 1941), "Newman: Correspondence & other material relating to release from internment & employments, n.d., 1940-1942," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada 1900-1935* (University of Ottawa Press, 1988).

<sup>28</sup> For examples see, "Oct. 1941: No. 42 Internment Camp, Oct. 1941-July 1942," War Diaries, LAC, RG24 15400, 2284 and "Internees Box 1, files 1-189," Ontario Jewish Archives, RG282 9-6-1, file 12.

the carte blanche authority of Frederick Blair, Director of Internment Operations and well known anti-semitic, to sign off on every internee's release meant that anti-semitism blanketed release policies and elicited cooperation from those internees less inclined to volunteer to work. Major Ellwood, commandant of Camp Sherbrooke, was the worst of the commandants for using fear to manipulate internees. For example, when the internees first refused to do the extensive work required to bring camp N up to an acceptable living standard, Ellwood threatened that their behaviour was "damaging" to their image and would help spread anti-semitism in Canada. He appealed to the "more educated" among them to get things in order.<sup>29</sup> Anti-semitism was so pervasive that Canadian Jewish aid organizations worried that if they advocated on behalf of the internees too aggressively, they would rock the fragile boat of Jewish-Canadian relations. To help smooth things over, the United Jewish Refugee and War Relief Agencies and the Central Committee of Interned Refugees gifted cartons of cigarettes and rum to the camps to be distributed among the guards.<sup>30</sup> Anti-semitism and the threat of deportation combined with more release opportunities helped coax unwilling internees into work.

Working in a paid position earned an internee 20 cents per day before their salaries were raised to 30-50 cents, depending on one's role. Earnings were deposited to an account opened for each internee and then issued as canteen tickets. Money sent to prisoners from relatives and friends in North America and England was plentiful and issued in the same manner.<sup>31</sup> More than a place to buy luxury items, the canteen was a portal to the outside world of material goods and information in the form of newspapers and magazines, making the canteen worker its gatekeeper.

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<sup>29</sup> "Oct. 1940: No. 42 Internment Camp, Oct. 1940-Sept. 1941," War Diaries, LAC, RG24 15399, 2284.

<sup>30</sup> B.R. Racey, Commandant Internment Camp Île-aux-Noix to United Jewish Refugee and War Relief Agencies (May 8th 1941), CJC CENT CA, Vol.16, file 125 A; G.C. Roy, Lt. Adjunct Internment Camp B to Mr. S. Goldner, Central Committee of Interned Refugees (May 13th 1941), CJC CENT CA, Vol.16, file 125B; United Jewish Refugee and War Relief Agencies to Sergeant's Mess, Refugee Camp "A" (Dec. 30th 1941), CJC CENT CA, Vol. 17, file 125G; S. Goldner to Major E.D.B. Kippen, Internment Camp Farnham (May 1st 1941), CJC CENT CA, Vol. 17, file 125G.

<sup>31</sup> "Nov. 1940: No. 40 Internment Camp, Oct. 1940-April 1941," War Diaries, LAC, RG24 15397, 2282.

Although staged for the *Montreal Standard*, figure 2.5 illustrates the popularity of the canteen and its worker's position of power. While he poses in his suit with some of the luxury items behind the counter—bread, cigarettes, tic tacs, canned and fresh fruit—the camp boys crowd into the small window to peer at what is new.



Figure 2.5 "Jewish internees gathered at canteen purchasing various goods such as a large salami, tabacco, tinned fruit and fresh fruit. [graphic material] – c1940-1943," Jewish Public Library Archives, Boulkind Family Fonds, 1062, 017694.

The canteen embodied power in multiple ways. As the above image reveals, working in the canteen was a privileged position typically bestowed on an older internee with some accounting experience. But the canteen also held currency for the commandant and the wealthier internees. Luxury items could entice internees, who were otherwise unwilling, to work in order to be able to purchase them, especially cigarettes. The canteen also stocked basic items that would be hard

to go without for an extended period of time such as toiletries and clothing.<sup>32</sup> Fritz Wihl explains in his autobiography that felling trees was too hard for him, so he focused on his studies instead. However, when his money ran out, he was forced to go back to work for a period.<sup>33</sup> This was never a problem for internees whose relatives and friends maintained their tab. With money coming in from external sources, these wealthier internees did not have the same financial motivation to volunteer for jobs. Instead, they could spend their money not only on canteen items, but pay other internees for their handicrafts or to have them do their laundry.<sup>34</sup> This dynamic between wealthier and working-class internees, represented by the social function of the canteen, helped established a camp hierarchy that was fueled by external class factors.

In Harry Rasky's CBC documentary and the former internees' newsletters, classism falls away from the narrative in favour of more congenial memories of brotherhood, often surrounding their common pursuit of further education. When social differences are referred to at all, it is usually only tangentially by way of reminiscing about an "assorted character."<sup>35</sup> Rather than remembering internment as a divisive experience or one that at least reflected existing class stratification, the collective narrative of internment that has emerged attempts to communicate the former internees' shared value system which centred around education.<sup>36</sup> This narrative strategy highlights the gap between the refugees' ambitions in Canada and Internment Operations' exploitative maltreatment of them during the war. More covertly, however, it points

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<sup>32</sup> "Treatment of Enemy Aliens - Internment camp B, Little River Camp, Colters Siding and Camp 70, Fredericton, 1940-1945," LAC, RG24-C-1, file 236-11, C-5377.

<sup>33</sup> "Wihl, Fritz: autobiographical note on his internment," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1. See also E.L. Maag, Delegate in Canada for the International Red Cross, to Saul Hayes, United Jewish Refugees and War Relief Agencies (Dec. 5th 1940), "Internment Camp N, 1940-41," CJC CENT CA, Vol.16, file 125 C.

<sup>34</sup> "Loewy, Harry-Memoirs WWII, Internment Camp. 'Days Behind the Wire'," CJC ZB, pg. 176.

<sup>35</sup> "Ex-Internees Newsletter #1" (September 1996), "Ex-Internees Newsletter 1969, 1996-2000," OJA, *Fonds* 93, Box 1 of 2, file 9.

<sup>36</sup> Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," reprinted in *New German Critique* 65 (Spring-Summer 1995), 132. At least one exception to this general impetus is Gerry Waldston who in his interview with Harry Rasky emphasized that internment reflected all classes of society and was a good training ground for making something of oneself in the real world. LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

to the classism hidden within this dominate narrative constructed from the voices of the most successful camp boys who were often members of the same clique during internment.

Consequently, the issue of the camp hierarchy appears in the postwar sources, but perhaps not in the ways that one might expect. Rather than forming an essential part of the discussion, the legacy of camp hierarchies is embodied in the source itself. The memory archive of Jewish internment was created by former internees reaching out to camp friends through word of mouth, leaving out the "assorted characters" stories. What emerged naturally as part of the process of collecting memories from known acquaintances in the late 1970s and early 1980s developed into a more deliberate pursuit in the 1990s when the impetus to get their legacy "right" increased as the former internees aged. Examining the work schemes available to internees gives us a sense of how the significance of the camp hierarchy changed over time, not only between camps and with their formal recognition as refugees, but also through the sources as they continued to emerge in the waning years of the twentieth century.

### *Farming*

During the period of the Jewish refugees' internment, little became of the farming scheme despite Camp Farnham's location on Dominion Experimental Farm land. When the internees first arrived in the autumn of 1940, the plan was to have them plough 35 to 40 acres in order to prepare for the following crop season.<sup>37</sup> However, by May the following year plans were in motion to farm only 12 or so acres just outside of the barbed wire.<sup>38</sup> This employed only 8-10

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<sup>37</sup> "Oct. 1940: No. 40 Internment Camp, Oct. 1940-April 1941," War Diaries, LAC, RG24 15397, 2282.

<sup>38</sup> "May 1941: No. 40 Internment Camp, May 1941-Dec. 1941," War Diaries, LAC, RG24 15397, 2282.

internees who were handpicked for their previous agricultural experiences in Europe.<sup>39</sup> Although located on a tiny island, Camp Île-aux-Noix also had a small farming scheme, which employed men who had formerly been in the Kitchener Camp in England. As figures 2.3 and 2.4 illustrate, the refugee camp in Kent was geared towards preparing men for work in agriculture, so they entered camp with farming skills that likewise made them valuable in Canada, reflecting earlier immigration schemes.

Farmers, or those willing to do farm work, were not among the first internees to be released. Initially Internment Operations and the Canadian public focused on the unique circumstances of the younger boys who had their studies interrupted by their internment in England and who established schools in camp to further their education. But by the spring of 1942, the release of farm workers had increased rapidly with Immigration Officers interviewing internees for the possibility of becoming farm labourers.<sup>40</sup> One could attribute the shift in focus to the priority assigned to each work group or release scheme; once the majority of students were released on sponsorship, Internment Operations could turn its focus to the next group of internees. It is likely that this hierarchy was established in the first place as a result of labour market trends as Fordham's letter suggests. Initially foreign workers were not needed in Canadian industries that hired Canadian-born workers, but as the need for overseas armed forces rose after Japan's entry into the war in December 1941, more young men left their positions in factories and on farms to serve for the remainder of the war.<sup>41</sup> This left wives and mothers alone with small children to keep family farms running. In both Canada and the United States, this

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<sup>39</sup> "Oct. 1940: No. 40 Internment Camp, Oct. 1940-April 1941," War Diaries, LAC, RG24 15397, 2282.

<sup>40</sup> April 1942: No. 41 Internment Camp Jan. 1942-December 1943," War Diaries, LAC, RG24 15399, 2283.

<sup>41</sup> "Canada and the War. Politics and Government: Conscription," Canadian War Museum, [http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/newspapers/canadawar/conscription\\_e.shtml](http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/newspapers/canadawar/conscription_e.shtml) (accessed February 2nd 2016).

meant that internees and POWs gained productive value as men capable of carrying out the more physically demanding jobs of farm labour.

Although farming became an official release scheme, memories of ploughing and planting do not frequently surface in former internees' individual recollections of the past and even less so in their collective narrative. Undoubtedly this has to do with the small number of farmers compared to other interned groups. But it also reflects attitudes towards the type of work valued by the voices of the archives. Former internees have focused on the story of education because it speaks to their collective values and helps show the extent to which wartime immigration policies and internment were significant mistakes on the part of Allied Forces. At the same time, farming was not unique to the Canadian experience, even if internees had no prior farming experience in Europe. There, too, farms had been a fixed part of the landscape, and the transition from an agricultural to an industrial society gave Germany and Austria its modern identity. Instead it was Canada's vast forests and the process of becoming lumberjacks that stuck with former internees as they built careers in other fields.

### ***Felling***

Tree felling entered into the Europeans' social imaginary as stereotypically Canadian, and the memory of working at the Acadia Forest Experiment Station was prominent in former internees' narratives of internment life.<sup>42</sup> Anywhere from 100 to over 300 men reported for work daily outside of the barbed wire fence, making forestry a significantly larger employer of

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<sup>42</sup> Recruitment poster "*Kanada: das Land der Gelegenheit*" (1910), LAC, e008222651; Kestler, "Discovering Canada: German merchant seamen in Canadian internment camps, 1940-1946," presented at Civilian Internment in Canada: Histories and Legacies workshop (Winnipeg, June 2015); Gisela Sigrist, "Kanada--Wunschtraum, Kanada-Wunschtraum," in *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 45:2 (1995): 208-218; "160 ACRES (250 MORGEN) FREI" (1900-1905), LAC, MIKAN no. 2945662.

internees than farming.<sup>43</sup> It also required a level of trust between a guard and his work party as the internees were handed double-sided axes in the dense and remote forest. Felling typically ramped up in the fall and winter months, making the job a harsh introduction to Canada's climate. On more than one occasion, a supervising guard became so cold while standing idle that he passed his rifle to an internee in exchange for his axe; taking a few swings warmed the body.<sup>44</sup> The intimate relationship formed between guards and internees on work duty helped internees make sense of Canadianess which crystallized, in turn, conceptions of the self. The guards served as models of Canadian identity against which internees could measure their own manhood and intellectual capacities, which they viewed as superior.

Internees associated the guards' ability to swing an axe with their physical size, making them "natural" lumberjacks.<sup>45</sup> Recalling his supervisor in the quarter master store of Camp Fredericton, Francis Dammers observed that the quarter master was a "typical Canadian woodcutter, six foot three, six foot four."<sup>46</sup> Another remembered a particular sergeant as "a very big fellow very strong, strong legged boy. He was quite tough with us in the field when we worked as lumberjacks out in the bush but he was also very kind and I remember he introduced me to root beer, my first taste of root beer here in Canada."<sup>47</sup> The guards' masculinity was measured by their appearance as rugged and their performance of toughness, but the internees also seemed to associate these attributes with working-class men who, they implied, lacked the intellectual capacity for other work. Many of them simplified the distance between the guards' and internees' capabilities as the difference between supposedly cultured Europeans and backward or colonial Canadians who required physical fortitude to tame the hinterland.

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<sup>43</sup>"Oct. 1940: No. 70 Internment Camp, Aug. 1940-Nov. 1942," War Diaries, LAC, RG24 15404, 2287.

<sup>44</sup> "Wihl, Fritz: autobiographical note on his internment," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

<sup>45</sup> "Loewy, Harry-Memoirs WWII, Internment Camp. 'Days Behind the Wire'," CJC ZB, pg. 155.

<sup>46</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Francis Dammers, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Edgar Lion, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

Whereas the Canadians were "natural" lumberjacks, the Europeans took longer to learn the necessary skills.<sup>48</sup> Harry Loewy recalled in his internment diary in vivid detail an exchange between a corporal and the "true scholar" Dr. Gabriels who saved all his forestry money to order scientific articles on biochemistry from the canteen. Acting on his disdain for all non-scholars, one day Gabriels challenged the corporal whom Loewy described as "a true earthy product of New Brunswick, who felt at home in the forest but had little appreciation for all that blankety-blank book learning": "I say, Corporal, what do you know about biochemistry?" According to Loewy, "the poor corporal was visibly taken aback by this discomfoting inquiry which probably aroused unpleasant memories of a busybody school mar'm in a country school of New Brunswick. After he had caught his breath, he merely growled back, 'Biochemistry? I don't know a good &\*+S% about this &\*+S% foolery.' With obvious compassion for this underprivileged child of the woods, Gabriels retorted in a condescending tone, 'You poor fool, you!'"<sup>49</sup> Both Gabriels and Loewy in his telling of the story emphasize the importance of place on identity formation. In the case of the corporal, the wild forests molded him into a natural woodsman, but this narrow vision of masculinity was not necessarily valued by middle and upper class Europeans. After a few minutes' pause, the corporal responded by attacking Gabriels' sexual orientation: "'Say Doc', did you ever sleep with a woman"? Gabriels, a bachelor, shook his head vehemently and replied most emphatically, 'Most certainly, NOT'. Thereupon came the corporal's triumphant rejoinder, 'You poor fool, you.'"<sup>50</sup> When the corporal's intelligence was insulted by the professor, he fired back by questioning Gabriels' manhood, using his homosexuality as evidence of dysfunction. Therefore, felling trees was about much more than the physical labour involved. Given the seclusion of the work space and intimacy with the

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<sup>48</sup> "Loewy, Harry-Memoirs WWII, Internment Camp. 'Days Behind the Wire'," CJC ZB, 155.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 263-264.

guards, it also became a way to exhibit social hierarchies, revert the power dynamic between guard and internee, and perform and test varying masculinities in a stereotypically masculine environment.

The homosocial nature of tree felling helps put the relationship between work, productivity, and masculinity on display. Codes of masculinity differed according to one's socioeconomic status prior to internment and one's age. Hegemonic masculinity was especially important to working-class men and was reframed in the context of internment where it allowed them access to power denied from other sources. For young men one's manhood could be measured by the physical performance of masculinity such as one's size, willingness to fight, and dominance.<sup>51</sup> The manual effort required to fell trees was an instant test of this manhood, the result of which was the rugged and strong body of the Canadian lumberjack. The process of becoming a productive male citizen through the transformation of the body was one primary objective of the National Forestry Program which occupied the Acadia Forest before the internees' arrival. In figure 2.6 we see a group of young enrollees gathered in their tent, gazing back at the photographer. Located in a final report on the program's success that year, the objective of the photograph was undoubtedly to show both the men's congeniality towards one another—taming the working-class man's "brutish" nature by channelling his energies into physically demanding labour—and their physical fitness made visible by the absence of shirts. The unemployed youth all came from working-class families and their segregation from society was the government's solution to their perceived lack of productive value.

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<sup>51</sup> Tony Evans and Patti Wallace, "A Prison within a Prison? The Masculinity Narratives of Male Prisoners," *Men and Masculinities* 10:4 (June 2008): 486.



Figure 2.6 "Enrolees in sleeping tent," "Final Report on National Forestry Activities 1939: Acadia Forest Experiment Station," LAC, Department of Forestry, RG39 vol. 48.

The Jewish internees who arrived the following season came from a wider socioeconomic pool. In the exchange between the corporal and Dr. Gabriels we can see how codes of masculinity varied and overlapped between different groups. Whereas the internees employed a colonial and paternal lens to explain the differences between the lumberjack guards and the Enlightened Europeans, this actually had more to do with Dr. Gabriels' privileged position as an intellectual and the guard's as a grunt soldier. Tree felling helped the men negotiate and perform these differences, which were more fluid than the limited scope of the National Forestry Program might suggest.

Working in the forest was a paid position, but it was not an optional position, perhaps contributing to its place in former internees' memories as an important step in their immigration stories. Because it did not require previous training, all physically fit men could participate, which also made it a direct challenge to the functioning of the camp schools in Fredericton and Sherbrooke. Because shifts typically lasted four hours, the internees had no trouble fitting in

lectures, but they often felt that their study time was restricted by work. To get around this, some internees in Camp N would work for an hour collecting enough debris to build a fire that then acted as a cover for studying. As long as they kept the smoke billowing, the guards would believe that they were working.<sup>52</sup> In another instance, a young internee was sent to solitary confinement for refusing to go cut wood; because there were only four weeks before the McGill matriculation exam, he wanted to spend his time preparing. Only after a camp teacher intervened on his behalf, explaining to authorities that the pupil wanted to forfeit his 20 cents a day to further his education, did they release him from his detention cell.<sup>53</sup> In both cases, there is a subtle suggestion that the camp schools were not only a more respectable endeavour than manual camp labour; their sometimes covert operation depended on the guards' intellectual inferiority. In the second example, what appears as obvious to the internee—the priority of schooling over working—has to be carefully explained to the guards by an authority figure from among the internees. Elaborating on the relationship between the wood cutters and their guards, one internee recalled a particular guard who "used to get the odd love letter from somebody and he couldn't read it, so one of us would read it to him. We'd all stand around and giggle..."<sup>54</sup> Meant as an illustration of the fraternizing that took place between the internees and guards, the anecdote also belies the power dynamic built into the system of internment. The camp boys treated their intellectual capacity as a source of power behind barbed wire, a private joke that the guards were not allowed in on or capable of understanding. This source of manhood differs significantly from that illustrated by the National Forestry Program and emulated by Internment Operations. Whereas the government believed their productive value lay in their visible physical capabilities, the middle and upper class internees valued education and professional skills. Camp schools also

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<sup>52</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Jack Hahn, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>53</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Joseph Kates, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>54</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Jack Hahn, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

had the pragmatic function of helping younger internees' secure early release to attend universities in Canada. In other words, their freedom was at stake in debates over how the male body should be made useful.

### ***The Works Programme***

One thing that Internment Operations and internees agreed upon was that as a whole, the internees represented a large source of underutilized labour potential. Where their perspectives differed, of course, was how to best use the men in the war effort. Because the internees were classified as Prisoners of War second class under the Defense of Canada Regulations Act, they were not permitted to work in any capacity having a direct connection with the operation of war.<sup>55</sup> Farming and felling helped keep the Dominion running while Canadian men were engaged overseas, but the work had little to do with the war effort itself. Setting up manufacturing shops in the camps required more careful consideration and side-stepping of the regulations supported by the international Geneva Convention. One especially prickly Major made establishing the Works Programme and seeing to its efficiency his *joie de vivre*. Major D.J. O'Donahoe gained notoriety after delivering his "Play Ball" Speech in Camp Sherbrooke on the occasion of its opening:

If you play ball, I play ball. If you don't play ball, we won't play ball. I am not threatening you, but I am simply stating facts. We are here to teach you fellows discipline. We have nothing to do with your internment, we are only your custodians...You all want us to win this war?. We are going to start right here. Will you help?...You're going to be asked, in fact you are going to be ordered to work, firstly woodwork, secondly clothing, thirdly knitting. Do you all understand that?...Some of your have been in business. Well, we will teach you something

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<sup>55</sup> K.S. Maclachlan, Acting Deputy Minister to Mr. G.K. Shiels, Deputy Minister of Munitions and Supply (Sept. 6th 1940), "Treatment of Enemy Aliens - Ile-aux-Noix, 1940-1944," LAC, RG24-C-1, file 7236-18, C-5377.

usefull [sp], so that when you get out of here at the end of the war, the time you have been interned will not be wasted entirely.<sup>56</sup>

Earning the nickname "Major Balls," O'Donahoe carried out the Works Programme with a threatening anti-semitic tone, frequently cautioning the internees that their lack of cooperation would be read as anti-British. The major internment industries included constructing wooden storage boxes for soldiers, making camouflage nets, knitting socks, and producing "housewives"—sewing kits named for the women who would normally perform the labour of sewing and mending outside of male segregated societies.

