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**FROM FATHER TO SON: CANADIAN JEWRY'S
RESPONSE TO THE ALBERTA SOCIAL CREDIT
PARTY AND THE REFORM PARTY OF CANADA**

This article examines the response of the Canadian Jewish Congress to the anti-Semitic propaganda within the Social Credit movement in Alberta under Ernest Manning in the 1940s, and its response to the Reform Party of Canada's right-wing agenda and incidents of intolerance under his son, Preston Manning, in the 1990s. The article discusses how the national representative organization for Canadian Jewry evolved and matured in the postwar period so that its passive, ineffective approach to Social Credit's intolerance was replaced by an unequivocal and public questioning of the Reform Party's agenda. It argues that Preston Manning learned from his father's errors regarding anti-Semitism within populist parties, and resolved that his party would not fall prey to such intolerance. Similarly, the Canadian Jewish Congress was determined to confront the Reform Party in a manner which it had been unable to muster against Social Credit in the 1940s.

THE FATHER

In 1935, the Social Credit movement under William Aberhart won the Alberta provincial election in an unprecedented landslide. It took thirty-six years for Social Credit to be

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bested, when Peter Lougheed's Conservatives swept the polls in 1971. Newly-discovered archival evidence has revealed that before, during, and following the Second World War, the Alberta Social Credit party and government and the national Social Credit party engaged in an extensive and prolonged anti-Semitic propaganda campaign. This anti-Semitic propaganda, originally expounded by Social Credit's Scottish founder, Major C.H. Douglas, was based on the theory that an international, Jewish financial conspiracy was attempting to take over the world. The nature of the propaganda, although purely rhetorical and mostly confined to attacking the "shadowy" international Jewish financier, nonetheless greatly concerned the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), the national representative organization for Canadian Jewry. The CJC, newly re-organized in 1933 to meet the rising tide of anti-Semitism in Canada and Europe, was poorly-equipped to confront Social Credit's anti-Semitic propaganda. For years the CJC conducted anti-defamation work, goodwill educational campaigns, public appeals against race hatred, and even direct confrontation of Social Credit politicians, in an attempt to persuade Social Credit to abandon its anti-Semitic campaign. Its efforts often were met with failure and at times negative repercussions — for several reasons. First, there was little public or political support for Jewish and other minority groups at the time; second, there were fewer legal remedies available then to combat group libel and defamation; third, Social Credit leaders, when confronted by the CJC about their anti-Semitic propaganda, refused to deal with the CJC in good faith; and finally, the CJC lacked a strong, concerted public relations policy which could effectively confront and eliminate such anti-Semitic attacks. A few selected examples of the response of the CJC to Social Credit's anti-Semitic propaganda will reveal the difficult nature of both the problem and the attempted solution.¹

One of the biggest disseminators of anti-Semitism in the Social Credit movement was the party organ, *Today and Tomorrow* (renamed the *Canadian Social Crediter* in 1944). Its

main purpose was to inform readers about the international Jewish financial conspiracy. It argued that international finance was comprised of a small group of men, mostly of Jewish origin, which operated behind the scenes to manipulate the world money system in order to establish a world slave state under its control. The conspiracy was responsible for any adverse international event, including the world-wide Depression of the 1930s, the totalitarianism of Germany and Russia, the Second World War, and the socialism within European and North American democracies. The paper's most common strategy was to openly declare that the conspiracy was international and financial but imply or only occasionally state that it was Jewish. Most of the articles in *Today and Tomorrow* were written by the paper's editorial board, led by John Patrick Gillese, and by Social Credit politicians. Many articles quoted *verbatim* from Social Credit politicians' public speeches.

Leaders within the CJC had been reading *Today and Tomorrow* since 1935 and viewed it with growing alarm. By 1942, two CJC officials in Alberta, L.M. Fradkin of Calgary and H.A. Friedman of Edmonton, believed that the anti-Semitism displayed in the party organ, if allowed to go unchecked, "may develop into something serious to the Jewish people of Alberta and Canada."² Accordingly, they arranged for a CJC official from Winnipeg, Rabbi Solomon Frank, to approach Premier Aberhart, confront him with the fact that his party organ contained anti-Semitism, and hopefully persuade him to bring *Today and Tomorrow* in line. The meeting took place in early 1942 while Aberhart was attending a Social Credit conference in Winnipeg. During the course of their meeting, Aberhart gave Rabbi Frank the following assurances:

1. That anti-semitism and racial hatred of any kind are entirely foreign to [Aberhart's] own philosophy of life.
2. That [Aberhart] deprecated most strongly any anti-Semitic tendencies on the part of members

of his party. Furthermore that he had taken it upon himself ... to express himself in accordance with this thought to those of his party who were guilty of anti-semitic statements. Though he would want his party to be clear from any racial or religious biases of any kind, he of course could not be held responsible for isolated utterances, particularly when these ran counter to his way of thinking.

3. That if, in spite of [Aberhart's] repeated warnings to the contrary, these anti-semitic utterances on the part of his membership were to continue, he would take whatever steps he possibly could in order to definitely squelch any anti-semitic tendency.

Rabbi Frank noted that Aberhart “seemed sincerely upset by the actions of those within his party that would seek to connect him with anything of an anti-semitic character.” Although Aberhart did not ask that their conversation be kept confidential, the rabbi felt that any statement made by a man in public office must be treated with a certain degree of confidence. Accordingly, he insisted that Aberhart’s statements not be publicized.³

It is interesting that Aberhart did not dispute that some Social Credit politicians were spouting anti-Semitism. Rather, he adopted a tone of apology and even personal injury that members of his movement were engaging in such destructive actions. This stance was significant because it would not be continued after Aberhart’s death. After 1943, Social Credit’s anti-Semitic propaganda would become more daring and vocal, while Social Credit leaders like national party leader Solon Low and even Premier Ernest Manning would deny that their party was anti-Semitic. Even more noteworthy is the fact that, notwithstanding Aberhart’s and Frank’s mutual conventions of etiquette, little was done to solve the real problem, which was the promotion of anti-Semitism through the Social Credit party organ. Aberhart’s assurances aside, there was no attempt to silence those promoting anti-Semitism, and the CJC did not

push the matter further. Consequently, because of its tactics of quiet diplomacy, an opportunity for the CJC to publicize the dangers of Social Credit's anti-Semitism and, even more importantly, to publicize Aberhart's acknowledgment of the problem, had been relinquished.

When Ernest Manning took over the premiership after Aberhart's death in the spring of 1943, he stepped into his mentor's shoes. Having been a cabinet minister since 1935 (the youngest in the British Commonwealth), Manning was well aware of Social Credit's anti-Semitic predilections. By this time too the CJC was convinced that anti-Semitism was an entrenched part of the Social Credit movement and would not be eradicated easily. As the Second World War progressed, so too did Social Credit's denunciations of Allied cooperation and plans to create an international peacekeeping association in the postwar period, which it viewed as part of the international Jewish financial conspiracy. Even more disturbing for the CJC was Social Credit's opposition to the acceptance of Jewish refugees because it suspected they were fabricating the extent of their persecution to further the aims of the Jewish world plotters.

Notwithstanding the increasingly offensive nature of Social Credit's anti-Semitic propaganda, the CJC continued to respond in an ineffective and passive manner. CJC officials persisted in believing they could use moral suasion and facts about the reality of Jewish wealth and power to persuade Social Crediters to abandon their anti-Semitic attacks. Such an approach seriously underestimated the virulence of Social Credit's anti-Semitism and the intransigence, duplicity, and complicity of Social Credit leaders.

