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**Plateaus of Freedom:  
Nationality, Culture and State Security in Canada, 1927-1957**

**Mark Kristmanson**

**A Thesis**

**in**

**The Humanities Doctoral Program**

**Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

**May, 1999**

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## ABSTRACT

### Plateaus of Freedom:

#### Nationality, Culture and State Security in Canada, 1927-1957

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Concordia University, 1999

This thesis examines the relationship between national culture and state security in mid-twentieth century Canada. Using records opened through Access to Information it challenges received interpretations regarding the origins of official multiculturalism and federal cultural institutions. Drawing a distinction between nationalism and nationality, it argues that Canada's 'national culture' evolved *continuously* with the grid of national security states. The argument proceeds by way of micronarratives and close archival readings of textual and audio-visual sources.

Part 1 asks how landscape was inhabited, culturally? Aboriginal artforms and European landscape art are juxtaposed with military reconnaissance and 'remote sensing' to trace the formation of a 'citizen-observer' attuned to the nation's need for protective sentience. Painter A.Y. Jackson's 1927 Arctic Patrol marked a limit in that subjective construction; Grey Owl's residencies in National Parks gestured towards an alternative cultural inhabitation of landscape, questing beyond aboriginal or settler stereotypes for a hybrid mode of observation.

Part 2 argues that multicultural states are, of necessity, security states. Political theory grounds special rights in cultural specificity but it disavows concomitant security measures directed towards ethnocultural minorities. Liberal and poststructuralist theories are counterposed to inquire why there was no right *not* to be a citizen. Culture and security formed a conceptual device, sensing and regulating 'alien' phenomena, but also producing a 'state' of anxiety marked by official secrecy and compromised civil liberties.

Canadian Multiculturalism derives from wartime security concerns. Idiosyncratic British Intelligence veteran Tracy Philipps embarrasses nationalist historiography by connecting Canada's early multiculturalism policies to an anglomorphous censorship-propaganda-intelligence complex. During the National Film Board's 'red scare' (1948-53), the RCMP misrecognized the NFB's security dimension even as Norman McLaren's 1952 Oscar-winning *Neighbours* obliquely pointed it out.

Whenever culture and security intersect, citizens 'remember-to-forget'. In Part 3, counterintelligence expert Peter Dwyer's amateur play delineates two forms of secrecy and solves a riddle concerning suspected spy Harry Dexter White. Dwyer drafted legislation to

found the Canada Council even as he shaped the emerging security state. His role in the 1945-46 Gouzenko Affair suggests that, contrary to prevailing accounts, the defection was a propaganda coup inspired by British Intelligence. Despite catastrophic consequences of Cold War for 'progressivism', the Canadian activities of performer/activist Paul Robeson opened a "third space" between nationality and nationalism.

## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	vii

### PART I DWELLERS AND OCCUPIERS

Introduction: .....	1
1. Masts, Totems, Antennas .....	13
2. Aboriginal Erasure: The <i>Beothic's</i> 1927 Arctic Patrol .....	45
3. White Mischief: Grey Owl And The Department Of The Interior .....	85

### PART II THE 'STATE' WITHIN THE STATE

Introduction .....	120
4. Citizenship: A Forced Choice? .....	126
5. Characterizations of Tracy Philipps .....	163
6. Love Your Neighbour: The RCMP and the National Film Board, 1948-53 .....	228

### PART III REMEMBERING-TO-FORGET

Introduction .....	274
7. State Security and Cultural Administration: The Case of Peter Dwyer ..	285
8. Pulp History: Repossessing the Gouzenko Myth .....	343
9. "I Came to Sing": Paul Robeson's Third Space .....	387
Conclusion .....	452

BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	457
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#### Appendices

1. Telegram concerning Peter Dwyer and Harry Dexter White, Nov., 1953	480
2. List of sound images .....	482

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Detail traced from Haida box, n.d. . . . .	19
2. Haida Poles at Masset, ca. 1881 . . . . .	21
3. "Installations at Camperdown [N.S.], 1949," Alcock antenna array . . . . .	23
4. Checking transmission line with infra-red hot joint detector, 26 July 1951 . .	26
5. NRC Radar Antenna on Roof, 1949 . . . . .	27
6. Golf cartoon, ca. 1935. . . . .	33
7. A.Y. Jackson, "Night, Georgian Bay, 1913." . . . .	34
8. "Depth recorder testing, 1949" . . . . .	41
9. A.Y. Jackson, sketchbook, poles at Kispiox, 1926 . . . . .	43
10. A.Y. Jackson and F. Banting, group photo, Sydney Station, Aug. 1927. . . .	46
11. A.Y. Jackson, sketch of the <i>Beothic</i> , 1927. . . . .	47
12. Capt. Falk on the <i>Beothic</i> , September, 1931. . . . .	48
13. Frederick Banting on <i>Beothic</i> , August, 1927. . . . .	52
14. A.Y. Jackson, sketch, Inuit approaching the <i>Beothic</i> , Arctic Bay, 1927 . . . .	54
15. A.Y. Jackson and the <i>Beothic</i> , 1927 . . . . .	54
16. The <i>Mary</i> , Beechey Island, 1927 . . . . .	55
17. Inuit pilots on <i>Beothic</i> , 1927 . . . . .	57
18. Inuit children by the 'coal hole,' Pond Inlet, 1927. . . . .	58
19. Nookupluk, "seeing as," April, 1931 . . . . .	59
20. A.Y. Jackson and Frederick Banting on the <i>Beothic</i> , 1927. . . . .	66
21. Stereoscopic principle of aerial cartography;	74
22. Mirror stereoscope viewer, n.d. . . . .	74
23. Wassily Kandinsky, <i>Composition 280</i> , 1923 . . . . .	75
24. Lawren Harris, "Abstract, 1942 . . . . .	75
25. Detail of Jackson Pollock's <i>Blue Poles</i> , 1953 . . . . .	77

26. Inuit on the <i>Beothic</i> , 1927 .....	78
27. Banting at Franklin's head-quarters on Beechey Island, 1927 .....	80
28. Banting crash site, Labrador, 1941 .....	81
29. Banting crash site, Labrador, 1941 .....	81
30. Peter Sibbald, "Innu boys lying on a sandbar," 1991. ....	84
31. Detail, Robert Stead, Canadian Authors' Association, Quebec City, 1924 ...	99
32. Grey Owl on Lake Ajawaan, 1936 .....	100
33. Robert Stead, ca. 1946 .....	101
34. Grey Owl, portrait, 1936 .....	104
35. Grey Owl at Beaver Lodge .....	105
36. Aerial survey photo, oblique, 1927, showing Lake Ajawaan .....	108
37. Aerial survey photo, vertical, 1948, detail showing lake Ajawaan (left eye) ..	109
38. Aerial survey photo, vertical, 1948, detail showing lake Ajawaan (right eye)	109
39. Aerial survey photo, vertical, 1948, detail, showing Beaver Lodge .....	110
40. Grey Owl, Landscape with beaver, n.d. ....	112
41. Parks Branch landscape photo tacked to tree at Beaver Lodge, with Grey Owl's handwritten instructions, n.d. ca. 1930s .....	114
42. Grey Owl, landscape, double-exposure, n.d. ....	115
43. Grey Owl, landscape photograph, n.d. ....	116
44. Edmonton Journal, November 20th, 1940 .....	168
45. Nationalities Branch, Christmas Party, 22 December 1944 .....	226
46. Nationalities Branch, Christmas Party, 22 December 1944 .....	226
47. Norman McLaren's <i>Neighbours</i> , Jean-Paul Ladouceur, Grant Munro, 1952	237
48. Norman McLaren shooting " <i>Neighbours</i> ," 1952 .....	241
49. <i>Neighbours</i> examine the flower (film still, <i>Neighbours</i> , 1952) ...	244
50. <i>Neighbours</i> "flying" (film still, <i>Neighbours</i> , 1952) .....	246
51. Norman McLaren and Wolf Koenig film neighbours "fencing" (film still, <i>Neighbours</i> , 1952) .....	250

52. Neighbours' graves . . . . .	259
53. Louis St. Laurent at Liberal Party Convention, 1949 . . . . .	273
54. Louis St. Laurent receiving Report of the Royal Commission on the Arts Letters and Sciences from Vincent Massey, 1951 . . . . .	273
55. Topographical Survey, detail, White Rock, B.C. and Peace Arch Park, ca. 1961 . . . . .	273
56. CBC International Service, 1945. Worker on antenna truss . . . . .	276
57. CBC International Service, 1945. Control room at Sackville N.B. transmitter site . . . . .	276
58. CBC International Service, 1945. POWs in Montreal studio, censored . . . .	276
59. Peter Dwyer, Security pass photo, April 26th, 1950 . . . . .	306
60. Noviciate Hurdman Bridge, 1922 . . . . .	307
61. CBNRC, Hurdman Bridge, aerial view, 1952 . . . . .	308
62. Soeur Joseph-André at Noviciate entrance, ca. 1927 . . . . .	310
63. Florence Fancott as Adelaide in <i>Hoodman-Blind</i> , Ottawa Little Theatre, November, 1953 . . . . .	315
64. Florence Fancott and Donald Shepherd in <i>Hoodman-Blind</i> , 1952 . . . . .	316
65. <i>Ottawa Journal</i> , 18 November 1953 . . . . .	332
66. Peter Dwyer and Lillian Breen at Canada Council. ca.1966 . . . . .	338
67. Elizabeth Harrison, "Cafeteria, Chateau Laurier, 1944" . . . . .	344
68. Ted Cochrane and Paul Robeson arriving at Blaine customs terminal, January 31st, 1952 . . . . .	431
69. Aerial Survey Photograph of Peace Arch environs, 1952 . . . . .	434
70. Peace Arch Park, detail, 1952 . . . . .	435
71. Detail of Semiahmoo Reservation, 1952, extruded with digital filter . . . . .	436
72. Detail, Blaine outskirts, 1952, extruded . . . . .	436
73. Detail, Peace Arch Golf Course, 1952, extruded . . . . .	437
74. Robeson approaches the stage, greeting members of the audience, May 18th, 1952 . . . . .	438
75. Aerial view of concert, May 18th, 1952 . . . . .	439

76. Robeson at the microphone, May 18th, 1952 . . . . .	442
77. Contact sheet, concert views, 18 May 18th, 1952 . . . . .	443
78. Detail of aerial photo showing base of Peace Arch, May 18th, 1952 . . . . .	444
79. Detail of rearground, Peace Arch Concert, 1955 . . . . .	445
80. Paul Robeson and Harvey Murphy at Peace Arch . . . . .	446
81. Peace Arch Concert, view from Canadian customs looking south, May 18th, 1952 . . . . .	448
82. Paul Robeson at last Peace Arch concert, 1955. . . . .	449
83. Detail, man with film camera, August 1955 . . . . .	450

## INTRODUCTION

Nor will it, I trust, be deemed presumptuous on the part of a man of humble and obscure condition to attempt to discuss and direct the government of princes; for in the same way that landscape painters station themselves in the valleys in order to draw mountains or high ground, and ascend an eminence in order to get a good view of the plains, so it is necessary to be a prince to know thoroughly the nature of the people, and to be one of the populace to know the nature of princes.

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*

In a small, wood-panelled dining room in the Ottawa Press Club a dwindling group of retired security intelligence officials, along with some of their counterparts who once served in branches of the state's cultural agencies, meet weekly for lunch, as they have since the 1950s. Invited to sit in, I hear them reminisce, exchange opinions on current affairs, and turn over a few well-chewed enigmas. One former External Affairs man explains the exact status of the Saarland in 1938-39; another marvels at the lax security in the present Privy Council Office. Despite long familiarity there is an air of formality. Occasionally a flash of steel in the repartee serves as a reminder that these men (they are all men) once wielded considerable power. My interest is in one of the founders of this lunch group, Peter Dwyer, now deceased, and for a moment their eyes turn to me as I wonder out loud about his dual role in Canada's national culture and state security, and how one realm extended into the other. After a pause, someone says "Well, Dwyer was a remarkable fellow," and another mumbles, "cultural attachés? No, no . . . passport officers," and the conversation moves on.

Afterwards, a man who once directed the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's Security Service shakes my hand. Fixing his steely eyes on me, he says, "Kristmanson . . . that's Icelandic."

"No," I reply, "Canadian."

"Well," he smiles, "we watched your traffic."

...

He meant that the secret Communications Branch of the National Research Council (CBNRC) had intercepted and decoded the Icelanders' wireless transmissions during his years with the Intelligence section of the Canada's Department of External Affairs. And though the remark was offered lightly, it stayed with me. I understood then that my name marks me as "already-different" in the gaze of Canada's state security apparatus. It is a style of thinking--indeed, a political rationality or a cultural logic--of which I had either been innocent, or else chose to forget. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that this prompted me to look closely at intelligence and national security in what was slated to be a more conventional treatment of culture and citizenship in twentieth century Canada.

Five years later, as I approached the end of this project, I happened to see the man again, aged but still dapper. I observed him turning a corner on to Sparks Street with a spring in his step, making his way to the weekly lunch party. The spring in his step reflects his status in the secret world: it is the step of "the man who knows," and for whom the restricted realm of secret knowledge is both sufficient and satisfactory. It is the step of a man whose natural adversaries have not only been laid low, but so deeply internalized as to be almost beyond remembering.

There were others inside this magic circle for whom the space of secrecy was insufficient, who regretted the intellectual shut-down induced by the Cold War, who felt disgust at the silent civil struggle that purified the state's apparatuses of internal dissent. They watched their 'secret society' turn itself inside out to create a society of secrets. Certainly the cultural anomie of Canada's first post-Cold-War decade has justified their uneasiness. For my part, during the intervening years I have come to know more about them and their shadowy world than I thought one could; more than most people would want to.

### **Styles of Retrospectivity**

The style of retrospectivity I have cast through the following pages seeks to reauthorize memories and states of affairs that never 'made it', historically. These data never were integrated in the State's processing of its own history. For the most part, the narratives which follow are composed of documentary debris, but debris, I suggest, still encoded with historical potentials, still attracting alternative modes of retrospectivity. And if such potentials have been (and will remain) unrealizable it is not because they were utopic, and gestured towards unattainable horizons. On the contrary, they show that the 'horizon' metaphor, like the 'nation' metaphor, are diversions from the *immediacy* of historical potential to its specific locale--it is a style that imagines there might be immediacy of such intensity that it annihilates the very representational space of what is commonly recognized as 'History'.

This retrospective potential for historical signification depends on readers. It trusts that borne along in history's dispersed freight are disused, outmoded, perhaps even censored, protocols of reception. It chances that in their solitary wanderings readers carry not only maps to convey them through unfamiliar landscapes, and a novel or two for reassurance in some dark pass, but also, rattling loose in the bottom of their packs, what Michel de Certeau calls "the seeds of alternative traces."<sup>1</sup> This retro-potential is not directly "activist"--historical writing only rarely can be--but nonetheless these seeds may yet

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<sup>1</sup> Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 186.

have the potential to *reactivate*, and this will be necessary to the invention of socio-cultural realities adapted finely to their time and their place.

The three parts of this thesis are concerned with such potentialities.

Part I, "Dwellers and Occupiers," recounts two stories, one of an Arctic voyage, and the other a tale of Grey Owl, the sole aboriginal person *invited* to live inside a wilderness park. I will argue that a visual regime of 'landscape perception' was part of the protective sentience of national culture, constituting viewing subjects both through the subjective gaze of landscape painting and the cartographic grid of the airphoto map. Furthermore, this regime was gendered and racialized as a set of norms tuned to render 'difference' into the visible spectrum.

The painter A.Y. Jackson stayed with my great-grandparents when he visited Hazelton, B.C. with Edwin Holgate in 1926. My grandmother was then a young girl, but she remembers Jackson clearly for his odour of stale cigarette smoke. In his autobiography, Jackson reports:

One day Holgate and I were making drawings of the Indian grave houses at Hazelton. They were made of wood and were of odd design. Inside were placed all kinds of objects the deceased might have use for in the spirit world . . . . A Negro with his arm in a sling came to watch us work . . . . Anxious to impress on me the fact that he was not an Indian, he said, "Sir, I was the first white man in Hazelton."

One of the objects in the grave house was a broken sewing machine, and this piece of technology reminded Jackson of a previous visit to Hazelton with anthropologist Marius Barbeau. In a complex negotiation with a native shaman, Barbeau traded his voice recorder for masks and rattles "covetted for the National Museum." It was a contest over two forms of mimetic power: "The recording machine excited the medicine man; he quickly realized that his waning power might be bolstered up by it."<sup>2</sup> Barbeau knew that possession of these artifacts also conferred a form of knowledge/power.

Writing of the early contact period, Stephen Greenblatt associates such transactions with Europeans' "intense dream of possession," adding that while he found "almost no authentic reciprocity in the exchange of representations between Europeans or peoples of the new world, no equality of giving or receiving . . . still, there is always some degree of mimetic circulation."<sup>3</sup> Race, ethnicity, history, anthropology and this mimetic rivalry circulate uneasily through Jackson's account; it is as if Jackson *had* to (ethnically) cleanse

<sup>2</sup> A.Y. Jackson, *A Painter's Country: The Autobiography of A.Y. Jackson* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1958), 89.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 121.

the painted landscape of aboriginal figures because the national scheme of representation and observation was not yet stable enough to see itself in 'multicultural' terms. Perhaps it was as much the result of *cognitive crisis* as cultural imposition that aboriginal presence in Jackson's Skeena sketches is rendered as already-extinct, and of solely museological interest.

### **The 'Complex'**

Part II, "The 'State' within the State," sets liberal theory and cultural nationalist historiography on edge to outline a ridge of pressure between national culture and state security. Its patterns of disjuncture and continuity are traced through the wartime development of multiculturalism and the post-war 'security scare'. A censorship-intelligence-propaganda complex that formed during the Second World War is understood here both as an institutional instrumentality and a pathological 'complex'.

The National Library of Canada, through whose good auspices much of this research was conducted, is an easy place to locate the "state" within the state. It requires no more than sitting at a reference terminal and checking the holdings of periodicals published in minority languages. One finds an astonishingly rich collection that spans much of the twentieth century. Casual browsers must be impressed with a liberal multicultural ethos so even-handed that an almost complete set of minority language publications exists in its National Library, alongside the majority-language collections.

The Archives' own archive corrects this impression. The story begins in 1926 when RCMP Commissioner Courtland Starnes wrote to the Dominion Archivist, Arthur Doughty:

I have among my records . . . a certain number of newspapers, most, though not all, of a more or less subversive nature. They are pressing upon my accommodation and it has occurred to me that you might like to take charge of them.<sup>4</sup>

Another load arrived in 1928, and yet another in 1933. Deputy Commissioner J.W. Spalding advised Doughty that he "had the honour to send by police truck, as of ultimate interest to yourself, a number of bundles of more or less seditious publications . . . . It has occurred to me that it would be advisable to preserve them for the future."

In November 1951, the National Archivist received another "secret" RCMP communication:

During approximately the last ten years, this Force has been in receipt of a large number of foreign language newspapers published in Canada. They are comprised of Communist and Nationalist publications, In the latter case, the majority being in

---

<sup>4</sup> RG 37 vol. 49, file 60-3-RCMP, C. Starnes to A.G. Doughty, 14 Dec. 1926; On 19 Mar. 1928, Starnes offered Doughty a further "considerable accumulation" of material.

the Ukrainian language. The communist papers are in the languages of various prominent ethnic groups in Canada.

2. For the years up to 1950, we have practically a complete set of duplicate issues.
3. We have a considerable amount of Italian material in the forms of books, periodicals and newspapers of a Fascist nature.<sup>5</sup>

That such a rich research resource for cultural history exists *only* because ethnocultural communities were the objects of the liberal state's distrust and surveillance presents one face of the culture-security paradox. The xenophobic and suspicious mounted policemen were, equally, the sensitive custodians of materials for a plural, multilingual and non-cultural-nationalist history.

### **Ignoring the Sky**

Part III, "Remembering-to-Forget," confronts Canada's national culture with its secrecy and amnesia, reopening the question of how the Left was collapsed after 1945, and the way emergent cognitive models were, as one vigilante historian puts it, "thrown forcibly into the dustbin." In 1954, CBC Chairman Arnold Davidson Dunton addressed a convocation at the University of Saskatchewan.<sup>6</sup> Ten years earlier Dunton had been John Grierson's protégé, succeeding him as head of the Wartime Information Board. With some discomfort, Dunton had adapted himself to the post-progressive era, taking over the CBC as Wartime Information staff were absorbed into the various information-related government departments. In his 1954 address, "Freedom for Whom?" Dunton laid out the liberal dilemma: how to defend the West's cherished freedoms while still reining in Canadian communists who exploited such freedoms hoping to wreck liberal democracy. "Right within our own borders communism works to beset and bedevil the cause of freedom," beguiling people with falsehoods, and tainting worthy causes by infiltrating legitimate organizations:

What do we do? . . . If we tried to ban expression of even just the fundamental doctrines of communism we still could not escape the fact that we would be putting a restraint on thought and discussion. Once a society starts banning mere discussion it can hardly call itself free.

At the same time, "we know the communists are actually partners in a long range plot" to destroy freedom: "This is the dilemma of our kind of democracy."

Dunton cautioned that capitalism and progress have their dangers, too. The rise of mass communications, he acknowledged, had concentrated the means of information into

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 8 November 1951.

<sup>6</sup> A. Davidson Dunton, "Freedom for Whom," Convocation address, University of Saskatchewan, 14 May 1954, (Toronto: CBC, 1954). National Library of Canada.

just a few hands. No one can avoid the fact that broadcasting "is monopolistic by nature," and that its commercial imperative tends towards censorship: "you might as well try and ignore the sky," he said. Therein lay the importance of the CBC as a safeguard to free expression, he said, "free from any government control," adding that "we in it are very conscious of our responsibility."

Dunton did not burden his audience with the details of how he discharged this responsibility, even though a degree of anguish underscored his words. He mentioned neither his suppression of a programme concerning Igor Gouzenko's defection in the winter of 1946, his substitution of the topic "Have We Freedom of Expression in the Press?" with "How Could Canadian Radio Better Serve the Public Interest?" in order to "avoid distortion," nor his acquiescence in the purging of Sally Solomon and Stuart Griffiths from the CBC's International Service in 1948. He was silent on the cancellation of Rimsky Korsakov's opera *May Night* in 1952 at the behest of the RCMP's John Leopold and the internal ban on Paul Robeson appearing on CBC programmes.<sup>7</sup> Nor did he point to examples where he had risked defending a person or a programme as he would with headstrong producer, Ross McLean. Instead, Dunton called for greater "public understanding and interest," granting the CBC the widest mandate possible under the circumstances, and for Canadians to trust its executives to fairly represent the spectrum of opinion. "The first safeguard for free movement of ideas to people by mass means," he intoned, "should come from the sense of responsibility of those who control the means." This "trust our secrecy" formulation was the best he could offer the students, but he warned them: "at the university you have known a freedom of the mind that you may not quite know again."

By the time Dunton presented a convocation address on the same theme at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton three years later, the cultural nationalist

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<sup>7</sup> NAC RG 41, vol. 200, file 11-18-11-41 pt.2, "Citizens' Forum," F.W. Park to A.D. Dunton, 21 February 1946: when Park objected to Dunton's "intellectual contraceptive," Dunton replied, on 27 February, that cancelling the "broadcast on Canadian relations with Russia . . . is right because . . . it would be unreal . . . without bringing in the current spy business," adding, on 4 April: "to substitute [the topic of the United Nations in place of Canada's relations with Russia] is likely to be helpful rather than harmful to sensible judgement on the part of the public"; A.D. Dunton to E. Bushnell, 13 December 1946, advising title change; Arthur Siegel, *Radio Canada International: History and Development* (Oakville, Ont.: Mosaic, 1996), 99-101, recounts the Solomon-Griffiths firings; NAC RG 146, ATIP 96-A-00119, RCMP file, "CBC - TV Programs," J. Leopold to file, 9 May 1952: "he realized that if the CBC proceeds . . . it may lay itself open to charges of [assisting] the Communist inspired campaign to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the death of Gogol . . . . Asked what he should do, the undersigned [Leopold] ventured to suggest that if he were in [Dunton]'s shoes he would cancel the contract to avoid any unpleasant repercussions."

*dispositif* has resolved the internal tensions that marked the earlier speech.<sup>8</sup> Gone are the direct references to communism. The word is not mentioned at all. Rather Dunton is concerned to give the word 'freedom' a new inflection, and his question "Freedom for Whom?" is answered by the title of his new speech: "Freedom for Minds." With the official launch of the Canada Council just three months away, Dunton let the students in on the new line of thinking.

He introduced it by stages. First, he allowed that the universities were islands of free thought, but ones which were greatly affected "by the surrounding mental climate." He drew a metaphor from fluid dynamics: "ideas flow in the society around [universities] as well as within their own confines." The rise of mass communications is a part of human progress that cannot be undone; to say so "is like saying the flow of the St. Lawrence River should be reversed." Between 1952 and 1957, sixty percent of Canadians had invested close to a billion dollars outfitting themselves with televisions, and they "appear to be spending well over twenty hours a week watching them." The danger of concentrating media ownership in a few hands ought to be obvious, he said, and he stressed the importance of public broadcasting as the bastion against the possibility of "thought control."

Dunton had cleared the stage for his new concept of "freedom," which he defined as "the opportunity for Canadians effectively to communicate among themselves through the airwaves." There must be the freedom, he said, for "the output of Canadian minds to circulate among Canadians." It was a credo that would occupy cultural politics in Canada for the next three decades, painting over the rich mural of dissent left over from the progressive era.

### **The Conspiratorial Text**

Parachuted into the middle distance of a historical vista, the interdisciplinary historian wanders outward in concentric rings, eschewing the comfortable spatial orientation of the Quattrocento perspective that foregrounds objects against a unified background and historically-scheduled time. Aurally, a kind of textual 'echo-location' gives some sense of the surrounding environment. Restricted to what one can know immediately, the terrain easily can seem like a landscape of conspiracy, a fearful and suspicious space in the political unconscious. Merely taking the jump into a restricted zone of information betrays one's desire for some alternative solidarity.

Yet, the embarrassment of transgression can be productive in unexpected ways. As Fredric Jameson writes:

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<sup>8</sup> A. Davidson Dunton, "Freedom For Minds," Founder's Day address, University of New Brunswick, 28 February, 1957. National Library of Canada.

the 'conspiratorial text' . . . whatever other messages it emits or implies, may also be taken to constitute an unconscious, collective effort of where we are and what landscapes and forces confront us in a later twentieth century whose abominations are heightened by their concealment and their bureaucratic impersonality.<sup>9</sup>

With the conspiracy genre, he continues, "it is the gesture that counts." Definitive proof of any conspiratorial hypothesis is less important than "the intent to hypothesize, in the desire called cognitive mapping--therein lies the beginning of wisdom." At some "deeper level of our collective fantasy . . . we think about the social system all the time, a deeper level that also allows us to slip our political thoughts past a liberal and anti-political censorship."<sup>10</sup>

Past or future conspiracies are of less interest than the self-organizing intensification of *nationality* in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The resolution of the Second World War in something new called Cold War accelerated Canada's transition from British Dominion to sovereign nation. But underlying these giant swells, and to some extent irrespective of them, a tidal rise of nationality discreetly regulated cultural differences through an era of decolonization, rapid population movements, accelerating informatics and mass communications. By mid-century, one finds a rich paradox of the new Canadian *nationalism* proclaiming its sovereign uniqueness even as the silent isomorphism of *nationality* enmeshed its citizens in the postcolonial international grid of security states. The immense intellectual concentration on the "problem" of nationalism since 1989 is a fascinating indicator of a severe disturbance that slowly, almost imperceptibly, is repoliticizing the liberal meta-discourse of nationality, a regime that went unchallenged through the Cold War.

### **Deep Furrows**

The restrictive inclusion of French- and English-Canadian relations in what follows is not accidental. It has long been the practice to cultivate Canada's political landscape with this low-level pastoral feud, sowing acre upon acre with the stubbly grass of residual colonial conflict. If the cultivation metaphor can be permitted one final harvest it must be to say: "move on, the soil is exhausted!" Like Joni Mitchell's "hissing" summer lawns, or electronic "noise" plaguing a public address system, Canadian discussions of nationalism and constitutionalism have hissed, hummed, buzzed and squawked for more than a century over this question. As decades passed, while trouble-shooting constitutional technicians

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<sup>9</sup> Fredric Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press and BFI Publishing, 1992), 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

sought to eliminate noise in the finicky national sound system, and ideological lawns were kept ever more closely-cropped, somehow it became convenient never to start the show.

Arcing landscape, electricity and government suggests that the electrified political landscape is a larger metaphor for modernity and the Euro-occupation of North America. In this vein, Pierre Popovic diagnoses a suppressed strain of modernism in "Duplessisme," that is, the era of Quebec politics immediately prior to what is usually thought of as the Quiet Revolution.<sup>11</sup> In the popular sayings of the arch-conservative Premier Maurice Duplessis, who governed Quebec with an iron fist in the 1940s and 1950s, electricity was a ready theme. "Électeurs, électrices . . . électricité!" he was likely to shout; and once, upon learning that the head of a Quebec hydro-electric consortium, Mr. Watt, did not speak French, he quipped: "So, he's no kilowatt."<sup>12</sup> Popovic's analysis of Duplessis' *calembours* locates a modernist and capitalist affinity that troubles Charles Taylor's theory that a "deep diversity" persists between French and English Canada.<sup>13</sup> From aboriginal, ecological, feminist, gay, marxist, postcolonial, or any non-centrist perspective, it seems *deep complicity* better describes both the theory and the historical relationship it privileges.

### Problems of Scale

It does seem that the space for *consciously*-formed critical hypotheses has been assigned an extremely narrow bandwidth in public culture. Surely one task of interdisciplinary inquiry is to decompress it and open up spaces for such hypothesizing. For this reason, the problem of 'scale' is crucial in sizing history to *human* modes of comprehension, rather than those of Gods, intelligent machines or Princes. Indeed, Machiavelli makes this connection in the passage above when he associates techniques of landscape observation with the art of governing populations.<sup>14</sup> It is a mutual regard through which members of a population see and know the Prince to be the governing entity which

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<sup>11</sup> Pierre Popovic, "Le duplessisme," in his *La Contradiction du poème* (Éditions Balzac, 1992), 134.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Taylor, *Reconciling the Solitudes: Essays on Canadian Federalism and Nationalism* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993). Taylor allows that not all political cultures may be subsumed under an overarching national culture. He views divergent strains in liberal thought between French (collectivist) and English Canada (proceduralist) as an instance of "deep" diversity. This "second-level" diversity is opposed to "first-level," and presumably "shallow," multicultural differences subsumable by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. He veers close to defining as deeply diverse only those groups which actually threaten the nation's territorial base, even though clearly there are profound and less commensurable "differences" which do not.

<sup>14</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (New York: Mentor Classics, 1960), 32.

knows them better than they know themselves. Conversely, one of the populace will know better than the Prince or Princess the gap between his or her lofty rhetoric of civility and the actual exercise of power. Five hundred years on, the techniques of imaging and observation are vastly more sophisticated, but the essential disposition of state authority, population and territory remains in force.

Representations of history often impute a reader of colossal proportions, looking down from the highest possible "eminence." Cliometricians scale their writing to 'cyborgs' --rendering statistical patternings in human societies as if for some great human-watching machine. The political historian likes to scale historical representation to the ratio of the State and its national territory, in its relation to other states and territories. Intellectual history often matches itself to the spatio-temporal signature of a given disciplinary formation. At the other end of the telescope, the minutiae of microhistory is scaled to an insect-reader who may find it hard to define larger formations in the bewildering complexity of the extreme close-up.

Can narratives be configured in scales that usefully characterize human historical actors for human readers? It is from such intimate aural and spatial locales, I suggest, that the loose seeds Michel de Certeau mentions might be reactivated. And yet there is a tendency as one approaches biography to fetishize the subject as a freely choosing agent, unconstrained by social forces. Reverting to "human scale" need not mean returning to the sovereign subject of idealist history; rather the de-centred historical subject is rendered in a scale consistent with one's own sense of de-centredness.

A second reason for emphasizing a human scale is that I do not apply a programmatic multi-disciplinary template to the set of historical data. Rather, the historical characters who emerge from the archive into this text were themselves, with one or two exceptions, *interdisciplinary actors* of one kind or another. The epistemological foundations shift in accordance with their at times flagrantly anti-systematic concatenations of specialized knowledge. Nationality's mode of representation, constricted by its own disciplinary precepts, thus recedes, decompressed to restore the wider play of lived subjectivity with its narrative authority. It is a gesture, at least, towards a historiography that conserves the real from the virtual, cultures from bureaucracies and intelligent machines, and memory from the civic imperative to forget.

**PART ONE**

**DWELLERS AND OCCUPIERS**

Explorers, tormented by a sense of the unreality of the unseen, are first: pioneers and traders follow. But the land is still not imaginatively absorbed, and the incubus moves on to haunt the artists.

Northrop Frye, 1940

The image of a landscape void of human presence precedes the apparition of specially designated human figures prominently occupying that picture space . . . . Expressed in a Foucauldean way, a structure which began to emerge as an unnamed and vague space toward the latter half of the nineteenth century, became a fully articulated system of representation called the wilderness, possessing an iconography and prescribed codes of conduct. Wilderness, in short, became a disciplinary practice, one that required . . . both the marginalizing of aboriginal presence from the land and the disappearance of aboriginal presence from representation.

Jonathan Bordo, 1992

## CHAPTER ONE:

### MASTS, TOTEMS, ANTENNAS

Landscape is invisible, because the more we absorb it, the more we lose ourselves in it. To be fully in the landscape we must sacrifice, as far as possible, all temporal, spatial and objective precision . . . . In the landscape we cease to be historical beings, i.e., beings objectifiable to themselves. We are dreaming in broad daylight with our eyes wide open.

Erwin Straus, *The Primary World of Senses*, 1935.

How is territory inhabited, culturally? In proposing this question I have in mind to filter the signifier "culture" just for its connotations of protection and collective security, scanning the archive for an elusive paradox on the hither side of 'national history'. The question takes shape in the scission between peoples' embeddedness in a landscape and their alienation from it, their rootedness in an immediate terrain but also the dispersal of lived subjectivities across geographies of governance and protection. Since any human occupation of territory is effected and maintained by a certain degree of force, the following readings willy nilly disclose the control of space and time by men versus women, by culture versus anarchy, technologies versus bodies, legitimate versus vulgar taste, homesteading versus wilderness living, colonization versus diaspora, all the way up to selective internments and ethnic cleansing. Indeed, in the last instance, the question of cultural inhabitation of a landscape passes over into the infernal logic of war and conquest to concepts such as *lebensraum* and, ultimately, 'Final Solutions'.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Plateau Music**

Yet, the proposed series --nationality, culture, security--is directed not towards twentieth-century Europe, but rather its peaceful Canadian hinterland: a plateau of relative calm where ambient tensions may be sensed at lower thresholds, and where cultural inhabitations of landscape can be traced according to shifting modes of landscape perception. Before the advent of the 'national security culture', Wendy Wickwire records

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<sup>1</sup> On the spatial patterning of masculine domination of the modern metropolis see Elizabeth Wright, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, Disorder and the Control of Women* (London: Virago Press, 1991); for the depredations of empires and their dislocations see Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); for an account of struggles over the last vestiges of British wilderness see E.P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act* (New York: Pantheon, 1975); for European impact on North American landscape see William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).

that sh-peent-lum and his wife predicted the arrival of Europeans in British Columbia's lower Fraser Valley prior to their actual appearance. In Plateau music, according to Wickwire, there was no "built-in tension . . . which must be arbitrarily resolved." Before the occupation, Coast Salish guarding power was invoked through song as vocalized by a warrior. Other songs were carriers of community and of collective memory. As one Native woman put it: "the happiness gets right in your heart, and your whole system." On the other hand, Euro-occupation gave rise to "homelessness songs," a wistful genre in Plateau music expressed in the open-ended and irresolvable pentatonic scale.<sup>2</sup>

### **Interdisciplinarity**

This question I have posed might lend itself to a strictly disciplinary reading, say in historical geography, anthropology or cultural history, or it might be adapted to a programmatic cultural studies critique on the race-class-gender grid. Indeed, resistance to dominant cultures of occupation can be traced and mapped according to feminist, postcolonial, and/or marxist perspectives. Yet, what purpose do such analyses serve if they simply assert that human relations are so many 'social constructions'? On one hand, Michael Taussig points out, demonstrating the "social construction" of historical phenomena--"the invention of tradition"--as an end in itself only results in a conundrum: "for in construction's place--what? no more invention, or more invention?"<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, it is worth recalling that Michel Foucault, whose writings helped move "social construction" theories into the research agendas in the social sciences and humanities, warned against merely explaining "power" to power, and so simply enhancing the grip of hitherto dominant formations. In the following pages I will not argue merely that "nationality" structures the cultural occupation of territory. That is a given. Rather I hope to ventilate a stale air of inevitability about that social construction.

Scholarly disciplines in the humanities and social sciences routinely accommodate sectoral 'oppositional' studies, but it appears that much research and analysis ultimately serves to refine the disciplined knowledge of territorial occupation. There is patient investigation of political and family organization, climate, surveying and cartography, transportation, military and civilian technologies, sexuality, food, economics, psychology,

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<sup>2</sup> Wendy Wickwire, "To See Ourselves As the Other's Other: Nlaka'pamux Contact Narratives," *Canadian Historical Review* 75:1 (1994):1-20; and her "Cultures in Contact: Music, the Plateau Indian, and the Western Encounter," Ph.D. Thesis, Wesleyan University, 1983, 246, 279-81.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), xvi.

aesthetics, policing and governance, to name just a few. These specialized knowledges accumulate within a nationalist epistemology produced by the State, as Hegel directed, in the very progress of its own being. In return, such specialists are called upon first to firm up public consensus on any issue that touches the state's interest.

Interdisciplinary studies face an epistemological dilemma: how to "add" knowledge without "accumulating" it? How to predicate knowledge differently without it simply disappearing for lack of an authorized position of enunciation, or else seeing it re-integrated as a new sub-discipline? Overcoming this dilemma is not so impossible as it sounds, but nor is it automatically liberating. Edward Said's exemplary *Orientalism*, for instance, works between disciplines to illuminate an entire discourse woven into the Europeans' imperial occupations of territory. But even Said's influential intervention should not lead to a valorization of interdisciplinarity as an end in itself; obviously, such techniques may just as well be turned to ends he would oppose. The point is not to set up an opposition between interdisciplinarity and established knowledge disciplines, but rather to acknowledge that the *potential* for non-specialist interdisciplinary interventions is always there, up for grabs. The approach here is deliberately *inter-*, that is, non-specialist and non-programmatic, deploying concepts borrowed from various disciplines and from cultural theory as transparently as possible.

The subject matter is historical, but the text does not exclusively address the historical discipline. In English Canadian historiography the traditional response to the question I have posed was to emphasize "national development" as the organizing principle of Canadian history and geography, reiterating the "National Dream" as a westward and northward expansion of settlement and economic growth, culminating in a sovereign modern nation. Within the historical discipline that dream is undergoing analysis to unearth the fears and secrets embedded in the landscape. There is interest in the ways aboriginal peoples occupied the same territory prior to and after the European conquest of the Americas. There is pathbreaking work in the histories of ethnic minorities, gays, and in ecological matters.<sup>4</sup>

For its part, anthropology has all along been the scholarly discipline most directly implicated in elaborating 'culture' as the sign of human identity and difference, tracking along with the ontological shifts associated with Europe's imperial fortunes. Today, the

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<sup>4</sup> Tina Loo, "Dan Cranmer's Potlatch: Law As Coercion, Symbol and Rhetoric in British Columbia, 1884-1951," *Canadian Historical Review* 73:2 (1992): 125-65; David Kimmel and Daniel Robinson, "The Queer Career of Homosexual Security Vetting in Cold War Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 75:3 (1994): 319-45; Gary Kinsman, "'Character Weakness' and 'Fruit Machines': Towards an Analysis of the Anti-Homosexual Security Campaign in the Canadian Civil Service," *Labour / le travail*, 35 (Spring 1995): 133-61.

traces of 'archaic' knowledge collected and codified by anthropologists from countless generations of aboriginal habitation circulate in and out of remnants of traditional aboriginal knowledges and collective memories, reanimating dormant traditions and creating new ones. This is often salutary. In pre-contact aboriginal artworks, for example, Wilson Duff glimpsed the "immediacy" in the cultural inhabitation of territory as it was before being dispersed through the distancing effect of European modernity and its abstract conceptions of time and space.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately, he evolved a kind of para-anthropology that accompanied the reignition in the 1970s of West Coast art traditions by Bill Reid and other aboriginal artists.

On the other hand, anthropological knowledge also fuels aboriginal land claims tendered on the front-end of clear-cutting machinery, as anxious as any transnational corporation to feed forests to global commodity markets. If anthropology once was imperialism's avant garde, normalizing cultural differences through a system of knowledge, it has returned as the boomerang of white guilt, providing raw fuel for all these processes, leaving the discipline clinging to the hope they can be contained and absorbed within the liberal tolerances of national culture.

The difficulty facing historical or anthropological accounts of the cultural occupation of territory—and this is the case for any strictly disciplinary approach—lies in the social scientific language of the question itself. The cognitive mappings encoded in the word "territory" reference a juridico-political space segmented into present, past, and future tenses. The word "occupy" references some distant authority. Moreover, the sign "culture" triggers the disciplines to "see as" rather than to "see," in Wittgenstein's well-known figure. If the cultural inhabitation of territory by prehistoric aboriginals could be fully understood today it would require an abandonment of social scientific language, and the relearning of intuitive faculties long dulled by logocentrism and abstract systems that transpersonalize memory and displace human capacities into machines. This is neither to romanticize an apocryphal "natural man" or her lost idyll, nor to vilify "socially constructed" European knowledge, but rather to recognize the incommensurateness of what, for lack of a more precise term, I will call "dwelling" in relation to knowledge disciplines whose discursivity is inexorably bound up with the culture of an occupation.

'Culture', for all its complexity and imprecision, is an *earthy* term. As Robert Young has shown, one of its etymological roots is 'colonus', the farmer who inhabits and cultivates:

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<sup>5</sup> E.N. Anderson, ed., *The Bird of Paradox: Unpublished Writings of Wilson Duff* (Surrey, B.C.: Hancock House, 1996), 96.

The culture of land has always been, in fact, the primary form of colonization; the focus on soil emphasizes the physicality of the territory that is coveted, occupied, cultivated, turned into plantations and made unsuitable for indigenous nomadic tribes.<sup>6</sup>

'Occupation' is not so earthy. It connotes a *systemization* of the inhabitation of territory by a force emanating from a distant metropolis. The culture of an occupation reads on the earth's surface as an expression of that elsewhere, like the Soviet tank tracks that once soiled the gardens of Prague, the wall that once divided Berlin, or the network of interstate highways in America. The logic of occupation embosses the surface of landscapes with alien contours that have no local provenance. Indeed, 'occupation' is so explicitly a sign of force that to seek a history of dwelling persisting within it invites ridicule, and fragile juxtapositions risk being crushed between the knowledge pyramids of History, Geography, Anthropology, and so forth. Yet, the "inter-" of interdisciplinary study may well entail the rehabilitation of analogical modes of inquiry to balance "seeing" with "seeing as," and to recover some sense of the "immediacy" that must persist intertextually even within the "mediations" of historiography or anthropology. Only as a *gentle science* might interdisciplinary study eschew the macro generalizations of social theory and touch the earth in scales appropriate to sustainable human inhabitation.<sup>7</sup>

### **Intra-Landscapes**

The question "what is a tree?" elicits various hierarchies of significations that are contingent on cultural assumptions regarding time and space. In the contemporary Euro-Canadian landscape "tree" is abstracted to signify, primarily, "a natural resource"; at other times it may have borne stronger associations to the human form or to the cosmic order. When poet Pat Lowther describes a tree as "a slow paradigm for an explosion" she invokes at once the step-animated acceleration of time familiar to the modern filmic observer, but also inflects that way of imaging with the potentially greater ecological "explosion" following upon mass deforestation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Robert J.C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), 31.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Bové, "Abandoning Knowledge: Disciplines, Discourse, Dogma," *New Literary History* 25 (1994): 601-619; Edward Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community," in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983): 135-59.

<sup>8</sup> Pat Lowther, "Woman," in her *Time Capsule* (Victoria, B.C.: Polestar, 1996), 81.

In another poem, "at the last judgment we shall all be trees," Lowther combines the many-limbed sensitivity of a tree to the reception of electromagnetic waveforms:

its thousand tongues  
tasting the weather  
as we taste the electric  
weather of each other<sup>9</sup>

Lowther describes human relationships, and perhaps even human cultures, as thousand-tongued sensing systems and electrified zones of protection, alert to threats and opportunities. Adapted to a syllogism, Lowther's poem might read:

I am human  
A human is a tree  
A tree is an antenna  
I am an antenna

In this case, the familiar romantic anthropomorphism that vests the tree with human subjectivity, as in Grey Owl's story "The Tree," or painter Emily Carr's human-contoured arboreal paintings, passes over into an effaced mechanomorphism of antennae and protective sentience.

For any human group, a culture of security is a necessary feature of successful inhabitation of landscape. Yi-Fu Yuan's global historical catalogue of territorial insecurity amongst human groups suggests that anywhere the sign "culture" was invoked, latent reference was also made to the concern for security. "In a sense," he writes, "every human construction is a component in a landscape of fear because it exists to contain chaos."<sup>10</sup> Prehistoric aboriginals maintained their cultural presence on the northwest coast of North America through a non-scientific knowledge of nature: the acute faculties of human sentinels and trackers, messengers' fleetness of foot, a feeling for the tides, weather, animal behavior, and the interpretation of shamans' visions. According to a Haida proverb, life was as sharp as a knife, as precarious as walking on a razor-thin blade. Individual and collective security was vested primarily in the body and its memory, and deposited in manual tools, implements and totems.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>10</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1979), 6.



Fig. 1. Detail traced from Haida box (Robert McMillan). Rising from sleep this morning my waking thoughts are transfixed by a recurrent motif in Haida art: A hungry man/woman digs into the wet sand and extracts a clam. Before consuming the limpid mollusk the eater pauses to contemplate the opened shell. What perfect shelter the clam has! The oval carapace secretes a tidy landscape, complete with island and surrounding sea. No wonder Haidas credited Raven with releasing humanity into the world from a clamshell. The shape is vulvic, but also ocular. The eater swallows the eye-land and the clam is transformed into human flesh. A flesh made of clams and salmon, no longer swirled in sand around the feet of islands, but brought up into the realm of sight, sound, hardened muscle and driving wind. But change and transformation work across infinite orders of magnitude.

Looking up, the clam diggers see the rim of their world suddenly prised open, their own island exposed to some determined new voracity, their own hard shell neatly severed. Swallowed, they in turn are absorbed into the fibre of an invading culture. The protective sphere of a new force radiates away over the horizon, carried on invisible waves. Yet deep in the fat of the occupied territory encoded matter from the clam and the clam-eaters continues to emit strange signals.

### Pattern Recognition

Across the Atlantic, in early modern Europe, practices of *mimesis* interwove actual inhabitations of territory with its representation in virtual systems. A regime of territorial observation gradually was codified and compressed in rules of perspective, landscape painting, atlases, maps, photographs and the abstract vocabularies of the sciences.<sup>11</sup> In Europe's colonial expansions, the capture of the Other in systems of knowledge gave rise to cartography, philology, ethnology, demographics, criminology and eventually to museology and explicitly formulated systems of representation. Of course, a reverse process

<sup>11</sup> See Anne Godlewska and Neil Smith, eds., *Geography and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) and Denis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press [1984], 1998).

internalized Otherness in the very processes of Western identity-formation, hybridizing its enunciation in everything from novels to missionary reports.<sup>12</sup>

From this vast array of signifying practices I want to isolate the specialized sensitivity of visual artists who discerned patterns and organized certain codes of representation as part of the expanding reach of technology and the formation of modern states. There is a certain point where such imaging becomes explicitly aligned with the rise of nationality as a system. The alignment occurs in various times and places, but as Ernest Gombrich writes:

The idea that each nation and each school of art should do what it can do best is symptomatic of a complete change in the notion of art. The division of labour in the workshop of late Gothic times [that made painting landscape backgrounds a specialized skill] had served the practical purpose of speeding up the work on a given commission. Now the division of labour no longer applies to a concrete painting but to Art as such. It is to Art as an abstract idea that each nation should make its contribution where it is best equipped to do so.<sup>13</sup>

This "complete change" occurred in the early period of transoceanic conquest, and the Europeans presumed from the outset the supremacy of their ordering of knowledge, a "guarding power" they believed superior to that of other peoples they might encounter. A power vested not just in their sextants, ships and guns, but in techniques of representation that would organize territory in a cultural system, internalize it as 'second nature'. This second nature was not tuned to the infinitesimal detail of each local instance of human inhabitation, but rather to the application of government from a distant metropolis. That is, to the generalized style of observation conditioned to "seeing as" rather than "seeing." Moreover, it was a *modular* system adaptable to any terrain or climate, defining each territory as an object of observation and knowledge.

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When European ships ventured up America's northwest coast in the second half of the eighteenth century, carefully probing the sheltered waters behind the coastal islands, they did not recognize as *antennae* the ornate carved poles bristling in shoreline villages nestled against the primeval rain-forest. These majestic fir spires held aloft impassive watchmen

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken For Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817," in his *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994):102-22.

<sup>13</sup> E.H. Gombrich. "The Renaissance Theory of Art and the Rise of Landscape" 1950 in his *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*, (London: Phaidon, 1966), 115.

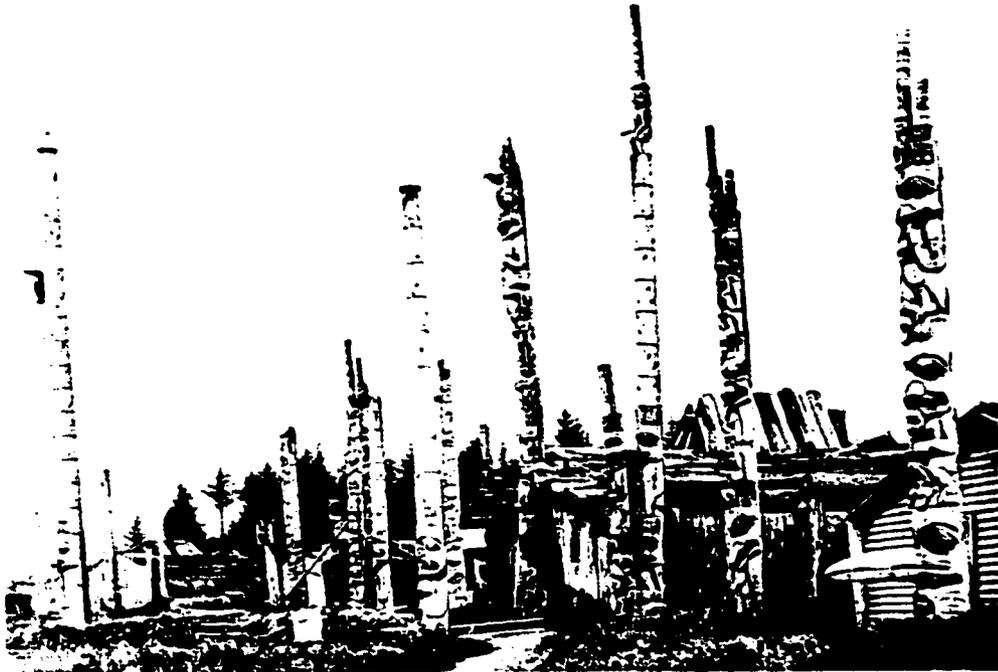


Fig. 2 Haida poles, Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands, ca.1881, photo: Dossetter. (BCPA.)

whose wooden eyes surveyed the passage of all creatures, through every weather, amongst the tidal eddies and rocky archipelagoes. The carved totem poles acted as a kind of paleo-radar for the aboriginal families and bands whose knowledges were "lived" in the immediate, local workings of their habitat. One writer has described the carved totem pole typical of this coast as a "shamanic tree," a "cosmic axis" and a "symbolic vehicle of communication between earth and sky."<sup>14</sup> The smooth masts of European physics now hove into view jammed its circulation of knowledge: raven, frog, owl, man, killer whale and dogfish were excited and accelerated their transformations.

"[We] might annex some meaning" from these "rude designs of fancy," George Vancouver mused after leading a shore party in 1791, but "the figures described [were] too remote, or hieroglyphical, for our comprehension."<sup>15</sup> Heightened artistic efforts among the native artists seemed not to impress this strange, all-male white society whom the Haida called *mamathni*, "their-houses-move-over-the-water."<sup>16</sup> Confirming Vancouver's initial

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<sup>14</sup> Joan Vastokas, "The Shamanic Tree of Life" *Artscanada* 184-87, (December 1973-January 1974), 44; George F. MacDonald, *Monumental Haida Art: Villages of the Queen Charlotte Islands*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1993), 6-7.

<sup>15</sup> J.S. Marshall and C. Marshall. *Vancouver's Voyage* (Vancouver: Mitchell, 1955), 47.

<sup>16</sup> Wilson Duff, *The Indian History of British Columbia Vol. 1*, (Victoria: Province of British Columbia, 1980), 56.

incomprehension, the European colonists who followed were bent incontrovertibly to another way of seeing, blind to meanings self-evident to the aboriginal artists. The explorers, traders, and colonizers regarded these artifacts as fascinating curios, but the knowledge vested in them regarding how a human culture sustainably occupied this territory for millennia was considered esoteric and primitive.<sup>17</sup> The colonizers' culture was positioned so close to one pole of a paradox that it was unable to grasp—perhaps still today is largely unable to grasp—some essential, intractable culture/nature opposition within which the aboriginal cultures once were poised.

As their civilization disintegrated, their internal conflicts were both absorbed into and amplified by the Europeans' combinations of power and passivity. The native chiefs for a time erected more and greater poles as if to keep pace with the flotillas of masts at anchor in their bays. But their style of inhabiting the land was changing, their daughters were sold into prostitution or slavery, firearms intensified the violence of internecine raids, encroaching settlers squandered food supplies, the cultural economics of the potlatch were disrupted, and smallpox laid waste to entire villages. By the time the last chiefs were driven to acknowledge the ministries of the church and governance from the imperial centre, the Europeans had implacably woven localized shreds of resistance and docility into the general pattern of imperial occupation.<sup>18</sup>

The coastal artists' paleo-radar had been predicated on known types of threat, successfully resisted for perhaps a hundred generations, but it was useless against this *kulturkrieg*. Except for the samples uprooted by anthropologists for preservation in climate-controlled museums, the high poles slowly succumbed to damp and wood lice. The great tradition passed into fewer and fewer hands. Such was one venerable form of guarding power toppled by another, at least for a time.

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Eight generations after European masts first challenged the totem poles of the Northwest coast, Canada's postwar electronic antenna "farms" are now connected by fibre-optics and high-speed datalinks to the security hub of the national culture. The contemporary landscape is barbed with vertical antennae, microwave relay towers, white

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<sup>17</sup> See Douglas Cole, *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2nd Edition, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> See Katherine Pettipas, *"Severing the ties that bind": Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994).

