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**ROME AMONG THE BISHOPS: AN IMMIGRANT
JEW EXPLORES THE UNKNOWN WORLDS OF
FRENCH CANADA¹**

Introduction

What follows is a case study in pioneering Jewish-Christian dialogue initiatives in Quebec. The background of interest is the complex and evolving relationship between the English-identified Jewish community and the French-speaking Quebec majority, as the latter transitioned in the years after the Second World War from a Catholic religious to a language-and-culture based nationalist movement. This situation was unique within Canada and posed particular challenges for Quebec's Jews and for dialogue. In addition to the anti-Semitism that was prevalent in the rest of English-speaking Protestant Canada, Quebec's Jews faced Catholic-Church based anti-Semitism and conversionist agendas. Furthermore, they became the targets of language-based hostility as Quebec's increasingly language-focused nationalists saw them as part of the oppressing English-speaking minority.

In particular, this study highlights the activities of David Rome, a pioneer in what was then new and fraught territory. Rome's singularity lay in his coming to understand the distinctness of Quebec when others in the Jewish community of Montreal did not, and in the way he responded to this distinctiveness. His activities ranged from public relations

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campaigns designed to protect the vital interests of the Jewish people to intimate exchanges across the divide of difference.

All of Rome's activities were marked by his character and world view, formed to a significant extent during his youth in Lithuania. By the time he arrived in Canada at age 11, Rome had developed an intense pride in his Jewish identity and heritage. He also had become convinced that this inheritance was threatened, both by the secularizing forces of modernity and by anti-Semitism. Rome's childhood experiences led him to believe that the Jews had survived through the millennia thanks to their ability to adapt, to learn new languages and to use their wits. This conviction was accompanied by distrust of the other, "the Goyim," who were known to be hostile. The persistence of such orientations towards the other meant that dialogue was never a simple affair for Rome, and his story raises questions about the nature of dialogical exchanges. Rome's story also offers insight into the challenges faced by dialogue pioneers. Among these challenges is the problem of intra-community dialogue: it is often difficult for pioneers to convey their dialogue-based insights back to their own group.

Although this case study is historical, the issues involved remain current. Plural societies like Canada face the ongoing challenge of how to ensure a sense of belonging and shared citizenship for all. Despite the desire to celebrate and be enriched by diversity, difficult issues remain. Members of founding national groups may fear new arrivals whose religion and culture feel foreign and threatening. Further, new neighbors may have been bitter enemies in their countries of origin: Hutus and Tutsis, Palestinians and Jewish Israelis among others. In Quebec, the Bouchard-Taylor Commission (2007-2008) highlighted an additional layer of insecurity on the part of French-speaking Quebecers, many of whom feel a threat to their identity coming from the sea of English-speakers that surrounds Quebec in North America.

Where there are inter-groups tensions and fears, in Quebec, Canada and beyond, dialogue is often suggested as

a way forward. However, in part because of the many hopes placed in it, dialogue has become an over-used term. It is often not clear what is meant by “dialogue,” how it works and what we can expect from it. This study offers a reflection on these questions and does so in human terms, at human scale. This is important as it is individual humans who have to make dialogues work, it is through them that government policy succeeds or fails on the ground. The extensive use in what follows of oral history and primary source materials, from both sides of the dialogue, help to foreground this personal dimension.

Mise-en-scène

The installation of layman Guy Frégault (1918-1977) in 1947 as the first Chair of the newly established Institut d’histoire at the Université de Montréal was an important moment in the evolution of that university in the direction of a modern, secular institution engaged in the professional study of history.² Frégault was the protégé and successor of Abbé Lionel Groulx. Groulx was a leading figure in paving the way towards Quebec’s Quiet Revolution, an influential nationalist and teacher; however, his ardent nationalism included anti-Semitic views. Though opinion today on the extent and importance of Lionel Groulx’ anti-Semitism is divided, the Abbé would not have been known as a friend of the Jews.³ And yet, among the attendees at Frégault’s installation there was a lone Jew in the room, David Rome (1910-1996). What was Rome doing there? Was he a Jewish dignitary with introductions to the powers-that-be? Was he engaged in building bridges, attending in an official capacity on behalf of his community? If so, on the face of it, it would seem an odd choice of occasion. In fact, Rome was nothing of the sort. His own description of the event, recorded in conversation with his friend Eiran Harris, makes clear that he was not there in an official capacity:

It was a very spectacular event. Every Bishop of Quebec was there, all in their robes, and all the dignitaries of the university and all the national-

ists...it was the elite of Canada and Quebec. And there was a stranger there and someone said you know, “He’s Jewish...” and the word spreads like that...and it became known that there was a Jew in the room and his name was Rome...And I heard the word “*juif*,” “*un juif*”...Then years went by, until 1962, when by this time it was the Lesage government,...and Guy Frégault was the Deputy Minister (of Cultural Affairs)...So he remembered in making up the list for the Arts Council, he remembered this “Jew boy” who’d been there at his installation, so he nominated me.⁴

In what follows, I will present the changing political and historical setting in which Rome wandered among the Bishops, and “the nationalists.” I will also trace the immigrant path that led him to their door, carrying the vulnerability and the determination of a “Jew-boy” from Eastern Europe. At a time when French Canada was an undiscovered continent for many English-speaking Canadians, we will see how Rome explored that territory and designed a program of public relations in response to what he found. We will see that Guy Frégault’s invitation to Rome to be part of Quebec’s first Arts Council plunged Rome into the creative center of those shaping Quebec’s new nationalism. This meant that in terms of understanding French Quebec, Rome would leave his community behind, much as he wanted to bring it along and share his vision and program with its members. Nevertheless, from beginning to end, Rome was faithful to his self-appointed mission of protecting the vital interests of the Jewish people.

Political and historical setting: two periods

For the purposes of this paper, two historical periods are important to Jewish-Christian relations in Quebec and to Rome’s work. The first centers on the Second World War and the Holocaust. This includes Jewish attempts before and during the war to reach out to Christians in power, clergy and politicians, in attempts to help save endangered European Jews.

Once the war was over and the full extent of the atrocities perpetrated became widely known, there were new reasons for Christians and Jews to meet. From the standpoint of the Catholic Church there was a deep sense of question: is it possible that we, our actions, or inactions or policies could in some way have contributed to this horror? This question was eventually responsible in part for a groundbreaking change in Church teachings about Jews, expressed in the document *Nostra Aetate*, a document developed initially under Pope John XXIII and proclaimed in 1965 by Pope Paul VI.⁵ During the same postwar period, people from the Jewish community were, with considerable suspicion and despite traditional taboos, beginning to relate to the Christian community. They realized that many Christians knew very little about Judaism or about the Holocaust. If Jews were to ensure a “never again,” they thought, Christians would need to know what happened and also to get to know Jews as people. This was very much Rome’s motivation and approach.

The second period relevant to Rome’s work among the bishops and the nationalists comes with the Quiet Revolution, when Québécois culture and the French language replaced religion as the main anchor of French Canadian identity. In the decades following the election of the Jean Lesage government in 1960, the hegemony of the Anglophone minority, their control of the province’s business life and general sense of entitlement began to dissipate. Power relations between the French-speaking majority and the previously-dominant English-speaking minority shifted and eventually were inverted. This happened more intensively with the election of the Parti Québécois in 1976 and the passage of the protective language legislation of Bill 101 the following year.

In the rest of this paper, I will begin by showing the genesis of Rome’s interest in French Canadians and the Catholic Church in Quebec, and how he developed that interest into a public relations program during his time at the Canadian Jewish Congress. Next, I will show how Rome’s program changed and

intensified after his stint on the Arts Council and in the wake of the formation of the Parti Québécois in 1968. The final section proposes that Rome's most effective work may have been done in building relationships with individual French Canadians, a proposal supported and illustrated with a series of examples.

Genesis of David Rome's interest in French Canadians and the Catholic Church

To understand what prompted Rome to attend Frégault's installation it is important to appreciate what he brought with him from Lithuania to Canada, the personal background that was both baggage and source of his determination to persist in protecting what he understood to be vital interests of the Jewish people.