After Manning took over the helm he was confronted with an entrenched faction of Social Credit purists who promoted Douglas's anti-Semitic theories. Although Manning himself embraced Douglas's social credit theories and wholeheartedly attacked the international financial conspiracy,⁴ he was less comfortable with the Douglasites' overt anti-Semitism. Faced with an upcoming summer election in 1944

and barraged by accusations of Nazism by Alberta Co-operative Commonwealth Federation leader Elmer Roper, Manning decided to wipe the pre-election slate clean. On 2 March 1944, he issued a public statement in which he “unequivocally” repudiated anti-Semitism within the Alberta Social Credit movement. However, his statement was remarkable for its equivocation:

It has been brought to my attention that an erroneous impression has been created in certain quarters that the Social Credit movement is anti-Semitic. Nothing could be further from the truth ... Social Credit is not opposed to any religion or race, as such. It is only when the adherents to any religion, or the people of any race take collective action as a group to attack the principles of Christianity and democracy which are fundamental to Social Credit that conflict arises ... In exposing and opposing the conspiracy of individuals and corporations seeking to impose a state of financial and economic dictatorship upon all nations the advocates of Social Credit consider it most important that the facts of the case be placed before the people irrespective of the color, race or creed of the conspirators.⁵

Manning apparently believed it was both politically safe and morally correct to deny anti-Semitism but still expose the “enemy” of Christianity and democracy, since its “color, race or creed” was irrelevant. But his repudiation of anti-Semitism rang hollow and became even more suspect when he compared Social Credit’s battle against the international financial conspiracy with the party’s fight against Nazism. He argued that, because Nazi Germany attacked Christianity and democracy, this necessarily brought it in conflict with Social Credit, which upheld these principles. “However,” declared Manning, “we were not attacking Germans as Germans.”⁶ He made no further comment, but the inference could be made: the fight against Nazism necessitated war against Germans, but no one doing so was anti-German

per se. Likewise, the fight against the international financial conspiracy necessitated war against Jews, but no one doing so was anti-Semitic.

One of the leading officials in the CJC, Louis Rosenberg, had some comments about Manning's repudiation. "Evidently the leader of the Social Credit Party in Alberta does not like to be called an anti-semite, although he has done nothing to repudiate the repeated anti-semitic remarks which appear regularly in his official paper *Today and Tomorrow* and the anti-semitic statements made by the Social Credit members in the House of Commons." Moreover, stated Rosenberg, the only difference between blatant anti-Semites in the Social Credit movement and "more circumspect and careful men" like Manning and the late Aberhart was that the former invoked the word "Jewish" in their fulminations about the international financial conspiracy, whereas the latter "use the same arguments and the same phraseology but omit the word Jewish, leaving their true meaning to be understood."⁷

Notwithstanding the CJC's uneasiness with Manning's 'repudiation,' it was not until December 1944 that Alberta CJC officials attempted again to confront Social Credit on the issue of anti-Semitism. That month CJC officials H.A. Friedman and John Dower met with Solon Low, leader of the newly-created national Social Credit party. Friedman and Dower met Low at the legislative buildings in Edmonton and talked with him for nearly two hours about Social Credit's attitude on the "Jewish question." They showed him several issues of the party organ (now renamed the *Canadian Social Crediter*) which were anti-Semitic. On the surface, the meeting went well. Low was conciliatory, assuring both Friedman and Dower that he strongly opposed anti-Semitism and that it definitely was not part of Social Credit policy. He gave them "his personal assurance that he would no longer tolerate the type of articles that we brought to his attention in the party's paper ... that he would disavow any member of the party who indulged in Anti-Semitic statements ... that he would ... make a public statement to the press

on the question of Anti-Semitism, which he assured us we would find fully satisfactory.”⁸

Shortly thereafter, Low gave a public address in Lethbridge, Alberta in which he discussed Social Credit’s stance on anti-Semitism. Unfortunately for the CJC, Low’s statement was blatantly anti-Semitic. He began his speech by stating: “some Jewish friends of our movement have told me that we are being identified with anti-Semitism because of our persistent and outspoken exposures of a group of international financiers and world plotters who are engaged in a criminal conspiracy to destroy democracy and Christianity and to enslave mankind to their rule.” By construing his meeting with Friedman and Dower in these terms, Low simultaneously refuted and reaffirmed Social Credit’s anti-Semitism. “Some of these men happen to be of Jewish racial origin,” he commented, “and to be more specific, of German-Jewish origin.” However, they were not exclusively Jewish, Low qualified, and although many were this was no reason to condemn Jews as a whole. Accordingly, it was important to clarify for everyone, including Canada’s Jews, Social Credit’s stance on anti-Semitism:

We very definitely are not anti-Semitic or anti any race or religion ... The only times when the Canadian Social Credit movement can possibly be brought into conflict with any racial or religious group would be if those comprising such a group conspired together as a group in an organized attack on democracy and Christianity. I am sure that our fellow Canadians of Jewish origin recognize that a truly democratic and Christian society ... alone will give them the social objectives they seek as individuals in common with all Canadians ... it is fantastic for anybody to suggest that as Social Crediters we are anti-Semitic. I will go further and point out to our fellow Canadians of Jewish origin that actually the Social Credit movement is the most

powerful influence in the country working for their emancipation.

Low also explained why anti-Semitism was “sweeping” England, Australia, New Zealand and the United States, as well as Canada. (Germany, interestingly, was not mentioned). His explanation served only to publicly reinforce Social Credit’s anti-Semitism: “our Jewish friends should recognize that the cause of the growing anti-Semitism ... is not due to propaganda alone ... anti-Semitism is spreading, because people cannot fail to observe that a disproportionate number of Jews occupy positions of control in international finance, in revolutionary activities, and in some propaganda institutions, the common policy of which is the centralization of power and the perversion of religious and cultural ideals. This gives people the impression that therefore there must be a Jewish conspiracy to gain world control.”⁹

Low’s speech had made a mockery of his meeting with Friedman and Dower and was the absolute antithesis of what they had hoped for. Not surprisingly, Western CJC officials were extremely dismayed by Low’s address and the entire CJC leadership became extremely wary about openly confronting Social Credit’s anti-Semitism in the future. What the CJC needed, but was not yet ready to create, was a public relations approach which did not rely on the goodwill of those who promoted anti-Semitism.

By the end of the Second World War, the Social Credit movement had proven its anti-Semitism through a new spate of propaganda, the most offensive of which was denial of the Holocaust. Throughout the immediate postwar period, until Manning’s purge of the anti-Semites in 1947–48, Social Credit’s anti-Semitic propaganda increased both in intensity and frequency. During this period, the CJC was forced to confront the very tragic implications of Hitler’s tyranny and acknowledge that European Jewry had been nearly destroyed, while the Canadian government had done virtually nothing to assist it.¹⁰

While Social Credit propaganda railed against the United Nations Organization, Soviet communism, and Zionism, all of which it deemed part of the international Jewish financial — and now overwhelmingly communist and Zionist — conspiracy, Canadian public opinion on anti-Semitism and racism was slowly changing with acknowledgment of the Holocaust.

This widening discrepancy between Social Credit's anti-Semitic propaganda and the nation's emerging tolerance encouraged the CJC to adopt a more assertive public relations approach. Yet even before the end of the war, the CJC realized the need to adopt a more assertive public relations approach and work with other organizations to ensure that the race-hatred and genocide of Nazi Germany did not occur in Canada. Thus, by the immediate postwar period, the CJC concluded that it was insufficient to convince non-Jews that Jews were indeed "good people" or to simply correct all the slanders and misinformation about Jews. It was more important to show that anti-Semitism, race hatred, and intolerance were harmful to all society. Accordingly, the CJC began a large-scale programme which attempted to persuade group after group — labour unions, business groups, church groups, farm groups — that anti-Semitism was dangerous for all Canadians, not only for Jews.¹¹

This emphasis on the universality of race hatred and the importance of combatting all forms of prejudice and discrimination was crucial. By the early postwar period, the CJC's public relations approach was evolving and maturing so that it encompassed more than anti-defamation work, and focussed also on the broader social implications of prejudice and discrimination.¹² However, even though the CJC's public relations approach was shifting to a broad-based appeal against all race hatred, it nonetheless remained an appeal — the organization still assumed that anti-Semitism could be combatted by changing the attitude of non-Jews.¹³ This assumption would greatly impede its attempts to end Social Credit's anti-Semitism. In the early postwar period the CJC became increasingly assertive and confronted Social Credit in a series of incidents,¹⁴ yet its efforts

were continually thwarted by Social Crediters' duplicity and intransigence. When CJC leaders attempted to convince Social Credit politicians that their anti-Semitism was harmful to Canadian society as well as Canadian Jewry, the latter agreed wholeheartedly and encouraged the CJC to denounce the international Jewish conspiracy so that anti-Semitism would cease. These tactics made it difficult for the CJC to make many inroads. The Social Credit movement appeared determined to continue and expand its anti-Semitic attacks, irrespective of any appeal.

