

policy guidelines, although his own conclusion is rather modest, reminding readers that the future is as unpredictable as the present was half a century ago. "Orthodox Jews in America," he says, "will . . . reinvent themselves and their movement again and again, generation after generation" (p. 305).

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Laverdure, Paul . *Sunday in Canada: The Rise and Fall of the Lord's Day*. Yorkton, Saskatchewan: Gravelbooks, 2004. 253pp.

In 1905, Great Britain passed the Aliens Act, which imposed heavy restrictions on immigration. In this manner, the British government tried to lower the growing number of foreign immigrants, many of them eastern-European Jews, who had entered the country in the previous decades. A year later, Canada passed the Lord's Day Act, which was meant to promote a Sunday Sabbath imbued with tranquility and spirituality on which businesses were closed and secular commercial amusements of all kinds were suspended. At first glance, these two Acts have little in common apart from their timing. In *Sunday in Canada*, however, Paul Laverdure demonstrates that the moving spirit behind the latter had a great deal to do with the former.

The main group spearheading this drive for legislation in Canada was a Protestant group known as the Lord's Day Alliance. This organization had existed since the 1880s, and from its inception had been pushing the Canadian government to introduce a bill making Sunday Sabbath observance mandatory. The group made little headway, however, until it infused its spiritual rhetoric with a mixture of Canadian nationalism and anti-immigration xenophobia more characteristic of the supporters of the British Aliens Act. The threat of foreign immigration dovetailed with threats to the legal, moral, and social order epitomized, in the eyes of the Alliance, by desecration of the Sunday Sabbath. Proponents of the Canadian act railed against the tragedy of "our law...being so flagrantly broken;

and our country...being degraded by the vicious practices of foreigners,” (29) and vilified their opponents as “a lot of heathens, Jew Anarchists, Socialists and Catholics, who would tear down the holy institution of the Lord’s Sabbath!” (59) Playing on the country’s political and nationalistic fears ensured the passage of a religious law.

The nationalist rhetoric and the desire to remould Canada into a model Protestant society put the Alliance at odds with Catholics as well as Jews and other foreigners. Although Catholics observed the Sabbath on Sunday, church attendance mattered more to them than after-church activities or the strict prohibition of work. Protestants commented darkly, that “the priests teach, and the people believe, that the Roman clergy are above the law.... All day long the Papal flag fl[ies] from the steeple of the Catholic church, and the Union Jack far below it on the flag-staff.” (54) This accusation combined desecration of the Sabbath laws with putting the pope and the Catholic Church above Canadian nationalism and allegiance to the Canadian government.

It was the Jews and not the Catholics, however, who suffered most from the Lord’s Day Act. They had attempted to introduce a “Jewish Exemption Clause” allowing Jews to work on Sunday, if they kept their Sabbath on Saturday. This effort was quashed by the Alliance, some of its leaders asserting that “Jews can earn as much in five days as any of us can earn in six.” (36) There had been a brief alliance between Jews and Catholics in their opposition to the act. Once it was in place, however, it was used as a tool to persecute Jewish businessmen. This was especially the case in Quebec, where well over 90 per cent of all the businesses prosecuted for breaking the Sunday laws were owned by Jews or others of foreign origin. Only a handful of native Quebec businessmen were prosecuted, despite the fact that they broke the law as often as their “foreign” competitors.

The Lord’s Day Act was launched in alliance with political nationalism. Despite increasing fragmentation within the Alliance after the Act had been passed, it remained in force for close to fifty years. This was, again, due almost entirely to the fact that

Ottawa's political program continued to dovetail with that of the Alliance. The nationalist xenophobia with which proponents of the Act were allied continued to flourish between the world wars, and the emergence of bolshevism, which sowed political disorder and atheism, strengthened the desire to protect religious practice and any laws that had been enacted for that purpose.

The political desirability of the Lord's Day Act, however, could not last forever. The necessity of waging war, particularly the Second World War, superseded any Sunday Sabbath laws on the books. When the Alliance protested the transportation, training, and entertaining of troops on Sundays, they were accused of pro-German sympathies. After World War II, the Sabbath laws were ignored and then shed gradually, as the government worried more about finding jobs for returning soldiers and preventing the onset of another depression. Ottawa's political agenda had changed, as had the mood of the general population. The Lord's Day Act was repealed in 1950, its crusading advocates having died out without anyone stepping forward to take their place.

Paul Laverdure brings a certain measure of quiet poignancy to his description of the slow death of the movement, its leaders, and their ideals. His book, however, is suffused with quiet triumph at the move from state-mandated religious practice to state secularization. Given the forces that ultimately propelled the Lord's Day Act into being, secularization in *Sunday in Canada* becomes the triumph, not of irreligion, but of religious and cultural tolerance in Canada.

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Academic Studies Press

Pomson, Alex and Randal F. Schnoor, *Back to School: Jewish Day School in the Lives of Adult Jews*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008. 184 pp.

Research indicates that increasing numbers of American Jews no longer turn to the synagogue to explore and express their