

GRADUATE STUDENT COLLOQUIUM ON QUEBEC / CANADIAN JEWISH STUDIES

COLLOQUE ÉTUDIANT SUR LES ÉTUDES JUIVES QUÉBÉCOISES / CANADIENNES

Introduction

On November 9, 2004, the Institut Québécois d'études sur la culture juive (IQECJ), in cooperation with the Concordia University Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies and the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives, held a unique bilingual graduate student colloquium to highlight the creative research of students in Montreal universities in the field of Quebec / Canadian Jewish Studies. This event took place in the Atrium of Concordia University's Samuel Bronfman Building in Montreal, which formerly housed the headquarters of Canadian Jewish Congress. Twelve graduate students from the four major universities of Montreal (Concordia, McGill, Université du Québec à Montréal, and Université de Montréal) took part in this colloquium. Nine of them submitted papers published in this collection. The three other presenters were Geneviève Couture, Université de Montréal, who presented a paper entitled: « Réfugiés et prisonniers de guerre à Sherbrooke : I er camp d'internement Newington, 1940-1946 »; Jean-Luc Bédard, Université de Montréal, « La sépharadité parmi les jeunes juifs de Montréal d'origine marocaine » and Howard Gontovnick, Concordia University, "What is the Distinguishing Factor that Gives a City its Jewish Character? Exploring Côte Saint-Luc, Québec."

Founded in 1987 by Canadian Jewish Congress archivist David Rome and Father Jacques Langlais, the IQECJ pursued the twin goal of transmitting the historical and cultural heritage of the Montreal Jewish community, and of stimulating research in this field through the preservation of documentary and archival sources. Of particular interest to the two founders

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was the fostering of dialogue in this field between researchers primarily oriented toward Jewish studies and those whose main focus of interest was the study of francophone Quebec. In 1986, when Rome and Langlais published their seminal study, *Juifs et Québécois français: 200 ans d'histoire commune*, research and teaching in this area was hardly to be found in any of the Montreal universities. Furthermore, relatively little information reached the general public concerning the scope and importance of Montreal Jewish history in the study of key twentieth century Quebec issues, such as the school question, the development of industrial unions, and the impact of immigration on the Island of Montreal.

As this special issue of *Canadian Jewish Studies* amply demonstrates, a new generation of Quebec researchers is now emerging that approaches the field of Canadian Jewish Studies with both confidence and intense interest. The variety and complexity of the subjects presented in this collection also attests to the fact that these young, talented researchers are immersing themselves in the rich and complex archival collections available in both Jewish and non-Jewish institutions, and producing studies in both English and French.

This broadening of the field of Quebec / Canadian Jewish Studies is attracting scholars, many of whom, in earlier historical contexts, would not have been aware of the importance of including Jews and Judaism in their scholarly explorations. New fields are now emerging that include areas very little explored until recently: Montreal's Yiddish heritage, the role of women in synagogues, and varieties of Jewish adaptation to Canada. The internal structuring of the Montreal Jewish community, the impact of the Holocaust on Francophone literary writing, and recent intercommunity tensions in Outremont have also found their way into the academy as subjects of inquiry and reflection. Many other issues, certainly, that have yet to be defined and exploited, will doubtless become the research objectives of this newly emerging cohort of academic researchers.

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