However, events converged in such a way that Ernest Manning solved the CJC's problem for it. In late 1947 and early 1948 Manning conducted a purge of the anti-Semites within the Social Credit movement. The editor of the *Canadian Social Crediter*, John Patrick Gillese, was relieved of his position;¹⁵ writings by Social Credit's most notorious anti-Semite, MP Norman Jaques, were barred from the party organ, as were the anti-Semitic writings of Social Credit's founder, Major C.H. Douglas;¹⁶ the propaganda arm of the movement, the Alberta Social Credit Board, was disbanded;¹⁷ and in February 1948 Manning fired L.D. Byrne, technical advisor to the movement, and R.E. Ansley, Alberta minister of education.¹⁸ In the wake of Manning's purge, other Social Credit politicians broke with the movement and started their own splinter groups which remained true to Douglas's original, anti-Semitic principles.¹⁹ However, Manning's authority prevailed and the official movement was largely freed from the anti-Semitic propaganda which had been its hallmark for years.

Certainly, a changed political and economic climate provided much of the impetus for Manning's action. In the postwar, post-Holocaust world, anti-Semitism was considered 'politically incorrect' and Alberta's economic fortunes after the 1947 Leduc oil strike precluded any further need to vilify the "international bankers." What most scholars have overlooked in this regard is that Manning did not act until it was politically and economically expedient to do so and, even more

incriminating, as Social Credit leader he had been complicitous in allowing anti-Semitism to exist in the party.²⁰ Yet it must be acknowledged that Manning ultimately vindicated himself by removing his party's most repugnant feature.

For the CJC, Manning's purge of 1947-48 certainly solved its "number one" public relations problem. By this time as well the CJC was facing a different world. The pervasive anti-Semitism of earlier years was receding, the horrors of the Holocaust had shocked many Canadians and made race hatred noxious, and Jews in Palestine had engaged in a dramatic struggle to create their own state.²¹ Upon emerging from this era of rampant anti-Semitism, the CJC embraced the philosophy learned from European Jewry's horrifying experience — "Never Again." For the CJC, "Never Again" should Canada's and Alberta's political culture embrace such intolerance. "Never Again" would the CJC allow it. Accordingly, throughout the postwar period, the CJC modified its public relations philosophy to embrace a "zero-tolerance" approach to intolerance. Its philosophy now accepted that Jewish protection involved more than altering the attitude of non-Jews toward Jews — its public relations work should ensure that the rights to which Jews were entitled in a democratic society were respected, enforced, and granted.²²

The CJC's new approach was self-respecting, even pugnacious. Its philosophy was now that Jewish rights were not something to be begged or pleaded for or accepted with thanks, but something which Jews could and should demand and fight for legitimately. Jews' status would not be protected by influencing the attitudes of non-Jews or filling them with goodwill. Jewish protection would come from enactments of public policy, legislation, administrative practices, and judicial precedents which would make the practice of discrimination impossible. The CJC did not abandon goodwill propaganda or educational campaigns in the postwar period, and the efficacy of this kind of public relations work was still accepted. However, it realized that previous public relations measures had basically left the root problem

untouched — that the Canadian democratic system had allowed large patterns of racism and discrimination to form part of the social, political, and economic landscape of the nation.²³ This certainly had been the case with Social Credit’s anti-Semitic propaganda campaign, which had operated for years with impunity. In short, the CJC’s difficulties in responding to “the Social Credit problem” played a significant role in compelling it to adopt a more effective public relations approach in the postwar period. Its negative and frustrating experience with Social Credit taught it a valuable lesson about protecting and promoting the rights of Canadian Jewry and, indeed, all minority groups. The CJC’s evolution and maturation would serve it well when, decades later, another prairie protest movement would emerge and identify specific ‘enemies’ in order to explain political, economic, and social grievances.

THE SON

The Reform Party of Canada was established in 1987, in the hopes of creating a new federal party of the right. Performing a delicate balancing act between promoting itself as a western-based regional party as well as a national party with national clout, the party endorsed the slogan, “The West Wants In,” and under Preston Manning’s effective leadership it gained over 100,000 members within four years.²⁴ The idea of a federal party that would have western interests first was very appealing to Albertans and other westerners. As Ian Pearson notes, the Reform Party was playing to the same sense of alienation that created the Progressives in the 1920s and the Social Credit party in the 1930s:

In the eyes of Reformers, central Canada has never stopped putting the boot to the prairies. But beyond that, the Reformers are feeding off a frustration with politicians in general, a feeling that the party system has atrophied and needs substantial reform to revive it. Previous western

populist movements appealed to different sectors of the disfranchised: the poor, farmers, labour. When Preston Manning pitches his message, he's speaking not only to a core of farmers and disgruntled retirees but also to a potentially huge group that feels abandoned by the established political parties: the middle class. (The disaffected rich also seem more than happy to go along for the ride.)²⁵

Along with its appeal to feelings of political alienation, the Reform Party promoted other conservative populist values.²⁶ It was these values which helped give the party a reputation for right-wing extremism. Specifically, the Reform Party's original platform included opposition to the Meech Lake accord, with its recognition of Quebec's "distinct society." Stated Manning: "either all Canadians make a clear commitment to Canada as one nation ... or Quebec and the rest of Canada should explore whether there exists a better but more separate relationship."²⁷ Murray Dobbin, in examining the party's confrontational approach to Canadian federalism, states that "the Reform party is the only national party in Canadian history to explicitly exclude Quebec from its charter."²⁸ (It should be added that Preston Manning later softened his position on Quebec in full realization that his party was doomed to the role of a western protest movement if it could not penetrate that province and Ontario; however, his attempts to learn French and run candidates in *la belle province* proved overwhelmingly unsuccessful.)

A corollary of the Reform Party's inflexible and at times inimical stance towards Quebec was its attitude toward bilingualism. From its inception the party opposed the bilingual policies of the federal government, and especially bilingualism outside Quebec.²⁹ Other planks included the party's opposition to Canada's multicultural policy. Manning believed that the federal government should "get out of the business of handing out grants for the preservation and development of cultural distinction ... That should be the responsibility of individuals, private

associations and lower levels of government, including the provinces.”³⁰ The Reform Party also opposed federal immigration policy and argued that, rather than pandering to politically powerful ethnic groups by allowing more of their group into the country, the government should judge applicants on economic criteria. Perhaps unwittingly repeating what Liberal prime minister Mackenzie King proposed in 1947, Manning declared that immigration should be tied to Canada’s economic conditions and “absorb[ive] capacity.” More revealing, the Reform Party manifesto stated that immigration policy should not be “explicitly designed to radically or suddenly alter the ethnic makeup of Canada, as it increasingly seems to be.”³¹

Responses to the Reform Party’s platform were extremely varied. Not surprisingly, the party appealed to “people opposed to multiculturalism and bilingualism and to the Mulroney government’s alleged toadying to Quebec ...”³² But Manning also espoused religious opinions which garnered broad support. Like his father, Manning was an avowed Christian, and he made no apology for inflecting his politics with Christian values. In *The New Canada*, he reveals his religious philosophy: “when I am asked for a definition of my most deeply held values (that is, for a statement of faith), I could respond by reciting the Apostles’ Creed or the statement of faith of any of the various churches (Baptist, and Christian and Missionary Alliance) that my family and I have attended. Such a statement would not be very meaningful, however, to Canadians who have abandoned or who have never subscribed to this country’s Christian heritage.”³³ Laurence Decore, former leader of the Alberta Liberal party, in commenting on Preston Manning’s “evangelical mystique,” states: “there’s something captivating about a preacher and the way a preacher can get his message across. His father had it and it’s all wound up in a western twang. It’s wound up in the use of biblical images. It’s very populist. And Preston’s got it down to the kind of perfection his father had. It makes him very appealing, and makes him sound very honest and forthright. I think it’s easy to like what he says.”³⁴