The purpose of the Works Programme was widely debated among internees and officials. After six months of operation, one commandant lamented that "the whole basis of production seems to be wrong, and work at this Camp is regarded more as an opportunity to provide employment than to obtain production from the labour hands available."<sup>57</sup> Part of the problem, as the commandant saw it, was that the Works Programme was an optional employment scheme that paid workers a daily rate rather than operating on a pay per piece system. As a consequence, production could be difficult to obtain from internees who viewed the Programme as a serious misuse of their skills and energy:

In Canadian Refugee Camps, there are some 1200 potential workers, mostly young, some already fully trained, all urgently demanding to be given places in that war effort without whose triumph they themselves will be lost. We have been given work to do, important work, but work requiring only a fraction of our energies. We have been promised more war work[...] But it is impossible that men who are held in captivity can, or will work like free men; to assume such a possibility does justice neither to us nor to the good will of democratic authorities.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> "Speech of 'Major Balls' (O'Donahoe)," (October 21st 1940), "Baum, Robert: Correspondence & other material relating essentially to Baum's experiences while interned, n.d., 1936, 1939-42, 1979," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

<sup>57</sup> "July 1941: No. 42 Internment Camp, Oct. 1940-Sept. 1941," War Diaries, LAC, RG24 15399, 2284.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* "Statement on the Occasion of One Year of Internment in Camp 'N'" (October 15th 1941), "Wolf, Fred: Memoranda, Major "Ball" Speech & other material relating to internment, 1940-1942," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

The debate centred around whether internees were given work to occupy their idle hands or to procure goods that could be sent to soldiers. Of course, the Works Programme did both, but for the internees this issue obscured the larger problem of their internment as an affront to democratic values for which the current war was supposedly being waged. The difference between how Internment Operations and the internees viewed their productive potential is illustrated by a comparison of figures 2.7 and 2.8, both depicting net making in camp, and the circumstances of their construction. The first is a photograph located in the war diary of Camp Sherbrooke which summarizes the camp's production levels and takes stock of goods manufactured per month. It is one image in a series that focuses on the young muscular man who has stripped down to his underwear in an effort to find some relief from the summer heat. The photographer's gaze is drawn to the man's frame and not necessarily the items being produced, emphasizing the masculine body as a labouring body. The young man's body acts as a model of physical fitness and, therefore, productive manhood. Although there is no evidence that these particular photographs were ever published, one might easily imagine their placement in a publication similar to Britain's "Some Victims of Nazi Oppression," meant to demonstrate to the public the Jewish refugees' productive value as labourers.<sup>59</sup> Figure 2.8 portrays the same work, but from the perspective of a camp artist who worked with a simple sketch notebook and pencil rather than elaborate or expensive equipment. Here the net makers are outside the barbed wire fence where there is more room, making the task somewhat of a privilege. More significantly, the fence obstructs the artist's gaze to the outside world of working men, shifting the emphasis away from net making and net makers to confinement and the loss of liberty. The two figures reflect the different symbolic meanings of the Works Programme through the hierarchical power of their gaze.

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<sup>59</sup> "Some Victims of Nazi Oppression," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 2



Figure 2.7 Untitled, "Sept. 1941: No. 42 Internment Camp, Oct. 1940-Sept. 1941," LAC, War Diaries, RG24 15399, 2284.

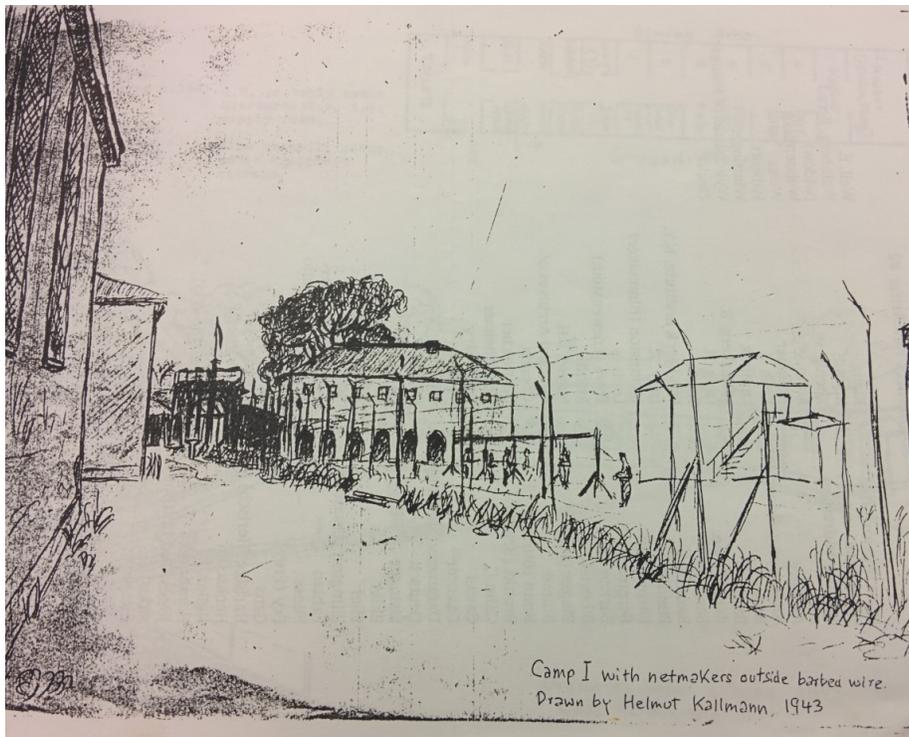


Figure 2.8 Helmut Kallmann, "Camp I with netmakers outside barbed wire," " Ex-Internees Newsletter 1969, 1996-2000," OJA, Fonds 93, Box 1 of 2, file 9.

One of the advantages of the Works Programme for internees was that it provided them with a bargaining chip that the education system did not. Because Internment Operations solicited their labour for manufacturing, the internees could respond by asking for improvements to camp life in return for their participation. Work became a way to negotiate the terms of their imprisonment, especially following the change in camp status when internees rightly expected to be treated as refugees rather than as POWs, leading one commandant to observe that the "handling of internees on the Works Programme is certainly an art."<sup>60</sup> From the perspective of the authorities, the change in status created a "communist problem" in the various work huts, the internees' new demands causing at least the draughting office in Camp Farnham to close temporarily.<sup>61</sup> When the seven so-called ringleaders of the communist movement were discovered, Major Kippen arranged to have them transferred to St. Helen's Island where Italian fascists were detained. On the day of their scheduled transfer, the internees rioted and threatened to go on hunger strike; far from "professional" communists, the internees simply demanded that the remaining Nazis be removed from camp and used the power of their productive potential to initiate change.<sup>62</sup> Rather than removing the Nazis, the commandant arranged to have the Jewish leaders sent to a camp with known Italian fascists as a disciplinary measure, insinuating a prejudice link between Jews and communists which was a popular perception in Canada at the time. The incident also shows that Internment Operations was more threatened by the thought of organized Jewish communists than by Nazis. In the end, the seven "agitators" were returned to Farnham and the sleeping huts were rearranged to segregate various groups from one another.

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<sup>60</sup> "April 1941: No. 40 Internment Camp, Oct. 1940-April 1941," War Diaries, LAC, RG24 15397, 2282.

<sup>61</sup> "Sept. 1941: No. 40 Internment Camp, May 1941-Dec. 1941," War Diaries, LAC, RG24 15397, 2282.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

The Works Programme was exploitative in the same way all prison work is exploitative in that internees performed labour for a fraction of its worth on the outside. Work is framed as a privilege, rather than a civic duty, where the reward is money for the canteen and the opportunity to occupy oneself. Internees were not oblivious to this trade off and accepted it in so far as it helped their reputation in Canada, which was continually threatened by Internment Operations. But internees protested the Works Programme when it became an obstacle to their release a year after its inception. In response to agitation in Camp Farnham over the trickled release of internees, Fordham cautioned, "...those who are so anxious to be outside of a camp might well lay that thought aside for the time being at least, and see how much and how well they can assist in developing the war work done inside the refugee camps. After all, it would seem that the desire to proceed with this work should take precedence over the wish to gain individual liberty."<sup>63</sup> Questioning the refugees' loyalty long after it was formally established manipulated the men into cooperation and underpaid work. According to the Camp Spokesman, the British Home Office declared less than 70 of 1500 refugees unreleasable, yet Internment Operations kept the majority behind barbed wire or released them to exploitative and restrictive factory jobs.<sup>64</sup>

While Sam Goldner of the Central Committee for Interned Refugees advocated on their behalf behind the scenes, Canadian Jewish newspapers simultaneously touted the internees' free labour as indicative of their national loyalty. One such article, "Refugee Jew Gives Dominion Board His Services Free," describes how a former Viennese banker came to offer his expertise to the Foreign Exchange Control Board in Ottawa in exchange for his expenses, a mere \$1000

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<sup>63</sup> Fordham quoted in letter from Camp Spokesman (March 16th 1942), "Newman: Correspondence & other material relating to release from internment & employments, n.d., 1940-1942," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* Sam Goldner to Saul Hayes (Nov. 4th 1941), CJCCCA, ZA 1941, Box 12, file 120.

annually.<sup>65</sup> These conflicting narratives did not necessary compete with one another; both were necessary to secure an internee's release and then to ensure that a place existed for him in a Canada that could be hostile to Jews, especially those suspected of being communists. While a public relations performance also existed around the release of students, internees on the student scheme did not have the double stigma of being Jewish and working class. Moreover, the students' productive value was not directly tied to the Allied war effort, making their case more straightforward and detached from drawn out debates over loyalty and productivity. It was easier to be a student in camp if one was independently wealthy; having money sent to camp from outside donors meant that one did not have to work to purchase camp "luxuries." In short, camp work did not level the playing field in prison, so to speak; instead it reflected social hierarchies of the outside world where power is negotiated and fluid.

### ***Training Bodies: Sports & Belonging***

Camp schools were important to those who participated in them as students and teachers because they offered a productive distraction from some of the depravities of internment life. One former instructor recalled cautioning the younger internees to "forget about sexuality and do things with your brain and the spirit."<sup>66</sup> At the time of their internment, the focus on learning discouraged mental idleness, which, given the time to meander and flourish, made internees prone to mental breakdowns.<sup>67</sup> On the heels of the 1930s, when the lobotomy and shock therapy

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<sup>65</sup> "Refugee Jew Gives Dominion Board His Services Free," *Hebrew Journal* (Toronto, March 2nd 1941), "Press Clippings-internees/refugees," CJCCCA, ZA 1941, Box 13, file 138 (B).

<sup>66</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: William Heckscher, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>67</sup> A handful of internees were placed in mental hospitals after suffering breakdowns instigated by the loss of family in Nazi Germany and propelled by their own helplessness in camp. "Sept. 1940: No. 70 Internment Camp, Aug. 1940-Nov. 1942," War Diaries, LAC, RG24 15404, 2287.

were popularized as treatments for the mentally ill, Internment Operations did not devote much of its resources to maintaining or treating the internees' mental well being directly. Those who showed outward signs of mental distress were transferred to institutions designed to treat their symptoms with medical intervention, making mental productivity as a preventative remedy all the more important to the internees. However, given the parameters of incarceration and the limited scope through which Internment Operations was willing to see the Jewish refugees, mental productivity was a project that held little value for the authorities. The camp schools did not just fail to produce war goods, they also failed, from the guards' perspective, to produce manly men through physical activity.<sup>68</sup> Whereas work took care of idle hands, "men of character" capable of withstanding the mental strain of incarceration could be built and trained through organized athletics.<sup>69</sup>

The push for camp sports was not strictly top down, although the authorities actively encouraged internees to participate and were in contact with sponsoring organizations, namely the YMCA and the Central Committee for Interned Refugees. The draw of physical recreation as an outlet for emotions that so-called masculine men might otherwise exhibit through destructive behavior, such as rioting or violence, was shared by "moral" men on both sides of the barbed wire.<sup>70</sup> Consequently, the spectrum of value individual men assigned to sports reflected a variety of upbringings and cultural norms from Central Europe, to Great Britain, and finally, to Canada. For some prisoners, sport was not simply a healthy way to exercise anxiety and frustration;

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<sup>68</sup> Mike Huggins & Jack Williams, *Sport and the English, 1918-1939* (London: Routledge, 2006), viii.

<sup>69</sup> Roberta J. Park, "Biological Thought, Athletics and the Formation of the "Man of Character", 1850-1914," in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, eds. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 1987).

<sup>70</sup> The case of a riot in an Australian internment camp serves as an important study for the value Internment Operations placed on controlling men's bodies. As long as the internees didn't resort to violent riots, the authorities showed little interest in their well-being, even if that meant housing Jewish Refugees with Nazi POWs for the duration of the war. S.P. Koehne, "'Disturbance in D Compound': The Question of Control in Australian Internment Camps during World War II," *Melbourne Historical Journal* 34 (2006):71.

participating in the ritualized social activity could help reconstruct the self in the face of loss and fractured lives.<sup>71</sup>

With the help of the YMCA and the Central Committee who donated equipment, the internees set about organizing track meets not unlike those held by distinguished British universities, where some men had been pupils, or the national unemployment programs that preceded Internment Operations. Commandants lent their support to the sports programs by offering cigarettes as prizes, attending the events as spectators, and awarding handmade trophies whittled by internees (figure 2.9). Sport helped restore the rituals of normative manhood behind barbed wire where men were thought to be more vulnerable to mental breakdowns associated with weakness or femininity and sexual deviance. In a space where internees lost the rights and obligations of citizenship, men restored normalcy by holding each other accountable to a standard of "good" citizenship through physical fitness and positive morale.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Michael L. Mullan, "Sport, Ethnicity and the Reconstruction of the Self: Baseball in America's Internment Camps," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 16:1 (March 1999):1-21.

<sup>72</sup> Sam Goldner to Major W.J.H. Ellwood (Oct. 10th 1941), "Internment Camp N, 1940-41," CJC CENT CA, Vol.16, file 125 C; "Loewy, Harry-Memoirs WWII, Internment Camp. 'Days Behind the Wire'," CJC ZB, 250.



Figure 2.9. Jewish Public Library Archives, Boulkind Family Fonds, 1062; 017693.

Focusing on the construction of masculine bodies held special significance for the refugees as Jewish men given the emergence of psychoanalysis in the first half of the century, which spurred anti-semitic rhetoric about the Jewish mind and body.<sup>73</sup> Building on Sigmund Freud's fears about his own perceived femininity, scholars Daniel Boyarin and Sander Gilman argue that the notion of Jewish passivity was particularly dangerous leading to the Holocaust because it was often associated by German authorities with homosexuality.<sup>74</sup> Meanwhile, at the height of Freud's influence, the Weimar Republic's state sponsored athletes embodied, quite literally, the values and processes of modernity as efficient and rational—standards the male Jewish body supposedly failed to meet.<sup>75</sup> Behind barbed wire, the Jewish internees did practice passive

<sup>73</sup> Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* Daniel Boyarin, *The Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

<sup>75</sup> Erik Jensen, *Body by Weimar: Athletes, Gender, and German Modernity* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

resistance (as chapter four demonstrates), but this expectation of Jewish passivity simultaneously called into question their hegemonic masculinity which, they had learned in Weimar Germany, was an obligation of good citizenship and, under Nazism, a set of traits inherited by Aryans but denied to allegedly effeminate Jews.<sup>76</sup> Camp sports provided the terrain to negotiate and perform these conflicting perceptions of the masculine self. The young internees' navigation into modern manhood was complicated by the watchful eye of camp guards who expected certain behaviours from them as both Jews and "naturally" aggressive men—two images which history taught the internees were incongruous with one another.

Sport could also be a symbolic signifier of national loyalty and some internees threw themselves into it to show that they were learning Canadianness. Outside of internment, sport has typically been studied as a state craft used to mould and occupy citizens.<sup>77</sup> Sports encouraged not only physical health, but also "moral qualities such as honesty, selflessness, courage or resolution which could be transferred to other areas of life."<sup>78</sup> In the specific case of the Jewish refugees we can see reverberations of this state work, but more importantly we see its inverse; the internees participated in sport partly to shape how Canadian citizens thought about them and their national ties. This process began with lectures on the history and significance of sport in Canada and continued with the sports equipment they requested to have sent to camp.<sup>79</sup> Though ice hockey was already played in Europe at the time, Sam Goldner responded to one request for

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<sup>76</sup>In his speech at the Second Zionist Congress in 1898, Max Nordau advanced the idea of recasting the "new Jew" through *Muuskeljudentum* (Muscular Judaism) to combat the image of Jewish men as effeminate.

<sup>77</sup>For examples of nation building through sport in various democratic and totalitarian contexts see: Alan Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives* (State University of New York, 2001); Molly Wilkinson Johnson, *Training Socialist Citizens: Sports and the State in East Germany* (Boston: Brill, 2008); Shelley Baranowski, *Strength through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge University Press, 2007); Dean Allen, "'The Race for Supremacy': The Politics of 'White Sport' in South Africa, 1870-1910," in *Sport in Society* 14:6 (2011): 741-753; John Nauright, *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity* (London: Cass, 1996).

<sup>78</sup>Huggins & Williams, *Sport and the English, 1918-1939*: vii.

<sup>79</sup>"List of Sports Articles" (Sept. 12th 1941), "Refugee Camp A, 1940-42," CJC CENT CA, Vol. 17, file 125G.

protective hockey gear by explaining its particularities in Canada, reinforcing earlier depictions of Canadians as tough and rugged: "You will note that the stuff we sent does not include such things as helmets and masks, as you request. These requests cause me to wonder whether your boys are going in for hockey or mayhem. Helmets and masks are generally not used in Canadian hockey which is a much tougher brand than Europeans generally play."<sup>80</sup> Ice hockey rinks sprung up in multiple camps, but the most popular sport was undoubtedly soccer. Internees formed teams based on national loyalties with the Austrians insisting on their own clique. After the Nazi POWs were separated from the refugees, the internees did not form a team Germany. Instead the Jewish refugees demonstrated their national loyalties by representing England and Scotland in "international" matches.<sup>81</sup> Their developing sense of belonging was quite literally played out on the fields of internment. Sport became one narrative through which internees shaped their senses of self and communicated their values to those around them.<sup>82</sup>

Soccer may have been the "people's game," but not everyone in camp participated equally.<sup>83</sup> According to one former internee's recollection, the camp intellectuals disliked sporting events and avoided joining in when possible.<sup>84</sup> Another remembered that friction between camp cliques played out on the soccer field where they would take turns insulting one another.<sup>85</sup> Together the two memories give a sense that sport was often used as a means to express class distinctions and social affiliations, even when it transcended class boundaries. In their analysis of class conflict and cohesion in sport, Mike Huggins and Jack Williams review

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<sup>80</sup> Sam Goldner to Clarence Halliday (Jan. 23rd 1942), "Refugee Camp N, 1941-1942," CJCENCA, Vol. 17, file 125C.

<sup>81</sup> "May 1941: No. 42 Internment Camp, Oct. 1940-Sept. 1941," War Diaries, LAC, RG24 15399, 2284.

<sup>82</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

<sup>83</sup> Huggins & Williams, *Sport and the English, 1918-1939*: 134.

<sup>84</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Ernest Shield, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>85</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Gustav Bauer, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

the ways in which British sport clubs and traditions reflected class stratification.<sup>86</sup> Working-class men, for example, supported soccer clubs, while middle class "gentlemen" were more likely to be spectators of rugby (despite its violent nature, which was often linked to lower classes) or cricket. National politicians made a point of attending the Oxford versus Cambridge athletics meetings while sports clubs maintained social exclusivity by charging high membership fees. The internees brought these social hierarchies into camp where they were especially salient for those who had spent any significant amount of time in Great Britain as students learning these cultural norms in a highly stratified society. The best known camp clique was undoubtedly the Cambridge boys who "were generally viewed as snobs, rightly or wrongly, by the ordinary people."<sup>87</sup> Sometimes class belonging emerged openly through taunting on the field, but it also surfaces in the archives in more subtle ways such as in a request for golf and tennis equipment—sports typically reserved for those with access to pricey membership clubs.<sup>88</sup>

More so than the camp schools, organized sport reflected the broad range of personalities and social backgrounds of the internees and guards. Because it helped return some normalcy to internment life through a familiar social system, sport carried multiple meanings. On the surface it was a welcomed distraction from the turmoil internees faced, which some felt was best exercised through physical recreation. This echoed national narratives of manhood whereby "good" citizens are formed through healthy bodies. It was also much more than this given that the internees were nationless Jews whose bodies German authorities had more commonly associated with femininity or homosexuality and passivity. Sport became a way to perform a sense of self lost through the rise of Nazism, flight, and internment. Hierarchies, which included

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<sup>86</sup> Huggins & Williams, *Sport and the English, 1918-1939*, 133-151.

<sup>87</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Emil Fackenheim, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>88</sup> Clarence Halliday to Sam Goldner (March 30th 1942), "Refugee Camp N, 1941-1942," CJCCENT CA, Vol. 17, file 125C.

the guards, restored social order as they once knew it and allowed internees to explore and express old and new loyalties.

### ***Conclusion***

In May 2000, an issue of Canada's *Maclean's* magazine arrived on the doorstep of former internee Henry Cassel in the heart of Toronto's Jewish community. Under the heading "Canada history" appears a curious article titled "no ordinary campers."<sup>89</sup> It tells the story of the Jewish refugees who were interned in Canada during WWII only to go on to make significant contributions to the country that once stood as their gatekeeper to freedom. The constructed narrative echoes the former internees' newsletters circulated over the five prior years, but the article's title also hints at the makings of a larger story rarely articulated. "No ordinary campers" presumes that there is such a thing as "ordinary" campers, likely meant to evoke images of outdoorsmen around a campfire in the wilderness. Situated in the broader context of Canadian internment history, it unwittingly points to a more sinister past of "campers" rounded up and segregated from society by the state. Using the lens of productivity to view the Jewish refugees' experiences helps bridge this memory gap between the story of their post-war successes and the longer trajectory of state-sanctioned ethnic and class discrimination in work camps. Whereas the camp schools were important to the internees' post-war careers and constructions of the self, they do not necessarily represent the range of internment experiences encountered by internees from varying social backgrounds. Nor do they offer a way in to understand power as fluctuating and negotiable as it played out between guards and internees and between internees from different

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<sup>89</sup> Sonja Sinclair, "No ordinary campers," *Maclean's* (May 15th 2000), "Ex-Internees Newsletter 1969, 1996-2000," OJA, *Fonds* 93, Box 1 of 2, file 9.

classes. The Jewish refugees were certainly unique in the history of Canadian internment, but at the time of their internment, authorities looked to familiar mental maps to envision their charges; they found them in the relief and youth unemployment camps of the Depression era. Therefore, work and sport were two key ways Internment Operations understood and regulated the male body.

