

Tauben's *Traces of the Past* is the paramount authority on Montreal's historic synagogues, and perhaps the best study yet to-date on Canadian synagogue architecture, despite its focus on a single location. The book's shortcoming is that the concluding analysis is scant (three and half pages) considering the amount of energy, work, time, and effort the author invested in this work. This might disappoint an academic reader, desiring better-developed findings. The findings presented are almost exclusively of a Judaic Studies background, the degree that Tauben obtained. While valuable and insightful, discoveries pertaining to architectural history and heritage conservation – materials and themes presented throughout the rest of the book – could also have been made. Nonetheless, Tauben has set a high standard for future research in Canadian synagogue architecture and *Traces of the Past* is a book this reviewer will use frequently as a secondary source and reference.

Endnote

¹ Sara Ferdman Tauben, *Aspirations and Adaptations: Immigrant Synagogues of Montreal, 1880s-1945* (Master Thesis, Concordia University, 2004).

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Théorêt, Hughes. *Les Chemises bleues: Adrien Arcand, journaliste antisémite canadien-français*. Sillery: Septentrion, 2012. 410 pp.

One of the most controversial issues in the field of Canadian Jewish studies involves the nature of French Canadian antisemitism at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is an issue that has transcended the normal small audience for scholarly articles and books to involve a wider discussion in op-ed articles and other media in both French and English. Hughes Théorêt enters squarely into the midst of this controversy with his biography

of Adrien Arcand, one of the most notable French Canadian antisemites of the twentieth century.

The author, a student of Pierre Anctil at l'Université d'Ottawa, gives the reader a valuable insight into the complex life and manifold activities of Arcand. He responsibly utilizes a wide variety of sources, including archival, and his book constitutes a generally well-written and well-organized inquiry into the subject.

When I first encountered the book, I asked myself why one would publish a biography of Arcand so soon after the publication of Jean-François Nadeau's *Adrien Arcand, führer canadien* which was published in 2010 and won the Prix Richard-Arès in 2011? The answer is that Théorêt's book constitutes a polemic against the interpretations of both Nadeau and Esther Delisle on the issue of French Canadian antisemitism.

It is important to note that from the outset Théorêt seeks to nuance our understanding of the phenomenon of antisemitism in French Canada. Thus he notes that the antisemitic atmosphere in Quebec, as expressed in the work of French Canadian nationalist thinkers like Lionel Groulx, André Laurendeau, and Georges Pelletier engendered only "rare instances" of violence, a moderation that he attributes to the influence of the Catholic Church (26). These intellectuals' pronouncements on "the Jews", for the author, constituted in the main, an episodic, essentially "literary antisemitism" (*antisémitisme de plume*). He contrasts this with the incessant and virulent antisemitism of Arcand. The contrast between the French Canadian nationalism of Groulx, Laurendeau and Pelletier and the antisemitic and fascist politics of Arcand is a continuing theme in the book. Théorêt shows how Arcand opposed the separate French Canadian state advocated by Groulx and his disciples on the grounds that an independent Quebec would inevitably be at the mercy of the Jews (131). Though Théorêt elsewhere makes the point that Arcand must be understood in terms of his fervent Catholic beliefs, he also wishes the reader to clearly understand that Arcand's ideas should not be considered representative of

practicing Catholics in Quebec in the 1930s (164). The author admits that Arcand's views on Canada's participation in the Second World War and on the crucial issue of conscription for overseas service approaches that of Henri Bourassa, Groulx and Laurendeau, yet he resists the notion that Arcand's "blue shirts" ever attracted Laurendeau's "Bloc Populaire" followers, though he does concede that Laurendeau's movement did attract numerous "blue shirts" to its rallies. In conclusion, Théorêt asserts that Arcand and the Quebec of the Quiet Revolution had essentially nothing to do with one another. As he states, Arcand was: "Conservateur, ultra-catholique, anticomuniste, fasciste, et antisémite, il n'avait plus sa place dans la société québécoise des années 1960" (321).

In his conclusion, Théorêt states that to understand Arcand in his complexity, one cannot simply describe him as a "Canadian führer", as Nadeau does in the subtitle of his book. While Arcand was certainly an admirer of Hitler, he was too good a Catholic to approve of Hitler's persecution of the German Catholics (370, 381). He also faults Nadeau for paying relatively little attention in his book to Arcand's multiple post-war activities.

Théorêt has little good to say of the work of Esther Delisle. In particular, he faults her for not distinguishing between the antisemitisms of Arcand and those characterizing Groulx, Laurendeau, *Le Devoir* and *L'Action nationale*. He characterizes the former as "virulent and hateful" and the latter as "moderate and socioeconomic". He also notes that Delisle does not mention Laurendeau's regrets published in the 1960s for his deeds of the 1930s (379).

In general, Théorêt's book has much to teach us about Quebec's antisemitic past. It also has much to teach us about the complex ways in which the interpretation of that past is still being worked out by contemporary francophone intellectuals in Quebec.

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