Prelude: David Rome's early life; core values and vulnerabilities

Rome was four years old when he left his birthplace in Vilnius, together with his father, to settle in the village of Zhlobin, some 400 km to the southeast. There his father bought a store. The family stayed for seven years, until their departure for Canada. Speaking of Zhlobin, Rome says that the village was *entirely* Jewish, but this seems unlikely.⁶ The important thing in Rome's account is that there is a clear separation between "Us" and "Them," Jews and Goyim: "Zhlobin was entirely Jewish. There may have been a few Goyim...Jews were Jews and Goyim were Goyim and never the twain met, except in the store."⁷ In speaking about his personal experience with anti-Semitism, Rome says: "There were no pogroms where we lived. We didn't use the term anti-Semitism. We knew there were Goyim, and that by nature they were hostile. So we kept away from them."⁸ Or again in describing his experiences in school, experiences of fear and vulnerability he claims to have brought with him as a "heritage" when he came to Canada: "On the way to school, Jewish students were attacked by Goyim and their dogs. One day I decided to confront them; fortunately, they were not there. I brought that heritage to Canada."⁹

Rome's early education took place in the changing circumstances of war and occupation.¹⁰ He learned to write Yiddish on his own, learned Russian from a grammar book, and was taught how to write his numbers by a German officer.¹¹ He did not remember going to primary school. His family was ardently Zionist, devoted to Hebrew and Jewish Studies. However, like the vast majority of Jewish emigrants, when they left Lithuania they headed west to North America rather than to Palestine. Rome's stories express pride in the fact that he was self-taught and that he succeeded in living by his wits in a precarious environment. Among the skills important to survival was that of being a polyglot, as he put it, "The secret of the Jews' success was knowing many languages."¹²

At age 11, Rome arrived in Vancouver with his parents. It was there, as a young man attending Labour Zionist meetings and conferences, that Rome conceived his self-appointed mission, of devoting his life to the service of the Jewish community.¹³ Rome continued his association with the Labour Zionists upon arriving in Montreal; from 1939 to 1940, he acted as the first National Director of the Canadian Labour Zionist Organization. After this, Rome spent two years in Toronto as editor of the *Daily Hebrew Journal*, before returning to settle definitively in Montreal.

*Press Officer at the CJC: "Fundamental Pioneering;"
David Rome discovers French Canada*

Rome arrived in Montreal imbued with a mission to serve the Jewish people. In joining the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) as its first press officer in 1942, he was in a good position to do this. Revived in 1934 to combat anti-Semitism, Congress was at the centre of the fight to protect and serve the interests of Jews in Canada and internationally.¹⁴ As long as the war was on, Rome's energies were galvanized by learning the ropes at Congress and doing his job as Press Officer, monitoring the media, trying to educate both Jews and non-Jews and sending out counterpropaganda, including importantly within

Quebec.¹⁵ However, once the war was over, Rome began articulating his own, personal analysis of Quebec life and politics and planning a new public relations program in response to that analysis.

In July 1946, Rome wrote to his boss, CJC Executive Director Saul Hayes, framing his thoughts. In a memo he titled “Public Relations Work among French Canadians and Catholics” Rome identified two reasons to mount a new public relations campaign.¹⁶ First was the ongoing anti-Semitism in Quebec, which continued “with a vehemence and persistence not to be found elsewhere in Canada.” Second, he raised the issue of national unity and the need for all English-speaking Canadians, not only Jews, “to accommodate themselves, at least in part, to their French-speaking fellow Canadians” for the good of the country as a whole. Key to Rome’s analysis was his assessment of the challenge of working in French Canada. He said that the language barrier was a formidable one, but that even beyond that, there was an issue of mentalities, a need to understand minds and hearts:

It is a difficult area in which to operate because of the large barrier which divides it from the rest of Canada, particularly from English-language Canada. There is also a separate historic tradition which makes French Canada subject to a totally different logic and to totally different motivations. It is therefore not simply a question of translating English language procedures into the French language.¹⁷

In the same memo, with a great deal of circumspection, Rome raised the question of meeting to dialogue with priests who approached him. Full of wariness that their intentions may have been dishonorable, i.e. that they may have wanted to befriend in order to convert, he nonetheless picked up on a new, post-Holocaust openness to dialogue, noting that the contrition in their stance should be acknowledged:

The simple facts are that we have been approached by members of their church...with some implication that their action comes from authorities higher than their own. It appears to be a case of someone coming towards us with an outstretched hand. In their approach also there is a large measure of frankness, an admission that hitherto everything had not been right on their side and there is something to correct.¹⁸

Rome insisted that if any step were to be taken towards meeting these priests, these steps had to be “tentative and non-committal.” Furthermore, he insisted that the Jewish community be kept fully informed. Rome’s “heritage” of Jewish suspicion with respect to the Goyim came through in his insistence on gaining the assent of “the entire Jewish community.”

It is essential that if we do anything at all that it be done with the knowledge and approval of the entire Jewish community. There are too many possibilities of suspicion and lack of confidence within the Jewish community...for us to proceed a single step without this common agreement and mutual confidence...all these explorations are of such a pioneering character... each item of this program must be subject to the veto of each party.¹⁹

Rome’s pitch to Saul Hayes was successful. A year later, in the spring of 1947, a special committee devoted to “Public relations work among French-Canadians and with the Roman Catholic Church” was appointed as a subcommittee of the Joint Public Relations Committee of the Eastern Division of the CJC and of B’nai Brith. On December 4, 1947, sub-committee Chair Samuel D. Cohen reported on the committee’s work. As in Rome’s initial memo, there was the sense of French Canada as an unexplored world. What is noteworthy about this is that no one seemed to have noticed this fact before Rome brought it to their attention. In Cohen’s words: “French Canada is in

reality a complex and well-established world of its own and your committee has spent a good deal of time in the elementary process of exploration.”

Cohen ended his committee report with a tribute to Rome, making it clear that Rome had gone ahead and met with Church representatives and entered into a dialogue.

[Mr. Rome] seems to have not only familiarized himself with the techniques of the various groups which form part of the Catholic church organization, but has succeeded by tact and subtlety in gaining the respect and confidence of certain Catholic gentleman who had evinced, in many instances, a genuine interest and desire to participate in the fostering of goodwill and better understanding between Jews and Catholics.²⁰

As Rome continued his explorations of the previously unknown worlds of French Canada, he developed his own understanding of the roots of anti-Semitism there and of what policies had to be adopted to counter it. He continued to warn his superiors of the conversionist agendas of different Catholic groups, but modified his strong cautionary language as he got to know them and came to believe their claim that their friendship was not based on conversion alone.²¹ In fact, these very groups became staunch allies in the fight against anti-Semitism. Although their long-range horizon remained conversion, groups like the Comité Saint-Paul and both the Sisters and the Fathers of Notre Dame de Sion were committed to helping publicize positive images of Jews.²² At this point as well, the Jews were becoming valuable as allies in a secularizing world. Rome states:

As a matter of fact, in a frank discussion with the Monsignor of the church, who is especially in charge of conversionist activities in this area, [he] said that the church is more interested in having Jews observant of their own religion and shunning atheism than it is in converting them to Catholicism.²³

Other parts of the public relations program developed by Rome included preparing educational materials for the clergy as well as for Catholic youth groups, making them aware of basic information about Jewish holidays and preparing background on Jews in Canada.²⁴ However Rome was not content to send materials out and track their usage from his office. He organized information meetings about Canada's Jews and went out himself as presenter. Going out into the field, meeting and talking with people allowed Rome to gauge attitudes for himself. He noted, for example, that it would have been difficult for the students he presented to at gatherings of Catholic youth, to hide anti-Semitic attitudes, if they had them, during question and answer exchanges.²⁵ Rome was also active among the Bishops, as attested to by a report by Saul Hayes from April 1948:

Last week Mr. Rome had the opportunity to meet with the Archbishop of Montreal for a lengthy discussion, some of which was off the record, on a variety of subjects which interest us. This is the first such interview held with the present Archbishop on such subjects and the report of this interview is very gratifying. We have received confirmation that His Excellency is well informed on the fight against anti-Semitism which is being conducted by a number of priests in this district.²⁶

The in-person approach portrayed here, including the opportunity to feel out opinions "off the record," was part of what was particular and dialogical about Rome and his way of doing things. It took a particular kind of chutzpah, fueled by conviction and mission, for a Press Officer to arrange and successfully execute such encounters.