### Chapter 3: Privacy and the Sexual-Self

Privacy was an important issue for internees as they navigated the intimacies of selfhood behind barbed wire, and it is a central theme underlying the practice of oral history, particularly if one takes seriously Thomas King's claim that "the truth about stories is that that's all we are."<sup>1</sup> Chapters one and two began with former internees' stories about Canadian internment and the emergence of their collective narrative. They drew attention to the former internees' authority to narrate their past while demonstrating how memories of the past coalesce through contemporary contexts rather than through lived experience. Chapter three echoes the intimate nature of oral histories—the telling of oneself—first by asking what happens to those stories once they are shared publically and then by examining the ways in which the internees' sexual selfhood, perhaps the most private sense of self, developed in camp within the purview of Internment Operations. The chapter's conceptual concern with storytelling is concretized through its material focus on masculinity and desire.

Fifty years after the camp boys came of age in the Canadian wilderness, a different group of at-risk youth returned to the former camp site in New Brunswick to uncover their story. In 1993, public school teacher Ed Caissie conceived of a project that would promote his district's stay-in-school program introduced to encourage junior high and high school students in Minto, N.B. to complete their secondary education.<sup>2</sup> Students learned about their local history through an archeological dig of the former internment site and constructed a scale model of the camp, which became the basis for the development of the New Brunswick Internment Camp Museum. It is now home to nearly 600 internment artefacts and a reconstructed portion of a prisoner's hut,

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas King, "The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative," 2003 CBC Massey Lectures (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Mallory, "Minto School Promotes Stay-In-School Program," *The Sackville Tribune Post*, n.d.

where in 1997 one male and two female students re-enacted an intimate wartime scene as internees sharing close quarters.<sup>3</sup> Ed Caissie's project brought the places of internment and the narratives of former internees to life.

That the students constructed and portrayed the internees' sleeping quarters, and not other scenes such as recreation or work programmes, speaks to the significance of privacy in constructions of the self, which is made more discernible through its loss in internment. This chapter focuses on what that loss of privacy meant to the internees' varying masculinities and sexual selves. For the N.B. Internment Camp Museum, this story manifests more subtly through the students' own journey of self discovery as young adults and storytellers. Re-enacting the history of the internment camp transformed former internees' narratives into a part of the students' identity and memoryscape of adolescence. When sharing the collective narrative of internment became a school project and then a grassroots museum, the cultural memory of internment found new meaning by relating the young internees' coming of age story to that of the at-risk students.<sup>4</sup> Whereas Harry Rasky's 1981 documentary reflected the former internees' concerns that their internment not be compared to the Holocaust and their subsequent newsletters took up the issue of internment's legacy, the N.B. Internment Camp Museum's narrative speaks to the mobility of memories and the democratic nature of storytelling.

### ***Liberty and Jewish Diaspora***

Taking the opportunity of his third camp transfer in two years to reflect upon the perplexing experiences of life as a Jewish refugee from Nazi oppression in Canadian internment

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Mitham, "N.B. Internment Camp Heritage Museum Finds Home," *The Daily Gleaner* (June 1997).

<sup>4</sup> See Jan Assmann's characteristics of cultural memory in "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," reprinted in *New German Critique* 65 (Spring-Summer 1995): 130.

camps, Franz Krämer penned, "Two years of internment have led to one positive experience: culture can neither be maintained nor grow without liberty. This liberty is composed of certain qualities, such as uncensored speech, privacy, irregularity of life, the possibility of saying to a woman "Take it or leave it" (While we cannot even get one)..... In consequence, culture in Camp "A" was a poor, wornout and underfed lady."<sup>5</sup> Several things are telling about Krämer's analysis of camp culture. First is the very act of his self-reflexivity within the broader framework of late modernity. Where a struggle for physical survival was far from the reality of daily life in Canadian internment camps, internees' general good physical health afforded them the discursive space to dwell on the mental strain of incarceration. Above all else, the interned men lamented the loss of their liberty, a right belonging to all citizens of any "cultured" state, and they reflected on their collective case as one small consequence of the unfolding war between democracy and dictatorship, the line between which at least some saw as blurred.<sup>6</sup> The second major theme apparent in Krämer's analysis of camp life is the importance of the absence of women. Here men's access to women as objects of their desire appears as a right of the modern condition equivalent to freedom of speech, self-determination, and the division of public and private spheres. At the same time, given the absence of these liberties in camp, culture becomes embodied in the form of an imagined sickly woman, revealing an intimate and unspoken relationship between the values of modern democracy, power, and the (sexed) body. It is this axis that incarceration makes apparent that is the subject of this chapter.

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<sup>5</sup> Franz Krämer, "Culture" in *The Stackeldraht Farewell Number* (Farnham, Nov. 1941), Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Department of National Defense, War Diaries, RG24-C3 vol. 15397, file 2282.

<sup>6</sup> "Do you Remember?" in *Camp L Chronicle*, issue 2 (Cove Fields, Oct. 1940), LAC, Erich Koch *fonds*, MG30 C-192 vol. 1.

The modern concept of liberty created a subject position from which the young interned men thought self-reflexively about their status in the world as they came of age, mulling over the realities of their statelessness among which, the loss of privacy ran chief. Having been cast out of the German and Austrian nation states, the Jewish refugees found themselves part of a familiar Diaspora narrative. Displaced from their homelands and denied acceptance in their new national communities, the men began to imagine a country where they might belong. Whereas diaspora studies may well assume that the desire to return "home" had the men longing for Palestine, in the narrowest sense Zionism, or central Europe, in its broadest, the majority of Jewish refugees fled to the United Kingdom to wait for their US visa numbers to be called. The rise of Nazism forced the German and Austrian Jews to think differently about what "home" might mean. For practical reasons, immigration and acculturation became their primary objectives, disrupting the recognizable teleology of dispersal, rejection, and return that gave *the* Jewish Diaspora the designation of "ideal type", a measuring stick against which the diasporic-ness of other groups could be calculated, by early Diaspora scholars.<sup>7</sup>

Reading the history of the camp boys along this grain speaks to an important disciplinary debate—a crisis of identity—that precipitated the establishment of Diaspora Studies in the late twentieth century as a response to the proliferation of the term "diaspora" to describe any group who leaves their nation state as refugees, emigrants, migrant workers, etc.<sup>8</sup> To put it simply, how does one define "diaspora" and do differences between theories and experiences of diaspora

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<sup>7</sup> Undoubtedly, part of the problem in establishing this teleology as a yard stick in Diaspora Studies is the assumption that there is a singular Jewish Diaspora in terms of experience and identity, signified by the use of the definite article "the." Diaspora as an entity rather than as a stance or way of seeing. William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies," *Diaspora* 1:1 (1991): 83-99; Rogers Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora" *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 28:1 (Jan. 2005): 1-19.

<sup>8</sup> Safran, 83-99; James Clifford, "Diasporas" *Cultural Anthropology* 9:3 (1994):302-344; Brubaker, 1; Khachig Tölölyan, "The Contemporary Discourse of Diaspora Studies" *Comparatives Studies of South Asia, Africa, & the Middle East* 27:3 (2007): 647-655.

exist?<sup>9</sup> Commenting on the parameters of Diaspora Studies a decade after the issue of definition was first raised, Rogers Brubaker suggests that the proliferation of "diaspora" and the accompanying problem of definition has resulted from the singular treating of "diaspora" as a bounded entity rather than as a stance or approach.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, if "diaspora" only describes experiences of dispersal and return, figurative or literal, then diaspora is born of the nation state whose borders serve as a gatekeeper to belonging. Any real or imagined community that moves beyond its borders can claim diaspora status. The problem, therefore, is not necessarily in the numbers claiming diaspora status, though a case could be made there too. The problem is that the spread of "diaspora" suggests that with modern globalization we have moved beyond the nation state, having entered "the age of diaspora."<sup>11</sup> On the contrary, the teleology of diaspora experience, defined and constrained by the structures of modernity, risks reinforcing state-making, and consequently boundaries of exclusion and inclusion, as a normative process. In addition to normalizing the out-casting of Jews and sexual deviants, the subjects of this chapter, "diaspora" as a singular experience also suggests a heteronormative teleology of its own, privileging a return to "roots" which is always based on patriarchal authority.

While acknowledging the validity of multiple diasporic experiences, I propose reading the history of the camp boys against the teleological grain, not as another example of *the* Jewish Diaspora, but as a way of queering the diaspora—recognizing their desire to belong while remaining critical of the politics of identity and nationhood, and sharpening the view of nation-

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<sup>9</sup> Clifford, "Diasporas," 302.

<sup>10</sup> Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora," 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

building as a heteronormative process.<sup>12</sup> This diasporic approach demonstrates how the erosion of national boundaries has been a much slower development than some would like to imagine.<sup>13</sup> If the incarceration of the Jewish refugees serves to tell us anything about modernity more broadly, it is that mechanisms of state control and monitoring have only increased over the same period of time in which the plethora of diaspora experiences has supposedly made the modern world supra-national and not simply transnational.

Drawing his observations of camp culture to a close, Franz Krämer queried his readership, "Have I grumbled too much?" And in response, "Certainly. Our cultural life wasn't so bad compared with the activities in those countries which are already at war. And the refugees are at war with Hitler much longer than anybody else, some of them for eight years."<sup>14</sup> His sentiment that internment was experienced as both a period of cultural deprivation, administrative confusion, and as an instance of deliverance from a worse fate in Nazi occupied Europe reflects the myriad ways internees comprehended their fate in Canada as they awaited release, but especially in the decades following as many former internees became Canadian citizens and some published memoirs providing a narrative framework through which the history of their internment has been remembered.<sup>15</sup> And yet, the refugees were not simply cast out from one homeland, experiencing tremendous displacement and violent loss, to be assimilated into a new national community—a successful story of immigration. This would be to forget that within

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<sup>12</sup> Hirsch and Miller, "Introduction" *Rites of Return: Diaspora Poetics and the Politics of Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 4.

<sup>13</sup> For more on this debate see Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora," 9.

<sup>14</sup> Krämer, "Culture" (Farnham, Nov. 1941), LAC, RG24-C3 vol. 15397, file 2282.

<sup>15</sup> Eric Koch, *Deemed Suspect: A Wartime Blunder* (Toronto: Methuen, 1980); Walter W. Igerscheimer, *Blatant Injustice: The Story of a Jewish Refugee from Nazi Germany Imprisoned in Britain and Canada during World War II* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005); Harry Loewy, *Days Behind Barbed Wire* (unpublished manuscript, Canadian Jewish Congress Archives); Erwin Schild, "A Canadian Footnote to the Holocaust," *Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 5:1 (Spring 1981): 31-44.

Canada the refugees were victims of ongoing, structural discrimination as Jews and not as members of an enemy nation. It is worthwhile, instead, to dwell in the historical moment when the messiness of Krämer's emotions captured the uncertainty of their futures as they were pulled between new lives in the UK, the US or Canada and familial and cultural connections in central Europe and beyond. They did not disperse and return, following a linear narrative of diaspora. Their diasporic experience reflects "the sense of being part of an ongoing transnational network that includes the homeland, not as something simply left behind, but as a place of attachment in a contrapuntal modernity."<sup>16</sup>

The refugees' double consciousness as persecuted Jews and as potential immigrants in the English speaking world is mirrored in their experiences as interned men, compelled by the gendered contract of modern nationhood to perform one masculinity while their status betwixt and between afforded them more flexibility. Sexuality during incarceration, I therefore argue, became one crucial site for constructing and making sense of the modern self. More specifically, the absence of privacy in internment camps heightened internees' anxieties over how "normal" masculine desire should be performed, while imagining the female body as an object of male yearning, through story-telling and artworks, became one way internees attempted to regain self-determination lost through incarceration. By examining how internees thought about and performed their sexual identities as a subconscious expression of their disenchantment with the realities of late modernity, I aim to consider the consequences for intimacy and the self when the right to privacy and civil society are non-existent.

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<sup>16</sup> Clifford, "Diasporas," 311.

In thinking about how the internees constructed and represented their varying masculinities without women to affirm their identities, this chapter takes up the issue of hegemonic-masculinity versus non-hegemonic or subordinate masculinities. R.W. Connell popularized the term "hegemonic masculinity" to refer to the negotiation of male power within social frameworks.<sup>17</sup> Initially this was limited to the ways in which men exercise their dominance over women, but, as the case of male segregated societies helps make clear, hegemonic masculinity also includes the exercise of power over non-hegemonic or subordinate forms of masculinity.<sup>18</sup> Because masculinity is constructed socially and historically, it is fluid and contingent upon other selfhoods, such as ethnicity and class, intersecting in specific contexts. Rather than form clear binaries, masculinities develop in relation to one another and are frequently performed as hierarchical. Hence, hegemonic masculinity "as the historically and culturally stable and legitimised form of masculinity" is negotiable.<sup>19</sup> Conditioned by the experience of camp life, then, the Jewish refugees tested and deployed their masculinities in a multitude of ways, with the possibility that any one given internee could choose to express his masculinity along a moving continuum.

### ***"Camp Boys"***

In the summer of 1940, when fears of a German invasion of the British Isles were at their peak following the evacuation of Dunkirk, hundreds of male Jewish refugees found themselves

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<sup>17</sup> Raewyn, Connell, *Masculinities* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> Patrick Farges, "Masculinity and Confinement: German-Speaking Refugees in Canadian Internment Camps (1940-1943)," *Culture, Society & Masculinities* 4:1 (2012): 33-47; Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

<sup>19</sup> Farges, "Masculinity and Confinement: German-Speaking Refugees in Canadian Internment Camps (1940-1943)," 34.

incarcerated in British prisons at a critical juncture in their lives: the transition from school boys to men.<sup>20</sup> The youth of the youngest refugees made them especially apt to embrace and adapt to their transient status as they were moved from local holding cells, to temporary internment camps outside of London and on the Isle of Man, to Canada and Australia where many would remain for the duration of the war.<sup>21</sup> One former internee recalled with laughter greeting the policemen who came to arrest him, seeing his incarceration as a way out of shoveling manure on a farm, his only means of subsistence in Wales.<sup>22</sup> Unlike internees over the age of 25, the "camp boys," as they called themselves, had fewer familial ties and obligations in the United Kingdom, many having left Germany and Austria before Kristallnacht in 1938 to enroll in prestigious universities, while others' internment stories began with a more desperate flight from Nazi occupied Europe following the beginning of state-sanctioned violence against Jews.

Regardless of how they came to be in Britain in the summer of 1940, the common characteristic of their youth only partly explains why most remembered their first encounter with Canada with a mix of nostalgia and resentment. One could also see their narration of the self within the context of what it meant to be a modern man: "To be modern...is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world—and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are..."<sup>23</sup> This juxtaposition of adventure and catastrophe was exaggerated in internment camps that became, at least for the youth among them, an experiment in

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<sup>20</sup> Jewish women categorized as "friendly aliens" during the spring alien tribunals were also interned for a brief period following the round-up of men, but they were quickly released following a public outcry and were never sent to Canada and Australia.

<sup>21</sup> About a third of the total number of refugees who were rounded-up were aged 16-25. Interview with Gerry Waldston (Toronto, April 27th, 2015).

<sup>22</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Gregory Baum, LAC, MG30 C-192 vol. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Marshall Berman, *"All that is Solid Melts into Air": The Experience of Modernity*, 2nd ed. (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 13-15.

socialization; the absence of the right to privacy quickly exposed men's character and desires in a condensed and enforced collectivity. Theirs, in other words, is a coming-of-age story that, heightened by the conditions of incarceration, reflects some of the anxieties over what it meant to be masculine in late modernity.

What is clear about the story of camp boys is that the bonds of belonging they formed early in their internment experience with one another were powerful identity markers within any given camp, and they often followed them through post-release life as well. When youth were picked up in the UK, they were frequently arrested alongside friends they had made working as laborers on farms or, most notably, as students at Oxbridge. With their limited autonomy in British camps, they made life-changing choices about which ocean liner to board in order to stay together.<sup>24</sup> Once interned in Canada, they organized themselves into huts based on common interests, backgrounds, and age.<sup>25</sup> Upon their staggered release, former internees would help their still interned friends secure Canadian sponsors, often settling in the same Canadian cities post WWII.<sup>26</sup> And it is with the nostalgia of a class reunion that former internees reflected upon their internment experience nearly forty years later during a gathering of camp boys in Toronto. Fraternity, or their close relationships with other men, helped shape who the former internees would become.<sup>27</sup> At least part of their schooling in masculinity included important lessons about

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<sup>24</sup> Gerald Frey, Letter to Mary Meyer (June, 1940), LAC Gerald Frey *fonds*, MG30 c252 Vol. 1, "Correspondence, 1940.); Interviews with Harry Rasky: Prof. Ernst Oppenheimer, LAC, MG30 C-192 vol. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Appendix 1, War Diary No. 70, Entry August 20th 1940, LAC, RG24-C3, vol. 15404, file 2287.

<sup>26</sup> Irving Sherman, Letter to American Consul General (1 May 1940), LAC, Heinz Warschauer *fonds*, MG31 D-129 vol. 1, "Correspondence (English) 1938-1941)."

<sup>27</sup> Although the conditions of concentration camps were no doubt much more deplorable than what the refugees experienced in Canada, we see a similar bond between prisoners which, in the case of the Holocaust, could mean the difference between life and death. Deborah Lee Ames refers to these relationships as communities of camp sisters—groups of two to three women who strove to keep one another alive by pooling their extremely limited

managing their sexualities, which ranged at varying times from homosocial to heteronormative. Yet despite the obvious role homosocial or fraternal bonds played in the constructing of selfhood, internees foregrounded their heterosexual desires in visual representations of camp life and the loss of liberty.

### *Fraternity & Same-Sex Desire*

Cities were important sites of modernity, especially for effeminate or same-sex desiring men who used the anonymity of urban life to conceal what the state judged to be their amoral behaviour. Indeed, cultural historians have successfully made the case for the city as an actor in the making of twentieth century sexual identities, constitutive of modernity more broadly.<sup>28</sup> But where the alienation of cities served the expression of so-called deviant sexualities under the mores of citizenship and respectability—clubs, rooming houses, and sometimes the cityscape itself providing enclaves for gay social and private lives—the intimacy of incarceration subjected same-sex desiring men, or those who blurred the lines of friendship, to an all-together different kind of policing of sexual morality. Namely, prisons are sites of hyper-masculinity where "unnatural" desires are policed more directly by fellow internees than by representatives of the state. The regulatory force of the state institution serves as a lens into the joint histories of

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resources and offering what moral support to one another that they could. See "The Community of Camp Sisters: Bonds of Support, Bonds of Subversion," *Prose Studies: History, Theory, Criticism* 26:1-2 (2003): 43-58.

<sup>28</sup> For examples of the spatial turn in different contexts, see: Jennifer V. Evans, *Life Among the Ruins: Cityscape and Sexuality in Cold War Berlin* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011); Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Barry Reay, *New York Hustlers: Masculinity and Sex in Modern America* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).

difference and normalcy under modernity.<sup>29</sup> For the camp boys, incarceration in Canada could be sexually liberating in that without citizenship the state had even less to say about their sexual proclivities as long as they occurred behind closed doors. At the same time, overcrowding in mass dormitories and communal lavatories meant that no such doors existed and the right to privacy was one of the greatest deficiencies internees had to endure. The camp boys were seen by both the state and fellow internees as particularly vulnerable to the advances of homosexuals, likely due to their perceived feminine innocence in a world of men. We see similar patterns of desire, vulnerability, and policing in other instances of same-sex isolation—prisons serving as the most obvious example—but also in migrant worker camps.<sup>30</sup>

Recalling his internment biography in an exchange of letters with fellow former internee and author Eric Koch for the purposes of Koch's book on the subject, John wrote "I learned," among other things, "some amenities of homosexuality," and of life after release, "[I] quickly got over my penchant for boys, developed in Camp and returned, full tilt, to ladies but with greatly heightened understanding and sympathy for gays."<sup>31</sup> In response Koch joked, "My book will be a smash hit. It will be called JEWS WITHOUT WOMEN. Good title, eh?"<sup>32</sup> Homosexuality as a temporary state, an abnormality caused by the absence of women and equally cured by the restoration of "normal" gender relations, echoes Victorian literature linking deviant sexualities with a medical condition. But John was far from the only one who saw turning to homosexuality

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<sup>29</sup>Regina Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy: Prison and the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality* (University of Chicago Press, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> See for example, Regina Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy: Prison and the Uneven history of Modern American Sexuality* (Chicago: University of Chocago Press, 2008);T. Dunbar Moodie, *Going for Gold: Men, Mines, and Migration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

<sup>31</sup> John Bardach, Letter to Eric Koch (Feb. 20th, 1980), LAC, MG30 C-192 vol. 1, "Correspondence between Koch and former internees 1979-1980 (A-F)."

<sup>32</sup> Erich Koch, Letter to John Bardach (March 13th, 1980), LAC, MG30 C-192 vol. 1, "Correspondence between Koch and former internees 1979-1980 (A-F)."

as a coping mechanism for unsatiated "normal" sexual urges.<sup>33</sup> The problem of privacy mediated all expressions of sexuality, some opting to treat it as a distraction from more worthwhile intellectual pursuits and others substituting a different fetish in its place.<sup>34</sup> However, though time may have seemed to be standing still for the internees awaiting release, their camp sexual practices should not be considered a time apart, detached from the performance of sexual identities on the outside. Whereas the internee John explained his "penchant for boys" as "situational homosexuality," this analysis reinforces a dichotomy between homo and hetero sex as "natural" rather than acknowledging the instability of sexual identity. In other words, the link between sexual acts and sexual identity might not be so simple to delineate.<sup>35</sup> After all, as Foucault first pointed out, penal complexes are sites for exercising modern power partly through observing and studying sexuality, a relationship and system that presumes homosex is deviant and, in some cases, subject to medical intervention. Instead of analyzing the sexual acts between internees as "situational," it would be more fruitful to see them as revealing of the fissures and fault lines in modern notions of sexual identity.

