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**Defining Antisemitism in Francophone Canada:
The Plamondon Trials of 1913–1914**

Abstract

The study of antisemitism in twentieth-century Canada has recently attracted considerable scholarly attention, especially given the country's poor record in welcoming Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany before and during the Second World War. This article argues that scholarship in this domain has tended to oversimplify the differences that existed between Anglophone and Francophone Canada in this respect, often ignoring elements of religious doctrine that kept Catholics and Protestants relatively apart in their understanding of Jews and Judaism. To better define the frame of reference of Francophone Roman Catholics, the author examines the documentation produced during the 1913–1914 Plamondon defamation trials in Quebec City. These trials offer a unique opportunity to better understand the inner workings of antisemitism within a French Canadian elitist milieu, independently of other forms of Judeophobia that predominated in English Canada.

Résumé

L'étude de l'antisémitisme au vingtième siècle au Canada a beaucoup retenu l'attention dans le domaine des études juives, surtout si l'on considère que le pays a accueilli peu de réfugiés juifs qui tentaient de fuir l'Allemagne nazie avant et pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Cet article avance l'idée que les recherches sur ce sujet ont eu tendance à sursimplifier les différences qui existaient à cette époque entre le Canada de langue anglaise et celui de langue française, au point de ne pas tenir compte des aspects de la doctrine religieuse catholique et protestante qui divergeaient quant à leur attitude respective pour ce qui est des Juifs et du judaïsme. Pour mieux comprendre le point de vue des catholiques canadiens-français, l'auteur analyse la documentation produite à l'occasion des procès qui ont eu lieu à Québec en 1913–1914 concernant les propos antisémites du notaire Plamondon. Ce contexte d'affrontement légal offre une occasion unique de dévoiler le visage de l'antisémitisme dans un milieu élitiste canadien-français, indépendamment des tendances judéophobes du Canada anglophone.

Few scholars of Canadian Jewish history who have approached the subject of Francophone antisemitism have attempted to define what, specifically, distinguished the hatred disseminated by Catholic French speakers from the type propagated by Anglophone Protestants. In *None Is Too Many*, for example, Irving Abella and Harold Troper went no further than establishing a language divide between these two types of anti-Jewish discourse, as if the forms of antisemitism emanating from these two vastly different societies were equivalent and could be compared at first glance.¹ Readers of *None Is Too Many* are led to believe that only nuances distinguish what Anglo-British Canadian Jew haters expressed and their equivalents in French Canada, and that otherwise their respective hostility essentially took the same shape

and form. Such oversimplifications, based on ignorance of French Canadian cultural models and religious heritage, are at the root of a significant problem in the field and have long obstructed a better grasp of the evolution of Jew hatred in this country. Using the Plamondon blood libel trial—a landmark case in the legal fight against antisemitism in Quebec City in the early 1910s—this article argues that antisemitism in Francophone Canada emerged from different sources, presuppositions, and civilizational contexts than its counterpart in English-speaking Canada and therefore cannot be understood through simplistic or superficial comparisons.

Recent publications based on a study of French-language newspapers extending over long periods have revealed a very different overall picture with regard to antisemitism in Quebec than has been presented generally in Canadian Jewish studies up to now.² This new approach has been supplemented by a serious analysis by Simon-Pierre Lacasse of opinions expressed after the Second World War on the subject by two major Montreal English-language Jewish publications, *The Canadian Jewish Chronicle* and *Congress Bulletin*.³ One of the most significant debates in the field is whether the forms of antisemitism that developed in Francophone and Anglophone Canada during the twentieth century can meaningfully be compared, as has been done in English-language scholarship, or whether such comparisons are inherently problematic because they overlook the distinct historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts from which these phenomena emerged.⁴ At the very least, historians with diverse skills and research orientations should be called upon to examine the matter and present their conclusions. Nevertheless, the lingering question remains whether such debate genuinely advances our understanding of Canadian Jewish history or ultimately belongs more to the sphere of political controversy.

Notary Plamondon and His Allies State Their Case in Court

Discussions about the nature and effects of French Canadian antisemitism are not new and did not begin with the publication of *None Is Too Many* in 1982. There were several occasions during the twentieth century when Jews and Francophones entered into open confrontation concerning the relative significance of Jewish hatred in Quebec Francophone Catholic circles, and whether such attitudes deserved to be denounced publicly. In 1934, Omer Héroux, editor-in-chief of *Le Devoir*, and H. M. Caiserman, the general secretary of the Canadian Jewish Congress, exchanged several salvos when it was revealed that the central organization of Canadian Jewry distributed information to the effect that this newspaper was among the main press organs promoting antisemitism in Quebec.⁵ After a few angry exchanges where Héroux wholeheartedly denied such accusations, especially when Congress was placing *Le Devoir* and *L'Action catholique* on an equal footing with *Le Patriote*, published by Adrien Arcand, both sides moved on to more pressing issues and did not

renew their mutual complaints. Of much more significance in this respect were the Plamondon trials of 1913–1914, which saw two Quebec City Jewish residents, Benjamin Ortenberg and Louis Lazarovitz, sue notary Jacques-Édouard Plamondon over the antisemitic content of a lecture titled “Le Juif,” which he delivered on March 30, 1910, at the Cercle Charest de l’Association catholique de la jeunesse canadienne. The plaintiffs also demanded a financial reparation of \$500 from the defendants and a condemnation for defamatory libel by the court.⁶ Meanwhile, the talk itself (*la causerie*) was published on April 16 of the same year in *La Libre Parole*, a Quebec City weekly devoted to the promotion of the social teachings of the Catholic Church.⁷ It was also printed in a brochure format by the same periodical shortly after.⁸ The main argument at the trial was that the ideas publicized by Plamondon were deemed to have caused social disturbances in Quebec City, to have resulted in a loss of revenue on the part of Jewish store owners, and to have directly led locals to throw stones at both a synagogue and the residence of one of the plaintiffs, Benjamin Ortenberg.⁹ Spurred by the speech that Plamondon himself delivered at the trial, a debate ensued in the Quebec City French-language press pitting *La Libre Parole* and *L’Action sociale* against the liberal papers *La Vigie* and *Le Soleil* about what constituted antisemitism.

The trial hinged on whether a 1910 speech about Jews and Judaism, presented by Jacques-Édouard Plamondon, a notary educated at l’Université Laval in the Faculty of Law, was defamatory and caused material damage to Jews. The trial proceedings, covered by the local press with great interest, became an occasion for Plamondon and several prominent clergy members surrounding the trial to air a full-fledged and multifaceted series of accusations about “the Jews” and their deleterious impacts on Western civilization, dating back to Roman times. During the first trial, in 1913, the plaintiffs, Benjamin Ortenberg and Louis Lazarovitz, and the co-defendants, Jacques-Édouard Plamondon and René Leduc, were offered the opportunity to openly express their opinions and beliefs with regard to the debate at hand, and to call upon expert witnesses to buttress their point of view.¹⁰ A defamatory libel in civil law is defined as the utterance of false statements likely to damage a person’s reputation and social standing. If Plamondon’s *causerie* was based on doubtful and untrue affirmations, then he was likely to be condemned by a court of justice for attacking the plaintiffs and causing them harm. To be freed of all accusations, Plamondon’s interpretations of Judaism had to be proven correct according to valid evidence, which is what the defendant set out to do in front of a court of justice.