Persuading the Jews to change their ways

As Rome's thinking developed, he became increasingly convinced that defending Jews in Quebec and Canada required more than pointing fingers and fighting anti-Semitism. He continued to ponder the two categories of actors he identified

at the installation of Guy Frégault: the Catholic Church, and the nationalists. In a 1949 memo Rome spelled out the danger posed by the hostility of French Canadian nationalists towards English Canadians and other non-French-Canadians. Rome was not saying that these nationalists, or all nationalists, were anti-Semitic by nature, a view he might well have brought with him from Europe. Much more precisely, Rome targeted the danger to Jews as lying in their alignment with the English Canadians:

In regard to French-Canada, anti-Semitism varies according to the policies of the church. Another very important factor is the policy and the power of the distinctive French Canadian “nationalist” sector. Insofar as these groups are hostile to the English Canadians and to other groups of non-French-Canadians, Jews are in jeopardy...The policies of the nationalist group and of the church are mutually interdependent. *French Canada is alert to the extent to which Jews align themselves with French-Canadians linguistically, culturally, politically and in other ways.*²⁷

This view would continue to orient Rome’s thinking. It would be critical to the campaign that he would pursue with increasing intensity over the coming years: to try to get the English-speaking Jews to speak French and to know and appreciate Québécois culture.²⁸

One of Rome’s first and most successful undertakings in this direction was to establish, starting in 1948, the *Cercle Juif de langue française*, whose four founding members were also the members of the sub-committee on public relations work among French-Canadians.²⁹ This initiative of gathering “Jewish men and women who are interested in French language and culture” intended to demonstrate to French Canada both the Jews’ abilities to speak French and their interest in Quebec culture and French culture more generally.³⁰ The *Cercle* was a success and was developed more intensively after Rome left Congress by his successor, Naïm Kattan.³¹ Nonetheless, the

lively meetings and interesting cultural exchanges that took place under the auspices of the *Cercle* did not filter out into the mainstream community.

Wishful thinking

It is perhaps an indication of how convinced Rome was of the survival-critical importance of Jews and French Canadians becoming allies, that at times he exaggerated and stated as fact things he wished were true. No doubt buoyed by the success of the *Cercle juif* and perhaps anticipating the imminent full flowering of his plans for the Jews, Rome managed to convince important members of the French press that great strides were being made. Rome boasted in a memo to the National Joint Public Relations Committee of B'nai Brith and Congress about a lead editorial by Pierre Vigeant in the influential nationalist newspaper *Le Devoir*:

The important "nationalist" daily *Le Devoir* which is the platform of very influential publicists and political figures and which, in the past has published very many viciously anti-Jewish statements directed against the community and against Congress, recently devoted its leading editorial to "The Jews and French a Significant Evolution."³²

The article reported on a new attitude within the Jewish community. It said that the Jews used to believe that English would predominate and the French would assimilate. But they had come to appreciate the strength and permanence of French Canada and learned to adapt. The Yiddish press of Montreal was said to contain important statements encouraging members of the Jewish community to learn French. The article even warned of the effects on business of this Jewish transformation, as their shops would become indistinguishable from French-owned stores and would represent a new source of competition. Anticipating Quebec's signage laws by over a quarter of a century, the article noted that the francization of the Jewish

shops “may even alter the appearance of Montreal, since they help to make it seem an English-speaking city.”³³

Although it was a distortion of the truth at the time, this *Le Devoir* article anticipated a future that would eventually come to be, for the most part. What Rome wanted the community to embrace and take the lead in, would later be imposed through legislation.

The Arts Council, the Widening Gap, and a Revised “Jewish Program for our Future in Quebec”

The Arts Council

When he created Quebec’s first Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 1961, Premier Jean Lesage had lofty aims for it as the “Ministry of French Canadian Civilization and of the French Fact in America.”³⁴ The scope of the ministry’s mission suggested the importance this government placed on culture as a critical dimension of public policy. For deputy minister and nationalist historian Guy Frégault, the department was more than a place to design cultural activities; he saw it as a means for expressing and affirming French-speaking Canadian identity.³⁵ The Arts Council was created by the Ministry in order to fulfill this vocation and to produce Quebec’s first cultural policy blueprint, called a White Paper on Culture (*Livre blanc sur la culture*).³⁶ Appointed personally by Guy Frégault, Rome sat on the Arts Council alongside important builders of the new Quebec.³⁷ Rome chaired the Libraries committee. He also argued for the importance of supporting the literature of immigrants to Quebec, in their own languages. Rome was proud of the fact that the Ministry subsidized Jewish institutions, including the Jewish Public Library of which he was Director, and also “scholars in traditional rabbinics, such as Rabbis Heimlich and Grosbert, and other writers in Yiddish and in English [and] cultural interchanges by poetry and music groups with Israel.”³⁸ This was an opportunity for Rome to weave a Jewish thread into the cultural landscape of the new Quebec, one of his goals. It was also a chance for him to gain a rich and visceral sense of what

mattered to the nationalists. In terms of language, the language to be spoken by immigrants was targeted as a critical element. The White Paper noted that immigrants were being absorbed into the Protestant school system and the English-speaking sector and that this would have to change. This was a position Rome had already arrived at; as he was part of the committee on the French language, he may also have contributed to it there.

In June of 1966 the Lesage government was defeated by Daniel Johnson of the Union Nationale. The White Paper was seen as “too nationalistic and too ambitious” by the new government, which did not acknowledge it as an official policy statement.³⁹ It may be because this important document slid into obscurity that little has been said to mark the noteworthy fact that Rome sat on this council and was its only Jew.

The Widening Gap

In 1948, when Rome set out on a pioneering path towards French Quebecers, he insisted on not taking “a single step without [the] common agreement and mutual confidence” of the “entire Jewish community.”⁴⁰ However, the further Rome pushed his explorations of the previously unknown worlds of French Canada, the more people he met and got to know, the wider the gap became between his world view and that of the mainstream Jewish community.

Further, in the decades after he began his investigations, the mainstream community also changed. In a way, or at least in part, they had started heading in the opposite direction. Manny Batshaw, Executive Director from 1968 to 1980 of the Federation of Allied Jewish Community Services, explained that at a given point the community decided to focus its resources inwards. If there were external threats to the community, and there were, there were also internal ones. Assimilation and loss of Jewish identity were major issues in an open society. Batshaw commented on Rome’s strategy of making personal contact with the powers-that-be and contrasted it with the approach he and his colleagues had decided upon at Federation:

[David Rome thought that it was] more important to have the bishops acknowledge the Jews *through him*, rather than for us to hold our own, through approaching the non-Jew with confidence...Being political, producing politicians ... But generally, it was to stand up and be counted as Jews. And to do that, you had to feel proud of being Jewish; you had to be educated in being Jewish. That's the way we wanted to present ourselves. Rome would say, we have to do this on the bishop level... I think that's two very different approaches.⁴¹

Batshaw was right; the two approaches were different. To a certain extent they might even seem contradictory and may partially explain the widening gap. It is possible that community leaders, focused on keeping the new generations of Jews within the fold, might have heard Rome's insistence on turning outwards towards French Quebec as distracting or even dangerous. They might have thought that getting to know the others too well would foster assimilation and intermarriage. Perhaps on the other hand, Rome's sense of Jewish community was so firmly part of his being, his devotion to Jewish life and history so complete, that he was less sensitive to the position of Batshaw and the Federation.

A Revised "Jewish Program for our Future in Quebec"

In 1968, the year in which Batshaw took over at the Federation, Rome composed a "Memo on Jewish program for our future in Quebec."⁴² The tone of the memo was strong, almost desperate in places, though Rome stated that his suggestions should be approached "positively, with hope and not from desperation or despair." Some themes were continuous with those in his previous program, notably that the route to mutual knowledge was through culture. His statements were forceful and detailed. As well, there were new realities with which to contend. With the Church much diminished, the old forms of anti-Semitism were no longer felt to be threatening. On the other hand, the year 1968 saw the founding of the Parti

Québécois and the intensification of a polarization between Jews and nationalist Québécois. Seeming to ignore the latter fact of life, or perhaps because he was only too well aware of it, Rome began advocating a new or significantly modified policy based not on fighting anti-Semitism, but on establishing empathy and common cause between Jews and French Canadians: “A public relations program must be instituted for these and other purposes, not on the level of combating anti-Semitism, but of informing all French Canada...of the identity of interests of the two Quebecers, the French Canadian and the Jewish.”