The Reform Party also had the blessings of *Alberta Report*, a right-wing conservative newsmagazine which acted as the party's political cheerleader.³⁵ In one editorial, *Alberta Report* commented that,

most media pundits detest religion ... Thus they assume that if they represent Mr. Manning often and at length as genuinely religious, people will reject him as a sanctimonious, irrational bigot. But in this they are deluding themselves. True, the common man detests the self-righteous ... But he sees far, far more sanctimonious fanatics among the media and their think-alike friends — the feminists, the socialists, the environmentalists, the multiculturalists and all the political toadies in the other parties who suck up to them ... there is a plain and growing public gratitude that Mr. Manning and 100,000 Reform party members are restoring our freedom to think and speak as we want.³⁶

Alberta Report and the Reform Party reflected and shaped the political culture from which they came. Reform Party supporters, plagued by the same anxieties as their populist predecessors, sought a kind of salvation in this new national party of the West. As Dobbin states, the party “promised to give legitimacy and credibility to their concerns, their issues, their yearning for the way things had been. And that was who turned out to buy Reform Party memberships — those for whom the modernization of Canada, as characterized by non-white immigration, multiculturalism, metrification, women's right to abortion and an awakened Quebec nationalism made them feel alien in their own country.”³⁷

Yet not all responses to the Reform Party were positive. Critics of the party's platform argued that the party's stance on “immigration, bilingualism, multiculturalism, the RCMP uniform and other issues revealed a mean-spirited and intolerant membership.” Some critics “detected an unsavory edge of intolerance in the Reform's opposition to multiculturalism

and the Meech Lake accord,” while others noted that most Reform Party members seemed to be “white Anglo-Saxon men with 18th-century views.” There were a few who explicitly branded Reformers as “separatists and bigots” and labelled their party “a right-wing WASP group that bemoans the fact that Canada is not what it was 50 years ago.”³⁸ One of the most vocal critics of the Reform Party was then deputy Liberal leader Sheila Copps. In November 1991, shortly after ex-neo-Nazi and former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke lost the race for governor of Louisiana, Copps created an uproar in the House of Commons by comparing Manning with Duke and declaring much of the party’s platform “racist.” Copps further asserted that unless Manning “absolutely” accepted the separation of church and state, his religious views and, specifically, his belief that women should be submissive to men and that homosexual acts were sinful, could help promote policies that discriminated against women and gays.³⁹

Such accusations of intolerance were not mere diatribes in the game of political one-upmanship. In early 1992 the Reform Party expelled four members of the white supremacist group, Heritage Front, including the group’s leader, Wolfgang Droege. The same year Gordon LeGrand was thrown out of the party after he and others trampled a Quebec flag to protest that province’s language policies, and Zvonimir Lelas was expelled when it was discovered he had been convicted of defacing a synagogue.⁴⁰ Manning’s response to the extremist tendencies of his party and the concomitant criticism was, to borrow loosely from Murray Dobbin, calculatedly ambiguous.⁴¹ Using an aphorism of his father’s, Preston stated: “If you turn on a light, you’re going to attract bugs.” Moreover, he added, “if you want change, remember that change is messy. It will bring modern ideas and it will bring extreme ideas. It will bring contradictory ideas. If you want change then you’ve got to get involved. Just because there are some factors you don’t like, don’t make that the reason for not doing it.”⁴²

Manning also emphasized the importance and dignity of the common voter — the rank-and-filer who was not afraid to get involved to return the world to its proper order. Pointing to his party's populist base, Manning stated that "the conventional wisdom is not to let people express their opinions for fear that they might embarrass a political party. Our policy is different." Further, he argued, "no reasonable person could consider as racist" his party's stance on multiculturalism and immigration. "A party that challenges the status quo in any of these areas — be it immigration, language policy, the Constitution — automatically risks accusations of racism and extremism." But as Ian Pearson aptly notes, "Manning is careful to present moderate, general policies, even though the ... members of the Reform Party are clamouring for severe action on fiscal matters, multiculturalism, immigration, language legislation, and Quebec's status within Confederation."⁴³

As recent political developments have shown, the Reform Party's stance had only limited appeal in a cosmopolitan, multicultural, pluralistic democracy such as Canada. Thus, notwithstanding the party's attempt to broaden its electoral and popular base (which caused an ideological contradiction in the party's *raison d'être*), its western protest origins remained largely intact. Between Joe Clark's rebuffs and vain attempts to place old wine in a new bottle in the name of political transsubstantiation, the Reform Party was consigned to the role it was best suited for — an outlet for disenchanted, disgruntled westerners who were tired of pressing their noses against the window of the central Canadian ball. What is most intriguing is not the fact that the Reform Party existed for thirteen years, but that it embodied clear ideological continuities between the movements of father and son. The enemies changed over the years — from the international socialist Jewish-Zionist banker to the political interest group: feminists, socialists, environmentalists, multiculturalists, Quebec nationalists, and other "political toadies." However, the political culture which informed Social Credit ideology and which informed Reform Party ideology

remained relatively unchanged. Threatened social, political, and economic values acted as strong impetuses for a political ideology which viewed external opposition in terms of ‘the enemy.’ Manicheanism is far from dead in the West, and it has proven extremely useful in defining Western Canada’s political cultural identity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In essence, the Social Credit ideologues of Ernest Manning’s era were succeeded by his son’s supporters within the Reform Party fold. Therein lay an intriguing political continuity—the perpetuation from father to son of the ideologically faithful.

THE CJC AND THE RPC

By the time the Reform Party was created, the Canadian Jewish Congress was a strong, politically active organization, capable of protecting and promoting Canadian Jewish and minority group rights on many levels. Its response to the Reform Party’s stance on immigration, multiculturalism, hate crimes legislation, Nazi war criminals, and Quebec sovereignty showed the extent to which the times had changed. Preston Manning actively sought the goodwill of the CJC and other Jewish community groups, and the CJC unequivocally expressed its reservations about the party’s agenda and actively attempted to persuade the party to adopt a more moderate stance. This was a far cry from fifty years earlier, when CJC officials tepidly met with Social Credit politicians in a vain attempt to stop their anti-Semitic propaganda campaign, and Social Credit leaders cavalierly dismissed the concerns of “our Jewish friends.”