It is under these circumstances that we are offered a revealing list of the sources which inspired Plamondon to adopt an antisemitic stance in his 1910 public address, vastly enriched by the detailed testimonial of three eminent Catholic priests who came to his defence in front of Judge Albert Maloin. The documentation brought before the court on this occasion provides us with one of the most detailed and comprehensive depictions of the intellectual and religious origins of French Canadian

Catholic antisemitism in the early twentieth century. In all, when questioned by the court, Plamondon and his allies alluded to thirty-two specific foundational texts and declarations, written by highly significant historical figures, published and distributed over two millennia, who in their minds amply justified that Jews be treated with great suspicion, if not outright hostility, in a Christian society.¹¹ The plaintiffs' lawyer, Samuel W. Jacobs, and his expert witness, Rabbi Herman Abramovitz, the spiritual leader of the Shaar Hashomayim congregation in Montreal, cross-examined Plamondon, further revealing a broad array of historical sources that fed Francophone Canadian hatred and suspicion of Jews.

Plamondon alone could not have created such a vast list of antisemitic authors and "proofs" on which to rest his case; the task of assembling such a body of texts fell to three priests who appeared in court on his behalf. Their purpose, as stated by Leduc's lawyer, Joseph-Édouard Bédard, was to show that the sources mentioned by Plamondon in his initial public statement were reliable and revealing of the profound truth of Christian doctrine regarding Judaism. According to Bédard, the clergymen on whom Plamondon's defence rested—l'abbé Joseph-Emery Grandbois, l'abbé Jean-Thomas Nadeau, and l'abbé Joseph-Arthur D'Amours, all eminent members of the Catholic clergy—had "indiscutable autorité [indisputable authority]." The texts and their interpretations of them, argued Bédard, were both "vrais et dans l'intérêt public [true and in the public interest]."¹² The priests had extensive doctrinal and theological training. Each had studied ecclesiastical history, was fluent in Latin and Ancient Greek, and had mastered the intricacies of logical reasoning. Grandbois had obtained a doctorate in theology at l'Université Laval, then a canonical Catholic institution administered directly by the diocese of Quebec. He had also studied the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac languages at the École biblique de Jérusalem under Father Marie-Joseph Lagrange, whom he mentioned in his own testimonial. Both Nadeau and D'Amours, besides being scholars in their own right, were often called upon to write in Catholic Quebecois media to propagate the teachings of the Church, such as in *L'Action sociale*, the precursor in 1907 of *L'Action catholique*, and had experience in communicating the main tenets of their faith to a broad public. They represented, in short, the most significant voices of the Catholic conservative elite of Quebec society at the time. They carried the moral authority of the Church itself in court.

In an age when all major intellectuals and political leaders of Quebec Francophone society were educated under the guidance of Catholic institutions of higher learning, the three abbés were formidable foes, determined to use every argument at their disposal to establish the threatening nature and moral inferiority of Jews and Judaism in a society based entirely on Christian values. The arsenal of arguments and citations that they brought forward at the Plamondon trial was of immense proportions, compared to what the notary himself could have mustered on his own volition,

and laid bare the theological positions of the Catholic Church in Quebec regarding Judaism before the great reorientation of the Second Vatican Council.¹³

Their testimonial was transcribed by a court clerk in shorthand French on a few pages, and later found its way into the Canadian Jewish Congress archives when Samuel W. Jacobs offered to the institution his documentation regarding the Plamondon trials.¹⁴ Almost all the references offered by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours, and the texts that they cited, were written in French originally or translated into that language when they dated back to the Roman Empire or to periods of history that predated the French cultural sphere. They also were almost invariably authored by Catholic figures of authority, or individuals that the Vatican considered deeply associated with the propagation of the faith. For that reason, it is doubtful that many of the thirty-two authors or works cited by the three abbés in their critique of Judaism were widely known at the turn of the century to persons of the Protestant tradition, or readily available in Canada in the English language.

In this respect, the Plamondon trials demonstrate that the negative perception of Judaism that some French Canadians entertained doctrinally at the turn of the twentieth century came from a different stream of antisemitism than the one that was dominant in Anglophone Canada. It did not find much common ground, except in a very general sense, with the ideas developed in this regard in the Reform movement initiated by Luther in Germany or Henry the Eighth in Great Britain, when speaking specifically of the Anglican faith dominant in the British Empire. Historically, Catholics would not under any circumstance, for fundamental reasons of doctrine, refer to the "heretic teachings" of Protestantism. The violent antisemitic pamphlet authored by Luther in 1543, entitled *Von den Jüden un iren Lugen* (*On the Jews and their Lies*), was not included in the list compiled by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours, and was never cited by the three Catholic priests present at the trial.¹⁵ Likewise, German romantic precursors of radical nationalism like Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Johann Gottfried von Herder were not referred to at the Plamondon trials, nor were the many disciples of Charles Darwin whose theory of evolution was condemned at the time by the Catholic Church. The Vatican frowned upon most "modern" forms of thinking at the turn of the century. Its aggiornamento came only after World War II; few "modern" modes of thinking about the Jews contributed to Quebec antisemites' logic at the time of the Plamondon trials. They did not even draw from the then-popular pseudo-scientific current of thought that justified hatred of Jews based on racialist classifications, drawn from the work of Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau and his *Essai sur l'égalité des races humaines* published in Paris in 1855, and many others. Even the term "antisemitism" itself, as coined by Wilhelm Marr in 1879 in his infamous pamphlet entitled: *Der Sieg des Judentums über das Germanium* (*The Victory of Judaism over Germandom*), was irrelevant to the Quebec Catholic elite of the time. This should come as no surprise as the civilizational focus of the three abbés, and all

their colleagues, was centred entirely on Italian ideas, with Latin as the vehicle of all knowledge, whether recent or ancient and pre-Christian. In this vast Catholic cornucopia of accumulated knowledge and interpretation of the world, the Roman Empire and its contributions to the evolution of European history, *not* the later British or German versions informed by Protestantism, formed the nodal point of human advancement.

A Vast Cornucopia of Jew-Hatred Going Back to Roman Times

Plamondon and the three abbés made their official declarations to the court separately during the initial inquiry and were cross-examined individually by the legal representative of the plaintiffs. The written summary of their respective attitudes about Jews and Judaism, and the method of compilation adopted by the clerk at the time of the 1913 trial, allowed for many repetitions to appear that are in themselves significant to the historian. Once regrouped, these statements produce a much clearer picture of what exactly inspired the three Catholic priests to maintain their antisemitic stance in front of the judges to avoid a condemnation for libel against Plamondon. The strategy of the three clerics was quite simple. They argued that all the authors that the notary alluded to, and their works, presented the truth in terms of Catholic religious doctrine, and that their reasons for opposing Jews in one form or another, including the conclusions that Plamondon himself arrived at in his initial public conference, were all reasonable, truthful, and valid. There was no basis to condemn the notary, they argued; the documents he used simply promoted church teachings. All were sound and acceptable, irrespective of whether certain utterances may have caused harm to several Jews living in Quebec City or to their reputations as good citizens.

A clear picture of the particular articulation of Francophone Catholic antisemitism at the turn of the century emerges from the extant archival sources from the trial. The three abbés' hostility to Judaism was deeply rooted historically and quite systematically presented. It relied on an accumulation of anti-Judaic interpretations resting mostly on religious arguments and covered a wide range of periods and events leading up to the time of the 1913 trial itself. The testimonial was encyclopedic; most of the textual basis for their beliefs came from European sources.

Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours appeared to think in unison and shared the same general dispositions regarding Judaism. At one point in their testimony, they cited classic Roman sources in Latin. As Catholic scholars, they were familiar with Roman imperial law, from which the canonical rules and hierarchical structure of the Church derived. These sources included Cicero, who in 59 BCE, had participated as a lawyer in a public trial in Rome to defend the conduct of an imperial administra-

tor, Lucius Flaccus. Flaccus had forbidden Jews from his province in Asia Minor to send funds to their coreligionists living in Jerusalem. The exhortations of Cicero, known as “Oratio pro L. Flacco,” present a striking parallel with the Plamondon trials of 1913–14, in that they painted a highly negative picture of Jews, going as far as declaring Judaism to be a “barbarous superstition.” By blackening the image of Judaism, Cicero’s harangue managed to absolve Flaccus of the accusations of extortion presented against him. This approach to Judaism paved the way two thousand years later, in the minds of the three abbés, to what should be the conclusion of the ongoing trial in Quebec City. This foundational declaration by Cicero was strengthened further when Tacitus (ca. 58–120), one of the greatest historians of the Roman Empire, was referred to by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D’Amours as a guide to understand the true nature of Judaism. In his *Historiae*, which covers the period from 69 to 96 of the Common Era, Tacitus repeats the accusations levelled against Jews by Cicero and incorporates them in a highly significant chronicle of the Empire then at the height of its power. For the three abbés, these negative perceptions and descriptions, dating back nearly two millennia and written before the Catholic Church even existed, carried the weight of a literary tradition highly regarded in Catholicism, and served as solid proof that Jews were indeed a marginal group yielding an influence far greater than their number warrants.

Later in the trial, Grandbois, Nadeau, and D’Amours turned to the origins of the entire edifice of Catholic theology regarding Judaism, which forms the second stage in their argumentation. They quoted from early Church fathers and celebrated preachers who helped Christianity across vast areas under Roman authority, namely, Saint Jerome (ca. 342–420) and Saint John Chrysostom (ca. 347–407), both of whom developed extremely negative perceptions of Jews, portraying Jews who maintained an attachment to some of the Jewish rituals while declaring themselves to be Christians as active opponents of the Church. Chrysostom, who became archbishop of Constantinople, published a series of homilies in the late fourth century brutally condemning the religious tradition of Jews, known in the Roman tradition under the title *Adversus Judaeos* (Against the Jews), which described Judaism as “demonic and despicable.” These harangues, which resounded in Christian theology for a very long period, remained the standard view of Jews in many Catholic seminaries and institutions of higher learning; they were presented as evidence at the trial.

Saint Jerome, who produced the first translation of the Bible in Latin, known as the Vulgate, and exerted a tremendous influence throughout the centuries in theological and Christian intellectual circles, likewise judged Judaism to be a threat to the Church and deplored in no uncertain terms the “resistance of Jews” to conversion. Saint Jerome in fact was one of the first Church fathers to give credence to the theory of supersessionism, which maintained that the First Alliance had been voided to the benefit of Christianity. By referring to these saintly figures of the Catholic Church in

court, the three abbés raised religious objections to an acceptance of Jews in Quebec society that were formidable in the circumstances, even in a civil court of law, and that were part of the dogma presented at l'Université Laval to seminarians and lay persons, at least until the Vatican Council of the Sixties. The attitude of Saint Jerome and Saint John Chrysostom to Jews and Judaism is the doctrinal base for a Catholic response at the turn of the last century to a Jewish presence in Quebec society, not Luther or the disciples of Charles Darwin. This scathing attack on Judaism was further deepened by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours when they cited in court the Gospel of Matthew, a standard negative Christian depiction of the teachers of Jewish law and of the Pharisees at the time of Christ, who were described as "broods of vipers," "blind guides," and "whitewashed tombs" (in Christian tradition, the Pharisees are depicted as comprehending Jewish law but dismissive of its teachings altogether). Such biting criticism of Judaism taken from parts of the Christian holy scriptures and disseminated universally without the use of a proper context or interpretation, to which one must add the chasing of the merchants from the Temple by Christ himself, strongly encouraged the Catholic faithful in all historical circumstances to adopt a theologically negative view of Jews and Judaism.¹⁶

Having covered sacred ground that was indisputable to Christians at the time, Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours then turned to another series of references, which form the third stage of their antisemitic demonstration. In a broad sweep of the modern age pertaining to the issue at hand, the three priests turned to thirteen authors who in their minds formed the cultural and intellectual background justifying in general terms the marginalization of Jews in a Christian society.¹⁷ This vast panorama constitutes the "Summa Theologica" of all the fundamental "truths," religious and secular, that the three abbés had absorbed in their religious training at l'Université Laval and during further studies in Catholic institutions of higher learning in Europe. Save a few exceptions, in most of these references Jews and Judaism appear only as a passing subject of interest within a much wider edifice conceived to situate Christianity and particularly Catholicism as the central locus of European civilization. Nonetheless, these mentions each constitute, in their own way, a subtle reaffirmation of the inferior moral standing and "threatening" nature of Judaism in a world dominated by the Church, whose teachings and religious beliefs must be viewed as immutable and unchallengeable. In an age of revolutionary movements and violent contestation of the social order, the modern authors cited by the three abbés also present a very conservative view of the political order deemed necessary to preserve the fundamental values of Christianity. Mostly, in a French context, they point in the direction of a restoration of the institutions of the *Ancien régime*, which predated the colossal changes brought about by the transformative events of the French Revolution of 1789. Once more, in this section, Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours place the French intellectual tradition at the centre of their argument, while rejecting at the same time the contributions made in this respect by "les philosophes du siècle des Lumières."

Jews as Proponents of the French Revolution and Modernity

Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881) and Bernard Lazare (1865–1903) figured prominently in the priests' arguments, as they provided a critique of Judaism from a "Jewish point of view." If Jews themselves envisioned their religious tradition as passé and irrelevant in the Christian civilization of Europe, the arguments of Disraeli and Lazare should be even more convincing to those who profess to rationally demonstrate the futility and even harmfulness of the persistence of Judaism in modern times. In his early works of fiction, Disraeli, a convert to Anglicanism, presented Christianity as a superior civilizational development emerging out of the Biblical tradition. From his perspective, Jews served as a bridge to a more accomplished spiritual and moral world, while being denied at the same time entrance into societies that appeared after the beginning of the Christian era. Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours cited Disraeli's 1844 *Coningsby*, a novel that painted a positive view of British political conservatism and described the career of a young man by the same name elected to Parliament. This work of fiction also included the character of Sidonia, a Jewish personality modelled on Lionel de Rothschild; the three abbés considered Sidonia an archetype of the influential Jew operating undetected in society and bent on reaching political and social aims contrary to public interest. Lazare was the object of an even more convoluted form of reasoning on the part of Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours. An author who professed to be entirely agnostic in his beliefs and who was embroiled in the early stages of the Dreyfus affair, Lazare claimed in *L'antisémitisme, son histoire et ses causes*, that Jews were in part at the source of the hostility that they encountered in France during the Third Republic, essentially because they persisted in their communitarian notion of Judaism and did not embrace the universal nature of the French Revolution of 1789. An anarchist and a political polemicist, Lazare, although of Jewish origins, also condemned the highly visible participation of some Jews in the capitalist exploitation of workers and thought that antisemitism was simply based on an erroneous form of reasoning on the part of Jew haters. In a strange twist of logic, the three priests nonetheless recruited his writings in their anti-Jewish crusade because of the negative judgment he passed on Orthodox Judaism, even though he clearly sought an assimilationist solution to the hostility that Jews suffered on the part of Christian traditionalist opinion in France.