The gentle language of his 1949 memo on anti-Semitism, informing his readers that French Canada “is alert to the extent to which Jews align themselves with French-Canadians linguistically, culturally, politically, and in other ways” had been replaced by something much stronger. Rome was now insisting that the Jewish community make the “profound, and therefore painful adjustment” necessary to learn and adopt the French language and culture. As Rome put it: “The alternative is to conclude that Quebec cannot stay in Canada on what it considers just terms, and that after such a separation there is no possibility of a permanent viable Jewish life in Quebec....On this assumption let those who can – flee.”

In order to avoid the “flight” scenario, Rome proposed an intensive program of education for the Jews, in order to break down the “wall separating Jews from French Canadians.” Rome continued, placing a sharp responsibility on his fellow Jews, “While such walls are around it is useless to deplore the menace of separatism.” Rome argued that instead of staying inside and building up fears of what French Quebecers were going to do, the Jews ought to go, meet, learn about, and collaborate with them.

Rome had developed a double point of view. He still understood very well the feelings and reflexes of his own community. At the same time though, he had also seen, felt and experienced the intensity of the new Quebec nationalism from the inside, by participating in its effervescent discussions and being part of the excitement of making policy.

In addressing his own community in the new “Jewish Program,” Rome demonstrated his understanding of why the changes he advocated for them would be “profound, and...painful.” He admitted that these changes “seem to run counter to deep loyalties which many Canadian Jews have.” He mentioned their loyalty to Canadian federalism “on the existing pattern” and to the English language and culture, “from which all of us have benefited.” Rome also cited “our fear and suspicion of the Roman Catholic Church and feeling the Protestantism is less aggressive and more tolerant.” Taking all of the forgoing as “viable valuable truths” about the English-speaking Jewish community of Montreal, Rome stated unequivocally that the Jews nonetheless would have to change. To stick to their old beliefs would be “to doom ourselves and our children to a permanent condition of hostility with our neighbors and their historic traditions.”⁴³

Rome then turned to a reiteration of the strategies he had already arrived at, at least a decade earlier. It would be essential for the Jews not to be labeled unilingual English. The traditional place of Jewish children among the Protestants in Quebec’s confessional system he qualified as “dangerous...stupid and anti-halachic,” an odd, angry comment. Looking to the future, he warned that it would be just as dangerous for the Jews to be identified with the English side of a linguistically structured system. Pushing even further and exaggerating, trying to arouse indignation perhaps and wake people up, he stated that “the Jewish school tax dollar has been the ammunition which has given strength to the Anglo-Saxon cultural warfare against Roman Catholic French-Canadians.”

Rome repeated his insistence that the Jews of Quebec and the rest of Canada learn about French Canada and its aspirations. He spoke of the harm done by “notorious” Canadian history textbooks “which have portrayed an unacceptable picture of French Canada.” Echoing information Rome picked up on the Arts Council, Rome insisted that: “The Jewish community must formally adopt French as one of its official

languages. This must be apparent from its buildings, letterheads, its publications, representations, public assemblies, and this must be fully noted in the French-language press.”

In restating the point that French-speaking Quebec needed to know about Jewish culture, Rome in his 1968 memo used the French-Canadian term “*la survivance*.” Used by French Canadians to refer to their own success in surviving despite the English oppressors and other odds, Rome distanced the Jews from the English by showing their similarity to the Quebecers. His introduction of the notion of “vigorous minorities” further emphasized the similarities between the two people, sharing one fate:

The French-speaking community must be made aware of the Jewish cultural life in this country, not all of which is in English. It must be educated about Jews’ attachments to language, about the Jewish struggle for *la survivance*, about Jewish love of folklore, about the Jewish efforts to maintain their culture and literature in the surrounding oceans of overwhelming attraction force. The common fate of vigorous minorities should bring up *approche*ment where at the moment it is only fear and hostility.⁴⁴

In framing things this way, Rome reached deeper than the question of language learning or even culture, to the visceral level of identity, vulnerability, steadfastness and survival.

Another striking and seemingly new formulation emphasized that learning the French language would not be enough to allow the Jews to be at home in Quebec. Without an understanding of culture, the “cultural allusions” necessary to grasp meaning would be absent. Rome wrote: “It is intolerable that the educated Montreal Jew should be cut off from the literary and cultural allusions in conversation with his French Canadian neighbor – even when he understands the French language.” It is possible that this statement is based on experiences Rome had on the Arts Council, where may not have able to follow certain conversations fully, even though he had learned French.

Rome then argued that all political parties, including the strongly nationalist ones, should be in conversation with the Jewish community. Perhaps Rome's closeness to militant French Canadians on the Arts Council allowed him to participate in open and honest conversations despite strong difference of views. If so, this may have allowed him to imagine things that the mainstream Jewish community, which was developing a powerful aversion to "the Separatists," could only have laughed at. Rome states: "It is intolerable that politically only one party operating in French Canada should have any access to the Jewish voter and that the militant French Canadian parties should from Day One be cut off from the Jewish community."

His frustration evident, Rome added "It is too late in the day to discuss the causes of this situation." This was a kind of admission of defeat; the two views Rome held were just too far apart. Despite his urging the Jewish community to be positive and not despair, Rome seemed not to have faith that he could explain "the causes of this situation" in a way that his readers would understand. The fact that he described all of what he had been saying as a "vast and...completely unexplored" area further confirms his sense of defeat. Though it was no longer completely unexplored for him, French Canadian culture remained unknown to the majority of the Jewish community.

If the degree of passion and conviction Rome brought to his mission caused him to be hard on his own community, it also dictated a tough attitude towards the other side when necessary. In June 1977, less than a year into the first mandate of the Parti Québécois, the Monchainin Center held a colloquium entitled "Qui Est Québécois?"⁴⁵ The diverse origins of the twenty-three participants included Mohawk, Mexican, Pakistani, Polish, Berber, Sephardic, and Haitian residents of Quebec. The whole idea was to open up the issue of inclusiveness and counter the dangers of ethnic nationalism present within the P.Q. Although on many other occasions Rome's main argument stressed the "identity of interests" of the French Canadians and the Jews, he devoted a significant part of his address to detailing the

anti-Semitism present in the history of Jews in Quebec. In the discussion that followed his presentation, the question was asked, “Do you think that the Jews are accepted in today’s Quebec?” Rome’s answer was very clear: it was no longer just about language. Pointing to Montreal’s twenty thousand francophone Sephardic Jews, Rome wondered if they would be accepted, acknowledging it was up to the French Canadians to decide.⁴⁶

Four years after writing this memo, Rome was back at the CJC, at the archives. He had been quietly but firmly dismissed as Director of the Jewish Public Library. He was not seen as the right man to move the Library forward and modernize its procedures.⁴⁷ Further, insiders suggested that the Library board members did not appreciate the time Rome spent with French Canadians and thought he should have focused instead on Yiddish Canadians.⁴⁸

At some point Rome must have abandoned the idea that he could dictate a “Program for Our Future” to the whole community. Nonetheless, his mission remained alive. While at the Jewish Public Library he began what he called “the Quebec documentation of the Jewish community,” a task he continued when he was named archivist at the CJC.

In this responsibility I have had to familiarize myself with...every scrap of paper and every fact touching the past and the sociology of Quebec Jewry; the location of all such material; the acquisition or the copying of this documentation; the inventory in publication of this material...and in the drafting of this history, at least in preliminary form.⁴⁹

While engaged in this mammoth task of documentation at the Canadian Jewish Congress archives, Rome continued to pursue his own program of meeting people and sharing his views and knowledge with them. He urged and persuaded people to see things his way with the force of his simple lifestyle, his passion and mission, his humor and empathy. There is no doubt

that these personal meetings and relationships constitute an enduring aspect of his work.

The Personal Relationships

As time went by and Rome's experience diverged increasingly from that of his community, it became less possible for him to convert them to his program for the future of Quebec's Jews. But this in no way meant that Rome gave up on his mission to serve the Jewish community; neither did he abandon his vision of weaving a Jewish narrative into the story of Quebec. Of the different ways he went about this, perhaps one of the most effective was through the many in-person conversations that he continued to have with a variety of people.

In looking at the personal relationships that Rome built, it becomes clear that his passion to learn the "logic" and "motivations" that animated French Canada had borne fruit. He devoted significant time and energy to studying the history of Quebec, learning about its strengths and vulnerabilities and the people and stories that shaped it. The fact that someone outside their own collectivity should take the time and trouble to do so was deeply appreciated by his interlocutors. In this final section I will present four of Rome's important dialogue partners, describe how they found their way to his door, and then say how their engagement with him affected them.