One of the first substantive interactions between the Reform Party and the Canadian Jewish community was in Calgary in 1990, when Manning discussed the anti-Semitism in the Social Credit movement during the 1930s and 1940s. He told Calgary’s Jewish leaders that “I despise racism in general, and anti-semitism in particular,” and that “my own concerns

about this issue are rooted in my father's experience with exactly the same problem in the early days of the Social Credit movement in Alberta." Manning explained:

As many of you are aware, during the Depression Western Canada produced ... the Social Credit movement ... While the majority of its members and leaders were sincere and well-intentioned Canadians, the party did attract an element who held conspiratorial theories about the Depression. These people were looking for someone to blame for the economic and financial problems of the day, and they fixed on the "Jewish financiers." When my father became Premier of Alberta in 1943, he made a concerted effort to root this sentiment out of the party where it existed. This involved calling for the resignation of a Cabinet Minister and withdrawing membership from certain members of the Party. It involved public statements, adverse publicity, and the loss of some seats, but in the end it was successful. Many of the older members of the Jewish community in Edmonton and Calgary will remember those days, and my father sincerely appreciated the support of those people. Eventually my father was recognized for his efforts by the Government of Israel, and by the B'nai Brith Society which awarded him its national Humanitarian Award in 1982. If there was a lesson to be learned from the Social Credit Depression experience, it is that ... if a new political movement can prevent extremism of any kind, particularly racism, from taking root in the first place it will save itself and members of minority communities an infinite amount of trouble later on."⁴⁴

This would not be the first time Manning would harken to his father's purge of the anti-Semites in an attempt to assuage the concerns of the Canadian Jewish community. Indeed, notwithstanding Manning's determination that his party would not fall prey to similar intolerance, by the time he met with

Toronto Jewry in early 1993, he had ousted several members and repeatedly reassured Jews that the Reform Party was not a haven for racists and anti-Semites.⁴⁵ In January 1993 Manning gave a speech in Toronto hosted by the CJC, B'nai Brith Canada, and the Jewish Civil Rights Education Foundation, where he admitted that he had to fight racism in his party and that he had already expelled “two dozen to 30” party members who harboured racist views. Nonetheless, he defended his party’s track record by pointing out that unacceptable members were immediately kicked out. Moreover, stated Manning, the Reform Party had taken several steps to “protect” its members from extremism, including electing and supporting party leaders who explicitly rejected extremism and racism; rejecting any proposals which would discriminate on the basis of race and expelling those members identified with racist organizations; having potential candidates for nominations complete a forty-page questionnaire to ensure they support Reform’s “aversion” to discrimination; and issuing open invitations to members of all racial minorities to examine the party’s policies.⁴⁶

Manning also asked leaders of Toronto’s Jewish community to join his party in order to “inoculate” it against racism: “I want to appeal for help, particularly from people like yourselves ... Help us inoculate ourselves against the virus of racism which could be absolutely fatal to a new party like ourselves and to our country.” He added that if Reform became the government, race would not be a factor in anyone’s status, the Constitution would be racially neutral, immigration policy would be based on labour needs, and Canada’s multiculturalism department would be abolished—henceforth it would be up to private organizations and municipalities “to provide and polish the pieces of the [Canadian] mosaic.”⁴⁷

Jews attending Manning’s speech were not impressed. One observer questioned Manning’s rationale for inviting Jews to join the party: “[it] seems like a back-handed way of creating racism, to say: ‘We need Jews to show we’re not racist.’” Karen Mock, national director of B’nai Brith Canada, believed that

people should look below the Reform Party's surface: "I'm worried about the white supremacists and known racists. I think these people have an attraction to what might be behind the words and behind the phrases." Judy Feld Carr, a Syrian Jewry activist, found some of Manning's language and choice of words "frightening," and believed that his suggestion for Jews to join Reform was itself racist. "I find him scary," she remarked, and she questioned why racists were attracted to the Reform Party in the first place. Another observer similarly commented: "I'm afraid, I'm really afraid ... He's slick. He's been trained ... There's a bit too much of 'my Jewish friends.'" (During his speech Manning referred several times to the fact that he had Jewish friends.) Gabe Nachman, president of B'nai Brith Canada, also expressed concern because Manning spoke almost exclusively on racism: "maybe he thinks that's all Jews are interested in." As for the CJC's response, David Satok, chair of the community relations committee for Ontario, considered Manning's comments on immigration to be "a little disturbing" and felt they indicated a policy lacking in compassion. Satok further doubted that private groups and municipalities would do as good a job on multiculturalism as the federal government.⁴⁸ Thus, Manning's attempts at wooing the Toronto Jewish community were not as positive as he had hoped. Clearly the CJC, along with other Jewish organizations, had no compunction about publicly expressing its reservations about the Reform leader and his party.

In fact, CJC national president Irving Abella strongly voiced his opposition to the party. In November 1993, shortly after the federal election in which the Reform Party had had to oust candidates with intolerant views,⁴⁹ Abella commented that "the Reform party has simplistic answers to complicated questions. Parties of that type attract a certain fringe." However, he quipped, "I'm delighted there are nuts in the party, because if they are not discovered, the party may gain more respectability than it deserves." Noting that the CJC had already met with Manning, Abella remarked that "he's not really a concern to us.

Mr. Manning even represents a riding in Calgary that has a fair number of Jewish people in it ... But he says he can't find the radicals in his party. We know Mr. Manning realizes these people do harm to his party and he'd be delighted to have them out. He's told us, 'You find them and we'll throw them out.'"⁵⁰

The CJC president also commented on the potentially threatening aspects of the Reform Party: "given the fact the [Progressive Conservatives] can't raise funds as they did before, and the fact Reform is on a roll and has momentum, it just might accept people who are not racist but still have a racist fringe hiding in back. If they play their cards right, then we could be in trouble." Further, stated Abella, the CJC was concerned about the Reform Party's recommendation for restrictive immigration policies. Emphasizing that "the public doesn't get the real message of the importance of immigration in this country" since "immigrants have provided wealth and jobs and a mosaic to Canada," Abella noted that "people are too concerned with only looking at queue jumpers and people gouging welfare. That's the message we all see and one the media transmits and that's wrong." He added that many Canadians believed the country was too much like a "United Nations" and were opposed to further immigration of minorities. Consequently, "a substantial part of the Reform party vote can be traced to that feeling. They have a simple answer—'Throw the bums out.'"⁵¹ Abella's words were not those of a passive organization head. As CJC president, he accurately conveyed his organization's concern about the Reform Party's potential threat to minority group rights. Such reservations were well founded, for it was not long before the Reform Party was embroiled in another incident marked by intolerance.

In January 1994, a Reform Party newsletter produced by the Okanagan Centre riding association in British Columbia contained a quotation by Adolf Hitler. The newsletter, a single broadsheet, carried a message from the newly-elected Reform MP, Werner Schmidt, describing his first week as an MP and his impressions of Parliament. The Hitler quotation was a filler,

coming under the heading of “More Famous Quotes,” and stated: “What luck for rulers that men do not think.” The newsletter had the Reform Party logo on its letterhead and gave the Reform Party association office as its address. When the Hitler quotation was discovered by the press, MP Schmidt declared: “I didn’t even know the quote was in there until the newsletter hit the streets,” and he dissociated himself completely from the quotation. He added later that “such a distasteful reference should never have been made in a Reform Party publication and I will be taking steps to ensure that such a situation does not occur again.” The constituency association president also announced that “any quotation by that despicable person has no place in our Newsletter and we will take steps to ensure that no similar incidents occur in the future;” meanwhile, the vice-president admitted the reference was “not very politically correct.” However, a local Reform executive assistant attempted to defend the quotation’s inclusion by stating that it was not meant to glorify the Nazi leader, but rather was meant as a warning that citizens must monitor politicians to avoid giving power to leaders such as Hitler.⁵² Interestingly, some newspaper editorials defended inclusion of the quotation and discussed at length the issue of post-Holocaust hypersensitivity and ultra-political correctness.⁵³

The CJC’s response, however, was unequivocal. Renée Switzer Bellas, chair of the Pacific region of the CJC, stated that “using the words of a murderer responsible for the annihilation of millions of men, women and children is highly offensive to all Canadians, especially coming from an MP’s newsletter.” Hal Joffe, the CJC’s national community relations chair, called the newsletter insensitive and demanded an apology by the MP to the people of Canada. B’nai Brith also sent a letter to Manning expressing its dismay at the newsletter and calling for assurances that there would be no repetition of “such displays of insensitivity and poor taste.” Manning quickly announced that “it was a big mistake” to have inserted the quote and that “if it’s misinterpreted that would be a danger, I think.”