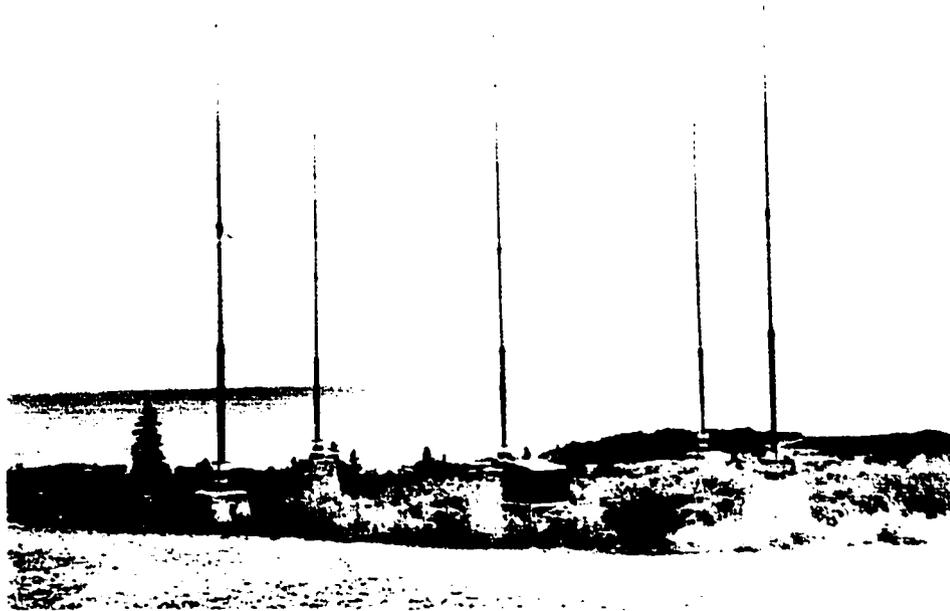


Fig. 3. "Installations at Camperdown [N.S.], 1949." Alcock antennae array (NRC Collection, National Archives of Canada, henceforth "NAC," PA 198296). A similar five-mast array was erected at Masset, B.C., where the station also served as an intercept site.

radomes like outsized golf balls pastured on giant putting greens. On the Queen Charlotte Islands, adjacent to the ancient Haida village at Masset, the Canadian signals intelligence establishment has maintained an intercept site since the 1940s to monitor transmissions over the North Pacific.<sup>19</sup> Spanning the frequency range, remote sensing systems comprise an invisible, sentient filigree alive to the streams of information at large in the nation's broadcast air. Potential internal and external threats to national security are intercepted, filtered, monitored, decoded, analyzed and accumulated in Ottawa's capacious databases. And complementing the interception of signals and systematic remote sensing is a parallel ensemble of broadcasting antennae honed in wartime as instruments of propaganda, censorship, and security intelligence. If the totem poles once stood for a coastal aboriginal

<sup>19</sup> NAC RG 10, vol. 7789, file 27157-2, "Masset - Radio Beam Station, 1943." The military took over land directly above the old village, including 11 acres recently cleared by the Haida as a recreation field. During protracted negotiations over DND's lease the Band felled more trees, severing the station's power cable and thereby underlining their request that the village be electrified in lieu of monetary payment. Also see history of CFS Leitrim, Detachment Masset, [www.island.net/~opposite](http://www.island.net/~opposite), internet site, and Communications Security Establishment history posted by Bill Robinson on [watserv1.uwaterloo.ca/~brobinson](http://watserv1.uwaterloo.ca/~brobinson), internet site.

form of life, predicated on local knowledge and a certain stratum of pattern recognition, these antennae signaled that successfully occupying the territory depended on machinic sensing.

The totem poles vaulted a shaman's vision via "holes-through-the-sky" into an overworld where prescient dreaming shaped the flow of terrestrial events. Their crests and symbols were specific to the houses they presided over, "centering" them in the cosmos.<sup>20</sup> They were as tuned to their immediate locality as the radio antennae that superseded them later stood impervious to natural surroundings. In communal memory of the Kwakiutl, for example, it was passed down that their own prophets and travelers had provided distant early warning of the occupation; indeed, one such prophet warned, "it's going to look different when those white people come here."<sup>21</sup>

Fenced to deter intruders, the huts at the bases of the radio towers housed unmanned automata wired to distant stations.<sup>22</sup> Countless metres of square truss work and metal extrusions, and steel cable, erected into the atmosphere not to *attract* visual attention but with a strange pretense to invisibility. Indeed, if Eiffel's sinuous tower was a quaintly magnificent precursor to a floration of antennae in Canadian landscape, concern for the visual appeal of the radio tower itself was quietly jettisoned, as if it were embarrassing to draw aesthetic attention to objects whose sole function was to receive or to radiate invisible waves. In contradistinction to the commanding imagery of the totem poles, radio antennae and electrical transmission equipment were consigned to invisibility, outside the regime of observation itself, so eliminating any need for an aesthetics specific to their design.

Pursuing an insight proposed by Manuel de Landa, one might say that the proliferation of antennae in the landscape was symptomatic of a more general "migration" of human sensory faculties from the human organism itself into the increasingly complex machinic processes of modernity.<sup>23</sup> Figuratively speaking, it was a migration that weakened

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<sup>20</sup> MacDonald, *Monumental Haida Art*, 6-7.

<sup>21</sup> Wickwire, "Seeing the Other," 12.

<sup>22</sup> Mike Frost, *Spyworld: Inside the Canadian and American Intelligence Establishments* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1994); Peter Hum, "I Spy", *Ottawa Citizen*, May 10th, 1997, reports that the military "are now divulging that in the mid-1990s, the 46-year old listening post received a \$23-million upgrade [and is] already in the thick of a \$51-million 'remoting' project to convert far-flung listening stations on Canada's north, east and west borders into remote operations run from Leitrim. (CFS) Leitrim will very clearly become the hub of SIGINT activities of the Canadian Forces."

<sup>23</sup> Manuel De Landa, *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (New York, Swerve, 1991), 8, suggests that the human facility to sense patterns in apparently chaotic or random information, particularly visual data, is the key contribution of the human organism to a vast

the human subject's identification with the immediacy of his or her natural surroundings, and further displaced culture into "second nature," bathed in the electromagnetic radiation that Paul Virilio calls "third light."<sup>24</sup> With the advent of television, satellite technologies and the internet--today a fully machinic and interactive virtual sphere for the "wired" elite--the human sensorium has further migrated into remote sensing and communications technologies. In accelerated fin-de-siècle informatics a new language of pattern recognition is dedicated to machine intelligence, introducing what amounts to a post-human terminology of "self-organizing maps," and "reality-constrained imagery."<sup>25</sup>

This is not to argue that the contemporary cultural occupation of North American landscape is the product of some bland and irresistible force of globalization. Such arguments tend to promote a technological determinism that ignores contradictory movements underscoring global and local phenomena. For one thing, they too readily assume the withering away of nation states, forgetting that "globalizing" technological change has derived primarily from research and development in the realm of *national* security and remains regulated by national and internationally constituted authorities. The genealogy of this "migration" is entwined precisely with the rise of modern states and their occupation of territory in accordance with a specific form of political culture.

By the middle decades of the twentieth century Canada's territory and its airspace had already cohered as one vast "zone of protection" directly wired to that political culture, of which more will be said in chapter four. British subjects of the Dominion progressed to nationhood and citizenship, safeguarded by its extended faculties of prescience. In the Canadian context of the question I have posed one must look into the formation of this "zone of protection" where it coincides, not with the advent of McLuhan's "global village," but first with the *nationalization* of an imperial culture of occupation.

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"self-organization" of machine intelligence: "the 'migration' of problem solving recipes, algorithms, passed down from human body to human body to the rules that make up a logical notation, (the syllogism, the class calculus), and from there to electromagnetic switches and circuits."

<sup>24</sup> Paul Virilio, *Open Sky*, trans. Julie Rose, (London: Verso: 1995), 39.

<sup>25</sup> For example, see the journal *Pattern Recognition*. In articles such as Aditya Vailaya et al, "On Image Classification: City Images and Landscapes," Vol. 31:12 (December, 1998): 1921-35, or David Squire and Thierry Pun, "Assessing Agreement Between Human and Machine Clustering of Image Databases," *Ibid.*, 1905-21, one finds researchers developing software that senses for patterns in image databases (i.e. rather than searching text labels attached to images). Apparently, pattern recognition will make machinic sensing 'serve people better', but at what point does the 'pattern' become one of human subjectivity adapting to better serve a diffused machine intelligence?

## The Machinic Wilderness

When Canadians say "wilderness" they refer to controlled areas permissible for the growth of "wild" flora and fauna. No longer does the fearful wilderness "incubus" that so impressed the critic Northrop Frye stalk the nation's imagination. Rather, Canada's once mysterious and ominous "interior" is now a platform for various machinic figures that strut confidently across its terrain. Their feet bolted to the earth, columns of giant, skeletal robots clench a humming chorus of electrons streaming southwards to the inhabited territories and then to disperse into trackless flows of electrification. Seen at night from high altitudes

urban conglomerations are bright galactic clusters spaced thinly along the forty-ninth parallel. In the northern lands, a few sparse constellations punctuate a darkness blacker than deep space.

The wilderness no longer secretes the unseen and the unfathomable but rather provides a mundane surface for aerial photography and various techniques of remote sensing; a surface of representation for population data, mineral deposits, cultural archaeology, indeed, every imaginable domain of knowledge. If landscape is taken to be, as W.J.T. Mitchell has proposed, not just a genre of painting and photography but a *medium* in itself, like paint or clay, then we must consider both representation of landscape and

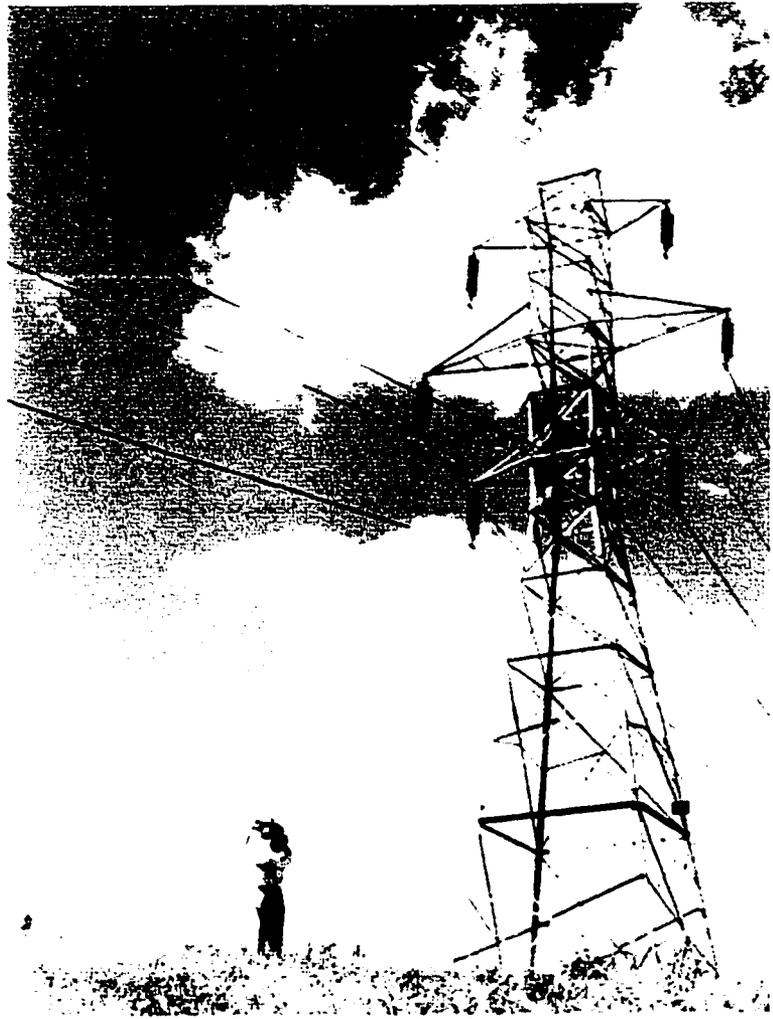


Fig. 4. "Checking transmission line with infra-red hot joint detector, 26 July 1951," (NRC, NAC PA198295.)

actually existing topography as the interdependent signs of territorial occupation.<sup>26</sup> The way Canadians "saw" their territory depended on how the landscape medium was "seen as", re-organizing terrain both in actuality and in visual knowledge. Thus Canadians today often *see as* wilderness what might better be described as "re-forests" whose very shape and contour has been mediated by human perceptions of landscape.

This reworking of wilderness as a human medium has valorized certain symbolic

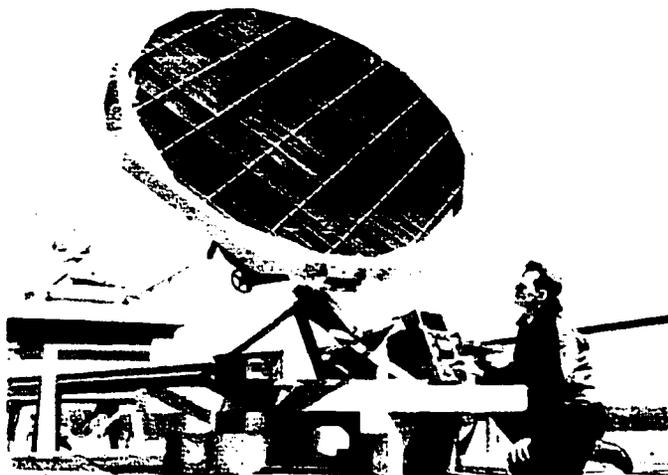


Fig. 5. "Radar Antenna on Roof, 1949." (NRC. NAC PA 198298.)

elements over others in a generalized "semiotization," to use Felix Guattari's term.<sup>27</sup> For example, the sacred wind-bent jack pine for decades has elided its profane doubles: the ubiquitous hilltop antenna, the microwave relay tower and the power line corridor. It is remarkable that not one antenna, dish, or transmission tower is represented in mid-century Canadian landscape art. Why is it that even as these structures proliferated they

passed unremarked and unrepresented in a nation obsessed with landscape representation? It is a question I will return to in Part III, "remembering-to-forget."

The term "culture," when attributed to modern nation states, is usually associated with a static, hypostasized "identity," something fixed and reflective of immutable constitutional origins, established by far-seeing founding fathers. I have launched this excursion into Canada's culture and security with antennae in order to emphasize the active, less stable connotations of "national culture," taking sensing and "identification" as the response to neurosis or panic. In part, this sense of insecurity derives from Canada's inherited *mentalité* of colonial violence--the nervous garrison---but this residual anxiety was

<sup>26</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape" in Mitchell (ed.) *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994): 5-34.

<sup>27</sup> Felix Guattari, *Soft Subversions*, (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996), 11-12. Guattari calls this "the *semiotic subjugation* of all individuals" that has children "learning about capitalism in the cradle. They learn to perceive capitalist objects and relations on television, through the family . . . . If they somehow escape semiotic subjugation, then specialized institutions are there to take care of them."

exacerbated in the twentieth century by new protocols of observation attendant to the regime of nationality: from the passport system to radar curtains.

What critic John Ruskin diagnosed as an emerging faculty of "landscape perception" in the nineteenth century was thus not simply a heightened sensitivity to 'natural beauty'. Rather such perception formed part of a regime of observation, inuring British subjects to the Empire's protective sentience.<sup>28</sup> Later, as Canada was enmeshed in the postcolonial grid of nation states, its vast terrain was normalized both through remote and intimate sensing. Through landscape perception the state might benefit not only from citizen-observers' alertness to threats, incursions, uprisings and migrations on a hemispheric scale, but from their internalization of the idea of being watched. To all this Ruskin's "natural beauty" was mere camouflage.

### **Landscape Perception: Two Paradigms**

Erwin Straus distinguished "the space of landscape" from "the space of geography" by attributing *sensing* to the former and *perception* to the latter. For Straus, sense stimuli occur 'immediately' in the landscape whereas 'geographic' space processes such as perceptual knowledge in systems of representation. "The human perceptual world lies between landscape and physics," he writes, and human yearning both for primordial landscapes *and* technological dominance creates "excessive vacillation . . . between these two contraries."<sup>29</sup>

Straus opens up a vista for a combined regime of landscape perception which is neither wholly primordial nor geographical. That is, for a form of landscape perception which regulates the "excessive vacillation" he mentions by cognitively blending one's 'immediacy' in landscape with the 'geographic' order. In this vein, the Group of Seven's nationalized and generic wilderness locales seem to supply a necessary corollary to the "geographic" perception of the nation's territory. The citizen imagines the latter as a relational database, without an 'horizon', keyed to accuracy and specificity, and having all of its elements indexically related. It does not favour the ground elevation of the landscape

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<sup>28</sup> John Barrell, in Mitchell (ed.) *Landscape and Power*, points out that the "innocent idealism" that typified bourgeois discourses on landscape obscured an inverse "moral, ideological and political darkness." Ruskin's "landscape perception" thus tracks both the advent of middle class tourism in the 18th century, *and* an uneasiness caused by a parallel traffic of vagrants and transients displaced by the enclosure movement and industrialization.

<sup>29</sup> Erwin Straus, *The Primary World of Senses: A Vindication of Sensory Experience*. (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, [1935] 2nd Edition, 1963), 318-22.

painter, but rather the vertical perspective of the airphoto. Indeed, it is 'mecomorphic', and tends to see as a machine might see.

The Group's mode of landscape perception, on the contrary used 'underspecified' locales sharing the same general horizon. Their regard of wilderness filiated the citizen, both to a kind of place, and a 'way of seeing' places. Never mecomorphic, these paintings rather were *anthropomorphic*, with trees and stones taking on human forms. The positivism of geography softened here into the gentle romanticism of the bush garden and "this land is our land."

The 'cultural nationalist' observer, I suggest, *blended* these scenic and geographical modes. On one hand, the tree, and a qualitative, semiotized national landscape, on the other, the antenna, and a quantitative spatio-temporal regime of facts, systems and routines. Two styles of observation, two mutually exclusive codifications of landscape, yet fused in a durable regime of landscape perception. At the secret "Y" intercept site at Massett this blending of anthropomorphism and mecomorphism produced, quite literally, *tree-antennas*: the navy's intercept array swayed in the wind, lashed to the tops of nearby trees.

### Scenic Landscapes

In English Canada, in the first decades of the twentieth century, the painters of the Group of Seven synthesized a *topos* of Canadian wilderness whose wide dissemination and frequent repetition came to epitomize not just the Canadian landscape but a generalized way of seeing. These artists developed what were really an ensemble of *topoi* that they, along with others before and after, worked into a definably cultural nationalist idiom of Canadian landscape painting.

The Canadian state was not unique in fostering its self-image in landscape art. A comparable landscape *topos* of German cultural nationalism, to take just one example, was developed in the mid-nineteenth century--prior to Germany's actual political unification in a state--as an aerial prospect of a triumphant tricolor fluttering high on a lofty peak and surveying mountains flaming red in the sunset.<sup>30</sup> Nineteenth-century British painters such as the pastoral Constable and the atmospheric Turner supplied earth, water and sky for more

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<sup>30</sup> Martin Warnke, *Political Landscape: The Art History of Nature*, Trans. David McLintock, (London: Reaktion, 1994), 7.

prosaic *topoi* of England's "green and pleasant land."<sup>31</sup> Indeed, J.M.W. Turner's *Libor Studorium* codified landscape types according to a letter system that, as Gombrich notes, helped elaborate the "syntax of a language without which expression [of landscape] would have been impossible."<sup>32</sup>

At the outset of what Wilfrid Laurier predicted would be "Canada's Century," the Group of Seven interjected rough, unadorned wilderness into British imperial visual codes and repudiated the propensity for narrative in British landscape art. Their intense concentration on "pure" wilderness was an admission that Canada's national history had just begun, its colonial origins no glorious cause with which to cement a sovereign national imagination. The shift in the emphasis of territorial occupation from British colony to sovereign nationhood led Canadian nationalist painters to grasp the nettle: the unsettled bush country of the "interior" that was to replace idealized English countryside as the essential "homeland" scape. In these unsettled regions the artists met the ongoing presence of aboriginal peoples whose "pre-historic" interactions with the same territory remained a conceptual, if not immediately a physical, obstacle to the assimilation of "wilderness" to a national imaginary.

British imperialism in the nineteenth century frequently is treated as a supernational entity rather than as the belligerent, expansionist "zone of protection" of an individual nation state. Yet, each vector of European imperialism can equally be read as an aggressive manifestation of cultural nationalism in which a generic landscape *topos* was a key medium of visualizing and mastering colonial space. The shift of critical emphasis here from terms such as "imperialism" and "postcolonial" attends to *cultural nationalism* as the adaptable module for the external and domestic operations of imperial and postcolonial states. It was the Imperialists' (insecure) sense of cultural nationalism, expanding and contracting with the fortunes of their colonial projects, that underwrote continued "internal" colonization of marginal groups in "postcolonial" states such as Canada. According to Yi-Fu Yuan, it is a mistake to think of insecurity as prompting purely defensive actions. "Anxiety," he writes, "drives us to seek security, or, on the contrary, . . . growth, daring, and adventure."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth Helsinger, "Constable: The Making of a National Painter" *Critical Inquiry* 15:1 (Winter 1989), 269: "Constable's adoption of 'pastoral' . . . is, I would suggest, part of a largely unconscious move away from the particularities of his origins in a rural middle class toward an identification with a 'national' culture." Also see her "Turner and the Representation of England" in Mitchell, ed. *Landscape and Power*, 103-125.

<sup>32</sup> Gombrich, "The Renaissance Theory of Art," 121.

<sup>33</sup> Yi-Fu Yuan, *Landscapes of Fear*, 10.

The modern genre of "landscape" painting was developed initially by sixteenth century lowland painters expressing their *anti-imperial* local nationalism, but it subsequently proved serviceable to Dutch overseas imperial projects.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, English cultural nationalism organized pictorial conventions such that every foreign strand painted by its far-flung naval artists bears the family resemblance. The Group of Seven's "soft" break from Imperial *topoi* was consistent with the gradual development of Canadian cultural nationalism. This was always less a willful project than the slow-motion marooning of a far-flung Anglo conclave, left behind by the receding imperial tide.<sup>35</sup> More remarkable than the fact of a break from English painting are some of the specific points of rupture, as shall be seen, and the extent to which elements of Britishness in landscape were retained.

### Wilderness Hazards

If political liberalism itself was somehow constitutive of English cultural nationalism, its most extreme expression in landscape was and still remains the golf course. In this most artificial of landscapes, natural topography is surgically-tamed to a circuit of fairways and greens flanked by serpentine and shady bowers meticulously planned according to the play of trajectories, ground observation and virtuous conduct. "Virtuous," because in golf the referee is virtual, the rules of fair play are to be internalized by each player. As English golfer Henry Cotton wrote in 1931:

golf may not teach the team spirit, but it has a virtue possessed by hardly any other game . . . it will teach you to rely on your own judgment . . . [I]t can impart something of that peculiar quality known as personality, because it is at once most comprehensive and entirely individualistic.<sup>36</sup>

The self-government of golf was disseminated globally in tandem with the expanding administration of the British Empire. Distinct national associations formed roughly in pace with the self-government that emerged in the Dominions during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The Royal Canadian Golf Association was founded in Ottawa in 1894 and by 1919 there were 114 golf clubs in Canada. During the 1920s a

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<sup>34</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell, "Imperial Landscapes, in Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power*, 10.

<sup>35</sup> With, as Neil Smith's arboreal metaphor suggests, some American shaking of the aging Imperial tree. See his "Shaking Loose the Colonies: Isaiah Bowman and the 'De-colonization' of the British Empire" in his and Anne Godlewska, eds., *Geography and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

<sup>36</sup> Henry Cotton, *Golf* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1934), 11.

nation-wide boom produced almost five hundred more.<sup>37</sup> Promoted initially by bankers and businessmen of Scottish descent, golf quickly established itself as the club sport for Canada's business and professional elite, female as well as male.

By 1900, the golf courses were almost always designed by imported professional designers such as the aptly-named Englishman, Willie Park, for whom Canadian landscape presented a malleable medium. Park specialized in "large greens having sinuous undulations, some of them two-tiered, guarded by subtly placed bunkers."<sup>38</sup> His treatise on golf course design elaborated such ideas in militaristic terms, stipulating that the visible traps were "bunkers," while invisible bunkers were "traps." By classifying hazards as "heroic," "strategic," or "penal," golf course planners extrapolated from three major tropes of modern landscape painting, the "heroic" landscapes of Poussin, the pastoral "places of delight" of Claude, and the "sinister dens" of Salvator Rosa.<sup>39</sup>

To achieve the proper combinations of height, distance and texture, the face of landscape suffered massive surgery. In 1917, for example, prisoners of war were used to clear away rocks and cut down trees for the fairways in Banff, Alberta, where the Canadian Pacific Railway a few years later employed five hundred men to continue the work. The C.P.R. spent "some half a million dollars, since large quantities of rocks had to be blasted away to convert mountains into molehills."<sup>40</sup> In Essex, Ontario, in 1927, "some 20,000 stumps and trees had to be dynamited and 30,000 cubic yards of dirt hauled in to build up the greens, the fairways disced and harrowed eight or ten times before seeding."<sup>41</sup> Yet, despite massive earthworks the designer was to situate each hole--abstractly modeled as a play of trajectories, elevations, prospects and refuges--within existing topography, producing classically beautiful vistas: serene valleys, shady copses, and lazy serpentine.

Suborning tracts of real wilderness to classical topoi of eighteenth-century Englishness, the designated "wilderness" areas of golf links were refigured as controlled "hazards" luring the drives of careless golfers to disaster: symbolic oceans, deserts, forests and grasslands wrought in miniature from the elements of nature. (The circuit around the

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<sup>37</sup> James Barclay, *Golf in Canada: A History* (McClland and Stewart, 1992), 223.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>39</sup> Gombrich, "Renaissance Theory of Art," 121.

<sup>40</sup> Barclay, *Golf in Canada*, 370,

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

links, capturing a pennant at each hole, might be thought of as the mini-putt version of colonial progress itself.) The controlled aspect of the course hazards extended into the clubhouse where a sure grip was exercised on who might join. With the exception of a joke found in a 1918 Canadian Pacific Railways publicity brochure, both of the major



"Have either of you gentlemen seen anything of a little white ball?"

Fig. 6. Golf cartoon, 1935.

histories of golf in Canada, "pukka" to a fault, makes reference only to white people.

The selection of this anonymous brochure text for inclusion in the history, is significant for the way aboriginality and wilderness are rendered as an "absent presence" in the colonial dissemination of golf. The CPR writer jested that Scottish factors in the Hudson's Bay Company likely introduced the game first in western rather than eastern Canada. He wondered if:

the first feather ball on this continent was teed up on the limitless prairie or at the foot of the grim old Rockies with a Buffalo head for a ticklish hazard, a Bison wallow for a generous putting hole and an untutored savage mayhap as a caddy primeval?--and prime evil caddies are still--whenever they are still.<sup>42</sup>

In the 1990 confrontation at Oka, Quebec, when masked Mohawk "warriors" squared off first against ill-prepared Quebec policemen and then an implacable but media-conscious and manipulative Canadian military force, the issue was not just land in its legal title, but also a struggle over territory as a cultural medium. Depending on the outcome, the contested land was either to be developed by Oka Mayor Jean Ouellette and his white business associates as the additional nine holes of a private golf course, or else remain a municipal park of stately pines bordering the cramped Mohawk burial ground. The warriors' defensive bunkers--dubbed the "Hell Hole," "Devil's Den," and "China Beach"--presented golf course planning with an entirely new threshold of hazard.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> L.V. Kavanaugh, *History of Golf in Canada* (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1973), x.

<sup>43</sup> Geoffrey York and Loreen Pindera, *People of the Pines, The Warriors and the Legacy of Oka* (Toronto: Little, Brown, 1992), especially chapter two. See also Jay Appleton's "prospect-refuge" thesis in his *The Experience of Landscape* (London: John Wiley, 1975), 70 passim. Appleton's notion that landscape is experienced ideally from the individual hunter's (or golfer's) prospect, seeing without being seen seems to restrict the broader connections he implies between landscape and territorial protection.

## Hot Mush

The Toronto-based painters in the first decades of this century dispensed with these specifically imperial and military aspects of landscape art manifested in golf course aesthetics. Theirs marked the first direct encounter of "modern" artists with Canadian wilderness, an encounter freed from the lens of both the Colonial Office and the Royal Academy. Yet if the Group's brazen seizure of artistic sovereignty in Canada excited controversy in the Toronto press, their work was nonetheless broadly acceptable, even officially-blessed. As the catalogue to the Barbican's 1990 Group of Seven retrospective reports, "landscape painting from the first part of the twentieth century . . . is both obvious and fundamental in Canadian art since it has itself acted as an ideological and psychological



Fig. 7. A.Y. Jackson, *Night, Georgian Bay*, 1913. (National Gallery of Canada.)

vehicle for defining Canada."<sup>44</sup> The steady flow of government assistance provided to Group of Seven artists by successive Directors of the National Gallery indicates that their work was considered central to the wider project of crystallizing a nationalized cognitive frame. The task was not to reveal unseen truths in the landscape but rather to initiate viewing subjects to a way of identifying with the landscape; more precisely, "seeing as" anglo-Canadian cultural citizens.

Francophone artists in Québec diverged to some extent from the activities of the Group of Seven. In Québec art, the pastoral folk tradition of the French colony celebrated agricultural landscapes fashioned by sturdy habitants who represented, as Esther Trépanier writes, "a way of life which existed prior to the English conquest." The Québécois landscape *topos* "referred to in this context is . . . cultivated land . . . divided up and organized into parishes, villages, and even towns . . . a humanized setting." She contrasts

<sup>44</sup> Michael Tooby (ed.) *The True North: Canadian Landscape Painting 1896-1939* (London: Lund Humphries, 1990), 11; Ann Davis, "The Wembley Controversy in Canadian Art," *Canadian Historical Review* 54:1 (March 1973): 48-74; Roald Nasgaard, *The Mystic North: Symbolist Landscape Painting in Northern Europe and North America, 1890-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), points out the Scandinavian influence on the Group of Seven.

this with the English Canadian vision of Canada "as a virgin region untamed, still to be conquered . . . uncultivated land . . . favourite themes of the Toronto painters of the Group of Seven and their innumerable imitators":

Whereas [the Group of Seven] almost never portrayed man in their work, the Quebec artists also devoted an important part of their production to illustrating customs and traditional crafts.<sup>45</sup>

By imputing a "pre-conquest" aura to French Canadian landscape art, though, Trépanier exaggerates the differences. For example, the Toronto artists of the Group expended little effort on promoting their "wilderness sublime" in Quebec. When in Quebec they, too, recorded pastoral scenes and concentrated on picturesque signs of habitation. They neither sought out wilderness locales nor did they explicitly romanticize the Quebec colonial tradition, as A.Y. Jackson believed their Quebec colleagues did.<sup>46</sup>

Within the broad pattern of European colonialism in the Americas the "difference of expression" between French and English Canadian landscape artists appears to be one of degree not kind, at most a case of residual and emergent tendencies, amplified by leftover colonial rivalries. To pose it counterfactually, if Quebecois landscape artists had then been tasked with distinguishing Quebec as a *sovereign* nation, one wonders if they too would have engaged with the fact of wilderness and its legacy of aboriginal presence.<sup>47</sup> In effect, the Group of Seven's wilderness sublime performed that work on everyone's behalf. Their 'postcolonial' elaboration of a new cultural nationalism was the windscreen view of Canada as an emerging nation state, and their regard of raw wilderness, influenced by French Impressionism, paradoxically signified Canada's modernity. Quebec pastoralism on the other hand was a rear window on France's truncated North American adventure, a nostalgia that also obscured aboriginal presence. At the height of the Group's influence in the 1920s,

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<sup>45</sup> Esther Trépanier, "The Expression of a Difference: The Milieu of Quebec Art and the Group of Seven," in Tooby, ed., *The True North*, 99.

<sup>46</sup> A.Y. Jackson, *A Painter's Country - The Autobiography of A.Y. Jackson* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1958), 82, "While we [Jackson and Robinson], in our paintings, accepted all the contemporary types of buildings which made the old Quebec villages a jumble, Gagnon, steeped in the traditions of Quebec, in his compositions would replace the new wooden boxes with old houses of which he had many studies" (this may reflect a degree of professional jealousy, in light of Clarence Gagnon's exquisite technique). See Jackson's sketches reproduced in Naomi Jackson Groves, *One Summer in Quebec: A.Y. Jackson in 1925, A Family View* (Kapusksasing, Ont.: Penumbra, 1988).

<sup>47</sup> Inuit in Quebec are protesting the unilateral naming by the *Commission de toponymie* of 101 islands in the James Bay hydroelectric reservoir with titles of works by Quebecois writers such as Marie-Claire Blais and Lise Bissonnette. See Paul Waldie, "Name Game Angers Inuit: Islands to honour Quebec writers' works" *Globe and Mail*, August 23rd, 1997, 1.

all of these artists shared a similar set of formal conventions and influences; happily or not, they occupied front and back seats of the same aesthetic vehicle.

But then the Group of Seven were never the aesthetic radicals they allowed themselves to be labelled in Toronto's conservative press, nor did they subscribe to any of the avant garde theories that would have really boiled the blood of their critics. As Michael Tooby points out, cultivation of the Group of Seven by National Gallery officials was explicitly ideological. "Determined to aid in the development of Canadian Art," he writes, the Gallery's curators:

found in Toronto . . . artists whose . . . painting was also modern but not radical. Lecturing in western Canada in 1921 [National Gallery Director] Eric Brown went out of his way to say that 'We must not confound this modern tendency . . . with futurism. Any movement tending to distort art and art's creations has as much relation to true art as Bolshevism has to true government and candidly it is a sign of degeneracy.'<sup>48</sup>

In light of the subsequent purge of avant garde art by fascists in Europe the word "degeneracy" strikes an ominous note, but Brown's analogy between "true" art and "true" government indicated clearly enough what was expected of the Group in defining nationally-significant wilderness *topoi*.

### Aboriginal Erasure

Jonathan Bordo has proposed that in the Group's elaboration of a "wilderness sublime" the landscape is noticeably voided of humans, most particularly the "noble savages" who so routinely ornamented nineteenth century wilderness landscapes.<sup>49</sup> It was a

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<sup>48</sup> Tooby, *The True North*, 24-25.

<sup>49</sup> Jonathan Bordo, "Jack Pine--Wilderness Sublime or the Erasure of the Aboriginal Presence From the Landscape," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27:1 (Winter 1992-93): 98-128. The evacuation was effected in stages. When an 1858 photograph of a portage appeared in etched facsimile shortly afterwards, the native guides and bearers from the photo had been altered to appear as a platoon of white men "reminiscent of a press gang." The light canoe was refigured as a "stolid, dory-like boat of great weight," and to complete the transformation, the unmanicured landscape of the Canadian Shield depicted in the photograph became what "might just as well have been the [English] Lake District." The "portage has lost its specificity of place . . . the locale has become indefinite," it has "become a topos . . . physically placeless . . . an imaginary space." In a second set of images, F.H. Varley's well-known *Stormy Weather, Georgian Bay* (1920) is juxtaposed with his *Indians Crossing Georgian Bay* (1922). In the former, the *topos* is established as unpeopled. Two years later, aboriginal presence was reintegrated into what Bordo calls the only finished work by a Group of Seven artist to depict "indigenous people as an explicit and named subject of a landscape." He argues that aboriginal presence returns in the *later* image because a *topos* of "wilderness sublime" first had established the landscape as unpopulated. (Bordo does not refer to a Varley oil sketch for *Indians Crossing* dated 1920

maneuver in visual representation that sought to establish a direct affinity between the Euro-Canadian social imagination and northern landscape, a regard unimpeded either by the persistent presence of aboriginal peoples or by any reminder of earlier colonial occupation.

The Group painter Frederick Varley enthused at the time, "[we are] emptying ourselves of everything except that nature is here."<sup>50</sup> His statement identifies the Group's wilderness *topos* as a cultural project to evolve a system of representation designed to visually define the *national* occupation of territory. Founded on an erasure of aboriginal presence and the generalization of landscape, it was nonetheless charged with lingering anxiety. The stress placed on a distinct Euro-Canadian subjectivity in these paintings not only *inverted* aboriginal presence to render it as "absence," but in a more subtle dispossession, the banished dweller was permitted to return into the nationalized scheme of representation only as an *immigrant*, coded by the dominant cultural nationalist gaze as alien and "new" to the terrain.<sup>51</sup>

This dispossession was made easier by deliberately weak "indexical" charge of a *topos*, its placelessness. The Group painters rejected the Europeanized contours of Barbizon landscape but nonetheless retained its perspectival mode of observation. They avoided specifying exact historical times and locations but rather prepared the general "lay of the land" viewed from ground level. The degree of abstraction was calculated to make each image work as a metonym for the larger imaginary whole.

In 1969, the critic Northrop Frye remarked that abstraction and simplification in the non-figurative works of Lawren Harris stressed the subjectivity of the artist rather than the landscape as an empirical object:

The more dependent a picture is on representation, the more epigrammatic it is, and the more it stresses the immediate context in space and time, of a particular sense experience. The effect of stylizing and simplifying is to bring out more clearly, not what the painter sees, but what he experiences in his seeing.<sup>52</sup>

Frye endorsed Harris's wilderness abstractions as true explorations that cut through the mere "picturesque" of academicians to a more elemental symbolization of nature:

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--reproduced in C. Varley, see note 48--but it reinforces his argument, since, despite the title, no human figure is discernible.)

<sup>50</sup> Christopher Varley, *F.H. Varley*, (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1979), 9.

<sup>51</sup> In a telling lapse, the Mulroney government's Minister of Indian Affairs, Tom Siddon, referred to the Mohawks as "immigrants" during the Oka crisis of 1990. York and Pindera, *People of the Pines*, 415.

<sup>52</sup> Northrop Frye, "Lawren Harris: An Introduction" in his *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (Toronto: Anansi, 1995), 212.

Abstraction sets the painter free from the particular experience and enables him to paint the essence of his pictorial vision, with each picture representing a number of possible experiences. The units of the picture have become symbols rather than objects, and have become universal without ceasing to be particular.<sup>53</sup>

Frye's attribution of "universal essence" to Harris's pictorial vision of Canadian wilderness should sound an alert. (When the word "universal" flies overhead, Stuart Hall warns, duck, because someone is about to get singled out.) In this case, the "essence" of Harris's vision is the symbolization of a "national" landscape, and those singled out by its "universal" will be aboriginal peoples. Frye allows no presence of aboriginality here. While he credits the Group of Seven with squarely addressing the fearful northern incubus that plagued the Euro-Canadian imagination, he pointedly attributes this disturbing presence to *the land itself*.

Indeed, Frye considered the northern brood of "sirens, gorgons, centaurs, griffins, cyclops, pygmies and chimeras" an *inhuman* malevolence. The "metamorphic stratum is too old," he wrote, "the mind cannot contemplate the azoic without turning into the monstrous."<sup>54</sup> The traveler in Canada's wilderness is overwhelmed by its "uninhabited loneliness," suffering guilt, "emotional unrest and dissatisfaction . . . about a country that has not been lived in: the tension between the mind and a surrounding not integrated with it."<sup>55</sup> Here the closure exerted on aboriginal presence on the painted canvas is carried over whole into cultural criticism. One wants to inquire of Frye: a country not lived in by *whom?*

Contrasting his statements with the example of west coast aboriginal art one can see how the cultural nationalist observer was to be both a voyeur as well as an object of surveillance. Frye's dualist tension between "the mind" and its empirical surroundings is not apparent, for example, in the aesthetics of the Haida or other west coast artworks. While there is an obvious and at times almost overwhelming intensity in these works there is no indication of the subject-object tension that Frye refers to. The representation of "frog" or "raven" in Haida art, for example, occupies the entire picture plane, oblivious to the rules of Euclidean geometry. The images are vested rather with a quality perhaps approximated by

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Frye, "Canadian and Colonial Painting," 202.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

the term "immanence"; they impute no intermediate and virtual observer who "sees as" rather than just "sees."<sup>56</sup>

Frye's remark discloses a specifically colonial tension with landscape that made its quasi-military regime of "observation" not only possible but necessary to the security of the settlers. The colonial observer was a voyeur trained both to see and record landscape, and to imagine being seen and recorded in it. Landscapes were to be mediated through a 'virtual observer,' indeed, the model citizen observer. In this viewing device landscape is viewed not as an immediate "presence" but rather as a forever receding object, receding in distance, time and meaning from the point of observation. Taken in Mitchell's strong sense of a medium, such landscapes are shaped by an absent referent, by a scopic drive in the colonial imagination, whose metaphor is the projectile and whose originating point is located deep in the back of the head, far back in the imagined geographical centre: the imperial metropolis. The west coast aboriginal art seems to offer no such subject-object split.<sup>57</sup>

At stake in elaborating these techniques of cultural nationalist observation is a specific form of visual rationality that admits a dweller's way of seeing only at the risk of a *loss of identity* with the landscape. Cautiously, and despite all caveats, Frye remained true to the nation's rationality. The establishment in art and literature of a nationalized landscape *topos*, he maintains, depended on its artists' *seeing* the land *as* uninhabited. As such the Group's oeuvre proved to his satisfaction that the Canadian social imagination, by the mid-1930s was passing "the stage of exploration" and had "embarked on that of settlement." It was explicitly the art of an occupation, and Frye hoped that Euro-Canadian culture, armed with this scopic regime, would steadily overcome the nervous garrison's fear of its wilderness home. By attributing this fear directly to harshness of the land and climate, he subtly neutralized the unmentionable possibility that the dreaded wilderness incubus might

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<sup>56</sup> Wilson Duff, introduction to *Images-Stone-B.C.* (Saanichton, B.C.: Hancock House, 1975), 16. Duff tried to express the ineffable quality of Paleolithic stone art of the north west coast with a structuralist aphorism: "images hold ideas apart so that they can be seen held together." In many phrasings he sought to describe this poised suspension between "seeing" and "seeing as," a quality that grants Haida art that sense of overwhelming immediacy.

<sup>57</sup> These images suggest a subject already immanent in the object, and an object already immanent in the subject, requiring no external or intermediate aesthetic regard of nature; rather, nature observed from *within*. If such a statement seems to veer towards essentialism, one need only recall anthropologist Wayne Suttles's incisive phrase "adaptation does not mean perfection," in his *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), 63, to retain the contrast between two relatively distinct codes of observation. Euro-Canadians' endless fascination with and emulation of Haida art seems to quest for some alterior visual protocol *appropriate* to the awe-inspiring Pacific coast landscape.

be aboriginal presence itself. This the painters and the settlers assiduously occluded from the scenic mode of landscape perception.

### **The Geographical Imagination**

The perceptual shifts occasioned by modernity were topics of discussion in the 1920s and 1930s, especially the re-ordering of space and time by distance communications, speed and noise. This points to an entirely separate register of signifying practices from those of the landscape painters. Obliquely complementing their generalized wilderness *topoi* was an all-encompassing matrix of temporal and spatial signs that did indeed specify relational points in geography and history. Extending beyond immediately local knowledge and impressionistic spatial referencing, this way of seeing rendered intelligible the linkages between historical traces left by events of national relevance across the whole jurisdiction, emphasizing the correspondence of such signs to their physical referents while remaining entirely virtual. It provided the raw materials for more or less persuasive causal interpretations provided through journalism and social sciences.

This realm of perceptual knowledge was of special concern to Erwin Straus. According to Straus, the map is a primordial and perennial feature of human "sapience." Some geodesic faculty is built-in, so to speak, and finds expression in directions scratched on the sand with a stick or in precise geodesic positionings triangulated from satellites. Geographic space is not even representable solely in cartographic terms but rather is a set of relations where each place, point or event is positioned in relation to the whole set. Geographic space has no horizon, says Straus, only systems of coordinates referenced to null points (such as the Greenwich observatory). The advent of modernity vastly expanded this realm of knowledge, or rather it had the effect of shrinking and compressing geodesic space to contain the vast range from the microscopic to the telescopic, inevitably altering "even the geographical space of primitive man or of the farmer whose home is in a remote valley."<sup>58</sup>

Straus points out that modernity radically decentered not just the village or the church spire as the epicentre of the 'remote farmer's' existence, but annihilated it as a standpoint from which to order perceptual knowledge of elsewhere. Even "the natural

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<sup>58</sup> Straus, *The Primary World of the Senses*, 319. For a fascinating account of Inuit cartography see René Fossett, "Mapping Inuktitut, Inuit views of the Real world," in Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, eds., *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts For Native History* (Peterborough: Broadview, 1996): 74-94. "While European scientific cartography sought to describe physical reality objectively, Inuit mapping attempted to describe practical reality subjectively." (83)

absolute centre: the centre of the earth" no longer acts as a centre of gravity in the geographical imagination:

Today even the boundaries of the heliocentric system have been burst; our perceptual world has lost its natural centre. In this respect we no longer have, as it were, a terrestrial home; what is left are merely stop-over stations in the swirl of modern life.<sup>59</sup>

Where Straus is silent on cognitive modeling of geographic perception by the system of nationality, Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the *chronotope* introduced a geopolitical dimension. A chronotope, Bakhtin wrote, is "a unit of analysis for studying texts according to the ratio and nature of the temporal and spatial categories represented . . . an optic for reading texts as x-rays of the forces at work in the culture system from which they spring."<sup>60</sup> Applied to territorial occupation under Canada's nation state, Bakhtin's concept helps to grasp the ratio through which this entire reserve of indexical signs was available for cross-referencing. The term's usage here will be clarified through examples.



Fig. 8. *Mamathni?* "Depth-recorder testing, 1949." (NRC, NAC PA 198297.)

A chronotope governed the "mapmindedness" of eighteenth-century British imperialism, when the trigonometric surveys reconstituted conquered lands as administrative units in a colonial arena.<sup>61</sup> It was encoded in the narrative strategies of the novel that trained readers to imagine events occurring simultaneously in disparate settings. It was the continent-wide news wire projecting an even progression of time across the entire national territory.

It was the telephone systems that provided the pulsing "daily plebiscite" of Ernest Renan's modern consensual nation. It was the space-time grid that organized the collection of census data by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 410.

<sup>60</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogical Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas, 1981), 426. The chronotope shifted the type of systems analysis of routinization typical of time-space geography into the realm of linguistic study. See Derek Gregory's *Geographical Imaginations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) which situates Geography as a discipline within the linguistic turn of social theory.

<sup>61</sup> On colonial cartographic techniques see Matthew Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographic Construction of British India* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1997).

and the Aerial Mapping programme launched by the Department of Geographical Surveys in 1925.<sup>62</sup>

British imperial culture had coordinated time and space on an unprecedented scale, and each British subject indeed carried its great burden. Even in the Canadian wilderness, British subjects had to imagine themselves within a pan-imperial chronotope, eventually synchronized with and symbolized by Greenwich Mean Time. Frye's description of Susanna Moodie, roughing it in the Ontario bush in the 1840s, as "a British army of occupation in herself, a one-woman garrison," nicely phrased how one individual's occupation of territory had internalized the space-time consciousness of the entire empire in order to "presence" it at one of its remote geographic frontiers.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, without a widely disseminated national chronotope the Canadian nation could not have coordinated its cultural occupation of territory. The difficulty, and the stakes, of maintaining such a chronotope is all too evident in the almost frantic obsession with standardized time and the rush into successive "national" communications technologies.<sup>64</sup>

Straus identifies this mastery of time and space in perceptual knowledge as the site of melancholy, from which "no path leads back" to "naive, untrammelled existence in the landscape":

The melancholic knows what it means to lose contact with the landscape . . . [no longer] developing in and with it. The depressive, frozen in unmoving time, is alienated from the landscape, he looks at the world as if it were in a bird's eye view; he sees it from above like a map; he hovers over the ground . . . filled with an agonized yearning for the small and the common . . . even bodily pain . . . . Loss of home, loss of the landscape: this what we clinically term depersonalization.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Morris Zaslow, *Reading the Rocks: the Story of the Geological Survey of Canada, 1842-1972* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1975).

<sup>63</sup> Frye, *The Bush Garden*, and Susanna Moodie, *Roughing it in the Bush, or, Forest life in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1962). The idea that a regime of representation might be carried as a "burden" is also suggested by John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Houndmills, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1988), 203. Photographic protocols of reception are a cultural "burden." Photography is "an insistent practice, inserted at the heart of the modern social order." It has "a double momentum" in which, as in time and motion studies, it divides, apportions, observes and controls bodies in "ever more intimate and exacting attention" while on the other hand it organizes space via "the landscape tradition, aerial surveys, astronomical photography, micro-photography . . . and so on. Two kinds of longing, Two kinds of subjection."

<sup>64</sup> See Maurice Charland, "Technological Nationalism," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 10:1-2 (1986): 213; and Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* (London: St. Martins, 1983).

<sup>65</sup> Straus, *Primary World of Senses*, 328.

Straus's associating a melancholy of homelessness with the aerial perspective appeared within a decade of the first systematic airphoto mapping of the continent. The *filiating* function of landscape art counterbalanced this tendency, providing the cultural nationalist observer with a degree of ontological security within the national geographic and geopolitical imaginary. As an image space, the territory was now fit for its citizens.

Yet it is not accurate to leave the impression that the Group never acknowledged aboriginal presence in the landscape. When A.Y. Jackson sketched Indian villages in the Canadian northwest in 1926, for example, he encountered the remnants of the Haida, Nootka, and Kwakiutl and their great artistic tradition, including the poles at Kispiox. One might compare Jackson's aesthetic encounter with Haida iconography with the problem of photographing a blinding light. Jackson was not to be blinded by the aboriginal artists' intense play with paradox. He stepped back and simply fed the Haida images, off-axis, into the established conventions of European landscape as elaborated by the Group. The cluster of poles at Kispiox, for example, was rendered by Jackson not as evidence of an alternative set of cultural possibilities to the Euro-occupation of territory but merely as the exotic and picturesque ruins of those cultures.<sup>66</sup>



Fig. 9. A.Y. Jackson, sketchbook, poles at Kispiox, 1926

<sup>66</sup> In *A Painter's Country*, 89, Jackson reports that as he and Edwin Holgate sketched these poles a railway work crew "was straightening them up and setting them in good concrete foundations. For our purposes, we preferred the poles leaning forward or backward . . . The Indians were suspicious . . . and they had good reason to be."

The interrelationships of masts, totems and antennas are pointers towards shifting codes of observation that govern not just landscape art, but also historiography. Watchers perched atop the carved totems, looked down with the raven. Look-outs peered from the swaying crow's nests of ships. Wireless operators hunched before flickering consoles and tasted the electronic weather of each Other. All of these shared a common frequency range of culture as the instrument of collective security, and as the transmission site for governance. Culture and security intersected at points where human sentience encompassed tracts of landscape or territory. They intersect where anthropology blends into security intelligence, and where history becomes the chronicle of the nation state's containment of difference. If each chronotope is rated for a certain style of dwelling or occupying, the cultural nationalist observer must be blind to other scales of protective sentience and prone to modes of address which valorize the modern over the primordial, the national over the local, the machine over the human as if these were serial categories. What hybrid modes of observation as yet await their historical narratives?

## CHAPTER TWO

### ABORIGINAL ERASURE: The *Beothic's* 1927 ARCTIC PATROL

I would not pick on Baffin Land  
For my too brief vacation  
.....

And yet this summer I could stand  
The climate bold and bumptious,  
The company in Baffin Land  
Will be exceeding scrumptious,  
For Doctor Banting sails today  
From Sydney on the northern way.  
And Painter Jackson, too.  
Good boys! Hooroo!!

Their hammocks are already slung  
Upon the staunch Beothic  
.....

Will Fred declaim on Insulin  
Or diabetic fainting?  
Will Aleck rave about the sin  
Of Academic painting?  
.....

I never dreamed that I could know  
Such envy of the Esquimaux

"Baffin Land" by J.E. Middleton, *Saturday Night*, August 13th, 1927.

For the problem of the observer is the field on which vision in history can be said to materialize, to become itself visible. Vision and its effects are always inseparable from the possibilities of an observing subject who is both the historical product *and* the site of certain practices, techniques, institutions, and procedures of subjectification.

Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 1990.

I have been looking for something that I visualized--it exists round here, but I did not discover it. An arctic landscape, no place in particular, a generalized landscape . . . . I got on a big hill that looked over miles of hills and lakes, and of course I made a punk sketch.

A.Y. Jackson, crossing Hudson Straits, August 28th, 1927

The neat, almost clinical, erasure of aboriginal presence in the landscape works of the Group of Seven locates a break in Canadian landscape art where cultural nationalism overtook previous Imperial visual codes. Applying techniques of discourse analysis to this question, Jonathan Bordo demonstrates how these visual codes contributed to constructing a

cultural nationalist observer, and, indeed, this was evinced explicitly in statements made by the artists. The pamphlet accompanying the first Group of Seven show in 1920 promised "Art expression that sincerely interprets the spirit of a nation's growth," one that "will differ from the Art of the past and the Art of the present day."<sup>1</sup> At this key juncture, the Group promised to envision Canada as an emerging modern nation, and without question, their activities helped advance a disciplinary practice that eventually came to govern the representation of Canadian "wilderness."

On the other hand, complexities emerged during A.Y. Jackson's voyage in the company of the 1927 Eastern Arctic Patrol that prompt closer consideration of the erasure of aboriginal presence in the new Canadian nationalist art. The voyage at some point passed beyond the discursive limits of what Bordo calls 'wilderness sublime,' and beyond the landscape *topos* of cultural nationalism. Foucault himself, it should be remembered, cautioned that the state "is far from being able to occupy the whole field of actual power relations." Furthermore, it "can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations."<sup>2</sup> The records of the 1927 *Beothic* patrol present us less with an indomitable reach of state authority than with intermittent patterns of governance, and the State's continued reliance upon pre-existing aboriginal knowledges and practices.

It was obvious to Canadian government officials in 1927 that the Arctic territory and its aboriginal inhabitants were well-integrated neither in the nation's scenic landscape *topoi* nor its geographical imagination. Subsuming aboriginals to that combined regime of landscape perception depended on vesting them with a specifically



Fig. 10. A.Y. Jackson (left) and Frederick Banting (second from right), Sydney Station, Aug. 1927. (NAC PA 204624)

Euro-Canadian visual subjectivity, initiating them to the cultural nationalist wilderness ethos. Only with this technique of observation could they re-imagine their homelands and know their place within the national chronotope. Yet this national geographic imaginary had little purchase among the Inuit. Indeed, the Arctic topography patently was unripe for the clearing

<sup>1</sup> Cited in Tooby, *The True North*, 24-25.

<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-77*, ed. Colin Gordon, (London: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1980), 122.

and settlement that the Group's Canadian shield landscapes had fostered, and its expanses were not yet thoroughly charted. It was ludicrous to imagine Arctic terrain as suitable for surgical transformation into pastoral English countryside or golf links. Perhaps unsurprisingly, A.Y. Jackson's sketches and diary accounts of the Arctic voyage exhibit uncharacteristic lapses of confidence in his earnest attempts to translate the Group's national landscape idiom into the highest latitudes.

By 1927, the Group's iconography of wilderness held the national imagination up to Canada's "pine line", yet none of the artists had yet ventured northwards into the massive Arctic and sub-Arctic zone over which the Canadian state tenuously asserted its sovereignty.<sup>3</sup> As Jackson boarded the train in Toronto en route to the *Beothic*, docked at Sydney, Nova Scotia, he had no inkling of how he was to be overwhelmed by the latent image-capacity of these landscapes and seascapes, by their colossal scale and flux, presided over by night skies of shimmering aurora. Stymied by the resistance of these landforms to condensation into any simplified iconography, the voyage would produce mixed results artistically, and a controversy in the press over comments offered by both Jackson and his companion, Dr. Frederick Banting, concerning what they viewed as the deteriorating culture of aboriginal people they had encountered en route.

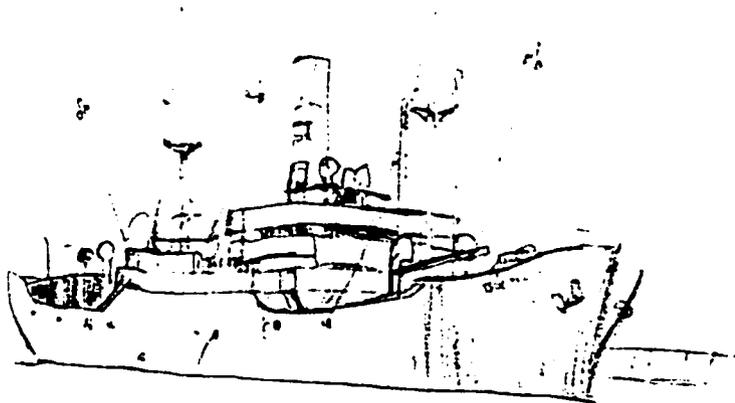


Fig. 11. A.Y. Jackson, sketch of the *Beothic*, 1927.

### **C.G.S. *Beothic***

The Canadian Government Ship *Beothic* was a 2700-ton coastal steamer refitted for breaking through the polar ice, leased by the Government's Northwest Territories and

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<sup>3</sup> F.B.A. Housser, *A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of the 'Group of Seven'* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1926). Even before Jackson ventured to the Arctic, Housser had associated the Group's *oeuvre* with the trajectory of national history. The Group of Seven's Ontario wilderness had long been tourist destinations; see Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1995).

Yukon Branch for its annual Eastern Arctic Patrols.<sup>4</sup> Commanded by Captain Falk, the ship carried a small professional crew, RCMP officers en route to relieve others due for rotation, as well as three guests: A.Y. Jackson, Frederick Banting, and a drink-loving botanist named Malte.<sup>5</sup> For a period of fifty days the voyage of the *Beothic* held the all-male company in a shipboard polity that still resonates with questions of aboriginal presence, constitutionality and civic conduct in a (post)colonial nation state.<sup>6</sup>

The captain, all agreed, was competent and fair. The policemen were fascinated by the mystique of the Arctic although some of them doubted the purpose and wisdom of the government patrols. There were two known rascals. The decks became piled high with native gear, and the Inuit, with their dogs, populated the deck and the hold. The scientists and the artist began to question assumptions they had embarked with. There was mutual recognition in a climate that demanded cooperation. There was risk, but also effective planning and experience. Work was performed by all parties, according to their various callings, seals and salmon were eaten, images were shown and images were made, fox furs were loaded. Prejudices were bared and accommodations found. There was dream work as well, some of which is known. The absence of women accentuated the homosociality of the ship's company and underlined the masculine character of police "protection" in the Arctic.