The visibility of same-sex desire in camp life caused the greatest anxiety over what becoming a man should look like for the younger internees. Worried that the friendships the camp boys developed early on in their internment experience, sometimes beginning in the dormitories of Oxford or Cambridge universities, would become sexual under the constraints of incarceration, older internees apparently took it upon themselves to act as the boys' moral

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<sup>33</sup> Henry Kassel, "Autobiography 1993," Ontario Jewish Archives (OJA), *Fonds 93*, vol. 1, file 1.

<sup>34</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: John Newmark & Professor William Heckscher. LAC, MG30 C-192 vol. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Regina Kunzel, *Criminal Intimacy: Prison & the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality* (University of Chicago Press, 2008). In her work, Kunzel draws heavily on the theories of the mid-twentieth sexologist Alfred Kinsey who developed the Kinsey Scale to explain the range of one's possible sexual responses.

guardians: "The older men took steps to see that the friendships formed were healthy and natural and succeeded in maintaining a high moral tone in this respect. In one hut at one time they formed themselves into a voluntary guard at night, each remaining on watch for an hour till he was relieved by another. Subsequently they found this quite unnecessary and abandoned it."<sup>36</sup> Had the boys wanted to arrange late night encounters in their bunks, they would have faced more practical obstacles to their rendezvous in addition to the sexual morality guard. First, internees were housed in huts accommodating approximately 40 men in double bunks, if one was lucky, and in dormitories of 300–400 men if one was not.<sup>37</sup> To say that the rhythm of tens, if not hundreds, of other men snoring would be an intrusion on an otherwise private and intimate encounter would not be an overstatement. Of course, interested parties could arrange hook-ups during the day when at least some roommates could be expected to be busy attending the camp school, participating in work parties, or enjoying one of the few leisure activities available to internees. However, even those internees willing to make-do with life as it unfolded around them in the sleeping huts encountered a second obstacle; building makeshift privacy curtains around individual bunks was forbidden by camp administration and subject to daily inspections by the camp commandant.<sup>38</sup> With these conditions in mind, it is entirely possible that the kind of older gentlemen's guard that formed to police the friendships of young men abandoned their nightly posts not because the internees were not engaging in sexual activities with one another, but because the lack of privacy in their sleeping quarters forced them to turn to other spaces.

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<sup>36</sup> Alexander Paterson, "Report on Civilian Internees Sent from the United Kingdom to Canada during the Unusually Fine Summer of 1940," LAC, MG30 C-192 vol. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Accommodation varied significantly between camps depending on whether existing structures, such as army barracks and warehouses, were used, or if new H-huts were constructed. International Red Cross Reports on camps A, I, N, B, & Q. LAC, Department of National Defense, Directorate of Internment Operations, RG24-C5, vol. 11249, files 9-5-3-23, 9-5-3-40, 9-5-3-41, 9-5-3-42, and 9-5-3-70.

<sup>38</sup> War Diary No. 70, Entry August 20th 1940, LAC, RG24-C3, vol. 15404, file 2287.

Where the alienation of modern cities provided sexual "deviants" at least some clout to form and perform their sexual selves using the covert spaces of bars, train stations, and public lavatories, the closeness of internment did not provide internees with the same anonymity or privacy.<sup>39</sup> Like those of modern prisons and concentration camps in Eastern Europe, camp lavatories became important sites for expressing desire and wielding force, a place where internees might hope to escape the gaze of guards but certainly not that of fellow internees. To some, the lavatories came to symbolize internment as a whole, the physical nakedness of communal shower rooms a metaphor for the stripping of their identities as free youth:

Then we were all herded into the shower room and made to strip, you know.. Some of these huge naked men, and I was 16 and sort of thrown in with them and I kind of hated the, I mean, I sort of, perhaps ever since then I always rather disliked men because I saw such an assortment of them in those shower rooms where we were all herded, one after the other, you know.<sup>40</sup>

Whether consensual sexual acts occurred in the shower rooms is uncertain, but as the sixteen year old above learned, regulation of the (sexed) body through the absence of privacy was intimately tied to how young internees began to think about themselves, especially in relation to other, often older, men—"huge" not only in physical size, but also in the discursive space they occupied in camp life.

The bonds of belonging camp boys developed likely blurred the lines between friendship and romantic relationships to any on-lookers, whether these homosocial encounters occurred frequently or not. This is not surprising given the close living quarters and the movement of cliques from one internment camp to the next over the course of several years. While those in charge of policing the men's behaviour, and those internees who initially stood guard overnight,

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<sup>39</sup> Robert Lamprecht, "Chester Railway Station Lavatory" (5.8.1939), LAC, MG30 C-192 vol. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Arturo Vivante, LAC, MG30 C-192 vol. 3.

concerned themselves with the impressionable youth, it seems as though the reality of the relationship between these "mature men" and the younger internees may have been more nefarious than Alexander Paterson reported to the Home Office in the UK.<sup>41</sup> The focus of his one-on-one interviews with internees was the issue of release and, more to the point, their potential return to the UK if they found joining the Pioneer Corps more desirable than remaining incarcerated in Canada (many did not). Given the criminalization of homosexuality in Canada and Britain at the time, it is not hard to imagine that such encounters would not be reported to a representative of the Home Office when "good behaviour" and cooperation with the authorities was central to any future immigration plans.

While it is possible that older men saw themselves as moral guardians of the sexual acts between "youngsters", at least one internee recalled in his unpublished memoirs that it was the older men who became especially cozy with the camp boys: "There was, however, the problem of homosexuality which always raises its head in such situations. It was a known fact that a few of the mature men struck up close friendships with the younger boys. They were constantly together."<sup>42</sup> He goes on to assert that in all likelihood these friendships remained platonic, though some of them were "suspected of homosexual tendencies."<sup>43</sup> Here Loewy's understanding of sexual acts and sexual identity echoes the same sort of language that we see used to describe sexuality in other instances of male segregated communities such as prisons or mining camps.

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with Gerry Waldston (Toronto, April 27th, 2015).

For more on self-policing during internment, see Paul Jackson, "The Enemy Within the Enemy Within: The Canadian Army and Internment Operations during the Second World War," *Left History* 9:2 (Spring/Summer 2004): 45-83.

<sup>42</sup> Harry Loewy, "Days Behind Barbed Wire" (unpublished manuscript). The Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives (formerly the Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives), CJC ZB, 164.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

Sexual intercourse between men was not necessarily a precursor to being labelled gay. Instead, it mattered more whether one performed his gender identity as male or female, was sexually dominant or submissive, masculine or effeminate. Who gave Loewy and his friends the "creeps", then, was "Fritzi", a man who no one else thought of as a man.<sup>44</sup> Not only was his gait feminine, according to Loewy, but he took on typically feminine roles in camp life such as mending other internees' clothes. It was his gender performance as female that gave Fritzi the title "homosexual" by his fellow internees rather than his actual sexual behaviours.

Former internee Gerry Waldston recalls protecting one of his good friends in camp from the unwanted advances of older internees who were "regular" or "creepy" homosexuals (as opposed to those who "turned" during internment as a solution to the absence of women), "who added a lot more of the youngsters to their ranks."<sup>45</sup> It seems as though the perceived innocence of the camp boys made them targets, as Waldston understood things, and as one internee penned them in a "A Love Song to a Boy": "Your virginal lips/ Still dreaming their kiss/ And clumsy small hips/ That lover's weight miss/ And childish large eyes/ And unreproved look/ That make me surmize/ You dreamt of love's book."<sup>46</sup> These older gay men formed their own social groups within the camps and were frequently identified by their sexual preferences above all else.<sup>47</sup> On

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<sup>44</sup> "Fritzi Ritz" was an American comic strip from the 1920s, but the internees would have bestowed the nickname "Fritzi" due to its feminization of the German "Fritz," short for Friedrich.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Robert Lamprecht, "Love Song to a Boy" (4.10.40) LAC, MG30 C-192, vol. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Gerry Waldston estimated that there were one to two dozen "normal" homosexuals in his camp, an interesting word choice given the historical association of homosexuality with "deviancy," but that more "youngsters" were recruited. Interview with Gerry Waldston (Toronto, April 27th, 2015).

occasion, Waldston joked, signs reading "I'm gay" were taped to the back of men's shirts, signifying a warning to others to stay away or approach, depending on one's inclinations.<sup>48</sup>



Figure 3.1 "Major Racey, commander of Canadian internment camp "I" inspects the bunks and chats with an internee. c1940-1943." Boulkind Family *Fonds*, 1062; 017710.

Age was but one indicator of power relations that existed between internees, the produced effect of which was not inevitably coercion or force. Undoubtedly, real desire between various groups led to harmonious relationships, unequal power dynamics sometimes even serving as a source or enhancer of said desire. However, the example of both Loewy and Waldston gives a good indication of how camp boys were perceived as sexually vulnerable and in need of

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

protection or banning together to ward off "legitimate" homosexuals who were usually remembered as being older. Given their recollection, one might consider the relationships between camp boys and other men they would have encountered in camp, namely the guards who as members of Canada's Veterans Guard—too old for active service overseas—mainly served in the POW and internment camps across the country during WWII. Little evidence exists to propose that sexual relationships between guards and the younger internees was a regular occurrence. Unlike the internees, the guards could and did make regular visits to neighbouring towns where they often drank in excess and met local women when stationed far from their own families. Still, the segregation of the camps from outside life, and the precarious fate of the internees, would have made them the perfect place to act out "deviant" sexual behaviours. The photograph of Major Racey and an unidentified internee in Camp "I" (figure 3.1) for the *Montreal Standard* alludes to the power structures at work behind the barbed wire prisons. Officially a depiction of the camp commandant's daily inspection of the internees' sleeping quarters, the stance of the guard over the internee seated by his bunk bed suggests his ultimate authority and intrusion in all matters of daily life. Here the internee's bedding is free for the touching, as one of the most intimate private spheres—the bed—becomes subject to command.

Alfred Bader recalls one particular French Canadian guard who was especially interested in helping the internees whatever way he could, particularly when it came to securing them extra luxury items such as cigarettes and wood for his religious group to build an ark for the Torah.<sup>49</sup> Not making the connection himself between Bader's helpfulness and his sexual advancements, Bader remembers the guard Bruno, "Unfortunately he really took a liking to me. We arose at

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<sup>49</sup> Alfred Bader, "Autobiography," CJCCCA P09-17, 29-30.

6.45am, to be ready for roll call at 8 o'clock after prayers and breakfast, but around 6.00am, while Julius Kastner in the lower bunk was still fast asleep, Bruno would appear at my bedside and start playing with my penis. He wanted me to go outside the camp with him and walk around the island in the afternoon. What was I to do?" Sensing his vulnerability to Bruno's will, Bader took measures to defend himself by requesting that his good friend and former cattle dealer be allowed to join them. Not interested in having the extra company, he dropped the issue of leaving the camp together. By relying on bonds of friendship, Bader was able to discourage Bruno from further assault.

Other internees were not so fortunate. According to the diary that one internee maintained in secrecy to record the injustices of camp life, the exchange between Bruno and Bader was not an anomaly.<sup>50</sup> Bornemann documented how the guards would enter the internees' sleeping huts at night and pull away their blankets to see who was naked. When the guards became drunk on special occasions such as New Years Eve, the level of bodily violence escalated to rape. While the men's "situational" homosexuality has been joked about in their post-war correspondence and interviews, none touch on the very real danger of sexual violence, heightened by the uneven power dynamic between guards and internees. It is unclear how often such incidences occurred, but regardless of frequency, bringing them to light in a museum exhibit would shift the internment narrative away from one of "blunder" and "adventure" to something more harmful and participatory on the part of the Canadian guards.

Stripped of other identity markers such as profession and civilian clothing, sexuality was amplified in internment as one key way of knowing and to be known. With the morality of

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<sup>50</sup> "Bornemann: A diary containing notes on everyday life in the camps, n.d.," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

young men hanging in the balance as they came of age, "camp boys" in particular were subject to policing by fellow internees to ensure that their sexual desires remained "natural," and, at least some, were also the objects of their desire. As cultural theorists have demonstrated over the last two decades, the regulation of sexual morality is one way the state mirrored back to its citizens the state's expectations of them in solidifying a national identity, especially during times of war and other crises.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps that is why, in the backwoods and abandoned railway sheds of Canada, most internment guards paid scant attention to the sexual activities of internees so long as they stayed out of sight; no longer German and Austrian citizens and certainly yet to be Canadian or British, internees were stateless, no longer contributors to any "moral" nation. At the same time, this is perhaps why internees policed homosexuality themselves—to maintain some semblance of the modern condition behind barbed wire. Meanwhile, their reactions to sexual behaviours and gender performance indicates that the modern equation of sexual acts with sexual identity is in need of further deconstruction.

### ***"Don Juans": The Heterosexual Male Gaze***<sup>52</sup>

If same-sex desire played out under the blanket of the early morning's darkness and in the spaces whose visibility was eclipsed by moments of privacy, the expression of "normal" sexual desire was voiced within everyone's purview. From nearly the beginning of their internment, the

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<sup>51</sup> For example, see Christopher Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007); Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Elizabeth Heineman, *Before Porn was Legal: The Erotica Empire of Beate Uhse* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2008).

<sup>52</sup> Loewy, "Days Behind Barbed Wire," 164.

men were permitted to write two letters weekly to loved ones and to receive an unlimited amount in return, the distribution of letters the highlight of any given day. In one letter a young immature woman, an English school girl named Daria, asked her interned friend,

Tell me, excuse my vulgar curiosity, do men discuss women almost exclusively when alone together? For lately it has struck me, that almost the sole topic of conversation among young women is men.. They discuss them endlessly, personally, in every trivial detail, what they wear, what they say, their behaviour, work, success or failure socially, in fact the topic never exhausts itself.. And even admitting that the important and perhaps chief aim of women is to marry and to have children and that therefore her interest will always lie in the world of men, which had for her a kind of mysterious fascination because it is impenetrable on equal terms, I still think it is curious, very curious.<sup>53</sup>

Next to the subject of their release, internees did indeed discuss women almost exclusively, but perhaps not in the way or for the simple reasons Daria naively assumed in her query. Where the women in her letter discussed men's social and financial standing as prospective husbands, the internees thought about women as objects of their desire, pointing to the upholding of gender inequality. If policing same-sex desire was one way internees expressed anxiety over their masculine identities in a world without women or privacy, communal fantasizing of the female body helped to restore men's power lost through incarceration. Through late night chatter and especially through shared images of the imagined female body, men sought to restore normative gender relations, making women's sexuality the site for exercising and regulating their male authority. At the same time, the sexual banter may have had the added effect of further eroticizing the relationship between men, demonstrating how one moment could be experienced along a spectrum of masculine desire and dominance.

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<sup>53</sup> Daria, Letter to Eric Koch, LAC, MG30 C-192, vol. 1, "Correspondence to Otto Koch July 1941."

Camp artists were especially popular men during internment because they were capable of translating to internees images of their lost worlds beyond the wire. Their most popular subject or muse was undoubtedly young beautiful women. But where Daria described the role of women in relation to men according to Victorian norms of respectability—women's primary purpose in life to get married and have children—the internees fantasized about the modern "New Woman," perhaps unsurprisingly, as sexually promiscuous. Emerging from the women's suffrage movement at the turn of the century, the "New Woman" of the 1920s was imagined by many as a threat to existing moral codes and the supposedly "natural" gender hierarchy. However, through incarceration women's independence and sexual liberation are seen as both a source of humour and potential pleasure.



Figure 3.2 Gerry Waldston, private collection.

To keep the spirits of his friends high, Gerry Waldston took on the role of camp comedian, in addition to artist, posting a weekly joke on the bulletin board of camp Sherbrooke for all to see. The source of his audience's laughter was the juxtaposition of sexually liberated

women and the internees' inability to access their unrestrained bodies. Visualizing women's bodies as a commodity of the modern world lost through internment demonstrates how men fashioned their evolving sense of self in such intimate domains as sexuality and the body. For Gerry and other artists, women are constructed for their erotic impact on the see-er, establishing a hierarchical relationship between those that see and those who are seen. In figures 3.2 and 3.3, four women are depicted in a similar manner of dress, accentuating tiny waists, large breasts, and exposed legs. Donning victory curls and painted lips, the two sets of women hint at their sex lives and the expectations put upon them by men.



Figure 3.3 Gerry Waldston, private collection.

Although the intent was humour, the images would have also allowed internees to imagine themselves as "Alfred" or the young woman's date with the possibility of a sexual encounter around the corner; the figure of a woman also standing in as a symbol of freedom. For this reason, the male gaze did not simply reinforce an existing power dynamic between men and

women, though it did that too. The women created in the artist's eye also possessed power over the internees by being the subject of their desire and not someone or something else.<sup>54</sup> They held the power, in other words, to make "rational" men lose control sexually and intellectually by taunting them with their freedom. And in at least one case, the woman imagined on paper by the men was not a work of fiction, but the likeness of a young woman who gazed back at the interned men as she passed Camp Cove Fields on her way home from school each day.



Figure 3.4 Behind Barbed Wire Scrapbook, LAC Eric Koch fonds MC30 C-192, vol. 2

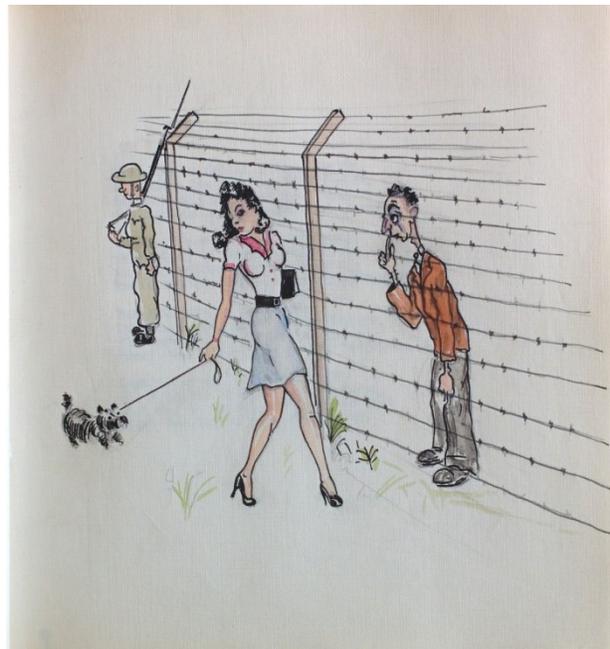


Figure 3.5 Gerry Waldston, private collection.

"Blondie," as she was nicknamed, like the women in figures 3.2 and 3.3, appears on paper confident and attractive. A girl of just fifteen or sixteen, Blondie would pass by the curious camp overlooking Quebec City on her daily walk home from school in the early fall of 1940

<sup>54</sup> Landes, *Visualizing the Nation*, 15-17.

before the refugees were moved to Sherbrooke in October.<sup>55</sup> Believing the internees to be Nazi POWs, she waved to those watching her pass, hoping to attract the attention of the forlorn soldiers. At least one internee made the daily ritual of approaching the barbed wire fence by the pedestrian path to watch her go. Although the woman pictured in figure 3.5 is not blonde, we might imagine this was the dynamic between Blondie, the soldier on guard, and internee Peter Field when he waited for her to pass. The internee leans forward inquisitively to get a better look at the attractive woman who, despite her interest in the internees, maintains an aloofness about her as she strolls by casually. Unlike the unassuming guard pictured, the actual guard on duty noticed Peter's interest in Blondie, and perhaps taking advantage of an opportunity, asked Peter whether he'd like to exchange his pocket knife for the young woman's address. And so began a year-long correspondence between the two, which, on account of Blondie's family connections to William Lyon Mackenzie King, even led to Peter receiving special passes to visit her.<sup>56</sup>

The case of Blondie and Peter shows more implicitly how power dynamics between men and women shift or are complicated when women, quite literally, gaze back at men. The internees who created the images of women as objects of male desire and those who gazed at them undoubtedly wielded power over the female body. Solidifying what they would have considered "natural" gender relations, with men in the power position, the internees subverted their own position as prisoners. Yet the fragility of the internees' power over women's imagined bodies was tested early in internment when the refugees were first housed in camps within city limits and within range of the female gaze. Although Peter fantasized about Blondie and shared

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<sup>55</sup> War Diary No. 42, Entry October 15th 1940, LAC, RG24-C3, vol. 15399, file 2284.

<sup>56</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Peter Field, 1980, LAC, MG30 C-192 vol. 3.

stories of their experiences together with other internees, Peter was romanticized by Blondie as a caged man worthy of her sympathy.<sup>57</sup> It was she who fantasized about him as a passive soldier in need of saving through her affections. The power of seeing, in other words, does not belong just to men but is in constant flux according to social circumstances.

The internees' gender identities undoubtedly intersected with their religious and cultural selfhoods. The archival documents do not make explicit the extent to which being Jewish, and the stereotype of Jewish masculinity as effeminate, in particular, affected their sexual proclivities, if at all.<sup>58</sup> In chapter two we saw how the internees' and Internment Operations' understanding of male productivity was incompatible given that the former's was rooted in intellectualism and the latter's in the body. It is possible that a broader or alternative understanding of masculinity impacted their sexualities in similar ways, allowing for a greater spectrum of desire. However, without documented evidence, drawing such conclusions risks advancing stereotypes rather than actual scholarship on Jewish masculinity. It seems apparent that the greatest factor in the men's self expression was place and the loss of privacy afforded by it.

### ***Conclusion: Privacy & the Return to 'Normalcy'***

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985); George Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford University Press, 1996); Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Jonathan Frankel. *Jews and Gender : The Challenge to Hierarchy: Studies in Contemporary Jewry* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Itzkovitz and Ann Pellegrini, eds. *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question: Between Men—Between Women* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

When internees daydreamt what life after internment might look like, the return to a 'normal' private life was cause for considerable anxiety. After months, or in some cases years, of a regimented, soldierly routine, would they know what to do with their autonomy or, importantly, how to interact with women? In a drawing titled "Roll Call", Gerry Waldston depicts a former internee standing attention at the foot of a bed, linens rolled and luggage orderly, as his lover looks on in shock. The quotation marks surrounding "Private Life" betray his fears that the breakdown of private and public life in internment would follow him home, into the bedroom where he would be caught, literally and figuratively, with his pants down.