Even more surprising on the part of the three priests testifying at the Plamondon trials was their reference to Voltaire (1694–1778). A central figure of the French Enlightenment, Voltaire was one of the high-profile *philosophes* who paved the way for modernity in France and in Europe in general. A friend of the *encyclopédistes* Denis Diderot and Jean d'Alembert, a proponent of a rational approach to social ills, and a staunch critic of the absolutist political foundations of the *Ancien régime*, Voltaire held all forms of religiosity in contempt, regardless of historical period or type of

civilization. He considered references to God, any god, to be a form of obscurantism and fanaticism unworthy of an educated person and systematically denounced all organized religions as being a major obstacle on the path to human progress and accomplishment. Such views did little to endear Voltaire's *philosophie* to the Catholic Church in France, and his works were routinely banned from Catholic *bibliothèques* and educational establishments. In fact, most Catholic intellectuals were seriously discouraged in the 1910s and beyond from reading Voltaire or making references to his thinking. While Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours must certainly have known this, they were nonetheless aware that a great proponent of the Enlightenment could also, by virtue of this overall disdain of religion, be portrayed as an enemy of traditional Judaism. Voltaire did not make a profession of attacking Judaism, but he described Jews in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*, published in 1764, as "La nation [...] la plus détestable qui ait jamais souillé la terre [the most detestable nation that defiled the earth]," not to mention other such instances of hostility throughout his career. The three abbés selectively chose what served their purpose from a wide body of classic works and ignored the historical context under which various antisemitic quotes and denunciations were produced, including Voltaire's equally harsh critique of Catholicism.

One last example of the antisemitic thinkers the abbés cited to buttress their case was Charles-Louis-Victor, Prince de Broglie (1757–1794), who figured prominently in their list of authors. Although Broglie favoured the French Revolution in general, in a pamphlet published in 1789, entitled *Opinion sur l'admission des Juifs à l'état civil*, he also declared himself to be against the Assemblée constituante's political emancipation of Jews. In 1791, Broglie even proposed a law that would have excluded Jews from any civic responsibility and prohibited their entrance into certain types of commercial activities.¹⁸ This understanding of the contribution of Jews to Revolutionary France was eventually superseded by the emancipation Act of November 13, 1791, the first of its type in the entire world, which was based on the principle of the universality of mankind.¹⁹ Clearly, the three abbés shared Broglie's regret over the 1791 decision to grant Jews full citizenship on the same footing as other French citizens, provided that they abandon their traditional structure of internal governance and their *communautarisme* (communitarianism). Indeed, all the sources that Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours cited in their testimonial to the court were both antisemitic and anti-revolutionary in the French sense of the word, in that they not only deplored the granting of equal rights to Jews in France in 1791 but altogether rejected the democratic principles on which the Republic was founded and the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* promulgated in 1789. As eminent members of the Catholic clerical elite of Quebec, the three abbés wholeheartedly embraced the traditional interpretation of the *Ancien régime* and supported the political forces that attempted to restore such an order in late-nineteenth-century France. In that context, antisemites saw Jews as a major factor contributing to the economic dissolution of traditional Christian society and as strong adherents of the Republican ideal.²⁰

The context under which the emancipation of French Jews took place, in the midst of a vast revolutionary upheaval, followed immediately by the Napoleonic thrust in favour of liberalism and the final disappearance of the *Ancien régime*, gave the three abbés in Quebec City many reasons to validate the antisemitic statements made by Broglie in 1789, the most important of which was that the 1791 emancipation Act contradicted the anti-Judaic teachings of the Church in place since Saint Jerome. The French Revolution was a historical development that the traditional Catholic elite could not reconcile itself with doctrinally and that the popes ceaselessly fought against, until the Second Vatican Council. A further complication emerged with the proclamation in 1870 of the Third Republic in France, which was to become a full-fledged parliamentary regime and under which Jews generally enjoyed further advancement in their legal status as French citizens.²¹ The Third Republic rapidly became a battleground for those who opposed the democratic ideal of the French Revolution of 1789 and the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, and sought either to restore royalty in France or at least to reestablish the medieval privileges granted to a hereditary nobility. One of the most salient developments in this respect was the Dreyfus affair, which saw an officer of the French army, of Jewish origins, accused in 1894 of espionage in favour of Germany.²² The trumped-up charges against Captain Alfred Dreyfus revived the long-standing accusations of Jewish disloyalty to the French State and the ideals of Christianity, which had been circulating for centuries in the higher circles of Catholic France. They also pitted the new Republican elites against the political forces of *la restauration monarchique* and the conservative inclinations of the Church.

The Centrality of the Dreyfus Affair in Plamondon's Thinking

After having evoked a very wide historical panorama of Jewish hatred, spreading over two millennia and mostly centred around Roman civilization, the preaching of early Christian figures, and the antisemitic contributions of a series of French Revolution-era thinkers who approached Judaism in a negative way, the three priests entered a fourth stage in their attempt to prove that Plamondon's interpretation was based on valid doctrine. Up to that point, Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours referred mostly to authors who occasionally discussed the issue of tolerating the presence of Jews in societies that claimed to be based on Christian moral principles and reflected the ethical teachings of the Church. These general considerations of a broad nature were transformed in late-nineteenth-century Europe by a group of publicists who developed a different and, in a sense, a more "specialized" view of Judaism.²³ In many countries, including Germany, Great Britain, and France, authors appeared who were obsessed with the central place that Jews seemed to have taken in Western society, and the power that they were accused of concentrating in their hands. These were contemporary political activists and antisemitic social

theorists to whom the three abbés turned to complete their defence of Plamondon and his interpretation of Jewish influence in Quebec City. In this phase of their demonstration, the Catholic priests relied almost exclusively on essays published in France by authors belonging to ultraconservative, Church-oriented milieus, rather than on activists involved in “nationalist” movements, who relied mostly on “scientific” and racial arguments to bolster their hatred of Jews. Grandbois, Nadeau, and D’Amours remained deeply attached to the anti-Judaic stream of thinking present in early Christianity, and opposed Jews more as adherents of the Jewish religious tradition than as simply individuals of Jewish origins. Their wrath, in other words, was concentrated on the persistence of Judaism in the contemporary world; it did not include a racial definition of Jews.

The tragic events surrounding the Dreyfus affair in France, and the climate of muted antisemitism that it fuelled in traditional Catholic circles, must be considered more directly central to the hostility toward Jews that manifested itself in French Canada among intellectual circles at the turn of the twentieth century. After years of bitter political debate and several highly publicized trials involving the upper echelons of the French army, including the very daring editorial published by Emile Zola in 1898 in *L’Aurore* under the title “J’accuse...!”, reason and justice finally prevailed. Dreyfus was rehabilitated officially in 1906 and reintroduced into the ranks of the French army. This was only four years before the anti-Jewish speech given by Plamondon in Quebec City. Certainly, opposition to a Jewish presence in Quebec was foremost of an anti-Judaic nature, in that the basic fault of Jews was their refusal to convert to the true faith and their persistence in maintaining a religious tradition that had been superseded by Christianity. Added to these traditional accusations was the more contemporary notion that Jews did not pay allegiance to the king or the country in which they found themselves, but first to a secret master plan of Jewish dominance about to engulf the world. These conspiratorial and antisemitic tropes were nearly universal in Europe at the time of the Dreyfus affair, though they manifested in different forms and with local variants. French Canadian Jew haters were inspired not by antisemites in Great Britain, Germany, or Russia but by those in the unique cultural and linguistic context provided by the French Third Republic.