Fig. 12, Capt. Falk, Sept. 1931.  
Photo: Finnie (NAC PA 100110)

Their ship's name, *Beothic*, referred to an aboriginal people perhaps genocidally extinguished, but at least forcibly dispersed by Europeans in Newfoundland during the colonial period.<sup>7</sup> Carrying the memory of that hunted and vanquished people on its prow the vessel punched its way through pack ice as if impelled by some core ambivalence in the very engine room of European colonialism. The name alerts us to traces of desire, a desire that

<sup>4</sup> The patrols commenced in 1922; the *Beothic* was chartered in 1925.

<sup>5</sup> The Department's Expedition Leader, Dr. Livingstone was picked up en route, at the termination of an 1100-mile overland expedition.

<sup>6</sup> James Tully, *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Tully discusses Bill Reid's sculpture "The Spirit of the Haida Gwaii" as the model for a postcolonial 'ship of state'.

<sup>7</sup> Ingeborg Marshall, *A History and Ethnography of the Beothuk* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996). Marshall is keen to make a case for genocidal

pursues absence, irresistibly drawn forward into it. Thus the irrecuperability of one aboriginal presence preceded the vessel, destining it towards another.

Accounts of voyages record how ships cocoon their occupants in political environments, incubating local political theories and putting them in action. Politics that gestate over the period of a voyage and then evaporate, leaving records as terse as official logs, or as leisurely as passengers' diaries. As readers we project ourselves into the space and time of these accounts, attending closely to the microcosm of shipboard government that ensures good form in deck-tennis or capsizes into mutiny. Rather than comment directly on the relation of the Canadian state to northern aboriginal peoples we might attend to what sort of polity reigned aboard the government patrol ship and what changes it underwent as it steamed to and from the highest latitudes during the summer of 1927.

### **The Elusive Arctic Topos**

Charles Stewart, Minister of the Interior, was favourably impressed when A.Y. Jackson wrote floating "the possibility of including an artist on the personnel of the next expedition to the Arctic."<sup>8</sup> The Department concurred with Jackson's "conviction that an artist's interpretation of the country . . . would give a graphic impression of a part of Canada that has been held through patient and heroic endeavour." The Director of the North West Territories and Yukon Branch, O.S. Finnie, agreed that "as far I know, there has been no artist in the north in former times, and a picture from that country would be something new in the realm of art."<sup>9</sup> This was not entirely accurate. During the previous century numerous paintings had been made by officers of various ships sent into the region by the British Admiralty. Furthermore, the spectacular disappearance of the Franklin Expedition in 1845 had popularized various images of the Arctic in Britain ever after, including a well-attended and very lifelike Arctic diorama at Burford's Leicester Square Theatre in London.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, the Admiralty's stuffy and topological Arctic pictures were not available for viewing in Canada, nor would they have served the "Canadian" purpose. Oswald Finnie rightly regarded Jackson's offer of the Arctic sketches to the Department for

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extermination, but it is noteworthy that by her own account the Beothic had the ability to disappear or reappear at will, to the Europeans' confusion.

<sup>8</sup> NAC RG 85, vol. 12, file 20 "A.Y. Jackson."

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> J. Russell Harper, *Painting in Canada: A History*, 2nd Edition, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 133. An officer who arrived in the Arctic on a Franklin relief mission experienced *déjà vu* upon encountering the exact landscape depicted in the London diorama.

illustrations in official publications, as well as one finished painting, as "an excellent opportunity" to publicize the Canadian Government's activities in the north. He concurred with Jackson's suggestion that the completed canvas be donated to the Dominion Archives or the National Gallery as a permanent record of the expedition.<sup>11</sup>

Jackson also explained how he had "already painted Canada east to west generally" and would "now like to start at Ellesmere Island and work south." This became the spatial matrix for the painting tour, an impressionistic framing of the Arctic within a national image space presided over by the Canadian Government. As a leading Group of Seven artist Jackson was expected to bring the Group's distinctive cultural nationalist sensitivity to bear on the Arctic landscape. He was to synthesize the sensory stimuli he received into an iconography of Arctic wilderness consistent with the Group's "right degree" of modernism. The Director also understood, and so advised Jackson, that such artistic sensibility was to be directed at the landscape and not its human occupants. In particular, he was not to emphasize the conditions or the visual appearance of the native people he encountered, nor to stray into any public controversy on their account.<sup>12</sup>

This task proved more difficult than that faced by Jackson and other members of the Group when they had followed Tom Thomson into the relatively friendlier terrain of Algonquin Park, or even his travels on the British Columbia coast the previous year. In the Arctic he had to tame, graphically, a vaster, more hostile wilderness environment. In Algonquin Park, he could ignore native people; in the Arctic, visitors continued to rely on their knowledge and skills for survival. At the outset Jackson knew little of Inuit society beyond hearsay that one treated them as one treated small children. So, as an afterthought to his first diary entry he wrote: "Got a lot of toy balloons, colored crayons, candy and such things for the Esquimaux."<sup>13</sup>

On July 16th, 1927, the *Beothic* dropped its cables and churned away from the party gathered on the Sydney pier. Jackson's companion, the medical researcher Sir Frederick Banting impetuously "tore off his collar and threw it overboard, shouting 'no more white collars!'" With Banting's gesture the social conventions of the shore gave way to those of the ship. Jackson looked around at the ship's company, noting with satisfaction that the "husky" young policemen aboard were "normal, clean living chaps, none of them with artistic temperament." A few days later, he added, without disappointment, that it was "not a

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<sup>11</sup> NAC, RG 85, vol. 5713, file "A.Y. Jackson," Finnie to Jackson, April 17th, 1927.

<sup>12</sup> NAC, RG 85, vol. 5713, file "F. Banting", Crory to Finnie, September 9th, 1927.

<sup>13</sup> A.Y. Jackson, *The Arctic 1927* (Moonbeam, Ont.: Penumbra, 1982) Diary A, no pagination, July 16th, 1927.

literary aggregation. I don't think anyone on board ever heard of Blake." Privately, he wondered at their penchant for long stints of winter isolation. One officer had committed suicide recently at the North Devon post. "Probably too temperamental," wrote Jackson.<sup>14</sup>

The passage north was plagued by fog, but when its shroud occasionally lifted an increasingly forbidding terrain rose into view. The artist found it frustratingly difficult to sense any consistent pattern from the moving ship. The foreground was always ice, often so vividly coloured that southern viewers of the pictures later considered his renderings exaggerated.

His diary entries record mounting frustration:

- July 29th: Art is some problem. There is no end of stuff, but everything is moving.
- July 30th: Made a rotten sketch of an iceberg.
- August 3rd: Ellesmere Island is a vast ice cap, only bare in spots near the coast. Not a sign of life, not an insect even.
- August 4th: A desolate looking landscape . . . beyond and across the bay are the fortress like shores of North Devon Island towering up . . . . We cannot go on until it clears, as compasses are almost useless here on account of proximity to the magnetic pole.
- August 5th: I made a punk sketch which I scraped off.
- August 6th: The landscape is just an endless pile of sharp stones, not even moss or lichen to soften it.
- August 9th: Haven't made a sketch for four days.<sup>15</sup>

On August 10th, it was again "The friendly Arctic--rain, wind and fog," so he turned to "making a drawing of an ingloo [sic], stones and bones." He had found the landscape stubbornly resistant to the anthropomorphism so successfully embodied in the jack pine. Where the jack pine had reoccupied the empty landscape with wavy expressive silhouettes suggesting human forms, no similarly anthropomorphic symbol offered itself up to Jackson's eye. In desperation, he attempted to locate it in entire landforms, describing a vast wall of cliffs as a "very fine succession of Gothic Churches and strongholds, rosy in

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Diary B, July 27th, 1927.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., extracts, dates as indicated.

color." and "miles of big Cathedrals and Hart Houses violet red and orange."<sup>16</sup> As if feeling that these metaphors reinforced an appalling absence of any



Fig. 13. F. Banting on *Beothic*, August 1927. (NAC, C665 33)

trace of a European culture of occupation in the passing cliffs. Jackson abruptly turned to accuse the Inuit of improvidence:

A couple of years ago fifteen Eskimos died of starvation further down the Inlet, while round here they had so much food they were throwing it away. The Eskimos were presented with Confederation medals. Some future archaeologist will dig them up in the igloos. I fell asleep and did not see the ceremony.<sup>17</sup>

Jackson's association of aboriginal presence with hunger, citizenship and archeology is an index of his growing perplexity and fatigue with the Arctic landscape and its people. The Eskimos were seemingly incapable of governing their resources, resulting in what appeared to him to be sporadic bouts of feasting and starvation. Yet they were presented with medals to recognize and encourage their participation in Canada's confederation. Jackson wearily consigned the problem to future archaeologists and went below to sleep.

The Inuit whom Jackson and Banting encountered on the voyage indeed had, as the *Toronto Star* reported on September 9th, "a different status as compared with the other native Canadians." The latter, the writer continued:

are wards of the Canadian government, but the Eskimos are British subjects with wider citizenship rights. Their exact status is nebulous, but it is recognized that they are not in the same category as the Indian. They have no reservations, no treaty money, but live their lives as free citizens.<sup>18</sup>

This presumed much about the Inuits' territorial ontology. However grandly enumerated as "British subjects" the Inuit encountered by the *Beothic* inhabited highly isolated "pockets of local order," to use the geographer Torsten Hägerstrand's term.<sup>19</sup> The steamer's visits provided celebratory occasions known as "ship-time": rare, wonderful

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., Diary B, August 8th, 1927.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> *Toronto Daily Star*, 9 September 1927.

<sup>19</sup> See Torsten Hägerstrand, introduction to Anne Buttimer, ed., *The Practice of Geography* (London: Longman, 1983).

opportunities to visit otherwise inaccessible relations and friends. Yet "ship-time" did not translate into a spatio-temporal matrix of citizenship and governance; the Inuit expected neither their persistence in the landscape nor their expiration from hunger or disease to be known or recorded elsewhere. Their lived subjectivity operated beyond the call of "civic duty" in the national observatorium, and their geographic imagination bore little relation to the *Toronto Star's* confident assertion that they "live their lives as free citizens." Their "freedom" was in this sense a freedom from *knowledgability*, something incommensurate to the *Star's* liberal democratic conception of freedom. Only the cycle of Government Arctic patrols and the scattering of RCMP and Hudson's Bay Company posts began to establish the Euro-Canadian conception of a "freedom" predicated on the assumed fact of observation. Only then would the Inuit become parties to the *sentience* of the national culture in its occupation of territory.<sup>20</sup>

Jackson noticed a great deal about the Inuit, but he never probed into their culture or what freedom might have meant to them. Nor was he interested in their works of art. He did not notice, for example, how aboriginal artists' concern for hunger conjoined an ethos of conservation with the ritual of the feast. The experience of hunger in the hard face of a bare landscape fostered respect for the spirits of fish and animals. The Inuit hunter believed not only that improperly taking an animal or a fish risked antagonizing its spirit, but also that consuming its flesh necessarily transformed his own being.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the greatest expression of transformation is found in the work of Haida artists where the mouth and swallowing are frequent figures of paradox and play; but Inuit, too, were deeply influenced by such ideas and images.<sup>22</sup> Jackson's estimate of Inuit civic conduct, their innocence of a national chronotope that might have connected their isolated groups, did not acknowledge how his nationalist sensibility of time, space and geography even then was engaged in "swallowing" theirs.

Despite Jackson's resignation to their eventual extinction, the "vanishing race" was coming to play an ever more present and robust role in daily life on the *Beothic*. On August 12th, the artist met a troop of Eskimos on the beach. "They stepped up and shook hands

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<sup>20</sup> William C. Wonders, "Unrolling the Map of Canada's Arctic," in Morris Zaslow, ed., *A Century of Canada's Arctic Islands 1880-1980, Royal Society of Canada, 23rd Symposium* (Ottawa: Royal Society of Canada, 1981), 2. "Most Inuit possessed a well developed 'built in' geographical sense or mental maps (to use the currently popular term) which frequently amazed the white man." The Inuit had no use for drawn maps, Wonders explains, rather they sketched on snow or sand when necessary. They could and did provide accurate drawn maps to Europeans when asked.

<sup>21</sup> Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear*, 48-51.

<sup>22</sup> Wilson Duff, *The Bird of Paradox*, 253.

with me very genially--the big chief, three or four other men, a lot of kids, tattooed ladies and the village belles." This was one of his first close encounters with Inuit for whom, he wrote, "smiling is the chief means of communication with us." The Inuit women whom he assisted on board the ship "smell rather high," he noted, "smiling at six feet is as intimate as I would care to get." Just prior to providing this gentlemanly assistance and appraisal he himself had been carried "like the Prince of Wales" on the back of an Inuit out to the ship's launch.<sup>23</sup>



Fig. 14. A.Y. Jackson, Inuit approaching the *Beothic*, Arctic Bay.

Writing in his parallel diary the same evening the strange ice-jump from landscape to starvation to landscape re-occurred: "Fifteen Eskimos died of starvation down Admiralty Inlet," he wrote, "Shinik Islands. Children probably eaten--no traces of them, remarkable cliff at entrance to Arctic Bay."<sup>24</sup> Corporal Joy, a Mountie well known for his Arctic exploits, told stories of starvation and hard-ship endured by white explorers, and the declining self-sufficiency of the Inuit. In Joy's opinion the Canadian government ought simply to have been ensuring that the Inuit were left alone to pursue their traditional ways. The "remarkable" Corporal Joy, wrote Jackson, was "not scientifically trained, but very observant." Apart from Joy's tales of starvation "none of the boys say much about the cold." Arctic landscapes troubled his dreams, in which he roamed without Inuit helpers far beyond the safety and comfort of the ship. He dreamed that he, Fred Banting and Bess Housser, "with a bunch of Germans were away out on the ice which was very unsafe, and the land a long way off."<sup>25</sup>



Fig. 15. A.Y. Jackson and *Beothic*, 1927. (Malte, NAC PA 204623)

The persistence of Arctic memory was, for Jackson, all about cold. Time and permafrost

<sup>23</sup> Jackson, *The Arctic*, Diary B, August 12th, 1927.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Diary A, August 12th, 1927.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, Diary B, August 24th, 1927. Bess Housser later married Lawren Harris.

became the main obstacles to condensing the landscape into an Arctic *topos*. For one thing, there was a palpable discontinuity with the familiar chronotope, the cycle of days bore no resemblance to daily rhythms in the south. As Banting wrote, "Sometimes we would find ourselves working at one or two o'clock in the morning. The twenty-four hours of daylight was demoralising."<sup>26</sup> Jackson concluded he would need a full year in the Arctic just to grasp the changing qualities of light. Moreover, he was struck by the way the cold climate

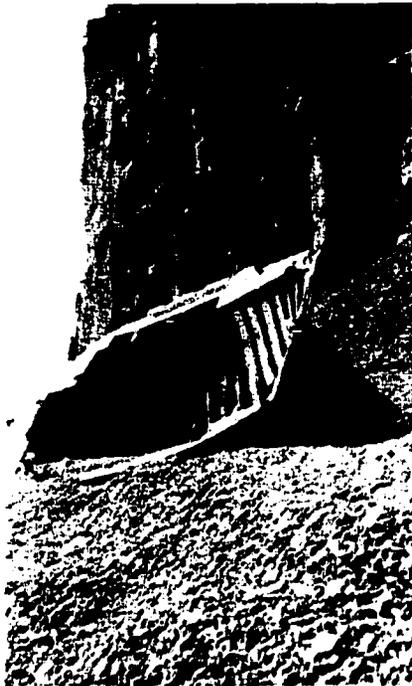


Fig. 16. The *Mary*, Beechey Island, 1927. (Malte, NAC, PA 203529.)

and relative scarcity of human activity slowed down the decay of the relics and debris of previous expeditions, and of previous sites of aboriginal habitation, as if the Arctic landscape remained glacially impervious to the puny European conception of time, and the arbitrary line demarcating "history" from "pre-history."

Jackson sketched the *Mary*, a little schooner left on the beach eighty years previously on the slight chance that members of the hapless Franklin Expedition returned to their former camp on Beechey Island. Fascination with the uncanny preservation of Arctic relics infected the RCMP patrols generally. Objects and writings left in cairns by early explorers were duly withdrawn, replaced with an official receipt, and sent back to Ottawa. After marveling over these items the RCMP Commissioner of this period, Courtland Starnes, directed that any of the explorers still living, or their organizations, be advised that the RCMP

had placed these "historical" materials in the care of Dominion Archivist, Arthur Doughty.<sup>27</sup> Any remains of aboriginal material culture--Corporal Joy showed Jackson and Banting several unexcavated sites from which he had removed artifacts--were considered "pre-historical" and placed in the ethnological collections of the Victoria Memorial Museum. Police activity in the Arctic thus attempted to sort and incorporate scattered relics of Arctic cultures into the national chronotope, reinforcing an already institutionalized distinction between history and anthropology.

<sup>26</sup> W.W. Hipwell, "A Memoir," introduction to A.Y. Jackson, *Banting as an Artist* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1943), 15.

<sup>27</sup> RG 37 vol. 49, file 60-RCMP, see Courtland Starnes-Arthur Doughty correspondence, ca. 1920s and 1930s.

Later, on his return to Toronto, a headline stated that "Mr. Jackson Sketches Farthest North, where Canadian Mounties Patrol the Roof of the World."<sup>28</sup> The article announced that Jackson had repudiated any thoughts of further sketching trips to Europe, stating that there was too much still to be done in the Canadian north. Bold-faced text announced that the "Toronto Artist of the Group of Seven has pushed the boundaries of Canadian painting farthest north." To prove it, three sketches formed a dramatic triptych at the head of the article: one, a rendering of the austere and bare Cocked Hat Island; second, the minuscule RCMP post at Bache Island, huddled at the foot of a great line of cliffs; third, a former Eskimo encampment "being excavated by the Government party." The northern landscape thus rendered as a) empty, b) policed, and c) a place where aboriginal "presence" was (or would soon become) primarily of archaeological interest.

Initially, the erasure of aboriginal presence here appears to be consistent with the pattern adduced by Jonathan Bordo. Yet, a new element crept in that troubled the subjective gaze that so dominated those Georgian Bay works. Here, the views are from afar, human scale is confronted with gargantua. The observer--Jackson--is shrunken by his surroundings. Furthermore, human presence was no longer stated as an "absence" drawing forward future settlement and development, but rather a different, ominous absence signaled by traces of privations endured. It was as if *any* human occupation of Arctic territory demanded a common culture of survival that commandeered all available human ability and skill regardless of origin.

The finished "official" painting of the expedition, selected from amongst the sketches by the Minister for the collection of the National Gallery, finds the *Beothic* at the most northerly point of her voyage, the Bache RCMP post, alone in a dangerous sea of jagged fragments. The painted canvas understates the deep uneasiness captured in the sketches made at the time. Fearful of being caught, frozen, and crushed by the pressing ice, Jackson recorded in his diary on August 1st:

Caught in the ice. The situation may become very serious within the next few hours. We got about a mile and a half from the Bache Post, and the ice kept getting tighter, and the floes larger, and finally the *Beothic* could do nothing . . . She has a very powerful bow--but she is vulnerable amidships. We are slowly moving with the pack.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Toronto Star*, September 10th, 1927.

<sup>29</sup> Jackson, *The Arctic*, Diary A, August 1st, 1927.

This northerly extreme of the *Beothic's* circuit was not the tamed landscape familiar to the majority of Canadians clustered far away along the forty-ninth parallel. The hygienic clarity and straight-thinking modernity symbolized in the Canadian nation's northern-ness was betrayed here by the doubleness of "north."<sup>30</sup> The magnetic north pole was "bedeviling navigation," Banting reported. "Captain Falke said he wished the Russians owned it and kept it in the middle of Siberia."<sup>31</sup> The geodesic self-orientation of



Fig. 17. Inuit pilots on *Beothic*, 1927. (NAC, Malte, PA 204662)

the national chronotope had ceased to govern the ship's position, and Captain Falke wisely turned to Inuit knowledge of pilotage--ignored in 1845-46 by Franklin to his peril--for the ship's security. That the Euro-Canadians geographical perception of time and space was so unstable in the Arctic environment could only complicate Jackson's task of eliciting from it a scenic landscape *topos*.

### The Coal Hole

Another visual regime was introduced into life on the *Beothic*. On August 22nd, as the ship gradually proceeded southwards, Jackson's diary records the screening of films for the entire Inuit population of Pangnirtung down on the coal in the *Beothic's* hold. Their utter delight with the moving images disarmed Jackson, who wrote: "It makes you realize right away too the value of simplicity."

By then he had become acutely aware of the Inuit presence aboard the ship. On August 13th, he had written:

We keep on accumulating Eskimos and dogs. The fore deck is piled up with motor boats, sleighs, dogs and props. Fighting and howling goes on all day long. The Eskimos staterooms are down the hold on top of the coal, and they think it pretty swell . . . . The whole population from babies to grandmas came jumping over the ice to see us off . . . about thirty of them, with dogs, in a Chauve Souris medley of costumes. They trade them awful junk at the H.B.--old print dresses of twenty years ago, skirts down to their ankles, red blue pink, seal skin pants, the loose Arctic shirt with the bag at the back for the papoose, old army tunics, and every cap imaginable.

<sup>30</sup> The trope of "hygienic" cold in Euro-Canadian culture is explored by Carl Berger in his "The True North Strong and Free," Peter Russell, ed., *Nationalism in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw Hill, 1966): 2-26. Yet, exclusionary pride in the Canadian hardiness to cold was obviated at these high latitudes. One aspect not explored by Berger is how the trope of hygienic cold operated in relation to Inuit presence, obviously a model of success by any standards of human adaptation to tundra. Again, it appears that erasure of aboriginal presence was prerequisite.

<sup>31</sup> Jackson, *Banting as An Artist*, 14.

And all hopping from one chunk of ice to another, throwing their dogs across the wide spaces.

The film screenings began in Godhavn, Greenland on July 24th, where they met a peculiar shipboard welcome from the Governor decked out in gold braid, accompanied by his wireless operator in a straw hat. Jackson reported "wild excitement" when "the boys made a movie house with tarpaulin on the deck, and the whole village were invited out to see *Felix the Cat* and several other films [at] morning and afternoon performance[s]."

As the voyage proceeded these screenings continued to interest Jackson. On August 22nd he wrote:

All the Eskimos went out to the steamer and saw a movie show down in the coal hole. They whooped it up when they saw themselves, taken on a previous trip, and at *Felix the Cat*, and at some flappers in bathing suits on the beach in Vancouver.

This new type of image in which Inuit "saw themselves" on film draws attention to an unmentioned function of the Patrols: the exposure of aboriginal people to Euro-Canadian



Fig. 18. Inuit children by the "coal hole," Pond Inlet, 1927. (NAC, Livingstone, PA 102082.)

techniques of observation.<sup>32</sup> The Arctic film footage was produced probably by George Valiquette or Roy Tash, newsreel cameramen engaged to record the Patrols of 1924 and 1925, or else by Richard Finnie in 1926. As Peter Geller has shown, the Branch was quick to use emerging film technology to image and to imagine the Arctic within the nation's territory.<sup>33</sup> Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* and other films screened extensively across North America shaped southern perceptions of the Arctic. But the records of the 1927 Patrol highlight how film *returned* to the North to refashion the Inuit ontology of dwelling in the Arctic territory. The scopopic regime of cinema stressed the subject-

<sup>32</sup> Labrador Inuit encountered projected images more or less coterminously with rural Europeans. See Stephen Loring, "In Torngak's Realm: The Nineteenth-Century Photography of Moravian Missionaries in Labrador." In J.C.H. King and Henrietta Lidchi, eds. *Imaging the Arctic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press and University of British Columbia Press, 1998), 217. The Moravian missions on Labrador's north-east coast had used magic lantern slides for religious instruction at least since 1865."

<sup>33</sup> See Peter Geller, "Visions of a Northern Nation: Richard Finnie's Views of Natives and Development in Canada's 'Last Frontier,'" *Film History* 8:1 (Spring 1996), 20. Geller

object dichotomy discussed above: the seduction of the filmic image, the desire for what is absent, for one's own past, and indexing images in a national sphere of information. The documentary film already was the preferred means of fostering the affect of national simultaneity; here it conjured up such images, flickering through coal dust in the *Beothic's* hold, and delighted Inuit saw themselves arraigned in the same spatio-temporal frame as flappers across the continent on a Vancouver beach. Courtesy of the RCMP, they were now officially initiated to an emerging filmic diegetic of Canadian cultural nationalism.

### Standing Reserves

The iconography of the *Beothic's* coal hole is complex, invoking at once Plato's cave and Heidegger's essay concerning technology. In the coal hole cinema the "standing reserve" of filmic images meets the standing reserve of fossil fuels. The coal does not so much "feed" the ship's engines as it forces itself upon them, thrusting the *Beothic* into its destining, opening up the North. So it is with the images, not so much feeding the senses as forcing themselves on the Inuit imagination, enframing them in that other destining. There is a relentlessness inherent to these processes and capacities that seems to have desensitized the occupier to primordial traces of "dwelling." For occupiers, the spatial reference to their essential place is always elsewhere: the metropolis, the capitol, the stock exchange, the point of emigration, the "old country." The occupier is concerned most of all with territory, and

terrestrial boundaries. The occupier transplants customs, styles of observation and marks off the limits of the zone of protection. The occupier cannot comprehend all at once what Heidegger calls the "fourfold" of earth, sky, divinity and mortality, but instead revolves in a restless passage, emphasizing the serialization of space: the home, the workplace, the church and the mortuary, each location displacing the others."

Dwelling," according to Heidegger, signifies the "primal oneness" of the four-fold. The coal hole is a point of transformation, a worm hole, a black hole where the

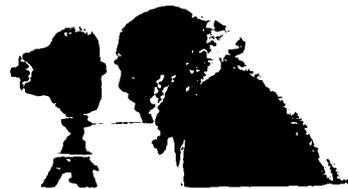


Fig. 19: Nookupluk, "seeing as." April 1931. Photo: Finnie. (NAC PA 101156.)

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writes: "The Canadian State also turned to motion pictures to promote a view of an active government presence in its northern territories. The period between the wars, in particular, marked an important time for the extension of governmental control." Tash and Valiquette were assisted in 1924 and 1925 by O.S. Finnie's son, Richard, who afterwards became the Branch's official cinematographer and still photographer.

incommensurateness of occupying and dwelling collide. The crucial term is displacement, the geopolitical aesthetic of Western art. The dweller's primordial oneness obviated aesthetics, indeed any distinction between technology and art: "The arts were not derived from the artistic. Artworks were not enjoyed aesthetically. Art was not a sector of cultural activity." In the coal hole the occupiers' propensity to "see as" attempted to seduce the Arctic dwellers' propensity to "see" in the full poetic sense of Heidegger's "revealing."

There is sometimes a careless acceptance that the saturation of all cultures with mediated images, and their reification as academic knowledge, extinguished the possibility of "dwelling" and "seeing" in this primordial way. Yet it is not clear that the transformation occurring in the coal hole was so unambiguous or one-sided. In Hugh Brody's and Nigel Markhams' film *Hunters and Bombers*, for example, an Innu elder plucks a shoulder bone from the fire and holds it in front of the camera.<sup>34</sup> He studies it and pronounces with satisfaction that he sees in this charred knob the shape of a ski-doo. It is a good omen, he tells the group, the hunt will be successful. To the film-maker, hidden behind the camera—in effect, catching our own eye—he says, touching the lens housing, "that is your way of seeing; this is ours." But what does "ours" mean here? The ski-doo, the hunt, the camera, the Innu children watching Anne Murray on CBC television in a bare room, all suggest a hybridity of dwelling and occupation within which the distinction between "seeing" and "seeing as" ceases to hold.

The Inuit lying on the coal in the *Beothic's* hold were unprocessed fuel for what Foucault called "governmentality." And yet, in this Heideggerian reading, aboriginal presence suggests an entirely different understanding of that "standing reserve." Rather than relegating aboriginality to a human fodder for the Canadian state's claim to sovereignty in the Arctic, might it not suggest a capacity, a resource injected into conceptual engines of governance, driving the ship of state into its destining while also re-routing that destiny? Conceiving of aboriginal presence as a "standing reserve" augurs some fusible crux where the surfeit of territorial imaging and the neuroses of occupation collapse, or else are absorbed into a dwelling and a seeing that is neither primordial nor modern, prehistorical nor historical, natural nor machinic. The essence of being at peace in the free, if Heidegger is correct, is found at the brink of *poësis*, where the fourfold is one, in the "locale" from which vaster "spaces" are granted their essential being.

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<sup>34</sup> Hugh Brody and Nigel Markham, dirs., *Hunters and Bombers* (Montreal: National Film Board, 1991); for more on the Innu and NATO bombers, see Jose Mailhot, "Montaignais Opposition to the Militarization of Their Land: An Historical Perspective," *Native Issues* 7:1 (1989): 47-54.

Jackson's interest in the film screenings waned as he pondered his task and understood it to be distinct from this expansion of a national chronotope through film projection. His focus returned to the mission of establishing a scenic *topos* for the Canadian far north. This elusive quintessence, like jack pine, was to be sought directly in nature, but the harsh Arctic landscape yielded nothing but "a lot of wandering without finding a composition." His sketches of Inuit life, made incidentally as he sought the big landscape metonym, seem now to convey some gentler message, but one he could not allow himself to hear.<sup>35</sup> On August 28th :

I have been looking for something that I visualized--it exists round here, but I did not discover it. An arctic landscape, no place in particular, a generalized landscape. . . . I got on a big hill that looked over miles of hills and lakes, and of course I made a punk sketch.<sup>36</sup>

The elusive Arctic *topos* was not to be found, even from the prospect of a big hill. Aboriginal presence in the landscape once again was erased from official view: a charming, smiling, generous, but finally contingent, presence. Yet, while Jackson earnestly gazed into the distance, his own diary records the aboriginal presence close by, quietly animating the ship, sustaining its larder, providing essential local navigational knowledge, indulging its film screenings, perpetuating its trade in furs, and enjoying the company.

Paradox depends on its elements maintaining a certain blindness or unknowing, and in a perfect paradox blindness is doubled. On August 31st, Jackson noted that he had stayed up on deck during the previous evening's screenings in the coal hole:

They are a vanishing race, too much contact with white people is the end of them . . . . Last night the aurora made great spirals in the sky, while the Eskimos were down in the hold seeing the movie show.<sup>37</sup>

### **Techniques of the Observer**

Jackson's self-critical estimate of his artistic production on the voyage was not shared by the Department of the Interior, nor by posterity. Historian Carl Berger later wrote of Canadian nationalism that its "theme of northerness culminated in A.Y. Jackson's *The*

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<sup>35</sup> NAC RG 85, "F. Banting". O.S. Finnie perhaps recognized this. Offered his choice of a sketch as a personal gift he chose one of Jackson's small studies of Inuit and their dogs. Even Banting remarked that "Ice is extremely difficult to paint . . . Jackson['s] best efforts are of Eskimo villages."

<sup>36</sup> Jackson, *The Arctic*, Diary B, August 28th, 1927.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 31st August, 1927.

*North Shore of Baffin Island* (1929) and Lawren Harris's *Bylot Island* (1930) both of which exude the crystalline cold and seem themselves to be part of the stark northern wastes."<sup>38</sup> As promised, Jackson had supplied the Department with material for the visual dissemination of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic, one more element in a growing ensemble of cultural nationalist processes. In 1933, a departmental memo advocated the use of Jackson's sketches in its publications because "without mentioning the fact it would indicate the breadth of the government's interest in the Arctic."<sup>39</sup> To honour his commitment, Jackson had duly worked up the Minister's chosen sketch and placed it in the National Gallery's collection.<sup>40</sup>

The subsequent reorganization of the Department of the Interior as the Department of Mines and Northern Development under the Conservative government of R.B. Bennett indicated a change in attitude towards the wilderness. The interventionist term "development" was introduced into the nomenclature of northern governance for the first time, replacing the more mysterious "interior" and its lingering suggestion of uncharted territory. It was under this new Department that a mass reproduction of A.Y. Jackson's Arctic paintings and sketches occurred, although not until after the war. In 1948, Hugh Keenleyside, then Deputy Minister, commissioned another northern painting tour, this time to the Northwest Territories, asking of Jackson "only [that he] catch the spirit of the country and reproduce it in the most effective manner. There is," he added, "no one else who can be relied upon so confidently to do this."<sup>41</sup> Jackson was flown into the Territories where he painted and sketched for a number of weeks. The results of this trip were handed over to the Department to use for educational purposes.

The wide recognition of the Group of Seven's nationalist art throughout Canada in the 1940s owed a great deal to the two world wars. First, there were the activities of Jackson and others as war artists in the First World War.<sup>42</sup> More important to their success, though,

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<sup>38</sup> Berger, "The True North Strong and Free," 4.

<sup>39</sup> RG 85, "A.Y. Jackson," Major McKeand to "W.C.B.," 27 November 1933.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., C. Stewart to A.Y. Jackson, 11 February 1930: "Many have praised the picture. To me it is valuable not only for its artistic worth, but also for its significance as a portrayal of Canada's watchful care over her remotest hinterland." The painting is now held in the McMichael Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

<sup>41</sup> NAC RG 85, "A.Y. Jackson," R.A. Gibson to Fred Smith, 17 August 1949.

<sup>42</sup> Maria Tippett, *Canada, Art, and the Great War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

was the mass reproduction of their landscape paintings to brighten up the walls of canteens during the Second World War. In his autobiography Jackson reported that 17,400 prints were distributed "free of charge" during the war followed in the post-war period by many paid orders through the National Gallery. "The [canteen] exhibitions," he wrote, "did more to familiarize young Canadians with the names of their artists than all the publicity we ever had previously."<sup>43</sup>

The Department of Mines and Northern Development planned to repeat that brilliant wartime cultural initiative, albeit on a smaller scale, by reproducing Jackson's landscapes of the Northwest Territories. Presided over by Deputy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Roy Gibson, the Department developed plans for the mass reproduction of Jackson's work. Their goal was "to promote culture in the schools in the Northwest Territories" by familiarizing the native children with Jackson's "outstanding portrayal of their own country."<sup>44</sup>

Initially, they planned a series of colour film strips for circulation to northern communities and schools using the National Film Board's existing circuits of distribution, but this was opposed by Eric Brown's successor as National Gallery Director, Harold O. McCurry. McCurry, it was noted, "has been somewhat prejudiced about film strips made from paintings as he feels that no reproduction can ever be one hundred percent perfect." W.T. Larmour, of the Editorial and Information Section, felt that McCurry's perfectionism "should be weighed against the fact that school children in the Territories will probably never have an opportunity to see the originals." Through the filmstrips, he argued,

they would receive an authentic and vivid introduction to the art of their country, and particularly the region in which they, themselves, live. Such a method would also act as an encouragement to Eskimo and Indian children--many of whom show a natural talent and feeling for art.<sup>45</sup>

Jackson himself had never paid much attention to the work of aboriginal artists, judging during his Arctic visits that while their watercolours were of interest it would be a long time before they mastered the proper handling of oils. On the other hand, the Department officials were genuinely enthused about promoting art in the residential schools. Eventually, filmstrips were rejected in favour of silkscreen copies to remain on permanent exhibition. By 1951, the Editorial and Information Section was set to distribute

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<sup>43</sup> Jackson, *A Painter's Country*, 170.

<sup>44</sup> NAC RG 85, file "A.Y. Jackson," J. Wright to C. Gibson, 28 December 1949.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, W. Larmour to J. Wright, 28 December 1949.

six hundred such silkscreened copies to the northern residential schools. Larmour developed what today is called a 'media relations strategy' aimed at maximizing the value for the Department and the Government.

This included seeking the public endorsement of the Director of the National Gallery, a "formal visit" by the Minister to view the original paintings "combined with [photographic] pictures of the schools where [the silkscreen copies] will be placed." Furthermore, he thought that Canadian propaganda agencies would find value in reporting the project: "The Information Section of the Department of External Affairs will, I am sure, be interested in using this as an example of Canadian cultural developments." Remembering the success of the wartime silkscreens, Larmour also believed the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's International Service "would most certainly" use the story as well:

When the armed forces put silk screen reproductions into canteens during the war the publicity campaign was terrific . . . . Now we are going to put . . . the work of one of Canada's leading artists into the schools of the Eskimos and the Indians. We should tell the world.<sup>46</sup>

Larmour was not entirely certain that his superiors shared his zeal in "letting the world know we are not alone producers of uranium." One memorandum ends plaintively:

At the risk of seeming maudlin I should like to ask why we should wish to conceal the implications of this picture purchase, or this project? Is it not that despite the war we are making some small effort to cultivate the hard growing eternal verities and need we be ashamed of this? Canadians always seem to be. Other countries are not.

Placing A.Y. Jackson's landscapes in residential schools to depict authoritatively "the North" for the benefit of aboriginal children presented some negative aspect Larmour could not quite fathom. His Department's "interesting adventure in the arts" ostensibly was in service of the "eternal verities" he mentioned and yet there was still some question of concealment, of keeping the project behind the habitual mask of official discretion. It was as if these silkscreens might somehow be more governmental than artistic, encumbering the ritual of the gift with another purpose. He quelled this uncertainty by invoking an international compunction for Canada to keep up with the more strident propagation by other nations of their cultural programmes.

A few years later, when Jackson visited the residential school at Great Bear Lake he noted with approval that Principal Rhéal Gravel, a "cultured French-Canadian," had the silkscreens prominently displayed "on the walls of the classrooms."<sup>47</sup> The Inuit and

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Jackson, *A Painter's Country*, 185; "Jackson Paintings in Arctic Schools," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 17 May 1950.

Eskimo children would eventually have televisions to inform their techniques of observation, but it is interesting to consider Jackson's paintings as an early attempt to re-order their ontological relationship with landscape from something "seen" to something "seen as."

### **Aerial History**

The English historian E.P. Thompson compared the methodology employed in his *Whigs and Hunters* (1975) to "a parachutist coming down in unknown territory: at first knowing only a few yards around me, and gradually extending my explorations in each direction."<sup>48</sup> His posthumously published book of lectures *Beyond the Frontier: The Politics of a Failed Mission, Bulgaria, 1944* (1996) cues his readers that the aerial metaphor was not offered carelessly. This book concerns the story of his brother, Frank Thompson, who parachuted into Bulgaria in 1944 as a twenty-three year-old SOE (Special Operations Executive) intelligence officer only to be captured and executed by the Bulgarian government. Though not definitively provable, it appears that his death was linked to an anti-Communist purge within the British intelligence services, a weeding out of their own left-leaning elements at Winston Churchill's private urging. Most of the relevant records were destroyed or suppressed, blocking Thompson's paths into the research. Nonetheless, as Arnold Rattenbury writes, the beauty of Thompson's last book is "precisely its limitedness. It takes a bearing, cross-bearings, looks bird's-eye, worm's-eye, eye-to-eye, goes to and fro . . . wonders, imagines, supposes, rejects."<sup>49</sup>

According to the Thompson, the aerial historian drops into the archive from above because he or she distrusts the purposes of much received historical knowledge. The aerial historian attends to details and fragments relegated to footnotes, suppressed beneath sonorous generalizations, or whited out by censors. Thanks to Thompson, deerhunters in one of England's last pockets of wilderness, and the hidden hand of state security in death of his brother two centuries later, continue to circulate as historical signs. It is in the spirit of Thompson's aerial history that the attention here shifts to vertical modes of observation in the cultural occupation of territory, and the scientific gaze of Frederick Banting, voyaging with Jackson on the *Beothic*.

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<sup>48</sup> Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters*, 16.

<sup>49</sup> E.P. Thompson, *Beyond the Frontier: The Politics of a Failed Mission, Bulgaria, 1944* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Arnold Rattenbury, "Convenient Death of a Hero," *London Review of Books*, 8 May 1997, 12.

Banting accompanied Jackson on various sketching trips in the 1920s, himself an amateur painter who emulated the Group of Seven's landscape style. In the Arctic, Banting tried as he had during their sketching tours in Quebec, to deflect attention from international fame garnered from the discovery of insulin. Painting was an escape from the pressures of celebrity. In the photograph below, Banting and Jackson sit side by side in deck chairs, sketchbooks in hand, facing the Arctic vista. As each day passed, they both

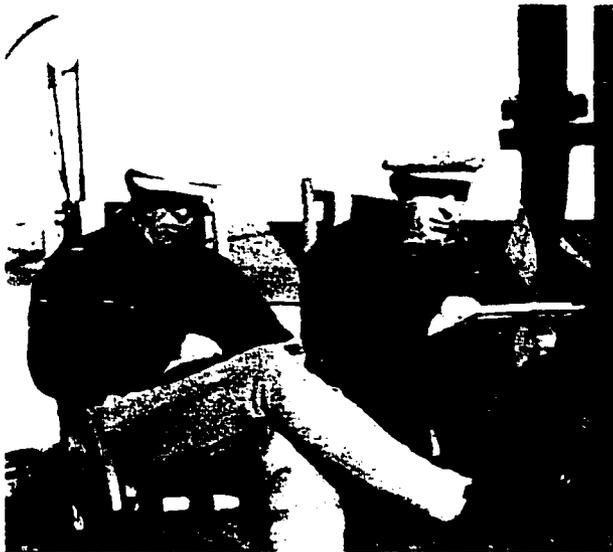


Fig. 20. A.Y. Jackson and Frederick Banting on the *Beothic*, 1927. (Ontario Provincial Archives.)

felt its essence had eluded them, yet the real chagrin was Jackson's. He, not Banting, was expected to deliver the picture of that Arctic landscape *topos*. Banting's presence on the *Beothic* draws attention to an entirely different regime of observation: the vertical view of the microscope and the aerial photograph.

In a memorial of Banting's youth, a friend recalled how his daily walks from the Banting family's Ontario farm to school took young Frederick on a path "along the river, through woods and fields" where

"sometimes his keen eye would see an Indian arrow-head, or it might be a four-leafed clover. It was remarkable how many four-leafed clovers he could find."<sup>50</sup> A proclivity for observing patterns and locating artifacts in vertical view was not exceptional--his optic was that of other researchers--but it presents the corollary to Jackson's search for an Arctic landscape *topos*.

The scientist was more dependent than was the painter upon mechanical prosthetics to carry the eye aloft, descend it into microscopy, or to retrieve data from beyond the visible spectrum. Perceptual knowledge was abstracted from visual information according to the conceptual models supplied by the scientific disciplines. As Gilles Deleuze points out, the twentieth century attuned subjects to high degrees of abstraction. If Foucault's nineteenth-century 'societies of discipline' described a social order predicated on Jeremy Bentham's design for the panopticon prison and workhouse, Deleuze maintains that the next century

<sup>50</sup> F.W.W. Hipwell, introduction to Jackson, *Banting as an Artist*, 7

witnessed a conversion to what he calls 'societies of control'.<sup>51</sup> The panopticon's central tower of observation was replaced by a rhizomorphic "dispersion cloud," and the *individuals* who were the objects of panoptic surveillance were segmented into what Deleuze calls *dividuals* to be scanned, sampled, monitored and modified at each strata by finely devolved and highly abstract protocols of sensing and perception. Where Foucault's "complete and austere" institutions formed a serial passage from family to school, factory to prison to hospital, Deleuze's society of control is a totalized space of all-at-once and everywhere-at-once, reinforced by real-time digital technologies.

This transformation from "discipline" to "control," to use Deleuze's shorthand, was accompanied by a shift in emphasis from scenic modes of observation to vertical and spectral modes. It is not that the former disappeared but rather observation became *penetrative*, scanning air, earth, water and the human body with shafts of remote sensing, from aerial photography to x-rays. As painter Wassily Kandinsky predicted in 1911, there were frequencies and invisible forces that machines would bring into the realm of human sense perception. In his poem "Under the Lens" (1937) one finds the Newfoundland poet E.J. Pratt already attuned to these changes, elaborating a vertical visualization of what might be called microscopic landscapes-without-subjects:

Along the arterial highways,  
Through the cross-roads and trails of the veins  
They are ever on the move -  
Incarnate strife,  
Reflecting in victory, deadlock and defeat,  
The outer campaigns of the world,  
But without tactics, without strategy <sup>52</sup>

Pratt marks here a crucial transition from the ground's eye view of landscape to the aerial observer first brought into art around the time of the First World War. The receding trajectory of the projectile, as seen from the gunsight, shifts to the aerial reconnaissance photograph and the severely vertical interest of the aerial bombardier. Kandinsky had alerted the field of painting to the change even as the earliest experiments in aerial reconnaissance announced a new era in the conduct of war and the exercise of national security. What began in the nineteenth century with balloons and kites, human

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<sup>51</sup> Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on Societies of Control," *October* 61 (1992), 3-4. He does not specify how societies of control are "envisioned," but each shift towards machinic observation, he points out, further collapses the mass/individual pair central to classical political theory.

<sup>52</sup> "Under the Lens", *E.J. Pratt, Complete Poems, Part 2*, Sandra Djwa and R.G. Moyles, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 27.

observers and sketch pads was, by the onset of the First World War, an increasingly sophisticated use of aerial cameras fixed to aircraft and new techniques of image interpretation.<sup>53</sup> It took some time for this way of imaging landscape to apprehend Canada's great land mass, but the *Beothic's* 1927 voyage coincides with its first systematic application.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, Banting and Jackson witnessed the arrival of an entirely new element in the arctic landscape: the air base.

Banting affably deferred to Jackson's visual sensibility but it was he who remarked that a different optic would be required in the Arctic. "Everything is so clear and transparent," he told reporters later:

You can see for great distances. Sometimes for more than 80 miles. The distances are very deceiving and difficult to paint. It is hard to get a foreground and a middle distance that will give the intense feeling of space and vast distances.<sup>55</sup>

Had he pursued the analysis he might have applied the clinical view of the microscope, the aerial camera and machinic data displays of devices then emerging, such as the electro-cardiogram and the polygraph, to the cultural occupation of aerially-surveyed landscape. Decades later, telemetry has transformed traditional Inuit methods of hunting, providing remotely-sensed information on the movement of caribou and other quarry.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> J.K.S. St. Joseph, ed., *The Uses of Aerial Photography: Nature and Man in a New Perspective* (London: John Baker, 1966), 113: the "remarkably versatile" aerial camera is an instrument able to detect features "of which no traces are ordinarily visible to an observer on the ground"; see also Major J.E. Hahn, *The Intelligence Service Within the Canadian Corps, 1914-1918* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1930), Chapter 4, "The Interpretation of Aeroplane Photographs," 21: "The examination should be systematic, with attention concentrated on each detail . . . . One photograph in itself may yield very little definite information, but read in conjunction with other photographs, Intelligence Summaries, Prisoners' Statements, etc., much valuable information of a positive or negative character may be obtained."

<sup>54</sup> Moira Dunbar and K.R. Greenaway, *Arctic Canada From the Air* (Ottawa: Defense Research Board, 1956). The Arctic airphotos reproduced in this volume are breathtaking. In their "Aviation in the Arctic Islands," in Zaslow, ed., *A Century of Canada's Arctic Islands*, 79-80. Dunbar and Greenaway write: "The first flying by Canadians north of the mainland was in 1927-28 as part of the Hudson Strait Expedition . . . . One of the Fokkers . . . crew would almost certainly have perished without the survival skills of Bobby Anakatok, an Inuit guide, who brought them safely to Port Burwell after thirteen days on the ice. This was the first real effort to use aircraft for ice and weather reconnaissance in North America."

<sup>55</sup> *Toronto Daily Star*, September 8th, 1927.

<sup>56</sup> An Inuit hunter interviewed by David McLaughlin for the CBC's "The World At Six," 2 April 1999, credits satellite telemetry with having virtually eliminated the risk of Inuit hunters starving to death as a result of misjudging the location of caribou herds.

If Jackson was eminently qualified to apply the disciplinary codes of cultural nationalism through the wilderness sublime, Banting's amateur painting misrecognized his own formation as a scientific observer at the frontier of a new regime of sensing. Or perhaps he *was* at least dimly aware of it: his initial response to the tentative landscape abstractions of Lawren Harris in a Toronto exhibition disturbed him such that he made six return visits to the gallery before demanding an explanation directly from Harris at his studio.<sup>57</sup>

While Canadian painters continued to elaborate the Group's landscape *topos*, the poet Pratt became the most articulate diagnostician of the emerging national chronotope, presaging the security dimension of cultural nationalism. In "The Radio in the Ivory Tower" (1939) he reconstitutes the perspectival landscape of the shell trajectory as an airspace seething with invisible signals, a radio field dominated by the radiant antenna tower of anglo-Atlantic culture and technology.

"This is the castle of peace," he wrote from his university eyrie, "And this the quietest hour."<sup>58</sup> Yet,

A slight turn of the dial  
 And the night and space and the silence  
 Thronged and tongued with life--  
 As the hosts might swarm through a lens  
 From a blood drop  
 Or a spot of dust in the heavens.  
 Out of the void they came  
 To storm at the base of the tower

Here the radio sphere is combined with the vertical view of microscopy to reconstitute landscape as teeming with invisible forces. When technology enhanced human sentience in order to intercept these phenomena from beyond the senses, Pratt warns, there will be no quiet, human societies will sleep no more.

The monocular sentinel, Polaris, "watching a speck on the frontier," discovers that the hostility of the Arctic climate is no longer a natural protective barrier for the nation's soft southern underbelly. The "Muscovite" intruders are oblivious to his "focused stare":

Which had often congealed the blood of explorers,  
 And frozen their hands to the sextants  
 Till their bodies starched on the parallels.

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<sup>57</sup> Jackson, *Banting as an Artist*, 11. "He was willing to believe that artists did research, too. He began to see a kinship between scientists and artists."

<sup>58</sup> E.J. Pratt, "Under the Lens," *Complete Poems, Part 2*, 41.

The incubus held no fear for bodies encased in airplanes that "southward advancing had brushed with their wings one half the floor of the world." Pratt's tentative "particles of speech" here open up on an entirely new threshold of insecurity, both above and below the ice surface. Canada's fearsome polar incubus was already making way for the lethal and undetectable Polaris submarines that later would prowl under the ice cap.<sup>59</sup>

In "Towards the Last Spike" (1952) Pratt ruminates on the spatio-temporal acceleration of the national dream and its expanding range of influence and observation:

It was the same world then as now - the same,  
 Except for little differences of speed  
 And power, and means to treat myopia  
 To show an axe-blade infinitely sharp  
 Splitting things infinitely small, or else provide the telescopic sight to roam  
 Through curved dominions never found in fables.  
 The same, but for new particles of speech -  
 Those algebraic substitutes for nouns  
 That sky cartographers would hang like signboards  
 Along the trespass of our thoughts<sup>60</sup>

The microscope, the aerial photo and the technical specialization of language are marshalled to treat the myopia of an entire people. The Dominion is rendered an observable, sentient field from sea to shining sea. Whatever might be said about the quality of Pratt's verse ("The radar pinged the moon one starlit night") he intuited that the cultural occupation of territory proceeded by expanding its *scales of observation*--from microscopy to aerial mapping--requiring a new conception of time and space, indeed, a new type of observer.

On the *Beothic*, Jackson remained perplexed at the problems of scale presented by the gigantic land formations, the absence of trees and even insect life. Pratt's verse suggests that, scale-wise, the artist himself was an insect in that landscape, and the landscape *topos* he sought may logically have been an insect's view. The futility of transposing the icon of the solitary jack pine into the far north was underlined during a subsequent *Beothic* Patrol made in the company of Lawren Harris in 1930. Then, the two Group of Seven painters

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<sup>59</sup> Trevor Lloyd, *Frontier of Destiny--The Canadian Arctic* (Ottawa: Canadian Institute for International Affairs, 1946): 1. The booklet's cover is an aerial view of Port Radium, the site of Canada's uranium mine. Lloyd writes: "Arctic Canada is one of the strategic areas of the world. Military authorities, who are rarely the first to recognize shifts in strategic geography, have expressed interest in it, one of them having gone so far as to say that he would "put armoured cars up there." United States military men refer, whether nervously or menacingly, to the "undefended roof of North America" and claim the right to return en masse to the Canadian northland which they left so recently. The north is 'in the news,' and much that is not in the news in the secret despatch boxes."

<sup>60</sup> E.J. Pratt, "Towards the Last Spike," *Complete Poems, Part 2*, 201.

encountered the only tree mentioned in the accounts of either voyage. "It was desolate and barren," Jackson recalled, "we found a little dead spruce tree; it had died of loneliness."<sup>61</sup>

Neither Jackson nor Banting reflected on the Government's establishment of airfields for aerial reconnaissance in the Arctic in 1927; they simply noted the buildings and runways under construction from the deck of the *Beothic*. The Arctic had not assumed the strategic importance it would have during the Cold War. The aerial survey reinforced Canada's claim to sovereignty over the territory and permitted further mapping and study of ice conditions. Yet here was a view of Arctic landscape that would tame the fearful incubus. No longer would the explorer forever wonder what lay beyond the next hill, island or headland, intimidated by the vastness and the impenetrability of the territory. Systematic aerial surveys put an end to that. The mosaic of human settlement and unoccupied land was now generalized in an entire zone of occupation, leaving no space "unoccupied" in its scheme of representation.

As Margaret Atwood points out, these developments mark a gender shift towards the masculine. She regrets how Canadian poetry and fiction changed after "something happened in the real world" that fully disclosed the mysteries of the North. She points to the aerial perspective as a masculine gaze neutralizing the female coding of Frye's "incubus". On a commercial flight passing over the Arctic in 1967, poet Al Purdy looked down bemusedly and wrote: "I can't think of anything more to say about the North West passage." Formerly, according to Atwood, such flippancy was perilous: "if you don't think right about the North the ice-goddess will get you."<sup>62</sup> Indeed, the "idea of the North as female" produced a type of male character in Canadian literature who, as in the mysterious (and real-life) wilderness death of painter Tom Thomson, is the "victim of landscape." Between them, economic development, environmental degradation and remote sensing have banished Northern Canada's literary muse.<sup>63</sup>

At the same time, this redefinition of the Arctic primarily as an occupied airspace first marked the horizon out of which, two decades later, Soviet missiles and bombers might appear at any time, calling up the need for protective sensing systems on an unprecedented scale. The Distant Early Warning (DEW) line, the radio interception sites euphemistically

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<sup>61</sup> Jackson, *A Painter's Country*, 134.

<sup>62</sup> Margaret Atwood, *Strange Tales: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 28, 77.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*; Greenaway and Dunbar, "Aviation in the Arctic Islands," 80: "without aircraft most of Northern Canada would still be unmapped and almost unknown, and this is particularly true of the Arctic Islands."

known as "weather stations," and systematic aerial reconnaissance converted the northern territories from forgotten wastes to areas of concentrated remote sensing.<sup>64</sup> Intimations of an appalling lack of hemispheric defense were discernible in 1927: the *Beothic's* radio suffered from a lack of radio relay coverage in the north, the Governor of Godhavn moved about in the company of his wireless operator, and the Patrol encountered the government's earliest investment in airfields for aerial cartography.

On August 29th, at Wakeham Bay, Jackson wrote:

This morning on the wireless we got Noranda \$22.40 . . . . The most northerly orchids in the world grow here . . . . an airplane base under construction, and the *Stanley* and the *Larch* anchored quite near us, quite a metropolis . . . the air station will be here for sixteen months studying ice conditions . . . . Another post is being established at Nottingham Island and the third one yet to be near Burwell.

Both Jackson and Banting subsequently employed the aerial view for various purposes. In Banting's case, enthusiasm for developing bacteriological weapons for use in the impending world war led him to sponsor early tests of aerial spraying in the autumn of 1940.<sup>65</sup> These consisted of dumping sawdust from a low-flying airplane over an Ontario lake and taking scatter measurements. That the base camp for these experiments was his friend Colin Lucas's cottage on Balsam lake—a quintessential Group of Seven landscape—neatly contrasts the coexistence of the two paradigms of observation.