Figure 3.6 "Roll Call," Gerry Waldston private collection.

Therefore, thinking about and performing sexual acts in camp was much more than a way for the young men to pass their time. Making sense of the sexual-self was a key way to make sense of the modern self under the conditions of incarceration. Flexing their limited power through policing 'unnatural' sexual acts and imagining the 'natural' submissive status of women and subordinate men to hegemonic men, internees expressed anxieties over their varying

masculinities, governmental authority, and individuality. The conditions of Canadian internment afforded the men the space to express their fluid sexualities from "normal" to "deviant" while still policing effeminate men, in particular, as amoral. That "situational" homosexuality and a more aggressive brand of masculinity seemed to transpire simultaneously, sometimes represented by the same actors, disrupts any notion that gender performance is stable. The absence of privacy in camp made the turn inward that much more difficult for the internees but also crucial to their evolving identities.

## Chapter 4: Protest and Power: The Art of Claims-Making

The collective narrative of internment underwent a digital transformation in 2012 when the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre opened its exhibit "'Enemy Aliens': The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-43," which included a permanent online platform to expand the exhibit's viewership.<sup>1</sup> The construction of this virtual museum was a collaborative process between museum curators, an historical consultant, and former internees, revealing memory as a negotiation of power between various experts. Add to this, financial investors and an engaged public, via the site's submission form for further stories and photographs, and the number of players involved in the production of internment knowledge has become quite expansive and the performance of its narrative perhaps more democratic than once assumed. The transformation of the narrative from standalone monograph to digital media forces us to reconsider the social production of history by multiple authorities across various platforms.<sup>2</sup>

While the employment of new media in the dissemination of historical knowledge may be new to the twenty-first century, in what may seem like a paradoxical twist, the collective narrative of internment that the online exhibit produces has changed little since the early 1980s when the camp boys story was first published. Although this stagnation could be mistakenly read as a testament to the durability of memories over time, it is better understood as a reflection of the circulatory process of meaning making. The historical consultant for the "Enemy Aliens" project was Dr. Paula Draper whose 1980 dissertation on the camp boys was in many ways the

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<sup>1</sup> "'Enemy Aliens': The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-43," Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, <http://www.enemyaliens.ca/accueil-home-eng.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Ann Rigney, "When the Monograph Is No Longer the Medium: Historical Narrative in the Online Age," *History and Theory* 49 (Dec. 2010):100-117.

starting point for all narratives on Jewish internment that would follow, including the internees' own memoirs.<sup>3</sup> Word of Draper's project spread in Toronto and Montreal's Jewish communities as she conducted oral history interviews in the late 1970s so that when Erich Koch and other former internees penned and recalled their internment experiences, they subconsciously filled their own memory gaps with those collected by Draper. When CBC journalist Harry Rasky interviewed former internees at their 1980 reunion for his forthcoming documentary, he formulated his questions based on the narrative provided in Koch's book. Reciprocally, interviewees responded to his questions beginning with, "I mean I think it was as Eric Koch describes," or "As Eric says," confirming what was already suggested.<sup>4</sup> "Enemy Aliens" follows the narrative structure set forth by Draper in her dissertation which was rearticulated by former internees in the intervening decades. Far from 'bad' historical practice, this example, spanning over thirty years of memory work, provides a rare glimpse into the life of stories that is more circulatory than linear. Because the production of the online exhibit compels us to raise questions about the accessibility, quality, interactivity, and durability of historical knowledge, the assumed model for storytelling—the historical monograph—similarly becomes subject to critical dissection.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter is about the negotiation of power in two different ways. On the surface, it tells the story of how power was wielded in internment camps by guards and internees who

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<sup>3</sup> Paula Draper, "The Accidental Immigrants: Canada and the Interned Refugees," (PhD diss. University of Toronto, 1983).

<sup>4</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Gregory Baum and Helmut Kallmann, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>5</sup> In their foundational book on digital history, Cohen and Rosenzweig point to twelve positive qualities and potential hazards of gathering, preserving, and presenting the past online; the ones that I have identified here are those that I see as raising the most urgent issues. Daniel J. Cohen & Roy Rosenzweig, *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

resisted their imprisonment and who created hierarchies of social difference so that some internees held authority over others. In more subtle ways, it critically examines how the collective memory of internment has been negotiated over time between multiple authorities to create a cohesive narrative that excludes resistance as a central theme. Since the launch of the VHEC's virtual exhibit, several more former internees whose voices contributed in significant ways to the internment narrative have passed away, putting into perspective the importance of intergenerational memory work. In one way the VHEC's curatorial strategy symbolizes the transmission of memory from those who experienced internment to those left to remember its legacies through the use of new media and its links to teaching tools and modules. At the same time, this moment of transition should be used to evaluate not only the past in which the events occurred, but also the multiple pasts in which internment memories competed, coalesced, and faded "within a complex nexus of shifting power relations."<sup>6</sup> More specifically, why, outside of the specific campaign for recognition of religious rights, has the resistance of internees not been more widely discussed given that it is a central theme in other stories of lawful and unlawful imprisonment?

According to former internees who discussed the morale of prisoners in a video compilation for the VHEC exhibit, Canadian internment was a "bad situation" but "a better situation than had [they] stayed behind" in Europe.<sup>7</sup> Some even went so far as to refer to internment as an enjoyable experience, which may lead to the logical conclusion that the internees had no reason to resist the injustices that they faced in Canada. However, the former

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<sup>6</sup> Monica Eileen Patterson, "Memory Across Generations: The Future of 'Never Again'," *The Journal of the International Institute* 10:2 (Winter 2003), <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jii/4750978.0010.205?view=text;rgn=main>.

<sup>7</sup> Fred Kaufman, "Morale" VHEC exhibit "'Enemy Aliens': The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-43," [http://www.enemyaliens.ca/les\\_gars\\_des\\_camps-camp\\_boys/la\\_moralite-morale/video-eng.html](http://www.enemyaliens.ca/les_gars_des_camps-camp_boys/la_moralite-morale/video-eng.html).

internees also emphasized that this generally positive outlook was true of the students among them, but not necessarily the older internees who faced different challenges. The broader suggestion is that internment was not experienced universally; social differences created multiple contexts of imprisonment. Yet, given the age of the former internees when their collective narrative was first crafted in public forums, it is the voices of the students that have emerged as dominant. Another broader suggestion of the film clip is that because the internees' suffering was mental rather than physical, as would have been the case in Europe, they did not have the moral right to complain. While there is truth to be found in these recollections, if only because the former internees believed them to reflect the past as it was, their memories are also mediated by decades of Holocaust and discriminatory immigration narratives; they were lucky, history has told them, to get into Canada at all. Taking into account the various circumstances that led to the internees' imprisonment and their equally varied responses to it, it remains that internment was an unspecified prison sentence that caused serious mental anguish: "As long as adults are locked up with no choice to leave of their own free will and they are not treated as mentally or physically ill, then they are in prison and that confinement is unpleasant to them. It is extremely rare for a prison inmate not to wish to leave."<sup>8</sup> Hindsight taught the majority of internees that they were fortunate to be interned in Canada, while others who had experienced concentration camps first hand did not need to wait that long. Despite how fortunate an event their internment might have turned out to be in the larger context of WWII, it was, nevertheless, an injustice worthy of protest.

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<sup>8</sup> Herbert Gamberg & Anthony Thomson, *The Illusion of Prison Reform: Corrections in Canada* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984), 5.

This chapter asserts that most internees did not passively accept their Canadian imprisonment despite later recollections of understanding and even gratitude. While interned, the men relied on social difference to reclaim agency, and they negotiated their rights through subtle and overt forms of resistance. When protests interfered with the daily operations of camp life, internees were punished according to western imprisonment practices developed over centuries of reform. How the internees reacted to life behind barbed wire is situated between the specific historiographical issue of Jewish passivity and the broader context of modern prison policies and government surveillance. What is at stake in bringing Jewish protest and punishment to the foreground of internment narratives is how we define and value resistance within uneven power structures of class and ethnic difference.

Raul Hilberg first raised the issue of Jewish passivity during the Holocaust in *The Destruction of the European Jews*, published the same year that the trial of Adolf Eichmann brought the genocide of European Jewry into public consciousness.<sup>9</sup> Hilberg argued that the majority of Jewish victims' "passivity" in the face of their own destruction cannot be read as a form of resistance on par with the act of taking up arms—a controversial conclusion that led to a fifty-year cascade of scholarship attempting to define the parameters of "resistance."<sup>10</sup> Those historians who disagreed with him advocated for the recognition of spiritual resistance—

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<sup>9</sup> Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Yale University Press, 1961); Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Viking Press, 1963).

<sup>10</sup> Reuben Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe: With a Historical Survey of the Jew as Fighter and Soldier in the Diaspora* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1974); James M. Glass, *Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust: Moral Uses of Violence and Will* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Meir Grubsztein, ed., *Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Conference on Manifestations of Jewish Resistance, Jerusalem, April 7-11, 1968* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1971); Israel Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939-1943: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); Shmuel Krakowski, *The War of the Doomed: Jewish Armed Resistance in Poland, 1942-1944* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1984); Joseph Rudavsky, *To Live With Hope, To Die With Dignity: Spiritual Resistance in the Ghettos and Camps* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1997).

"attempts by individuals to maintain their humanity, personal integrity, dignity, and sense of civilization in the face of Nazi attempts to dehumanize and degrade them."<sup>11</sup> The broader question in this on-going debate pertained to power structures and the type of resistance one could reasonably expect from a group who had been systematically marginalized and then persecuted. To put it simply, how do those with no power resist those with all of the power?

While the circumstances of Canadian internment camps were dramatically different from those of the ghettos and concentration camps of Nazi occupied Europe, in some ways the better physical conditions allowed internees to dwell further on the problem of lost dignity. As Rabbi Erwin Schild explained for the "Enemy Aliens" exhibit, "Physically [internment] was not a terrible experience. Our suffering was mentally, psychologically, spiritually."<sup>12</sup> The root of the problem, as he saw it, was having to convince the Canadian government and public that they were not Nazi spies, members of the same group from whom they had originally fled. For this reason, forms of passive resistance became an important means for the internees to protest being labelled German POWs while simultaneously showing their desire to cooperate with Allied

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<sup>11</sup> "Spiritual Resistance in the Ghettos," *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005416> (last updated January 29th 2016). Michael Marrus, "Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust," *Journal of Contemporary History* 30:1 (Jan. 1995): 83-110; Joseph Rudavsky, *To Live With Hope, To Die With Dignity: Spiritual Resistance in the Ghettos and Camps*, (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1997); Rachel Feldhay Brenner, *Writing as Resistance: Four Women Confronting the Holocaust: Edith Stein, Simone Weil, Anne Frank, Ety Hillesum* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997); James M. Glass, *Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust: Moral Uses of Violence and Will* (New York: Palgrave, 2004); Miriam Intrator, "The Theresienstadt Ghetto Central Library, Books and Reading: Intellectual Resistance and Escape during the Holocaust," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 50:1 (Jan. 2005): 3-28; Eliyana R. Adler, "No Raisins, No Almonds: Singing as Spiritual Resistance to the Holocaust," *Shofar* 24: 4 (July 2006): 50-66; Tam K Parker & Myrna Goldenberg, "Survival of the Closest: Gender and Agency in Holocaust Resistance," in *The Double Binds of Ethics after the Holocaust: Salvaging the Fragments*, eds. J. Geddes, J. Roth, and Jules Simon (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 71-88.

<sup>12</sup> Erwin Schild, "Morale" VHEC exhibit "'Enemy Aliens': The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-43," [http://www.enemyaliens.ca/les\\_gars\\_des\\_camps-camp\\_boys/la\\_moralite-morale/video-eng.html](http://www.enemyaliens.ca/les_gars_des_camps-camp_boys/la_moralite-morale/video-eng.html).

forces. Passive resistance was a specific strategy that balanced the internees' desire to immigrate to Great Britain or North American with the guards' anti-semitic threats.

### ***Rehabilitation: The History of Modern Prison Reform***

Perhaps in more covert ways than the Holocaust, the context of modern incarceration, developed over centuries of reform, also affected the internees' treatment and their reaction to it. Canadian incarceration policies grew and morphed alongside correctional ideologies elsewhere, namely in Great Britain and the United States, making the story part of a broader Western history of detainment.<sup>13</sup> As previous chapters have attempted to emphasize, internment populations reflect bias towards lower class men than crimes committed. As a result, prison inmates have historically been "heavily weighted toward young males of low social and economic status," making the narrative of the educated camp boys all the more appealing and remarkable.<sup>14</sup> However, in order to speak to the transnational context of their story, it is imperative to read their narrative not for what makes it unique, but for what makes it so familiar.

Modern incarceration ideologies began in the eighteenth-century in response to fundamental changes in the organization of society. The right to detain and punish shifted from the singular monarch to the state, which included multiple apparatuses of government control such as armed forces and the judiciary.<sup>15</sup> Utilitarian and social reformer Jeremy Bentham advocated for rational punishment in accordance with the severity of the crimes committed, but

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<sup>13</sup> Gamberg & Thomson, *The Illusion of Prison Reform*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

at the turn of the century, the driving forces behind incarceration remained retribution and revenge. This meant that the emphasis of punishment remained on physical pain. To improve the behaviour of criminals once interned, he proposed his Panopticon prison design as a way to illicit inmate cooperation through surveillance and self-regulation. With a central watch tower, all inmates would be visible to authorities at any given time, though not all at once. The power of the gaze meant that prisoners would have to police their own behaviour or risk further punishment. Bentham imagined that his design would not only be effective in prisons, but could also be applied to hospitals, sanatoriums, and asylums. Although no such prison was built during Bentham's life, the project represents an important shift in punishment philosophy from the application of physical pain to surveillance and the loss of privacy.

The penitentiary evolved as one part of this expansion of centralized state authority, which also included the asylum, the training school, and the work house—institutions created to deal with the problems of social control stemming from the rise of industrial capitalism and the emergence of the working class.<sup>16</sup> Rather than seek retaliation for crimes committed, prisons evolved to reform and discipline deviant or marginal behaviours.<sup>17</sup> Those most affected were unemployed workers whose labour potential could be exploited in prisons and work houses but veiled as reformation through productivity. Under the capitalist system, labour became a sought after currency, and the effects of this new approach to incarceration reverberated beyond prison walls. Prisoners' labour potential could be sold to private businesses and shaped by current

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>17</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977).

market demands.<sup>18</sup> But as chapter two illustrated, work also gave prisoners the power to protest unfair compensation and working conditions, creating a dynamic that required authorities to compromise with inmates.

At the time of the refugees' interment in Canada, the incarceration system was undergoing another transformation whose historical roots can be traced back to Bentham's focus on the psyche. Rehabilitation, the idea that prisoners should be re-socialized in preparation for entry back into society, became the driving purpose of incarceration. Building on the notion that prisoners' crimes were in some way deviant from the social norm, mid twentieth-century reformers took a medical approach to the issue, claiming that criminal behaviour was caused by psychological illness.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, the rehabilitation model sought to alter the psyche of prisoners and to develop skills that would ameliorate their social status once released. Again, the assumption here was that lower class men were more likely to offend because they were predisposed to psychological problems. In practice, the rehabilitation model failed to recognize prisoners as acting subjects with their own desires and agendas. Moreover, if prisoners were "diseased" when they entered the prison system, their psyche only deteriorated behind bars.

When the refugees' internment began in 1940, it was clearly situated between this longer history of prison reform and the looming danger of what would become the Holocaust. Though the internees may have been unfamiliar with incarceration ideologies and practices, as opposed to the evident threat Nazism posed, the making of the modern prison reflected the making of the

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<sup>18</sup> Rebecca M. McLennan, *The Crisis of Imprisonment: Protest, Politics, and the Making of the American Penal State, 1776-1941* (Berkeley: The University of California, 1998), 4.

<sup>19</sup> Gamberg & Thomson, *The Illusion of Prison Reform*, 30-34.

modern citizen.<sup>20</sup> Far from a world apart, internment mirrored back to internees the social differences and possibilities of their lives before WWII broke out. While they worried about their future prospects, and those of their family members still in Europe, Internment Operations developed a camp system that drew on centuries of incarceration philosophies, converging in the contemporary model of rehabilitation. The internees participated in this approach through the development of the camp schools—building skills for future release, but the authorities focused their efforts on technical training, which they believed would better groom them for reception into Canadian society.<sup>21</sup>

On at least one occasion, a public meeting hosted by the Canadian National Committee on Refugees was held in Montreal and attended by the Commissioner of Refugee Camps, who addressed the "rehabilitation problem" of would-be releasees.<sup>22</sup> The shape and course of their internment training or rehabilitation was evidently subject to the public sphere where middle class morality demanded that the refugees become productive citizens (not that the internees disagreed with the theory behind this impetus; in fact, they were products and advocates of it). While Canadian citizens might have insisted that released refugees not become a drain on the welfare system, they likely also wanted to ensure that the refugees would not pose a threat to their own employment and thereby social standing. Power dynamics between different classes therefore contributed significantly not only to daily life behind barbed wire, but they spilled over

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<sup>20</sup> Michel Foucault, "Power," in *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, Vol.3, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2001).

<sup>21</sup> J.C. Veness, District Forest Officer, "Report on Internee Labour: Acadia Forest Experiment Station, N.B.," (May 12th, 1941), "War Efforts - Internment Operations - Acadia Forest Experiment Station, New Brunswick," LAC, RG39 vol. 40, file 49726; J.C. Veness, District Forest Officer to D.A. Macdonald, Acting Dominion Forester, (Feb. 12th, 1941), "War Efforts - Internment Operations - Acadia Forest Experiment Station, New Brunswick," LAC, RG39 vol. 40, file 49726.

<sup>22</sup> "Refugees Problem to be Discussed," *Star*, November 25th, 1941.

into public discussions about what should become of the refugees. Although the internees had committed no crimes, they were viewed as wards of state who required rehabilitation—an invention of the middle classes—before they could successfully re-enter into society.

### ***Breaking Them In***

When internees entered the "temporary" camps in July 1940, they did not know what to expect. Few, if any, had prior criminal convictions that would have made them custodians of the state. Those who arrived from the Kitchener refugee camp had experienced Germany's concentration camps first hand followed by British sponsorship and care. Their Canadian experience would be like neither of these. For the majority of the 2, 284 refugees from Nazism who would arrive that hot summer, this would be their first prison sentence, though its length was undefined and there was no trial. On entering Camp Lennox, the fort located on Île-aux-Noix, Alfred Bader was summoned by the camp's commandant, Major Kippen, who singled out the boy for his evident young age. How did a sixteen year old manage, he wanted to know, to parachute into England? Kippen, like all Canadian authorities at that time, was under the impression that their new charges were German fifth columnists captured in Great Britain. Bader responded that he had not parachuted, but was a Jewish refugee. The Major, who would become one of the more favoured commandants, responded coolly, "Do not pretend to be a Jew. I do not like Jews either."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> "Excerpt from autobiography re: internment," Bader, Alfred (1939-2009), The Alex Dworkin Jewish Canadian Jewish Archives (CJCCA), P09/17.

This exchange is representative of the anti-semitism the refugees encountered throughout their internment, but especially early on when their national loyalties were, rather remarkably, still in question. However, if the guards were not expecting Jewish refugees, their status quickly became apparent, at least for the orthodox among them.<sup>24</sup> It did not take Internment Operations long to realize the mistake that had been made sending the refugees to Canada as POWs second class, but their treatment of the internees was slow to align with their new knowledge.

Undoubtedly, the commandants and guards who hurled anti-semitic remarks at the refugees were openly prejudiced against Jews as was not uncommon in Canada between the two world wars. It is possible, however, that vocalizing their anti-semitism was more than a reflection of brutish ignorance. Behind barbed wire, it could also be a specific strategy leveraged by authority figures to quickly establish power dynamics between guards and internees. In the context of a prison system that no longer applied physical punishment to correct deviant behavior, at least in theory, alternative methods of eliciting internee compliance developed, requiring guards to perform as imposing figures of authority. One way to do this was by attacking ethnic differences.

Internment camps formed a social system with everyone playing a social role, which may or may not have corresponded to one's standing in life beyond the barbed wire. Certainly one's prior economic status played a part in elevating one's status within camp rather quickly, but just as in the outside world, social mobility was possible. One former internee described internment as a microcosm of the real world: "From the highest intellectuals to the lowest thieves, to cobblers, to workmen, to everything, was represented [in camp]."<sup>25</sup> Unsurprisingly, camp guards

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<sup>24</sup> During the summer of their arrival, orthodox Jews who refused to shave for the 9th of Av were forcibly shaved by their guards. *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Interview by Harry Rasky, 1980: Gerry Waldston, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

were at the apex of this system in which power was negotiated between multiple members in order to maintain reasonable control and to function daily. Drawing on their military backgrounds for training, it made sense that the guards focused on internal order rather than physical punishment or retribution, reflecting also the approach to corrections in Canada at the time.<sup>26</sup> To a much more devastating end, SS guards in Nazi concentration camps also orchestrated social systems of control. As Nikolaus Wachsmann explains in his comprehensive history of the Nazi concentration camp system, scales of suffering and power existed to illicit cooperation from certain prisoners in the maintenance of control over the others.<sup>27</sup> In all three instances—Canadian internment, modern prisons, and concentration camps—men perceived as effeminate or gay found themselves on the lowest rungs of the hierarchy, pointing, perhaps unsurprisingly, to the heteronormative character of power relations. With prisoners often policing one another's behaviours, guards could take a more passive role in the maintenance of prisoner control. In Canadian internment camps and prisons, this meant that the use of physical force by guards was an exception rather than the rule. The opposite was true in Nazi concentration camps.

Accordingly, the internment guards' first directive was to instill fear in the Jewish internees so that they would be cooperative without the use of physical force. In addition to gaining a reputation as simple or backward lumberjacks, outlined in chapter one, the guards' apparent brutishness was also widely discussed between internees through camp newsletters and scrapbooks. On one occasion, Alfred Bader created a phony job advertisement for a position as camp guard, which was circulated in Camp I's newsletter, *Lennoxer Tageblatt*. The requirements,

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<sup>26</sup> Gamberg & Thomson, *The Illusion of Prison Reform*, 40-43.