Luc Chartrand and Stéphane Valiquette

Today a respected journalist and international correspondent, Luc Chartrand (b. 1953) met David Rome for the first time around 1977, at the beginning of his journalistic career, one year after the election of the first Parti Québécois government. At the time, together with a colleague, Chartrand had proposed to a government publication a series of articles on the education of minorities. The proposal was accepted, and Chartrand chose to study the Jewish minority. Someone told him that the Jews were the "People of the Book" and that it was Rome, archivist

at the Canadian Jewish Congress, who was guardian of the books for the Jewish community. So it was that Chartrand found himself at Rome's door.

Chartrand identified himself as a "pure laine" or old-stock Quebecker, and as such "l'autre" (the other) for someone like Rome. Chartrand then described the welcome offered him by Rome, both at the CJC archives and also at home, in Rome's kitchen.

My Quebec genealogy goes back to the seventeenth century...So I am truly what they call "pure laine." I had the typical French Canadian background to meet someone like David Rome, as a person who belonged to the Other.

[Rome was] a man who smiled a lot, who was very friendly, very warm, who liked to talk, and so one just, one just felt like talking to him...So I went back to see him often, at the Archives, and at his place, in his kitchen, to have a coffee... How many times did I meet David Rome in my life? I would say about twenty times.⁵⁰

Apart from his friendliness and the information he imparted about Jewish history and Jewish life, Rome connected with Chartrand as a young nationalist. Rome's interest in Quebec history and his particular perspective on it, allowed him to show Chartrand aspects of his own history that he himself did not know. One example was the role played by the clergy generally, and by Abbé Groulx more specifically, in articulating French-Canadian pride and identity. As a young secularist, Chartrand said he never would have believed that the new Quebec nationalism owed anything whatsoever to the clergy, which was considered passé by his generation. Chartrand added that Rome was fully aware of the anti-Semitic side of Groulx, but that he knew how to make distinctions and evaluate the different dimensions on their own merits. Chartrand summarized by stating what is at the heart of an effective dialogue, the fact of being brought to see a well-known landscape from a different

perspective: “He is the person who helped me to see things from another point of view than my own. That is, that he had a vision of Quebec society that was different, another vision, that then helped me understand that everything could not always be seen from the same point of view, which is what was interesting.”⁵¹

Luc Chartrand reported that his interest in Rome stimulated him to seek other perspectives on the man. In order to do this, in 1999 he went to talk with Father Stéphane Valiquette about Rome.

Father Stéphane Valiquette was one of the pioneers of Jewish-Christian dialogue in Quebec, who met Jews for the first time in the Saint-Jean-Baptiste neighborhood of Montreal, where he was born. Here he had been in the habit of helping his Jewish neighbors with different jobs on the Sabbath and so had come to know them personally.⁵²

At the time of the conversation in question, Valiquette was close to eighty-seven years old and Chartrand, close to forty-five. Through the conversation between them, the preoccupations of the two generations are expressed. As a young secular Quebecer, Chartrand wanted to see whether Valiquette could confirm that Rome was really a cultural rather than a religious Jew, and that, like Chartrand himself, Rome was primarily interested in politics. Valiquette answered that in his opinion, Rome’s influence was more in the social than the political arena; that Rome wanted, as did Valiquette, to encourage dialogue among the different elements of society. Valiquette also stated his own motivations for contacting the Canadian Jewish Congress at the end of the 1930s:

Chartrand: The importance of David Rome for dialogue with the Christians, would you say it was mostly political?

Valiquette: I would say it was societal; the fact that we had a Jewish population here, who we were welcoming: the idea of a society comes up, that the different elements of a society should know and speak to each other; dialogue, among

the different elements of the society. You have to put this in the context of 1937, 38, 39, all the anti-Semites. That struck me, I who had known the Jews from my youth; I couldn't take this idea of hatred, it was unacceptable. So I had the idea of asking permission to go and visit the Canadian Jewish Congress.⁵³

It was at the Canadian Jewish Congress that that Valiquette met H.M. Caiserman, and after that, Rome. Thus began Valiquette's long career as a pioneer in his own right of the dialogue between Jews and Christians.⁵⁴ Chartrand published several articles having to do with Jews in the widely-read French-language magazine *L'Actualité*, including a feature article on Rome himself.⁵⁵ Valiquette later moved to television journalism, where he continued to be interested in Jews and Jewish life. Thorny issues involving Israel inevitably arose and Chartrand pursued several. He still speaks of one day writing his "Jewish memoirs."⁵⁶

Pierre Ancil

The meeting between Rome and Pierre Ancil was akin in some ways to that between Rome and Chartrand. Both involved the same generation of young nationalists. In both cases it was the preoccupation of the Parti Québécois with "minorities" that produced an interest in the Jews, which led inevitably to Rome as the "go-to" person for such inquiries.⁵⁷

Born in 1952 in Quebec City, Pierre Ancil completed his Master's degree, and then went to the New School for Social Research in New York, where he earned a doctorate in anthropology. When Ancil returned to Canada in 1980, he was hired to work at the *Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture* (IQRC) in Montreal. Like Quebec's first Ministry of Culture, the institute was an expression of the importance of culture to the nationalist goals of the emerging Québécois nation. In the wake of the first accession to power of the Parti Québécois, questions about how to envision, construct and maintain a Francophone society were at the top of the agenda.

One big challenge was how to deal with the “allophone” minorities, immigrant groups whose mother tongue was neither French nor English.⁵⁸ The support of these groups was considered very important by the Parti Québécois. Thus relations with the Greek, Portuguese, Jewish and other communities became an important political issue.

This was the context in which institute founder and father of sociology in Quebec, Fernand Dumont, sent the young Pierre Anctil to meet and get to know the Jews. The path for Anctil, as for so many, others led to Rome. Meeting Rome was a pivotal point in Pierre Anctil’s life. Rome was an eloquent spokesman for the Yiddish-speaking Jewish immigrants. He insisted on highlighting the cultural richness and human depth of these people, most of them poor but determined to succeed, and their institutional and cultural contributions to Canada. Acutely aware, both as a Quebecer and as a student of anthropology, of the importance of language to understanding a culture, Anctil decided in 1984 to sign up for a Yiddish-language course at McGill.

By 1988, Fernand Dumont decided that Anctil was taking his interest in Jews too far, risking a betrayal of the Quebec nationalist identity. Anctil was asked to stop his preoccupation with the Jews or to leave the *Institut*. For Anctil, the choice was as difficult as it was clear. All that he had been reading and thinking about, the issues that had occupied him as a young nationalist, had brought him to the conclusion that the quality of openness and inclusiveness of a nation would depend on how it treated its minorities. Thanks in large measure to all of his meetings with Rome, Anctil became convinced that this question centered first of all around the Yiddish-speaking immigrant Jews: neither Catholic nor Protestant, speaking neither English nor French, they were the first Other in linguistic, cultural and religious terms to arrive in Quebec:

I realized that the key to the question, its pivotal point, was the Jewish community. The whole question of diversity, of nationalism, openness to the other; everything turned on the

Jewish community...At the beginning of the 1980s, I realized that the Jewish question was the fundamental one. The Jews posed the most difficult question:...Can we remain Jews and be Québécois? Can we learn French and have intense relationships with French Canada, but stay Jewish?⁵⁹

Pierre Anctil was sensitive to the challenge that Rome posed to his audience at the Monchainin colloquium in 1977. He too believed that it was up to the French Canadians to decide whether or not Quebec would be an inclusive society. Meeting Rome gave him the opportunity to respond to the challenge.

The intensity of this challenge and the need to respond to it took Anctil deep into the study of the Yiddish-speaking immigrant community in Montreal. He has become an authority on this community and its history. As professor, he has introduced these Jews to a new generation of francophone Quebecers, a number of whom have produced masters and doctoral theses in the area, some of whom have followed in his footsteps and studied Yiddish. As a translator, Anctil has made a series of Yiddish books accessible to French Quebec and continues to pursue new areas of research within the worlds of Quebec's Jews.

Jacques Langlais

Rome had a long and productive relationship with Father Jacques Langlais (1921-2008) of the Holy Cross Order. Together the two authored two books, whose publication offered multiple opportunities to be interviewed in the French and English media, something Rome valued. It was a relationship that mattered deeply to both men, as Langlais affirmed in the chapter he devoted to Rome in his autobiography.⁶⁰ The following notes give a sense of the meaning of the relationship to each man and conclude with a view of Rome through the eyes of Langlais.