Through the National Research Council Banting met the British scientist Henry Tizard and he joined the NRC's committee for wartime scientific research. The NRC became enmeshed in the urgent development of remote sensing systems for air and sea. The NRC's radio division had already accumulated a decade of experience in ionospheric tests and Tizard's committee supplied them with crucial advances in the art of RDF (Radio Direction Finding) eventually known as radar. The idea of a national airspace as a sentient broadcast environment, so crucial to the defense of Britain from the Luftwaffe in 1940, began to have diverse applications in Canada.<sup>66</sup> The radar curtain that sensed and located objects approaching national borders was just one of several ways that the manipulation of radio waves were redefining national airspace. As we will see in later chapters, the

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<sup>64</sup> David Neufeld, "Commemorating the Cold War in Canada: Considering the DEW Line," *The Public Historian* 20:1 (Winter 1998): 9-19.

<sup>65</sup> Michael Bliss, *Banting, A Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 283; John Bryden, *Deadly Allies: Canada's Secret War, 1937-47* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989), see chapter two, "Banting's Crusade," for an account of the Nobel Laureate's obsession with military aviation.

<sup>66</sup> See David Fisher, *A Race at the Edge of Time: Radar--The Decisive Weapon of World War II* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1988).

interception of coded signals was another important development, as was the development of a coordinated national broadcast environment for commercial and public radio. In sum, remote sensing, signals intelligence and broadcasting radically altered the stakes in the nationalist discourse of 'wilderness sublime'.

### **Sky Cartographers**

Jackson complained in his 1958 autobiography that the pattern of aviation development he witnessed in utero during his first voyage on the *Beothic* had resulted three decades later in the utter surrender of the Canadian Arctic to American security interests. "Nowadays this country has become as remote as Wall Street," he remarked acidly, "If a Canadian wishes to visit the Canadian Arctic he has to get permission from Washington."<sup>67</sup> With his hands-on experience in the north he was perhaps more aware than average citizens of just how much Canada had ceded its sovereignty in the Arctic to U.S. defense interests.

Even though an RCAF Squadron Leader assigned to the Arctic Patrol of 1922 wrote a report "stressing the future importance of Arctic aviation for defence, and recommending the immediate establishment of an experimental base in the Arctic Islands," the first such flights were made in 1925 by members of an American naval aviation unit.<sup>68</sup> Aerial mapping in the North on a wide scale was requested in May 1941 by the United States government in order to facilitate a Pacific air corridor to the Yukon and Alaska. The Canadians agreed to permit the Americans to conduct an aerial survey, with a proviso that copies of the photographs were to be deposited with the airphoto library in Ottawa. By 1946, there was concern in Ottawa that the aerial imaging of Canadian territory in the Arctic was a matter of sovereignty.

In May, 1946, External Affairs' Arnold Heeney was advised the Canadian aerial survey could not meet the full extent of American requests for photographs for at least four years. "It seems unfortunate," he wrote,

that, after inserting a provision that each country would be responsible for its own mapping, we should have to relinquish responsibility so soon. Do you think there is any possibility of having the R.C.A.F. air charting program expanded . . . ?

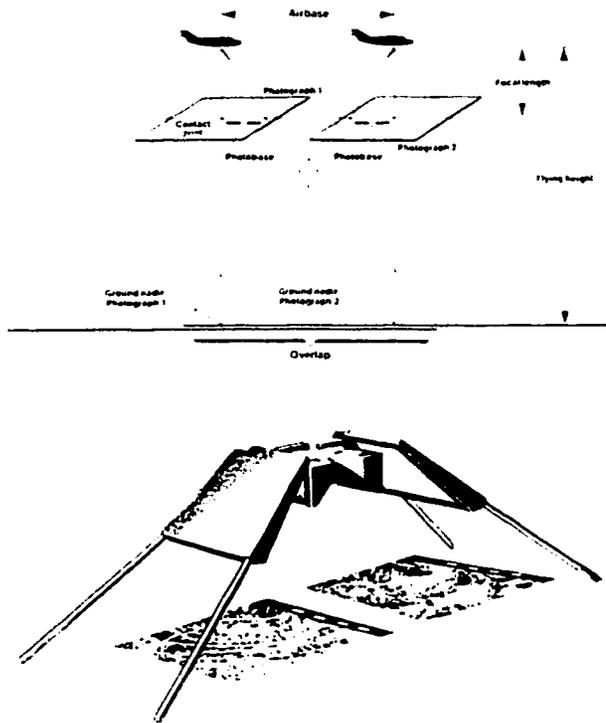
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<sup>67</sup> Jackson, *A Painter's Country*, 135; NAC RG 2, vol. 235 S-100-6-J "Security Org. - Arctic Security - John L. Jenness." Jackson was right. In 1951 the publication of a Ph.D. thesis by John Jenness (son of Diamond Jenness) was blocked for security reasons even though he had received permission to photograph Arctic landforms. After a noisy campaign by both Jennesses, and surreptitious approaches to senior bureaucrat Norman Robertson, was the decision of Marc Boyer, Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources, overturned.

<sup>68</sup> Greenaway and Dunbar, "Aviation in the Arctic Islands," 80.

I personally do not like the idea that of the United States taking over air charting in this region.<sup>69</sup>

Heeney had learned that the liaison of American and Canadian defense departments running the joint projects "Blackjack" and "Guilty" was so "perfect" that the diplomats and politicians had been cut out of the decision-making loop. But there was little choice in the



Figs. 21 and 22. Stereoscopic principle of aerial cartography (above) and mirror stereoscope viewer (below). (*Airphoto Interpretation of the Canadian Landscape*.)

ground from the air," he continued,

offers several difficulties. You must find a lake big enough for the plane to get in and out of, a lake you can walk around . . . . A country with much diversity is preferable, and you must remember that what you see from a plane in four minutes will be a two-hour hike from your base.

Jackson resolutely remained the interpreter of the scenic landscape *topos*, mentally transposing his aerial observations into ground elevations.

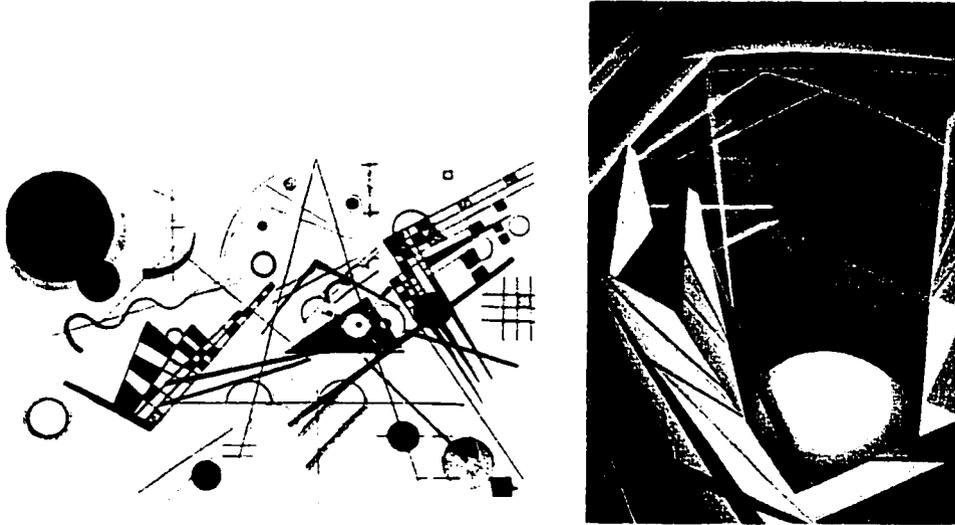
Of the Group of Seven only Lawren Harris flirted with aerial perspectives in a few of his abstract paintings. Northrop Frye compared Harris's abstractions to those of

matter. "For the purposes of publication," he concluded, "we might employ a little window dressing and refer to one large scale operation of which the United States was doing the part in the Arctic and the R.C.A.F. the part in the North-West Territories.

"By then the painter Jackson was accustomed to using aerial reconnaissance on his own account to locate sketching grounds in remote areas, learning how to interpret surface textures and topography from above. In one case, he reported, what "from the plane appeared to be long stretches of gravel resembling high-ways . . . turned out to be miles of large stones covered with lichen" difficult to traverse on foot. "Picking out a sketching

<sup>69</sup> NAC, RG 25, vol. 5738, file 17-P (s), "Aerial Photographic Surveys of Canada by U.S. Authorities," A. Heeney, 2 May 1946. See also Matthew Evenson, "Harold Innis and the Arctic Survey," *Canadian Historical Review* 79:1 (March 1998): 36-67.

Kandinsky, writing that "the artist's mind seeks a responding spirit in nature . . . the elemental spirit of *design* . . . what can be identified with the searching intelligence . . . often quasi-geometrical in form . . . prominent in, for instance, Kandinsky." Here Frye underestimated the extent to which Kandinsky truly radicalized landscape perception in



Figs. 23 and 24. Lost golf balls? Wassily Kandinsky, "Composition 280," 1923, and Lawren Harris, *Abstract*, 1942.

art. Even before the introduction of aerial reconnaissance in the first world war, Kandinsky defined a representational space closely attuned to the patterning of sense data in the electronic age. While the Group of Seven experimented with anthropomorphized jack pines, Kandinsky's "Black Lines" (1913), for example, is like a sensuous map, and "Composition 280" (1923) includes antennae protruding upwards in its loose, exploded isometry. In contrast, Harris's abstract paintings pushed the Group of Seven's familiar technique of observation towards greater stylization without really acknowledging Kandinsky's paradigm shift at all. In this sense, Harris's abstract paintings run cold because the wilderness *topos* so effectively disseminated by the Group could not sustain any further degree of abstraction.

Jackson was as unmoved by art theory as he was motivated by cultural nationalism. Pragmatically, he sought to refine and reinforce the *topos* and used the airplane only instrumentally for this purpose. For Jackson, there was a right degree of modernity and of modernism and he abhorred the way that the airplane and the highway had "marked the end

of the picturesque and colourful life of the northern people."<sup>70</sup> Most of that frontier society, he wrote, "had departed before the artists came into contact with it." His acknowledgment that the Group of Seven "did not paint the life around us; not the inhabitants, only the setting," is accompanied by this defense: at least the Group depicted the setting in accordance with human precepts of observation and sensory experience. He deplored the international style and abstract painters' abandoning their responsibility to render the Canadian landscape, giving it up "to the Kodachrome operators." Once Canada was "a country with little or no art," he reflected, "now it seems we are to have art without a country."<sup>71</sup>

More than Jackson knew, the colour field painters and abstract expressionists were training an educated public to entirely new techniques of observation. And these techniques did have something to do with (American) cultural nationalism, or more precisely, international painting reflected an intensification of the entire system of nationality.<sup>72</sup> Here again, these paintings were made for the most part from a vertical view.

In some cases the paint was literally dropped, spattered or sprayed like bacterial agents from above on the canvas. For example, Jackson Pollock's paintings, as an art of textures, topographies, and layers, may properly be viewed from above, as he painted them. They appear more susceptible to spectral analysis than a casual Saturday afternoon jaunt through the Museum of Modern Art. They invite machinic scanning for information embedded outside the range of human senses: landscapes to pulsate heat-seeking instruments in a high altitude bomber.

In Pollock's *Blue Poles*, one finds scenic and aerial modes doubly exposed: the spatter and scatter of descending paint coincides with an elevation vaguely suggesting trees, masts or antennas. The observer integrates the two modes of abstracting visual data. As Kandinsky predicted in *Point and Line to Plane* (1911), traditional geometries of representation gave way to entirely new modes of envisioning information, minus what he

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<sup>70</sup> In 1951 he said, "while art today is going international, Canadian art is bound to have a foremost effect. My plea to you today is for sound sane painting." Unidentified press clipping, "A.Y. Jackson Lauds New Ottawa Artists' Association," 4 April 1951, RG 85, "A.Y. Jackson file. A Northern Affairs Dept. wit wrote on the margin, "He should try it!"

<sup>71</sup> Jackson, *A Painter's Country*, 196.

<sup>72</sup> Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Jane De Hart Matthews, "Art and Politics in Cold War America," *American Historical Review*, 81 (1976): 762-87.

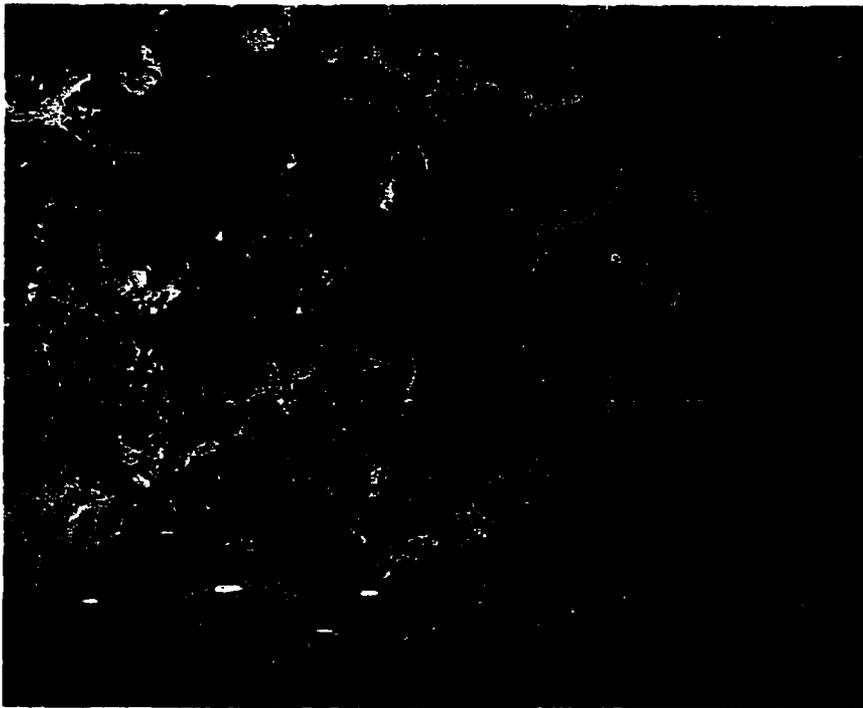


Fig. 25. Detail of Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles*, 1953.

called the "faked third dimension" of Quattrocento perspective.<sup>73</sup> He disdained the "utter illusion of the density of matter." In 1928 he added an introduction that discussed how an acceleration of human temporality "envelops us in a play of horizontal and vertical lines bending in different directions as colour patches pile up and dissolve into high and low tonalities." Only by means of "microscopic analysis can the science of art lead to a comprehensive synthesis," he wrote:

The multiplicity and complexity in expression of the "smallest" form attained, after all, by slight changes in its size, serve to the receptive mind as a plausible example of the power and depth of expression of abstract forms. Upon further development . . . of the receptivity of the observer, more precise concepts will be necessary, and these will surely, in time, be attained through measurement.<sup>74</sup>

...

If Jackson and Banting felt faint tremors of these developments during their stay on the Arctic steamer they could go below and warm up with the excellent and plentiful meals served up from the ship's galley. Within the camaraderie of the ship's company it was quite safe to speak one's mind. Lighting their pipes, they listened gravely to RCMP officers airing

<sup>73</sup> W. Kandinsky, *Point and Line to Plane*, (New York: Dover, 1979), 17-21.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

doubts regarding the wisdom of interfering in the society and ecology of the Arctic. They heard how the Inuit now concentrated their hunt on Arctic foxes for which the Hudson Bay buyers traded deplorably cheap southern goods. They learned of immense downstream profits made from these furs and how, unlike in Greenland, these profits never returned to the Inuit hunters, whose families now frequently starved, having neglecting their traditional hunting practices.

Banting suspected that natural resistance to diseases among the Inuit diminished as they departed from their traditional diets, clothing and shelter. A man prone to passionate initiatives, he returned to the south incensed that aggressive Hudson's Bay traders and an apathetic federal government were



Fig. 26. Inuit on *Beothic*, 1927. (NAC, Malte, PA 203530)

together conducting a quiet genocide against the Inuit. How he planned to address the issue is unclear. What he did do was have a long off-the-record conversation with C.R. Greenaway, a journalist whose discretion he trusted, during the train journey back to Toronto. When his remarks were blazed verbatim in the *Toronto Star* the next day, beneath the headline "BANTING REGRETS HUDSON BAY USE OF ESKIMOS - ARCTIC NATIVES UNFAIRLY TREATED," the Commissioner of the North West Territories was furious. According to Banting, the Company exploited Eskimos, undermining their subsistence life style by luring them with European goods and foods, making the Eskimo "a trapper instead of a hunter." Furthermore, he argued, the Company was effectively a foreign corporation. "There is scarcely a real Canadian in the Hudson Bay Company," he was reported to have said:

Their men are principally English and Scotch. They send them out on a salary and a commission . . . it is to be hoped that the people of Canada will back the government to take strong measures against the Hudson Bay Company. The company exists for the most part in England and apart from Canada.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>75</sup> *Toronto Daily Star*, September 8th, 1927, 1.

On his arrival in Toronto, Banting found himself already on the defensive. Obligated to recant some of the statements, he met personally with Governor Charles Sale of the Hudson's Bay Company, who was visiting from London, in an effort to mollify the great Company.

In Ottawa, the Deputy Minister, W.W. Crory, frostily reminded Director Finnie that "it was distinctly understood when Dr. Banting was taken on our boat as a guest . . . that he would observe all our regulations, one of the most important of which is that nothing is to be given to the press except it has first been vised by the Department." Finnie had attempted to smooth over the embarrassment by advising Crory that "although Dr. Banting was indiscreet . . . it looks as if he had been victimized by one of his "personal friends"-- a newspaper reporter--who valued copy more than friendship." But Crory was not to be placated, reiterating to Finnie:

I understood from you that Dr. Banting understood the reasons for the Department's policy with respect to publicity and had assured you that before making any public utterances or giving any interviews he would, he would submit his remarks to you for approval. It was because I learned . . . that Dr. Banting had been interviewed extensively by one of the Toronto reporters that I asked you to get in touch with him and remind him of the understanding which we had with him. I believe you got Mr. Banting on the phone but it was too late.<sup>76</sup>

Finnie weathered the crisis, partially because Banting was not prepared, once outside the cocoon of the *Beothic's* company, seriously to press the issue. After receiving Banting's written report, Finnie allowed that, despite all the bluster,

[w]e intend asking the Hudson's Bay Company, in a formal way, what they intend doing in the way of providing better and more suitable treatment and supplies for the native population. It is quite evident that some definite steps will have to be taken.

The fatuous public response of the Company, that "furs that might be worth \$100,000 on the New York market are worth only a fraction of that in the far north," passed unremarked.

Banting had spoken approvingly of the RCMP's supervision of Inuit life. "In places where there are mounted police detachments the interests of the Eskimo are guarded," he said, "It would be a good thing if we could get a policy of government control of the fur trade of the Arctic." Jackson, too, "in his terse, snappy way," told reporters, "[i]t's about time for Canadians to change their ideas about what is really north in this country . . . . The Police have a whole new geography of places that most of us down here have never heard

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<sup>76</sup> NAC RG 85, "Banting," W. Crory to O. Finnie, 9 September 1927. Crory perhaps got wind of the incautious conversation from Vincent Massey, who happened to be on the same train and joined the group.

of."<sup>77</sup> RCMP Commissioner Starnes took the opportunity to announce that "new stations had been opened and that the northern territory was pretty completely under control . . . the



Fig. 27. A limit of modernity. Banting in Franklin's headquarters on Beechey Island, 1927. (NAC, Malte, PA 203528.)

RCMP know just about where all the Eskimos are."<sup>78</sup>

The various responses to Banting's indiscretion permit us to read the archive as an "x-ray" of Canada's emerging nationality as it extended into the Arctic, defining a series of discursive parameters about the cultural occupation of the northern territory. The importance of establishing the Arctic as a policed jurisdiction went hand in hand with the application of censorship and self-censorship regarding aboriginal matters. Imaging the north as an assertion of sovereignty was reinforced by

Banting's description of the Hudson's Bay Company as a foreign corporation.<sup>79</sup> Banting also stressed the idea of the north as an archaeological resource, a vast frozen museum, relegating aboriginal presence to "pre-history." The *Star* endorsed this erasure, opining that "Dr. Banting's observations will be of interest not only to the sociologist but to the archaeological students," describing the Inuit relics he collected as "even more ancient than those discovered by Diamond Jenness[s]."<sup>80</sup>

In 1931, Banting aired his ambivalence about Canada's northern landscape and its population: "She is a funny country to love with her frozen North, her rocky barren tracts, her mountains and her lakes . . . Her people are to me the best in the world but I would

<sup>77</sup> *Toronto Daily Star*, September 12th, 1927.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, September 10th, 1927.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* The "H.B.C.," as Shelagh Grant notes, in her *Sovereignty or Security? Government Policy in the Canadian North, 1936-50* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), 15, was jokingly said to stand for "Here Before Christ."

<sup>80</sup> The dubious role of government archaeologist Diamond Jenness is discussed by Peter Kulchyski, "Anthropology in the Service of the State: Diamond Jenness and Canadian Indian Policy," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 28:2 (Summer 1993), 33-34. Kulchyski points out that Harold Innis's *The Fur Trade* (1931) and Jenness's *Indians of Canada* (1932) served as a "strategic containment . . . forcing Native cultures into specific culturally coded categories." Innis excluded from the historical construction of Canada, and Jenness circumscribed them, "piercing them through with the gaze of instrumental rationality."

love Canada if there were no people--sometimes I feel that I would prefer it."<sup>81</sup> For his part, the truly discreet Jackson wrote to the *Star* disclaiming comments attributed to him regarding the "social or economic conditions of the Eskimo." Taking all possible distance from his companion's remarks, he stated, "I went to the Arctic as an artist."<sup>82</sup>

...

Did a malign spirit creep into the Hudson bomber that was to carry Banting to England in 1941? The subsequent rumours of deliberate enemy sabotage of his secret mission regarding Allied scientific cooperation have been deemed groundless. Frye might have said that the incubus was there, an archaic guarding power not susceptible to radar, and the enemy of human machinery. Perhaps it worked on Banting's fear as the bombers waited in Gander for better weather for the crossing. When they did finally take off into the night and headed off towards the North Atlantic the tremor of danger was palpable. When engine failure brought the aircraft plummeting down into the Newfoundland bush country, the aerial view precipitously collapsed, the ground rushed up into gut-wrenching specificity. Banting was not strapped in, but somehow he survived the impact of the crash landing on Lake Gander, the smashed plane a twisted heap at the edge of the forest. Banting was able to exit the wreck but died face-down in the snow just outside the fuselage.



Figs. 28 and 29. Two views of Banting's crashed Hudson bomber, Lake Gander, 1941. Photo: Frank Ebdon. (NAC, Ebdon, PA 203526 and 203527.)

### Looking Up

Unlike the Group of Seven and their followers, Native Cape Dorset painters never refrained from rendering the aircraft flying above their landscapes, nor the antennae that

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<sup>81</sup> Bliss, *Banting*, 192.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, September 16th, 1927. The editor responded "We probably assumed too readily that he concurred in the stronger views . . . expressed by Dr. Banting."

pricked the northern landscape. The machines that occupy the air are important links to the outside, and also signs to be wary of. In Labrador, in the old hunting grounds of the Innu, the NATO planes shrieked overhead in lethal simulations of battle, conducting thousands of sorties every year. In heads-up virtual displays young top-gun pilots from NATO countries launched computer-guided rockets to strafe the small animals, mossy logs and loose stones that stand in for enemies. In *Hunters and Bombers*, an Innu hunter lowers his rifle and curses his luck as the giant metal shape hurtles over the trees. The bombers were there because the topography is comparable to Central Europe but "unpopulated," they fly low to take advantage of a chronic deficiency in radar defense systems, a sensory lacuna in the airspace immediately above the ground.

When photographer Peter Sibbald first went to Goose Bay in northern Labrador in 1989 he was not unreasonably suspected of being an agent of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service by the Innu residents there.<sup>83</sup> His presence with a camera was viewed as an incursion into their community, possibly aimed at gathering intelligence regarding their personalities, moods, and political activities. Sibbald denies this, and in the chronic uncertainty surrounding secret intelligence services we are left to accept his word or not. On the other hand, his photographs support his claim to have been an independent artist. His "Return to *Nitassinan*" exhibition documents the aboriginal presence on the land as a patchwork legacy of the old ways, faced with the apparent hopelessness of cultural *métissage*, under a sky of the thunderous warplanes. In placing the air base and the Innu reserve into the same discursive field, Sibbald elucidates connections between culture and security, land and sky, mortality and spirituality, that the security state prefers to keep separate. The death of an elder surrounded by her family is juxtaposed with the two uniformed officers shaking hands to mark the change of command at the base, as anonymous killer fliers rotate in and out of Labrador on a computerized schedule.

Sibbald's diptychs of culture and security serve as a reminder that Northrop Frye's incubus was pure colonial panic. Indeed, Frye himself diagnosed its inscription on the Canadian landscape:

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<sup>83</sup> Peter Sibbald, "Return to *Nitassinan*: Daily Life Amongst the Innu of Labrador," Harbourfront Centre, 1995: "In 1989, a botched investigation revealed that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) was trying to infiltrate the Innu. I was just another White Man from the big city with a camera and a guilty conscience . . . or was I? Perhaps I was a communist agitator, or a CSIS agent. I parachuted into a hurricane of rhetoric howling and ripping apart at least three entrenched and competing interest groups. Amidst the animosity and paranoia, I found myself reeling. Clearly I was way over my head."

The obliterated environment produces an imaginative dystrophy that one sees all over the world . . . Canada . . . has had this peculiar problem of an obliterated environment throughout most of its history . . . . [I]t is practically the only country left in the world which is a pure colony, colonial in psychology as well as in mercantile economics.<sup>84</sup>

Colonial panic derived neither from the harshness of the climate nor the ruggedness of the land but from the subjugation of *people* both in actuality and in schemes of representation. The erasure of aboriginal presence in the cultural nationalist project of landscape underscored this neurosis. Augmented by Cold War geopolitics that made Canadian wilderness a likely transit site of nuclear devastation, Frye's analysis of the north, like the Group of Seven's *topos*, erased aboriginal presence for good reason. When understood as a *human* presence, absented from a system of wilderness representation, the incubus cannot be tamed by any Group of Seven artist, nor even by an entire garrison, no matter how well-armed.<sup>85</sup>

In Peter Sibbald's photograph of two Innu children lying in the shallows there is a gentle quality that cancels out the aviator-occupiers' colonial panic, and the catastrophic cultural logic of occupation so evident in the other images on his photo-documentary. If Sibbald is among the few Euro-Canadian artists to have visualized the elusive northern *topos*, perhaps it is because it was never assimilable to the cultural nationalist project. It represents a recognition of dwelling that A.Y. Jackson was unable or unwilling to acknowledge on the *Beothic* in 1927.

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<sup>84</sup> Frye, *The Bush Garden*, xxiii.

<sup>85</sup> Pierre Berton, *Why We Act Like Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987), 115. Even the trusty and transposable claiming of landscape through golf falters at high latitudes, if Berton's account of Yellowknife's "Midnight Sun Golf Tournament" is any indication: "We tee off at midnight, just after sundown, and for the next nine holes we will see no blade of grass. The 'greens' are made of oiled sand, the fairways are solid rock." The golf/artillery metaphor is so weakened here that players, according to Berton, resort to actual firepower: "they sometimes carry shotguns to drive off the ravens who swoop down and carry off the golf balls."



Fig. 30. Peter Sibbald, "Innu boys lying on a sandbar in Lake Melville at Sheshatshit," July 1993.

The "azoic" is present, as Frye might point out, in the form of a giant boulder; yet it is not "monstrous." According to Sibbald this tableau was not 'staged', though the two boys "were clearly aware of my photographic presence."<sup>86</sup> Indeed, it appears he underwent a certain *loss of identity* amongst the Innu, a loss to his technique of observation that nonetheless marks some ineffable gain in understanding. In the next chapter this loss/gain of identity in a landscape will be explored further through the case of Grey Owl. But here in Sibbald's photograph the two children have become resilient landforms themselves. Directing their gaze upwards, they wait, as if relearning how to dwell again will begin with reclaiming the sky.

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<sup>86</sup> Peter Sibbald, personal communication with author, 29 May 1999.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### WHITE MISCHIEF:

#### GREY OWL AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

What happened to all the *other* series of procedures that, in their unnoticed itineraries, failed to give rise either to a specific discursive configuration or to a technological systematization? There are many procedures besides panoptical ones. These might well be looked on as *an immense reserve* containing the seeds or the traces of alternate developments.

Michel de Certeau

Tradition is not something a man can learn; not a thread he can pick up when he feels like it; any more than a man can choose his own ancestors.

Someone lacking a tradition who would like to have one is like a man unhappily in love.

Ludwig Wittgenstein

The later Wittgenstein respected the *thickness* of the real. Given the complexity of language and the density of social practices the possibility of a person choosing his own ancestors and then conducting himself seamlessly in keeping with their traditions was remote. Yet, in the case of Grey Owl, who arrived in Canada in 1906 as Archie Belaney, a white English schoolboy determined to become an American Indian, Wittgenstein's maxim is only half right. To be sure, Grey Owl's gradually-adopted "Indian-ness" would always be evidently artificial amongst the native people he met—they viewed Grey Owl as an English oddity even as they were disarmed by his devotion to a romanticized vision of their identity. Grey Owl, as Wittgenstein's aphorism predicted, was unhappily in love, but it was a peculiar "colonial" love for Indian peoples and what he viewed to be their vanishing way of life.

On the other hand, the well-established European stereotype of 'the' North American Indian ensured that Archie Belaney, assiduous reader of Ernest Thompson Seton, Henry Longfellow and James Fenimore Cooper, would appear uncannily authentic in his native regalia on the platform of an English lecture hall or in an Ottawa bureaucrat's office. The recognition of Grey Owl as the *reddest* of Indians by a London newspaper was an extreme fulfillment of the narcissistic promise of the racial stereotype: the creation of a pure other out of one's self. The posthumous revelation of Grey Owl's "true English identity" in 1938 was thus injurious to the smooth operation of the stereotype, and the Grey Owl legend was given its narrative configuration as a "hoax" story, a con man revealed by intrepid reporters in sensational world-wide coverage. His identity was presented as pure masquerade, an

instance of English eccentricity, a childish prank played upon the state.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, I will argue, the records of Grey Owl's "going native" in a masquerade of pure otherness trace a "loss of identity" in the national sense: a destabilization of the scenic *topos* national landscape, and a seed of alternative developments to conventional notions of citizenship.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of the scandal surrounding the revelation of Grey Owl's "true" identity, coming as it did at the peak of his career as a representative of the Canadian state and its wilderness tracts, his traces in the National Archives of Canada are the broken material of narratives that failed, officially. Failed, that is, in that they trail off from the main current of national history. There is no mention of Grey Owl even in official histories of the "National Parks" where only since the 1970s has his name been anything but anathema.<sup>3</sup>

The official story goes like this. As a function of the settlement and development of Canada's wilderness interior the Government of Canada created a series of national parks in order to preserve wilderness habitats in their natural state. During the 1930s the Parks Bureau was eager to restore wildlife species in the parks after the ravages of excessive trapping and sought ways to gain public sympathy for the plight of these animals. A half-breed styling himself 'Grey Owl', who lived as an Indian in the company of tamed wild beavers, had written several magazine articles about wildlife. These writings were brought to the attention of Parks publicist J.C. Campbell by the editor of *Canadian Forest and Outdoors*. Campbell recognized the "beaver man's" potential usefulness in public relations

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<sup>1</sup> Titles of magazine articles are indicative enough: "Magnificent Fraud," *Macleans* 1 August, 1951, "Imposter Who Hood-Winked a King," *Macleans* 15 January 1967; "Accomplished Liars," *Saturday Night*, October, 1986. The Grey Owl narrative continues to circulate as a kind of 'wilderness' myth in popular magazines, perpetuating the identity hoax and the hint of mystery, even as Grey Owl is recuperated into environmentalist discourse.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of white stereotyping of Indians see Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 1992). For accounts of other Indian masqueraders see James A. Clifton, *Being and Becoming Indian: Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers* (U.S.A: Richard D. Irwin, 1989). Clifton's stated aim is to "define" these "marginal men and women" in "the language of social science."

<sup>3</sup> Author's interview of Archivist, Prince Albert National Park. The Tourism department of the Government of Saskatchewan have recently begun to promote the Grey Owl legend as one of Saskatchewan's key tourist attractions. Parks Canada's "Grey Owl Interpretive Plan" (Parks Canada, n.d. ca. 1970s), 2, states: "In the past the elements that caught most peoples' interest were essentially those that do not relate to Parks Canada objectives. The great hoax, Grey Owl's penchant for alcohol, his many wives (legal and illegal), his rise to fame from the backwoods of Canada to meet the King of England, the entertainment value of his stories—all these must be used only, if indeed at all, to catch people's interest. We must lead people to discover the more meaningful aspects of Grey Owl's philosophy of man and nature."

and his superior, James Harkin, the energetic Comptroller of National Parks, approved the use of Grey Owl and beaver in Parks publicity. Grey Owl thus became the subject of widely disseminated promotional films for the Department. In 1931 he was formally appointed by the federal government to the position of "labourer" in Riding Mountain National Park, and then at Prince Albert National Park as "Caretaker of Park Animals." As a seasonal employee, Grey Owl became an unusual presence in these Parks, a summer tourist attraction but also a magnet for other writers and for intellectuals interested in nature conservation. In the winters he was granted unpaid leave to promote his books and make public appearances. After a second successful but arduous lecture tour of Britain in 1938, when he met and showed his films to King George and the royal family, Grey Owl succumbed to pneumonia and died in Prince Albert hospital.

After his death it was revealed that "Grey Owl" was in fact, Archie Belaney, an Englishman who came to Canada as a teenager and learned Ojibwa language and customs in the Temagami region of Ontario, primarily from his Ojibwa wife and her family. After volunteering for the First World War he entered into a bigamous marriage with a friend from his childhood in Hastings, but soon left her to return to Northern Ontario, where he married once more. The oft-repeated fiction of his Apache Indian origins and a youth spent in Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show duped his public, embarrassed his employers in the Canadian government, and made a mockery of the Royal family who had warmly received him as an Indian at Windsor Castle. He was both criticized for his deceptive "masquerade" as well as accorded qualified praise for his pioneering role in the environmentalism movement.

The "failed narrative" has a different focus. In summary form it might run as follows: To help regulate the occupation by Euro-Canadian society of a former wilderness the Department of the Interior administered and promoted a string of national parks. The advent of these parks was symptomatic of a 'governmentalization' of the wilderness, a landscape figuratively emptied of human inhabitants in the Government's imaging of its 'interior'. Thus the engagement of the Indian writer Grey Owl along with his tame beaver, between 1931 and 1938, to live *within* the precincts of two national parks, even as aboriginal inhabitants' lands were expropriated, unavoidably drew attention to the place of Canada's native peoples in the wilderness landscape. Grey Owl's official connection to the federal government, in combination with commercial success as an author, launched his international career as a spokesman for the Canadian wilderness and aboriginal peoples. Throughout, Grey Owl maintained his Indian identity by tinting his skin, dyeing his hair, and disguising his British accent and education.

Concern among the bureaucrats at the Department of the Interior grew as Grey Owl's increasingly erratic public performances began to promote a radical political programme calling for a Canadian nationality that severed links with Britain and recognized the distinct status of Canada's native peoples. Grey Owl seized and subverted components of the Dominion's symbolic formation, not least its coding the beaver as the "white" anthropomorphic symbol for modern, industrious Canadian citizens. At the extreme, Grey Owl advocated bifurcating Canada into settled and wilderness areas placing the latter under native custodianship. As the officials debated Grey Owl's future employment with mounting anxiety and irritation, the Deputy Minister, Roy Gibson, suggested his replacement by "carefully selected" young Indians. With Grey Owl's unexpected death in 1938 they had to handle the potent legacy of his "absent presence" in the Park.

The scandal of Grey Owl's true identity was a source of embarrassment to departmental officials, and despite continuous international pressure virtually nothing was done to commemorate Grey Owl or preserve Beaver Lodge, his cabin in Prince Albert Park. In a protracted bureaucratic struggle, Gibson's directive to engage Indians to "keep green" the memory of Grey Owl at Beaver Lodge was successfully resisted by his staff. In 1947, a white, university-trained 'naturalist' was appointed to replace Grey Owl in Prince Albert Park, signaling the defeat of Grey Owl's attempt to redefine aboriginal presence in the Canadian wilderness.

### **Wilderness Parks**

In his autobiography, *Pilgrims of the Wild*, Grey Owl recalled his appointment to the federal civil service which began when Parks publicity director, J.C. Campbell, visited Grey Owl and his wife Gertrude (known to Grey Owl's readers as Anahareo) in 1929 at their improvised cabin at Touladi Lake near the Quebec-New Brunswick border. An encounter which began with suspicion ended with cameraman Philippe Laplante filming Grey Owl with his beavers. *The Beaver People*, Grey Owl wrote, was:

received with acclamation all over the Dominion, and was to be shown in civilized countries. [I]t had been arranged, pursued my visitor, that I might continue with the work I was now engaged in, under the auspices of the Dominion Government, and at a regular salary . . . I myself would become a servant of the Government of Canada.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Grey Owl, *Pilgrims of the Wild* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), 239.

The chance of employment and publicity came as a stroke of good luck for the impoverished Grey Owl. In the privacy of his notebook he wrote, however, under the heading "Mr. Campbell,"

You say a man has to give up something make some sacrifices. Do you realize, leaving the beaver out, that I am giving up everything? Security? which I do not value.<sup>5</sup>

The sacrifice Campbell had in mind, in return for the "security" of employment in the Department of the Interior was a surrendering of Grey Owl's identity and anonymity to the purposes of the state. Both parties to this contract were disingenuous. Campbell's offer of employment as a seasonal park labourer represented the Government's minimum possible investment in the "beaver man." On the other hand, Grey Owl's employment in the civil service was the first step in the haphazard programme of wild west carnivalesque, and proto-environmentalism just then emerging from the ruins of his career as a trapper. It was thus not material 'security' he risked, but rather an identity he had arduously created over two decades.

Grey Owl crossed frontiers regularly: Englishman to Indian, city to wilderness, day to night-traveling, sober conformity to alcoholic release. His "poor relations" with authority, began at school in England where, as Donald Smith writes, the "Grammar School masters taught the students their imperial heritage . . . the idea of the superiority of British civilization and of Christianity . . . and 'the white man's burden' of civilizing inferior races."<sup>6</sup> His distaste with this attitude soured completely in the trenches of Ypres and found its alternative in the frontier life of northern Canada. Yet even there Grey Owl could not escape European modernity and its colonial heritage, especially in the guise of an Indian.

Experiencing for himself the effects of the racial stereotype and discrimination from the Indian point of view, Grey Owl frequently confided to his notebook his anger at the hypocrisy he encountered:

The dime novel Indian has come to stay, . . . down through all ages to come. He will go down not as a patriot, not as Nature, as the greatest interpreter of all, not as an artist . . . but as a lowly savage. Have fought beside Christian troops heard plenty of howling and saw much savagery. One man['s] guts on gun bayonet--while I do not uphold the now discontinued practice of scalping the sight made me think that a scalp neatly stretched . . . like a beaverskin was far more sightly.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> NAC, MG 30, D147, vol. 1, Grey Owl, notebooks, n.d. approx. 1927-38.

<sup>6</sup> Donald B. Smith, *From the Land of Shadows: The Making of Grey Owl* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1990), 17.

<sup>7</sup> NAC MG 30, D 147, Vol. 1, Grey Owl, notebooks, n.d. approx. 1927-38.

"What's it like to be Indian?" he wrote in the notebook. It was to be treated as an exotic object of curiosity, to be infantilized, and also to be feared. He noticed how the British termed any anti-imperial critics as "fanatics."<sup>8</sup> Yet the neophyte civil servant initially kept these estimates of Britishness hidden from his superiors. They were unaware, too, of his propensity to stride through the woods at night, hurling himself into what he described as the "barbaric freedom that possesses the soul of one who travels alone in the dark, out on the edge of the world."<sup>9</sup> Grey Owl's indifference to Frye's wilderness "incubus" is summed up in derisive aphorisms in his notebooks recording the sense of insecurity he observed around him: "Civilized man," he scribbled, "is afraid of everything, it appears."<sup>10</sup>

Under the direction of his mentor, J.C. Campbell, Grey Owl initially promoted both the national parks and his own career without these underlying tensions breaking into open conflict. With the publication of *Men of the Last Frontier* (1933), *Sajo and her Beaver People*, *Pilgrims of the Wild* (1935), and *Tales of an Empty Cabin* (1936), along with several films, and numerous magazine articles, his international reputation was established. Indeed, despite his oft-stated antipathy towards modernity, industrialization, and colonization, he ably mastered their means of dissemination. Through motion pictures, still photography, radio, books, and lectures, he exhibited a propensity for publicity and visual conspicuousness which became a prevalent theme in his own writing. His "autobiography," *Pilgrims of the Wild*, is the story of a "savage" coming by accident and through scarcity upon the modern means of dissemination, discovering that *representing* wilderness produced sustenance after the forests were exhausted of game.

An entry in his notebook from this period conveys Grey Owl's awareness of having literally given himself over to modern means of dissemination, and the justification for it. "Do not shake hands with me," he wrote, "shake hands with beaver. I am screen on which picture shows & proud to be that. Not a trainer. Not really produced anything. Privileges Brother of Wild very great."<sup>11</sup> By "going native" he had situated himself and his text at the epicentre of a disturbance that the Group of Seven had attempted to paint over: the capitulation of "wilderness" and aboriginal presence to the discourses of modernity:

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Grey Owl, *Men of the Last Frontier*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968).

<sup>10</sup> NAC MG 30, D 147, Vol. 1, Grey Owl, Notebooks, n.d. approx. 1927-38.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

progress, settlement, development, resource extraction, and economic growth. Such a passionate defense of the wilderness, uttered by such a startlingly complete embodiment of the Indian stereotype, shot Grey Owl to the top of the charts, so to speak, carried aloft by countercurrents of doubt already circulating within the project of modernity. Yet his performance did not conform to the familiar Romantic critique of "dark, Satanic mills" defiling the landscape. It was laced with his imperfect but quite serious engagement with actual aboriginality and the unassimilable, "absent presence" discussed in the previous chapters.

As Grey Owl elaborated a "not altogether Indian story . . . in an Indian Background," his attitude towards the state exhibited decreasing compliance. Grey Owl was no *éminence grise* but rather a spectacular and unpredictable civil servant who introduced "occult instability," to use Frantz Fanon's phrase, by blending Indian stereotypes with the wilderness park in an unnerving parody of national identity and landscape.<sup>12</sup> The greater his international reputation became the more confidently he strode into the Group of Seven wilderness *topos* to confront the Government's attitude towards indigenous peoples and their subaltern status in the Dominion.

In the autobiography he ruminated on his marginal status vis-à-vis the dominant culture, its up-to-date fashions, and its view of aboriginals as the "unchosen":

I love the simpler things of life; homely useless dogs, cheap cigars, clothes and music that are a little out of date, and men that sometimes forget to remember that they are God's greatest feat of creation . . . And as to the imputation, made a trifle scornfully, that I must be possessed of some high form of erudition to have accomplished anything, that I somehow must be cheating, that I was, in fact, stepping rather out of my class as one of the unchosen,—Emerson was again good enough to come to my rescue with a passage, taken from his "Self-Reliance":

"They cannot imagine how you aliens have any right to see. 'It must be somehow that you stole the light from us.' They do not yet perceive that light, unsystematic, indomitable, will break into any cabin, even into theirs."

In other words, I was having the time of my life.<sup>13</sup>

Grey Owl's seizing hold of time, *the time of his life*, was not what his superiors at the Department of the Interior had in mind, when, after accepting Campbell's offer Grey Owl had moved with his two beavers first to Riding Mountain National Park, and then finally to Prince Albert Park in north-central Saskatchewan. He cited this passage from Emerson in

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<sup>12</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 153. The term is drawn from Frantz Fanon's "On National Culture." Bhabha eschews "reified forms of realism that attempt to hark back to a *true* national past [in] continuist national narratives [which] miss the 'zone of occult instability where the people dwell.'"

<sup>13</sup> Grey Owl, *Pilgrims*, 255.

1933 at Beaver Lodge, a dwelling part cabin, part beaver lodge, which was built for him in the heart of Prince Albert Park. In the quotation, as in much of Grey Owl's own writing, there is an ambivalence in the address such that the narrative voice is positioned in between the supposedly 'authentic' Indian personality and the "we" of a national narrator. "They cannot imagine" an alien point of view, Emerson says from his position as interpreter, and Grey Owl similarly introduced himself as an *interpreter*, or a translator, in the sense of Walter Benjamin's essay on translation, a median figure, not quite alien, not quite the same.<sup>14</sup>

With his quirky Beaver Lodge Grey Owl opened up a new space within the coded space of the wilderness park. As a building, it was designed for "dwelling" rather than "occupation." The cabin was quite literally built for cohabitation of humans and wild beavers, an architecture either radically new or perhaps a contemporary shadow of "pre-history." The end of the small structure jutted into the lake where it opened into the beaver dam piled up against it. It is from this in-between zone that Grey Owl began to articulate an "aboriginal" vision of cultural nationalism that resisted the Group of Seven's wilderness *topos*, and challenged their principle that the *absence* of human habitation is the defining characteristic of "wilderness."

### Official Consciousness

To restore the Grey Owl legend with a narrative authority appropriate to his hybrid cultural project I have tracked his insemination of an "unofficial chronotope" into the Parks bureaucracy. Archie Belaney arrived as a runaway youth on the hither side of the "frontier" not as a colonist, but as an immigrant, and if he was accepted by those who dwelt there perhaps it was because he came to learn, rather than to instruct anyone. In the years before and after the First World War this wilderness still lay beyond the realm of "official consciousness," its aerial mappings, and the resource development that brought with it increasing surveillance.<sup>15</sup> This was not so much the 'consciousness of officials' as a widely shared national consensus in which the nation-state projected its homogenous simultaneity in time and space. Maurice Charland has written that "because the state itself is the basis of a Canadian commonality, *its national consciousness would be the product of a*

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<sup>14</sup> Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 80.

<sup>15</sup> H.V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines and Hydro-electro Power in Ontario, 1849-1941* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1974).

*bureaucratic cultural apparatus.*"<sup>16</sup> Until his years of fame, Grey Owl stayed on the hither side of that frontier.

Once in the government's employ, Grey Owl both served and subverted the neat equation of nationality and nationalism, and the dual regime of landscape perception. As the sensate field of a new regime of information, the "graticular" mode of landscape perception ushered in remote sensing on an unprecedented scale. This was not a matter of choice, but essential to Canada's emerging nationality. At the same time, the romantic landscape *topos* established criteria of visibility that, through cultural nationalism, cancelled out the bureaucratic and technocratic signature on the landscape. Grey Owl abhorred the former developments but became an icon of government publicity in the latter, freely promoting the same anthropomorphism with the beavers that the Group of Seven wrought with the jack pine. All was well with him until he attacked the silent encroachment of technocracy. At that point, he began to work a separation between nationalism and nationality that was unacceptable to his government supervisors.

Ernest Renan argued in his 1882 address "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?", that state cultural apparatuses be consecrated with the ongoing task of forging a patriotic national soul. Renan rejected as myth any pure ethnic origins of nations, and as arbitrary any strict national territorial demarcations. He argued instead that a "nation is a soul, a spiritual principle" sustained by binding mechanisms that derive national consensus from collective memory:

Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form.<sup>17</sup>

Renan's formulation installed synchronic memory, the past held like a great inhalation of breath, and diachronic will, the people breathing out the moment of their 'becoming', as the generative dialectic for these binding effects. He cited the importance of national hymns, the reiteration of "present-day consent" to live together in a shared national history, and of the nation-state as a "daily plebiscite." In short, Renan, like Lord Acton, in his essay "On Nationality", rejected the proposition that true nations are the expression of a single *ethnie*, but rather they were the products of liberal civility that had subsumed ethnic plurality, sharing a "rich legacy of memories" propagated by *the state apparatus itself*.

<sup>16</sup> Maurice Charland, "Technological Nationalism," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 10:1-2 (1986), my emphasis.

<sup>17</sup> Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?", trans. Martin Thom, in Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London, Routledge, 1992), 19.

Cultural nationalism was directed to vesting the state with its aspect of soulful personality. Benedict Anderson has noted that such rituals are characterized not by memory per se, but rather by the citizen's *remembering-to-forget* all that which is unbinding, unassimilable, incommensurable, and lies outside the national historical memory.<sup>18</sup>

Renan's stress on a reiterated *consent*—a specific consent by which the citizen's spatio-temporal relation to the national history is held as part of a social contract—is democratic-sounding in its vague reaffirmation of volunteeristic citizenship. Yet there is also an anxiety in its prescriptive daily dosage, an anxiety which I will argue in Part III attended the cycles of surveillance and exclusion that defined and sustained the "large-scale solidarity" that Renan argued is a nation. Renan's assertion that such "solidarity, constituted by . . . the sacrifices that one has made and of those that one is prepared to make in the future" is ambiguous, if we consider the equivocal meanings of "sacrifice". There well may be a nationalistic commitment to self-sacrifice, but the cohesion of nation states has also been achieved by means of outright sacrifice, by scapegoating, expulsions, incarcerations, silencing, and dispossession.

In effect, Renan asked his listeners to filiate themselves to the state only in the scenic, romantic mode while understanding implicitly that the logic of nationality requires much else that has to remain unseen. With Grey Owl, the government suddenly had a spokesman who intended to break these relations at the point of its maximum vulnerability, its colonial past and its persisting culture of occupation.

### **An Ill Bird**

The response of the Parks officials to Grey Owl's activities in the years leading up to his death of exhaustion and pneumonia in April, 1938, reveals a fault line in cultural nationalism. The "fine grain" of these records outline how official cultural nationalism suppressed Grey Owl's "failed narrative" and an alternative chronotope it encoded. On April 25th, 1936, James Harkin, Controller of National Parks, wrote of Grey Owl to Roy Gibson, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Interior regarding Grey Owl's drunken spree in Ottawa following his introduction to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, and Minister of the Interior, Thomas Crerar:

I am sorry to hear that Grey Owl has been indulging too freely in liquor. As a matter of fact, with so much Indian blood in his veins I suppose it is inevitable that from time to time he will break out in this connection. We ourselves are quite annoyed. Sometimes we feel that it would be just as well if we did wash our hands of him, though I do feel there is quite a field for additional publicity for us in connection

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<sup>18</sup> See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, chapter eleven, "Memory and Forgetting."

with him. With the great success he had on his recent winter lecture tour in England, he has obviously become more difficult to handle and I fear that it will be only a matter of time until we will have to definitely decide upon a break with him.<sup>19</sup>

Harkin continued that he was "disturbed" and "disappointed" by Grey Owl's conduct and recommended that he be disciplined, even though his "spreeing" had not occurred during his seasonal period of employment. Deputy Minister Gibson concurred, advising Harkin that Grey Owl must be put on notice that "if he conducts himself in a manner which will reflect adversely on the Department, we cannot continue his employment."

Grey Owl continued to test their patience. His most spectacular interventions occurred after his second tour through England in 1937 when he traveled across Canada presenting his lecture performance and granting interviews. He tested out increasingly radical views regarding Canadian nationalism and cultural rights for aboriginal peoples, exciting local controversy as he went along. The 'lectures' were in effect dramatic multimedia performances commencing with recorded music and a darkened stage. The tall, gaunt figure in Indian dress appeared bathed in a stark spotlight. The performances were punctuated by film excerpts that brought the wildlife and the wilderness around Beaver Lodge into magical proximity. He appealed to a wide audience, but especially children, whom he sometimes addressed over the heads of their adult companions.

During a visit to Ottawa, the *Ottawa Citizen* reprinted an article in which he wrote of his "great ambition" for Canada's Indian peoples. He sought

to persuade the people of Canada that the rightful and effective place of the Indian is as the supervisor and custodian of the wilderness itself. I mean that the Indian should be re-trained to perform those functions for which his racial history and characteristics have fitted him.<sup>20</sup>

In Regina, Grey Owl's "vision for Canada" was reported by the *Leader Post*. "I want Canada for the Canadians," he said. "I am engaged in the thankless task of selling Canada to the Canadians." Thankless because, as he discovered, Euro-Canadians were less than impressed with his disdain for the British Empire and his vision of aboriginal citizenship. Remarks such as these were noted with increasing acerbity by Parks officials in Ottawa, where the clippings were circulated for comment:

Grey Owl's dreams and ambitions are not for his loved animals and woods alone but also for the Indian race. "There are 247,000 Indians in Canada today the object of

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<sup>19</sup> NAC RG 32, vol. 18, file "Archie Bellaney," 25 April 1936, J. Harkin to R. Gibson.

<sup>20</sup> NAC RG 84, vol. 1770, file PA 272-NC, "A. Bellaney" [sic].

charity and a burden on the Dominion . . . Who is better qualified to take care of [Canada's natural resources] than the Indian. Yet these resources are taken care of in a poor way by political appointees."<sup>21</sup>

In addition to an active role for native peoples as custodians of natural resources he also argued for their increased political representation. Aboriginal Canadians would not become enfranchised for another quarter century, but he lent the matter a sense of urgency:

"I would like to see an Indian member of Parliament," continued Grey Owl. "I told Mackenzie King this. He told me that we did have one. But he is from a white constituency."

He stressed that Canada had to break its associations with the British Empire in order to achieve unity. This process had to begin internally, he said, with a recognition of aboriginal presence in the landscape. He had no doubt that it was worth fighting for such a vision, and he had practical steps in mind. "There is something else I want," he told the *Citizen* reporter, "A flag for Canada. Canada is the only nation in the world without a flag."

"What good would it do for Canada to have a flag?" the reporter asked. "Do you see this?" asked Grey Owl, lifting one of his long black braids. "This is a symbol that I am Indian. The flag would be a symbol of unity. It would make Canada into a nation. What are we running now? Is it nine provinces in one country or is it nine hostile countries?"<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, the national flag was to represent a new pact with nature. With teasing irony lurking just beneath his practiced gaunt frown, Grey Owl reminded the reporter that the "fundamentals of human nature require nature." Having "spent all his life in the wilderness," he would now "bring nature to civilization," adding, with insouciance, "[t]ake an Indian and put him in civilization and he dies. Take a white man from civilization and put him in the wilderness and he lives quite as well."

When he spoke to the Provencher Society in Quebec City in early March, 1938, Grey Owl scandalized his audience and his superiors when he stalked off the stage during the playing of "God Save the King" and afterwards called for the severing of Canada's Imperial tie with Britain, reiterating his appeal for a distinct Canadian nation with its own anthem, and a flag whose heraldry included "two beavers on the left and nine maple leaves on the right."

The Quebec *Chronicle Telegraph's* banner editorial the next day, entitled "Grey Owl an 'Ill Bird,'" conveyed the editor's outrage at these remarks:

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

It is a tremendous pity that a man so generously publicized as the famous Grey Owl, a man who gains his audiences by appearing under the auspices of respected local organizations such as the Provencher Society in this city, should . . . take advantage of his position on the platform to indulge in anti-British propaganda; sneering at the Union Jack and treating the National Anthem with contempt in the presence of his Majesty's representative.

. . . [T]here is no excuse for his singular conduct in Quebec: rather does it make matters worse, for parents sent their children to hear him . . . and are justly indignant over the attempts to undermine the British loyalties of these youngsters. Surely the Dominion Government which employs him in its service cannot approve of such unpatriotic behaviour?

The outrage was directed not only against Grey Owl but towards the authorities who "generously" permitted him to *speak* in the first instance. Under the official auspices of the Provencher Society and the Dominion Government, it was asked, how was it that these utterances by an aboriginal were possible at all? That 'silencing' of aboriginal voices was the issue was made clear at the close of the editorial, which defined the boundary of what was expected and permissible within cultural nationalist discourse at the time:

Grey Owl should either limit himself to talking about wildlife, as subject that he knows something of, or else return as speedily as possible to the wilderness for which he is best-fitted and where his anti-British spleen may be vented harmlessly in the great outdoors.<sup>23</sup>

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The Dominion government strongly disapproved of this turn in Grey Owl's activities. The Department's Publicity Director, Robert J.C. Stead, who had replaced Grey Owl's sympathetic chief, J.C. Campbell, in 1936, fielded the public complaints regarding these "performances," which touched the nerve of Canada's dubious status between colony and nation. Grey Owl's heady policy cocktail injudiciously mixed Canadian nationalism and the citizenship status of aboriginal peoples with the charged question of a distinct anthem and flag. The Quebec editorialist fumed that "an irresponsible performance such as that of Grey Owl, "can only do immense harm to the very cause of endowing Canada with a national flag":

There are staunch Canadians who associate this movement with Anti-British spirit . . . . The Union Jack, please God, will always be displayed with pride and affection in Canada as the banner of the British Commonwealth and will form a conspicuous part of the design of any distinctive national flag that this dominion may adopt.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

This was a view shared by Robert Stead, to whom Grey Owl had to answer for the controversy arising from his lectures. A few years older than Grey Owl, Stead was also an author whose work in the civil service financed his writing ambitions. The writings of both men were concerned directly or indirectly with Canada's national development--but from opposite sides of the frontier.