<sup>27</sup> Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015), 79-136, 225-240.

he joked, were "no more than two teeth, little hair, syphilis preferred."<sup>28</sup> Taking aim at their physical appearance as representative of their moral character was one way internees used humour to express dissatisfaction with their treatment. The aesthetics of internee resistance was shared by prisoners wherever they were detained in the mid-twentieth century.<sup>29</sup>



Figure 4.1 Untitled, "Behind Barbed Wire" Scrapbook, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 2.

At other times, internees found the guards' authoritative posturing less humorous, as figure 4.1 illustrates. Featured on the homepage of the VHEC's exhibit "'Enemy Aliens': The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-43," it depicts a guard yelling at a group of four

<sup>28</sup> "Excerpt from autobiography re: internment," Bader, Alfred (1939-2009), CJCCCA, P09/17.

<sup>29</sup> Jeffrey F. Burton & Mary M. Farrell, "'Life in Manzanar Where There Is a Spring Breeze': Graffiti at a World War II Japanese American Internment Camp," in *Prisoners of War: Archaeology, Memory, and Heritage of 19th- and 20th-Century Mass Internment*, eds. Harold Mytum and Gilly Carr, 239-269 (New York: Springer-Verlag, 2013); Jacqueline Z. Wilson, "Pecking Orders: Power Relationships and Gender in Australian Prison Graffiti," *Ethnography* 9: 1 (March 2008): 99-121; Mary Bosworth & Eamonn Carrabine, "Reassessing Resistance: Race, Gender and Sexuality in Prison," *Punishment and Society* 3:4 (Oct. 2001): 501-515.

internees, demanding that at least one among them respond to a previous command with the appropriate, "yes, sir!" The painting appears as part of a short montage of images selected to represent Jewish internment, so the Centre provides little in the way of textual analysis.

However, the curatorial placement of the image would indicate that the power dynamic between guards and internees was of central importance to the internment experience. One way to read this image is as a confrontation between different expectations. The guard is a trained soldier and expects his charges to act as orderly recruits. This approach rubs up against the response of the internees who are civilians unaccustomed to military life. Rather than toe the line, they tremble with fear, as the unknown artist depicts in his painting. A closer reading of the image reveals yet another layer to this dynamic.

Of the four internees, only one is visibly shaken by the guard. The other three appear more relaxed as they stand loosely at attention with two gazing past the guard. The artist has differentiated the trembler from the rest through their physical appearances. The trembler is dressed in the issued POW uniform from top to bottom while the other three wear the pants only. Two of the men sport suit jackets and ties, indicating that they might be camp teachers or occupy a similar role of stature. The trembler appears especially unkept with wild longer hair and the facial growth of a few days' stubble. The other men are depicted as having better personal hygiene. What was the artist attempting to say about the relationship between guards and internees? This much seems clear. What is perhaps more interesting is what his painting says about the relationship between internees. Some managed internment better than others, this may be measured by the maintenance of their dignity through personal hygiene and clothing choices

(when possible).<sup>30</sup> Why some fared better than others certainly had to do with the circumstances from which they came and the status of loved ones left behind. However, in the context of maintaining internal order, this often meant that internees from higher social classes adopted social roles within camps that made them respected leaders, shouldering part of the responsibility for maintaining social control. It is possible that this painting depicts a trembling man who has stopped taking care of himself being chastised by a guard. The other men are there to hear the guard's instructions and to see that the internee changes his behaviour. They have a role to play in the maintenance of the social system.

With so few guards assigned to each camp where hundreds of internees were cramped into spaces meant for far fewer people, power over external order was shared between the authorities and some internees. The fraternizing between guards and internees, described in chapter two, occurred once they understood them to be refugees, but it was also an implicit, unspoken function of the social system behind barbed wire. In order to secure internee compliance, particularly when poor living conditions had the potential to lead to rioting, the guards needed to solicit the cooperation of at least a few internee leaders. This could be accomplished by distributing informal privileges or by turning a blind eye to illicit behaviour. In practice, this gave license for some internees to exercise control over others, dividing them into different interest groups or cliques rather than uniting them. This mimicked patterns of belonging and exclusion found in modern prisons and Nazi concentration camps where detainment was not

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<sup>30</sup> In one interview a former internee commented that those from the upper classes fared better than those from the working class, which is typically the reverse in prisons. Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Toni Obert, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

an equalizer. Instead, the pecking order reflected societal expectations about power, identity, and masculinity.<sup>31</sup>

### ***Social Hierarchy & Self-Policing***

Incarceration is not an equalizer in prisons, internment camps, or concentration and death camps. Although Hitler's organization of victims into different social groups, visibly distinguished in camps by symbolic triangle patches, has long been known, it is only in the last two decades that historians have been willing to argue that this differentiation affected the extent to which one was persecuted and the likelihood of survival.<sup>32</sup> For the most part, victims of higher stature adopted their roles reluctantly in order to better their own chances of survival. But there are also stories of concentration camp *Kapo* (leaders) becoming zealous participants in this prisoner self-administration. Survival in Canadian internment camps was not at issue, but the same principle of social difference worked to make some internees privileged over others. The effects of this unbalanced dynamic were unequivocally not as disastrous or complicated as they

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<sup>31</sup> Wilson, "Pecking Orders: Power Relationships and Gender in Australian Prison Graffiti," 99-121. In Nazi concentration camps, homosexuals were at the bottom of the camp hierarchy. They continued to be persecuted after liberation, however, because they were still deemed amoral by the nation state. Heinz Heger, *The Men with the Pink Triangle: The True Life-and-Death Story of Homosexuals in the Nazi Death Camps* (New York: Alyson Books, 1994); Robert G. Moeller, "The Regulation of Male Homosexuality in Postwar East and West Germany: An Introduction," *Feminist Studies* 36:3 (Fall 2010): 521-527.

<sup>32</sup> Perhaps most significantly, this debate has been waged over the extent to which gender impacted one's suffering. Jonathan Friedman, *Speaking the Unspeakable: Essays on Sexuality, Gender, and the Holocaust Survivor Memory* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2002); Dalia Ofer & Lenore Weitzman, "The Role of Gender in the Holocaust," *Women in the Holocaust* (Yale University Press, 1999); Elizabeth Heineman, "Sexuality & Nazism: The Doubly Unspeakable?" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11:1-2 (2002): 22-66; Joan Miriam Ringelheim, "The Unethical and the Unspeakable: Women and the Holocaust" in *The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings*, eds. Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg (Rutgers University Press, 2003); Sonya M. Hedgepeth & Rochelle G. Saidel, eds. *Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust* (Brandeis University Press, 2010).

were under Nazism, but it does speak to the significance of "camp boys" as a unifying refrain in internment narratives.

The term, used by historians and former internees alike, evokes a somewhat sentimental image of a by-gone time, similar to reminiscences that circulate at a high school reunion which tend to recall the experience as perhaps more unifying than it was actually lived at the time.

"Camp boys" does not reflect the social differences that impacted daily life in the camps, but it is an important memory strategy that helps situate their internment into a larger narrative of pioneering, adventure, and immigration. It also represents how some internees felt about other men in their circle of friends or cliques, which did have major repercussions for life after internment when former internees moved to the same neighbourhoods as one another or were students in the same university departments. It is important, however, that this narrative does not obscure how internment could be socially divisive.

In each camp, a spokesman was elected from among the internees to advocate on their behalf with authorities. Hut leaders were similarly chosen to represent the needs of smaller groups, divided by living arrangements, at meetings with the spokesman. In this way, a formal democracy developed in camps wherein the commandant was head of the hierarchy, but authority was officially distributed between elected internees. The VHEC exhibit emphasizes that this political system was a welcomed distraction for internees who were united by common causes, such as ameliorating living conditions and securing release.<sup>33</sup> Undoubtedly, this was part of its purpose imagined by Internment Operations: the illusion of prisoner power which could be thwarted by the commandant at any moment when a spokesman became too pushy in his

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<sup>33</sup> "Politics," VHEC, [http://www.enemyaliens.ca/les\\_gars\\_des\\_camps-camp\\_boys/laction\\_politique-politics-eng.html](http://www.enemyaliens.ca/les_gars_des_camps-camp_boys/laction_politique-politics-eng.html).

demands.<sup>34</sup> But the internees were not passive subjects being acted upon by a centralized authority; they were also active agents who helped construct their own social system behind barbed wire.

Almost immediately they formed cliques based upon common interests and prior associations. Some of the more prominent groups that vied for influence in the camps included the Cambridge boys, yeshiva students, and the communists, who generally stuck together, when possible, in the division of internees between sleeping huts.<sup>35</sup> The politics of camp life were more than a distraction for internees. Electing a friend to camp spokesman or having a friend run the kitchen meant that one could expect certain privileges or favours to follow.<sup>36</sup> As a result, internees banded together and formed alliances to ensure that certain groups would have more influence on camp life than others. For example, Rabbi Emil Fackenheim was approached by a group of communists who asked him to become president of the camp university. Apparently, the Nazis, still in camp at that time, told authorities that the communists were running the university. Having communists in a position of authority was seen as undesirable by guards who lived through Canada's Red Scare, so they decided to place one of the Nazis in charge instead. The communists told Rabbi Fackenheim that the only way to prevent this was for him to intervene and become president as a neutral third option. He agreed. Several days later, Rabbi Fackenheim was approached by a student who was supposedly taking a course in mathematics; in practice he was being taught Marxism. In his own words, Fackenheim had "been had by the

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<sup>34</sup> Harry Loewy, "Loewy, Harry-Memoirs WWII, Internment Camp. 'Days Behind the Wire'," CJCCCA, CJC ZB, 165.

<sup>35</sup> "Kalman, Helmut: List of internees in different camps, n.d.," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Harry Loewy, "Loewy, Harry-Memoirs WWII, Internment Camp. 'Days Behind the Wire'," CJCCCA, CJC ZB, 185-86.

Communists" and he stepped down as president.<sup>37</sup> The formation of cliques could be seen as a method of survival, if only psychological, in internment, but they also reflected the vying interests of different social groups from beyond the barbed wire.

The internees did not need to wait on authorities to police their behaviours. As chapter three described using the case of sexual behaviours, the internees practiced self-policing to ensure the maintenance of middle-class morality. Formally, this took shape as a Court of Honour where seven internees of a certain respectability—Rabbis, Doctors, Cambridge students—were appointed judges.<sup>38</sup> In one instance, when internee gambling became out of control, the court sentenced the offender to donate several dollars to charity—a hefty fine when internment work paid 20 cents per day.<sup>39</sup> We see similar courts of conduct in other male segregated environments where men hold one another accountable for their behaviours that have little to do with the formal maintenance of their living situation. In the case of criminal prisons, prisoner solidarity or prison culture originates in society; deprivation alone does not unify prisoners in one resistive force.<sup>40</sup> On the contrary, prisoners react to their imprisonment by drawing on the value system of their nation or community. For the refugees interned in Canada, self-policing drew on liberal attitudes towards respectability and deviance, while competing political and class interests meant that internees did not simply present a united front behind barbed wire, however closely entwined their common fate may have appeared to make them.

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<sup>37</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Dr. Emil Fackenheim, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Harry Loewy, "Loewy, Harry-Memoirs WWII, Internment Camp. 'Days Behind the Wire'," CJCCA, CJC ZB, 236; Letter from Erich Koch to Margaret (Oct. 18th 1941), "Correspondence from Otto Koch to family & friends July-Dec. 1941," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Harry Loewy, "Loewy, Harry-Memoirs WWII, Internment Camp. 'Days Behind the Wire'," CJCCA, CJC ZB, 236.

<sup>40</sup> Gamberg & Thomson, *The Illusion of Prison Reform*, 77-78.

## *Hunger Strikes*

When internees did come together to protest the conditions in camp, they employed one of the oldest forms of claims-making: the hunger strike. Used by protestors and prisoners for centuries, the hunger strike became a political phenomenon in the twentieth-century when activists performed dissent within a specific cultural context.<sup>41</sup> Eating had become a metaphor for compliance and self-starvation for resistance.<sup>42</sup> In Franz Kafka's "A Hunger Artist," the hunger strike becomes a craft or art form that relies on a reciprocal relationship with its spectatorship; as the hunger artist's audience fails to acknowledge his performance, his protest is rendered meaningless.<sup>43</sup> It is the power of the gaze that makes the strike evocative rather than the food deprivation itself. For the internees, hunger strikes were a way to be seen by Internment Operations for what they were: Jewish refugees. By refusing food at specific moments during their imprisonment, they constructed and claimed a particular identity for themselves rather than accept that which was bestowed upon them by their immediate spectatorship. They sought recognition as civilian actors with basic human rights.

There were two main issues that caused the internees to go on hunger strike, if only briefly, before being coerced back into cooperation. The internment guards, it turns out, were unwilling audience members, and the internees' primary contact with the Canadian public was through Jewish relief agencies who warned them not to rock the boat. First, the accommodations that internees arrived to find at Camp N near Sherbrooke were the worst that they had

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<sup>41</sup> Leith Passmore, "The Art of Hunger: Self Starvation in the Red Army Faction," *German History* 27:1 (Jan. 2009): 32-33.

<sup>42</sup> Maud Ellmann, *The Hunger Artists: Starving, Writing, and Imprisonment* (Harvard University Press, 1993).

<sup>43</sup> Franz Kafka, "A Hunger Artist," originally published as "Ein Hungerkünstler" in *Die neue Rundschau* (1922).

encountered since arriving to Canada. This came as a particular shock after the commandant of the temporary camp Cove Fields told the departing internees that they were being moved to a permanent camp with better living conditions. The second instance, though less formally organized, involved the orthodox group in Camp B, Fredericton, and their refusal to eat the non-Kosher food provided by Internment Operations.

Over 700 internees arrived at Camp N on October 15th 1940 during a rain storm.<sup>44</sup> After being told their new camp would be better than the barracks at Cove Fields, the internees were shocked to discover that a former locomotive repair shed would be their new accommodations. Given its former purpose, there were still large pits in the ground for use by mechanics which, left uncovered, proved a dangerous hazard. The roof leaked so that the internees' living space was further limited by which spots on the ground were dry and the least muddy.<sup>45</sup> Immediately the internees refused to cooperate with their new commandant's orders to make the camp more hospitable by cleaning it up. When the new camp spokesman, appointed this time by authorities, instructed the internees to go eat, they booed him in a united chorus.<sup>46</sup> In a spontaneous act of defiance in the unexpected face of such deplorable living conditions, the internees refused to eat that night. Their claim had to do with their formal recognition as POWs second class rather than as genuine refugees; as long as their status remained the same, they would continue to slip between the cracks of the Geneva Convention and the Red Cross.

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<sup>44</sup> "Oct. 1940: No. 42 Internment Camp, Oct. 1940-Sept. 1941," War Diary, LAC, RG24-C3 15399, 2284.

<sup>45</sup> "Inspection Report," Major C.T. Good, Canadian Provost Corps (Oct. 22nd 1940), "Treatment of Enemy Aliens - Camp N, Newington, Quebec (Sherbrooke), 1940-1947," LAC, RG24-C-1, file 7236-32, microfilm C-5379.

<sup>46</sup> "Bornemann: Report on the trip to Canada & reports on arrivals at the different camps, n/d/, as well as a list of regulations to outgoing mail, 1940," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

The following day the internees decided that if they were not moved to a different camp, they would refuse to volunteer for work since internee labour carried greater currency with camp authorities than refusing to eat did. The commandant's response was immediate and his threats far reaching. In addition to cutting off heating, electricity, and food, the commandant warned that he would tell Internment Operations that he was sent the wrong internees and have groups of them transferred to Nazi POW camps. One Jr. Officer from among the camp staff tried to smooth things over by promising to use his connections to bring Saul Hayes, the Secretary of the Jewish Refugee and War Relief Agencies, to camp to speak with them. He cautioned, however, that "by refusing to cooperate, we would forfeit our chances of settlement in Canada and that, in an anti-Semitic country, we would do the Jewish cause great harm."<sup>47</sup>

The Officer's threat was certainly not baseless as the Jewish community in Fredericton made clear over the issue of providing the orthodox internees with Kosher meat. Before camps were redistributed following the formal change in status in July 1941, there were approximately 160 orthodox Jews at Camp B requiring Kosher food.<sup>48</sup> The group refused to eat the meat rationed to them less out of deliberate protest and more out of observance of their orthodoxy. Eventually, Internment Operations secured tin cans of salmon as a temporary substitute, but Major Kippen, commandant of Camp I at the time, suggested that if the internees wanted Kosher meat, it could be supplied by a public organization.<sup>49</sup> Accordingly, Rabbi Krauss, leader of

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Draper, "The Accidental Immigrants: Canada and the Interned Refugees," (PhD diss. University of Toronto, 1983), 261.

<sup>49</sup> "Visit to Camp I," (August. 14th, 1940), "Internment Camp, 1940-41," CJC CENT CA, Vol.16, file 125 A; Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Gustav Bauer, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

Fredericton's Jewish community, went about securing the supply of Kosher food to camp B, but he was met with opposition from his own congregation:

You know from before that I had difficulties with the leaders of my community regarding the Kosher slaughtering and the preparation of Kosher meat for the internees in Camp "B", but somehow I managed it. I am sorry to say, however, that it cannot go on forever. It is a question of my job. I therefore ask you to come down for this week-end and try to settle the matter. Otherwise, I am afraid I will not be able to furnish them with the Kosher meat.<sup>50</sup>

The leaders of Fredericton's Jewish community discouraged Rabbi Krauss from attending to the needs of the orthodox internees because they worried that it would be frowned upon by the government. Not wanting to risk their own precarious position in Canada, the community hesitated to come to the aid of foreign Jews. For the internees, then, the risk of ruining their chance at Canadian immigration or tarring the reputation of Jews more broadly was a serious threat that often quelled their protests.

When asked about the Kosher hunger strike years later, Major Kippen recalled that it was not actually about the food, but about their loss of freedom: "I don't know what it is. I think that's the spirit of mankind, that they don't like being caged in..."<sup>51</sup> The joint issues of appalling living conditions and lack of accommodations for the orthodox group were about meeting the material needs of the internees at the time. But Major Kippen was also right to suggest that it represented much more than that. Both causes gave the internees opportunity to make a claim about their identities and, following, a claim about liberty and justice. That the hunger strikes were not formally orchestrated as a political protest lasting days on end matters little. Striking was a performative tool that internees attempted to wield on multiple occasions in order to be seen. As

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<sup>50</sup> Rabbi Krauss quoted in Jewish Community Council of Montreal, Inc. (February 3rd, 1941), CJCCA CENT CA, Vol.16, file 125B.

<sup>51</sup> Interviews by Harry Rasky, 1980: Col. Eric Kippen, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

the responses of Internment Operations and the Fredericton Jewish community demonstrate, the internees had misjudged their audience and, as in Kafka's "A Hunger Artist," without their gaze, the hunger strike was rendered meaningless in its immediate aims. Instead, internees had to turn to more subtle forms of resistance in order to register the same general grievances and commentary on internment life while not jeopardizing the fate of Jews in Canada.

### *Humour*

Some internees thought methodically about how to best cope with the mental anguish of internment that Rabbi Erwin Schild attributed to their ironic classification as Nazi spies.<sup>52</sup> As chapters one and two highlighted, many tried to keep busy by participating in activities available in camp from work to recreation. As helpful as those distractions may have been, internees' internal worlds still needed tending to in order to maintain some semblance of normalcy behind barbed wire. Those who did not develop a psychological coping strategy risked suffering a mental breakdown in camp and post-traumatic stress following their release.<sup>53</sup> As a whole, the refugees turned to humour as a means to make sense of their fate as it unfolded in Canada in unexpected and novel ways.<sup>54</sup> This general attitude that their internment could be read as funny

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<sup>52</sup> Erwin Schild, "Morale" VHEC exhibit "'Enemy Aliens': The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-43," [http://www.enemyaliens.ca/les\\_gars\\_des\\_camps-camp\\_boys/la\\_moralite-morale/video-eng.html](http://www.enemyaliens.ca/les_gars_des_camps-camp_boys/la_moralite-morale/video-eng.html). Interviews by Harry Rasky: Gerry Waldston, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 3.

<sup>53</sup> W Braun to Erich Koch (April 14th 1979), "Correspondence between Koch & former internees 1979-1980 (A-F)," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

<sup>54</sup> Over the past two decades there has been an impetus to study humour in the Holocaust as a coping mechanism and form of resistance. Fictional works, most famously the film *Life is Beautiful*, have helped to break the ice on the sensitive subject, but now humour is being explored by scholars as a way to delineate the Holocaust. Chaya Ostrower, *It Kept Us Alive: Humor in the Holocaust*, trans. Sandy Bloom (Jerusalem : Yad Vashem, 2014); John Moreall, "Humor in the Holocaust: Its Critical, Cohesive and Coping Functions," presented at the 1997 Annual

was embodied in their camp newsletters that mocked the guards and Internment Operations through satire and, when necessary, pseudonyms.<sup>55</sup> Consequently, humour was a coping mechanism that was also a form of resistance because it allowed the internees to criticize the Canadian government in a way that would not jeopardize their, or other Jews', future in Canada.

Drawing cartoons depicting political themes was certainly not unique to Canadian internment, but rather, reflected the trajectory of the growing comic book industry led in the United States during the 1930s and 1940s by Jewish Americans.<sup>56</sup> Their criticisms of Hitler, in particular, reverberated throughout internment and refugee camps in Europe and North America where victims used cartoons to comment on the injustices of their displacement. Horst Rosenthal, for example, was interned in Gurs concentration camp in France near the Pyrenees mountains when he drew his twelve page comic book "Mickey Mouse in Gurs."<sup>57</sup> Using the familiar Disney character as his protagonist, Rosenthal portrayed daily life in the camp through the mouse's childlike anecdotes. The cartoon images combined with the simplistic text juxtaposed the harsh reality of the camp, making its underlying criticisms all the more poignant. Using the comic book form to describe and criticize Nazism and the Holocaust was popularized

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Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches, *Hearing The Voices: Teaching the Holocaust to future Generations*. <http://www.holocaust-trc.org/humor-in-the-holocaust/> (accessed May 20th, 2016); Steve Lipman, *Laughter in Hell: The Use of Humor during the Holocaust* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1991); Slavoj Zizek, "Laugh Yourself to Death: The New Wave of Holocaust Comedies!" (Lunds Universitet, December 15, 1999), <http://www.lacan.com/zizekholocaust.htm> (accessed May 20th, 2016).