Frank Dimant, executive vice-president of B'nai Brith, while acknowledging Manning's "quick" denunciation of the offending quote and Schmidt's dissociation from the newsletter, nonetheless urged Manning: "we seek your assurance that your efforts continue to exclude from involvement in your party any individuals who espouse racist and bigoted views."⁵⁴

While the CJC and other organizations were quick to respond to such incidents, the former also actively attempted to persuade the Reform Party to moderate its stance. Approximately two months after the newsletter imbroglio, the CJC again confronted the Reform Party about its potentially threatening agenda. In March 1994 the two sides met in Ottawa, where Abella and other CJC officials let Manning know about issues which were important to it and the Jewish community. They talked about immigration and multiculturalism, prosecution of Nazi war criminals, racism, and the role of the Reform Party in Quebec.⁵⁵

Abella told Manning that the Reform Party's immigration and multiculturalism policies implied an intolerance for certain minority immigrants, since they called for immigrants to be selected solely on the basis of Canada's economic needs. But Manning assured the CJC delegation that his party did not want to discriminate against any group; it simply wanted immigration to be compatible with the current economic climate. Manning added that while he supported a cultural mosaic, he did not believe the federal government should spend money to preserve it. To this Abella later commented: "the concern was that there is really a subtext in this and you've got to be careful ... This is a country of immigrants, which hates immigration and [the Reform Party] is playing up to that feeling. And [Manning] realized that." Yet Abella was pleased with Manning's support for prosecution of Nazi war criminals in Canada, a process the CJC believed had been too slow. Although Manning was not well-informed about the issue from the point of view of the Jewish community, stated Abella, once it was explained to him he agreed to apply pressure on the federal government by ask-

ing questions in the House of Commons about the prosecution of war criminals. The meeting concluded with Abella agreeing to keep Manning informed of any racists or “trouble makers” in the Reform Party who came to the attention of the CJC.⁵⁶

When questioned by the press about their meeting, both Abella and Manning agreed it was a productive discussion of issues which were of concern to the Jewish community. Abella was convinced that Manning would not tolerate racism or anti-Semitism in his party: “Mr. Manning is a very impressive man and I think his heart is in the right [place],” stated Abella. “We’re concerned about some of the people in the Reform party, some of the things they’ve said and continue to say. But his indication was that he would be trying to keep these people under control and make sure they don’t speak on behalf of the party.” For his part, Manning acknowledged the CJC’s concern about racist elements in the Reform Party: “Congress is extremely concerned about racists and anti-Semitic people that try to infiltrate political parties, and particularly new ones ... and we’ve done a lot to prevent that happening to the Reform party.”⁵⁷

One revealing aspect of this meeting which was not conveyed to the press was the private conversation between Abella and Manning, which occurred without the presence of executive assistants, minute-takers, or press secretaries. For nearly an hour the two men sat in a room and simply talked. Manning told Abella that one of his children had spent some time in Israel living in a kibbutz and he expressed his admiration for the impact Israel had made. After other small talk they turned to Canadian immigration policy, where Abella cited study after study which proved the benefits of immigration to Canada. Their discussion was not unlike a graduate history seminar, Abella remembers, in which he regaled Manning with the hundreds of books and articles which supported increased immigration as a boon to Canada, and referred to the only one or two studies which did not. When this “very friendly and very unusual” discussion came to close, Manning called his assistant

in and asked if Abella could give him the titles of the two studies which were critical of increased immigration. "At that moment," recalls Abella, "I realized how totally unpersuasive I had been."⁵⁸

Manning undoubtedly hoped his amicable meeting with Abella and the CJC delegation was a prelude of things to come, and he carried his goodwill ambassadorial campaign into the new year. In February 1995, in an attempt to build relations with the Quebec Jewish community and generate support for Reform Party by-election candidates in that province,⁵⁹ Manning met with twenty-five leaders of the CJC, B'nai Brith, Federation CJA, and the Canada-Israel Committee in Montreal. The meeting was Manning's first with the Quebec Jewish community, and came four days before the Reform Party fielded its first candidates in three federal by-elections in Quebec.⁶⁰

The meeting, however, was not as successful as Manning had hoped. Montreal Jewish community leaders left the meeting disappointed that the Reform Party leader had not shown greater sensitivity to the issue of Nazi war criminal prosecution, or to the situation of anglophones in Quebec. B'nai Brith national vice-president Stephen Scheinberg believed that Manning missed an opportunity to favourably impress his Jewish audience. "It would have been easy for him to say he believes Canada should move vigorously on Nazi war criminals, given that he knows Jews are unhappy with the federal government's decision to prosecute only four more of them and deport the rest," Scheinberg said. "He just didn't have anything to offer us."⁶¹

Manning also seemed to irritate Jewish leaders when he implied that prosecuting perpetrators of more recent atrocities was more important than going after "80- and 90-year olds." Thomas Hecht, chair of the Quebec region of the Canada-Israel Committee, was so incensed by the remark that he called Manning later for a clarification. "He showed a great degree of insensitivity," Hecht stated. "The Holocaust cannot be compared to ordinary, garden-variety war crimes. The Holocaust was unique in the history of mankind." Manning's position on

Quebec sovereignty also did not go over well with his audience. B'nai Brith regional executive director Robert Libman, who organized the meeting, believed that Manning's "continuous attacks" on the constitutional status quo would only help then Quebec premier Jacques Parizeau. "He seemed to lack an understanding of what Quebec is all about," Hecht remarked. "I can't see how he will achieve anything here if he continues to talk about equality among the provinces."⁶²

Yet most of the Jewish community leaders seemed favorably impressed by Manning as a person. "His non-demagogic posture and sincerity is very attractive for the '90s; we just disagree with almost everything he said," stated B'nai Brith's vice-president. The CJC's Quebec regional chair, Manuel Shacter, similarly commented: "he came across as a reasonable person, very low-key and quite well-informed." Shacter added that he believed Manning was open to suggestions from Quebecers on how to approach the constitutional issue, and that he would ensure his party did not appear to be hostile to Quebec's aspirations. Nevertheless, Shacter sensed a "wide gulf" between Manning and the Jewish leaders at the meeting, notwithstanding many were pleased with Manning's quickness to root out extremist elements that might be attracted to his party.⁶³

Shortly after the Montreal meeting, Manning attempted to build further bridges by granting an interview with the *Canadian Jewish News*. There he stated that Nazi war criminals should continue to be prosecuted in Canada but not deported, as proposed by the Liberal government. "There's no way any country can compensate for the horrific things that happened to the Jewish people, but this [prosecution] is one way we can say 'never, never again.'" Manning also declared that there should be no time limit on prosecutions, stating that the "biggest tribute" Canada can pay to the memory of Jewish victims is to be "vigilant" against the perpetrators of more recent atrocities who may seek refuge in Canada. "Some think they can find safe haven here, and that's an insult to the memory of those killed

during the war.” Manning again invoked the lessons learned by his father on the issue of anti-Semitism. As leader of the Social Credit party in Alberta, stated Manning, his father had faced the same challenge of fighting anti-Semitism within its ranks. Those who blamed Jewish financiers for causing the Depression did infiltrate the Socreds, but the younger Manning was proud that his father had “rooted them out and even fired some who were quite high up.”⁶⁴

Manning’s interview smoothed relations with the Montreal Jewish community, although his overtures did not have much effect on Reform’s electoral chances in that province. A few months later Manning attempted again to win over the Canadian Jewish community by embracing Judaism — or at least one of its holiest holidays. The day before Yom Kippur in October 1995, Manning spoke to an audience of two hundred at Temple Sinai in Toronto, stating that he wanted to atone for his past mistakes. Specifically, when Rabbi Michael Dolgin asked him if, on the eve of the Jewish Day of Atonement, he wished to make amends for past errors, Manning said he regretted that the Reform Party had run some extremist candidates in the last federal election. “In our desperate anxiety to get up to 200 candidates, we allowed some small constituencies” to put forward questionable candidates, confessed Manning. “We would have been better off running 185, than allowing those people to get in and discredit us.” He emphasized that because the Reform Party was new, it was “vulnerable to infiltration by extremists,” but that “the most efficient way of combatting anti-Semitism and racism is hard, practical, on the spot education on what is socially acceptable.”⁶⁵