Robert Stead had met with considerable success before, during, and after the Great War with books of poetry and novels that celebrated the achievements of the British Empire. *The Empire Builders and other Poems* (1908), with its optimistic, patriotic tone, caught the "surge of national pride coupled with Imperial fervour" that launched "Canada's Century." Yet, despite his appeal for those who "read little" but appreciated frontier romances "mixed with uplifting morality [and] an emphasis on the ideals of progress and Christian manliness," Stead's popularity waned during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>25</sup>

After he joined the publicity section of Department of the Interior in 1919 his creative writing attenuated as he concentrated his writerly activities on the professional organization of Canadian writers. He had founded the Ottawa branch of the Canadian Authors Association and became its national president in 1923.<sup>26</sup> He believed, as he wrote in 1930, that "the nation's traditions become idealized in its literature, and it is that idealization which holds the country together." In *The Homesteaders* (1916), his most popular novel, Stead stressed the importance of pioneer life, its heroic and ideal qualities, as part of a unifying national tradition.<sup>27</sup> With *Wheat*, he celebrated the "opening up" of the West. He was thus considered an exemplary literary citizen by comparison to the wayward Grey Owl, who nonetheless rapidly outstripped his superior in both sales and popularity, even breaking into the international book market. "Wheat," Grey Owl wrote in his notebook, "is a drug on the market, a fetish . . . . Once cashed the proceeds disappear into thin air. Perhaps finance a war." Stead reluctantly endorsed Canada's emergence from the Empire. The transition from colony to nation is not only a theme in his poetry and fiction, it permeates the temporal structure of his personal diaries. These two terse, tightly-worded, typed manuscripts held in small leather binders, whose entries begin in 1919 when he began

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<sup>25</sup> Susan Wood Glicksohn, introduction to Robert Stead, *The Homesteaders* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973): vii-xxiv.

<sup>26</sup> Lyn Harrington, *Syllables of Recorded Time: The Story of the Canadian Authors Association, 1921-81* (Toronto: Simon & Pierre, 1981), 88-90. Stead was the CAA's second national president but he cut short his term in office, telling the Association: "It might not be prudent for a civil servant to hold this position in view of [the CAA's proposed] denunciation of the Canadian Government."

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.



Fig. 31. Robert Stead, Canadian Authors' Association, Quebec City, 1924. (Stead, NAC PA 196228.)

working for the Department of Immigration and Colonization and end some months before his death in 1959, are indicative of the contrast between Stead and Grey Owl. Stead considered his diaries the chronicle of his life, important to the extent that he retyped all the entries from the first two decades to match the style of the later volume. The contents of the diaries record the chronology of Stead's after-dinner speeches, his social and professional engagements, and the births, deaths, and illnesses of his family and friends. A third, handwritten diary records family vacations and his travels on business. The diaries fix the historical sequence of Stead's busy life in relation to the national chronotope, organizing and indexing his lived subjectivity in relation to the emerging nation.<sup>28</sup>

Grey Owl's notebooks, in contrast, contain no temporal references whatsoever and reflect what might be described as a "non-sequential lived subjectivity" of a man to whom the national chronotope and its official cultural nationalism were never prominent. The undated assortment of pocket-sized books contain erratic penciled sketches, maps, prose fragments, jokes, caustic commentaries, puny sums and provisions lists. Yet, for all the apparent shakiness of his arrangements, his humorous or irritated asides, Grey Owl rarely strayed from his project.

Stead, like his superiors Frank Williamson and Roy Gibson, was a club-man, a lawn bowler, and, along with Harkin and Minister Crerar, a resident of Ottawa's middle class residential area known as 'the Glebe'. Even a brief prosopography of these officials in the Ministry of the Interior locates them in a compact urban geography of homes, offices, and sports and service clubs.<sup>29</sup> The space-time routines of these Ottawa bureaucrats set the model limits of Canadian sensibility, but offered an alien environment for the carnivalesque Grey Owl,

<sup>28</sup> Stead's only diary reference to Grey Owl is on May 7th, 1937: "received visit from Grey Owl and wife )?" This was Stead's introduction to 'Silver Moon', Grey Owl's last companion. Another entry records Stead being reprimanded for promoting his own writing career on government time; later he was banned from publishing at all.

whose unannounced appearance in buckskin on a residential street in the Glebe or on the Royal Ottawa golf course would have excited uneasy interest, if not arrest.

Juxtaposing Stead's novel *The Homesteaders* with Grey Owl's *Pilgrims of the Wild* presages the clash of official Ottawa with Grey Owl's frontier consciousness. In the former novel Stead follows the extension of policing into the frontier zone, the application of law, order, and progress by Christian pioneers to a lawless wilderness. The homesteaders' identity is owed to the Empire that stands behind them and whose authority is "presenced" through them at its geographic limits. *Pilgrims of the Wild*, on the contrary, is an account of Grey Owl's *escape* from the police, and a polemic *against* the process of settlement and civilization which Grey Owl believed had ruined the



Fig. 32. Grey Owl, on Lake Ajawaan, 1936 (OPA.)

wilderness and displaced its native peoples. Interspersed in the playful accounts of his life with beavers lies Grey Owl's sustained attack on the pioneering settler as the basis of a unifying national tradition, and his plea for a Canadian nation which comprehended aboriginal peoples in the richness of their association with the wilderness. The two writers came at the same frontier from opposite sides. It is no surprise that Stead gave Grey Owl a cool reception.

On March 9th, 1938, as a result of the scandal surrounding Grey Owl's performance in Quebec, Stead wrote to Comptroller Williamson, under the heading "Criticism of Grey Owl's Lectures:"

Grey Owl called me on Monday, and I brought to his attention the criticisms of his recent address in Quebec City contained in the attached clippings from the Quebec Chronicle Telegraph of March 5th. The clippings charge him with anti-British propaganda, with sneering at the Union Jack, and treating the national anthem with contempt.<sup>30</sup>

With only the press clippings and written complaints to refer to, Stead wrote that he was "unable to challenge" Grey Owl's version of the events, although he did castigate Grey

<sup>29</sup> See entries for Robert Stead, Frank Williamson, James Harkin, Thomas Crerar in *Who's Who in Canada 1935-38*, and Ottawa City Directories for the same years.

<sup>30</sup> NAC RG 84, Vol. 1770, File PA 272-NC, 'A. Bellaney'. March 9th, 1938, R. Stead to F. Williamson.

Owl after he admitted to walking off the stage during the playing of the anthem. "I pointed out," Stead reported:

that this was an indiscreet act for a person in his position and that it reflected upon the department because of his association with National Parks. He seemed considerably disturbed over that angle of it, returning several times to the question whether we were satisfied with the work he was doing to which I plead inability to give a definite answer, as I had not heard any of his addresses.<sup>31</sup>



Fig. 33. Robert Stead, ca. 1946.  
(NAC PA 196230.)

If Grey Owl failed to be more sensible in the future Stead continued, "some form of discipline may have to be applied" since even as a part-time employee "the public mind will hold us at least partially responsible for his utterances." The problem the Bureau faced, however, was that, "with [Grey Owl's] very large following . . . he could do great injury to the esteem in which the Parks Bureau is held by the general public." Stead concluded that "it is better to maintain some control over Grey Owl as a result of part-time employment than to have no control over him at all."

With Stead's report attached, Comptroller Williamson wrote to Deputy Minister Gibson that:

Undoubtedly Grey Owl is a hard man to handle but we had a very frank talk with him here and he now understands that so long as he is connected with the Department he will have to conduct himself in a manner becoming a civil servant, even though his engagement is seasonal.<sup>32</sup>

Marginal comments on memoranda between Comptroller Frank Williamson and Robert Stead indicate that the two also discussed the Grey Owl situation privately when Stead was invited to visit Williamson's office "on the third floor." Williamson had already subtly indicated his distaste for Grey Owl in an earlier memorandum to the Deputy Minister, writing that Grey Owl "undoubtedly makes capital of his racial characteristics" and that "[t]here is no doubt in my mind the publishers and Grey Owl obtain perhaps 90% of the benefits and the Parks 10% and that, therefore, Grey Owl is of some value in respect to our service."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> NAC RG 32, vol. 18, "Bellaney," 29 March 1938, F. Williamson to R. Gibson.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., vol. 1770, file PA 272-NC, 25 January 1938, F. Williamson to R. Gibson.

Even lacking the content of verbal exchanges among the officials the anxiety Grey Owl produced in Ottawa is evident enough in the extant memoranda. His insubordinate behaviour was not sufficient cause for dismissal but neither was he reliable as an official spokesman of the Department. In written departmental communications Stead maintained his bureaucratic composure, but in a letter after Grey Owl's death he revealed the extent to which his subordinate's activities had disturbed the normally imperturbable officials in the Department of the Interior.

Replying to nature writer M.U. 'Mike' Bates regarding a proposed collaboration in exploiting Grey Owl's international reputation for tourist promotions, Stead wrote, on January 11th, 1945, almost seven years after Grey Owl's death:

As to having Grey Owl in national parks publicity, that is another story. We do continue to make use of him in our films . . . . It would be somewhat different, however, to feature Grey Owl in our national parks literature . . . . But coming down to cases, Grey Owl . . . had not only his share of the ordinary weaknesses of the flesh but was several times a bigamist, and also an impostor of unlimited presumption. He had literary ability and showmanship of a high order, but these hardly write off his offence in hoaxing not only the public and the government but the highest personages in the Empire. In that respect he violated every canon of good behaviour and placed himself in a position where it was quite impossible that he should be featured in govern-[ment publications].<sup>34</sup>

Stead's mask of bureaucratic discretion fell askew as he recalled Grey Owl's violation of "every canon of good behaviour" and his willful mockery of the British Empire. Most seriously, Grey Owl had played with official assumptions about the cultural occupation of territory, destabilizing the Parks Branch's model of 'uninhabited' wilderness landscape.

If *Pilgrims of the Wild* cheerfully celebrated marginals on the wrong side of the frontier such as a cockney Indian, a midget animal trainer, and transients whose malady of "itchy feet . . . could only be alleviated by soothing contact of long stretches of railroad ties, applied at regular intervals," the author of *The Homesteaders* peopled the governmentalized side of the same boundary with those who shared unreservedly in the integrating authority of national government. An incident in Stead's novel illustrates the point. A young RCMP officer confronts an illegally armed Montana outlaw in a saloon on the Canadian frontier. The officer is cool, detached, and makes no attempt "to seize him, nor shout at him, nor menace him in any way, yet somewhere in his manner was a sense of irresistible power." He may appear to be a lone officer, allows the policeman, but he represents the Canadian state's, and indeed the British Empire's, capacity to exert as much force as necessary to track down

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Jan. 11th, 1945, R. Stead to M.U. "Mike" Bates. Page 2 is missing from the file.

and subdue any outlaw who dared challenge its authority. The American outlaw is thus introduced by Stead to Canadians' love for law and order, British-style.

"Since the lock-up is "a beastly place," the policeman tells the outlaw, "I think I'll let you sleep here [in the hotel], on your promise to appear in court" in the morning. The hardened law-breaker of twenty years surrendered his weapon, and the following morning he was surprised to find that the policeman had paid for his room:

It was the first time in a long experience that he found that law could be rigorous and yet absolutely just. It upset his whole crude philosophy of his relation to society and the State, and stretched before him the easy road to citizenship.<sup>35</sup>

This is the paradox of authority, that it operates through apparently 'powerless' officials whose neutral demeanor symbolizes the *capacity* of the state to exert force. As Slavoj Žižek writes:

When authority is backed up by an immediate physical compulsion, what we are dealing with is not authority proper (i.e. symbolic authority), but simply an agency of brute force: authority proper is at its most radical level always *powerless*, it is a certain "call" which cannot effectively force us into anything," and yet, by a kind of inner compulsion, we feel obliged to follow it unconditionally.<sup>36</sup>

Grey Owl's story troubles this capacity precisely because it subverts the shared *symbolic* order that authority requires in order to identify and integrate at its margins. For the subject to "feel obliged" the symbolic order must function within a *shared consciousness* of time and space. Unlike Stead, Grey Owl could not be assimilated to this consciousness because his masquerade neither accepted nor refused the 'call' of authority in a recognizable way, nor did it accept the principle of its time-space geography, the national chronotope.

When Grey Owl died on April 13th, 1938, his masquerade was already playing on borrowed time since the crucial information regarding his English identity was withheld only by a sense of bemused care amongst the denizens of the frontier. Indeed, he had made no great effort to hide his English origins amongst his friends in Temagami and Biscotasing. As I sit in the National Archives in Ottawa reading the Department's hundreds

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<sup>35</sup> Stead, *Homesteaders*, 188-190; NAC, Stead diary: his government service was no "easy road." As Parks Controller, J. Smart renewed the ban on Stead's extracurricular writing, and it all ended in 1946 with a frosty retirement party, after which Stead went to Sparks St. to have his initials embossed on the leather suitcase he was given.

<sup>36</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 94.

of press clippings related to Grey Owl's death, many initialed by Robert Stead and Frank Williamson, I wonder what these officials made of the crisis as it unfolded: the peculiar and



Fig. 34. Grey Owl, Detail of J. Karsh portrait, 1936. (NAC.)

numerous claims to knowing the "true" origins of Grey Owl, including a group of Oxford University dons certain he was their brilliant, long-lost student, and native communities in both Hudson's Bay and St. Boniface who maintained he was truly an Indian born into their bands. Or of Grey Owl's own sly sense of humour, telling reporters that it was with the royal family that he "felt most at home among white people . . . they are a group of real, simple people," or his laughter, after talking his way through

suspicious immigration authorities in New York, telling reporters that, as an Indian, "I was the only *real* American on that ship!"<sup>37</sup>

In particular, the circumstances of Grey Owl's death permitted a chorus of voices from the frontier to be heard in the nation's press, utterances which did not reflect the forced consensus of the national chronotope. "True to frontier custom," one account began, "his nationality was never definitely established in Biscoe, where . . . a man was accepted for what he was; not what he had been."<sup>38</sup> When his first wife was shown his photograph by a reporter she said, "That's him, sure . . . he hasn't changed much." Asked to ascertain the exact date of their marriage, Mrs. Belaney replied "'[t]here were big figures on the paper,' alluding to an alleged marriage license, and added, 'it was after the raspberries.'"

Pressed for more detail . . . Mrs. Belaney said she did not notice much "because I am so happy to get that man." She had explicit faith in Belaney and because of the ceremony being regular, . . . she didn't have reason to believe it wasn't entirely in order.<sup>39</sup>

Her marriage to a white man had left her ineligible for grants from the Indian Department, she told the reporter. Collapsing tenses, she told the *Nugget's* reporter, "I am have a hard life."

<sup>37</sup> *Toronto Daily Star*, April 16th, 1938.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *North Bay Nugget*, 18 April 1938.

After being abandoned by Grey Owl, Marie Belaney had faithfully waited for him just outside the perimeter of "official consciousness," unwilling to betray him to it. "They were always after me to tell who Grey Owl really was," she said, "I nearly gave in and told who he was. Just a week ago I went to Halleybury to see what could be done, but I turned back when I was near the courthouse."

The postscript to Grey Owl's career in the civil service derives from the effect of his absence, so carefully foreshadowed in books such as *Tales of an Empty Cabin*. The powerful image of the "empty cabin," his Beaver Lodge in Prince Albert Park, drew fan letters from all over the world pleading with the Parks Bureau to com-



Fig. 35. Grey Owl at Beaver Lodge, detail. (NAC.)

memorate Grey Owl and to continue his legacy. There was little sympathy amongst the officials for such "sentimentality," and although Grey Owl was buried at Beaver Lodge, his widow Silver Moon was forced to leave and no effort was made to maintain the site or monitor the beaver Grey Owl had tamed. J.A. Wood, the Park Superintendent who had liked Grey Owl, and who publicly stood up for his reputation after his death was transferred to another park.

In the months before Grey Owl's death, Deputy Minister Roy Gibson had already initiated inquiries about replacing Grey Owl, should he become "unavailable." In November, 1937, he had written:

We do not know how long Grey Owl will be available in the future but he has a certain publicity value so long as he behaves himself . . . It is my hope that we may be able to develop some young Indians of good character to undertake work of this nature in National Parks.<sup>40</sup>

In various memoranda Gibson pressed for this plan in spite of the reluctance of his senior officials, wondering if "there would be a chance for a real Indian if he were selected carefully." By the summer of 1939, after a Dutch academic reported the dilapidated state of Beaver Lodge, Gibson noted the public's "intense interest" in Beaver Lodge and tartly reminded Williamson that if he had not already discussed the subject "with Mr. Hoey of the Indian Affairs Branch . . . it would be well to look into it."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> NAC RG 32, C2, vol. 18, 'Archie Bellaney'. March 29th, R. Gibson to Pratt.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., R. Gibson to F. Williamson, 12 July 1939.

Williamson, goaded by Gibson into action, forwarded Gibson's memo to the new Superintendent of Prince Albert Park, Herbert Knight, for his opinion, adding disingenuously that "we were doubtful whether the interest in Grey Owl's cabin would continue after his death."<sup>42</sup> Knight, in his reply, took Williamson's cue:

In regard to the suggestion of keeping green the memory of Grey Owl by . . . keeping the cabin in same condition . . . this would result in heavy expenditure . . . in order to satisfy sentimentalists . . . . An Indian has been suggested, who, undoubtedly, would appeal to the public but, if he happened to prove a success, one must be prepared for him to be lionized . . . to the same extent as Grey Owl . . . with the same situation arising at his demise . . . . If the Parks are to become places where . . . wildlife respond to man's commands, I consider we are breaking away from the original intention, [setting] a dangerous precedent for the sake of publicity . . . . I am of the opinion that public interest in Grey Owl's work will soon be forgotten.<sup>43</sup>

Williamson added, for the Deputy Minister, "I think it is time for the proponents to regain their sense of proportion. If respect for Grey Owl's wildlife educational work is desired, I feel we could best serve this by appointing a nature guide to show visitors what the Park has to offer in its natural state."<sup>44</sup>

For a time, Deputy Minister Gibson was unmoved. He clung to the idea planted by Grey Owl that an aboriginal presence in the National Parks was not inconsistent with respecting the parks' "natural state"; that, logically, the *absence* of humans could be viewed as "unnatural." In face of Williamson's recalcitrance he contacted the Department of Indian Affairs directly and then instructed Williamson to ascertain from Superintendent Knight if two Indian boys recommended by the Principal of the Qu'Appelle Residential School in Lebret, Saskatchewan, "could be given sufficient nature training to assist in carrying on the Grey Owl legend at Prince Albert National Park."<sup>45</sup>

Here the narrative falters. Mysteriously, perhaps because impending mobilization for war shunted the question aside, Gibson suddenly conceded the point, concurring that "there is really no necessity for perpetuating the work of Grey Owl" after all. Victorious, Williamson dryly communicated to Knight in Prince Albert that "no special consideration is

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., F. Williamson to H. Knight, 14 July 1939.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., H. Knight to F. Williamson, 22 July 1939.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., F. Williamson to R. Gibson. August 18th, 1939. Gibson responded immediately with a memo marked "Rush," advising Williamson to "please let me know if any progress has been made . . . ."

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., R. Gibson to F. Williamson, 12 July 1939, marginal note on letter from Harold McGill, Director, Indian Affairs Branch, 24 August 1939.

to be given to looking after this beaver" and so the matter was left for the following nine years.

In 1947 Gibson rekindled the question with the new Comptroller, J. Smart, inquiring whether "suitable personnel, possibly Indians, should . . . undertake work of a conservation nature . . ." Smart's reply not only held to his predecessor's line but finally pressed home the point that Grey Owl had contested so vociferously: that the wilderness was to be the domain of modern science and technology and not of native peoples:

I personally do not agree that we should pattern any conservation activities on . . . the late Archie Grey Owl. It is very important, I think, that we should get into the work of establishing a naturalist service . . . You are aware that Dr. R.E. Bird, at present employed in the Department of Agriculture as Officer-in-charge of the Dominion Entomological Laboratory, Brandon, has made application for such a position.<sup>46</sup>

Smart recommended that "we take steps to obtain the services of Dr. Bird . . . as Chief Naturalist" and at a salary several times over what Grey Owl had been paid.

Grey Owl's succession in Prince Albert Park by the 'expert' Bird with his Ph.D. indicates the way that the disciplinary discourse of wilderness had developed to the stage where the "interpretation" to be provided in the Parks was now fully isomorphic with the Government's institutional and cultural coordinates. The absence of Grey Owl from Beaver Lodge thus became symbolic of the general absence of native people from the role he sought for them. Such "unofficial" counter-narratives must always "fail" since their promise cannot be achieved without becoming assimilated to the "official" national narrative. It can only mark those frontiers where, as authority integrates the subject within official consciousness, we glimpse instances of human conduct that exceeded those limits.

### **Beaver Lodge: Aerial View**

Lake Ajawaan was first surveyed from the air in 1927, three years before the construction of Beaver Lodge. In fact, the lake is difficult to see in the photographs because the camera on the airplane was set for an "oblique" view, that is, for a horizon shot. Remarkably, the early aerial photography simulated the earlier pattern of ground observation when such oblique views were gathered from high prospects on hills or mountains. The gaze is intermediate, neither strictly scenic nor cartographic. Before the advent of vertically-

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., J. Smart to R. Gibson, 18 November 1947.



Fig. 36. Aerial survey photo, 1927, detail. Lake Ajawaan in foreground, future Beaver Lodge site identified by box at lower right. National Air Photo Library (NAPL) FA634013

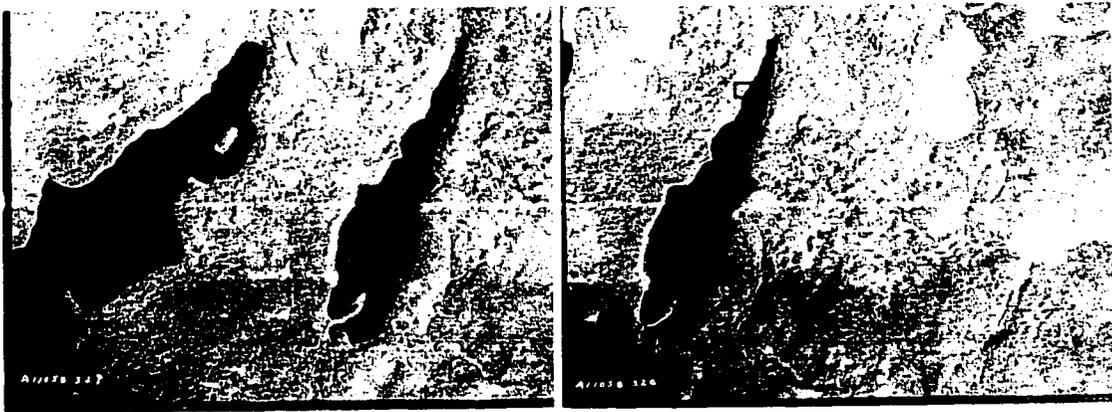
mounted aerial cameras, the aerial survey photos recorded what the aviator saw from the cockpit, and the photograph reproduced below shows how difficult it was to use such oblique views for cartographic purposes. On the other hand, the "scenic" conventions of the Group of Seven are disrupted when the point of observation is raised too high. Training the aerial observer to a directly vertical gaze involved more

than simply tipping the camera straight down. Where the "oblique" photographs were strictly *monocular*, that is, each image was meant to be viewed in isolation, the new vertical technique rehabilitated the nineteenth century stereoscope as the preferred means of viewing the terrain in paired images. The vertical photos were systematically taken with a sixty percent overlap so that they could be set side by side under a stereoscopic viewer, and thus seen with greater topographical relief.

What virtual observer is produced here? Through the two eyepieces my sight is split and redirected in opposite directions by two angled mirrors, creating intense cognitive confusion which will not abate until the two images are brought to exact alignment. Only then will stereoscopy enhance the topographical relief. The development of the stereoscope as a visual prosthetic in the 1830s, as Jonathan Crary has shown, derived from a series of discoveries in the physiology of human vision that shattered the objective unity of the classical observer. The "realism" provided by the stereoscope, Crary argues, in fact represented "a radical abstraction and reconstruction of optical experience" based on an emerging set of scientific knowledges and practices concerning human visual faculties.<sup>47</sup> Carrying through Benjamin's insight that early nineteenth century optical technologies

<sup>47</sup> Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1990), 8.

“subjected the human sensorium to a complex kind of training,” Crary traces the formation of a “modern observer” in the decades *prior* to the advent of photography and the abstraction of late-century painting.



Figs. 37 and 38. Aerial survey photos of lake Ajawaan (on right side), 1948. By this time Beaver Lodge had been abandoned for ten years. The site is indicated by the box near the head of the lake in the right hand image. (NAPL A-11058-326, 327.)

In the use of stereoscopy by the aerial survey, then, the common origins of the Group of Seven’s “observer” are reunited with the geographical mode of envisioning landscape. This is so even though, as Crary says, the stereoscope as a means of representation “shattered the *scenic* relationship between the view and object.”<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the abstraction of the observer imputed by these aerial photos is severe, for this observer must have eyes more than *half a kilometre apart*. Consider that the distance of parallax supplied by the human head measures less than three inches, yet when I peer through the stereoscope in the airphoto library on Booth Street in Ottawa, searching the western shoreline for Grey Owl’s cabin, I become a winged monster of unprecedented size, a cyborg whose eyes span hundreds of metres. The aerial view of Beaver Lodge is the binocular gaze of a terrifying machinic “incubus” capable of annihilating the mystery of an entire forest.

The title of Donald Smith’s admirable biography of Grey Owl, “From the Land of Shadows,” draws on Grey Owl’s evocation of wilderness as a place of shadow and refuge from modernity. It was Grey Owl’s paradox to attract a glare of publicity by retreating as far from the metropolis as he could. In one of his final stories, “Nemesis,” he played on the theme of being watched and tracked in a land bereft of shadows. Sitting by his campfire

<sup>48</sup> Jonathan Crary, “Techniques of the Observer,” *October* 45:3 (Summer 1988), 28. “No other form of representation in the nineteenth century had so conflated the real with the optical, an object with its image.”

he hears some unseen entity advancing, tuck, tuck, tuck, “almost as though the man carried a huge metronome, or that the creature itself were not a human being but a robot.”<sup>49</sup>

He pursues the creature/machine and it draws him to a “part of my hunting ground that I had never before set eyes on, a barren desolation of blowdown, burnt lands and black, impenetrable swamp.”(26) He is nonplussed: “How this section had escaped my observation . . . I could in no way account for. I was somewhat piqued to think that a stranger knew more of my own territory than I did myself.” He realizes that now it is tracking him:

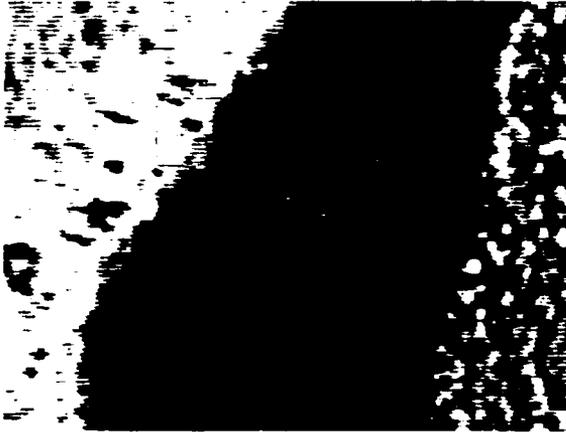


Fig. 39. Aerial survey photo, 1948, detail, with enhanced contrast. Roof of Beaver Lodge clearly visible inside red box.

Nearer it came, nearer and nearer, and still no one was visible; a slow measured advance, as immutable as the onward march of Time itself; tock, tock, tock; now no longer reminiscent of the strokes of the homely metronome, but more suggestive of the ticking of an infernal machine, stalking me, marking off the seconds till it should close with me and destroy me . . . . I was being hunted by some person or thing that could see without being seen, and could accurately forestall my every move. (27-28)

In a complete displacement or inversion of Frye’s incubus that was in fact repressed aboriginal presence,

this *machinic* pursuer prompts Grey Owl to suffer flashes “of the man-eating windego and the Loup Garou.” The nightmare ends when Grey Owl awakes from sleep in a hotel room, far from Beaver Lodge, and hears the tell-tale ticking of a clock.

The real life implications of aerial mapping and the relentless database-forming rise of nationality it represented were, indeed, his nemesis. Soon ‘Grey Owl’ would have no hope of crossing borders without a passport firmly identifying him as ‘Archibald Belaney’. The rapid assimilation of the parks to technocratic management would quickly dispense with any remaining tolerance for such an undisciplined employee. Furthermore, his activism had expanded to include the broad themes of the radical thirties: he attacked the exploitation of child labour, British colonialism and its class system. At the end of his second lecture tour to Britain, the Broadcast Censorship banned his farewell BBC broadcast to British children

<sup>49</sup> Grey Owl, “Nemesis,” *Tales of An Empty Cabin* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1989), 25.

in order to suppress his comments on the cruelty of fox hunting.<sup>50</sup> In the end, then, the principle of nationality and its stress on identification, surveillance, and the control of public information overtook his ambitious proposals for a truly postcolonial Canadian nationalism. It was only a matter of time before the radar of the emerging national security culture identified Grey Owl's "alien" qualities.

### Grey Ecology

Alongside the pollution of substances, Paul Virilio identifies speed, including the light-speed of electromagnetic technologies, as the polluter of distances, and announces "grey ecology" as the site for environmentalist action.<sup>51</sup> It is a remarkable feature of Grey Owl's sustained critique of modernity that it names the acceleration of communications and transportation precisely as obliterating possibilities for *dwelling* in a landscape. Indeed, his entire *oeuvre*, from beginning to end is about the tension between landscape and modernity, within which animals, humans and machines all play their parts. Of all machines, the automobile was the most lamentable. In his story, "The Tree," it is the agent of a complete change in the inhabitation of landscape, its paved routes entirely forgetful of the original intent of the lightly etched paths buried beneath their weight. From the high prospect where the ancient tree stands, the prairie has literally become a grid, and with great sureness Grey Owl retraces in just a few paragraphs its passage from wilderness to pastoral countryside, all in the span of one generation.

Grey Owl died still elaborating his own idiosyncratic style of observation that was neither European nor aboriginal. To get at what it was one must separate the romantic, scenic conventions he deployed in his books from other archival traces he left. This draws a fine line between the four Group of Seven lithographs decorating the walls of Beaver Lodge and his own often primal, chthonic prose descriptions of landscape.<sup>52</sup> Recall that this was a

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<sup>50</sup> Lovat Dickson, "Grey Owl's Farewell Address to British Children," 1936, National Library of Canada; Smith, *From the Land of Shadows*.

<sup>51</sup> Virilio, *Open Sky*, 59, coins the phrase from Paul Morand's 1937 observation: "Speed destroys colour: when a gyroscope is spinning fast everything goes grey."

<sup>52</sup> James Shortt, "A Structural and Furnishings History of the Grey Owl Cabin Site, Ajawaan Lake, Prince Albert National Park," (Ottawa: Parks Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs, Manuscript Report no. 264, 1978), 24-27. Shortt attributes all four lithographs to Group of Seven artists, if one includes Thomson's "West wind Pine." Shortt also lists forty-four books known to have existed in Beaver Lodge, including books on animal life and welfare, biography and travel literature, Indian life and customs, Theosophy and Christianity, and titles such as Kipling's *Jungle Book*, R.A.H. Spiers's *Round About the*

man who saw what Europe looked like as shell-shocked mud at Ypres. With Grey Owl one is reminded of Erwin Straus's comment that for landscape "to come alive again" one must "sacrifice, as far as possible, all temporal spatial and objective precision," indeed, cease to be a "historical" being altogether:

The night is mild and gentle for him who is taken by it; terrible, fearful, and ghostly for him who resists it and seeks to see it and comprehend it. Ghosts are the messengers of the landscape in geographical space.<sup>53</sup>

On close reading just for their landscape descriptions, Grey Owl's stories yield an intricately complex and atemporal wilderness moment whose being is not objective or historical; indeed, he stresses that it only barely registers even to the most sensitive human receptor. Night traveling is



Fig. 40. Landscape with beaver, n.d., photo: Grey Owl. (NAC PA 204455.)

one thing, but this particular moment of sensitivity occurs at daybreak. There is no point getting up early to experience this dawning, says Grey Owl, one must stay up all night to have senses keen enough to experience the pure indeterminacy of the transitional moment between night and day:

Ever greyer and greyer and more grey grew the landscape . . . . He who would probe deeply and intimately into the secrets of that hour and mystery that, like a half-world, hangs just within the realm of unreality, will not gain his ends by early rising. Better by far that he sleep not at all . . . . [N]umbed by slumber, [he] will lack something of keen alertness and sensitive perception. . . . sounds have more penetration and are audible at greater distances. . . . scents and odours are more pungent . . . proclaiming with certainty the presence of an enemy, or food . . . . No impression, however fleeting, escapes the perception of senses keyed to the hair-trigger delicacy . . . of this magic hour. [The forest floor has] a kind of pale translucence, as in some dim ocean cavern, where common objects loomed crouching, indistinct and shapeless, and the fronds of scattered clumps of undergrowth hung like queer aquatic-looking plants, in this green and liquid pool of murky light.<sup>54</sup>

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*Mitre at Oxford*, A.H. Blake's *London Cameras*, Ivor Brown's *The Heart of England*, and K.C. Greene's *The English Landscape*. (Shortt, 62-66).

<sup>53</sup> Straus, *Primary World of Senses*, 323.

<sup>54</sup> Grey Owl, "At Dawn", *Tales of an Empty Cabin*, 301.

Grey Owl's writings contain much cottage-country imagery consistent with his print of Tom Thomson's "West Wind Pine" hanging in Beaver Lodge. On one level, his prose conforms closely to the established landscape protocols, and no doubt vastly increased the marketability of his books. Nonetheless, one should not underestimate Grey Owl's ability to pursue ends not visible on the surface of his commercial success. This emerges forcefully from his own practice of landscape photography. Of the four hundred photos in the Grey Owl Collection held at the National Archives, almost all were shot by Grey Owl himself, and perhaps a quarter are pure landscapes. Some are consistent with Group of Seven wilderness codes, but many seem to indicate his quest for some enigmatic cipher encrypted in the fine detail of a lake surface, an ice crust, or in dense vegetation. Some even have the intense *aural* acuity one finds in his writing. The photos record a private search that he could not directly incorporate into his public visage.

The photos in his books were, with few exceptions, not drawn from his own collection. Grey Owl went to Ottawa to rifle the photo library of the Parks Branch for more 'perfect' wilderness *topoi*. One can imagine the managers' jealousy as he swept into their offices to select photographs. Betty Somerville, who chaperoned the heavy-drinking writer back from England in 1936, wrote in her diary:

[I] followed GO to Government Buildings, & had a hearty welcome and marvellous kindness from J.C. Campbell. He turned me loose in the photograph room with two charming secretary women. & had a glorious morning looking at photos and slides, & saw the slides being coloured. GO is evidently the hero of all the employees there and they follow him around in herds a twitter . . . We were both weighed - me 143 lbs in coat and all GO, 158 without his hat.<sup>55</sup>

Back at Beaver Lodge, Grey Owl sorted the photos he brought from Ottawa, tacked the chosen prints to a tree trunk and re-photographed safety copies with his own camera. Then he sent the prints on to his publishers. Even as he selected images that conformed to scenic idioms--images of a grander wilderness than he himself inhabited--he continued to shoot his own unpublishable landscapes. Further evidence of a "blurred" life? Perhaps; but he does convey the sense of a moving subject, out in the landscape, dreaming in broad daylight. Shooting from his canoe, he imaged wave motion in relation to the trees, and he saw fractals in the ice formations on the shore.

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<sup>55</sup> NAC Grey Owl Papers, Betty Somerville's diary, 25 February 1936. Somerville noted: "GO very tickled to hear of a man who read a notice, 'Drink Canada Dry,' so he tried!"

## Sparing

Grey Owl's landscape photography has passed unremarked in the various accounts of his life and writings, but it is crucial to my reading of his interdisciplinary cultural performance. Even as the geographic mode of perceiving the national territory obliterated the privacy of his wilderness refuge, Grey Owl pursued the 'scenic' mode of landscape perception into an astonishing regard of wilderness, well beyond the Group of Seven's *topoi*. He was well aware, too, that the camera was charged with mimetic significance in the quasi-shamanistic quest he had embarked on. In a letter purportedly written in 1918, while convalescing with his wounded foot, he promised to send his nurse photographs from his forest home:

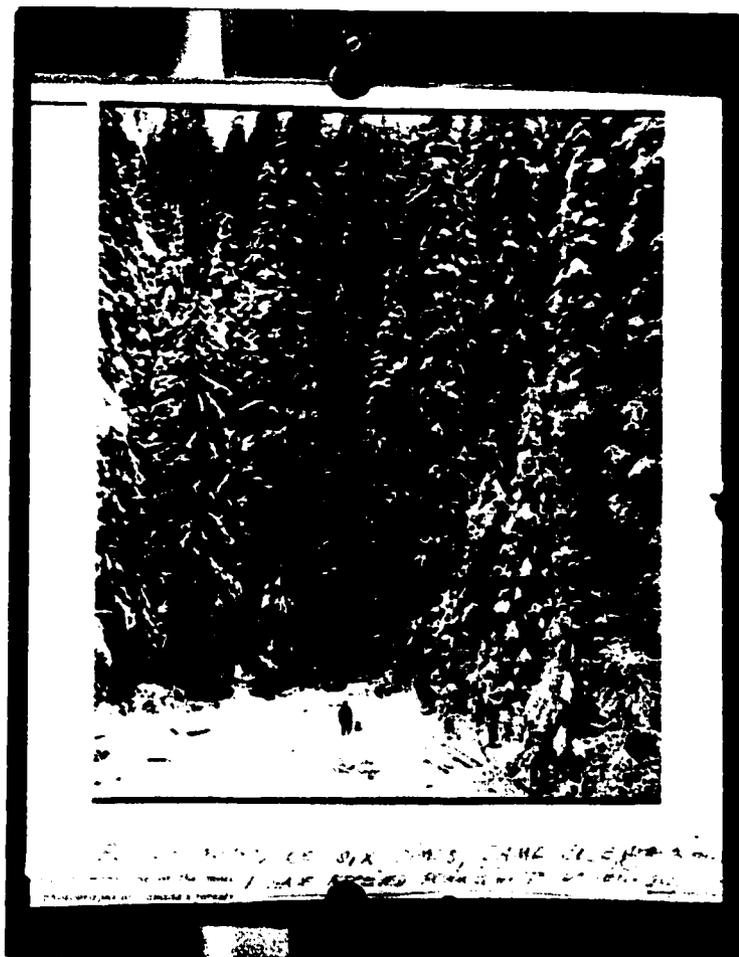


Fig. 41. Parks Branch landscape photo tacked to tree at Beaver Lodge, with Grey Owl's handwritten instructions. (NAC 204454.)

I am hunting at a place called Place-where-the-water-runs-in-the middle because the water runs in at the centre of the lake. I will send you a picture of it. I will show you the Talking hill in a picture so long as the old timers dont see me takin it.<sup>56</sup>

He wrote elsewhere that his camera was far more difficult to handle than his rifle, and inside Beaver Lodge he covered almost an entire wall with his photographs, many of them landscapes. Today, the suggestion of giving up the hunting rifle for a camera seems cliché, but it marked a turning point in his commitment to 'dwelling', reinventing what that might

<sup>56</sup> Grey Owl, "A Letter," *Tales of an Empty Cabin*, 92-93. This was one of his experiments in "un-learning" to write and coming back at it from what he imagined would be an aboriginal perspective.



Fig. 42. Grey Owl, landscape, n.d. (NAC PA 204456.)  
Some double-exposures appear to have been deliberate.

be, searching for it with his camera among “the spectral band of my familiars.”

In his “Letter on Humanism” (1947), Martin Heidegger insists that there is an “abyss” between humans and other animals. “The human body is something essentially other than an animal organism,” he says, because humans have

language and so can “stand freely in the clearing of being.”<sup>57</sup>

Thus spoke the sometime Nazi philosopher. “But with all due regard for his meaning, if I understand him aright,” Grey Owl wrote, objecting to a similar statement by an Irish poet, “I am inclined to disagree with him. There is not so wide a difference between man and beast as all that.” In a wilderness, one had to learn from animals, and “at least with animals you don’t have to watch for symptoms of an overdeveloped business instinct.” Speaking of four- and two-footed creatures alike, he hoped he might help “in the work of saving from entire destruction some of those interesting and useful dwellers in our waste places, in whom lie unexpected possibilities.”<sup>58</sup>

Of course, Heidegger had more to say about dwelling. The essence of dwelling is to be at peace, he said, and peace derives from the word free, and free means to be spared from harm or danger:

To free actually means to spare, the sparing itself consists not only in the fact that we do not harm the one whom we spare. Real sparing is something *positive* and takes place when we leave something beforehand in its own essence . . . . To dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace within the free, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its essence, the fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” *Basic Writings*, 228.

<sup>58</sup> Grey Owl, *Tales of an Empty Cabin*, 323.

<sup>59</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Building Dwelling Thinking,” *Basic Writings*, 351.



Fig 43. Grey Owl, landscape photograph, n.d. (NAC PA 204457.)

Grey Owl's landscape photography was a direct consequence of sparing the animals that formerly he hunted and trapped. But the scopic drive of these images, I suggest, is interrogative rather than projective. They were a way of posing a question about how to leave wilderness "beforehand in its own essence." In the end, his proposal regarding how to inhabit landscape, culturally, was diffident and simple: to convert the wilderness landscape from a scene of surveillance and mastery to one of learning. He scribbled in his notebook:

I do not have to preach to the Indians; they don't need me, unless it is the civilized half-breed and Indians who have gone white. They knew conservation before I was born or my father before me and so to talk to them would be presumptuous. It is to you I am talking for you have that yet to learn. You and your 100 million, not the few Indians.<sup>60</sup>

...

First at Riding Mountain National Park and then at Lake Ajawaan in Prince Albert National Park Grey Owl smuggled ideas into the Department of the Interior, trying to thwart the advancing governmentalization of the wilderness. It would have been as easy to turn back the St. Lawrence, as Davidson Dunton would later say, or to ignore the sky. Indeed, Grey Owl's officially-blessed presence inside Riding Mountain Park coincided with the nearby expropriation of Indian Reservation 61A at Clear Lake. Even then, surrounding land

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<sup>60</sup> NAC MG D147, vol. 2, file: "notebooks additional," n.d. 1927-36: "If you gain power or money . . . remember that power is best used to remove fear from other lives."

was being developed as “cottage lots, a golf course and a myriad of other facilities”<sup>61</sup> As for the aboriginal inhabitants, a Parks report states:

It was only in 1936 that the Federal government began the payments to former residents of Clear Lake Indian Reserve No. 61A . . . issuing the money only when the individuals had actually left . . . [although] they did allow for “special exceptions” which were recommended by the Indian Agent.<sup>62</sup>

Moving off the Park “was not their choosing,” according to A.G. Hamilton, Inspector of Indian Agencies. He wrote to Ottawa on November 27th, 1935, describing the mood at Riding Mountain:

The Indians are very indignant, because the half-section of land has been taken from them. I think they realize that they must move off the land, but at the same time, they are not ignorant of the fact that it is depriving them of a certain amount of their livelihood, because there is no doubt but what the Indians secure considerable wild meat in this vicinity . . . I cannot emphasize too strongly the fact that the Indians are greatly displeased and there is a strong feeling of resentment.<sup>63</sup>

Set against these brute realities the story of Grey Owl’s efforts remains a ‘failed’ narrative. His own tentative cognitive modelings for ‘dwelling’ soon were expropriated by the occupiers and adapted to their familiar modes of landscape perception. This process began even with his burial at Beaver Lodge in May 1938 when they shrouded his coffin with the Union Jack.<sup>64</sup> Decades later, in the 1970s, when his period of disgrace ended and at last he was to be rehabilitated in the Parks interpretive programme at Riding Mountain, the authors of the “Grey Owl Interpretive Plan” clearly were perplexed that his legacy persisted locally solely through the Grey Owl Golf Tournament. “The golfing classic is an annual event at Riding Mountain,” they wrote, and the “partying that accompanies the event is referred to fondly as the “Grey Owl Howl.” Although the golf tournament “bears little relation to Parks Canada objectives . . . an effort will be made to inject into this gala event at least the awareness of who Grey Owl was and an inkling of what he stood for.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> H. Chabot, “The Native Human History of Riding Mountain National Park: An Overview,” Parks Canada document, 1988, Parks Canada Library, 110.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 111; NAC RG 10, vol. 7765, file 27106-4 part 1, reel c-12053.

<sup>64</sup> See photograph of ceremony in Shortt, “A Structural and Furnishing History.”

<sup>65</sup> Parks Canada, “Grey Owl Interpretive Plan,” n.d. ca. 1970s, Parks Canada Library, 19.

## **PART II**

### **THE 'STATE' WITHIN THE STATE**

Freud believed that Moses was Egyptian, that there was not one Moses but two, and that the first had been murdered by his followers. It was the stubborn persistence and later re-emergence of that trauma in the form of deferred obedience to the first dead Moses that led to Freud's analogy with the symptom ('a State within the State')—something defiant and potentially destabilizing that will not go away. . . .

The story, and the analogy, are there to remind us of that part of historical being, passionate and traumatized, which runs backwards and forwards, never completely in the grasp of its subjects, through psychic time.

Jacqueline Rose, *States of Fantasy*

## INTRODUCTION

The fact surely is that, within any specific culture, the nature of the signals, and of the shared signifying system within which they must operate, is radically connected with the social organization of a very wide area of perceived reality.

Raymond Williams, *Culture*.

Every nationalism is metaphysically an anthropologism, and as such subjectivism. Nationalism is not overcome through mere internationalism; it is rather expanded and elevated thereby into a system.

Martin Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*

### Relay Towers

An archival audio recording. Harrison Hall, Chatham, Ontario, 1947. The final round of the public speaking contest for East Kent and West Kent is under way.<sup>1</sup> The proceedings are broadcast live but also recorded on a cylinder. Contestant #1, a boy of about ten years, begins winningly: "I have chosen an animal as my topic. What animal is it? Well, it is the sponge." As he enlarges on the chosen invertebrate, the diaphragm of the omni-directional microphone registers the outer acoustic envelope: an auditorium generously cased in wood and plaster. The contestants' earnest voices foreground a room ambience of stifled coughs and restless feet under metal stacking chairs.

Contestant #5 speaks in distinctive 1940s cadences, tinged with a slight French accent. Her words have a measured deliberateness beyond her years:

Mr. Chairman, honourable judges, ladies and gentlemen,

We have all lived and heard a great deal during the past few months about Canadian citizenship. That Act was proclaimed on our national birthday, July 1st, 1946, and it came into force January 1st, 1947. The Honourable Paul Martin, who was responsible for the passage of the act, expressed its purpose in these words:

"For the national unity of Canada and for the future greatness of this country it is of the utmost importance that all of us new Canadians as well as old have a consciousness of common purpose and common interests as Canadians to be able to say with pride: 'I am a Canadian'.

"It is my privilege today as an old Canadian to fearlessly affirm that Canada welcomes new Canadians. The world in which we live is not one in which any nation can live alone. We know only too well that the nations of the world are interdependent. In two world wars Canada has accepted her responsibility without a thought of gain. Our growth cannot be thought of separately.

"The successful continuance of good will between allies is essential to future peace. Canada therefore welcomes new Canadians to swell her present twelve-and-a-

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<sup>1</sup> NAC, radio broadcast, ca. 1947, NAC, Frank Fleming Collection, CAVA 1981-0016/699.

half million who mainly live on a narrow strip along four thousand miles of her southern border. She welcomes men and women who will help her develop her unlimited natural resources: her mines, her forests, her fields and her waters. In order to accomplish this Canada is now eager to provide the employment and give new Canadians the highest standard of living to share with them her abundance.

"As citizens of Canada, new Canadians must be encouraged to assume a partnership in the future and the destiny of Canada, to take an active part in the affairs of our community. To be one with us, to have a fellow feeling, a sense of "good neighbour," that will work together with us for our common good. Let us not forget that we Canadians are a most fortunate people blessed by providence with a rich and fruitful land and opportunities perhaps not surpassed by any other country in the world. The high tribute and sincere expressions of respect that have been paid to Canada by representatives of other nations should make her more eager to welcome those who come to verify for themselves the truth of these tributes.

"Let us take heed of a maxim--noblesse oblige--and one and all open our hearts to new Canadians and encourage in ourselves and others the growth of our robust Canadian spirit. We may then expect that our new brethren will strive to maintain the name and reputation of this new land of adoption. As time goes on they will learn to admire and esteem the wonderful history of past Canadian generations; they will automatically measure up to traditions of courage, enterprise and devotion. By the glorious names of those who shall ever live: Champlain and Frontenac, Wolfe and Montcalm, Papineau and Mackenzie, Macdonald and Laurier, they will take pride in the country they have adopted. That Canada should represent a variety of racial origins is traditional. The people in Canada come from diverse stocks, differing in religion, social outlook, and the culture. Because of this we will need to learn tolerance, which is the very keystone of our national unity.

"What of a newcomer into any district? Whether he be from lands across the sea and speaking in a foreign tongue, is he not facing the painful problem of adjustment to new surroundings, to new conditions? Is it not neighbourly on our part to lend a helping hand? It is not sufficient, be it remembered, to shake hands with a newcomer, to give him a cup of coffee. You must make them feel as one with you and encourage them to join your organizations, and give them the opportunity to grow, in the social life of the area. We must meet a stranger more than halfway or we fail in Christian charity."

So, one and all, since Canada welcomes new Canadians, gladly and loyally do we say this county also welcomes new Canadians.

As applause rewards her clear enunciation and well-placed emphases, light footsteps are heard exiting the stage.

...

What authorized contestant #5's oration on the topic of Canadian citizenship and national unity? Indeed, *who* was speaking? As a speech act, her extended direct quotation of the Honourable Paul Martin is a species of performative: by reiterating Martin's words she performed exemplary citizenship, circulating correct public discourse through State and citizen. It has that quality of "unisonance" heard when voices chorus in an anthem.

Paul Martin's improving dicta relayed material prepared by the special assistants brought in to work on the 1946 citizenship legislation, David Mundell and R. Gordon

Robertson, two bright young Canadians with Oxford degrees.<sup>2</sup> Change was 'in the air', and they fielded it, processing it into national language and putting it back 'on the air'. Martin's address was disseminated as government information precisely to condition such routinely-generated public discourse. In the perspicacious atmosphere of the Public Speaking Contest, contestant #5 embodied civic virtues prescribed for all Canadians, and the very "rote-ness" of her address inaugurated a new regularity in social discourse.

The government's initiatives in citizenship education sought to install a "common consciousness" that Martin and others had extolled from 1944 onwards as a corollary to the civic crises presented by conscientious objection, conscription, wartime internment of Japanese, Italian and German Canadians, and the unblinking anti-Semitic immigration policy. When the new concern for citizenship eventually found legislative expression in the 1947 Citizenship Act, it retained Canadians' British subjecthood, but the former colony's sovereignty would henceforth be characterized as a 'nation of immigrants'.<sup>3</sup> With this new emphasis, ancestral time of arrival replaced pure ethnicity as the index of social distinction. Anglo and Franco progenitors of national history claimed their pedigree over even those minority groups whose settlement in North America extended far back into the nineteenth century. Icelanders, Swedes and Chinese whose occupancy in many cases was several generations deep nonetheless remained "newcomers" in the new nationalist discourse of Canadian citizenship.

Consistent with the developments in nationalist landscape painting discussed in chapter two, contestant #5's oration reinforced the displacement of aboriginal peoples from the nascent national culture. The primordial precedence of their ancestors was consigned by omission to inferior status in the society of immigrants. The colonial fact thus erased, it was not only possible but commendable for contestant #5 to reiterate "old" Canadian Paul Martin's "fearless" welcome to "new" Canadians. Indeed, this language game of old and new Canadians now designated English and French Canadians as "elders" whose "noblesse" obliged them to instruct the new Canadians in venerating the series of odd couples named as Canada's founding fathers: Champlain and Frontenac, Wolfe and

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<sup>2</sup> R.G. Robertson, interview by Tom Earle, Library of Parliament, Ottawa. Formerly Clerk of the Privy Council, R.G. Robertson's inside knowledge of culture, citizenship and state security is perhaps without parallel; lawyer David Mundell was also involved in the Gouzenko spy trials.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Martin, "Citizenship and the People's World," in William Kaplan, ed., *Belonging: the Meaning and Future of Canadian Citizenship* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 70, cites Mackenzie King telling Parliament in October 1945 (a significant date, as will be seen in light of Gouzenko in chapter eight) that it was of the "utmost importance that all of us Canadians, new and old, have a consciousness of a common purpose."

Montcalm, Papineau and Mackenzie, Macdonald and Laurier. Colonialism and imperialism receded behind masses of central and south European immigrants assimilating to a freshly-minted national narrative, screened by an invented tradition of a racially plural state.

Contestant #5's reiteration of Martin's address not only promoted a sovereign consciousness *within* Canada's boundaries, it also announced Canada's isomorphism with the international system of nation states. She reiterated Canada's commitment to the emerging international order of the post-war era, even as she localized that vast commitment through her pledge on behalf of East and West Kent. In sum, her oration revealed what might be called *laminar* flow of the nation's political narrative: a smooth circulation of governmentality, updating instructions for civic conduct and reaffirming the official construction of the national past. Acting as a human receiver/transmitter in the reproductive circuit of the state's political rationality, contestant #5 was a relay tower in its dissemination, helping to manage cultural disturbances occasioned by the forced choice, and occluding its signs as a "state" within the State.

### From Colony to Cold War

From the preceding chapters it is evident that Canadian territory was occupied through a regime of observation. The nature of the occupying culture's signals, as Raymond Williams puts it, patterned a wide area of perceived reality. Moreover, individual members of a cultural group are trained to sense according to such patterns, and the twentieth-century Euro-Canadian occupier was trained intensively as an *audio-visual citizen*. At mid-century, when television signals first entered the Canadian broadcast air, the social organization of perceived reality already owed much of its patterning to an audio-visual consciousness promoted through radio and film. This shared signifying system sought to establish a certain communicative rationality, but it also sensed *for* that rationality in order to identify and manage instances of difference or non-compliance. The set of signifying practices associated with national culture, including audio-visual ones, formed its *dispositif*—that is, the specific 'conceptual device' that patterned social phenomena and integrated cultural differences.<sup>4</sup> By this means was a polyglot colonial society to be mobilized as a national population sovereign in its territory.

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<sup>4</sup> Gilles Deleuze, "Qu'est-ce qu'un dispositif?" *Michel Foucault, philosophe: Rencontre internationale, Paris 9,10,11 janvier 1988* (Paris: Éditions de seuil, 1989): 185-95. A *dispositif* is an instrumentality that untangles criss-crossed lines of force and puts them into action as productive webs of relations. The *dispositif* organizes disparate phenomena according to a veridical system that, while never universal, is nonetheless axiomatic within the process of its own being. Neither pure concept nor pure material, the *dispositif* is precisely the location and duration of their intersection: a patterning whose linguistic

The chapters in part two are concerned with the patterning of perceived reality within the system of nationality, once again prising open a discursive space between *nationalism* and nationality. Chapter four takes time out from the archive to explicitly address liberal political theories of citizenship, which today are seized with the question of special group rights based on social, cultural and sexual differences. The eloquence of Contestant #5 above shows Canadian postwar political discourse taking shape around the fact of multiculturalism. In fact, the accelerated transition from colony to nation during the Second World War was so precipitous that the internment camps, wartime censorship, and police informants are spectral doubles in this transition to the 'nation of immigrants.' Even today, liberal cultural rights debates still betray signs of Canada's precipitous lurch from colony to nation, but more precisely, a nation plunged into the Cold War.

Understanding national culture as a sensing system, alert to all traces of difference, leads directly to a suppressed problem in liberal rights discourses: why is it that any potential ground for extending cultural minority rights also marks the cultural minority in question as a potential security risk? In security terms, I argue that culture and citizenship are hardly 'equivalent' before the state, but rather occupy a sliding scale of (mis)trust. This derives not from inadequacy on the part of the Canadian state or its agencies, but from a 'forced choice' that unavoidably locates citizenship and nationality in a coercive but also unstable (multi)culturalist discourse.