In the foreword to the English version of their co-authored history of Jews and French Quebecers, Langlais remembers his first contact with Rome. His description is a reminder of Rome's

early forays into the unknown territory of French Quebec and a testament to the correctness of his conviction that speaking French mattered.

My first contact with David Rome dates from the 1950s, when he spoke at Collège Brébeuf in Montreal. It was the first time I had heard an Anglophone Jew speak, in my language, about the relations between Jewish and French Quebecers. The details of his speech now escape me, but it struck me as a milestone event for the two communities.⁶¹

In his part of the foreword, Rome described himself as,
...a Zionist devoted to Quebec's Jewish community and an archivist with a passion for Quebec history...concerned with the period of misunderstanding and hostility between Quebec and the Jews, and more broadly, with the holocausts that have marked all of Jewish history.⁶²

Rome's concern with "the holocausts that have marked all of Jewish history" and his linking of this with Quebec anti-Semitism pointed to his ongoing preoccupation with basic safety for the Jews. For Rome, a dialogue partner was a potential ally in ensuring this safety. Langlais' presentation of his work with Rome mirrored this intensity and went so far as to speak of "conversion."

Our project turned out to be full of surprises, difficult at times and always fascinating. Writing with and about someone else is more than an adventure. And when that someone else has grown hypersensitive after suffering experiences to which you are inextricably linked, when each step with him and closer to him binds you more closely to his past and future, it is even more than an unforgettable experience. It is a con-version (from *convertere*, to turn toward the other), with everything that implies in the way of discovery, confusion, anguish and ultimately, growth.⁶³

The intelligence and sensitivity that characterized Jacques Langlais give his appreciation of Rome a particular value and charm. Langlais said of Rome that he was a man “whom Western culture had touched but not transformed,” a comment that captures something about Rome’s stubborn belief in his own way of doing and seeing things. As well, Langlais took delight in recounting Rome’s simple beginnings in Canada, when he was mentored by CJC founding General Secretary H.J. Caiserman.

[Rome] didn’t have a Western education. He did his studies after arriving in Canada, I am not sure exactly how, he had to work and so on. This is a man who had to remain very flexible. The way in which he married was truly a farce. When he left Vancouver, it was at the invitation Caiserman, who asked him to come here. So David Rome took the train. He didn’t have money. He had to travel with the animals all the way. Caiserman came to meet him at the station. He didn’t have a cent. He invited him over. How come you are not yet married? They agreed: he should go away and come back after marrying, with his wife. He didn’t have the money to buy her a ring, so he bought her a 15-cent ring or something and they were married. It’s beautiful!⁶⁴

Jacques Langlais thought of Rome not only as a collaborator on writing projects, but also as a dialogue partner. Langlais took care to explain that he did not see dialogue as a statement of dissatisfaction with his own religion and a search for something better. Rather, dialogue was a way to look over the fence in order to admire God’s handiwork in the garden of the neighbor, in this case the garden of his Jewish neighbor and partner, Rome.

God could be offended if we go towards dialogue because we are not sure that our own religion can answer all our questions...that we might leave our own religion if we go to dialogue with others...but that is not the reason. If we dialogue

it is to leave that which we admire and that which we are sure of, and then to see whether we might not make some headway in our knowledge of the Other. In order to see, to admire the work of God's hands in the Other.⁶⁵

Rome's relationships with French Quebecers exquisitely blended genuine curiosity and self-interest, or perhaps, in his own terms, mission. It is difficult to know whether Rome's determination to get his message across left room for real dialogue. One wonders whether the vulnerable "Jew-boy" within remained too wary for there to be the trust necessary for dialogue to happen. In Langlais' description of him and Rome taking each other by the hand, there is a suggestion that at least in some moments, that trust was present.

Mr. Rome was a very honest man, someone who really respected others' opinions. If he had felt I was going too far he would have told me, or quite simply quit. We took each other by the hand, the two of us, to walk together. It takes two, to dialogue. So we have to choose our partner or partners. We cannot just jump into dialogue just like that, it would be imprudent.⁶⁶

Concluding Reflections

About Dialogue: Asymmetries and Agendas, the Question of Success

As we see in the case of Rome, an inter-group dialogue designed to enhance mutual understanding takes place in specific political and historical circumstances. These are the very circumstances and associated tensions that created the need for the dialogue in the first place, and that make dialogue difficult. At the same time, for parties to come to the dialogue table, each side must see a potential benefit in doing so. As in the case presented above, dialogue is often asymmetrical: the two sides are not mirror images of each other and the benefits sought by each may be different.⁶⁷

For the Catholic Church-dominated time period highlighted above, one strong motivation for the Catholics was a desire on the part of members of the Church to make amends after the Holocaust. This desire led to an important shift in Church policy, whereby the Jews were declared to be legitimate progenitors of the Christians rather than blind and accursed people who had to be converted. Made public in Pope Paul VI's 1965 declaration *Nostra Aetate*, this new official view inspired individuals like Jacques Langlais to dialogue with Jews in part out of a powerful curiosity about their own Christian roots (see footnote 5 above). For the Jews, the situation was quite different. After the Holocaust, their motivation was primarily self-preservation.

In the second period highlighted above, when the politics of Quebec shifted towards secular nationalism, the perceived dialogue benefits changed too, at least for the French Canadians. For them, the Jews became important as potential allies in their nationalist project and dialogue with them was one way of finding out how to get their votes. For Rome on the other hand, the primary motivation to dialogue remained self-preservation, even though the rest of his community was no longer on board.

However, to say that Rome was motivated solely by his desire to protect the vital interests of the Jewish people would be to miss the nuance present in this material. It is useful to consider the range in Rome's dialogue activities, from the political to the intimate interpersonal. The former tends towards the predominance of a public relations agenda, whereas the latter is characterized by personal engagement and relationship. At one end of the spectrum we could cite the *Le Devoir* editorial by Pierre Vigeant, which Rome boasted about to his bosses (see above). The extravagant claims in this editorial about the Jews' determination to learn French suggest that Rome's priority was to sell his view of the Jewish community, despite the fact that he had not yet persuaded the Jews. At the other end of the spectrum we might place the relationship with Jacques Langlais, Rome's

peer and partner. Nonetheless, as intimate as this relationship was at times, it did contain a mix of community agenda and personal relationship from Rome's side. Langlais' motivations as a Catholic had more to do with exploring roots and making amends, making this a good example of the Jewish/Christian dialogue asymmetry described above.

In considering the value of dialogue, the question of success and how it should be gauged inevitably arises. Rome succeeded personally in learning much about French Canada. This was to a significant extent due to his ability to empathize with the other, a quality that successful dialogue requires. Rome's own vulnerabilities sensitized him to the vulnerabilities of the other. His character and the strength of his mission lent him credibility and sincerity, even when wishful thinking led him to stretch the truth. Yet in the end he was unable to communicate his insights into the worlds of the other to his own community. As argued below, part of Rome's communication problems with respect to his own community may be seen as a predictable difficulty for any dialogue pioneer.

The question of evaluating the success of a dialogue is subtle. Even if the home community is not won over, there may be a slow process at work of turning the soil, preparing the earth so that future dialogue seeds may fall on more fertile ground.⁶⁸ In the case of Rome, while the full impact of his legacy remains to be assessed, it is clear that an important part of the work he did lives on through the people with whom he formed important relationships. Individuals including Luc Chartrand, Stéphane Valiquette, Pierre Anctil and Jacques Langlais were marked by their meetings with Rome. Their ongoing creativity has in turn marked francophone Quebec life with Jewish accents, helping to weave these cultures together, as Rome would have wished and in ways he might not have imagined.

The Predicament of the Dialogue Pioneer

Rome has received his share of honors from official Quebec, being designated in 1987 a Chevalier de l'Ordre

national, the Quebec government's highest honor, and receiving in 1991 the Prix d'excellence from the Quebec ministry of immigration and cultural communities. However, in the end he failed to persuade his community to adopt his program. Why?

Part of the reason was that Rome developed a perspective on French Canada that the rest of the community was not privy to, due to the intensity of his research, his meetings with clergy and others, his readings of Quebec history, and eventually his membership on the Arts Council. As well, Rome moved toward French Canada at the same time as the broader organized community was focusing inwards, devoting its resources to refilling the wells of Jewish knowledge, pride and identity that modernity and secularism in an open society had caused to dry up. In addition, it is possible that there was always something of the "Jew-boy" about Rome, the vulnerable immigrant whose instincts remained constantly alert to the dangers of the outside world, who never acquired the sense of entitlement and full participation in North American life that the mainstream Jewish community, for its part, wanted to believe in.