Of the nine authors and publicists cited by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D’Amours in the fourth section of their list of “proofs,” seven were devoted anti-Dreyfusards active during the Third Republic—thinkers who belonged to ultraconservative political milieus in France closely associated with the Catholic Church.²⁴ Looking carefully at the testimonial of the three Quebec City priests, one gets the definite impression that they were well connected with the main publicists of conservative French antisemitism, that they regularly read the press produced by these activists, notably Édouard Drumont’s *La Libre Parole*, launched in 1892, and had absorbed their logic and reasoning. It is no coincidence that when this French Canadian faction felt the need to

propagate their political ideas in 1905 through the creation of a weekly newspaper, they adopted the name of Drumont's own mouthpiece, *La Libre Parole*, soon replaced in 1915 by *L'Action catholique*. Despite all these ideological similarities, French Canadian leaders seemed to have felt a need to adapt the message of the French antisemites to the situation prevailing in French Canada, a society that did not present the same political complexity as France under the Third Republic, one in which most Jews were recently arrived immigrants from the Russian Empire. Drumont's bestselling essay, *La France juive*, for example, published initially in 1886, could not achieve wide circulation in Quebec because it described a situation that was typical of a highly industrialized and urbanized society, which Francophone Canada was not at the time.

Further proof of the unique nature of French Canadian antisemitism in Canada can be found in a literary event that took place in France in 1894–1895, just as the Dreyfus affair was gaining broad attention politically. Intent on obtaining publicity for his cause and for *La Libre Parole*, Drumont launched a concours destined to reward the best essay in view of answering a predetermined question: “Quels sont les moyens pratiques d'arriver à l'anéantissement de la puissance juive en France, le danger juif étant considéré au point de vue de la race et non au point de vue religieux [What are the means to annihilate the might of the Jews in France, the danger of Jews being considered from a racial point of view and not from a religious one].” (This orientation deliberately contradicted the famous concours *littéraire* launched in 1787 by the Académie royale de Metz, on the eve of the Revolution, which posed the question: “Est-il des moyens de rendre les Juifs plus heureux et plus utiles en France? [Are there means of making Jews happier and more useful in France?]” The contest was famously won by l'abbé Grégoire, a defender of Jewish rights in the Assemblée constituante.) Of course, only antisemites and publicists convinced of the veracity of Drumont's ideas submitted texts to the concours sponsored by *La Libre Parole*. Approximately 150 participants entered the competition to determine the best way to curb the supposed dominance of Jews over France after the emancipation of 1791. The essayists presented arguments, in other words, advocating for the permanent reversal of the civil and political rights afforded to Jews during the Revolution, a century earlier. Grandbois, Nadeau and D'Amours cited two of the winners of *La Libre Parole's* concours (l'abbé Marie-Léon Vial, author in 1897 of *Le roi juif comment le détrôner*, and Marie-Joseph Frank, author in 1898 of *Solution de la question juive*), signalling that the three abbés had read them and approved of their ideas. The three Quebec City priests cited one abbé Charles no less than thirteen times at the Plamondon trials. “Abbé Charles” was none other than Marie-Joseph Frank, whose book *Solution de la question juive*, reissued in 1909 under a different name, was highly influential among ultraconservative antisemites.²⁵ The abbés' next most cited sources were l'abbé Marie-Léon Vial, another winner of the concours, Roger Gougenot des Mousseaux, Édouard Drumont, and abbé Maximilien de Lamarque.²⁶ The three Quebecois priests saw these contemporary authors as the most credible literary au-

thorities to buttress the defence of Plamondon. The antisemitic tropes used in the Plamondon defamation trials drew heavily from the ideological orbits of the French Third Republic and the Dreyfus affair, and not those familiar within a British or German political environment.

This fact might also help explain why the Talmud figured so pre-eminently in the speech presented by Plamondon at the meeting arranged in March 1910 by the Association catholique de la jeunesse canadienne. Plamondon's line of attack had concentrated on the commercial practices of Jewish merchants and the supposed detestation of Christianity by all adherents of Judaism. In the Quebec City context, because Plamondon and the abbés selectively quoted damning passages from the Jews' own religious texts, the Talmud carried more weight as evidence of Jewish perfidy than racial or ideological forms of reasoning present in other antisemitic European contexts.

The Talmud Stands Accused of Turning Jewish Minds Against Christianity

During most of the Christian era, the Talmud, written during and after the institutionalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire, was considered by the Church as a minor Jewish treatise and was not regularly consulted by Catholic scholars who concentrated their attention on the Hebrew Bible. The first French-language translation of the Babylonian Talmud appeared only in 1831 in Leipzig, the work of abbé Luigi Chiarini (1789–1832), who completed only one tractate, a small fraction of the entire text.²⁷ The three abbés mentioned Chiarini's "translation" as though it were faithful. It was, in fact, a highly biased document that focused on criticizing the "errors" and "deviances" of Judaism and served more as a work of anti-Judaic propaganda than a sincere attempt at understanding the mode of reasoning of the Talmudists and their place in the Jewish tradition. Chiarini's work followed in the footsteps of the Protestant scholar Johann Andras Eisenmenger (1654–1704), who published a concerted attack on the Talmud entitled *Entdecktes Judenthum* [*Judaism Unmasked*] in Germany in 1700—perhaps the first one of its kind in Christianity and the foundation for all subsequent assaults on the Talmudic tradition. In this volume, Eisenmenger compiled a series of quotations taken from the sacred work and many other Jewish sources, transcribed out of context, with the intention of proving the anti-Christian nature of modern Judaism. These citations, reinterpreted by Eisenmenger and often altered to make them appear more scandalous, might have remained obscure had not a German priest and theologian, abbé August Rohling (1839–1931), introduced the distorted reading of his anti-Judaic predecessor to Catholic circles with the publication in 1871 of *Der Talmud Jude*. Rohling's German reissue thus crossed the Rubicon into Roman Catholic circles and was translated into French in 1888, with further distortions by abbé Maximilien de Lamarque under the title *Le Juif talmudiste*. This final rendition of the anti-Talmud tract reached French Canada at the turn of the century.²⁸

Both Rohling and Lamarque occupied a central place in the argumentation presented by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours at the trial of Plamondon, and the very negative perception of the Talmud that they defended can be seen in the list of contemporary authors who were called upon to justify Plamondon's disdain of this Jewish document, notably Antoine-François Saubin's *Le Talmud et la synagogue moderne*, published in France in 1899, and abbé Marie-Léon Vial's *Le Juif sectaire et la tolérance talmudique*, also printed the same year. By that time, the accusations against the Talmud, all without foundation, had become a standard instrument in the denigration of Judaism in France, notably in Édouard Drumont's *La France juive* and in the newspapers that he controlled. It figured prominently as well in the doctrinal teachings of the Quebec Catholic Church, as is evidenced in Mgr. Louis-Adolphe Paquet's "Summa Theologica" published in Quebec City in 1908 under the title *Droit public de l'Église: principes généraux*. Paquet (1859–1942), a professor of theology at l'Université Laval and a widely recognized authority in French Canada on matters of Catholic influence in secular society, besides being a proponent of Francophone *nationalisme messianique* (messianic nationalism), had himself internalized a highly negative perception of the Talmud as is evidenced in his *Droit public de l'Église*: "Le Talmud," he wrote, "ce commentaire fangeux et cette dépravation pharisaïque de la Bible plus chère aux Juifs que la Bible elle-même [This repugnant commentary, this pharisaic depravation to which the Jews are more endeared than the Bible itself."²⁹ Cited by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours as a source of doctrinal authority, Paquet's work contains classic anti-Judaic statements that described contemporary Judaism as corrupt, plagued by deviations from the original Biblical Revelation and unworthy of respect on the part of Christians.