To represent this 'forced choice' without simply reinscribing its terms leads once again to 'failed' narratives, and historical characters who somehow suspended the terms of choice. In chapter five, the case of Tracy Philipps, progenitor of Canadian Multiculturalism during the Second World War, illuminates the receding frontier of empire and rising cultural nationalism. Philipps is of particular interest because his activities trace the outline of a three-fold process of censorship, intelligence, and propaganda that developed in Canada as part of the Allied war effort. In official histories his activities in the Nationalities Branch of the Department of National War Services have been characterized as a false start towards multicultural tolerance that more balanced individuals soon curtail and re-initiate along more

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rubrics, expressed as epochs, paradigms, or political systems, never quite grasp the ineffable totality of its configuration. Yet a *dispositif* does have certain regular features: it governs a set of signifying practices, producing the scene of utterance; it is the space of subjectification, wherein subjects take shape intertextually, brought to consciousness at boundaries of its lines of force. A *dispositif* thus is more than a set of institutions, since it is also the set of conditions that grant institutions their specific dispositions. What is striking about Deleuze's explication of the *dispositif* is his insistence on its self-adaptation to change, its constant updating and self-reconfiguration. A *dispositif* is an entity in motion, leaving a distinctive spatio-temporal signature. As a result a *dispositif* must be discerned through its historicity and not merely by its formal characteristics.

rational lines. The *embarrassment* in nationalist historiography that repudiates Philipps in order to minimize his significance is symptomatic of the 'state' within the state. Philipps is read here as part of the "passionate and traumatized" double of national culture that, as Jacqueline Rose writes, "runs backwards and forwards, never completely in the grasp of its subjects, through psychic time."<sup>5</sup>

In its unscheduled transition to Cold War, Canada's national culture was like a tall ship swinging over to a new tack without properly warning the crew. Ideologically-speaking, there was a great flapping of sails, during which many left-wingers were swept overboard. Chapter six takes the RCMP's security screening of the National Film Board as an example of how the nascent security state was neurotic from the outset, never taking time to assess its status as an occupying force. The security scare at the Film Board from 1948-53 formed a real-life backdrop for Norman McLaren's Oscar-winning film *Neighbours*. In a mere eight minutes, McLaren delivered an enigmatic but devastating critique of the cultural nationalist observer and the cultural occupation of territory it fostered. *Neighbours* brings into visible and audible registers the invisible force of the forced choice of nationality, so effortlessly expressed by Contestant #5, supplying a vivid image of the 'state' within the state.

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<sup>5</sup> Jacqueline Rose, *States of Fantasy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 11.

## CHAPTER 4

### CITIZENSHIP: A FORCED CHOICE?

Liberal humanism is fond of imagining an inner space within the human subject where he or she is most significantly free. A sophisticated liberal humanist will not of course deny that human subjects are externally or even internally afflicted by all kinds of grievous determinants and constraints; it is just that what these forces seek to determine and constrain is some transcendental core of inner freedom. The bad news . . . is that this 'inner space' is actually where we are least free. If we were simply hedged round with oppressive powers, we would no doubt have a reasonable chance of putting up some active resistance to them. But no dominant political order is likely to survive very long if it does not intensively colonize the space of subjectivity itself . . . . Power succeeds by persuading us to desire and collude with it.

Terry Eagleton, *The Significance of Theory*.

Probably a long time will pass before the right to ignore the state will be generally admitted, even in theory . . . there is such a love of tried arrangements, that they will not act upon the right until long after it is safe to do so.

Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics* (1851)

#### **Rescue**

Labour organizer Harvey Murphy's RCMP files at the National Archives cover four decades of his activities and would fill a four-drawer file cabinet. He was identified variously as Slavic, Jewish, and a Communist, and investigators expended no end of effort attempting to determine his nationality, refusing to believe that he was born in Ontario. Informants provided conflicting reports of his probable Slavic surnames, his accent and the shape of his nose. He was considered a "dangerous agitator," and one could not say that during his adult life he enjoyed "equivalent citizenship" with respect to the state's internal security apparatus, though he broke no law.

Reading through his police records in the third floor reading room of the National Archives in January 1997 became a bifocal experience for me when an emergency unfolded outside on the bridge below. The event reinforced the view that, just as participation in society is, in a sense, an involuntary accident of birth, so it follows that there is an element of 'forced choice' in contemporary nationality and citizenship. This force reveals itself as a regime of sensing and observation, a transposable technology that individuates the subject in order to restore it to the totality. The force that underscores 'free choice' is of variable intensity, but in modern Canada the state had a way of exercising its care such that citizens

were only vaguely aware of its “backstage” resources, whose full extent was deliberately kept from view in any specific crisis.

From my high eminence in the Archives I noticed all traffic had been diverted from the bridge, and a fire engine purposely blocked the lanes. Various emergency vehicles had drawn up behind it, leaving the six-lane bridge open and clear. Moreover, three persons in survival suits held their inflatable rescue boat steady in the fast current just below the bridge. Two hundred meters downstream, black water slid under a thick crust of ice covering the river. Medical equipment was standing by strapped to a sled ready to slide down to the shore.

At first it seemed that two figures standing on the west side of the bridge were casually watching some action below, but then I saw a third figure clinging to the *outside* of the railing and leaning back over fast-running open water thirty feet below. The other two were policemen standing not more than four or five feet away, presumably trying to coax the person back to safety. They seemed careful to leave plenty of space, as if to show they would not interfere physically in his or her decision. This attitude was deceptive, though, for in fact the emergency response was disposed such that the person was unaware of its extent, or that even if he or she jumped, rescue was almost certain.

Perhaps as he or she intended, the jumper attracted attention, but this was tightly controlled—even media vans were held out of view. What the jumper could see was restricted to the two police cruisers across on the other side of the median, lights flashing, and the two seemingly casual policemen. An hour passed and the desperate figure exerted a growing psychological grip, at least on me. From my high perspective, I could see that the jumper had slid down to hang precariously from the bottom of the railing. A truck driver on an adjacent service road stopped to watch. The rescue boat edged closer under the bridge and an ambulance backed through the snow directly to the water's edge.

...

The suicide, whether it is Sylvia Plath or Wilson Duff or Gilles Deleuze or a figure clinging to a bridge, attracts unwanted attention to a crisis that continuously agitates a liberal society at its “transcendental core of inner freedom.” Suicide reveals the appalling density of social relations, and it leaves blood on everyone’s hands. Is suicide a triumph of the will or a failure of governing the self? My sympathies are conflicted, diverging at the point of the jumper’s ‘choice’. I wished that he or she would step back from the abyss, having looked down and seen the sheer obliviousness and self-sufficiency of the austere winter river. Yet, I could sense the invisible river of the ‘social’ building up pressure to clear this momentary blockage of emotional and vehicular traffic, gradually foreclosing on the jumper’s

intentionality. It was shaping up to be no choice at all: choose to jump and be saved, or choose not to jump and be saved. Another part of me wanted this person to expose the true nature of the choice.

The 'state' within the state is an emergency that has seized hold of the "transcendental core of inner freedom." The "quintessence of liberty," as Martin Thom writes of modern state formation, came to reside in a "general repudiation of suicide."<sup>1</sup> Brian Singer puts this succinctly when he writes: "Society appears ineluctable; the citizen is now always of society." Later in the afternoon I walked home and I saw that the man had been "saved," hustled into an ambulance as the emergency vehicles dispersed. The next day it was reported that in desperation a businessman threatened to jump into the Ottawa River but was induced to climb to safety. The blockage was removed, traffic flows were restored to normal, but the inner emergency persisted.

The occlusion of systemic force applied to wayward subjects, as witnessed on the bridge, is typical of the debates about nationalism, too. Such debates highlight nations-in-particular rather than the system of nationality itself. They oppose 'reasonable' civic nations to rogue states which are 'irrational', 'ethnic' and 'tribal', and they rate each state on a tribal/civic index even as the general means of violence/care shared to some degree by all nations are quietly stowed backstage. As Singer puts it, citizenship itself has become "depoliticized" by this complicity between 'ethnic' and 'civic' nations which harbours a common threshold of coercion. Even France's initial emergence as a nation-state at the time of the Revolution, he writes, "demand[ed] that the circumstances be forced: the internal enemies must be flushed out in order to preserve the virtue of the whole." So it is with nations, and the wayward nation should similarly expect to suffer the care/violence secreted in the system itself. The elimination or neutralization of tendencies towards what Thom calls "outworldliness" creates a productive tension. This is the force of the forced choice of nationality, and it is most visible where arts of government concentrate on identifying the alien state, or the unreliable citizen.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Brian C.J. Singer, "Cultural Versus Contractual Nations: Rethinking Their Opposition," *History and Theory* 35:3 (October 1996), 311. Martin Thom, *Republics, Nations and Tribes* (London ; New York : Verso, 1995), 110.

<sup>2</sup> Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)," in Slavoj Žižek, ed., *Mapping Ideology* (London: Verso, 1994): 100-140. This qualifies Althusser's placing culture amongst the *ideological state apparatuses*. I argue rather that the 'cultural' permeates and has specific efficacy within the repressive apparatuses of the state as well.

The unreliable citizen may appear in the guise of Harvey Murphy, the Moscow-friendly organizer of hard rock miners, in the chimera of Archie Grey Owl, or in the figure who would attempt suicide from a bridge, but such singularities point to a venerable liberal paradox: how can there be free choice when the context of choice must be forced, culturally?

### **Governmentality**

Reading and thinking about citizenship and its relation to culture has sent me shuttling back and forth between liberal political theory and critiques inspired by Michel Foucault's concept of "governmentality." My own oscillation between these paradigms is an example of the agonistic division that Foucault himself recognized in the modern construction of the citizen: at once I am a volunteerist, individual bearer of civic rights and responsibilities, held in a social contract of limited government and unfettered civil society, even as I am integrated by governmental processes as a mere datum of a "national population." Governmentality is that quality of citizenship through which the polity senses, surveys, secures, and cares for its population by policies and institutions that positively charge the entire social field, individuating each citizen, even as he or she is totalized in its scheme. Liberals cannot admit that constraints on free choice are so deeply internalized. Embodying this dichotomy of citizenship, I feel rules and norms that organize both of these paradigms conditioning my own free "choice" of language with which to speak and write about it.

In studying the formation of administrative states and their alignment with fixed national territories during the 15th and 16th centuries, Foucault noticed an elaboration of new "arts of government" in between the family on the one hand and the sovereign on the other.<sup>3</sup> In the emerging administrative state, the family and its 'oeconomy' retained some degree of authority, but the family was no more sufficiently complex or subtle to serve as model for the emerging bureaucratic state than was the old conception of sovereignty. This lack was filled by a new set of practices associated with the modern term 'economy' that concentrated a hitherto unformulated agglomeration of subjects as a 'population', which was made the object of new forms of knowledge concerning demography, health, and security, informed by statistics, the census, and so forth. Economy, population, and a third sign, territory, were the key operators in this new series that Foucault called 'governmentality'.

The term 'culture' is absent from Foucault's governmentality series, apparently because it properly belongs to subsequent developments; it is not so much a superstructure

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<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, "On Governmentality" *Ideology & Consciousness* 6 (Autumn 1979): 5-21

erected later over the political economic base of the modern state as simply a sign whose time had not yet come. The problem of culture emerged gradually as modernity took its shape, opposing itself to Europe's own *ancien régime*, but moreover to all that was non-European. This points to a problematic aspect of Foucault's theory since he never explicitly treats the emergence of 'culture' in relation to European imperialism. Robert Young accounts for this apparent lacuna by arguing that "instead of making a moral argument against Eurocentrism, as we tend to do, Foucault is . . . rather concerned with the predicates which make it possible."<sup>4</sup>

With *Orientalism*, Edward Said was first to harness the predicates elucidated by Foucault to mount a critique of European imperialism as a social discourse. What Benedict Anderson stresses in his seminal *Imagined Communities* is the "New World origins of nationalism."<sup>5</sup> He argues that the administrative nation state derived from the circulation of 'governmentality' through the *colonial* apparatuses of modern European states. In effect, Anderson inserts 'culture' at the head of the governmentality series, giving particular emphasis to vernacular languages of state as the basis for national cultures, and recognizing Latin America's preeminence in Europe's transition to modern nationalism. After Anderson it is impossible to conceive of modern state formation without reference to slavery and colonialism. The subsequent rise of postcolonial theory in the work of Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Robert Young, and others proceeded to draw out Foucault's parallel interest in counter-discourses and resistances, finding ambivalence and hybridity in the fissures and uncertainties of Europeanism.<sup>6</sup> By these routes "culture" was added to Foucault's initial governmentality series.

Another term Foucault withheld from the triptych of governmentality was 'security'. Its inclusion seemed to him to exaggerate state domination:

Maybe, after all, the State is no more than a composite reality and a mythical abstraction whose importance is a lot more limited than many of us think. Maybe what is important for our modern times, that is for our actuality, is not so much the State-domination of society, but the 'governmentalisation' of the State.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Robert J.C. Young, "Foucault on Race and Colonialism," *New Formations* 25 (Winter 1995): 57-65.

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, chapter 4, "Creole Pioneers."

<sup>6</sup> Of course, the postcolonial turn in cultural studies has its critics. See Benita Parry, "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse," *Oxford Literary Review* 9:1 (1987): 27-58, and Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> Foucault, "Governmentality," 20.

In other words, the governmentalisation of national populations and the formation of administrative states are better understood as dual products of the same intensification of discursive practices, rather than simply as a new top-down authority structure replacing the old model of sovereignty.

In Canada, the genealogy of cultural nationalism commences at a point when the disciplining of national cultures in Europe and Latin America already had reached maturity. During the formation of its bureaucratic apparatuses, Canada's national culture adapted to Britain's decline as an imperial power: absorbing postcolonial population displacements, reorienting its trade relations, and incorporating rapidly developing communications technologies. The bare elements of Foucault's governmentality schema are insufficient here. At the very least 'culture' and 'security', if not 'technology', 'gender', and 'sexuality' must be added to the series in order to develop a critique of Canada's late and rapid assimilation to the rising international system.

The advent of international relations as a field of social scientific study in the twentieth century marks the upward migration of 'governmentality' to an international level. This same movement brought the modern Canadian security state into being. The intensification of nationality as a global system in effect pressurized national cultures as the containers of difference, and this pressure increased in the decades of world war and nuclear fear. Even in the post-Cold War period, international crises in the Balkans and elsewhere have occurred where the containment of difference by the international system has proved impossible. The net effect has not been the breakdown of this system but rather its escalation.

Postmodernist political theory has exaggerated the withering away of nationality as a system (although it may accurately reflect its strategic abandonment by transnational corporate executives and their mafioso cousins).<sup>8</sup> For rank and file citizens, though, the order of things has not changed. A people must "choose" to become a nation or somebody else will choose it for them; a person must "choose" to become a citizen or it will be automatically ascribed to them by some authority. A 'forced choice' continues to be foundational in the international order, and it underscores Foucault's theory of governmentality.

The force of this forced choice has shaped and characterized Euro-Canadian occupation of territory, preconditioning its space-time routines, sculpting its topography,

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<sup>8</sup> Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* (New York : W.W. Norton, 1995).

authorizing the chronotope for its national literature, and delimiting the space of representation for its landscape *topos*. The forced choice has been the motive force of the *dispositif* of cultural nationalism, which is one reason it is so rarely specified. When this *dispositif* is placed under critical scrutiny it is as if one has turned against that force and feels its pressure. For above all it is this *dispositif* that occupies and governs the space and time of national cultures, a self-organizing rationalization whose centrifuge is located in the givens of liberal political theory itself.

### Forced Choice

Is it so far-fetched to conceive of childbirth as an emergence, preferably head first, directly into a forced choice? The Canadian Citizenship Act, based on the principle of *jus soli*, takes this moment of emergence seriously, defining in imaginative detail the contingencies of a national birthing space that extends beyond the national land mass to the bellies of ships and aircraft registered in Canada, and via the velvet extension of diplomatic privilege into the hearts of foreign capitals.<sup>9</sup> That we all must have a nationality and a desire to be or become citizens is considered prerequisite to personhood. Like other totalizing language games this dominant concept of citizenship, however axiomatic, leaves little supplementary space for other forms of identification.

William Rogers Brubaker puts the case bluntly:

Citizenship today means membership of a nation-state. Each claims a certain fraction of the human population as its own, and each aspires to mold this population into . . . a cohesive and in some respects homogenous nation . . . Usually the territory and citizenry are roughly congruent. If congruence were perfect all citizens would be residents. Perfect congruence is unrealizable in the modern world. But approximate congruence remains an ideal.<sup>10</sup>

For Brubaker the international system of national belonging remains the best available form of social organization and his interest in the irregularities produced by this system (such as refugees and guest workers) is directed to perfecting the reintegration of non-citizens back into the system.

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<sup>9</sup> Canada, *Citizenship Act 1974-75-76*, c 108, s. 1. 2(1) "A person is deemed to be born in Canada if the person is born on a Canadian ship . . . on an air cushion vehicle . . . or on an aircraft registered in Canada."

<sup>10</sup> W.R. Brubaker, ed., *Immigration and the Politics of Citizenship in Europe and North America*, (Lanham: University Press of America, 1989), 3,145.

According to Brubaker, there are six ideals of national belonging in the system of modern nation-states:

- a) everyone should be a citizen of a state.
- b) there should be just one invariable membership status in any given state.
- c) membership should be *sacred* and citizens should be prepared to make sacrifices for the state, "willing to die for it if need be."
- d) the political community should be simultaneously a cultural community with shared values.
- e) membership should provide for the exercise of free choice in a democratic political system.
- f) state membership should be *unique* and every person should belong to one and only one state.
- g) membership should be socially *consequential* and entail important privileges.<sup>11</sup>

In liberal theory each of these premises has come under review or been modified by empirical observation, with the exception of a) every one should be a citizen of a state, and e) membership should provide free choice. There is no evidence that the imperative to be or become a citizen is at all objectionable within current debates among liberal theorists. In this sense, a forced choice seems to override the openness to reconsideration implied in John Rawls's affirmation that "liberals believe that what we put in the given in order to make meaningful judgments can not only be different between individuals but can also change within one's individual life."<sup>12</sup> If 'citizenship' is in the given does it not follow that it should also be subject to review and change? Will Kymlicka's reassurance that in liberal thought "no end or goal is exempt from possible reexamination" skirts the issue since by specifying "ends" and "goals" he seems to restrict reconsideration of the given.<sup>13</sup>

This "given" that is beyond reexamination recalls Mauss's observation of the gift's implied reciprocity: indeed, when liberal theorists refer to the gift of citizenship they like to point out the "commitment" it entails in return. Having been given, albeit unable to refuse, the gift of citizenship, the citizen's first reciprocal commitment is to forget the circumstances of the gift. Such commitments strengthen relationships, writes Kymlicka, precisely because

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 3-4.

<sup>12</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 52.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., emphasis his.

“they aren’t the sort of thing we question every day.”<sup>14</sup> Or, is it rather that liberals’ commitment to the nation state—the close fit between what Ronald Dworkin calls the “intellectual environment” and the enunciative space authorized by the state—in fact keeps the forced choice beyond discussion in the *doxa* of liberal theory? This intellectual environment, says Dworkin, “provides the spectacles through which we identify experiences as valuable, it cannot sensibly be put on the scales.”<sup>15</sup>

Isolate just the words “cannot sensibly” from Dworkin’s remonstrance. Putting “our” intellectual environment in question impairs “our” *sensibility*, the protective sentence that “our” communal rationality depends upon. Dworkin’s spectacles point to the link between liberal thought and its scopic regime of observation.<sup>16</sup> Cultural self-reflexivity threatens to blind, deafen and generally disrupt the routine interplay of internal and external sensing and perception, jamming “our” protective and reproductive apparatuses. A national culture that self-reflexively questions its deepest liberal foundations puts itself at peril with respect to competing national entities.

If, for security reasons, nationality and citizenship are held in the given of Dworkin’s intellectual environment, what follows from his reluctance to place them on the scales? Perhaps the most striking consequence arises where the forced choice places the principle that everyone should be or become a citizen in direct conflict with the principle that members should enjoy equivalence before the state. This conflict occurs, for instance, when a naturalized citizen remains culturally-marked both as attracting special rights *and* special surveillance as a potential security risk.

Contemporary debates over cultural rights have shown that the liberal ideal of equivalence in citizenship is conflicted by the closure it places on free choice. Contractarians’ strong view of equivalence entails a similarly strong view of free choice. One is forced to choose to be a citizen, but once one *is* a citizen there ought to be an even playing field of free choice. Yet, when culturalist liberals point out that cultures are uneven playing fields, that many cultural differences are *unchosen*, and hence may reasonably give rise to special asymmetrical rights, the strict notion of equivalence must be relaxed. What is

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>16</sup> Ronald Dworkin, “In Defense of Equality,” *Social Philosophy and Policy* Vol. 1:1 (1983), 29, floats the idea of an “impartial spectator, or some such name” who is a virtual being reflecting the combined interests of all citizens. Then he must abandon the position, he says, “because the new person is no person at all.” But does Dworkin here rather *perform* the existence of this observer, like Spencer’s right to ignore the state, in order that it tactily be “forgotten” and absorbed into the general drift of his argument?

rarely mentioned in this debate is that, behind this emphasis on civil rights, lies a deeper concern about civic duties, and the uncertain allegiance of cultural minorities.

This aporia in liberal discourse may be stated in a series of propositions:

1. Everyone has a nationality and must be or become the citizen of a state.
2. The total field of nationalities comprises the authorized repertoire of membership. Nationality is an unchosen *circumstance* of each subject at birth.
3. Each nation state requires a subject's *allegiance*. Allegiance may entail as little as conducting oneself within the law or as much as conscription to military service. Allegiance marks the subject's accession to the state's political rationality.
4. A citizen who ceases to be a member of one state and is naturalized to another is required to swear foremost allegiance to the latter. Yet, despite their entry into a new contract, the *cultural* differences associated with their previous nationality must be considered as circumstances they did not choose, and thus they are right to maintain them.
5. Through naturalization, a subject passes through the forced choice of citizenship for a second or even a third time. Conflicting demands to both remember their cultural antecedents and forget former state allegiances accumulate as tensions within the host culture, tensions marked closely by state security apparatuses.
6. The naturalized citizen is a 'hybrid' member who will be perceived as reliable only to the extent that strict "other-regarding" practices in the host culture are relaxed.<sup>17</sup> In the extreme case of international conflict between a subject's birth nation and nation of naturalization, such a relaxation is impossible and the principle of equivalence is suspended. This individual may be subjected to intrusive measures, despite blameless conduct on their part.

This outline shows how a liberal state is uneasily drawn to reinforce the isomorphism of nationality as a system, as emphasized by Brubaker, even as it seeks to protect its sovereignty from external manipulation through its internal minorities. Unavoidably, the multicultural state is a security state; they go together.

Culturally-sensitive liberal theorists such as Kymlicka want to de-emphasize the strict other-regarding stance of Western nations in order to authorize rights based on *unchosen* differences. He seeks to "strengthen the theory and allay the unease," as he puts it, by working out a theory such in which cultural difference signifies *sub-nationally*. In effect, the principle of equivalence is modified to recognize group rights as well as individual rights. At best, this means extending maximum autonomy to the group vis-à-vis the state while insisting on maximum democracy *within* the group for its members. At worst, such group differences cynically may be used to justify greater social inequality between individuals. Indeed, Partha Chatterjee asserts that such rights discourses tend to

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<sup>17</sup> Thanks to Duncan Ivison for suggesting this point.

undervalue the way “alleged exceptions inhere as forcibly suppressed elements.” Liberal theory, he writes:

seeks to forget that the question of choice here is itself fallacious, for human beings cannot exist as "individuals" before they are born, and when they are born they are ascribed as particular members of society . . . accidents of "natural inequality," which social policies of welfare or equal opportunity must mitigate. It can, in other words, deal with it only in bad faith.<sup>18</sup>

This is why Kymlicka's cultural communities are pristine, shedding crossnational filiations at the immigration check point. Their 'difference' is to be absorbed by a minimal extension of cultural rights on the part of the host state.

Conservatives and doctrinaire liberals have little tolerance for cultural difference and no interest at all in special group rights. They view multiculturalism as a seed bed of future problems and weakened national sovereignty. If the price of 'equivalent' citizenship is minorities' assimilation to a dominant culture's norms, so be it. (The apparent contradiction between the Right's call for less government and greater internal security is resolved by an escalating criteria of patriotism; paradoxically, the more public resources are devoted to national security the 'smaller' the state needs to be.) In fact, both liberals and conservatives agree on the basic set of relations between nationality, culture and state security. Both assign "cultural citizens" to sub-national identities in identified minority groups, each having room at the top to interface with a common political rationality. The crucial issue for liberals in admitting criteria of difference to their conceptions of citizenship is that they not undermine the common political culture, and this is precisely what excites suspicion on the Right.

Political culture, as Duncan Ivison writes, is a slippery concept involving:

norms, attitudes, sentiments and images which influence or even regulate people's dispositions towards political processes. It helps constitute a certain regularity of behaviour and expectations within a political system . . . Liberal governments thus seek to create a culture of citizenship, or at least maintain one.<sup>19</sup>

The "minimal communicative rationality" that Homi Bhabha notices in the work of Charles Taylor, or John Rawls's characterization of the citizen's agency as "thin," suggests that a

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<sup>18</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 232.

<sup>19</sup> Duncan Ivison, "The Hybrid Culture of Citizenship," Research Paper, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, 1994, 9.

national political culture may be quite slender so long as it interpellates each citizen as an individual. "Thin," writes Kymlicka, but "far from trivial." The forced choice of citizenship secures that governmentalized "head space" where national culture and state security intersect. Anywhere the principle of a common political rationality is relaxed, the totalizing principle of nationality, driven by forced choice, will, by conquest, annexation or mere absorption, redepoly the society in question under an adjacent or more stable and powerful state.

### **Plateaus of Equality**

In liberal theory it is a given that the political culture of a nation state cuts across human differences such that each citizen consciously and conscientiously enjoys equivalence with regard to rights and duties, occupying what Dworkin calls an "abstract egalitarian plateau." Yet, despite the clarity of this imperative to assimilate citizens to a governing political rationality, liberal democratic states have in practice tolerated differentiated forms of citizenship. This has occurred in ways now considered to be negative; for example, in the impoverished rights historically accorded to women, aboriginal people and immigrant groups. In the latter part of the twentieth century interventions by pluralist western nations have accorded certain special rights on grounds of gender, ethnicity, sexuality and physical ability. Although still controversial in some circles, this is widely accepted to be an advance over the classical liberal doctrine stressing the strict equivalence of citizenship before a culturally-neutral state.<sup>20</sup>

Will Kymlicka holds that liberal states ought to recognize cultural difference as reasonable grounds for extending special rights in certain cases. Kymlicka offers qualified support for the extension of such rights, observing that "differences which arise from people's circumstances—their social environment or natural endowments—are clearly not their own responsibility. No one chooses which race or class they are born into . . . and no one deserves to be disadvantaged by these facts." (186) Prompted by persisting sociocultural inequities he perceives accruing from residual colonialism and from the ethnic pluralization of North America through immigration in the twentieth century, Kymlicka attempts to reconcile cultural difference with the liberal principle of free decision. Keenly aware that the contemporary national cultural context restricts the sorts of projects an

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<sup>20</sup> Thus Rawls and Dworkin have been challenged by a reformist fraction including Will Kymlicka, Jeff Spinner, Iris Marion Young and others. For a cross-section of this recent work see Will Kymlicka ed., *The Rights of Minority Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

individual immigrant, refugee, or aboriginal person can choose to engage in, his remedy is to incorporate a degree of cultural relativism in liberal governance.

Kymlicka recognizes that his own rights discourse has a specific genealogy in Canadian history.<sup>21</sup> He is prepared even to view liberal theorists themselves as an historical community whose discursive practices are conditioned by a certain “form of life.” In his *Liberalism, Community, Culture* (1991) he does not reject core liberal principles in certain important respects. Indeed, he is concerned with forestalling what he views as an excessive drift to relativism on the one hand, and hardening assimilationism on the other. The full debate will not be rehearsed here, but it will be useful to draw out Kymlicka’s deployment of culture as a means of conserving a strong view of liberal political rationality.

In chapter three, Grey Owl’s adoption of an aboriginal personality in the 1930s was viewed as his attempt to transform conventional terms of liberal “choice” by dropping below the threshold of citizenship into the ranks of the “unchosen.” Will Kymlicka admits no such radically transformative choices, nor the cultural hybridity Grey Owl came to embody. Rather he elaborates the “cultural” as a set of discursive practices that stably ground free choice within a fairly rigid notion of what a “culture” ought to be in relation to the state.

To some extent Kymlicka accepts the communitarian position that culture sets the limits of free choice. This is taken to be axiomatic and desirable. When an individual modifies or abandons his or her cultural membership in accordance with *ends* that are not determined by a community’s cultural structure, he maintains, that structure will still refer that individual to choose what is good because choice is pre-coded. “Freedom of choice, then, isn’t pursued for its own sake, but as a precondition for pursuing those projects and practices that *are* valued for their own sake.”<sup>22</sup> The “good” that such choices pursue may be constituted variably within concrete cultural frames of reference. But he sees no need for a set of principles that transcend cultural specificity to reconcile free choice with the good. Where communitarians abstract “community values” into differentiated systems of rights and duties, Kymlicka rather works outward from core liberal principles to address only “particular rights, goals, virtues or duties which are inadequately recognized or affirmed in liberalism.”(76)

More tradition-minded liberal critics such as Chandran Kukathas view this venture into culture as a ground for special rights as at best a slippery slope and at worst an exercise

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<sup>21</sup> See Tully, *Strange Multiplicity*, 71-78, for a discussion of John Locke’s apologetics for extinguishing aboriginal rights in his *Two Treatises* (1690).

<sup>20</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, Culture* , 48.

in bad faith.<sup>23</sup> Kukathas argues that granting cultural rights results in the exercise of force whenever members of a minority trump their group's collective rights with the superior value of their individual rights. For example, what if one's demand to *exit* a minority group violates its internal rules of membership? Forcibly helping a person to leave, which the liberal state is obliged to do, reaffirms its commitment individual 'choice'. But in doing so it may trample on legitimate group rights granted on the basis of cultural difference.

Kymlicka's recognition of "forms of life" as a basis of rights differentiation thus places him at one pole within liberal thought. In this sense, he is not so distant from a Foucaultian response as it might seem: the materiality of these cultural norms will be expressed through language, and their "truth" will be verified within social discourse irrespective of supposedly universal liberal principles. Except for one thing, unlike the pragmatist Kukathas or the discipline-minded Foucault, Kymlicka is not prepared to acknowledge explicitly any direct links between cultural difference and state security.

Implicitly, though, the accumulation of specific cultural knowledge is important to Kymlicka's conception of cultural rights. Disciplined cultural knowledge provides criteria by which the good will find appropriate expression as rights. Ideally, socio-cultural knowledge accumulates in a nationally-conditioned epistemology such that the state and its experts will become more sensitive to cultural differences. Partha Chatterjee calls these the "conceptual instruments of control" through which the colonial state enumerated its polyglot communities.<sup>24</sup> This knowledge is indexed to specific minority groups, tracking their historical development towards full compatibility with liberal principles.

Kymlicka sorts out the different trajectories these historical developments take. He notices three classes of rights to which such groups lay claims: multicultural rights, special representation rights, self-government rights.<sup>25</sup> Extending multicultural rights to accommodate specific habits and customs which do not interfere with the host culture ought not be unobjectionable. Indeed, as this register of cultural differences becomes better understood and accepted liberals can relax their insistence on the strict equivalence of

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<sup>23</sup> Chandran Kukathas, "Are There Any Cultural Rights?" *Political Theory* 20:1 (February, 1992): 105-39.

<sup>24</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*, 223-25. Chatterjee points out further that such "enumerated communities" lost their traditional "fuzziness" by means of two entwined epistemological formations: one, the categories of the liberal democratic state produced by Western political theory, and the other, the ethnological and philological categories that made up the Orientalist construction of India.

<sup>25</sup> Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, "Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work in Citizenship Theory," *Ethics* 104 (January 1994): 352-381.

citizens. Special representation rights are, in principle, temporary, such as employment equity measures. They may be difficult to define and implement, but their necessity presumably decays as various equity goals are achieved. The most problematic class of cultural rights relate to communities with aspirations to self-government. Here liberals struggle with extending rights to those who would alter the very structure of the state, and who pursue alternative rationalities of governance. Kymlicka's "differentiated citizenship" extends asymmetrical cultural rights to alleviate pressure for outright independence.

The presence of this third register of cultural differences within a national jurisdiction inevitably attracts state security attention. Thus, Kymlicka's management of wayward cultural demands through the tactical extension of rights must begin by neutralising something in national history itself: "it would be difficult and potentially destabilizing," he cautions, "for international law to accept [minority claims to sovereignty], since the origins of every state, and virtually every political boundary, are tainted by conquest or other injustices."<sup>26</sup>

During the heyday of the British empire, the British subject in North America, say Susannah Moodie, was measured by her contribution to the glory and perpetuation of that vast enterprise. Confronted with any choice, Moodie easily distinguished the "heroic" from the "cowardly" alternatives by referring them to the imperial context. Her lived subjectivity took its shape within that dynamic enterprise. For Moodie the empire filled every horizon, both spatially and temporally. A melancholy Wittgenstein, a century later, would stress the *impermanence* and partiality of such enterprises:

A culture is like a big organization which assigns each of its members a place where he can work in the spirit of the whole . . . . In an age without culture on the other hand forces become fragmented and the power of an individual man is used up in overcoming opposing forces and frictional resistances.<sup>27</sup>

For Wittgenstein, then, like Kymlicka, culture is an ordering force, patterning human behaviour and civic conduct in a self-organizing process. Except, for Wittgenstein, such "forms of life" are unstable and prone to falling apart or, at least, always changing in unanticipated ways. Agency, once free of the pressure exerted by the spirit of the whole, flies off in every direction.

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<sup>26</sup> Kymlicka, *Rights of Minority Cultures*, 19.

<sup>27</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 6e (1930)

Governmentality, then, is a name for the *dispositif* that holds official culture and individual agency in specific and productive relationships. The intensification of discursive practices around the signs "culture" and "citizenship" in liberal theory indicates some disruption in these relations.<sup>28</sup> Cultural knowledge, in the epistemological sense that Kymlicka engages with it, will be productive of a whole set of powers and resistances that individual agency cannot transcend.<sup>29</sup> In a Foucaultian reading, Kymlicka merely tinkers with regulations in order to make 'free choice' appear freer than it did before, further placing the means of surveillance and coercion out of view. The 'alien' within is thus better understood and more accurately located on 'the plateau of equality,' a liberal term that on close inspection starts to lose its aura of equivalence.

### Postnation

If modern nations ideally 'contain' cultural difference within their sovereign territories, 'postnational' discourse concerns rather the deterritorialized, transnational flows that cut across national cultural surfaces. If national cultures are expressions of a prior forced choice, masking its force with calls to commitment and patriotism, the figure of the postnational promises to alter the terms of choice. In Canada the project of Biculturalism and Bilingualism, launched in the 1960s, was an attempt to make a single national space from the two dominant language cultures, one in which the citizen's allegiance was owed to this dually-constituted unitary state. Yet the parallel introduction of multiculturalism policy,

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<sup>28</sup> A good example of this is J.W. Berry and J.A. Laponce, *Ethnicity and Culture in Canada: the Research Landscape* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 3-9. They introduce ethnicity and culture as the major focus "of an academia that will be asked to provide facts, explanations, and theories" to develop strategies of nation-building. "[T]he evolution from *bi*[-culturalism] to *multi*[-culturalism] is in the logic of nation-building by a dominant ethnic group that rests its legitimacy, in part, on its ability to arbitrate the often divergent claims of the less powerful ethnic communities. The refinement of ethnological knowledge in service of nation-building is a "research landscape," a cue to the purpose of the perceptual register of cultural difference.

<sup>29</sup> For Foucault human agency is a vexed and partial thing; it obtains only as a potential surplus to the citizen's internalization of a regulated freedom. Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, "Political Power Beyond the State: Problematics of Government," *British Journal of Sociology* 43:2 (June 1992), 175. A common 'political rationality' is installed in the citizen by means of "governmental technologies, . . . the complex of mundane programmes, calculations, techniques, apparatuses, documents, and procedures through which authorities seek to embody and give effect to governmental ambitions." For his own treatment of the problem of agency, see Michel Foucault, "The Political Technology of Individuals," in L.H. Martin, H. Gutman and P.H. Hutton, eds., *Technologies of the Self: a Seminar with Michel Foucault* (London: Tavistock, 1988).

enfranchisement of aboriginal peoples, and a gradual liberalization of immigration policies in effect proliferated hyphenated nationalities in Canada. The distinction here is important. Opponents of bilingualism and biculturalism quarrel about the internal arrangements of a state unified under an anglo-franco Establishment, whereas the critics of multiculturalism and immigration target postnational phenomena, whether they use the term or not. One of the key tasks of reformist liberal theory has been to establish this distinction in political discourses on culture.<sup>30</sup>

The figure of the postnational converges from three separate lines of development. The first is associated with the problem for nations posed by guest workers, refugees, and illegal aliens who occupy national spaces without being political members of their societies. The second is the rise of the transnational 'multicultural citizen' who is naturalized, but whose affiliation to the state may be mediated by other group affiliations. The third is the cross-national self-identification of gays, aboriginal peoples and other 'new social movements' as self-described national communities. All three present challenges for the forced choice.

Taking on the "problem" of the first type, Brubaker configures postnational membership in a narrative of progress towards citizenship. On his view, the "denizen" is a proto-citizen who typically enjoys significant social and cultural rights as a prelude to the full political rights of citizenship. The contributors to his edited collection on this subject consistently argue for increasing the pressure of the forced choice to eliminate or reduce intermediate categories such as denizens. Brubaker himself writes:

What are we to make of this extrapolitical membership? On the one hand it brings immigrants into the enjoyment of a wide range of economic and social rights even while they remain, for whatever reason, outside the political community. On the other hand, this very fact probably diminishes incentive to naturalize . . . . Secure status as a denizen . . . may dissuade an immigrant from becoming a citizen. As a way station on the road to full citizenship, denizenship is desirable. But in the long run, denizenship is no substitute for citizenship. European and North American countries must transform their denizens into citizens, enjoying political as well as economic and social rights. Nothing less is required by their self-understanding as democracies.<sup>31</sup>

Here what Brubaker calls "democratic self-understanding" approximates nation's political rationality or political culture. He acknowledges that the denizen may be subject to repressive arts of government until positive processes of governmentality install such "self-

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<sup>30</sup> Kymlicka and Norman, "Return of the Citizen," 372-73.

<sup>31</sup> Brubaker, *Immigration and the Politics of Citizenship*, 162.

understanding." Anxiety is discernible here in his foreclosing on a theoretical category of *permanent* denizenship; that is, those non-citizens who might permanently suspend the forced choice by not desiring citizenship. For Brubaker, residents who are durably anchored in a locality but not implicated in a rights/obligation contract with the state impede the necessary totalization of citizenship.

If Brubaker and his authors view the denizen with a degree of anxiety, Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal's detailed sociological study of denizenship in Europe views postnational belonging as a positive development. Soysal suggests that denizens not be viewed as an "irregularity" in the nation state model of citizenship but rather as revealing "a profound transformation in the institution of citizenship, both in its institutional logic and in the way it is legitimated." Stating the need to go beyond the territory-based theories of the nation-state, Soysal traces the emergence of a separate complex of international human rights that, in her gloss on the postnational model, have worked to displace nationhood and national citizenship in favour of universal personhood. Postnational diversity has already been irretrievably introduced into the juridical and social institutions of many nation states by means of international conventions and a constellation of international human rights organizations. A "new mode of membership anchored in the universalistic rights of personhood," she contends, "transgresses the national order of things."

This is also the view of Arjun Appadurai, for whom understanding the postnational forms of belonging that permeate the national culture of the United States means coming to terms with "the difference between being a land of immigrants and being one node in a postnational network of diasporas."<sup>32</sup> Postnational processes, he says, undermine the nation state's ideal of a homogeneous, stable citizenry enjoying simultaneous national presence in a consensual national narrative.

Soysal and Appadurai maintain that forms of postnational belonging limit nation-states' ability to effectively mobilize their populations in a common political culture, but neither writer addresses how rights of universal personhood might be maintained against the citizen's call to national duty in the most extreme tests of such a political culture. This question brings postnational discourse up against military imperatives that require the forced choice in the first instance, a requirement that seems to get lost in the intricacies of human rights discourses. Soysal's contention that the incongruence of "the two elements of

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<sup>32</sup> Arjun Appadurai, "Patriotism and Its Futures," *Public Culture* 3:5 (1993), 423.

modern citizenship: identity and rights" is the dialectic of national and postnational ignores the thorny question of obligatory national service altogether.<sup>33</sup>

This omission begs the question of whether such international rights of the person represent *transgression*, as she says, or rather a further *reinforcement* of the forced choice, especially when, as she admits, these rights are to be administered by nation states. She allows, too, that such rights may serve to reintegrate denizens into the international system. Thus, even though Soysal's postnational thesis anticipates further regularization of universal, internationally accepted human rights, it is hard to see how this does not in fact *enhance* the system of nationality. As Heidegger said, "nationalism is not overcome through mere internationalism; it is rather expanded and elevated thereby into a system."<sup>34</sup>

If the postnational is to be a thoroughgoing renegotiation of the terms of cultural identification vis-à-vis the state its potency must derive rather from defending its very provisional status as a composite of irregularities. Soysal avoids calling attention to the lack of one human right that would be truly singular: the right not to be a citizen, the right to sufficiency as a subject irrespective of any affiliation to a modern administrative state. This suggestion may seem to have alarming consequences that undermine conceptions of personal and collective security, and represent a setback to attempts to redress social inequality within an international framework. Yet, it is the logical starting point for a political theory of citizenship which recognizes links between culture and national security.<sup>35</sup>

This line of inquiry is closed to liberal cultural policies, literatures, and political philosophies for fear of demobilizing domestic support for national policies, especially militaristic ones. In the conditions of postnationality, patriotism becomes relative and the obligations of equivalent citizenship recede in comparison to the claiming of differentiated cultural rights. Writing of the United States, Appadurai asserts ambiguously that embracing the postnation "may mean distinguishing our attachment to America from our willingness to die for the United States."<sup>36</sup> Given American appetites for militarism, though, the question

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<sup>33</sup> Yesemin Nuhoglo Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994), 159.

<sup>34</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," *Basic Writings*, 244.

<sup>35</sup> Partha Chatterjee, "Religious Minorities and the Secular State: Reflections on an Indian Impasse," *Public Culture* 8 (1995), 32-33, argues similarly that cultural rights are asserted "against governmentality" and that the limit of liberal-rationalist theory is reached when that assertion in effect claims "the right not to offer a reason for being different." (Emphasis his.)

<sup>36</sup> Appadurai, "Patriotism and its Futures," 427.

of the nature and limits of that ultimate civic obligation will determine what future there is for Appadurai's "plural, serial, contextual, and mobile" forms of patriotism.

### Zombies

The Canadian historian J.L. Granatstein, known to CBC television viewers as an erstwhile expert, panelist and commentator on historical matters concerning Canada's national security contributed a chapter to William Kaplan's multidisciplinary volume *Belonging: the Meaning and Future of Canadian Citizenship*. Reworking material already published in his political histories of the Second World War, Granatstein examines citizenship and cultural policy in the ultimate test of patriotism: military conscription. In particular, he rehearses a narrative of uncitizenly behaviour exhibited by the some sixty thousand or more "NMRA men" (known pejoratively as "zombies"), eligible citizens who refused to enlist for overseas service during the war. The zombies are resurrected by Granatstein as spectres of chronic dysfunctionality in the production of Canadian citizenship.<sup>37</sup>

Kaplan's anthology aims at a wide readership and Granatstein, for his part, brings to it a professorial ability to recapitulate certain traces of the national history in a persuasive narrative, reminding readers of their "hard obligations" as citizens. In contrast to the postnational theoretical and sociological interests of Appadurai, Soysal, and Bhabha, Granatstein's narrative and commentary are uttered resolutely from within the national culture he promotes. He never acknowledges the forced choice or any of its possible alternatives; rather he voices what Toby Miller calls the "master command [of citizenship] that we be constitutionally equal." Granatstein endorses "a positive affirmation of Canadian citizenship based on loyalty and domicile" that will produce "free citizens of a free country, willing to volunteer and die for their country."

For Toby Miller, this statement is typical of how individual rights are folded into discourses of citizenship:

In this ultimate court of personage, we are identical. The means of ensuring this equilibrium is a doctrine of equivalence that denies difference. While such a doctrine can work very well at the point of distributing rights, because it refuses to

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<sup>37</sup> J.L. Granatstein, "The 'Hard Obligations' of Citizenship: The Second World War in Canada" in William Kaplan, ed., *Belonging: The Meaning and Future of Canadian Citizenship* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993): 36-49. The National Resources Mobilization Act passed on 18 June 1940; it permitted the conscription of citizens for home defence.

distinguish between categories of person, it does less well at the point of forming these rights, the stage when rights and obligations are defined and divided.<sup>38</sup>

Liberals might well disagree that citizenship can be or ever was so monolithic as Miller claims. Nonetheless, Granatstein expresses Miller's worst fears, declaiming the "command metaphor" of citizenship as a "white, male, heterosexual, polite, capitalist norm," one which Miller claims is "utterly disabling to anything branded as a 'sectional interest.'"

Kymlicka and Miller agree that 'culture', as the sign holding human identity and difference in specific sets of relations, will be the primary focus of political struggle over the content of citizenship. For Granatstein, too, this is crucial. In his view, Canadian governments ever since the First World War have neglected to introduce the sort of cultural policies to produce a well-tempered political culture. The lack of firm national cultural initiatives denied Canada the necessary lubricant for national "mobilization" (a word that so effectively conveys the state's intervention in the movement of gendered bodies in the emergency channeling of resources) at a time of need. The sticky agent they were to dissolve was "low morale," and in his example the zombies' incredulity towards the discipline of national culture was manifested as an incapacity for correct choice.

According to Granatstein, conscription, low morale, and correct are perennial challenges to be addressed in liberal states through citizenship policies. The crises over military conscription faced by Canadian governments in both world wars are precisely the problem of enforcing the forced choice, and *pace* Appadurai, Granatstein believes there is no reason to assume such crises will not return. He summarizes these historical precedents in order to arrest any 'postnational' erosion of citizenship, an erosion he attributes to the malign influence of official multiculturalism.

Granatstein's narrative voice is that of an officer faced with undermotivated and recalcitrant subordinates, and indeed, such an officer soon appears in his narrative. In the spring of 1944, when the government finally tried to press just a small portion of its sixty thousand conscripts into service, it was clear that none of the lessons of conscription in the First World War had been taken. Wartime information and cultural policies had failed miserably to mobilize the ethnocultural minorities for war.<sup>39</sup> To persuade the NMRA

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<sup>38</sup> Toby Miller, *The Well-Tempered Citizen: Citizenship, Culture and the Postmodern Subject* (Baltimore: John's Hopkins, 1993), 221.

<sup>39</sup> In *Conscription in the Second World War, 1939-1945: A Study in Political Management* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1969), 26, J.L. Granatstein writes: "the simple fact is that almost no one in Canada favoured compulsory service in the winter of 1940 . . . Too many Canadian remembered the casualties, the suffering, the internal strife of the Great War."

conscripts to assume their civic responsibilities proved to be difficult, and their commanding officer, Brigadier Macklin, wrote in his report:

The volunteer feels himself a man quite apart from the NRMA man. He regards himself as a free man who had the courage to make a decision. He seldom takes the trouble to analyze the manifold reasons put forward by those who won't enlist. He lumps them all together as no more than feeble excuses masking cowardice, selfishness, and bad citizenship. In many cases no doubt he is right . . . the rift is there all the time . . . it can be detected with ease in the attitude of the men. The volunteer is conscious of his position. He is proud of it. He is anxious to work. He salutes his officers and speaks to them with self-confidence. The NMRA soldier slouches at his work. He tends to become sullen. He nurses a fancied grudge against the army.<sup>40</sup>

Granatstein's quotation of Macklin's assessment is instructive since it presents the terms of choice as pre-given: the volunteer is the "free man who had the courage to make a decision." Yet, the free volunteer's anxiety is detectable here, as is Granatstein's. The volunteer is conscious, not to say self-conscious, of having taken up his position, and the promptness with which he salutes his officers, his anxiousness to work, troubles a reading of "self confidence" here as an outward sign of free decision.

The conscript slouches and apparently makes no decisions. "These men have never been trained from childhood to make important decisions or to think for themselves," the Brigadier wrote, "they are not yet fully educated for democracy." Thus a lack is ascribed to the unwilling conscript that must be redressed by policies and institutions which will inculcate the ideal of their equivalence before the state, their commitment to the 'hard obligations' of citizenship, and their accession through the forced choice into the national political culture. Macklin's report does not associate the conscripts' reluctance to fight with the conflicting tugs of former national allegiances and affiliations. On the contrary, "they do not know what they are fighting for," he reports, "and they love nothing but themselves and their land." Their stubborn insistence on a purely local identification, their utter incredulity towards "national" duty, and their "lack" of national consciousness was unintelligible to the Brigadier.

Was war service the volunteer's 'choice', as Granatstein would have it, or was it more like what Walter Benjamin called "servile integration in an uncontrollable apparatus"? That the conscripted zombies paradoxically asserted their agency by abstaining from such "free decision" was noticed by psychologists attached to the Wartime Information Board:

The attitudes of those NMRA soldiers who have persistently refused to "go active" are closely bound up with the discrimination to which they believe themselves to have been subject . . . a discrimination which is felt by them and their families to

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<sup>40</sup> Granatstein, "Hard obligations", 37.

mark them off, quite unfairly, as a cowardly, unpatriotic and guilty group, disowned by the rest of the army and most of Canada. The reaction to this has been the development of a group morale of their own, based on the conception of themselves standing firm against the organized pressure of the government, the army, the press and most civilians, in fact of almost the whole country. To "go active" under such circumstances is felt, not as courageous step, but a personal defeat, implying their inability to hold out against superior forces ranged against them.<sup>41</sup>

The zombies refusal became the provisional basis for an alternative political rationality, a localized point of resistance of the type theorized by Foucault. "Choice" itself became the object their action because by withholding it they changed the value of its terms.<sup>42</sup>

Brigadier Macklin's report lingered over this problem. The men were willing to serve overseas, he wrote, but only if the government explicitly compelled them to do so. They were willing to serve, but only if the latent force of the forced choice was made manifest. The "rift that was there all the time" was a rift at the moment when free decision and forced choice collided to expose the "state of emergency" that, as Walter Benjamin points out, is not the exception but the rule.<sup>43</sup>

### **The Nationalities Branch**

A systematic genealogy of multiculturalist discourse in Canada would locate a crucial break during the Second World War in the cluster of texts generated by and about the Nationalities Branch of the Wartime Information Board. Already, N.F. Dreisziger, Leslie Pal, and William Young have shown that the contemporary language and institutions of Canadian citizenship and multiculturalism are prefigured in wartime policies designed to control and monitor public opinion, and to mobilize "apathetic" elements of the Canadian population in the war effort.<sup>44</sup> In this respect the 'Nationalities' work of Vladimir Kysilewsky, Tracy Philipps and Robert England merits attention.

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<sup>41</sup> NAC RG 36, volume 31, file 822, pt. 2, Drs. Line, Griffin, and Ketchum to G.C. Andrew, 12 November 1944. In this Top Secret memorandum, the psychologists set out their opposition the proposal of recruiting the mothers of the NMRA men to influence their decision. The NMRA men disturbed the government and the military command to the extent that the remarkable mutiny at the internment camp in Terrace, B.C., was hushed up by the wartime censorship authorities.

<sup>42</sup> Zizek, *Love Your Symptom*, 105.

<sup>43</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History" in Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 257.

<sup>44</sup> Leslie Pal, *Interests of State: The Politics of Language, Multiculturalism and Feminism in Canada* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993). Pal shows how the

Robert England's theory of citizenship derived from his prewar work as an educationalist specializing in the assimilation of immigrant groups. Irish by birth, he worked as an immigration agent for Canadian Pacific Railways in the 1920s settling east European families in the Canadian west. Subsequent experience as a teacher in a remote prairie school prompted him to write *The Central European Immigrant in Canada* (1929).<sup>45</sup> This work is a useful example of how a synthesis of culture and citizenship was envisioned between the wars. In particular, his chapter "The Psychology of Assimilation" precurses the contemporary writings of liberals such as Kymlicka. Drawing from his direct experience with the civic education of ethnic minorities England offered a nuanced treatment of citizenship that deserves a close reading, particularly in view of his subsequent role in forming citizenship policy and institutions during the 1940s.<sup>46</sup>

England's discussion of immigration, citizenship and assimilation to Canadian identity begins by establishing anthropology and psychology as the most relevant disciplines. His reference to Malinowski's *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* introduces "culture" as a ground for special rights and for regulation.<sup>47</sup> Culture provides dense social contexts that are eligible for liberal concern, but England's example—lascivious tribal dancing—in effect marks the multicultural citizen as a sexualized, inferior object of toleration. He discusses how science and colonialism, counterposing eugenics with what he calls curiously the "de-urbanization of an Empire," established the basis for selective immigration on the basis of cultural attributes, primarily considering the "intelligence" of immigrants.

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Canadian state introduced and regulated its own counter-discourses by creating and funding special interest advocacy groups. Also see Pal's, "Identity, citizenship, and mobilization: The Nationalities Branch and World War Two" *Canadian Public Administration* 32:3 (Fall 1989): 407-426, and William Young, "Building Citizenship: English Canada and Propaganda During the Second War" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 16:3/4 (Autumn-Winter, 1981): 121-32. Unfortunately, neither Pal nor Young raises the question of state security.

<sup>45</sup> Robert England, *The Central European Immigrant in Canada* (Toronto, Macmillan, 1929). Page references cited in main text.

<sup>46</sup> Robert England, *Living, Learning, Remembering: Memoirs of Robert England* (Vancouver: Centre for Continuing Education, 1980), see chapter "Concern For Citizenship." The rise of academic expertise in government policymaking during this period is explored by Douglas Owsram, *The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

<sup>47</sup> Bronislaw Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* [1929] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

Culture, he explains, is the source of "psychic unity in a community" that "dominates attitudes, perspectives, hopes, and these in turn have physiological consequences." The "type of culture" affects the "whole machinery of logical thought" and is an "unseen foundation of life" whose "nature can only be understood by patient exploration." Assimilation of immigrants to Canada's cultural modernity will require "a certain standardization of logical processes in thought," (185) the "securing [of] a common language," and the insertion of "interpreters [and] messengers in their communities," (167) where such communities remain impervious to information disseminated through newspapers and national cultural institutions.

The assimilation of immigrants to Canadian nationality in England's text wavers between the individual exercise of free choice and the state's enforcing the terms of choice. He approvingly cites Renan's famous definition of a nation as a daily plebiscite, the "actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to preserve worthily the undivided inheritance that has been handed down." Immigrants have consented to "the work of Canadianization by their deliberate choice of Canada as their country." They have chosen to make "a great break with the past . . . placing their feet on the first rung of the ladder of progress." The fact that they have *chosen* this course: "resolves itself into how best to assimilate these heterogeneous masses of people without forcing the process of transition so rapidly that the best of their inheritance from foreign shores becomes lost." (176)

The recurrence of the words "force," "secure," "choice," and "consent," in England's text locate a disturbance in liberal discourse stemming from cultural difference. "We must be prepared to surrender much individual liberty," he admits, "if we are to secure the fuller freedom which social life confers," concluding that:

The paradox . . . of the achievement of freedom by submission to the bonds of society is what William James would call an "irreducible and stubborn fact," and it is at the root of this matter of assimilation and Canadianization.

Thus, "while we cannot force the immigrant to be a Canadian . . . it is our business to understand him . . . learn to listen," and to promote "wider perspectives, saner ideals, better habits and customs." (165) The best way, according to England, is to measure the efficiency of cultural differences with regards to enhancing Canada's modernity and furthering its ideology of progress.

Yet, despite this seemingly irresistible governmentalizing impulse there is also a parallel emergence in England's text of a minority rights discourse that is also "modern" and, one suspects, genealogically linked to Kymlicka's contributions to contemporary liberal theory sixty years later. "The modern world," he writes, "is more sympathetic to the

idea of ethnic individuality. We are beginning to realize that a primitive people has a right to preserve its own cultural background." (162-63)

The British Empire, England maintains, was "imbued with sufficient sympathy" to "touch other cultures with care." British culture is itself the product of much northern hybridity, a point he emphasizes by quoting a long extract from Daniel Defoe's ironic poem "The True-born Englishman."<sup>48</sup> The dominant anglo-franco official culture is presented as having a common, centuries-old northern heritage, diffusing any tribal essentialism that might undermine Canada's distinctively modern, "forward-looking" status. To "touch" other cultures with "Canadianization" is to distinguish their tolerable and progressive differences from the intolerable traditional ones.