Although this particular historical case is full of nuance, I would argue that a good part of the difficulties Rome faced can be seen as inherent in the position of a dialogue pioneer. Such people go out to meet and get to know members of a group seen by their home community to be alien or threatening. The home community understandably resists. Faithful to the vital interests of the group as it sees them, it tends to see dialogue pioneers as fraternizing with the enemy or even as traitors, going over to the other side. This factor comes through in the case of Pierre Anctil, who was a dialogue pioneer among French Canadians. It would also seem to have been a factor in ending Rome's library career.

Endnotes

¹ An earlier version of this article was published in French in *Cultures juives. Europe centrale, et orientale, Amérique du Nord.*, available at www.manuscrit.com. An earlier English version was part of the Work-

ing Papers series at the Institute of Canadian Jewish Studies, at <http://cjs.concordia.ca/>.

² Ronald Rudin, *Making History in Twentieth-Century Québec* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 64.

³ Ross Gordon, "The Historiographical Debate on the Charges of Anti-Semitism Made Against Lionel Groulx" (master's thesis, University of Ottawa, 1996). <http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/Quebechistory/encyclopedia/LionelGroulx-Historiography1980s.html>.

⁴ David Rome and Eiran Harris, *Autobiography, David Rome*, 1988, cassette no. 2, Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives, Sound collection.

⁵ A French Jew, Jules Isaac, played an important background role in this process through his publication of "Jesus and Israel," a treatise on the teaching of contempt toward Jews in the Catholic Church. In the wake of this publication, Isaac was received in person-to-person dialogue by Pope John XXIII on June 13, 1960, soon after the latter had convened the Second Vatican Council. See Norman C. Tobias, "The Influence of Jules Isaac on Roman Catholic Teaching About Jews and Judaism" (masters thesis, University of Toronto, 2008). The Nostra Aetate declaration states among other things that "the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures" and affirms that that "the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone." See: "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions – Nostra Aetate," accessed July 28, 2013, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html

⁶ Jews composed 20% of the population of Zhlobin in 1939 according to Leonid Smilovitsky, "Ghettos in the Gomel Region," accessed May 13, 2013, <http://www.jewishgen.org/Belarus/newsletter/GomelGhettos.htm>.

⁷ David Rome and Eiran Harris, *Autobiography*.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ During the First World War, starting in 1915, the Germans occupied Lithuania. With typical theatrical flourish, Rome says that, by

comparison with the horrors of Russian anti-Semitism, the years under German occupation were “golden.”

¹¹ Rome says he went to Yiddish school in Vilnius; if this is true, he must have returned there while his father (and mother?) stayed in Zhlobin and ran the store.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ “Through these cultural lectures I knew that my mission in life was dedication to Jewish community service.” Rome and Harris, *Autobiography*, *op. cit.*, cassette no 1.

¹⁴ Stephen J. Scheinberg, “From Self-Help to National Advocacy: The Emergence of Community Activism,” in *From Immigration to Integration*, eds. Ruth Klein and Frank Dimant (Toronto, ON: Institute for International Affairs, B’nai Brith Canada, 2001), 58.

¹⁵ Gerald J. J. Tulchinsky, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Stoddart Publishing, 1998), 179.

¹⁶ David Rome, “Public Relations Work Among French Canadians and Catholics. Memo to Saul Hayes,” July 8, 1946, Canadian Jewish Congress fonds, Series ZB (Personalia), David Rome, Box 1, File 15, Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ S.D. Cohen, “Report for Dominion Council Meeting, Eastern Division, on Work of Committee on French-Canadian Groups.,” December 4, 1947, Canadian Jewish Congress fonds, Series ZB (Personalia), David Rome, Box 1, File 15, Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives.

²¹ Pierre Anctil argues that the only way Catholic clergy could interact with Jews during this period was through conversionist activity. See Ibid.

²² The Sisters arrived in Montreal in 1947 and the Fathers in 1952. The story of the Sisters is extraordinary. Their order changed its mission from conversion of the Jews to dialogue with them, thanks to a crisis of conscience on the part of their Mother Superior in France. See Madeleine Comte, “De la conversion à la rencontre. Les religieuses de Notre-Dame-de-Sion (1843-1986),” *Archives juives* 35, no. 1 (n.d.): 102–119. Sister Marie

Marie-Noelle de Baillhache, the first of these Sisters to arrive in Quebec, carried out pioneering dialogue work through her Centre Mi-ca-el.

²³ David Rome, "Re Catholic Conversionist Activities. Memo to Saul Hayes," March 26, 1947, Canadian Jewish Congress fonds, Series ZB (Personalia), David Rome, Box 1, File 15, Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives. Also: Saul Hayes, "Work Among the Roman Catholics. Report to the National Joint Public Relations Committee," April 9, 1948, Canadian Jewish Congress fonds, Series ZB (Personalia), David Rome, Box 1, File 15, Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives.

²⁴ For example, information materials were prepared and distributed to Catholic youth groups, one of which published a "very fine full-page article on the Jewish holidays." As well, the Canadian Association of Catholic Youth prepared a study syllabus based on material that Rome had provided them with. Cohen, "Report for Dominion Council Meeting, Eastern Division, on Work of Committee on French-Canadian Groups."

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Hayes, "Work Among the Roman Catholics. Report to the National Joint Public Relations Committee" (see note 23 above).

²⁷ David Rome, "Memo to H.M. Caiserman. 'In Reply to Your Request for Information for the Survey on Anti-semitism in Canada,'" February 17, 1949, Canadian Jewish Congress fonds, Series ZB (Personalia), David Rome, Box 1, File 20, Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives. (Emphasis mine.)

²⁸ David Rome's instincts and analysis of the linguistic situation were confirmed by a survey published in the pages of the Yiddish daily the *Keneder Adler*, eight years after Rome had raised the issue of Jews and the French language. Naïm Kattan, who was Rome's successor as CJC Press Officer, asked two questions to a series of Quebec intellectuals and politicians and published the results in the *Adler* on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee in 1957. Kattan wanted to gauge the opinion of these leading figures on how Jews could help defend the French language and culture and how to improve relationships between French Canadians and Jews. Conrad Langlois, editor-in-chief of the newspaper *La Patrie*, said that the worst possible path for the Jews would be to remain entirely English-speaking and to be identified with the Anglophone community. Nationalist historian Michel Brunet, co-founder

in the 1950s of the *École de Montréal* thought that the timing of the Jewish leadership's interest in French language and culture was propitious. His community was in the process of creating a distinct, modern, Francophone society. The Jewish community's involvement could help to gain acceptance for their efforts by showing that others besides French Canadians were interested in preserving the French fact in North America. Then, feeling more confident, the French Canadians would be in a better position to cultivate interethnic relations. See Jack Jedwab, "The Politics of Dialogue: Rapprochement Efforts Between Jews and French Canadians, 1939-1960," in *Renewing Our Days: Montreal Jews in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Ira Robinson and Mervin Butovsky (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1995), 65.

²⁹ David Rome, S. D. Cohen, Rabbi Solomon Frank and *Keneder Adler* editor Israel Rabinovitch.

³⁰ David Rome, "Memorandum to The National Joint Public Relations Committee on Public Relations in the French Canadian Field.," n.d. Between 1952 and 1948, Canadian Jewish Congress fonds, Series ZB (Personalia), David Rome, Box 1, File 12, Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives.

³¹ Naïm Kattan made of the *Cercle* a remarkable venue for showcasing the new generation of Quebec artists, intellectuals and politicians. For an analysis of the Bulletin published by the *Cercle* under Kattan, see Jean-Philippe Croteau, *Les Relations Entre Les Juifs De Langue Française Et Les Canadiens Français* (Montréal: Université de Montréal, 2000).

³² Rome, "Memorandum to The National Joint Public Relations Committee."

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ "Ministère de la Civilisation canadienne-française et du fait français en Amérique." Note that David Rome adopted the phrase "Le fait français" and spoke about it. On one occasion he was heard by people at Allied Jewish Community Services and they created an organization with that name, run by Rosetta Elkin, to help Jewish professionals learn French (see David Rome, "Report on Activities Regarding French Canada," n.d (1979), Canadian Jewish Congress fonds, Series ZB (Personalia), David Rome, Box 1, File 12, Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives.