The Court Rules in Favour of the Plaintiffs

The plaintiffs' lawyer and his expert witness knew very well that the vast array of antisemitic sources that Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours presented to the court were without any historical validity and based on false evidence, particularly the facts concerning the Talmud and the attitude of Jews to Christians in commercial life. Called by Samuel W. Jacobs to criticize the three abbés in court, Rabbi Herman Abramovitz rhetorically asked if they had read the Talmud in its original version and if they had studied the type of Hebrew and Aramaic in which the treatises were written. They had not. This was a central element in the argument in favour of Ortenberg and Lazarovitz. How could the defendants present sacred Jewish sources as valid proof of Jewish hostility to Christianity when the authors they cited all conspired to present a very negative and biased interpretation of them? During his speech of March 1910, Plamondon had referred mainly to the anti-Talmudic tirades printed by Lamarque in *Le Juif talmudiste*, and to Édouard Drumont's two main pamphlets, *La France juive* and *Le testament d'un antisémite*. Most of the other sources that he alluded to, especially those in German and English, were taken directly from La-

marque's translation of August Rohling's *Der Talmud Jude*. Following Abramovitz's testimony, the validity of Plamondon's affirmations was in doubt, and his intentions appeared clearly defamatory.

Ultimately, Judge Maloin rendered a decision that conformed to British law and the then-current jurisprudence in October 1913. His decision claimed that freedom of speech could not be curtailed and that to be found guilty of libel, a publicist accused must name specific persons and attack their personal reputation pointedly, something that Plamondon had not done in March 1910. Describing an entire community in negative terms, or a collective group of some kind, was a matter of opinion, he argued, and judgment about such matters was best left in a liberal democracy in the hands of citizens themselves. After the suit was dismissed by the court, Samuel W. Jacobs and his colleagues appealed, and sent the case to a higher tribunal, the Court of King's Bench. The decision to appeal suggests that many Jewish community leaders remained concerned about the spread of antisemitism in Quebec City and felt it necessary to publicly oppose the dissemination of anti-Jewish hatred in Canada. They reasoned that public utterances against Jews had to be curtailed and that activists who repeated well-known anti-Jewish tropes should be condemned by a court of justice.

The appeal judgment, made public in December 1914, reversed the 1913 decision and, despite the sophistry Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours displayed in attempting to prove what is intrinsically false, the judge of the Court of King's Bench found Plamondon guilty, and sentenced him to a small fine for defaming the civic loyalty and reputation of the Jewish population living in Canada.

For decades, the decision would be considered a prime example of a court of justice silencing hostile pronouncements made *en bloc* against a Jewish community.³⁰ The Plamondon trial was the first instance in Canadian history of antisemitic pronouncements being condemned by a court of law, and for this reason it brought a ray of hope to the Jewish leadership who felt that the final judgment proved the value of the country's justice system in redressing wrongs committed by enemies of the Jews. It is important to note though that the decision of the court was not based ultimately on a religious interpretation but referred only to the damage done to the small Jewish community of Quebec City which the notary had not attacked specifically, but which had suffered nonetheless from allegations brought against Jews at various periods of history.³¹ The appeal judges based their decision essentially on the same legal principles that had guided Judge Maloin but took into consideration matters of local Jewish demography. Given the small population likely to be affected by Plamondon's scathing attacks, his speech was deemed indeed equivalent to a personal defamatory statement for all Jews living in Quebec City. Their summary judgment read:

Let it be clearly understood: the respondent is not condemned because he attacked the Jewish race or religion, nor for having repeated the accusations that historians and pamphleteers have levelled against Jews in general, nor because he denounced with reason Sunday labour; but he is condemned for attributing to all and each of the 75 Jewish families of Quebec the wish to commit the abominable crimes of which their race is accused, when they have obtained sufficient strength to commit these offences. In that, there is personal defamation.³²

Although the anti-Judaic statements presented in the context of the Plamondon trials were hardly defensible under any circumstances and originated mainly from the very elitist clerical segment of Quebec society, they nonetheless stoked the fears of the Jewish leadership everywhere in Canada, who concluded from the proceedings that repeated accusations of a hostile nature against small Jewish merchants living in the provincial capital might lead to violence and even to pogroms.³³ In 1910, when Plamondon spoke on the Talmud in St. Roch parish, there were roughly only four hundred Jews living in Quebec City, most of them recent Russian immigrants regrouped in a section of Lower Town near the port. The accusations uttered by Plamondon were also circulated at a time when Menachem Mendel Beilis, the superintendent of a brick factory in Kiev, Ukraine, was accused of ritual murder by the Russian authorities and tried in 1913. The highly elaborate antisemitic fabrications published by Drumont and his disciples in France at the turn of the century, and the complex unravelling of the Dreyfus affair during the Third Republic remained nonetheless largely out of reach of the common folk in Francophone Canada, whose knowledge of the French political environment was very limited. The treatment meted out to the Jewish artillery officer by the French *état-major*, and the reactions of the anti-Dreyfusard faction remained in Quebec an issue confined to a small group of Catholic conservative intellectuals far removed from the realities of the French Canadian working classes.

Writing about the period during which the Plamondon trial was taking place, the Yiddish-language journalist Israel Medres stated in his 1947 Yiddish-language memoirs, entitled *Montreal fun Nekhten*:

However, another type of anti-Semitism persisted. This was not the anti-Semitism of the street bullies, but an intellectual or academic anti-Semitism. This was the anti-Semitism of a small group of conservative ultranationalist French Canadian intellectuals.

The immigrant Jews in Montreal knew little about this type of anti-Semitism for they had not experienced it. Similarly, the vast majority of the French Canadian population was unaware of this sort of anti-Semitism. Newly arrived Jews found the French Canadians in the cities and towns of the Province of Quebec to be most hospitable.³⁴

Is this to say that there was no antisemitism among simple folks in Quebec society? Certainly not. Or that the anti-Jewish agitation in France did not find its way at times into the pages of the Francophone press of Canada? Not at all. Essentially, it was the general disposition of the French-speaking Catholic clergy, sustained by the anti-Judaic traditional teachings of the Church and its theological foundation that produced the generally negative attitude found in many Quebecois milieus to Jews and Judaism. In that sense, the regular preaching by priests on religious occasions, especially during Passion Week, the perceptions entertained by the clerical elites on doctrinal grounds, and the almost total absence of concrete contact in Montreal between Jews and elitist adherents of Catholicism, produced a climate that was not conducive to an overall favourable or even neutral understanding of Judaism in French Canada.

The elaborate argumentation provided by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours during the Plamondon trials represents the most explicit form of anti-Judaic doctrine available at the time to Catholics in Quebec, presented by priests active at the highest intellectual echelon in the diocese of Quebec. Most educated French Canadians, such as Plamondon himself, could not come to terms with all the nuances and theological justifications offered by the three abbés but, through several layers of cultural influence and religious teachings, absorbed the general orientations of Church anti-Judaism.