Manning’s atonement at the synagogue was apparently well received. According to Brotherhood president Harry Berholz, an organizer of the event, Manning believed it was important to speak at a synagogue to address “the issue of the misperception of the public that the Reform Party is anti-Semitic and racist.” Perhaps to dispel any suggestion that the synagogue was attempting to woo Manning, Berholz pointed

out that it was the Reform Party which initiated contact with the temple and that “the Canadian Jewish Congress endorsed his appearance at our temple.”⁶⁶

Attempts at influence continued on both sides. The following spring, the CJC resumed efforts to moderate the Reform Party’s agenda. In late April 1996, the two groups met for two hours, during which time CJC executives, led by national president Goldie Hershon, briefed Manning and a small number of Reform MPs about issues of concern before the Jewish community. The first item under discussion was hate crimes legislation. In June 1995, then Justice Minister Allan Rock had introduced Bill C-41, which would toughen penalties for hate crimes against racial minorities and other groups such as gays. The CJC had staunchly supported the bill but the Reform Party had voted against it, largely because of its gay-rights provisions.⁶⁷ Yet at the meeting Manning emphasized that disagreeing with the bill did not make his party racist or anti-Semitic. He said that the Reform Party disagreed with the Liberals’ method for implementing the bill, not the idea of more severe penalties for convicted hatemongers. “There were charges, fears and concerns that Reform might be anti-Semitic, extreme or racist,” stated Manning. “We want to do everything we can to dispel those fears and to get down to discussing the real issues that concern communities.”⁶⁸

Another issued raised by the CJC president was Canadian unity. She spoke to the Reform members about the importance of a unified country, and noted that Jews in Montreal had voted overwhelmingly (97.3 percent) against Quebec’s separation in the October 1995 referendum. After the meeting, Hershon said the Reform MPs supported her calls for a unified Canada.⁶⁹ A third issue raised was the deportation of suspected Nazi war criminals. Jack Silverstone, CJC’s national executive director, spoke about his frustration with the delays in prosecuting accused Nazi war criminals. “We desire to see these cases move forward at a greater speed,” and he noted that the Reform Party wholeheartedly agreed with this stance.

Indeed, both Manning and the CJC agreed that Ottawa should follow a two-track policy of prosecuting some suspects domestically while deporting others.⁷⁰

Yet differences between the CJC and the Reform Party remained, especially regarding immigration and refugee policy. On these issues, the CJC's national chair of community relations, Hal Joffe, chose his words carefully: "we approach immigration, possibly, from a more inclusive perspective [than Reform]." Thus, the evidence was mixed on how close the two sides came to a meeting of minds. Although Joffe asserted that "we had a very free exchange of ideas ... and I think it was quite productive," he admitted that "we've agreed to disagree on [some] issues."⁷¹ But he also emphasized that discussing such differences "is part of our process of becoming aware where they stand on issues and making them aware where we stand on issues." For his part, Manning agreed on the importance of meeting with the CJC and noted that the Reform Party was trying hard to bridge the gap between it and a community that had not historically been sympathetic to the party: "we've been doing this pretty consistently ... Certainly we're anxious to build bridges ... It's part of a relation-building."⁷²

Perhaps Manning's most embracing gesture towards the Canadian Jewish community was his appearance at a Jewish Business Network dinner in November 1997 in Côte St. Luc, a predominantly Jewish municipality in Montreal. At the sold-out dinner of over two hundred in a kosher restaurant, Manning vowed to "do everything possible" to ensure that no one with racist or anti-Semitic views was allowed into the party. He repeated how he had learned this lesson as a boy from his father. He recalled how his father had "purged" the Social Credit party of a small element that held "conspiracy theories" about the cause of the country's economic collapse. "Some — not all were infected—believed certain small groups were responsible; some pointed to the Jewish financial community ... I watched that struggle and I want to make sure that never happens in our party," stated Manning. He again emphasized

how his father went so far as to fire one cabinet minister and some MLAs for their views, and was honored by B'nai Brith for his efforts.⁷³

Manning also repeated his well-worn assertion that “there are those with racist views who will pick on a new party, particularly in times of stress, thinking they can infiltrate and influence it. The best way to inoculate against that is to encourage people who believe in civil liberties and opposing racial prejudice” to join the party. Manning extended the olive branch further by expressing his wish that the Jewish community would get to know him and his party, since its strong tradition of family and volunteerism could have a valuable impact on the party’s social policy. “We know our publicity in Quebec has not been the best,” Manning added. “We ask that you avoid prejudging on the basis of innuendo or secondary information. As your community knows well, prejudging is the basis of prejudice.” Manning even ventured that there might be a natural affinity between Jews and the Reform Party because both were concerned with reform. “In every field, from science and music to law and politics, Jews have been reformers in the sense of changing society for the better. They have had the courage to act and take all the criticism that comes from advocating systemic change.”⁷⁴

The times certainly had changed. It was fifty years to the month from the time Ernest Manning began his purge of the anti-Semites to his son’s speech at the kosher restaurant in Montreal. The two images were the epitome of contrast: a cap-in-hand Jewish organization hoping a fundamentalist prairie populist leader would stop his party’s anti-Semitism, to a cap-in-hand fundamentalist prairie populist leader hoping to woo Canadian Jewry. The irony was palpable. But the transformation was not by chance—the CJC was not the same organization as fifty years earlier. After decades of difficult and at times painful progress, and assisted greatly by changing trends in minority group rights, the CJC was now a powerful lobbying force on the Canadian political scene, committed to protecting

and promoting the rights of all minority groups. Any politician who disregarded or rebuffed such an organization did so at his own peril. Preston Manning was not that naive. Moreover, the Reform Party was not the Social Credit party. For all his party's limitations, provincialism, intolerance, and general lack of political correctness, the son had indeed learned from his father's errors. Rather than ignoring or complicitly condoning fellow party members who espoused intolerant views, Preston Manning acted swiftly and, perhaps, even courageously. While the ideological connections of intolerance remain an intriguing thread between the two populist parties, the filial connection must be distinguished—Preston Manning's alacrity in ousting bigots was a significant departure from that of his father, who did not eradicate his party's long-standing anti-Semitic campaign until well after the near destruction of European Jewry. Perhaps, then, it was not so surprising for both the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Reform Party of Canada to say, "Never Again."

ENDNOTES

¹The following incidents between Social Credit politicians and Canadian Jewish Congress officials are excerpted from the author's book, *Social Discredit: Anti-Semitism, Social Credit, and the Jewish Response* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).

²Letter, Fradkin to Friedman, 4 February 1942 (Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives {CJCNA}, ZC, Social Credit {SC}).

³Letter, Frank to Friedman, 10 February 1942 (CJCNA, ZA 1948, Box 1, File 7); Letter, Frank to Fradkin, 10 February 1942 (CJCNA, ZC, SC).

⁴Bob Hesketh, *Major Douglas and Alberta Social Credit* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 208-20.

⁵*Today and Tomorrow*, 2 March 1944.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Letter, Rosenberg to Lappin, 14 March 1944; Letter, [Rosenberg] to Fradkin, 13 March 1944 (CJCNA, ZA 1945, Box 7, File 100).

⁸Letter, Friedman to Hayes, 3 January 1945 (CJCNA, ZA 1945, Box 7, File 100).

⁹*Lethbridge Herald*, 10 January 1945; *Canadian Social Crediter*, 11 January 1945.

¹⁰For an excellent exposition of the Canadian government's refusal to assist European Jewry during the Second World War, see Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933–1948* (Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1991).

¹¹"Proceedings of the Seventh Plenary Session," 31 May–2 June 1947 (Provincial Archives of Manitoba {PAM}, Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada {JHSWC} Collection, MG6 B3).

¹²National Joint Public Relations Committee, "Public Relations in Theory and in Practice," c. 1950; "Declaration of Policy," c. 15 August 1950 (PAM, JHSWC Collection, MG10, File 3 / MG8, File 3).

¹³"Proceedings of the Seventh Plenary Session," 31 May–2 June 1947 (PAM, JHSWC Collection, MG6 B3).

¹⁴See Stingel, *Social Discredit*, chaps. 5 and 6.