This problem is structured in two ways. First, England's reach to anthropology establishes "culture" as a universal norm. "Our instincts are *alike*," he writes, adding his own emphases, "but they have been *modified by different environments*." Anthropological research confirms that "Man is one" primarily by his "availability for culture." (175) Culture emerges here as the legitimate site for organizing difference in a state. The second way follows the first. The specific quality of "Canadian culture" as the basis for conserving or assimilating difference is its regulation by modernity, the modern systems of knowledge, and the spirit of progress that animates nation-building:

We start in this process of assimilation with an ideal of Canadian citizenship which would accept, from all the peoples who come to us, methods, customs or habits of life that tend towards progress, and we ask in return that our new Canadians correct their institutions, their habits of life, and if necessary, their language to make co-operation possible between us. (169)

With the "standardization" of Canadian identity "we should not require [the immigrant] to surrender anything that might be helpful to unity and progress." Feminizing the immigrant, England judges that "we need not care whether the peasant woman . . . keeps or discards her head dress, unless it indicates adherence to a general scheme of custom and institution alien to the spirit of Canadian progress." (185) As with Kymlicka, who in more recent offerings openly describes his theory as "nation-building," this type of "multicultural right" is not seen by England as an impediment to national development.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Doubly ironic, in that Defoe himself was a government spy who reported on secessionist and non-conformist movements. See Paula R. Backscheider, "Daniel Defoe and Early Modern Intelligence," *Intelligence and National Security* 11:1 (January 1996): 1-21.

<sup>49</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), 22. In this recent work, Kymlicka wonders "why so many otherwise well-informed commentators agree that multiculturalism is impeding integration?" when all empirical indicators suggest that the opposite is true.

What is the content of Robert England's "spirit of Canadian progress"? This figure closely approximates Wittgenstein's "spirit of the whole," cited above in his aphorism on culture, which was written at about the same time as England's book. England employs two motifs that try to pin down this "spirit": one is through temporal references to the "rhythm" and "tempo" of modern life, the other is spatial references to "the local" as most immediate situation of lived identities.

Culture, as a composite of space-time routines is utilized by England to evoke a national chronotope and its affect of simultaneity, beginning with the instinct of rhythm:

The instinct of rhythm, which is at the base of much art and music, . . . is also the instinct to which a ritual or any repetitive process may appeal. Instincts can be repressed, abused, or controlled. The ideal is to teach that self-control and discipline which is part of all good manners. The development of a sense of responsibility in the exercise of power is the one great essential in the promotion of better citizenship. (180)

The European peasant who is accustomed to a different "tempo" and a more primitive environment must both embrace and be embraced by this new discipline. Unconditioned by the pace of life in a modern state, this immigrant otherwise will find the host culture both unintelligible and uncomprehending. He or she must speed up her routines to coincide with the nation's forward drive into the future. "The difference between Canadian and Central European," he estimates, is not insuperable, and "is largely one of time." The difference between Europeans and non-European world he rejects as incommensurable: "races too diverse may be excluded for social, if not biological reasons." (198) Approvingly, he cites Edward Wakefield's *Art of Colonization* (1849) to encourage greater efforts to attract British immigrants by marketing Canada directly to the wives of potential settlers.<sup>50</sup>

The spatial dimension of the chronotope is introduced as the problem of connecting lived local subjectivities with Canada's nationality. Failure to assimilate local concentrations of difference will produce communities whose unadapted instincts will take "a repressed form under modern conditions, [in which] tradition and repressed instinct become twisted into romantic memories which seek realization as rights." (180) England's policy message is that the local system of education must be designed to inculcate citizenship in localized immigrant enclaves: "no loyalty to Canada, no contribution to our national life, is possible unless we secure first *community loyalty* and *community service*." Specifying a mimetic function of cultural identification, he proposes a "transposition" of "their culture and our

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<sup>50</sup> Edward Gibbon Wakefield, ed., *A View of the Art of Colonization, with Present Reference to the British Empire; in Letters Between a Statesman and a Colonist* (London: J.W. Parker, 1849).

institutions . . . so that we may eventually know our institutions to be theirs and recognize that their instincts are a mirror of ours." (173). England's remarkably concise elaboration of culture as a problematic of governmentality invoked a new productive cultural knowledge as the ground for achieving collective security.

### **The Anxiety of Assimilation**

The appointment of Dr. Vladimir Kysilewsky to the Nationalities Branch nicely captures the "psychology of assimilation" at work. As a Polish-Ukrainian who arrived in Canada after fighting the Allied cause in the First World War, Kysilewsky earned a doctorate in Slavic Studies at the University of London under Robert Seton-Watson, the eminent historian of nationalism. In 1941 he was plucked from obscurity in depression-ravaged Ontario by his British friend Tracy Philipps, European Advisor to the Department of National War Services, to set up a small Editorial Section to handle foreign-language press material.

Kysilewsky's own activities and his writings on ethnicity and nationalism deserve a thorough treatment, but here I mention simply his own naturalization as an immigrant.<sup>51</sup> His education placed him firmly within Canada's liberal political culture, and his knowledge made him useful to its Intelligence service from time to time. Although he passed the obligatory security clearance without trouble there remained a technicality regarding his name. Upon his appointment he was advised by Philipps that he should change his name to one "more familiar" to the dominant anglophone culture.<sup>52</sup> Thus Kysilewsky, who pioneered Canadian multiculturalism in the Nationalities Branch, duly became "Kaye" in order to take up that work.

When England wrote *The Central European in Canada* in the 1920s all that lay in the future, but there is in his work an anxiety over assimilation whose overall dimension corresponds with the broad pattern of European colonization and decolonization. One detects an undertow of "colonial panic" that reminds us that England speaks for the culture of occupation. Its symptoms are lapses of faith that modernity and progress will sustain the European colonial moment. England frets that modernity, in addition to other ills, drums consumerism into citizens through "the mass suggestion of advertising." (164) Under capitalism the consumer-citizen is "taught to want things so badly that we will stop at nothing and will drill ourselves to satisfy our stimulated fancy." He calls fervently for

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<sup>51</sup> Myron Momryk, "V.J. Kaye (Kysilewsky) (1896-1976): Ukrainian Family Historian," *East European Genealogist* 3:1 (September 1994): 6-7.

<sup>52</sup> NAC, MG 32, Vol. 445, Personnel File: "Vladimir Julian Kaye (Kysilewsky)."

science, citizenship, and arts of government to perpetuate the colonial grid of race, gender and class relations in postcolonial Canada.

Colonial panic is evident in England's passing comments on aboriginal peoples, whose genocidal dispossession is brusquely justified by their "failure" to settle and develop the land. Perhaps most significant is the fear that without persuasive and non-violent assimilation to Canada's political culture, immigrant communities might develop their own inscrutable political rationalities. Immigrants "are compelled to accept" that "the means of communications have been built up through the years," and they have to adapt to the advanced communicative capacity of Canadian society. Yet, "reaction to progress is all too common," and left alone immigrants will seize the means of communication in service of ulterior and intra-community communication:

The language of the European newcomer is used on the telephone, he begins to create his own newspapers, he has his own stores and dominates the municipal councils and school trustee boards. (177)

There is also the possibility, England acknowledges, that these ulterior, or rather *alterior*, understandings may have their own validity, based in class as well as ethnic difference. For example, irrespective of "industrialization and free schools," the agricultural population of England, though illiterate, "was a more acute judge of political capacity and programmes than the newspaper-reading present day population." (186) Despite his authoritative tone, then, England's project to Canadianize immigrants is already caught up in a series of contests about how the citizen is to be constituted. The terms in which England proposes his project indicate that what is at stake is the nation's common political culture, the culture of freedom, its political rationality, and the degree to which this cluster of concepts is compatible with claims to cultural rights and differentiated forms of citizenship. Contradictions in organizing difference within national culture crop up even in these early theorizations of a Canadian multicultural policy.

### **The Gulf Within**

J.L. Granatstein, it will be recalled, wrote that interwar cultural policies failed to produce a population ready for national mobilization. The efforts of officials such as Robert England, Tracy Philipps and Vladimir Kaye during the Second World War came as too little and too late. Granatstein's call for a hyper-patriotic form of citizenship seeks to block specific postnational developments that undermine Canada's nationality by emphasizing that failure. After sketching out the wartime conscription crises he turns to attack journalist Zuhair Kashmeri's *The Gulf Within: Canadian Arabs, Racism and the Gulf War* (1991), a

record of intrusive measures taken by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) against Canadians of Arabic descent during the 1990-91 Gulf War.<sup>53</sup>

Granatstein argues that Canada's diversified population, thirty-eight percent of whom are of neither English nor French heritage, must not be permitted to weaken the "hard obligations" of citizenship. In the case of the Gulf War, he acknowledges, this meant that security forces had to step up surveillance to ensure that the Arab-Canadian communities did not harbour threats to the Canadian people. He argues that had cultural policies properly integrated these minority nationalities groups such measures might not be necessary.

The amateur photographs in Kashmeri's book reveal private spaces of cultural minorities penetrated because of official uncertainty whether or not 'governmentality' had successfully secured their responsiveness and allegiance to the national culture. In Kashmeri's stories of surveillance, intrusion, and intimidation, the CSIS agents who physically entered these private living spaces figure ridiculously, asking simplistic, leading questions, sniffing suspiciously for "normalcy" and evidence of successful "Canadianization."

If the plain citizen enjoys direct and equivalent contractual relations to their nation state, the *culturally-marked* citizen comes to the state by way of national affiliations and differential processes of identification. "Cultural" citizens are distinguished from "plain" citizens by their previous affiliations; that is, not just by their call for special rights, but by the need they occasion for extra surveillance and specialized governmental and academic expertise. The debate among liberals over cultural rights thus occurs against a shadowy and disavowed history of foreign wars, deportations, internments, and dispossessions.

Zuhair Kashmeri criticizes official multiculturalism for different reasons. Recognizing its coercive undertone, he proposes that a multiculturalism programme that fully accepted the post-national implications of the multicultural state would require that, before launching headlong into the Gulf War, Arab-Canadians be consulted and have direct influence on Canada's foreign policy.

Paraphrasing United Church Minister Tad Mitsui, Kashmeri writes:

If you expand the logic of white English Canadians and French Canadians that says that England or France are not plausible military enemies of Canada because of the historical links between their peoples, so it should be, in a truly multicultural country that the same sensitivities should exist for other groups as well. [A]s a multicultural,

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<sup>53</sup> Zuhair Kashmeri, *The Gulf Within: Canadian Arabs, Racism and the Gulf War*, (Toronto: Lorimer, 1991).

multi-racial country, you cannot take sides with anybody. Canada must adopt a policy of neutrality.<sup>54</sup>

This is too much for Granatstein, who finds the Kashmeri-Mitsui views intolerable. Neutrality, he writes, "if extended back to 1939 would have obliged Canada to remain neutral in the war against Hitler lest German Canadians be offended." This is "simply not debatable" because "Canada is not a neutral or pacifist nation, it never has been, and, given its geographical location, it never can be."<sup>55</sup> German-Canadians, he continues, had no objection to Canada's participation the war with Iraq. Over time they became Canadians, shaping political and international ideas out of the same mix of ideas, received wisdom, and national interests of their compatriots. "They had integrated into the mainstream . . . . Over time, presumably, so will the recently arrived Arabs and Muslims, despite the best efforts of the Department of Multiculturalism."

This is the nub of his critique:

The implications seem clear. If multiculturalism means toleration of ethnic and religious differences, the great majority of Canadians will support it. If, however, it means putting their political traditions aside and shaping their world-view to conform to a half-baked concept of multicultural neutrality, there is simply no doubt that the policy of multiculturalism will be tossed forcibly into the dustbin. Norman Robertson and Brigadier Macklin sought free citizens of a free country, willing to volunteer and die for their country. Old-fashioned as they sound today in the post-Cold War era, those two approaches to the hard obligations of citizenship have much more to recommend them than a policy of multicultural neutrality devoid of substance.<sup>56</sup>

Here Granatstein bares the true meaning of civic obligation. Still, the forced choice remains secreted in the given. Kashmeri is being "utterly nonsensical," posing questions that are "simply not debatable" in asking Canadians to "reshape their world-view." To my ear, Granatstein's irritation betrays a kind of panic produced by something like his own integration in the forced choice. Like Raymond Williams's character in his novel *Second Generation*, Granatstein warns that "if you give [nationality] up too soon, you will lose it to other classes and other nations." Forced choice may elicit hard obligations, but for Granatstein the alternatives are even harder.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid. 130.

<sup>55</sup> Granatstein, "Hard Obligations," 46.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. Yet, elsewhere Granatstein has not been so adamant. In Granatstein and J.M. Hitsman, *Broken Promises: the History of Conscription in Canada* [1984] (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1985), 266, for example, they write that in Canada "we have relatively little experience with war and no military tradition to speak of."

Clearly not moved by this point of view, Zuhair Kashmeri prefaces his book with the hope it is allowed to have a "permanent place before government historians paint the era with the brush of tranquillity." (xi) Granatstein's heated response suggests that Kashmeri and Mitsui succeeded in turning the liberal ideal of the "neutral state" to face its own most extreme conclusion, for they do not ask for special rights, but only equivalence before the state.

### **The Neutral State**

In Kymlicka's writings of a decade ago, ethnocultural minorities could not legitimately demand rights that undermine their national affiliation and civic duty. Cultural rights may be granted to cultural group members only in circumstances where differentiation helps cohere the nation as an administrative unit. Indeed, he allows that security measures may be applied to a cultural minority on a temporary basis if the group lacks the necessary "structure of understandings." Such measures may be required to help "the culture to move more carefully towards a fully liberal society."<sup>57</sup>

J.L. Granatstein is blunter than Kymlicka in expressing his desire that sectional interests be united forcibly in a common political culture, but even he stops short of the extreme "neutral state" positions voiced by Canada's Reform Party. For example, take a speech in 1994 to the Canadian parliament by Jan Brown, then the Reform Party's cultural policy critic, which called for an immediate cutting of "all federal funding to promote multiculturalism in Canada" Brown told the Commons that the Reform Party "opposes the current concept of multiculturalism and hyphenated Canadianism" because it is "a primary factor in the erosion of federalism and Canadian unity":<sup>58</sup>

Catering to special interest groups à la [Pierre] Trudeau and company smashes the spine of federalism . . . Multiculturalism is . . . a hindrance to nationhood. We pay people to have foreign roots.<sup>59</sup>

Brown's speech attempted authoritativeness in two ways. First, she spoke declaratively in the voice of "the people," a supposed "three out of four" Canadians whose tolerance for multiculturalism is at an end. Second, she invoked a range of white male (if not polite) "expert opinion," beginning with Philip Resnick's view that multiculturalism has

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<sup>57</sup> Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, 170.

<sup>58</sup> House of Commons, *Debates*, vol. 133 no. 102, Monday, Oct. 3rd, 1994.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

denied English Canadians the ability "to think of themselves as a nation," and Keith Spicer's comment that multiculturalism has been "an anthology of errors." Brown cited at length another academic, Richard Ogmundson, whose "visceral reaction" to multiculturalism reflected "an acute sense of betrayal." Ogmundson's harangue, as deployed here by Jan Brown, exhibits the cultivated sense of grievance typical of fascist formations. Jan Brown repeated his words verbatim to the Parliament:

The old social contract, upon which I based my life has been terminated . . . . It would appear that the cultural ideal has become that of the hyphenated Canadian . . . there is no cultural space available for someone like myself, who wants to be Canadian . . . I have been deprived of my primary cultural identification by the opportunists who run this country. In a way, one might consider the multiculturalism program to be a form of cultural genocide aimed at the destruction of a pan-Canadian identity.<sup>60</sup>

Ogmundson insists that the state's multicultural ideal of hyphenated nationalities has eliminated Canada's dominant "cultural space." Thus he lays bare the opposition between the freely-choosing citizen and the governmentalized subject, isolating it as an issue of "cultural space." To control this space of representation is to control "primary cultural identification," and thus the technique of cultural nationalist observation. In the remainder of Jan Brown's speech, the purification of national culture from the taint of multiculturalism is invoked not just to reinforce a majoritarian discourse against perceived sectional interests but to *preserve* the conflictual relation between centre and periphery, the regard of the citizen for the alien, warily keeping culture as the surface of visibility. Ogmundson's anxiety reveals how these enunciative boundaries of national language determine the extent to which the alien is already present intertextually in the citizen and vice versa. Brown's speech was a purposeful political mobilization of that opposition.

This is a cultural political struggle for "coherence," in the double sense of that which is binding and that which is intelligible. For Brown, Granatstein, Resnick and Ogmundson, the terms of forced choice are threatened by policies of multiculturalism that permit creeping postnational phenomena to undermine the sovereignty of the state. For Kymlicka, this marks a regrettable and erroneous "loss of confidence" in the capacity of the Canadian federal model to absorb cultural difference and to manage it within reasonable limits. All these writers accept that illiberal security policies, if necessary, must integrate ethnocultural minorities (forcibly if necessary) even if this violates the state's rhetoric of civility. Yet this capacity for violation is clearly a source of anxiety within Canada's political reason, fretting at its "spirit of the whole," contributing to the loss of confidence in national culture that

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

mystifies Kymlicka and frightens Granatstein. After all, as Granatstein shows, zombies and other spectres haunt national culture, continuing to evoke a "state" within the State whose subjects endlessly rush backwards and forwards through psychic time.

### Local Theory

Returning to Terry Eagleton's ironic phrase in the epigraph of this chapter, sophisticated liberal humanists disavow the nuanced internal colonization that seeks to quell the tremors at the "transcendental core of inner freedom."<sup>61</sup> Understanding "governmentality" helps neutralize the forced choice by exposing what Foucault calls the "demonic" incompatibility of two logics of the subject within which I have positioned this writing: the agonistic division between volunteerist participant in the social contract and datum of a "national population." Extending Foucault's original series—economy, population, territory—to include the signs "culture" and "security" has altered the social terrain. Foucault's triad dealt with rights of free movement, free exchange of value, and rights to property, assuming a common political rationality. "Culture" and "security" direct the analysis to the containment of cultural difference and what Homi Bhabha calls the *right to signify*.

And yet, I do not feel this opposition circumscribes my own lived subjectivity as a diasporic subject, one whose ancestors were flung from Iceland and Britain to survive as best they could in an already-obliterated semi-Europeanized wilderness. The lofty and venerable phrasings of liberal philosophy feel borrowed and out of place here; and most Canadian historiography seems bored and embarrassed in its outer orbit around the great metropolitan events and ideas. By the same token, 'governmentality' is a useful concept, but at times it seems (like Foucault, generally) inseparable from some crypto-philosophical vector of French cultural nationalism. Ultimately, a social theory capable of generating change will derive from "our" own dense socio-cultural matrices, whoever "we" might be.

Partha Chatterjee takes up questions of nationality and ethnocultural difference from a fresh perspective, finding examples (even in Hegel) of suppressed narratives of community intersticed in the grids of colonialism and nationality. He concludes *The Nation and its Fragments* with the heresy that liberal political theory, in its origins, was purely local to northern Europe: "One can see how a conception of the state-society relation, born within the parochial history of Western Europe but made universal by the global sway of capital, dogs the contemporary history of the world." Looking at developments in Eastern Europe,

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<sup>61</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The Significance of Theory* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 36.

Russia and even in China, he asks if liberal theory will yield "anything other than strategies seeking to replicate the history of Western Europe."<sup>62</sup> The former socialist territories will be assigned a "history of lack, of inadequacy," and appeals will be made again to political philosophies produced in Britain, France and Germany to start them on the outer lane of progress.

Unlike Will Kymlicka, Chatterjee sees a struggle between community and capital that liberal theory cannot reconcile but tries to contain by reinforcing the modern nation state and its grid of determinate national identities:

This will mean a substantialization of cultural differences, necessarily excluding as "minorities" those who would not conform to the chosen marks of nationality. The struggle between "good" and "bad" nationalisms will be played out all over again.<sup>63</sup>

Here Chatterjee is describing the 'forced choice' of citizenship. Applied to Canada, Chatterjee's analysis raises questions Will Kymlicka and his 'Canadian' political theory of cultural rights.

The question for Kymlicka is whether his tactical transgression of liberal foundations makes him some unidentified species of post-liberal.<sup>64</sup> Despite an almost urgent nationalist tone, in the substance of his writing he seems to have radically opened his theory to post-national phenomena. In *Finding Our Way* (1998) he moves beyond the positions taken in his first book *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (1991). In particular, he recognizes that what he calls "societal cultures" may legitimately inhabit the nation, indeed, they may claim "nation-building" as a cultural right. A "societal culture" is not necessarily a 'national population' in the strict sense defined by Brubaker above, but rather is defined minimally by Kymlicka as a "territorially-concentrated culture centred on a shared language which is used in a wide range of societal institutions, . . . both public and private."<sup>65</sup> The issue Kymlicka wants to foreground is not the right of a 'societal culture' to

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<sup>62</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*, 238.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Will Kymlicka and Ian Shapiro, eds., *Ethnicity and Group Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 3, write "when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, Liberalism appeared to many commentators as the only ideology which retained any validity or viability . . . but liberalism proved incapable of containing or defusing the ethnic conflicts which were unleashed."

<sup>65</sup> Will Kymlicka, "The Debate Over Minority Rights," University of Toronto, Lectures and Papers in *Ethnicity* 26 (December 1997), 8.

become a full-fledged nation, but whether, in its nation-building efforts, a majority visits injustices on its minorities.

Kymlicka is no longer interested in qualifying notions of "equivalence" or demonstrating that the "neutral" state is a liberal myth. Indeed, these debates are exhausted, and he sees a Canadian federal structure inevitably evolving to an asymmetry so radical that it seems reasonable to inquire if the term 'nation-state' will still apply. Kymlicka's acceptance that aboriginal self-government will operate as a different set of political cultures, for example, is not so distant from the "crazy" scheme of Archie Grey Owl in the 1930s to hand wilderness lands back into the care of aboriginal peoples. In his acceptance of some form of sovereignty for Quebec, Kymlicka again cedes something that hard-line liberals and their conservative cousins have long fought against. There are signs, at least, that Kymlicka no longer views the strict enumeration of ethnocultural communities as helpful, but rather he bows to a certain indeterminacy (what Chatterjee calls 'fuzzy communities') out of which a truly local theory might emerge, one which thinks about the welfare of people irrespective of nationality and governmentalization, which neutralizes the force of the forced choice, and thereby brings peace to the 'state' within the State.

This consideration of Kymlicka's latest work is selective and touches just its leading edge, but even a strong reading for its traditional liberal themes would raise the question of security. He is silent about how such an asymmetrical state might mobilize its population for war, or how it might grant asymmetrical rights without a concomitant increase in surveillance and policing. He answers Granatstein's fears that multiculturalism erodes sovereignty by pointing to its *hard limits*, stressing that it applies "pressures both positive (incentives) and negative (barriers)" to promote integration.<sup>66</sup> Canadians, he believes, have been led to think of multiculturalism solely as the total set of demands of special ethnocultural interests when, equally, it is a system that reciprocally imposes the state's demands on such groups. In some respects, then, Kymlicka continues to justify multiculturalism policy with the bad-faith argument of social control.

But beyond this, in order to pursue the most promising avenues of late- or post-liberal thought, the problem of security in its relation to culture will have to be tackled directly by these culturally-sensitive liberal theorists. A liberal theory within which 'forced choice' is *not* axiomatic might ask how identity and rights might be disassociated to eliminate 'forced choice' and particularly its illiberal and effaced logic of state security. Chatterjee writes that the "provincialism of the European experience" should not be "taken as the universal history of progress . . . . These doctrines were produced in complete ignorance of

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<sup>66</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way*, 25

the histories of other parts of the world." Like a battered officer's trunk, dragged through colonial campaigns, across hemispheres and over several bumpy centuries, the liberal kit is still thought by some to be useful and enlightening. Perhaps, as the *faux* reciprocity of the colonial encounter with the North American landscape is gradually undone, as the trophies collected for national museums are slowly returned, there can be a genuine intellectual reciprocity between dwellers and occupiers. *Historiography*, or something that looks like it, might have to precede theory in this case in order to reactivate blocked genealogies of intellectual development.

CHAPTER 5  
CHARACTERIZATIONS OF TRACY PHILIPPS

It is maintained, on the whole, that the English are in Canada either to avoid military service . . . or to "sit out the war" in "cushy jobs" . . . British Officers will, according to these stories, simply "idle away" the war in Canada. Even the Royal Family is said to prefer life in Canada . . . The authorities in Montreal conveniently provide "Blackouts" so that those hordes of Englishmen may disembark under the cover of darkness. . . . [We] Canadians will (like fools) accept all classes and conditions of Englishmen . . . The English always put Canadian troops in the front line . . . French Canadians, it is charged, will be used as suicide troops . . . [R]umors assert that [Mackenzie] King and Churchill are planning an invasion . . . with Canadian troops taking the lead. But at the same time, Churchill is plotting to achieve the defeat of Soviet Russia, or else he is scheming for a separate peace. No matter how you look at it, we Canadians lose out.

*Committee on Morale, Report on Rumours, 1942*

The Managing Director, Scott's, 1 Old Bond Street, W1:

In summer, I do not wear a hat. It is therefore only to wear in very windy, wet and snowy weather. It is therefore a heavy-weight turn-down, medium-wide brim, hat which I need, plenty large enough, and with all the details set out on my card. The initials T.P. should be stencilled inside and it should be well ventilated and 'insulated' against hair grease or sweat penetrating back and showing upon (very dark coloured) inside leather band.

If there is any doubt please enquire by airmail rather than despatch in error. Thank you for your unfailing courtesy and care over a long series of years.

Tracy Philipps  
On War Service in Canada, 1942

Disturbances issuing from the "forced choice" of nationality and citizenship, manifested as rumours, circulated by word of mouth from citizen to citizen, trace the spectral double of a triumphalist nationalism with which the anti-fascist war has been historicized. One wartime rumour pattern of concern to the Committee on Morale was widespread distrust of British war aims and its use of Canada to further them. The Committee's professional psychologists took such rumours seriously, regarding them "as important indices of the state of the 'public mind,' rather than idle fantasies." In their opinion:

They are dramatizations of attitudes, beliefs, or values, or they are attempts to fill in the gaps left by the sources of authentic information . . . They express both the state of the public mind and they are one of the ways in which it is molded.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NAC RG 26 (31), vol. 12, file 8-2-2, Irving, "Report, for the Committee on Morale, of Research of Rumours, September 5th, 1942," 4.

In retrospect, the rumours patterned anxieties associated with Canada's transition from colony to sovereign nation. Ignorant of radar development, for example, Canadians worried about their territorial security, propagating rumours of easy enemy penetration both by sea and air. Concern that the society was breaking down under the stress of war surfaced as rumours of Quebecois consorting with German U-boat crews on the St. Lawrence. In Quebec it was said that the zombies were forced to board troop convoys at bayonet point, and that some were tortured to death in the camps. Again, these bear some fantasmic relation to suppressed information concerning events such as the Terrace Mutiny, and the war resisters hiding out in the bush. Widespread anti-Semitic rumours occupied a yawning chasm in public information regarding the Holocaust, before its harrowing truth was accepted. Axis short-wave propaganda planted rumours to alienate ethnocultural minorities, but tales circulating among Canadians of East European descent that their mail was interfered with undoubtedly had some basis in truth. Tracy Philipps, European Adviser of the Nationalities Branch of the Department of War Services, heard from his Ukrainian contacts in Western Canada rumours indicating unease about the unknown, but presumed massive, scale of Allied Censorship.

The 1942 Rumour Report credits Philipps passingly with supplying rumours to the Committee. But the agency most accustomed to gathering rumours was the RCMP, whose officers across the country were regular collectors. The Mounties' sensitivity to patterns of anxiety was a natural consequence of its information-gathering networks; indeed, they planted rumours to test the efficiency of their dispersed host of informants.<sup>2</sup> The idiosyncratic Tracy Philipps was perhaps too much the object of rumour to have had much heart for collecting them on a formal basis. But the pattern of disturbance he created in wartime Ottawa matches up with anxieties patterned in the rumours. He was fully assimilable neither to Canadians' residual imperialism nor their emerging cultural nationalism. Shocks, static, surges and short circuits punctuate his four-year sojourn as a self-described "electrical engineer" of culture.

### **Cloud-Cuckoo-Town**

In this context it is worth remembering how the oratory of contestant #5 in 1947 glossed the problem of cultural difference with the homily "good neighbour." Her speech shows little trace of the vexed origins of multiculturalism as a problem of state security during the immediately preceding years. Nor does it reflect the activities of its main exponent, Tracy Philipps. This British ethnologist, linguist, naturalist, explorer, intelligence

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<sup>2</sup> NAC, McClung interview, 15 January 1981, ISN 61911.

officer, and relief coordinator was characterized with controlled disdain by one of his numerous enemies as a "minor British aristocrat who arrived in Ottawa in 1940 as a typical soldier adventurer." This might be misconstrued as a compliment, particularly if one is attracted by the purple splash painted by the fifty-year old Philipps on the dour wartime capital. In private communications with protégé Vladimir Kysilewsky, Philipps referred to Ottawa as a "cloud-cuckoo-town," inhabited by officials he dubbed "tweed people." Flitting through the recesses of Mackenzie King's administrative labyrinth were shadowy adversaries: "the Armenian," "the Hindu Kush," and someone he referred to only as "Dynamite."<sup>3</sup>

Despite an insufficient flow of private income Philipps lived in the style of a gentleman. Disembarked at Montreal in June 1940 with his wife, the pianist Lubka Kolessa Philipps, he was furious with Thomas Cook agents for assigning them a second class cabin.<sup>4</sup> For a year he traveled across the country on a self-appointed mission, first assuring Canadians that Britain would remain supreme in the Mediterranean, and then inspecting the "foreign-born" labour force.<sup>5</sup> In a letter to Judge T.C. Davis, Deputy Minister of the Department of National War Services, he compared his work among the foreign-born to "Muhammed's coffin, in mid-air with no visible means of support."<sup>6</sup> After deluging Davis with unsolicited reports and memoranda for more than a year, at last Philipps secured paid Government service under the Judge's watchful eye as "European Advisor" to the newly-formed Nationalities Branch.

As the war intensified, Philipps's flow of personal supplies from blitzed London reduced to a trickle, and his luck seemed to run out. Letters arrived from London shops, in one case regretting "our inability to be of service on this occasion as the casts for your shoes were destroyed when we were blitzed."<sup>7</sup> Philipps's closely-guarded supply of

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<sup>3</sup> "The Armenian" was Ladislaus Biberovich, "the Hindu Kush" was the Reverend W. Kushnir and "Dynamite" was most likely Duncan Cameron, a member of the Committee for Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship.

<sup>4</sup> NAC, MG E350 Tracy Philipps Papers (hereafter TPP), vol. 1, file 16, Thomas Cook Ltd. to T. Philipps, 20 March 1941. A representative replied evenly that Philipps received exactly the accommodations paid for.

<sup>5</sup> "Distinguished Soldier Is Sure Britain Will Remain Supreme in the Mediterranean," *Edmonton Journal*, 20 November, 1940.

<sup>6</sup> NAC, TPP, vol. 1, file 24, T. Philipps to T.C. Davis, 7 July 1941.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, file 22, Lawn and Alder, Merchants and Colonial Agents, to Tracy Philipps, 21 Sept. 1942. He had received their apology about his spectacles: "Our premises & records were totally destroyed on April 17th & our optician suffered a similar action on May 10th."

"serum" dried up, as did hope for replacement spectacles.<sup>8</sup> At his lowest point, facing real and imagined enemies on every front, he was struck down by a toboggan full of children while walking to work on O'Connor street, suffering a painful back injury. The single bright spot was his unshakable friendship with Vladimir Kysilewsky, his compatriot in the Nationalities Branch.

In his work, Philipps observed few bureaucratic protocols. Cabinet ministers such as Louis St. Laurent and Colin Gibson, fellow residents of the Roxborough Apartments, were ambushed by the peripatetic expert on European nationalities, roaming the corridors in his dressing gown. To Philipps's dismay, his informal access to these Ministers ended in 1942 with the departures of Judge Davis and his own Minister, Icelandic-Canadian Joseph Thorson, neither of whom seriously objected to Philipps's unorthodox style. The new Minister of National War Services, General Leo R. LaFleche, barred Philipps from his office and forbade his meetings with high officials. LaFleche instructed Chester Payne, his timid Deputy Minister, to reel in the roving Englishman and ground him to Ottawa.

Even worse things were afoot. Philipps's fractious separation from his wife soon after their arrival in the capital raised eyebrows in strait-laced upper echelons of the bureaucracy, and provided salacious ammunition to his detractors. She took refuge with Ladislaus Biberovich, a family friend, and chief translator in the Press Censorship. A scandal ensued with charges hurled back and forth between the parties. Press reports smeared Philipps, naming him as an appeaser with fascist inclinations who used his government position to promote right-wing ethnic elements, secretly attacking legitimate left-wing individuals and organizations.

As Philipps's star set, both publicly and privately, in the eyes of Ottawa's bureaucratic elite, natural predators began to close in. When left-leaning John Grierson took over as Manager of the Wartime Information Board in February 1943, he discussed the complaints against Philipps with Norman Robertson, the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs. It was only a matter of time before means were found to force Philipps's exit. Terrorized by his "incomprehensible" European Adviser, Chester Payne expressed deep gratitude when Robert England agreed to write a consultant's report that resulted in Philipps's departure from Canadian government service in 1944.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., file 11, Tracy Philipps to T.E. Frost, 18 November 1942. Philipps's serum, "strictly for my use alone," was obtained by mail from the Manager of the Army and Navy Club, Pall Mall.

Despite Tracy Philipps's failure to stabilize his position in "cloud-cuckoo town" many so-called "new" Canadians regarded him as their champion. He was received "almost as a Messiah" in parts of Canada where immigrant communities went entirely ignored by government, except as security risks monitored by the RCMP. He compared his reception in remote areas of Canada to what he had met with T.E. Lawrence in Arabia. Philipps lobbied vociferously on behalf of ethnic minorities even as he used their trust to glean information to improve his standing with the Special Branch of the RCMP. As both an early exponent of official multiculturalism and a police informant, Philipps exemplified the ambivalent relationship between multiculturalism and state security.

The traces of Philipps' Canadian story are retained mainly by the good graces of his friend Vladimir Julian Kysilewsky, or "Kaye," who stored his wartime papers for many years. As an unofficial fixture at the National Archives after his retirement, Kysilewsky prepared and deposited Philipps's manuscripts, perhaps to settle some old scores. In his mild way, while protecting his friend from the revelation of adverse personal information, he nonetheless made a gesture against the climate of official secrecy and suspicion of minorities he had endured during his public service career. He must have known that these documents included details of RCMP and government activities otherwise unavailable in open records.

To date, the security dimension of Tracy Philipps's activities has been lightly reported on. He is characterized merely as an opportunist who led the Government astray briefly in its policies towards immigrant communities during the war. Indeed, his resignation in May 1944 dates the beginning of the "rationalized" Citizenship Branch. As Leslie Pal writes, the Nationalities Branch's difficulties went beyond the problem of resources:

The larger difficulty had been with its personnel and in particular the European adviser, Tracy Philipps. Philipps was British, had little experience of Canada, and approached the ethnic question not from a Canadian vantage point but from a European one. This had led him to propose positions . . . at odds with Canadian Government and Allied policy. With [Prof. George W.] Simpson's resignation and the Cabinet's failure to appoint a deputy minister, Philipps effectively took over the administration of the branch. A British soldier and adventurer was thus in charge of a Canadian branch of government responsible for non-English and non-French nationalities.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Leslie A. Pal, *Interests of State: The Politics of Language, Multiculturalism and Feminism in Canada* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993).

The Advisory Committee on Co-operation in Canadian Citizenship (CCCC), in their confidential report following Philipps's departure, called this an "extraordinary situation of an Advisor who was not Canadian, and with a very limited knowledge of Canada, in charge of activities the purpose of which was to teach Canadian citizenship. Being familiar only with the European pattern, he placed his emphasis on the political problems in Europe rather than the cultural contribution of these groups to Canada."<sup>10</sup>

Philipps's "European" vantage point was anachronistic and incompatible with the progress of Canada's cultural nationalist narrative.

His unfettered circulation among Canadian ethnic minorities in 1940-41 is rendered as counterproductive; indeed it was *embarrassing* to the emergent rhetoric of the "society of immigrants" so seamlessly articulated by Paul Martin and Contestant #5 just a few years later.

Philipps is an incandescent flare who illuminates the murky cultural workings of Ottawa during the war years. Only an upper-class British eccentric could so have insinuated himself into the propaganda, censorship, and intelligence components of Canada's nascent culture/security apparatuses. At once a multiculturalist, RCMP informant, recipient of censored communications, propagandist, and voracious consumer of secret security intelligence data, the dervish-like Philipps left many traces.



Fig. 44. *Edmonton Journal*, November 20th, 1940

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 72; RG 35/7 National Records Committee Files, vol. 16, Advisory Committee on Co-operation in Canadian Citizenship, Part II (confidential), 2.

## Characterization and Historical Truth

Wittgenstein somewhat obscurely locates “character” in such qualities as *tempi*, *colour*, *intonation*, and *the major or the minor key*; that is, in an ensemble of ineffable attributes that pass through the lens of talent, he says, to produce genius.<sup>11</sup> This is how newness enters and renews wonderment in human societies. It is possible to have talent without genius, he believes, but never genius without “character,” and *having* character as opposed to simply being identified as occupying a niche in history is crucial to the “truth” of any historical characterization of genius. Historical characterization is baffled by a genius already outmoded in its own time, and may ascribe it to madness.

Tracy Philipps was out of his element in Canada, operating uncomfortably in a changing communicative context that placed his rationality in question. Whereas Wittgenstein suggests that madness can “be seen as a more or less sudden change of character,” the “mental instability” attributed to Tracy Philipps is more plausibly the inverse of this relation.<sup>12</sup> That is, Philipps’s “character” *did not change enough*, and its rationality failed to adapt to more or less sudden changes in the surrounding communicative context.

Such a figure left behind by a society’s changing tenets of rationality is unlikely to be remembered as a genius, since by definition the genius gives his or her name to their time. Outmoded genius invokes rather that connotation of “character” that signifies eccentricity, singularity, and the quality of defying, transgressing or exaggerating social conventions. When so-and-so is called a “real character” with a shake of the head, as opposed to “lunatic” or “deranged,” it is expected that this person is one of those who flexes social norms, but within tolerable limits. Cultivation of personal idiosyncrasy can even rate as an advanced form of cultural capital. It was raised almost to the level of pedagogy at Tracy Philipps’s boyhood school, Marlborough. In characterizing Philipps, I suggest, one must not filter out traces of his out-of-step strangeness, for it is these which image the ‘state’ within the state.

The historical observer, the ‘virtual reader’ imputed by historical writing, depends on how such dissonant traces are handled. N. F. Dreisziger treats the cluster of sources concerning Philipps, Vladimir Kaye and the Nationalities Branch in two book chapters and

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<sup>11</sup> Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 35e, 84e.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 54e.

a journal article.<sup>13</sup> Published in 1988, 1991 and 1997, his shifting characterizations of Philipps expose a ridge of pressure between culture and security in Canadian nationalist historiography.

Initially, Dreisziger traces the origins of Canadian multicultural policy during the war with straight-up whiggishness.<sup>14</sup> In September of 1939, he writes, Canada was prepared to fight a war in Europe neither in military nor psychological terms, “in particular, the country did not possess the administrative machinery to involve in the war effort the portion of the population that was neither of British nor of French background.” The formation of the Nationalities Branch was one solution to this problem; it resulted from the efforts of “several members of the country’s elite” who recognized that masses of unassimilated immigrants impeded war mobilization. Despite early setbacks, “[t]he beginnings of this bureaucratic apparatus were a small but telling and vital aspect of the general process whereby ethnic minorities in Canada have acquired a higher profile and greater influence in the country’s affairs.” It resulted in the “increased integration of newcomers into the Canadian economy as well as into social and cultural life.”

Tracy Philipps enters the diegetic in June 1940, in the crisis atmosphere that prevailed during the sweep of Hitler’s armies across Northern Europe towards the English Channel. Philipps emerged by default because the ‘old hands’ considered more capable of dealing with European minorities, such as Robert England and Watson Kirkconnell, declined the Nationalities brief. It happened that Philipps was on the scene to “do the actual building of the bureaucratic infrastructure.”<sup>15</sup>

Philipps descended from “an upper-class family, many of whose members had served Britain and the Empire with distinction,” Dreisziger writes, noting Philipps’s Oxford degree and his soldiering in Africa, “after which he had been in the service of the British government on various diplomatic and intelligence-gathering assignments.” Author of

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<sup>13</sup> N. F. Dreisziger, “The rise of a bureaucracy for multiculturalism: the origins of the Nationalities Branch,” in Norman Hillmer, Bohdan Kordan, Lubomyr Luciuk, eds., *On Guard For Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State, 1939-45* (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the Second World War, 1988): 1-29; “Tracy Philipps and the Achievement of Ukrainian Unity” in Stella Hryniuk and Lubomyr Luciuk, eds., *Canada’s Ukrainians: Negotiating an Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991): 326-341; “7 December 1941: A Turning Point in Canadian Wartime Policy Toward Enemy Ethnic Groups?” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 32:1 (Spring 1997): 93-111.

<sup>14</sup> Dreisziger, “The rise of a bureaucracy for multiculturalism.”

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* Davis was seconded from the Saskatchewan bench in July 1940 to establish the Department of National War Services.

published papers in scientific and anthropological journals, Philipps “also prided himself on his linguistic skills. He spoke French, German and Italian, and claimed knowledge of Turkish as well as thirteen African languages.” Dreisziger describes Philipps as “a man of determination, boundless energy, and a great deal of ambition,” who won admiration and provoked hostility as he addressed audiences across the country with inspired and spell-binding oratory.<sup>16</sup>

Philipps’s “bombardment” of Judge Davis and other government contacts in Ottawa with unsolicited memoranda, and his frenetic itinerary of public speaking and factory inspections in 1940–41, is rendered by Dreisziger as a gradual erosion of the Englishman’s credibility. Although he was hired to work under Davis, he was disliked by Norman Robertson of the Department of External Affairs, deliberately overlooked as a candidate in the search for a Director of the Nationalities Branch and, eventually, “grounded to Ottawa.” Until Robert England’s reorganization of the Nationalities Branch was implemented in the winter of 1944, it remained mired in controversy and inactivity. Philipps progressively alienated himself from influential officials, leading to calls from “just about every senior bureaucrat in External affairs, as well as John Grierson of the Wartime Information Board . . . for the resignation of the controversial Englishman.” Robert England’s reorganization “avoided some of the deficiencies of the Nationalities Branch,” Dreisziger writes, “notably it eased Philipps out of Canadian government service.”<sup>17</sup>

In his most recent offering, Dreisziger relegates Philipps to a footnote, and instead crafts his tale around senior bureaucrat Norman Robertson, characterizing him as the enlightened benefactor of immigrant groups in wartime Ottawa.<sup>18</sup> He focuses on December 7, 1941, a date of special significance to the subsequent treatment of ethnic minorities in Canada. In the first place, Canada declared war that day on Axis Allies such as Finland, Hungary and Roumania. Robertson pressed the Cabinet to exempt Canadian Finns, Hungarians and Roumanians from internment provisions in the Defense of Canada Regulations. The second event of that day was Japan’s bombing of Pearl Harbor, leading to the internment and expropriation of Japanese Canadians. Although Robertson did not forestall the latter process, Dreisziger credits him both with preventing further internments and with aiding ethnic minorities in general by helping to create the Nationalities Branch and its steering Committee.

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<sup>16</sup> Dreisziger, “A Turning Point,” .

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

As historical characterization, Dreisziger's "Norman Robertson" performs ideological work: modern liberal Canada takes the foreground against the reactionary background personified by Ernest Lapointe (a close adviser to Mackenzie King who died—propitiously for Robertson and the ethnic minorities in question—in the weeks prior to the events Dreisziger describes).<sup>19</sup> Indeed, "Lapointe" passes on so that "Robertson" can fulfill his destiny, for "Fate had prepared [Norman] Robertson for an important role by giving him a humanistic upbringing and a pivotal position in wartime Ottawa." Robertson was by conviction a civil libertarian and a humanist, "a gentle man who operated in the world of power."<sup>20</sup> Thus the character "Norman Robertson" is cut to fit Canada's future posture, as written in its official histories: intelligent, moderate, humanistic, gentle and compassionate:

From the time of Lapointe's illness and death, Robertson played a key role in the efforts to improve the treatment of Canada's enemy ethnic population . . . Robertson and other moderates failed only in their desire to avert the implementation of harsh measures against Canadians of Japanese background . . . . But . . . [t]hey had helped make a virtual non-event—the Canadian declaration of war on Finland, Hungary and Romania—a turning point . . . . Canadians can regard that date as an occasion when their country came a step closer to being a tolerant society.

By foregrounding Robertson and his prevention of internment for former nationals of minor Axis powers, the fact of *actual* internments, not just of the Japanese but of Italian, German and French Canadians, as well as others, recedes from view.<sup>21</sup> Dreisziger discusses neither the extent of security operations against ethnic minorities during the war, the way these blended into a latent anti-Communism in government circles, nor how that outlook proliferated with near religious fervour in the post-war period. Moreover, institutionalized anti-Semitism and the steep restrictions placed on Asian immigration pass without mention.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> NAC RG 26 (31) vol. 12, file 8-2-2, Irving, "Report, for the Committee on Morale, of Research of Rumours, September 5th, 1942", 5. Rumours held that Lapointe was murdered and the case hushed up.

<sup>20</sup> Dreisziger cites J.L. Granatstein, *Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft, 1929-68* (Toronto: Deneau, 1981), 97.

<sup>21</sup> Mario Duliano, *The City Without Women: A Chronicle of Internment Life in Canada During the Second World War* trans. Antonino Mazza. (Oakville, Ont.: Mosaic, 1994) Playwright Duliano was interned as a suspected fascist sympathizer; his Fredericton camp diary records that the internees were of eighteen different nationalities.

<sup>22</sup> Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948* (New York : Random House, 1983); Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates :*

Without disputing the liberal virtues of Norman Robertson, nor how far the tentacles of his characterization extend into various corridors of national history, is it clear enough how he is deployed here as a character-type in the teleological structure of a cultural nationalist narrative. Underlying Dreisziger's characterization of Robertson is a legitimation of the actually-existing Canadian state in relation to cultural minorities, and the very criteria of Robertson's visibility is his contribution to its socially-integrating force. Conversely, Tracy Philipps's characterization in these two accounts verges on embarrassment.

Philosopher Béla Szabados recuperates embarrassment as a *productive* stimulus that pricks the overconfidence of the present.<sup>23</sup> Everything one writes will eventually be historicized, and as such, "feelings of embarrassment are likely." Even the virtually seamless alignment of Canadian historiography with nationality may well become a point of embarrassment one day:

For the confidence of the present, rather its overconfidence, cannot survive keeping track of the failures or partial successes of the past. For the present moment will become part of such a track, eventually.

Thus Szabados calmly mortalizes writing in the humanities, tracking it ahead as the source of future shame. He wants to point up the wearing out of entire *epistemes*, the paradigms and discourses that sustain the confidence of the present. He recuperates the type of life that Nietzsche describes as running along beside its knowledge "like a wayward bass which refuses to harmonize with the melody," a life which may be embarrassing, or maybe not.

It is striking that the third of Dreisziger's characterizations of Philipps is *unembarrassed* and keyed closely to Philipps's waywardness and dissonance.<sup>24</sup> His account of Philipps circulating among Ukrainian Canadians in the autumn of 1940 lacks the omniscient voice-of-authority narrating the nation's progress towards multicultural equilibrium. Rather, Dreisziger descends from the "high eminence" of official pan-Canadian consciousness to write from the ground elevation of the Ukrainian diaspora on the Canadian prairies. Like W.E.B. Du Bois's "double consciousness," with which diasporic African cultures maintained their discreet rationality enfolded into that of a dominant culture, the Ukrainians are brought into historical visibility here not by the interests of state but by

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*Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-1990* (Toronto : Dundurn Press, 1992); Reg Whitaker, *Double Standard: The Secret History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto : Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1987).

<sup>23</sup> Bela Szabados, "Autobiography and Philosophy," *Metaphilosophy* 26:1-2 (January/April, 1995), 75.

<sup>24</sup> N.F. Dreisziger, "Tracy Philipps and the Achievement of Ukrainian-Canadian Unity."

Tracy Philipps's wayward character.<sup>25</sup> As such, Dreisziger repositions the reader in a more contested dialogue with the state's official memory.

This detachment can be specified. For example, the word "unclear" describes the Canadian government's obscure intentions towards Ukrainian-Canadians. The reader does not, as in the other articles, look outwards through the panoptical eye of the state, but rather, must assume a diasporic consciousness that peers into government from the outside. Despite Judge Davis's "ex-post-facto claim" that the Department of National War Services achieved the unification of rival Ukrainian Canadian groups during the autumn of 1940, Dreisziger's central argument here is that the government had little or nothing to do with it. Unification resulted primarily from Tracy Philipps's "personal mission" to create an independent anti-communist Ukraine as an eastern bulwark of British influence against Bolshevism. Philipps is characterized by Dreisziger as acting above the call of duty, solely on the authority of his own convictions, and out of step even with the British Foreign Office. To revise the false impression left by Davis, and subsequently etched into Canadian nationalist historiography, Dreisziger characterizes Tracy Philipps as a "real character," in Wittgenstein's sense, with at least a modicum of true genius.

This Tracy Philipps is far from an ineffectual meddler. Dreisziger introduces him through the extended biography provided in the brochure from his first Canadian lecture tour in 1940: seventeen paragraphs in which Philipps listed his exploits as a soldier, civil servant, diplomat, colonial administrator, scientist, explorer, war correspondent, League of Nations official, and writer on academic subjects in 'Comparative Religion, Anthropology, Zoology, and on certain aspects of Bird Migration.' He is a man of action ready to seize an opportunity.

Philipps secured the unification of Ukrainian-Canadian elements against the odds during two days of high-pressure meetings in Winnipeg. He and Professor George Simpson presided over negotiations between various factions whose product was the solidly anti-communist Ukrainian Canadian Committee (UCC). Not least, this unification officially established the term "Ukrainian" as designating a single nationality group in Canada, formerly referred to severally as "Austrians," "Bukowinians," "Galicians," "Ruthenians" and "Little Russians."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1994), 126-7, writes that in Du Bois's writings double consciousness came to "animate a dream of global co-operation among peoples of colour," an "unhappy symbiosis" of racial particularity, national identification ("ex-slaves but not-yet-citizens") and diaspora, which is "sometimes global and occasionally universalist."

<sup>26</sup> Vladimir J. Kysilewsky, *Early Ukrainian Settlements in Canada, 1895-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964). See "The Problem of the Ethnic Name", xxiii-xxvi:

In reporting this achievement Dreisziger sketches the Ukrainian Diaspora's micro-physics of power. In contrast to citizens whose "imagined community" is identified with an actually-existing territorial jurisdiction, the Ukrainian diaspora refers to an "imagined territory." Lacking a geographical basis for stable administration, he writes, "the members of an ethnic group have nothing to prevent them from setting up myriad organizations" and dissipating collective energy in factional rivalries and "fratricidal politics."<sup>27</sup> Achievement of Ukrainian-Canadian unity thus focused Ukrainian Canadians as a "nationality" group, but one without a sovereign geo-political referent in Europe.

Philipps's shotgun marriage of disparate factions did not please all parties for long. After Hitler turned on the Soviet Union in 1941, squabbles with the communist elements shut out of the negotiations turned the UCC into a destabilizing force in Canada-Soviet relations. Furthermore, Hitler's invasion obviated Philipps's estimates of British interests in Eastern Europe. Despite these turns of fortune, Dreisziger insists Philipps be credited as a peculiar external catalyst without whom Ukrainian-Canadians could not have combined their efforts as a single ethnic lobby in Ottawa; that achievement, such as it was, cannot be claimed for the Canadian Government.

Details of Philipps's role are known because of a car ride he took with Bill Burianyk after the Winnipeg negotiation was concluded. The Englishman welcomed a lift to Saskatoon, and in the beguiling intimacy of Burianyk's automobile, passing across the flat and lightly populated autumn prairie, Philipps confided frankly his views and motives regarding the Ukrainians and the Canadian government. Alas for Philipps, Burianyk was a regular informant of Manitoba provincial authorities, and a report of the conversation was soon on the desk of Norman Robertson in Ottawa.<sup>28</sup> Philipps's incautious statements deriding "old fogeys" in the British Foreign Office, who were not "big enough" to aggressively support an independent Ukraine could not have impressed Robertson. Moreover, he learned that Philipps viewed his mission primarily as furthering the *imperial* interest through his actions in Canada.

Philipps may never have learned of Burianyk's duplicity, but he noticed the change in his rapport with Robertson, whom he had praised to Kysilewsky as "unusually capable

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"A stateless nation which becomes a minority in an alien body politic is invariably exposed to political, social and economic pressure aimed at the obliteration of its identity . . . . Ukrainians within the Russian Empire were subjected to all of these pressures . . . [with the result that] the peasant masses in both politico-geographic areas, Galacia and Bukowina, [who emigrated to Canada] had little national consciousness."

<sup>27</sup> Dreisziger, "A Turning Point," 339.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

and charming.”<sup>29</sup> Given Philipps’s own addiction to secret information, his previous Intelligence service, and the alacrity with which he reported to the RCMP Commissioner any stirring on the Left during his travels around the country, it is surprising and perhaps fitting that he should have unburdened himself to an unreliable stranger. Philipps’s hard-earned moment of success thus foreshadowed his eventual undoing, and it provides an entry point to the suppressed aspect of his historical characterization, his relations with the various branches of state security.

### Colonial Panic

In 1927, British writer F.A.M. Webster published a novel, *The Man Who Knew*. Like Tracy Philipps, Webster served British Intelligence in Asia and Africa during the First World War. His novels and journalism specialized in athletics, military history, and colonial espionage fiction. In the latter category he wrote more than a dozen novels, including *The White Nigger*, *The Black Shadow*, *Son of Abdan*, and *East of Kashgar*, the latter subtitled “a secret service story [set] in little-known parts of Asia [and based on] the author’s peculiar knowledge of out-of-the-way corners of the world and the men who work there.” Although not mentioned by Dreisziger or Pal, *The Man Who Knew* is cited prominently in Tracy Philipps’s *curriculum vitae* as a fictionalized treatment of his own career as an intelligence officer in Africa and the Middle East after the First World War.<sup>30</sup> Bearing Philipps’s endorsement, Webster’s characterization contrasts fictionally the intermittance of “real” Tracy Philipps’s social authority, supplying a counterpoint to his peculiar moments of *powerlessness*, even helplessness in Canada.

Webster’s “Phillip Tracey” resembles the Tracy Philipps researchers meet through his manuscripts in the National Archives. Philipps’s claim that Webster’s novel was written “without consultation” seems doubtful.<sup>31</sup> Much of its ethnological detail seems to derive directly from Philipps’s studies of African secret societies opposed to European rule.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, despite Kysilewsky’s judicious weeding (snipping off dates and names and

<sup>29</sup> NAC, TPP, vol. 2, file 28, Tracy Philipps to V.J. Kaye, 13 January 1941.

<sup>30</sup> F.A.M. Webster, *The Man Who Knew*, (London: Selwyn and Blount, 1927).

<sup>31</sup> NAC, TPP, vol. 1, file 1, “Personal Dossier,” undated autobiographical summary. It states: “In 1927 the well-known British author F.A.M. Webster made (without consultation) Mr. Philipps, under the thinly veiled disguise of ‘Philip TRACY’ [sic], the principal character of his historical romance, ‘THE MAN WHO KNEW.’”

<sup>32</sup> Robert England Papers (hereafter REP), vol. 3, file 1. Three of Philipps’s numerous articles are collected here: “Pan-Islam in Africa” (1917), “The Tide of Colour” (n.d.) and “Nabingi: An Anti-European Secret Society” (1919).

adding his own marginal comments) it is obvious that Philipps often supplied information “off-the-record” to writers and journalists.