Comparing Two Traditions of Hostility to Jews

Despite the outcome of the Plamondon trials, the Catholic clergy in Quebec City continued to make regular defamatory statements throughout the interwar period. The most vociferous among them were likely abbé Édouard-V. Lavergne (1879–1948) and abbé Antonio Huot (1877–1929).³⁵ French Canadian religious anti-Judaism was in marked contrast to Protestant (and especially Anglican) anti-Jewish hate based largely on racial and imperial arguments in the broader Anglo-Canadian context. In this respect, British-born Goldwin Smith (1823–1910) can be used as a point of comparison between Francophone Catholic antisemitism in Quebec and more Anglo-Protestant varieties of the same phenomenon during the Plamondon Trial. Although Smith has not been studied thoroughly in this respect after he settled in Toronto in the 1870s, it is clear from his abundant writings that his anti-Jewish views were based mostly on Jews' supposed racial and social characteristics. Smith critiqued what he saw as the negative "innate" cultural behaviour of Jewish people and a "tribal" mentality that he thought Jews exhibited against any broader Canadian civil instinct. These traits, he argued, made Jews the enemies of civilization and unfit for the pursuit of higher ideals. Jews, he thought, were an inferior race obsessed with the creation of material wealth through base methods and were entirely responsible for the hostile reactions that they encountered among Gentiles. Smith suggested that

Jews be completely assimilated into the fabric of Protestant society and that Judaism be eradicated from Canada altogether, through long-term, nonviolent social mechanisms.³⁶ While some Catholics may have shared some of Smith's racialist judgments, they tended to focus their condemnation of Jews on their rejection of the teachings of Christianity.

In the last analysis, antisemitism found distinct articulation in French and English Canada. Comparing these two currents of thought without the proper qualifications can lead to serious distortions that only serve to obfuscate our understanding of how antisemitism worked (and works). The Plamondon trials, represent the most revealing case study to document the shape that Francophone antisemitism took in Canada before World War I.

This theological antisemitism, I would argue, remained the dominant form of antisemitism in Quebec until the Quiet Revolution. It was, however, augmented by the arrival of a new instrument that helped fan the flames of Jewish hatred across the world after the military armistice of 1918, namely, a pamphlet entitled *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. While the Protocols were written and published in the Russian Empire a few years prior to the Great War, French-language versions of the antisemitic tract began to circulate by 1920 in France. In 1922 abbé Ernest Jouin (1844–1932) published the tirade in *La Revue internationale des sociétés secrètes*, dedicated to exposing anti-Catholic conspiracies. In 1924, Urbain Gohier (1862–1951) published a book entitled *Les Protocoles des sages d'Israël*. Many of the sources cited by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours in 1913 refer to the conspiratorial aims of Jews and their supposed desire to dominate the world, including essays written by Paul Copin Albancelli (1851–1939), entitled *Le drame maçonnique: la conjuration juive contre le monde chrétien*, and by Mgr. Henri Delassus (1836–1921), entitled *La conjuration antichrétienne: le temple maçonnique voulant s'élever sur les ruines de l'Église catholique*, both published in France in 1910. While some of these tracts lacked the pointed and phantasmatic accusations proffered by the Russian version of the *Protocols*, they nonetheless augmented the more theological strands of anti-Judaism and played a significant role in spreading anti-Jewish sentiment.

Because the *Protocols* came from a dubious source in terms of Catholic theology and remained foremost a political pamphlet, the Vatican authorities remained suspicious of its authenticity and did not encourage its dissemination among the faithful.³⁷ More likely than not, this forged document, had it existed in 1910 in a French-language version, would probably not have been cited by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours as a credible source.³⁸ Other writers thought differently, and the *Protocols* were widely alluded to in antisemitic newspapers circulated by "secular" antisemites active in both English and French Canada, notably by Adrien Arcand throughout the thirties. In fact, weeklies like *Le Miroir*, *Le Patriote*, and *Le Fasciste canadien* used the arguments

and statements offered in the *Protocols* extensively and adapted them to Canadian circumstances. These papers helped initiate a type of antisemitic campaign quite different from what Plamondon and the Quebec City *La Libre Parole* had envisioned in the first decade of the twentieth century.³⁹ Arcand's antisemitism marked a turning point of sorts. Attacks on the Talmud and the Catholic Church's doctrinal objections to Judaism took a back seat to a more political form of antisemitic onslaught, based essentially on an economic and nationalist line of reasoning. Arcand was not attuned to the specific theological arguments raised by traditional Catholicism against Judaism, nor did he mention them in his antisemitic propaganda, mostly directed at a popular and working-class audience.

In Arcand's mind, Jews exploited Francophones on a commercial basis and ultimately sought to dominate the world, not only to bring about a triumph of Judaism over Christianity, but mostly to impose the revolutionary ideals of Soviet Russia and universal socialism. Yet despite their best efforts, the conspiratorial strain of antisemitism espoused by Arcand and his Parti national social chrétien could not displace the dominant theological forms of Quebec anti-Judaism based on Church teachings. Religious (il-)logic continued to dominate French Canadian antisemitism from the 1930s until institutionalized Catholicism began to wane in French Canada in the 1960s. Curiously, Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours' antisemitic interpretations of 1913 persisted despite the rise of Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany, which the Vatican opposed on canonical grounds. The entire line of reasoning of anti-Judaic Catholicism was finally dealt a fatal blow by Pope Paul VI with the publication in 1965 of the *Nostra Aetate* declaration, never to reappear in Quebec except in very limited ultraconservative circles. Seen from this perspective, Arcand-style anti-Jewish animus was relatively marginal in Catholic Quebec, despite being extraordinarily vocal. It was rarely supported by the local Catholic authorities, and it found no place in either the upper echelons of Francophone society or in the institutions of higher learning that served to sustain the development of a French-speaking elite in Canada. The revolting vulgarity and insane antisemitic suppositions propagated by the Arcand press, and its opportunistic use of Nazi regalia, condemned it to marginality in most of the French Canadian journalistic and political milieus, until it was finally decapitated in 1940 by the federal government in the context of Canada's declaration of war against Nazi Germany. Uprooting anti-Judaism from Quebec Francophone society, of the type that Plamondon had publicized, turned out to be in the end a much more difficult and long-term process than Samuel W. Jacobs had envisaged in the second decade of the twentieth century.

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lations from Yiddish to French of memoirs written by Canadian Jewish immigrants in the first part of the twentieth century. He is the author of the literary biography *Jacob–Isaac Segal: a Montreal Yiddish Poet and His Milieu* (2017). Recent publications include *A Reluctant Welcome for Jewish People: Voices in Le Devoir's Editorials 1910–1947* (2019) and *History of the Jews in Québec* (2021). In 2023, he published in collaboration with Richard Menkis, a collection of Jewish Canadian historical documents entitled *In a “Land of Hope”: Documents on the Canadian Jewish Experience 1627–1923*. His last book in French is *Sous le regard de L’Aigle. La presse yiddish montréalaise et le Canada français, 1929–1939* (2006).

1

Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933–1948* (Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1982).

2

Pierre Anctil, *À chacun ses Juifs: 60 éditoriaux pour comprendre la position du Devoir à l’égard des Juifs, 1910–1947* (Septentrion, 2014). Translated into English by Tonu Onu under the title *A Reluctant Welcome for Jewish People: Voices in Le Devoir's Editorials, 1910–1947* (University of Ottawa Press, 2019). This study revealed that only 2 percent of *Le Devoir's* editorials between 1910 and 1947 discussed the influence of Jews in Quebec society. See also Pierre Anctil, *Antijudaïsme et influence nazie au Québec; le cas du journal L’Action catholique (1931–1939)* (Les Presses de l’Université de Montreal, 2021).