¹⁵Minutes, National Council Meeting of the Social Credit Association of Canada, 29–30 November 1947 (Glenbow-Alberta Institute {Glenbow}, Solon Low Papers, Box M695, File 469); Letter, Gillese to Haldeman, 15 December 1947 (Glenbow, Solon Low Papers, Box M695, File 173).

¹⁶*Albertan* (Calgary), 15 December 1947; *Edmonton Bulletin*, 13 December 1947; *Edmonton Journal*, 15 December 1947; *Lethbridge Herald*, 15 December 1947; *Montreal Gazette*, 16–17 December 1947; *Wetaskiwin Times*, 17 December 1947; Memo, Rosenberg to Hayes, 12 January 1948 (CJCNA, ZC, SC).

¹⁷World News Services, "Anti-Semites Curbed in Social Credit Appeal For Support of Electors," c. December 1947 (CJCNA, ZC, SC).

¹⁸*Albertan* (Calgary), 23 February 1948; *Calgary Herald*, 23 February 1948; *Edmonton Bulletin*, 23 February 1948; *Edmonton Journal*, 23 February 1948; *Lethbridge Herald*, 23 February 1948; *Medicine Hat Daily News*, 23 February 1948; *Peace River Record-Gazette*, 26 February 1948.

¹⁹Letter, Kirshnblatt to Aronsfeld, 3 September 1948 (CJCNA, ZA 1948, Box 1, File 7); Letter, Wax to Kirshnblatt, 11 June 1948 (CJCNA, ZA 1947, Box 1, File 7D); *DSCC Information Service*, September 1948 (CJCNA, ZA 1949, Box 3, File 28); Memo, Kirshnblatt to Hayes,

24 September 1948 (CJCNA, ZA 1949, Box 3, File 28); Memo, Rosenberg to Hayes, 15 January 1948 (CJCNA, ZC, SC); *Canadian Jewish Weekly*, 25 December 1947; *Lethbridge Herald*, 23 February 1948; *Montreal Daily Star*, 11 December 1947; *Time* (Canada), 8 March 1948; *Victoria Daily Times*, 11 December 1947.

²⁰On the economic and political factors motivating Manning to conduct his purge of the anti-Semites, see Stingel, *Social Discredit*, chap. 7.

²¹Irving Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1990) 213.

²²“Proceedings of the Seventh Plenary Session,” 31 May–2 June 1947 (PAM, JHSWC Collection, MG6 B3).

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴Murray Dobbin, “The Clandestine World of Preston Manning,” *Canadian Forum* (November 1991): 10.

²⁵Ian Pearson, “Thou Shalt Not Ignore the West,” *Saturday Night* (December 1990): 37–38.

²⁶For an analysis of the Reform Party’s right-wing populism, see Trevor Harrison, *Of Passionate Intensity: Right-Wing Populism and the Reform Party of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

²⁷*Maclean’s Magazine*, 13 November 1989, 24.

²⁸Dobbin, “The Clandestine World of Preston Manning,” 11.

²⁹*Maclean’s Magazine*, 13 November 1989, 24; Pearson, “Thou Shalt Not Ignore the West,” 43.

³⁰*Canadian Jewish News*, 16 February 1995; Pearson, “Thou Shalt Not Ignore the West,” 43.

³¹*Ibid.*; *Maclean’s Magazine*, 16 December 1991, 13.

³²Dobbin, “The Clandestine World of Preston Manning,” 10.

³³Preston Manning, *The New Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1992) 97.

³⁴Pearson, “Thou Shalt Not Ignore the West,” 40. On the religious and populist similarities between Ernest and Preston Manning, see Lloyd Mackey, *Like Father, Like Son: Ernest Manning and Preston Manning* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1997), and Sydney Sharpe and Don Braid, *Storming Babylon: Preston Manning and the Rise of the Reform Party* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1992)

³⁵Dobbin, “The Clandestine World of Preston Manning,” 9.

³⁶*Alberta Report*, 16 December 1991, 2.

³⁷Dobbin, "The Clandestine World of Preston Manning," 10.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 11; *Maclean's Magazine*, 13 November 1989, 24–5; 22 July 1991, 21.

³⁹*Maclean's Magazine*, 16 December 1991, 12–14.

⁴⁰*Alberta Report*, 23 March 1992, 12; *Canadian Jewish News*, 21 January, 8 April 1993; *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, 8 November 1993; *Toronto Star*, 14 January 1993; Reform Party News Release, 15 June 1992 (Canadian Jewish Congress {CJC} National Communications Department, reference files, Reform Party).

⁴¹On Preston Manning's use of "calculated ambiguity" to promote his party's conservative agenda, see Murray Dobbin, *Preston Manning and the Reform Party* (Halifax: Formac Publishing, 1992).

⁴²Pearson, "Thou Shalt Not Ignore the West," 74.

⁴³*Maclean's Magazine*, 13 November 1989, 24; 16 December 1991, 13; Pearson, "Thou Shalt Not Ignore the West," 40.

⁴⁴"Remarks to Jewish Community Leaders, Calgary, Alberta ... October 3, 1990, by E. Preston Manning ..." document appended to "Correspondence With, Remarks to, Jewish Community Leaders, E. Preston Manning ... and Jewish Community Leaders, Calgary, Alberta," October 1990–June 1991 (CJC National Communications Department, reference files, Reform Party); National Archives of Canada, B'nai Brith Collection, MG28, V133, vol. 24, file 17.

⁴⁵Preston Manning addressed Jewish leaders in Calgary once in 1990 and twice in 1991; he spoke with Jewish leaders in Winnipeg in 1991; and he met privately with members of the Kitchener-Waterloo community in 1992. *Canadian Jewish News*, 21 January 1993; "Correspondence With, Remarks to, Jewish Community Leaders, E. Preston Manning ... and Jewish Community Leaders, Calgary, Alberta," October 1990–June 1991 (CJC National Communications Department, reference files, Reform Party).

⁴⁶*Canadian Jewish News*, 21 January 1993; *Toronto Star*, 14 January 1993; *Winnipeg Free Press*, 14 January 1993.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹*Canadian Jewish News*, 21 October 1993; *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, 8 November 1993.

⁵⁰*Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, 6 November 1993.

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵²*Canadian Jewish News*, 17 February 1994; *Montreal Gazette*, 10 February 1994; *Vancouver Sun*, 14 February 1994; Reform Party Press Releases, 9 February 1994 (CJC National Communications Department, reference files, Reform Party).

⁵³*Calgary Herald*, 15 February 1994; *Vancouver Sun*, 14 February 1994;

⁵⁴*Canadian Jewish News*, 17 February 1994; *Montreal Gazette*, 10 February 1994.

⁵⁵*Canadian Jewish News*, 31 March 1994; Canadian Jewish Congress communiqué, 22 March 1994 (CJC National Communications Department, reference files, Reform Party).

⁵⁶*Canadian Jewish News*, 31 March 1994.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

⁵⁸Letter (email), Abella to author, 7 April 1999.

⁵⁹*Canadian Jewish News*, 16 February 1995

⁶⁰*Canadian Jewish News*, 23 February 1995.

⁶¹*Ibid.*

⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴*Canadian Jewish News*, 16 February 1995.

⁶⁵*Canadian Jewish News*, 12 October 1995.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷Reform Party News Release, 6 December 1994 (CJC National Communications Department, reference files, Reform Party).

⁶⁸*Canadian Jewish News*, 2 May 1996; *Winnipeg Free Press*, 24 April 1996.

⁶⁹*Canadian Jewish News*, 2 May 1996.

⁷⁰*Canadian Jewish News*, 2 May 1996; *Winnipeg Free Press*, 24 April 1996.

⁷¹*Winnipeg Free Press*, 24 April 1996.

⁷²*Canadian Jewish News*, 2 May 1996; *Winnipeg Free Press*, 24 April 1996.

⁷³*Canadian Jewish News* (Montreal edition), 27 November 1997.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*