<sup>55</sup> Werner Buchholz to Erich Koch, "Correspondence between Koch & former internees 1979-1980 (A-F)," LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 1.

<sup>56</sup> Jean-Paul Gabilliet, *Of Comics and Men: A Cultural History of American Comic Books*, Translated by Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen (University Press of Mississippi, 2009). Michael Chabon, *The Amazing Adventures of Cavalier and Clay* (New York City: Random House, 2000).

<sup>57</sup> Pnina Rosenberg, "Mickey Mouse in Gurs—Humour, Irony and Criticism in Works of Art Produced in the Gurs Internment Camp," *Rethinking History* 6:3 (Nov. 2002): 273-292.

in the postwar decades by the likes of Art Spiegelman, but it was also common in those internment camps which allowed its prisoners greater freedoms such as access to art supplies.<sup>58</sup>

In camps Sherbrooke and Fredericton, Gerry Waldston used humour to lift the spirits of fellow internees by posting a "Joke of the Week" cartoon on communal bulletin boards. These comics often depicted the modern interactions between young men and women through the portrayal of "the new woman" as sexually liberated and provocative.<sup>59</sup> The images reflect a young man's fantasy world in a camp without women, but they also make an unspoken claim about the 'natural' dominance of men over women by drawing the women's power as a source of laughter.<sup>60</sup> These images, which saw control over women's bodies as a source of male power, were dramatically different from those that spoke more intentionally to the injustice of their internment and the loss of power to direct the course of their own lives. These images were not posted to lift the spirits of the internees, but to convey disappointment in the Allies and disenchantment with democracy more broadly.

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<sup>58</sup> Art Spiegelman, *Maus* (New York City: Pantheon Books, 1991).

<sup>59</sup> Gerry Waldston's private collection. Interview April 27th 2015 (Toronto).

<sup>60</sup> Corinna Peniston-Bird & Penny Summerfield, "'Hey, You're Dead!': The Multiple Uses of Humour in Representations of British National Defence in the Second World War," *Journal of European Studies* (2001): 413+. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 20 May 2016; David Keane, "Cartoon Violence and Freedom of Expression," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 30 (2008): 845-875; Giseline Kuipers, "The Politics of Humour in the Public Sphere: Cartoons, Power and Modernity in the First Transnational Humour Scandal," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 14:1 (Feb. 2011): 63-80.



Figure 4.2 Untitled, "Behind Barbed Wire" Scrapbook, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 2

One of these cartoons depicts the same internee being detained first by the German SS and then by the British army (figure 4.2). The intended comparison between the two is obvious and would have been disheartening for the refugees who thought that they were free in Great Britain. The two scenarios are composed as mirror images of one another so that the uniform of the detaining men is the only thing that differentiates between them. For the Jewish refugees, the line between 'good' and 'evil', dictatorship and democracy became blurred when they were wrongfully incarcerated. Although their situation in Canada was better than most of the alternatives in continental Europe, their collective image of the Allies as the would-be saviours of Jewish Europe was tainted.

Another cartoon represents one of the earliest release schemes made available to internees (figure 4.3). Once Britain realized the mistake it had made in detaining class B and C Enemy Aliens, it offered to accept the returned releasees under the condition that they join the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps (AMPC). The AMPC was a non-combatant military corps that was often sent to the frontlines of war to assist with construction and other engineering work. When war broke out, it was the only military service option available to enemy aliens and, because members of the corps went to war unarmed, it became known among the internees as a death sentence.

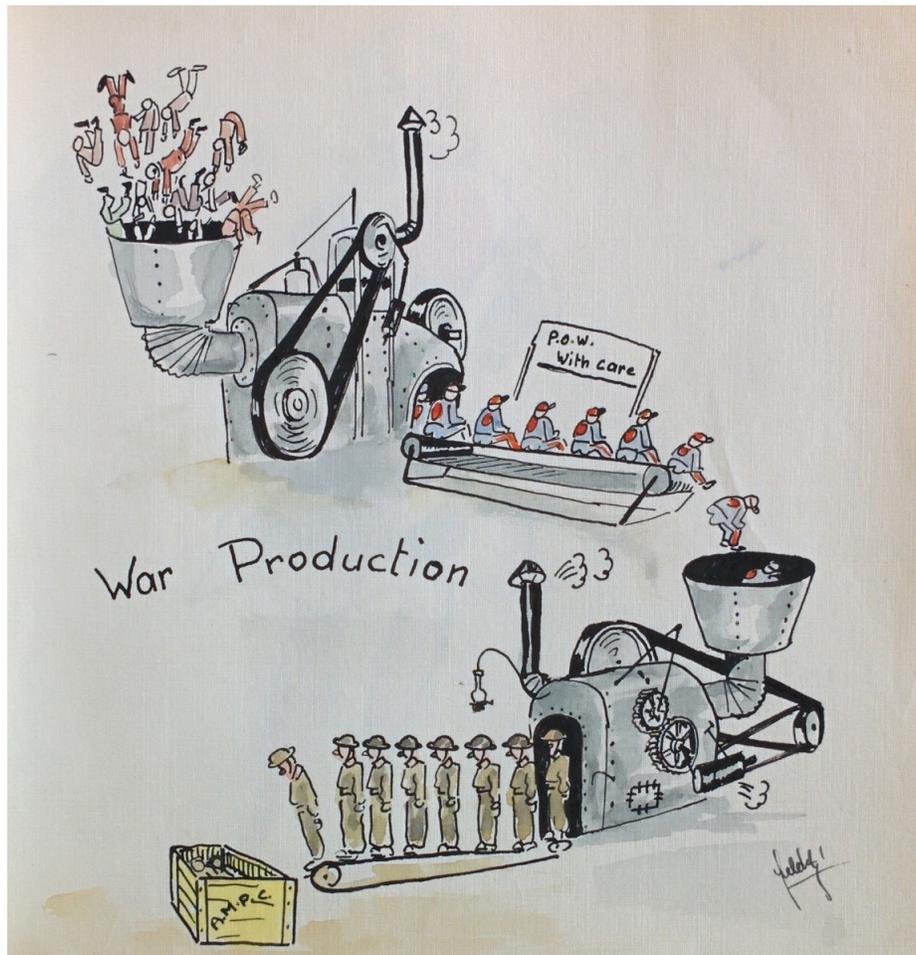


Figure 4.3 "War Production" by R. Feldstein, "Behind Barbed Wire" Scrapbook, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 2.

In his telling portrayal of this option made available to the internees in Canada in the late summer of 1940, the artist Feldstein captures the mechanization of modern warfare. The refugees are caught up in a system larger than themselves which turns them into POWs before offering them their "freedom" once more, but this time as members of the AMPC. As the internees move through this unjust process, their faces are hidden from the viewer by the uniforms they don and the anonymity that being part of a large group provides. Their individual identities are lost as they are advanced ever closer by the mechanisms of war to their own mass coffin. The commentary offered by "War Production" is specific to the internees' inability to direct the course of their lives, particularly the way that many of them would have preferred to mobilize against Nazi Germany, and it also speaks to the universal experience of modern warfare as dehumanizing and, ultimately, senseless. This is particularly poignant under the looming cloud of the Holocaust, which would take industrialized killing to unprecedented lengths.

The final example of cartoons as a form of resistance is much more comedic than the previous two. Figure 4.4 illustrates the internees' collective will to defeat the Nazis and implies their frustration that internment has prevented them from making a more concerted effort in the war. Outside of camp, a well-dressed internee kicks three Nazis from behind, sending them scurrying in shock and defeat. In this fantasy, the liberated Jew is the hero who chases the Nazis out of Europe. The exaggerated features and movement of the Nazis emphasize the painting's comedic effect, while the internee's brown suit shows that he is an everyday man turned hero, not unlike Superman's Clark Kent. Certainly, the simple plot that the image portrays would have been familiar to readers of Marvel and DC Comics who, at that time, were predominantly boys

and young men imagining themselves as war heroes. Internment prevented the refugees from having a part in that story, in which, arguably, their lives were in the gravest danger.

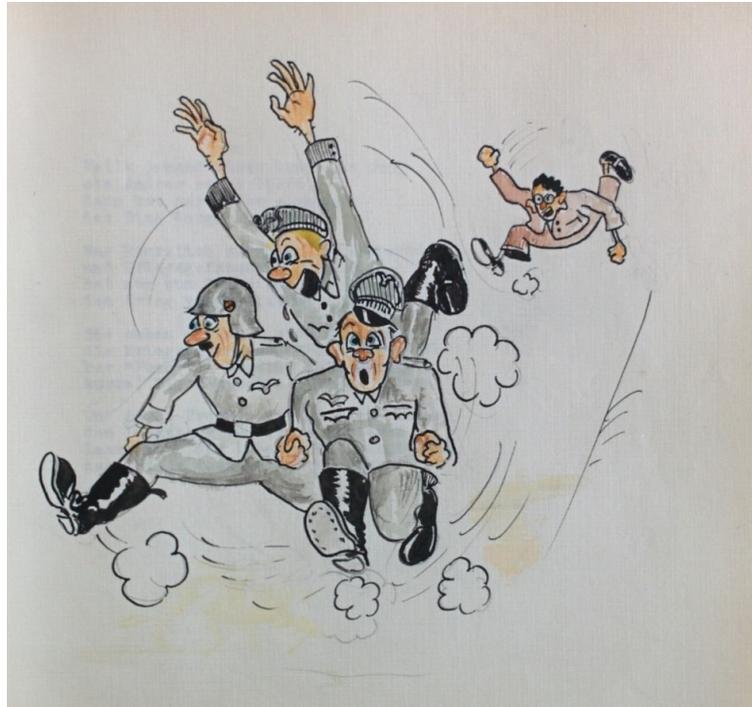


Figure 4.4 Untitled, "Behind Barbed Wire" Scrapbook, LAC, MG30 c192 Vol. 2

Cartoons produced during internment could be an uplifting, though never benign, source for internees who needed a distraction from the depressing reality of their situation. However, as the above instances show, cartoons were also a specific device employed in and outside of internment camps to voice criticisms of those in power. The Jewish internees were frequently silenced in their protests by anti-semitic guards who made the stakes of dissent all the higher. Turning to artistic representations gave the internees more freedom to voice their objections precisely because the cartoon was a popular form of political satire that, in the eyes of most, reduced complicated themes to simple, non-threatening caricatures. One camp artist, Oscar Cahén, was even released early thanks to his talents to work for the National Film Board drawing

anti-Nazi cartoons.<sup>61</sup> Self-expression, however it is received by others, is an important form of resistance when all other liberties have been suspended. What may have appeared to the guards as benign cartoons were actually acts of defiance.

### *Handicrafts and the Curated Self*

In addition to the many paintings and drawings produced in camp, internees also created artefacts of internment with camp issue materials or nature's scraps. Among the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's dossier of interment texts and illustrations is a curious photograph of an exhibition of internee handicrafts organized by the artists themselves (figure 4.5). In this unusual act of self-curation during imprisonment, internees carefully considered how they wanted to present themselves to the public through their material culture. The accompanying exhibition sign communicates two key messages: "We Work" and "Refugees from Nazi Oppression Transferred from England Interned in Canada." The former is a claim of self-worth and productive value while the latter is a reclamation of their identity muddled by the bureaucracy of wartime Britain and anti-semitic Canada. As a form of claims-making, producing and exhibiting handicrafts was about much more than satiating the boredom brought on by an indefinite internment sentence.<sup>62</sup> The Warsaw Ghetto Oyneg Shabes—Ringelblum Archive represents a similar act of self-curation through extraordinary circumstances. Under the direction of historian Emanuel Ringelblum, members of the Oyneg Shabes organization gathered

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<sup>61</sup> "War," Oscar Cahén Archives, <http://www.oscarcahen.com/#!/war/c1nst>.

<sup>62</sup> Gillian Carr, "Engraving and Embroidering Emotions upon the Material Culture of Internment," *Archaeologies of Internment*, ed. Adrian Myers and Gabriel Moshenska (New York: Springer-Verlag, 2011), 129-145.

over 35,000 pages of testimony from Polish Jews between 1940 and 1943, documenting their fate under Nazism.<sup>63</sup> Using historical scholarship, they collected and preserved evidence of Jewish life to resist Nazi oppression in the face of their own destruction. For the internees in Canada, materiality was a key expression of intellectual freedom in the face of physical confinement, which reflected their evolving concepts of selfhood. The VHEC's inclusion of a photograph of the exhibition in their own online exhibit tangibly embodies the layering of memories over time; how the history of the refugees' internment would be curated was set in motion by the internees themselves whose future depended on the politics of being seen.



Figure 4.5 "Camp Boys/Arts," "'Enemy Aliens': The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-1943," VHEC via Eric Koch / Library and Archives Canada / PA-188345

The production of handicrafts in prison has a long history that is connected to the exploitation of prisoner labour. Consistent with the emerging capitalist system of measuring

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<sup>63</sup> Samuel Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History: Emanuel Ringelblum and the Oyneg Shabes Archive*, (Indiana University Press, 2007).

individual value through productive value, prisoners were expected to produce handicraft work for profit.<sup>64</sup> Initially confined to their individual cells, gradually collective workshops were introduced to make the mass production of goods more efficient. When Canada's first penitentiary opened in 1835, it followed this American-European model of artisanal labour with local craftsmen weighing in on the type of labour that should be performed to stem too much direct competition.<sup>65</sup> The legacies of this prison model are visible in the photographs of interment, where internees could pass as artisans in their own workshops, crafting ski boots and woolen sweaters.<sup>66</sup> This is how Internment Operations wanted the internees to be seen—performing 'productive' labour for the war effort. To an extent, this is also how the internees wanted to be seen—capable of making a valuable contribution to Canada. However, the handicrafts that the internees produced in their spare time, outside of the Works Programme, can be read as acts of defiance rather than compliance because they helped shift the direction of their collective narrative away from official channels that manipulated and concealed the internees' true identities. In the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's exhibit, we see the theme of art as resistance fall from purview in favour of a more easily digestible understanding of their work as a welcomed distraction from the monotony of daily camp life and the horrors of Nazi occupied Europe.

The range of handicrafts produced was as extensive as the materials that could be scrounged and repurposed. Internees were very creative in their use of camp issue materials;

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<sup>64</sup> Gamberg and Thomson, *The Illusion of Prison Reform*, 16-17.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> For example, see "Internee working at handloom, description with photograph, 'A Handloom, below, used in the manufacture of fine woolen sweaters. This merchandise originally came from Vienna and was sold to the Canadian public at very high prices. Local production will lower costs considerably.' [graphic material] – c1940-1943." Boukind Family Fonds, Jewish Public Library Archives, 1062; 017676.

given their limited resources, everything from ballpoint pens to burnt out fuses could be refashioned into a handicraft. Boredom did threaten some internees' mental health, but creating new objects from camp materials also gave them a connection to materiality that was all but lost when their suitcases from home were either misplaced or, more likely, picked over by guards upon their arrival in Canada.<sup>67</sup> Having lost their physical connections to home, their relationship with new belongings was emotionally heightened. Rather than depict their feelings of dislocation, powerlessness, and emotional deprivation, which was often visible in their illustrations, their handicrafts countered this conflict related imagery.<sup>68</sup> Instead they crafted intricate wood carvings, jewellery, decorative boxes, and games to name but a few examples. Producing something aesthetically pleasing from the materials of camp life was undoubtedly a coping mechanism and an important commentary on the lives of objects.

Turning camp issue material into new, more pleasing craftworks could also be read as a form of resistance. Changing the purpose and function of objects called into question the idea of ownership behind barbed wire. Whereas internment regulated the internees' bodily practices and their movements through camp space, taking ownership of camp materials was a way to reclaim agency. Redefining the materials as objects unnecessary to the daily function of camp life reflected their desire to be seen as allies in the war against Nazi Germany rather than as spies of the same totalitarian regime. In other words, their handicrafts were a metaphor for the futility of their internment and the possibilities that their release would bring. Practically, this was carried

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<sup>67</sup> "Report on Alleged Theft of Personal Effects (German Aliens) Internment Camp "L" Quebec," "Treatment of Enemy Aliens-Accommodation Cove Fields 1940-42," LAC, RG24-C-1, file 236-9, microfilm C-5377.

<sup>68</sup> Joanna Brück, "'A Good Irishman Should Blush Every Time He Sees a Penny': Gender, Nationalism, and Memory in Irish Internment Camp Craftwork, 1916-1923," *Journal of Material Culture* 20:2 (June 2015): 151.

out in the transmission of handicrafts from internees to guards or members of the public as gifts or commissioned pieces.

Whereas the VHEC tells the visual story of internment through illustrations and a few sparse material objects donated by former internees or their descendants, the New Brunswick Internment Camp Museum's collection of artifacts shifts the narrative's focus to the objects' recipients. The New Brunswick Museum began as a project by one high school history teacher to help his at risk students learn through more creative ways of producing and sharing knowledge. In addition to building a model of Camp B, the students visited the site of the former camp to conduct an archeological dig, which produced objects of internment such as eating utensils and pots. As the teacher's collection became more well known, locals who had been guards at the camp, or their descendants, began to donate their own objects of internment necessitating the creation of the museum to house and display them. As a result, the N.B. Museum is founded upon a loose curation strategy of collecting and exhibiting material culture with little interference from a grand narrative of passivity, survival, or resistance. However, the plethora of objects acquired via former guards or members of the public who also worked within the parameters of Internment Operations speaks to the regularity of gifting during internment.



Figure 4.6 "Wooden Dice" loaned by Florence London to the New Brunswick Internment Camp Museum, 2008, <http://www.nbinternmentcampmuseum.ca/gallery.php>

One internee constructed a large pair of dice from scrap wood and old fuses for David Middleton, a camp guard. The dots of each die are made from fuses that have been inlaid with images of the guard's family. Evidently, some friendly exchanges would have taken place between internee and guard in the construction of this gift in order for the internee to acquire the photographs and for the guard to be willing to share them with one of his charges. The exchange of material goods helped break down the barriers between those with authority and those who supposedly lacked agency in a way that disarmed the guards. By befriending the guards, the internees upset the camp hierarchy, established from the top down, and reclaimed their selfhood as allies to the Canadian government. This passive form of resistance appeared so benign to authorities that some actually became collaborators in the process by befriending internees. Eventually, guards began commissioning works of art and requesting specific material objects,

which could also constitute an important part of their war experiences and developing selfhood as members of the Veterans Guard.

When internees gained access to the outside world, often through foremen working in the camps or hospital visits, they bestowed gifts on the members of public that they encountered. The gesture helped quell rumours that the internees were Nazi spies and dispel any clout of mystery enveloping the camp. For example, the General Foreman at the Acadia Forestry Station during WWII, Earnest Roy Jones, received a carving of a native from an internee, emblematic, no doubt, of the wilderness surrounding Camp B that internees often treated with awe (figure 4.7). A nurse at Fredericton's Old Victoria Hospital, Jacqueline Evert, received a personalized jewellery box from an internee as thanks for the care and kindness she provided during his hospitalization (figure 4.8). Reaching out to the public, when possible, counterbalanced anti-semitic threats from the guards who wielded them as a form of control to direct internee behaviour. By revealing their humanity, internees could hope that the guards' suggestion that Canada would be hostile to them could be fought with kindness and gratitude. It became a deliberate coping mechanism and strategy for release. In contrast, fewer such opportunities existed for those in Nazi camps. As the vast literature on Holocaust bystanders and perpetrators makes clear, fraternizing between prisoners and the SS or the local population was forbidden and could result in much more dire consequences.<sup>69</sup> In Canadian facilities, as we saw in chapter three

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<sup>69</sup> The literature also makes clear that the categories "victim," "bystander," "perpetrator," and "rescuer" are not always easy to delineate. Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945* (New York: HarpersCollins, 1992); Victoria Barnett, *Bystanders: Conscience and Complicity during the Holocaust* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999); Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Penguin Books, 2002); Saul Friedlander, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945* (Harper Perennial, 2008); Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, the Germans, and the Final Solution* (New Haven, CT. and London: Yale University Press, 2008); Mary Fullbrook, *A Small Town Near Auschwitz: Ordinary Nazis and the Holocaust* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012).

with the case of Peter and Blondie, a guard could even act as matchmaker between internee and schoolgirl. The Jewish internees were afforded more opportunities to express their selfhoods in Canada and thereby change, so they hoped, the public's discriminatory perception of Jews.