3

Simon-Pierre Lacasse, *Les Juifs de la Révolution tranquille : Regards d’une minorité religieuse sur le Québec de 1945 à 1976* (Les Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 2022).

4

Pierre Anctil, “Deux poids, deux mesures: les responsabilités respectives du Canada de langue anglaise et de langue française dans la crise des réfugiés allemands,” in a special issue of *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes*, entitled “*None Is Too Many and Beyond / Au-delà de None Is Too Many*,” 24 (2016): 16–37.

5

See Omer Héroux, “Le ‘boycott’ des annonces et les Juifs,” *Le Devoir*, February 3, 1934, 1, reproduced in Pierre Anctil, *À chacun ses Juifs*, 381–84.

6

In 1913, racist or supremacist utterances were not considered criminal under Canadian law.

7

Christian Samson, “La peur de l’autre dans la presse de Québec: les représentations de l’immigration internationale dans *La Libre Parole* (1905–1912),” *Bulletin d’histoire politique* 19, no. 1 (2010): 187–96.

8

An electronic version of Plamondon’s pamphlet is available at <https://archive.org/details/lejuifconfrenc00plam>, accessed on August 8, 2025.

9

Plamondon himself is not a central historical figure of Quebec Francophone antisemitism. His only public intervention in this respect was the conference he gave in Quebec City on March 30, 1910.

10

René Leduc was the printer of the incriminating pamphlet *Le Juif*, published in 1910.

11

Found in a document entitled “Défense, témoignage de Plamondon,” Fonds P0093, Samuel-William Jacobs, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives, Montreal. This document contained 32 documents presented as proof of the doctrinal validity of Plamondon’s speech.

12
Ibid.

13

Philippe Chenaux, *La fin de l’antijudaïsme chrétien: l’Église catholique et les Juifs de la Révolution française* (Cerf, 2023).

14

The full archives of the trial are available at Archives nationales du Québec in Quebec City (Fonds des archives judiciaires de la Cour supérieure, district judiciaire de Québec, TP11,S1,SS2,SSS1, art. 563).

15

The degree of violence reached in Luther's antisemitic pamphlet of 1543 is not found in Catholic theology, which remains more conceptual and abstract in its condemnation of Judaism.

16

Gospel of Matthew, 3:7, 23:7, 21:12.

17

Besides those discussed in the article, the authors are Nicolas Delamare, abbé Lucius Ferraris, abbé René-François Rohrbacher, David Drach, Jules Michelet, abbé Henri-Dominique Didon, abbé Marie-Joseph Lagrange, Auguste Fabius, and Moïse Schwab.

18

Brogie was guillotined in 1794 for opposing radical factions within the French revolutionary movement.

19

David Feuerwerker, *L'émancipation des Juifs en France, de l'Ancien régime à la fin du Second Empire* (Albin Michel, 1976).

20

Walter Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism from Ancient Times to the Present Day* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

21

Pierre Birnbaum, *Les Fous de la République: histoire politique des juifs d'État, de Gambetta à Vichy* (Fayard, 1992); *La France aux Français: Histoire des haines nationalistes* (Seuil, 1993).

22

Alain Pagès, *L'affaire Dreyfus: vérités et légendes* (Perrin, 2019); Piers Paul Read, *The Dreyfus Affair: The Scandal That Tore France in Two* (Bloomsbury, 2012).

23

Pierre-André Taguieff, *Criminaliser les Juifs: le mythe du meurtre rituel et ses avatars (antijudaïsme, antisémitisme, antisionisme)* (Hermann, 2020); *Les Protocoles des Sages de Sion, des origines à nos jours* (Hermann, 2024).

24

The three exceptions are Father August Rohling, a German Catholic priest; Mgr. Louis-Adolphe Paquet, the only Canadian author cited by the three abbés in 1913; and Roger Gougenot des Mousseaux, who died in 1876, before the beginning of the Dreyfus affair. The other six authors cited in this section are Édouard Drumont, abbé Marie-Léon Vial, Marie-Joseph Frank, abbé Antoine-François Saubin, Paul Copin Albancelli, and Mgr Henri Delassus.

25

Since it was not customary for priests to use only their first name in public transactions, it is highly likely that "l'abbé Charles" was a fraudulent designation.

26

L'abbé Charles (or Marie-Joseph Frank), l'abbé Marie-Léon Vial, l'abbé Antoine-François Saubin, and l'abbé Maximilien de Lamarque are minor figures in the history of Catholicism whose biographies are not well known.

27

Chiarini translated only tractate "Berakhot," which is dedicated to the rules of prayers in Judaism.

28

A much-enlarged translation and interpretation of abbé Rohling's *Der Talmud Jude*, prepared by A. Pontigny, appeared in France in 1889 under the title *Le Juif selon le Talmud*. The three abbés, however, cite only the work of abbé Maximilien de Lamarque in their demonstration, probably because he was a representative of the Church.

29

Mgr. Louis-Adolphe Paquet, *Droit public de l'Église: principes généraux* (L'Action sociale, 1908).

30

Joshua D. MacFadyen, “Nip the Noxious Growth in the Bud’: Ortenberg v. Plamondon and the Tools of Canadian Anti-Hate Activism,” *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 12 (2004): 7–96.

31

The court estimated that in 1911 there were sixty-five Jewish merchants and professionals in Quebec City, a number it considered small enough to expose them individually to the hostility of the general public following Plamondon’s statements. This argument was never invoked again in Canadian legal history on antisemitic defamatory libel.

32

The judgment is reproduced in Pierre Anctil and Richard Menkis, ed., *‘In a Land of Hope’: Documents on the Canadian Jewish Experience, 1627–1923* (Champlain Society, 2023), 239–40.

33

Israel Medres, *Montreal of Yesterday: Jewish Life in Montreal 1900–1920* [*Montreal fun Nekhten*], trans. Vivian Felsen (Véhicule Press, 2000), 121.

34

For a description of the Plamondon trials from a Jewish point of view, see Medres, *Montreal of Yesterday*, 121–34.

35

Abbé Edouard-V. Lavergne, *Sur les remparts* (L’Action sociale, 1924); abbé Antonio Huot, *La question juive chez nous* (L’Action sociale, 1926). The limitations imposed by the Canadian legal system on the attempts by Jewish organizations to suppress the dissemination of antisemitism were also quite visible in 1932 when Judge Gonzalve Desaulniers refused, albeit reluctantly, to condemn Adrien Arcand for the content of his weekly publications.

36

Notably, Smith also saw Francophones living in Canada as a tribal minority and likewise advocated their complete assimilation into Anglo-British society.

37

Maurice Olender, “Pierre Charles (s. j.) face aux Protocoles des Sages de Sion,” in *La chasse aux évidences: sur quelques formes de racisme entre mythe et réalité* (Éditions Galaade, 2015), 210–45.

38

The Protocols appeared in an English version at approximately the same time that a French translation began to circulate, notably in the United States, where Henry Ford publicized their content in the *Dearborn Independent* in the early 1920s.

39

Jean-François Nadeau, *The Canadian Führer: The Life of Adrien Arcand* (Lorimer, 2011); Hugues Théorêt, *Les chemises bleues: Adrien Arcand, journaliste antisémite canadien-français* (Septentrion, 2012); Pierre Berthiaume, *La clé du mystère d’Adrien Arcand ou l’hystérie antisémite: dénonciation de l’antisémitisme d’un libelle québécois et déconstruction de sa rhétorique démagogique* (Presses de l’Université Laval, 2024).