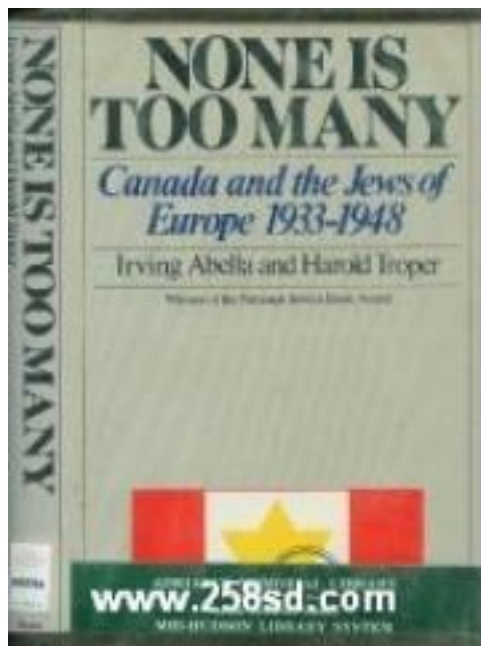


None is too many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948



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It was the name given to the camp barracks where the food, clothes, gold, diamonds, jewellery and other goods taken from prisoners were stored. It represented life, luxury and salvation; it was a Garden of Eden in Hell; it was also unreachable. In effect, the barracks at Auschwitz symbolized what Canada was to all the Jews of Europe throughout the 1930s and 1940s: a paradise, a mouse, a wealthy, overflowing and hill of life, but out of bounds, a haven, totally inaccessible. Why Canada was closed to the Jews of Europe is the subject of this book. It is a story summed up best in the words of

anonymOUS senior Canadian official who—in the midst of a rambling—off-the-record discussion with journalists in early 1945—as asked how many Jews would be allowed into Canada after the War. His response seems to reflect the prevailing view of a substantial number of his fellow citizens: “None” he said—is too many. Canada did not stand alone. Arguments still rage over whether more Jews might have been saved—or for how long rescue was possible. But such debates are futile. Had the democratic world tried to rescue the innocent—and failed—we might today find solace in the nobility of a lost cause—or of a gallant crusade—but there were no rescue attempts. The nations of the world were put to the test and were found wanting—their failure was not a failure of tactics—but of Will—of the human spirit. One fact transcends all others. The Jews of Europe were not so much Raped in a whirlwind of systematic mass murder as they were abandoned to it. The Nazis planned and executed the Holocaust—but it was made possible by art indifference to the suffering of the victims Which sometimes bordered on contempt. Not one nation showed generosity of heart to those who were doomed—not one made the Jewish plight a national priority and not one willingly opened its doors after the War to the surviving remnant of the once thriving Jewish community. Rescue required sanctuary and there was none. There can be no sadder irony in these events than that the democracies proved no more generous—and perhaps even more niggardly—in providing asylum than autocratic states. In countries where the voters could exact revenge on governments which initiated unpopular programs—political leaders carefully monitored the public mood. Nowhere was public sentiment

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