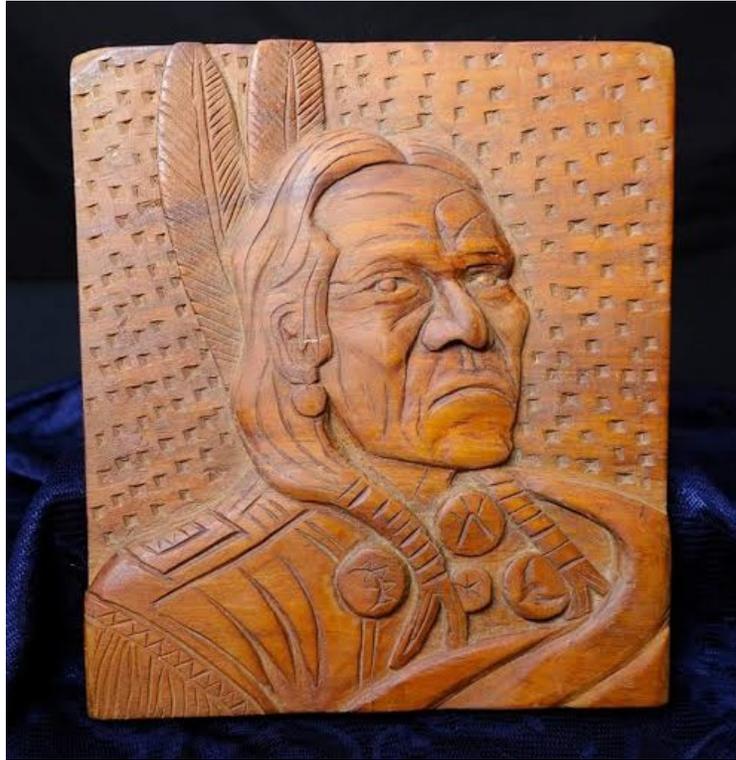


Figure 4.7 "Wooden Indian Head Relief," Donated by Alden and Roy Jones to the New Brunswick Internment Camp Museum, 2006, <http://www.nbinternmentcampmuseum.ca/gallery.php>



Figure 4.8 "Jewelry Box," Donated by Don Steen to the New Brunswick Internment Camp Museum, <http://www.nbinternmentcampmuseum.ca/gallery.php>

It would be easy to read the material artefacts of internment as visual representations of the life already described by former internees. Yet, the objects that remain have their own stories to tell that shift and augment the collective written narrative. The act of creating handicrafts was undoubtedly therapeutic for internees and a counterbalance to the emotional violence of incarceration. Using camp issue materials was a necessity given their limited resources, but it also served as a claim of agency and ownership that was non-threatening to the authorities who were sometimes recipients of the goods created. The multi-layers of meaning that handicrafts hold grow exponentially when we consider the act of curation as part of the narrative process. Through their own exhibit of handicrafts, the internees demonstrated the politics of visibility; they attempted to shape the public's gaze through their objects in order to be understood as refugees and allies. In other contexts of incarceration, handicrafts also served as a form of claims making, but the stakes were rarely so high as they were for the diasporic Jewish refugees.<sup>70</sup> For them, it seemed as though their fate in the democratic world resided in their ability to effectively communicate their selfhood to Canadians and shift their perception of them. With the launch of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's exhibit and the N.B. Internment Camp Museum's growing collection of artefacts, the process of curating is on-going and imbued with contemporary cultural values. What has been saved, by whom, and to what end stretches the history of internment from 1940, when the refugees were first interned, to the present when donors and curators select objects to display. The handicrafts are not simply relics of the past, but subjects of an incomplete narrative.

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<sup>70</sup> Brück, "'A Good Irishman Should Blush Every Time He Sees a Penny': Gender, Nationalism, and Memory in Irish Internment Camp Craftwork, 1916-1923," 149-172; Melissa Schrift, "Angola Prison Art: Captivity, Creativity, and Consumerism," *The Journal of American Folklore* 119: 473 (July 2006): 257-274; Gillian Carr & H.C. Mytum, *Cultural Heritage and Prisoners of War: Creativity Behind Barbed Wire* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

## *Conclusion*

Uneven power dynamics are built into the structure of modern incarceration. However, within this structure of state authority, there is incredible room for prisoner agency and claims-making. Maintaining control of prisoners has been a mainstay of modern prison reform, but the nineteenth century shift from physical restraint and discipline to surveillance heralded the optics of power. In discussing how power was negotiated between guards and internees, on one level, and how the collective memory of that past has been negotiated between multiple authorities, on another, this chapter has emphasized the importance of being seen to former internees' self-understanding. The sources employed as evidence further reinforce the idea that claiming power is a visual act that necessitates being seen by an attentive audience.

The collective narrative of internment has developed overtime to exclude protest as a central theme. If one defines protest narrowly as a refusal to cooperate with internment authorities, the archives admittedly produce few examples of this. They do, however, indicate why that might be the case. The internment of Jewish refugees did not occur within a vacuum, even though it has been minimized in the context of mass suffering and death during World War II. It is precisely its larger context—the Holocaust, anti-semitic immigration policies, and even modern prison reform—that led internees to downplay their disenchantment with Canada at the time out of fear and to emphasize their gratitude in the intervening years. Consequently, internees registered their protests in less threatening ways, largely through the art of claims-making. Rather than act in an uncooperative manner that could jeopardize their safety, internees found creative ways to resist their internment, namely by re-claiming their identity as allies and

refugees. While this air of community has helped solidify the collective narrative of internment over time, it has done so to the exclusion of internee diversity. Not all internees protested with equal consciousness or desperation because the stakes were not equally shared among them. One's social standing prior to and during internment greatly influenced one's quality of life in camp and upon release despite the ubiquity of anti-semitism as a potential equalizer. The digital transformation of the internment narrative did little to change its overall thrust, particularly when it comes to understanding forms of resistance. However, it has helped us to rethink the production of history as a collaborative process, which has made way for new sources of authority—importantly, the material artefacts of camp life uncovered by a New Brunswick teacher and his students.

## **Conclusion**

### **The Legacy of Jewish Internment**

It was an unusually hot April afternoon when I exited the bus on Bathurst St. to walk to the home of former internee Gerry Waldston, or at least that's how it felt to me as I rushed, flustered, to our meeting which had only been arranged an hour before. When I telephoned Gerry earlier that day, I expected that he might be willing to meet for an interview the following week. Instead, he asked if I could come right now. So when I stood on Bathurst St. an hour later, trying to make sense of my own scribbled handwriting—Gerry had given me walking instructions for a shortcut to his home—and with the battery in my portable audio recorder dead, the sun seemed to swelter.<sup>1</sup>

When I did arrive, Gerry and his wife, Shimona welcomed me into their home with a plate of cookies and a sense of familiarity. I was ushered to a table where Gerry had placed boxes of his artwork, some produced during internment, that I was interested in seeing. It had already been picked over, he explained to me apologetically, by the staff of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre for their exhibit "Enemy Aliens": The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-1943. Seeing what didn't make the narrative cut, I thought to myself, had slowly become the driving impetus of my research; I didn't mind working with what was left. For over two hours, and through the visits of two of his children, we discussed the history of Jewish internment in Canada. I was especially curious to know what he thought the legacy or message of Jewish internment should be as it only now enters public consciousness. His answer surprised me.

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<sup>1</sup> The interview with Gerry Waldston was recorded on my cell phone, using an audio recording app (Toronto, April 27th, 2015).

"It wasn't important," he declared. "It had no meaning. It did not add to the war or detract from it."<sup>2</sup> Though his response initially registered as abrupt and perhaps deflating of my dissertation's relevance, he was reminding me to consider historical context before asking about its legacy. The situation was handled poorly by Canadian authorities, he admitted, "but that's war! In war everything is fair."<sup>3</sup> With the absence of any clear policy for dealing with Jewish refugees who had been interned as enemy aliens, "It was 'let's just get them out of sight, put them away somewhere'..."<sup>4</sup> Whereas former internees have been quick to forgive the Canadian government, at least publically, for its wartime blunder, this dissertation has argued that the internment of Jewish refugees was more than a mistake on the nation's road to multiculturalism. As Gerry alluded, visibility was a powerful tool wielded by the state to help differentiate between 'good' and 'bad' citizenship as Canada's national identity took shape.<sup>5</sup> By making the internees invisible to the public eye through physical separation, they were also moved symbolically to the peripheries of Canadian democracy. The historical context, therefore, was not only war, but the democratic values that made it possible for the Allies to at once oppose Hitler and promote their own brand of anti-semitism at home. The optics of modernity was central to the performance of democracy.

Like other former internees, Gerry went on to trumpet the success of the Jewish refugees in Canada, estimating that 90% of them became well known figures.<sup>6</sup> Although he wasn't part of the Cambridge clique during the internment years, he repeated the oft-heard account of their superior intelligence as a testament to the intellectual character of the internees. In the same

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Gerry Waldston (Toronto, April 27th, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Seyla Benhabib, ed. *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Gerry Waldston (Toronto, April 27th, 2015).

breath, Gerry described living through the FLQ crisis in Montreal in 1970. At the time it seemed to me that his narrative was becoming disjointed, evidence of an aging mind and a life lived across multiple political upheavals, as we drifted further away from my original question regarding legacy. It was only after he mentioned "this Baltimore thing on TV," referring to the protests following the murder of an African American by six police officers in April 2015, and recent terrorist attacks that I could see he was drawing loose connections between his own experience of internment and subsequent cases of group-differentiated citizenship carried out to detrimental ends by the democratic state in his lifetime.<sup>7</sup>

The FLQ October crisis was the only instance in Canadian history when the War Measures Act was invoked during peacetime. In response to the kidnapping and murder of prominent politicians by the separatist paramilitary group, the Front de libération du Québec, Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau enabled police to arrest and detain any suspect without due process. Although the move boasted widespread public support as a necessary response to terrorism, prominent opponents cautioned that the suspension of civil liberties is dangerous; a warning that seemed to come to fruition when authorities abused their power to detain well-known artists and intellectuals who supported sovereignty.<sup>8</sup> The crisis reflected contemporary identity politics and how a real, but localized, threat could be employed by the state to detain undesirable citizens; in this case, those who, for linguistic and cultural reasons, advocated for the independence of Quebec from Canada.

But Gerry didn't just draw connections between Jewish internment and other discriminatory nation-building moments in Canadian history. He cast his net wider to reflect on

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<sup>7</sup> "Three Forms of Group-Differentiated Citizenship in Canada," in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib, 153-170 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

racial and religious discrimination in recent American history. As we discussed the unique circumstances of war that make discriminatory policies such as the War Measures Act possible, and even necessary, news reports from Baltimore broadcasted on Gerry's television in the background. A state of emergency had been declared in the city, a historical centre of racial tension in the United States, as Black Lives Matter protesters marched against systemic police discrimination and violence. In those hectic days, some 487 people were arrested and at least one fifth of those were held for as long as 48 hours without ever being formally charged.<sup>9</sup> A police spokesman justified the sweeping arrests claiming that protecting people's constitutional rights had to be balanced with public safety.<sup>10</sup> It appeared as though the same democratic system that continually fails African Americans was being invoked by the state to protect "white" Americans from "black" protestors, revealing the inequitable foundations of modern democracy.

When Gerry claimed everything in war is fair, he spoke to contemporary tensions in order to show that similar draconian policies would be adopted today in the event of another world war despite the lessons of wartime internment. The largest threat currently testing the limits of democracy is the refugee crisis caused by the Syrian civil war and the racial and religious discrimination those fleeing violence experience in the English-speaking west. As of May 2016, nearly 5 million refugees have registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).<sup>11</sup> Of those, approximately 4,000 have resettled in the United States, 5,000 in the United Kingdom, and 27,000 in Canada—numbers far below even

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<sup>9</sup> Dan Morse and Lynh Bui, "Accurately Charging People Arrested in Baltimore Proves to be Legal Challenge," *The Washington Post* (May 4, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> "Syria Regional Refugee Response Inter-Agency Information Sharing Portal," <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> Last Updated May 18th, 2016. Accessed May 18th, 2016.

those allotted, shamefully low, to Jewish refugees fleeing Nazism after 1933.<sup>12</sup> Gerry explained that 9/11 complicated Americans' relationship with Muslim immigrants and that Islamophobia has not recessed in the years between the terrorist attack and the refugee crisis. In a way, he was speaking to the universal pre-conditions of discriminatory internment that we can identify through the Jewish case in Canada, the FLQ October Crisis, the arrests of black protestors in Baltimore, and temporary refugee camps. A threat to "the" nation, however real or imagined, serves as a pretence for removing those citizens or would-be citizens already deemed "undesirable" by the state (through inequitable treatment) from public visibility. When groups become invisible, they are subject to further marginalization.

It would be easy to conclude from this that history repeats itself and that, as the cliché goes, we are doomed to repeat it. However, it seems as though the lesson Gerry hoped I would glean from his convoluted response to my question was more novel than this. Gerry, who passed away a few months after we sat in his living room chatting enthusiastically and with ease, was a great story-teller and had a knack for making people feel welcome. He understood the power of a narrative and its importance to individual and collective identity. So when he exclaimed that Jewish internment wasn't important and had no meaning, he was, to an extent, right. When it is situated in the grand narrative of WWII, of suffering and loss, Jewish internment in Canada was, to quote former internee Erwin Schild, but "a footnote," an interesting anecdote.<sup>13</sup> But Gerry didn't speak of its legacy in terms of the war; instead he situated internment within the broader history of modern democracy which continues to name and segregate undesirable participants of

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<sup>12</sup> "US State Department Refugee Processing Centre," "Immigration Statistics: Home Office" Gov.uk, Branch, Government of Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Communications. "#WelcomeRefugees: Milestones and key figures" cic.gc.ca For more information on the number of Jewish refugees seeking asylum during the Third Reich in the English-speaking west, see "Refugees," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://www.ushmm.org>

<sup>13</sup> Erwin Schild, "A Canadian Footnote to the Holocaust," *Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal* Vol. 5:1 (Spring 1981):31-44.

the system from "good" citizenry. Jewish internment serves as a relevant case study in the discriminatory processes of democracy and nation-building because its systemic flaws persisted past the supposed 1945 divide. The collective memory of internment has shifted throughout the past seventy years to relate to contemporary political circumstances.

### ***The State of Democracy: Difference and Decline***

The cases Gerry cited beg the question: is internment a necessary, albeit unpleasant, by-product of democracy? Drawing on the early work of Jürgen Habermas, theorists have debated the boundaries and meaning of democracy with no definitive answers.<sup>14</sup> What is clear is that the global trend toward democratization persists while politics of difference and exclusion continue to threaten the Enlightenment ideal of equality and have reached alarming heights in the 2016 American presidential primaries. The two, however, are not incompatible, as we have seen, but are rooted in the same nation-building search for a collective identity which necessitates the creation of difference and then its destruction. Although the Canadian Supreme court identifies the "accommodation of difference [as] the essence of true equality," the case of Jewish internment is indicative of the challenges posed by the modern project in practice.<sup>15</sup> In other words, democracies are not simply vulnerable to threats caused by various forms of difference, as has been argued; they actively work to create and sustain them.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Seyla Benhabib, ed. *Democracy and Difference*; Vincent Ostrom, *The Meaning of Democracy and the Vulnerability of Democracies: A Response to Tocqueville's Challenge* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997); Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds. *The Global Divergence of Democracies* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2001); James Allen, *Democracy in Decline: Steps in the Wrong Direction* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014); Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into A Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

<sup>15</sup> *Andrews v. Law Society of British Columbia* (1989) 10 C.H.R.R. D/5719 (S.C.C.) quoted in Will Kymlicka, "Three Forms of Group-Differentiated Citizenship in Canada," 153.

<sup>16</sup> Ostrom, *The Meaning of Democracy and the Vulnerability of Democracies*, ix.

When Habermas wrote optimistically about the public sphere, he largely ignored its politics of exclusion and the issue of access. The classic bourgeois public sphere was open only to educated land-owning men, excluding most citizens in emerging nation states. In the mid-twentieth century, new media transformed the public sphere, seemingly making it a more accessible and representative forum for political discourse. However, as critics of Habermas have argued, his image of democracy severs political processes from cultural forms of communication that help articulate issues of collective identity.<sup>17</sup> Storytelling, as Thomas King proposed, is an important part of who we are and how we perform our identities. If democracy is to persist as the dominant, and even idealized, form of human governance, then we need to take seriously the stories people tell in order to be seen by the state. In telling their story, the former internees consistently trumpeted their collective success during internment and after release to make a case for their belonging in response to their segregation as different. Consequently, the history of their internment isn't limited to 1940–43; by examining their collective memory, we can situate their otherwise specific, and some might argue insignificant, case into a broader pattern of differing and detaining under the mores of modern democracy.

The collective memory of internment strays in subtle ways from the story told by the archival documents. As a whole, the former internees' memory of internment yields a more positive and understanding view of their detainment than it was experienced at the time. This makes sense as knowledge of the Holocaust became more widespread after their release and the Jewish refugees felt fortunate to be in Canada, however convoluted their journey. It largely explains why similar groups also detained as "enemy aliens" during WWII launched redress campaigns in the 1980s under the global spread of human rights rhetoric when the Jews did not.

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<sup>17</sup> Seyla Benhabib, "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy," 67-94; Iris Marion Young, "Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy," in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 120-136.

Their recollection is also unsurprising given that the voices that have shaped the Jewish internment narrative are those of immigrants, hesitant to criticize their new home in any permanently damaging way. The chapters of this dissertation attempt to bring these differences to light while acknowledging that any neat separation between experience and memory is a false construct. Beginning each chapter with an account of the former internees' collective memory, rather than writing it as a post-script, was a deliberate narrative strategy to reflect the messy process of writing history where archival documents, memories, and the historian's own agenda coalesce.

When Canada agreed to Britain's request to house German and Austrian "enemy aliens," the Director of Internment Operations was given less than two months to prepare for their arrival. The confusion and mishandling of their case shaped the internees' experience of internment in Canada as well the historiography that developed years later, with much focus given to the haphazard policies and the material conditions of internment life.<sup>18</sup> With this work in mind, I turned towards a cultural approach to Jewish internment to understand the ways in which the internment camps, as tools of the state, attempted to mold the internees into "good" men. Chapter one used place to draw connections between the specific case of the Jewish refugees and other male segregated societies to demonstrate that their treatment was part of a pattern of state-level discrimination. Relief and youth camps were established by the state between the two world wars to offer training and work to unemployed men. In practice these camps exploited the men as cheap or free labour while removing them from public sight. Following the Jewish internees'

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<sup>18</sup> Eric Koch, *Deemed Suspect: A Wartime Blunder* (London: Methuen, 1980); Paula Draper, "The Accidental Immigrants: Canada and the Interned Refugees" (PhD diss. University of Toronto, 1983); Paula Draper, "The 'Camp Boys': Interned Refugees from Nazism", in *Enemies Within: Italians and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*, eds. Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, & Angelo Principe (University of Toronto Press, 2000); Walter W. Igerscheimer, *Blatant Injustice: The Story of a Jewish Refugee from Nazi Germany Imprisoned in Britain and Canada during World War II* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).

arrival to some of the same spaces, the interwar camps also served as a mental map for dealing with their specific case.

Chapter two picked up on this theme by showing how Internment Operations attempted to transform the refugees into productive internees, drawing on heteronormative ideas of the male body as inherently violent if not channeled appropriately. Not long after the internees were settled into their permanent camps, work and sports programs were established to promote the state's idea of healthy masculinity. At the same time, work schemes served the dual purpose of providing cheap exploitative labour, not unlike the unemployment camps of the interwar years. However, the state's vision of healthy masculinity as rooted in physical prowess rubbed up against many of the Jewish internees' vision of the same as rooted in their intellectual capacity. This led to disagreements over how the internees could best contribute to the war effort while interned behind barbed wire.

As chapter three argued, expressing their masculine identities was a major source of anxiety and pleasure for the internees. The absence of women and the loss of privacy helped to make their sexual selfhoods of particular importance. Given that they were not part of the Canadian body politic, and therefore outside the realm of the "moral" nation, the guards did little to police the internees' gender and sexual expressions. Instead the internees monitored one another's behaviours and were more likely to police "gay" gender expression than gay sexual acts. The stereotype of Jewish masculinity as effeminate further blurred the lines between sexual binaries that modernity tried to enforce through the trope of morality. Outdoor work and chatting about women gave some of the Jewish refugees opportunity to flex their muscles as heteronormative men while others explored and advanced alternative forms of masculinity.

Together the first three chapters speak to the ways the internees pushed back against the state's normalizing project in subtle, and likely, unintentional ways, largely by simply expressing their identities. However, they also objected to their mistreatment in deliberate ways, though this was made difficult by anti-semitic threats. Rather than turning to rioting, as one might expect, the internees used handicrafts and artwork as a form of claims-making that the state could accept as benign, widening the scope of what resistance looks like.

The optics of modernity functioned to mould citizens in the state's eye. In the name of nation-building, Canada wielded multiple tools to name and shape its population, but none so powerful as modern incarceration. Although the Jewish refugees were not Canadian citizens when they arrived, Internment Operations treated them as ethnically undesirable unemployed immigrants because that was the mental map exploitative labour camps provided in the first half of the century. The politics of sight played a large role in their experience and postwar narrative; while the state differentiated them from its own citizenry, the Jewish refugees pushed back in order to be seen as valuable contributors to the national body. This explains the significance of their collective memory of internment as a continuation of that project and, finally, as evidence of its fulfillment. Therefore, their success story should not be used to trumpet Canada as a multicultural nation, accommodating of difference. It should be situated, instead, in a longer narrative of class and ethnic discrimination to show the troubling foundations of modern democracy.

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**Ethics Clearance Form – New Clearance**

This is to certify that the Carleton University Research Ethics Board has examined the application for ethical clearance. The REB found the research project to meet appropriate ethical standards as outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human*, 2nd edition, and the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research*.

**Date of Clearance:** April 16, 2015

**Researcher:** Christine Whitehouse (Student Research: Ph.D. Student)

**Department:** Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences\History (Department of)

**University:** Carleton University

**Research Supervisor (if applicable):** Prof. Jennifer Evans and Prof. Rhonda Hinthner

**Project Number:** 102798

**Alternate File Number (if applicable):**

**Project Title:** Jewish Refugees in Canadian Internment Camps, 1940-1943 (working title)

**Funder (if applicable):**

**Clearance Expires:** May 31, 2016

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**All researchers are governed by the following conditions:**

**Annual Status Report:** You are required to submit an Annual Status Report to either renew clearance or close the file. Failure to submit the Annual Status Report will result in the immediate suspension of the project. Funded projects will have accounts suspended until the report is submitted and approved.

**Changes to the project:** Any changes to the project must be submitted to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board for approval. All changes must be approved prior to the continuance of the research.

**Adverse events:** Should a participant suffer adversely from their participation in the project you are required to report the matter to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board. You must submit a written record of the event and indicate what steps you have taken to resolve the situation.

**Suspension or termination of clearance:** Failure to conduct the research in accordance with the principles of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 2nd edition and the Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research may result in the suspension or termination of the research project.



**Louise Heslop**

Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Board



**Andy Adler**

Vice-Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Board