³⁵ Guy Bellavance, "Quebec Cultural Policies – The Canadian

Encyclopedia,” accessed May 8, 2013. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/quebec-cultural-policies>.

³⁶ The White Paper was the first in a series of Quebec culture ministry book projects. It was never published. Federal-Provincial Affairs Deputy Minister at the time Claude Morin said that this was because its linguistic and other policy suggestions were too strong for the times and Prime Minister Jean Lesage was not comfortable with them (see Georges Azzaria, *La Filière Juridique Des Politiques Culturelles*, Presses Université Laval, 2006, 88, n.3.) A decade later, many of the White Paper’s substantial recommendations appeared in the “Green Paper” Québec (Province) Ministère des affaires culturelles, *Pour L’évolution de La Politique Culturelle : Document de Travail / Jean-Paul L’Allier,...* -, 1976..

³⁷ These included Frégault himself; journalist, author, politician and senator Solange Chaput-Rolland; polyglot pioneer of international relations in Quebec, the professor and diplomat André Patry; pianist, radio commentator, administrator and educator Helmut Blume; music critic, historian and pianist Eric McLean; pioneering journalist Judith Jasmin; journalist, editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Le Devoir* and politician André Laurendeau and others. For the establishment of the Council and nomination of its first members see Paul Comtois, “Arrêt en conseil, Chambre du Conseil exécutif, Concernant la nomination des membres du Conseil Provincial des Arts,” November 22, 1961, E5 Conseil Exécutif, A.C. 2278/1961, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec. This document is signed by Paul Comtois, Lieutenant–Governor and Jean Lesage, Prime Minister of Québec.

³⁸ Rome, “Report on Activities Regarding French Canada.”

³⁹ Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* ([City?]: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 113. Although it was never published as such, the recommendations of the White Paper were taken up substantially in 1976 by Liberal Minister Jean-Paul L’Allier, in his Green Paper on the evolution of cultural policy in Québec (see Bellavance, op. cit).

⁴⁰ See page 23 and note 19 above.

⁴¹ Manny Batshaw was a social worker and founder of the Batshaw Youth and Family Centers, before becoming head of the Federation of Jewish Agencies.

⁴² David Rome, “Memo On Jewish Program for Our Future in Quebec.,” December 30, 1968, Canadian Jewish Congress fonds, Series

ZB (Personalia), David Rome, Box 1, File 10, Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Initiated in 1963 by Jacques Langlais to be a meeting ground of cultures in Quebec, the Monchainin Center oorganized activities for young people of different cultures and religions. It also did research and intercultural education. Rome's participation in this colloquium led Langlais to him; thus began their years of collaboration.

⁴⁶ Jacques Langlais and Robert Vachon, eds., *Qui Est Québécois?*, Collection Rencontre Des Cultures (Montréal: Fides, 1979), 99–110.

⁴⁷ Harvey Golden, *Report of the Consultant to the Jewish Public Library of Montreal*, February 9, 1970, JIAS collection, Director Joseph Kage records, Series QE, Box 013, Folder 7, Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives.

⁴⁸ Ron Feingold, Telephone interview, February 21, 2010.

⁴⁹ Rome, "Report on Activities Regarding French Canada."

⁵⁰ Luc Chartrand, Interview with the author, March 26, 2009 [My translation]. Ma généalogie québécoise remonte au 17e siècle. Donc je suis vraiment ce qu'on appelle un 'pure laine.' J'avais le background canadien-français typique pour rencontrer quelqu'un comme David Rome, à titre de personne qui fait parti de l'Autre. [Rome était] un homme très souriant, très sympathique, très chaleureux, qui avait envie de parler, et donc c'est quelqu'un qu'on avait envie, on avait de parler avec lui, quoi. Donc, je suis retourné le voir souvent, aux archives, et chez lui, dans sa cuisine, prendre un café... Combien de fois est-ce que j'ai rencontré David Rome dans ma vie? Je dirais une vingtaine de fois."

⁵¹ Chartrand, interview *op.cit.* "C'est la personne qui me faisait à moi comprendre des choses d'un point de vu autre que le mien. C'est-à-dire que c'était quelqu'un qui avait une vision sur la société québécoise qui était différente, une autre vision, puis qui me faisait comprendre que tout ne pouvait pas être vu du même point de vu, donc, c'est pour ça que c'était intéressant. "

⁵² To locate this parish see "La Paroisse Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal – Histoire Du Plateau Mont-Royal," accessed May 9, 2012. <http://histoireplateau.canalblog.com/archives/2008/06/29/9750618.html>.

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⁵³ Stéphane Valiquette, Interview with Stéphane Valiquette carried out by Luc Chartrand, on the subject of David Rome, Audio recording, 1999, Private collection of Luc Chartrand.

Chartrand : “L’intérêt de David Rome dans le dialogue avec les chrétiens, est-ce que vous diriez qu’il se situe d’abord sur le plan politique?”

Valiquette : “Je dirais sur le plan social. C’était le fait qu’on avait une population juive ici, qu’on accueillait. Donc l’idée de société se pose, que les différents éléments de la société se connaissent et se parlent : le dialogue entre les composantes de la population. Il faut mettre ça dans les années 37, 38 39, tous les antisémites. Alors moi, ça m’a frappé ça. Et moi qui a connu les Juifs tout jeune, je n’acceptais pas cette idée de haine, pour moi c’était inacceptable. J’ai eu l’idée de demander la permission d’aller visiter le Congrès juif canadien. ”

⁵⁴ For an appreciation of Stéphane Valiquette, see the website of Jewish Christian relations at http://www.jcrelations.net/Un_pionnier_canadien_du_dialogue_entre_juifs_et_chr_tiens.2872.0.html?L=6

⁵⁵ Luc Chartrand, “David Rome: Juif et Québécois,” *L’Actualité*, April 1988; an article in which Chartrand cites David Rome as saying it is only a shame that Lionel Groulx was not Jewish! “Le Fantôme de Groulx,” *L’Actualité*, March 1, 1997; “Les Juifs Des Pays D’en-haut,” *L’Actualité*, December 15, 1991; an article featuring Pierre Anctil “Montreal Foun Nekhtn,” *L’Actualité* 22, no. 13 (September 1, 1997): 60–61.

⁵⁶ Conversation with the author.

⁵⁷ Anctil maintains a large and growing archive at the Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee Archives. This includes abundant materials documenting his relationship with David Rome and the development of Anctil’s own thinking about dialogue and identities.

⁵⁸ Note that this issue was raised more than 15 year earlier by the avant-garde White Paper on Culture produced by the Arts Council on which David Rome sat.

⁵⁹ Pierre Anctil, Interview with the author, May 24, 2009.

“J’ai réalisé que la clef de la question, l’élément pivot de cette question, c’était la communauté juive. La question de la diversité, du nationalisme, de l’ouverture à l’autre; tout tourne autour de la communauté juive.... À partir des années 1980, j’ai réalisé que c’est la question juive qui est la question fondamentale. C’est les Juifs qui posent la question la

plus difficile: ...Est-ce qu'on peut rester Juif et être Québécois? Apprendre le français, avoir des rapports intenses avec le Canada français, le Québec français, le Montréal français, mais rester Juif.”

⁶⁰ Jacques Langlais, *Du village au monde* (Outremont, QC: Carte blanche, 2000).

⁶¹ Jacques Langlais and David Rome, *Jews and French Quebecers: Two Hundred Years of Shared History*, trans. Barbara Young (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991), viii.

⁶² *Ibid.*, vii.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, ix.

⁶⁴ Jacques Langlais, Interview with the author, August 1999.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ See for example Richard W. Rousseau, *Christianity and Judaism* (Montrose, PA: Ridge Row Press, 1983); António Barbosa da Silva, *Is There a New Imbalance in Jewish-Christian Relations?* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, Dept. of Theology, 1992); Geoffrey Wigoder, *Jewish Christian Relations Since the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press ND, 1990); David G. Dalin, *John Paul II and the Jewish People: A Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007); David Novak, *Talking with Christians: Musings of a Jewish Theologian* (Grand Rapid, Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2005); Jakob Josef Petuchowski, *When Jews and Christians Meet* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988).

⁶⁸ Thanks for this image to Deena Roskies, past president of the Montreal Dialogue Group.