*The Man Who Knew* is consistent with the genre of espionage fiction that first emerged as anti-German propaganda in Britain during the First World War, although it has little to say about Germany.<sup>33</sup> Post-war Weimar is rendered as corrupt and under the sway of a Jewish conspiracy whose influence is considered to be global. The novel’s gung-ho anti-Semitism is a depressing reminder to post-Holocaust readers of the robustness of that prejudice in inter-war Britain and its colonies. Webster’s Germany is an errant but thoroughly-chastised brother in the European fraternity, and his geographical focus for British espionage activity will not be Europe itself but rather its colonies in Africa and Asia.

Phillip Tracey, Deputy Director of African Intelligence, receives secret information pointing to nothing less than an impending global uprising against European imperial authority. Manipulated from Moscow by ruthless “Jewish Bolsheviks,” the “Coloured League” is poised to launch a concerted, global anti-colonial insurgency leading to “a world conquered by coloured peoples, but ruled by the Russian Terrorists of Leningrad.” A leader named Kosdrewski is “to be the biggest kind of noise in the coming trouble”:

He it was, who was neither black nor white—that piece puzzled us badly—who was going to overcome all those religious and racial scruples which, so far, held the innumerable warring factions in Africa, Asia and India apart. (70-71)

According to Tracey’s source, the insurgents’ intended programme was: “USA negroes return West Indies and Africa; Africa for Africans; Australia for China and Aborigines; America for Japan ((possible revival of North American Indians)).”<sup>34</sup> It enrages Tracey’s friend Jim Carruthers to think of “his” Africa delivered from the beneficent, ordering effects of white rule:

nor did it make me feel any better to read that tosh about Red Indian power in North America. When I thought of those jolly looking Canadian lads I had last seen going up at Ypres, just before the Huns launched the first gas attack against them, my blood fairly boiled.”

Carruthers believes that only Phillip Tracey--“among the first half-dozen of Great Britain’s secret service agents”—stands any chance of foiling this great conspiracy. (129)

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<sup>33</sup> See Wesley Wark’s introduction to his, ed., *Spy Fiction, Spy Films, and Real Intelligence* (London: Frank Cass, 1991). In fact, F.A.M. Webster’s post-WWI novel is respectful of German Intelligence exploits, particularly information gathering under the guise of archaeological surveys.

<sup>34</sup> Webster, *Man who Knew*, 71. (His ‘scare’-brackets.)

F.A.M. Webster hails readers as white, male gentiles “in the club.” His dedication signals that the novel “deals with some things that are known and some that are within the realm of possibility.” This cue to subtext is not the prudent self-censorship that J.M. Coetzee diagnoses in the racist theorist Geoffrey Cronjé’s justifications for apartheid in South Africa.<sup>35</sup> Cronjé’s extremism, if set out *en clair*, could have been turned against him by his opponents. On the contrary, *The Man Who Knew* is disarmingly overt in its racism, as if intensifying a general racialized consciousness helped resist any relaxation of colonial authority or of anti-Semitism.

As an index of imperial neuroses—the “colonial panic” underscoring the Anglo-culture of imperial occupation—the novel delineates patterns that are elided from more discreet accounts. The “real” Tracy Philipps, despite his penchant for secrecy, intrigue and encrypted communication, also was notoriously and uncontrollably indiscreet about European colonialism. For him it remained an alive and vibrant formation, even if this distressed some of his Canadian hosts in the early 1940s. In this context *The Man Who Knew*, like the records of its real life hero in Canadian archives, is an embarrassing text because it exposes with unintended precision the cultural, political and sexual contours of colonial panic.

### **Black Shadows**

As war churned across Europe cultural policies in Canada attempted, albeit tentatively, to integrate recent Eastern, Central and Southern European immigrants in a pan-Canadian civic consciousness. That the “foreign-born element” so-defined were drawn into the Canadian situation from Europe, and not from any of the Asian or African colonies, is a demographic fact that helped sustain the erasure of imperialism from Canadian multiculturalist discourse. How much easier it was to erect a rhetorical ‘nation of immigrants’ when this mass of immigrants arrived relatively unmarked by former colonial associations. The figure of Tracy Philipps reconnects this phase of European immigration to Canada with the broader trajectory of North European colonial expansion, routing our attention back not just to the imperial centre, Britain, or even to Europe, but to *Africa*, and specifically South Africa, Canada’s fellow Dominion in the Commonwealth, and the extreme case of racist Euro-cultural occupation of foreign territory.

Phillip Tracey’s friend and colleague, Afrikaner Peter Pirow, is the anchor of *The Man Who Knew*’s white supremacist rationality and foil to Tracey’s “advanced” English

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<sup>35</sup> J.M. Coetzee, *Giving Offense: Essays on Censorship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). See Chapter 9, “Apartheid Thinking,” 163-184.

ambivalence towards “race consciousness.” Pirow’s repulsion towards the physical touch of black men, reiterated throughout the text, exhibits the homoerotic scopic charge that Homi Bhabha calls the “paranoiac structure of ‘a man watching a man,’ which is [Frantz Fanon’s] surveillant model for racist colonial recognition”:

The white man’s eyes seek out the black man in a recognition, whilst the black man seeks out the white man’s eyes for ontological recognition. In this relay of looks I read a process similar to Freud’s transformative structure of paranoid projection, ‘I am a man love a man’, that ends with “He hates Me.”<sup>36</sup>

Webster presents at many junctures precisely this relay of looks, as in the mutual regard between Peter Pirow and “the big, naked savage . . . who belonged to the Wakamba poison-people of East Africa.” While the novel is prudish and cryptic about the heterosexual activities of its protagonists, his scant descriptive powers are given greatest exercise in images of “brawny” and “bronzed” white male bodies in close proximity with one another, “beautiful specimens of European manhood” overshadowed at various points by the giant, naked black man. Through this relay of looks Webster projects what Fanon called a “cultural imposition” of a racialized unconscious shared by black and white alike. Through Peter Pirow, Webster shows that so long as these cultural norms prevail the colonial fact will supersede any temporary reversal of his imperialist heroes’ fortunes.<sup>37</sup>

Pirow’s repulsion/attraction to black masculinity, and the novel’s reversals of the master-slave relation in various projective fantasies, are connected to a repulsion/attraction to “Africa” itself, personified by turns as a compliant feminine entity, erotically attracted to Carruthers’ “six feet of brawn,” and as a sorceress or succubus with powers to entrance Phillip Tracey, deceiving his senses with illusions, and controlling his will. These homoerotic and heterosexual configurations of colonial desire periodically crack Peter Pirow’s calm and reveal him as a berserker. Whereas Pirow’s racist personality is a primal protection of white male sex right to women, and the precious purity of blood, Phillip Tracey is content that “not one in a hundred fallen women in East are of British extraction.” Appreciative of their “usefulness to the Secret Service” as informants, Tracey says simply, “they are jolly good news gatherers.” (305)

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<sup>36</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, “Day by Day . . . With Frantz Fanon,” in Alan Read, ed., *The Fact of Blackness: Frantz Fanon and Visual Representation* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1996), 202.

<sup>37</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks* (New York: Grove Weidenfield, 1968), see Ch. 6, “The Negro and Psychopathology,” 141-209.

The connection of imperialism with this zone of male “protection” of women in *The Man Who Knew* resonates with non-fictional traces of Tracy Philipps in Canada. Although the exact reasons for Philipps’s departure from England remain obscure (the evidence hint at a complex blend of private and public pressures during the year prior to his departure) one of his appointed or self-appointed tasks in Canada was to report regularly to his mentor Edward Wood, Lord Halifax, on various matters, including the reception in Canada of British war evacuees.<sup>38</sup>

In his third report to Halifax, dated June 25th, 1940, Philipps mentioned the assistance he was providing his cousin, Mrs. Marcus Dimsdale, with plans to evacuate British children to Canada. On July 7th, writing from the Hotel Saskatchewan in Regina, Philipps warned Halifax that “grave misunderstandings” will arise from the “settling English children in Canadian homes”:

Very few of the hosts . . . have any full realisation of the full implications of their hastily and generously assumed responsibilities. When I was with Nansen, the same thing was foreseeable when Serbs took in children of their fellow-Slavs from RUSSIA. Here the very future of the race lies in this experimental migration.<sup>39</sup>

Philipps vehemently denied the charge made a year later that he had been, along with Halifax, a member of a group of upper-class appeasers known as the Cliveden Set, but it hovers uneasily over this correspondence. During the summer of 1940, as Hitler’s armies poised to cross the Channel and invade Britain, the British upper-classes rushed to exercise privilege in securing scarce evacuation berths for wives, children and servants.<sup>40</sup> Tracy Philipps’s “personal mission” to Canada on behalf of Halifax cannot be disassociated from emergency planning in the matter of Anglosaxon blood, or as he put it: “the very future of the race.”<sup>41</sup>

A combination of flattery, imprecation, and cryptic intimation in Philipps’s letters to his patron calls upon a discreet rationality that informed their class fraction. “To Anglosaxon America, the British Government IS just two men, Winston and yourself,”

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<sup>38</sup> Geoffrey Bilson, *The Guest Children: The Story of the British Child Evacuees Sent to Canada During World War II* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Press, 1988), 4. The sponsor for Philipps’s Canadian lecture tour was Major Fred Ney, Director of the National Council of Education. An ardent imperialist, Ney promoted the evacuees’ cause in Canada.

<sup>39</sup>NAC, TPP, vol. 1, file 5, T. Philipps to Lord Halifax, 9 July 1940.

<sup>40</sup> Charles Ritchie, *The Siren Years, 1939-45* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1974), 53-54. Ritchie was with the Canadian High Commission in London. He called it “a whole social system on the run . . . only the people at the top.”

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

goes the flattery, “for them you represent the great amalgam of the Mind and the Spirit combined in action.” Imprecations crept into asides such as, “I shall continue to carry on this work without pay so long as I can get my income from England . . . this is now being blocked at source.” He paired up cryptic intimations about the “future of the race” with the naiveté he diagnosed in Anglo-Canadians; their envy of European culture was manifested in “an almost ferocious fumbling after Things of the Spirit . . . they therefore go in fear of being fooled.”<sup>42</sup>

He warned Halifax of Canadians’ “uncomprehending criticism of England doing things on the cheap” and that “North American channels of information (radio, magazine, contacts) predominate over British.” This triggered a further interjection on the theme of race and racism in Canada, noting that “it is a bad sign that the Jews are beginning, by precaution, to cease to speak about Nazism in public.” On the theme of propaganda he advised Halifax that “Canadians seem to be the best interpreters of the Britain to the States. Englishmen can provide the raw material . . . it is unwise for us to go further.”<sup>43</sup>

The common thread in these erratic reports is Philipps’s testing for the persistence of imperial rationality in Canada. Obviously confused at the fluctuating hot and cold reception he encountered, depending on the residual strength of the imperial bond in any given situation, he remained blind to the fact that what he called “Britishthinking” amongst Canadians had entered a contested and transitory phase during the war years.<sup>44</sup> On the one hand, he was accepted without question by the business elite at Empire Club dinners, by many military men, and by journalists such as Blair Fraser, who responded warmly to Philipps’s “boys’-own-fiction” qualities. On the other hand, the Canadian nationalists he encountered, especially John Grierson’s young helpers in the Wartime Information Board, were put off by Philipps’s air of imperial pacification.

For Philipps, imperialism was entirely consistent with liberal principles. As he wrote from Ottawa in September 1940 to a correspondent in New York:

There is a great illusion about ‘democracy’ which is confused with liberalism, and it suffices for half a dozen unfortified mud-villages in half a dozen African countries to be evacuated for it to be imagined a colonial empire is breaking into collapse.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., T. Philipps to Lord Halifax, 25 June 1940.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., T. Philipps to Lord Halifax, 9 July 1940.

<sup>44</sup> Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), views imperialism in Canada as a “lost cause” by 1914, but its remnants were still potent when Philipps encountered them in 1940.

Here Philipps expressed what Christopher Sykes, Lord Milner, his erstwhile superior in British Intelligence during the First World War, had long maintained, that the Empire comprised two distinct political spheres.<sup>45</sup> One was “democratic” because white majorities in Canada, Australia and New Zealand ensured an overarching political rationality isomorphic with that of Britain. In the other cases non-white majorities had special recourse to native political rationalities, unintelligible to British thinking, and so could not similarly be eligible for democracy. Democracy might be obtained only where liberal political rationality had already established itself; that is, where the ‘forced choice’ discussed in the previous chapter was already positively internalized in the citizen. On the other hand, Philipps maintained, *liberalism* was perfectly compatible with non-democratic colonial governance (except here force and protective sentence remained externalized as policing, censorship and other regulations).

As a newcomer to North America, Philipps was keen to know if there was a “a real reason why to think North American should be incompatible with thinking Anglosaxon or with thinking British.”<sup>46</sup> That something so simple and common-sensical to Anglo-Canadians puzzled him shows how complex the gradual retraction of Imperial authority from Canada was, viewed from outside. It cautions against the temptation to render “Philipps the Imperialist” as a kind of quixotic jungle fighter battling on after the Empire was gone. The substantial residue of imperialist “Britishthinking” persisting in Canada ensured that, perhaps half the time, Philipps went among fully like-minded people; traversing the rising cultural nationalism was rougher going. In these circles his “Britishthinking” increasingly was a source of discomfort.

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F.A.M. Webster’s arch villain in *The Man Who Knew*, “Kosdrewski,” combined all of Imperial Whitehall’s deepest fears, and elicits Webster’s most eviscerating racist and anti-communist slurs. Having established with mechanical repetition the towering black male figure as an object of fear/desire, he surprises readers by casting the villain Kosdrewski as “the White Nigger . . . a white-skinned man with the features of a Negro”. Kosdrewski fascinates Phillip Tracey. In the smoking room of the Sports Club in London, he explains to his fellow agents that the fact Kosdrewski is “neither white nor black” is of

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<sup>45</sup> Christopher Sykes (Lord Milner), ed., *The Nation and the Empire* (London: Constable, 1913), 290. Also see “The Two Empires,” his address to the Royal Colonial Institute, 16 June 1908.

<sup>46</sup> NAC, TPP, vol. 1, file 5, T. Philipps to S. Watt, 7 September, 1940.

special “allegorical” significance, for his indeterminate racial status threatens to undo carefully maintained internal divisions among those opposed to European colonial rule.

### **W.E.B. Du Bois and the “Coloured Peril”**

Phillip Tracey arrives back in Britain secretly on a navy submarine after personally assassinating the leader of an anti-colonial revolt in Africa. He brings with him the man’s severed head as a phrenological exhibit for the British Museum. The real Tracy Philipps arrived in Canada in a second-class cabin. The fictional arrival by submarine represented the capacity of British Imperial power to operate covertly. Yet the real Tracy Philipps, on his personal mission amongst “the jungle of the foreign-born” in Canada in 1940, had no access to submarines, much less his fictional alter-ego’s invitation to Cabinet-level deliberations.

*The Man Who Knew* might be left in deserved literary oblivion had not its real-life model brought his notion of “Britishthinking” to bear on Canadian multicultural policy. As a self-described “applied anthropologist” and cultural expert, race politics were of perennial concern to Philipps. He observed that the foreign-born in Canada had not yet affiliated themselves to “shrewd and correctly-dressed British citizenship.”<sup>47</sup> He was startled when “a non-Anglosaxon asked me, whom he thought to be Swedish-Canadian, whether I was ‘for the British.’” Nationalities groups, he advised Halifax, must be addressed as diasporic associations cast widely across the entire western hemisphere, irrespective of national boundaries.

On June 25th, 1941, he wrote to RCMP Commissioner Wood at “2 a.m.” from his Toronto hotel room: “The very high proportion of Italian blood in Argentina, the whitest state in South America, is not without a contagious significance when it comes to hemispheric defence.” Eight months later, disconsolate that the government had ignored his pleas for a concerted “hemispheric defense” policy towards the foreign-born labour force, he wrote in self-pity to the RCMP Commissioner:

In a time of war and total ‘state-of emergency’, a trained navigating officer is sent out with his ship to embark foreign-born **WHITE CARGO**. The only things which are withheld from him are Orders, his course, a Compass, a crew or a port of destination. It therefore only remains for him to be court-martialed for saving dagoes.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> TPP, vol. 2, file 23, T. Philipps to Walter Herbert, 19 November 1943. Philipps described Canadian citizenship as “British subjects residing permanently in Canada”

<sup>48</sup> NAC, TPP, Vol 1 File 19, T. Philipps to S.T. Wood, 20 September 1941.

Philipps identified himself as a man who knew about colonial race relations, and indeed he had studied the subject, and was personally acquainted with the black American radical intellectual, Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois. He first met Du Bois in 1921 when Lord Halifax, then Britain's Colonial Secretary, assigned him to monitor Du Bois's second Pan-African Congress in Paris. Du Bois later recalled that these congresses were memorable chiefly "for the excitement and opposition which they caused among the colonial imperialists . . . a warning for colonial governments to clamp down on unrest."<sup>49</sup>

Du Bois's second novel, *Dark Princess*, published in 1928, just a year after *The Man Who Knew* takes up the identical theme of a world-wide anti-colonial uprising but from the insurgents' perspective. Paul Gilroy admires *Dark Princess* for transcending both African and American nationalisms with its sensitivity to diasporic consciousness. It reflects the upsurge of anti-imperial struggles during the 1920s, providing a literary prototype for narratives that neither essentialize black cultural nationalism nor succumb to endless slippages of cultural relativism. For Du Bois, India and Africa were hetero-cultural, and Gilroy argues that "it is the internal differentiation of these multiplicities, their irreducible complexity" that sanctioned Du Bois's blending of black America and Asia without betraying his own African origins.

Gilroy points out that such ideas circulated in the 1960s after Du Bois's death, when Martin Luther King embraced Gandhi's principles:

This link between anti-colonial politics and the development of African-American political culture is an important one that stretches back into the early years of the twentieth century when Du Bois and Gandhi (at that time a lawyer in South Africa) took their places alongside Annie Besant, Georg Simmel, Werner Sombart, and Ferdinand Thonnies at the 1911 Universal Races Congress in London. This is a history we would do well to recover and reassess today when the overriding appeal of ethnic "sameness" has become an obstacle to living with difference.<sup>50</sup>

By comparison to the brutality, masochism, sexual repression and closed-mindedness of *The Man Who Knew*, Du Bois's *Dark Princess* is gentle and intellectually curious. Despite their anti-European aims his characters are fully conversant with European modernity and its aesthetics. They perform the "double-consciousness" of black modernity, acknowledging European civilization's repressed ethical debt to slavery and colonialism while dwelling within its scene of utterance. These diametrically opposed texts serve as a reminder that the political rationality of "the Black Atlantic," forged among

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<sup>49</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, *Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 291.

<sup>50</sup> Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, 144.

chains in the holds of slavers and disseminated throughout the colonial world, was the object of a neurotic fixation above decks. It is a reminder that the traffic of European imperialism produced *colonizers* as diasporic communities, too, and that black double consciousness is not spatially differentiated from these white colonial mappings. The cultural histories of the Black Atlantic and the White Atlantic thus are irretrievably intertwined.<sup>51</sup>

F.A.M. Webster was concerned that this parallel formation be monitored with all vigilance by British Imperial Intelligence, and that immigration of coloured persons to Britain be prevented. It follows that while the intellectual output of the Black Atlantic had little *popular* currency in the dominant culture (white readership for *Dark Princess* was tiny, according to Du Bois) its texts were read with interest by intelligence agencies, searching for keys to its rationality.<sup>52</sup> Gilroy argues that the Black Atlantic's internal coherence derived from ineffable, non-discursive qualities such as music and gesture, precisely because such vernaculars remained inscrutable to colonial administration.

What occurs when the security intelligence function acknowledges "double consciousness" that destabilizes colonial rationality? Both "Phillip Tracey" and Tracy Philipps walked that line of peril, stopping just short of "going native." Phillip Tracey explains that to disguise oneself as the member of a different race an agent must rely not on costume or makeup but rather on *internalizing the other's identity*: "A clever man looks the same and *is* different." He passes by allowing himself to be what he pretends to be. But this willed entry into double-consciousness, warns Tracey, also jeopardizes the predominance of the agent's own rationality, a deeper fealty he must protect at all costs.

From time to time the real Tracy Philipps ruminated on his own desire to become the Other. Knowing that one's own civilization has betrayed one, he wrote, can "gnaw deep into a man's morale and sap his ability and self-confidence in his work."<sup>53</sup> In T.E. Lawrence's "*Seven Pillars* and the pathetic inscription to his translation of Homer," Philipps wrote that he found "the same heartbreaking conviction":

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<sup>51</sup> For Webster (see *The Man Who Knew*, 38-39), 1920s London is a patchwork of racially-determined prospects and refugees. To escape the giant black man chasing him, for example, Carruthers ducks into a restaurant from which his pursuer blocked by the invisible colour bar. But recent relaxations of these rules permits a "Hindu of the student type now so common in England" to enter and watch him from the next table.

<sup>52</sup> Du Bois, *Autobiography*, 291. This may explain why the Colonial Office Library collected many of Du Bois's books.

<sup>53</sup> NAC, TPP, Volume 1, File 24, T. Philipps, unaddressed, 9 September 1941.

He too, in the most publicly useful stage of his career, used to tell us that he was sometimes tempted to believe the great illusion that the 'foreign'-folk underdogs to whom he gave his life often understand more of the needs and depths of the human heart than do one's own, more comfortable, kind. It is the Great Illusion. But how it illudes at times!<sup>54</sup>

The fictional Phillip Tracey's crisis of identity occurs during a confrontation with the leader of the Coloured League, Kosdrewski:

Major Tracey, . . . we are fully aware of your sympathetic feelings towards and plans for the eventual emancipation of the coloured peoples of the world. In your own mind you have granted us race consciousness . . . . We aim to raise the coloured peoples not debase them . . . . It is necessary that we have allied to us one who is of the white races and yet in full sympathy with the coloured peoples . . . . I am here to ask you, Phillip Tracey if you will take up that great destiny. (171)

Phillip Tracey "looked for a long time at our strange visitor" and answered, finally: "I must stand by the men of my own race until the end."

Just a few pages later he is captured again, placed under hypnosis, and Peter Pirow is dismayed "by the sight of a fearless English gentleman, crawling on his hands and knees and fawning at the feet of a filthy African witch-woman." But the gibbering Tracey, "bubbling with the utter vacancy of the insane," is playing Hamlet, engineering yet another escape from Kosdrewski's clutches. Webster's plot construction, at each stage, places imperial rationality at risk and then ratchets it up to an even tighter pitch to overcome the Coloured Peril. The trouble for Phillip Tracey is that his superiors lack his highly-strung sensitivity to anti-colonial threats. Called to a British Cabinet meeting to explain the emergency presented by the Coloured League, Tracey's longest uninterrupted statement in the novel describes Gilroy's 'Black Atlantic' from the Imperialists' perspective:

When I spoke feelingly of Ba Sezzi cannibalism just before the War I was scoffed at as a visionary. [O]n Intelligence service I noticed that natives of South Africa and such advanced communities as Sierra Leone served as transport drivers and in Labour battalions in France. They were, therefore, brought in contact with the American blacks, who had some personal experience of lynchings and other persecutions. In German East Africa also they came into touch, for the first time perhaps, with East African and Congolese soldiers from the border of the Sudan

After the war I was sent to Constantinople, where I came into touch with Eudisch, the Soviet representative. He informed that in the School of Oriental Propaganda at Moscow the Russians were educating and financing twenty-four blacks. . . . [T]he American negro, Elder Smith, who died on his mission to Abyssinia in 1920, had been one of their greatest adepts, although he had taken only a correspondence course . . . . I was told that, through the influence of Smith, four Abyssinians had been sent to America to receive an Ethiopian education.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

I was following up this trail in Asia and India when I was recalled to Central Africa to deal with the Nabingi trouble. . . . I have here a short account of the origin and development of a notorious Anti-European Secret Society of Central Africa. It serves as an excellent example of the type of African Secret societies now tending, with the advent of race consciousness, the development of communications and contact with education to form into widespread organisations of almost Masonic significance and most profoundly disquieting tendencies. To this I have appended the official account of the attacks made by the armed forces of this semi-religious and wholly fanatical organisation upon British, Belgian and German forces, indiscriminately both before, during and after the Great War . . . .

An elementary form of hypnotism is an important factor in the operations of the Nabingi, or "Expellers" as this society is named. It has, for more than half a century, terrorised, from time to time, large tracts of British, Belgian and German territory in Africa. (148)

This passage at once names diasporic "race consciousness" as a threat and credits it with the potential to unseat European rationality, indeed, to *terrorize* it. Imperialist security intelligence above all else sniffed for noncompliance with the imperial power's political rationality, especially for any erosion of its own capacity to terrorize colonial subjects. Racial (in)subordination and political (ir)rationality thus converge in an economy of terror, and Webster's inversion of the terror principle will justify the most severe remedies in apprehending the insurrection. But not immediately. Unfortunately for Tracey, the Coloured League had infiltrated the highest levels of British government. Not only was one of their agents present during Cabinet briefing, but he dissuaded the Committee from responding swiftly to the crisis.

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In June 1940, Tracy Philipps wrote from Montreal to the philanthropist Anson Phelps Stokes in Massachusetts proposing an American lecture tour, and requesting information on W.E.B. Du Bois's whereabouts. He added that he had met Dr. Thomas "Jesse" Jones, Director of the Phelps-Stokes Foundation, "on the steamer *Energic* in the Congo in 1921." Stokes supplied detailed information on the "Negro Universities" but offered no financial support:

Dr. Du Bois is still alive and active. . . . He would I am sure be glad to hear from you. He has been somewhat critical of the British, especially in Kenya and South Africa, and in matters of Native policy, but he has greatly broadened his point of view in recent years and is a man of great force."<sup>55</sup>

Philipps pursued his lecture tour proposal with Jesse Jones, describing his topic in a characteristic flight of tortuous imagery:

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., File 5, A. Phelps Stokes to T. Philipps, 11 June 1940.

I have not felt it necessary to put forward any British point of view . . . rather a picture of conditions . . . seen through the chinks in the “blinds” of the kitchen windows of Italy’s and Germany’s tradesmen’s Entrances and Back Doors. The view may be as “through a glass, darkly.” But the silhouette stands out all the more clear-cut . . . It is in short an attempt at interpretation not only of the transitory oligarchies of this apocalypse which are wrenching the world out of the true, but also an appreciation, seen from beneath, of the deep-seated sentiments of the great masses of the Peoples who, the more that anarchy seems to threaten, will thrust up from below and make felt their elemental human will. It is a tour-of-the-horizon of the Shape of Things to Come wherever the sombre outline of the swelling cloud-the-size-of-a-man’s-clenched-hand can already dimly be discerned.<sup>56</sup>

Replying on behalf of the Foundation, Jones refrained from commenting on the proposed lecture theme but he encouraged Philipps to attend Dr. Du Bois’s First Phylon Conference to be held at Atlanta’s Fisk University in April 1941.<sup>57</sup>

In response to Philipps’s overture, Du Bois saluted “My dear Mr. Philipps” and challenged the Englishman to provide “a frank verbal statement before representatives of some forty American Negro Institutions of learning,” responding directly to the following question:

“After the present war and in case the British Commonwealth of Nations survives, how far are the British people willing to regard their colored subjects in Africa and Asia as existing for their own good, capable of education to develop their own abilities and organize to produce goods and furnish services for their own best development and not for the profit or convenience of England and the white world?”  
I hope you can prepare such a statement and later let us publish it.<sup>58</sup>

Du Bois already had a general idea of Philipps’s views from publishing the latter’s October 1938 address to the Royal Academy in Rome in the “Chronicle of Race Relations.” The “Chronicle” was Du Bois’s catch-all of race-related material presented with minimal editorial commentary at the end of each issue of *Phylon*. It served as a human rights watch and a barometer of global race relations. Among its provocative selections was a speech given by Adolf Hitler on December 10th, 1941, otherwise suppressed by Allied censorship.<sup>59</sup> Du Bois pointed out that Hitler “did not touch at all on his favorite race

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., T. Philipps to T. “Jesse” Jones, 15 June 1940.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, file 19, W.E.B. Du Bois to T. Philipps, 3 April 1941, under the letterhead, “PHYLON: The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture,” setting out room rates in Atlanta, and attaching a formal invitation to the “Conference for Cooperation of Science and Work.”

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., Du Bois to Philipps, 7 April 1942.

<sup>59</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “Chronicle of Race Relations,” *Phylon* (Winter 1941), 81-82. Extracts of a speech by Adolf Hitler, 10 December 1940.

theories” and instead “struck England, France and America in their vulnerable parts.” Hitler cited statistics of imperialism: “Forty-six million English rule and govern a total territory of roughly 40,000,000 square kilometres in this world . . . gained by force and robbery.” In order to sustain the “band of several hundred people who possess immeasurable fortunes,” he added, “100,000,000 colonial workers must work in India under a miserable standard of living.” But even such massive colonial exploitation did not produce uniform wealth for everyone in Britain or America. On the contrary, Hitler concluded, inside these countries extremes of wealth and poverty “baffle description.”

Du Bois’s coda to Hitler’s speech posed the same question he addressed to Philipps:

It is, of course, not to be doubted that in the redistribution of world ownership which Hitler has in mind, the suppressed races and masses could look for no further share in the ownership themselves . . . ; but that does not keep the man in the street, particularly if he is colored, from asking the Anglo-Saxon frankly “Suppose you do overcome Hitler and obtain power, where do we come in?”<sup>60</sup>

In the following issue Du Bois introduced Tracy Philipps as “a distinguished Englishman who has spent much time in the colonies.”<sup>61</sup> Philipps’s Rome address defined three principles of decolonization: “a) to give in good time; b) to give from strength [and] c) to ensure that the European language and culture can take root and produce sympathy long after the colony becomes independent.” Just as Macauley’s famous Minute had prescribed the British acculturation of upper castes in Indian society, so Philipps promoted the “quiet building-in” of a certain European political understanding in the colonies.

“Official censorship of liberal thought,” warned Philipps, was “among the chief causes of the loss to Europe of the South American colonies.” And colonial administrators in Africa and Asia were careless censors too apt to fear using the press, when they ought to teach colonized peoples “*positive* and satisfying doctrine.” These administrators acted like “Tritons among the minnows,” heedless of the aspirations of their colonial subjects. Crucially, they prepared neither themselves nor these subjects for the inevitably explosive confluence of liberal thought with local nationalisms. Insignificant rhetorical commitments to liberal democratic principles were “dangerous and illogical” when “democracy is tacitly withheld by those same democrats.” In regions such as Colonial Africa, the maxim “No

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>61</sup> Du Bois, ‘Chronicle of Race Relations’ *Phylon* (Spring 1941), 185. The text of Philipps’s address follows (185-188) and the quotations cited are drawn from these pages.

Taxation Without Representation” was ridiculous, said Philipps: “the people are, in fact, not represented at all.”

On the other hand, what Philipps considered “positive and satisfying doctrine” did not necessarily advance the cause of political representation. On the contrary, he said, what promises to be preparatory to full liberal democracy presents the greatest danger:

Thus, in Africa, the prerequisites for democratic institutions are still lacking. Yet democracy from Europe continues, dangerously and illogically, to be held up to sub-tropical Africans as an ideal and an ambition worth fighting to attain.<sup>62</sup>

In strains that resonate with Phillip Tracey’s statements in *The Man Who Knew*, Philipps described to his Italian audience a combined European “Colonial Power” preoccupied on every front with excessive local demands for political sovereignty that ignored “the European cry of ‘Safety First.’” He castigated the “non-democratic non-intervention” of European colonial administrators, not for withholding “democracy” but for failing to understand that the doctrine of liberalism was flexible enough to underwrite other types of “intervention.”

Speaking in Mussolini’s Rome of 1938, it is not surprising that Philipps’s intimated colonial policy for Africa frankly rejected British parliamentary democracy as unsuitable. Instead, colonial authority ought to be refined through increased sensitivity to “the unwritten, delicate and deep democracy within the totemic clan.” In essence, Philipps implied that colonial administrators ought to concentrate on extracting European colonial rule gradually, leaving in place sympathetic local strong-men whose legitimacy derived from pre-colonial sources of authority. Philipps advocated the immediate cessation of colonial instruction in “unsuitable European philosophies.” Already, these had spread through the colonial arena in “virulent and haphazard patches.” Rather, a new unspecified—but traditionally authoritarian and patriarchal—political culture must emerge to stem Africans’ “loss of faith in the simple and suitable religions of their own.” Africa’s inexperience in political terms, he concluded, required vigilance amongst colonial powers in order to give, in good time and from strength, not full representational democracy but a hybrid form of government complementary to European interests but built on limited endorsements of local traditions.

Dr. Du Bois offered no commentary on the address, leaving it to readers to sort out its ambivalent implications for colonial emancipation. Behind the scenes, though, he sent Philipps a further note about the upcoming conference, emphasizing that “we are counting on your presence”:

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

Your speech will take place in a fairly small room before an audience of two or three hundred persons about half of whom will be special trained persons in sociology and economics from Negro colleges throughout the South.<sup>63</sup>

Philipps shared the platform with two presidents of southern colleges in a plenary session entitled "Economic Security for the Darker Races." The details of their exchanges were not transcribed, but Philipps reported to Sir Gerald Campbell, his contact in the British Embassy to Washington, that his talk prompted "numerous questions, which I invited."<sup>64</sup> The audience "showed some bitterness, and considerable prejudice," he wrote, "based on misrepresentations made to them, probably from Communist sources, and on inadequate and outdated information."

While attending Du Bois's Phylon Conference, Philipps's once again became a civil servant, receiving the long-awaited offer of Canadian Government employment. It came not from Judge Davis but rather from the RCMP.<sup>65</sup> Although Philipps bewailed Commissioner S.T. Wood's strict remunerative terms he left Atlanta no longer a "dollar-a-year man" but a civilian Mountie assigned to monitor and analyze the activities of ethnic groups. Back in Ottawa, he renewed his *Phylon* subscription and would write once more to Du Bois regarding an incident which will be discussed below.

Neither Du Bois's published correspondence nor his autobiography mention Tracy Philipps, admittedly a minor character in that civil rights crusader's long and busy life. Philipps, on the other hand, clearly was awed by Du Bois, seeking his recognition (while also betraying him); drawn to Du Bois's unswerving commitment to emancipate Black America and colonized peoples everywhere, and yet fearful of its success.

### **Propaganda**

First steps towards a propaganda initiative directed specifically at minority "nationalities" were taken at an interdepartmental meeting in the East Block in October, 1941. In Room 123 of the Department of External Affairs, representatives of both "culture" and "security" related departments gathered around chairman T.C. Davis to initiate a "committee on cultural-group cooperation." Of the sixteen men only press censor Ladislaus Biberovich was a member of a minority nationality group, but his presence did

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<sup>63</sup> NAC, TPP, vol. 1, file 19, W. E.B. Du Bois to T. Philipps, 10 April 1941.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., file 20, T. Philipps to Sir Gerald Campbell, 1 June 1941 .

<sup>65</sup> NAC, TPP, vol. 2, file 6, S.T. Wood to T. Philipps, 2 May 1941.

not reflect 'affirmative action' but rather the negative spectre of minorities as security risks.<sup>66</sup>

Tracy Philipps's reserve during this meeting is not surprising since his role as European Advisor to the new committee was not expected to be central. His marginal comment "WHY?" penciled next to Biberovich's name on his agenda suggests that he was preoccupied with his bitter personal dispute with the latter. Philipps's estranged wife and son were staying with the Biberoviches, a domestic situation that eventually led to vilification on both sides; but on this day the two listened in silence to deliberations on how best to "Canadianize" the nationalities groups.

From an Intelligence perspective, "various ways of maintaining close contact with these communities were considered from the point of view of integrating the individuals composing such communities into the national war effort."<sup>67</sup> Representing the Department of External Affairs, Norman Robertson expressed concern that the Defense of Canada Regulations cast too wide a net and hoped the Committee might supply information to justify certain exemptions. The RCMP's Inspector Saul sought feedback on variations in the treatment minorities received at the hands of local and provincial authorities. With respect to Free Movements and Foreign Forces, Robertson felt "the new section would be extremely useful in providing reports of the trends . . . among the various foreign-language groups." Such information would become part of the inter-Allied exchange of intelligence, and as such the new committee would be expected to cooperate closely with his Department.

Censorship representative Wilfred Eggleston agreed that his unit could step up its monitoring of foreign language presses and supply translations of such material to the new Committee. It was agreed that the committee might also care to make recommendations regarding the future of the Ukrainian Farmer Labour Temples. These were seized by the Custodian of Enemy Property at the outset of the war to forestall communist subversion.

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<sup>66</sup> TPP, vol. 1, file 26, Saul F. Rae, "Minutes of Interdepartmental Meeting on Organization of Proposed Committee on Cultural-Group Cooperation Under Ministry of National War Services, 30 October 1941." Representing Intelligence interests were Norman Robertson of External Affairs, Insp. D.C. Saul, RCMP, and O. Coderre, Nationalization Branch. Censorship was represented by J.Sydney Roe, Examiner of Publications, press censors Wilfred Eggleston and Ladislaus Biberovich, and Edgar T. Read, Custodian of Enemy Property Branch. The propaganda/information component was represented by Walter Herbert, Public Information, John Grierson, National Film Board, Peter Ayles, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and Saul F. Rae, Department of External Affairs. W.P.J. O'Meara represented the Department of State, responsible for citizenship registration. The others invited to the meeting were experts on "cultural groups": Prof. George W. Simpson, slated to head the new committee, Robert England, Department of Pensions and Health, and Tracy Philipps, European Advisor to the proposed committee.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

Tracy Philipps had already proposed that the halls quietly be turned over to non-communist elements within the Ukrainian communities across Canada, but he refrained from comment at this gathering.

On the propaganda side, the NFB's John Grierson represented the Department of Wartime Information. The recent film "Peoples of Canada" featured immigrant groups, he said, and the Film Board's growing non-theatrical film distribution system brought such films even to remote communities. The CBC's Peter Ayles promised to provide translations of foreign-language broadcasts carried on commercial stations monitored by the CBC's radio censorship authority. He cautioned that any foreign-language broadcasts planned by the committee would have to be delivered through local commercial stations "rather than the CBC national network." At the close of the meeting "the representatives present were wholly agreed that the Committee did not have as its object the preservation of group differences, but should seek to encourage individuals from these foreign-language groups to identify themselves as closely as possible with the rest of the Canadian community."<sup>68</sup>

The new "Committee on Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship" (CCCC), a name suggested by Norman Robertson, was not exactly what Philipps had lobbied for, but its autonomy from the Department of Wartime Information came as a relief. He had written beforehand to an unknown correspondent: "between ourselves, I am not at all happy about . . . any European Section . . . [forming] part of the Dept. of Information":

The Department of Information is designed to deal with Anglosaxon and Francophone Canadians whose countries and near kindred are not hostages or tools in foreign and enemy hands.

Assigning him to this Department would be like "putting an electrical engineer under home consumption publicity men." For Philipps, the task of "Canadianizing" the foreign-born paralleled electrification: "This new kind of foreign-European work, in the long and delicate process of transmuting over 2 1/2 million souls to a Canadian current, is as technical and complicated as the work of an electrical engineer." The general direction of the work, he believed, "can only be guided by the Department of External Affairs."<sup>69</sup>

As it turned out, the Committee drifted away from External Affairs' guidance and Philipps developed his own network of contacts. Norman Robertson's distant attitude perplexed Philipps, as did the coolness he encountered in exchanges with intelligence chief T.A. "Tommy" Stone and his newly-appointed deputy, George Glazebrook. After illness

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> TPP, vol. 1, file 24, T. Philipps to unknown correspondent, 7 July 1941.

removed the CCCC's Chairman George Simpson from the scene, Philipps gravitated towards his RCMP contacts, with whom he carried on a lively exchange of correspondence. He turned, too, towards the United States, where he cultivated counterparts in the FBI, the Office of Strategic Services and the State Department.<sup>70</sup> He attempted to maintain contacts with British officials in Ottawa, New York, Washington and Detroit, although he failed to win the confidence of Malcolm MacDonald, Britain's High Commissioner to Canada, who for many years was his superior in the British Foreign Office.

Returning from Du Bois's 1941 Phylon Conference in Atlanta the previous spring, Philipps stopped in New York to meet Michael Huxley at the Inter-Allied Information Committee on the fifth floor of the Rockefeller Centre. Huxley directed this "high grade" or "white" propaganda outlet launched in the autumn of 1940 to help win U.S. support for Britain against the Axis. Specifically, the Committee sought to cast British war aims in light of a new "internationalism," a message intended to counteract Americans' suspicions that Britain's true war aim was to preserve its empire.<sup>71</sup> Huxley regarded his visitor with caution: clearly Philipps had sniffed "black" propaganda on the wind, and wanted to know more.

Unaware that thirty-one stories above them British Security Coordination was planning deceptions behind enemy lines and in neutral countries, not least the United States, Philipps sought Huxley's views on a request by Count Vladislav Radziwill "to have selected Poles trained in Canada for eventual work between the Prussians and the Russians along the eastern margin of Europe." Personally, he felt enemy intelligence services would have "Radziwill pretty closely taped." Huxley replied crisply that he was "not competent to respond" and whatever suggestions Philipps had ought to be directed to Malcolm MacDonald.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Of these, DeWitt Poole of the Office of Strategic Services was his most regular contact and closest U.S. equivalent. Philipps friend E. Bisiker, with the British Consulate in Detroit, told him that the FBI were "impossibly tight-lipped" and "one must be cautious with them."

<sup>71</sup> Nicholas J. Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign Against American "Neutrality" in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 117-18.

<sup>72</sup> TPP, vol., file 21, T. Philipps to "My dear Huxley," 29 May 1941; *Ibid.*, M. Huxley to T. Philipps, 2 June 1941; *ibid.*, file 16, T. Philipps to Col. James Mess, 31 May 1941. The pro-Empire Mess responded warmly to Philipps, and invited his opinion regarding "Prince Vladislav Radziwill (New York) and his work organizing 5th column activities behind enemy lines." Philipps responded that "You may be sure that in the States, the Gestapo have got Radziwill pretty closely taped and will sooner or later bribe some of his confidantes to let out what is afoot. Then both the Russians and the Prussians will probably shoot any newcomer out of hand." He wondered, though, about training Ukrainians in Canada for this purpose.

MacDonald's brief and patronizing replies to Philipps's unsolicited intelligence estimates on matters ranging from anti-English resentment in Quebec to the outlook for striking miners in Cape Breton, reminded him not to extend his activities beyond monitoring and reporting on the condition of the foreign-born labour force in Canada.<sup>73</sup> Apparently this was the field where it was calculated Philipps could do the least damage, and, noisily, he obeyed. In New York, Michael Huxley either knew or had been warned to keep the former imperial intelligence officer in the dark, so Philipps left the Inter-Allied Information offices knowing neither about BSC, its training centre "Camp X" at Oshawa, nor the "black" propaganda it engaged in. More importantly, he left without a true appreciation of the orientation of British "white" propaganda vis-à-vis the United States. He failed to grasp that his explicit valorization of the old British Empire was completely unsynchronized to its rhetoric of "new internationalism," soon to find formal expression in the Atlantic Charter, the creation of the U.N. and other world institutions.

In Ottawa, Philipps's propaganda efforts through the CBC met a similar pattern of resistance. At first, the CBC seemed cooperative, indeed the Committee received word from Dr. J.S. Thomson, the Director-designate of the CBC, expressing "his fullest sympathy with the aims of our Committee."<sup>74</sup> Philipps explained that "recent-Europeans . . . form almost one body in the Western Hemisphere from Arctic Canada to Antarctic Argentine." Following the Americans' lead, domestic foreign-language radio ought to be used to "re-nationalize" these diaspora. Robert England agreed, stressing "the great importance in the

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<sup>73</sup> NAC, TPP, vol. 2, file 2. T. Philipps to M. MacDonald, 13 August 1942. "The French Canadian situation is undeniably bad, and undeniably artificial. It is NOT a complicated problem. This does not make it necessarily easier to deal with . . . . If there is an 'injustice', it is that their Catholic Church, like the Orthodox in Serbia, is so little cath-olic and so narrowly national and so nearly auto-cephalous that it will not give its Youth an education to enable it to compete on equal terms with 'les Anglais'. By 'les anglais' they mean business-Ontarians, especially Orange-men. The economic inferiority in which they feel themselves, like the Moslems faced by . . . neighbouring Christians, is embittered by their Church's inculcation, like Islam's, of a superiority complex against infidels and heretics. Thus there is bred in them, in everyday life, an envy, hatred and malice. Secondly, the news of the world and of the rest of Canada cannot be got without insinuation or distortion, past the authoritarian Sinn Fein-like village priests, down direct to the peasant farmers and industrial-workers to enable them to exercise their shrewd, soil-rooted and sober judgment. In the narrowest sense of the term, they can be regarded as the best Canadians of all, for they alone have ceased to look back nostalgically . . . beyond and outside Canada to a mother land . . . whose influence will predominate until Canada, as an (English-speaking) nation, can give them a patriotic maternal mysticism as embracing and as exalting as the old."

<sup>74</sup> TPP, vol. 2, file 9, CCCC, Minutes of the 3rd Meeting, 23 September 1942.

first generation of broadcasting (to people who cannot yet think in French or English) in their mother-tongues." Philipps's contacts reported that daily Axis short-wave propaganda broadcasts successfully promoted disaffection among foreign-born listeners in Canada.<sup>75</sup> Philipps had urged the CBC to recruit and train foreign-born broadcasters, people fully conversant with the cultural vernaculars and political niceties of each cultural minority, to produce short but routine broadcasts first in Italian, with other languages to follow.

It was an exaggeration to say Dr. James Thomson had "fullest sympathy" for Philipps's proposal. As Thomson wrote to Grierson, Philipps's "belief that such broadcasting might have a useful effect upon such groups in giving them a sense of solidarity with the Canadian people" raised what was probably an "inevitable" question as a result of American foreign-language broadcasting. With a palpable lack of enthusiasm, he continued:

The question is a somewhat difficult one in which the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation would not wish to take any isolated responsibility. We should be ready to undertake a strictly limited amount of such broadcasting, but only if it were considered by responsible authorities to be in the national interest.

Mr. Philipps tells me that the groups . . . of primary importance at the present time . . . are the Italian speaking communities both in Toronto and in Montreal. He believes it might have considerable usefulness if on certain festival occasions a short programme of combined music and talk were provided for these particular groups.<sup>76</sup>

CBC broadcasts set the pace both in radio censorship and in domestic radio propaganda directed at English and French elements of the population. The CBC censored itself and it policed the self-censorship policy devolved on private broadcasters under the Defense of Canada Regulations in 1939. Cognizant of the acute alienation felt by linguistic minority groups, Philipps believed that the mood of censorship preventing their inclusion in national broadcasting only perpetuated negative effects of guardianship by repressive apparatuses. Ultimately, as a result of his incessant lobbying the CBC produced one fifteen-minute broadcast in Italian, for which Philipps received warm thanks from Italian-Canadians. Then Thomson reaffirmed Peter Ayles's initial position with finality: henceforth

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid. A typical Philipps report was tabled: "THE INFLUENCE EXERTED ON THE MIND, AND EVENTUALLY ON THE ACTIONS, OF RECENT-EUROPEAN CANADIANS BY GERMAN-CONTROLLED SHORT-WAVES FROM THEIR MOTHERLANDS APPEALING TO THEM IN THEIR MOTHER-TONGUES." To combat Radio-ROMA Philipps called for "a positive programme of social restoration of these fellow-citizens of ours." The discriminatory practices of "Anglo North Americans [cause] Recent-Europeans in North America to look back, and listen-back . . . by the millions."

<sup>76</sup> NAC, RG 36 (Wartime Information Board), vol. 13, file 8-9-1, J.S. Thomson to J. Grierson, 11 May 1943.

foreign languages would not interrupt CBC's stream of English and French programming.<sup>77</sup>

Once again, Philipps misapprehended the emerging national culture. When he observed to Sir Gerald Campbell in Washington that national minority groups were "compartments of Canada that are States in miniature" he intended that they be treated as a multiplicity, pending a very gradual coalescence of Canadian group identity. But segmenting audience or narrow-casting propaganda messages to ethnic communities ran counter to the CBC's patterning of national consciousness. On the contrary, it seemed to Thomson and his associates that the value of linguistic and cultural *continuity* in disseminating a pan-Canadian official consciousness outweighed any possible negative effects of leaving minority-language groups exposed to unopposed enemy short-wave propaganda.<sup>78</sup>

### **The Hour Strikes**

Unlike his friend Prof. Watson Kirkconnell, a university teacher, translator and literary critic, Tracy Philipps had little affinity for the emerging artistic and literary contribution to the *dispositif* of cultural nationalism. True, he once noted on his desk pad that "authors of REO [recent European origin] writing of Canada with their inherited genius [are] contributing to Canadian unity in the air and atmosphere Canada is giving them." But this was an isolated jotting. Otherwise Philipps appears to have read no Canadian writer or poet, nor to have examined the work of its painters or musicians. Appointed to the Committee on Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship, Kirkconnell failed to interest Philipps or the Committee with his proposal to launch a War Writers Board similar to the American initiative of that name.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> TPP, vol. 2, file 10, C. Lamberti to T. Philipps, 20 October 1942; TPP, vol. 1 File 29, T. Philipps to C. Payne, 5 August 1943: 'Canadianizing broadcasts, decision: *No broadcasting to any special language groups in Canada*. That is, not even in English. (Ref. Memo 21 July, 1943).' The CBC narrowed its labour broadcasts, as well. See Marcus Klee, "'Hands-off Labour Forum': The Making and Unmaking of National Working Class Radio Broadcasting in Canada, 1935-1944," *Labour/Le Travail* 35 (Spring 1995): 107-132.

<sup>78</sup> TPP, vol 1, file 25. T. Philipps to T.C. Davis, 1 October 1941. Philipps underestimated the importance of broadcasting. He complained, "I frankly regard broadcasting as one of the most troublesome, thankless (and ill-paid) chores which can be inflicted on a busy man." On the other hand, he felt slighted by CBC Talks' producers for overlooking him when preparing war commentaries concerning East and Southern Europe.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, file 9, "Minutes of the 3rd meeting of the Committee on Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship," 23 September 1942.

Yet Kirkconnell was an influential figure during Philipps's years in Ottawa. As lead author of a seminal 1944 report on the Humanities in Canada he called for a massive invigoration of Canadian universities after the war: "Higher education," wrote Kirkconnell, "shall liberalize or humanize the modern student, so as to educate the whole man and make him completely human, a representative of the universally human spirit."<sup>80</sup> In the tradition of Matthew Arnold and Cardinal Newman, Kirkconnell's university of the humanities was to define the intellectual profile of national culture. It required the establishment of expensive new federal cultural institutions such as a National Library, but in return Canadians would benefit from a thriving national literature and drama, an enriched understanding of "Canadian society," and enhanced international stature.

Kirkconnell's humanities report should be read in conjunction with his June 1941 propaganda booklet "Canadians All," written for and published by the Director of Information in Ottawa.<sup>81</sup> With the theme "Unity, Not Uniformity" Kirkconnell sought to derive the national population along new lines. Setting aside "the few Indian survivors, a few Asiatic immigrants and some negroes brought from Africa" he emphasized that the vast majority of Canadians shared a common European heritage. His discussion of physical types touches on eugenics, arguing there "is no such thing as a French race, an Italian race, an Anglo-Saxon race or a German race—or, for that matter, a Ukrainian race, or a Russian race." All these were variants of Europe's diverse civilization.<sup>82</sup>

Thus Kirkconnell's booklet grouped "Canadians All" under a European race umbrella, providing each with a capsule description and statistical profile. English Canadians and French Canadians were absorbed into the alphabetical sequence of twenty-five nationalities groups, punctuated by stills taken from the NFB's *Peoples of Canada*. Each of these cultural groups, Kirkconnell warned, was vulnerable to sinister infiltration by

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<sup>80</sup> Watson Kirkconnell and A.S.P. Woodhouse, *The Humanities in Canada* (Ottawa: Humanities Research Council of Canada [1944], 1947 edition), 7.

<sup>81</sup> Watson Kirkconnell, *Canadians All: A Primer of Canadian National Unity* (Ottawa: The Director of Public Information, 1941).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-19 passim. See also Watson Kirkconnell, *A Slice of Canada: Memoirs* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 275: "In January, 1940, I published . . . a series of articles on "War Aims and Canadian Unity," pleading for unity among New-Canadian groups and for a federal statement of war aims that would give coherence to that unity. The Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, who usually worked by indirection, then asked me through a personal emissary, Leonard Brockington, to write a substantial pamphlet on *The Ukrainian-Canadians and the War*, seeking to expound the issues of the conflict as I saw them and to emphasize the urgency . . . I did not mince words in my advocacy of community integration in wartime."

the "World Conspiracies" of fascism and communism. The least acculturated groups, he wrote, were primary targets for a "Propaganda for Disunity" that sought the destruction of Canada and the British Empire. Internment of German and Italian Canadians was necessary to suppress the agents of world conspiracies pursuing this aim. These, he wrote, "are no better than rats gnawing fatal holes through the bottom of a vessel as it passes through stormy seas."<sup>83</sup>

Watson Kirkconnell was the most widely-known and the most strident anti-communist academic of his generation. That he was tasked with writing *Canadians All* and *The Humanities in Canada* leaves no doubt about the general ideological orientation officially prescribed for the emerging national culture, even prior to the Cold War.<sup>84</sup> Anti-communism was an outlook he shared with Tracy Philipps, although the latter was not so attuned to what this meant in the shifting ground of Canadian higher education. For his part, Philipps had a keener sense that fears regarding communist fifth columns augured a rapid expansion and refinement of the state security apparatuses.

When the Hitler-Stalin Pact collapsed in June 1941, Kirkconnell observed to Philipps that "Hitler has given the kaleidoscope a real twirl as far as the various European groups are concerned."<sup>85</sup> They now met stiffened resistance to their anti-communist propagandizing. Indeed, they and their Committee became the object of hostile propaganda emanating from communist circles. Where initially "Quisling Kirkconnell" bore the brunt of the criticism, Philipps and Kysilewsky soon became targets as well.

In September 1942 a blistering attack in *The Hour*, a mimeographed New York news sheet, was received in Ottawa. It struck directly at the character of Tracy Philipps:<sup>86</sup>

#### MR. PHILIPPS GOES TO WASHINGTON

Within the past fortnight a dapper gentleman by the name of Tracy Phillips [sic] has visited Washington . . . "advising" State Department officials regarding the

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<sup>83</sup> W. Kirkconnell, *Canadians All*, 20.

<sup>84</sup> Watson Kirkconnell's *Seven Pillars of Freedom* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1944) became a *cause célèbre* on account of its almost hysterical anti-communism. He traced its threat to each pillar: religious faith, co-operation, education, justice, discipline, fraternity and loyalty.

<sup>85</sup> TPP, vol. 1, file 22, W. Kirkconnell to T. Philipps, 24 June 1941. Philipps had predicted the Hitler-Stalin pact would not hold, but it is unclear what he thought that might mean for his ambition for an independent Ukraine.

<sup>86</sup> NAC RG 146, file 93-A-00131 pt. 1, Department of National War Services, "Extract from THE HOUR, published at 100 East 42nd St., New York," n.d.

European situation and problems of the foreign born in this country. Those State Department officials are doubtless unaware of certain of this gentleman's past associations and of some of the more interesting aspects of his career.

A former member of the British Colonial Office, Tracy Phillips was known to be in close touch with "appeasement circles" in England before the war. Lady Astor and Lord Halifax, whose names were then associated with the so-called Cliveden Set, were among Phillips' intimate friends. Phillips was also said to be a great admirer of Benito Mussolini. He was a frequent visitor to fascist Italy. In October, 1938, Phillips attended the Congress of the International Colonial Institute in Rome. With him at the time was the Viscountess Dorothy Downe, well known in England for her pro-Nazi sympathies and as an intimate friend of Sir Oswald Mosely, the leader of the British Fascists, who is now in jail.

The Fascist Government of Italy displayed considerable warmth towards Phillips who, as late as March, 1940, publicly expressed his admiration for the brutal Fascist colonial policy in Africa. He informed the English public: "the Italian technique of overseas settlement offers us much to learn".

### Interesting Connections

U.S. State Department officials might find of greatest interest the relations that have existed between Phillips and certain fascist-Ukrainians in North America who have been connected with the German War Office and the German ministry of Propaganda.

Tracy Phillips arrived in Canada from England on June 10th, 1940, and was promptly contacted by Luke Myshuha, editor of the pro-Nazi Ukrainian American newspaper, SVOBODA. This paper was banned by the Canadian Government subsequent to exposures of its pro-Nazi character appearing originally in the THE HOUR . . . Only a short time before this Myshuha had returned from Nazi Germany where he had been a guest speaker on one of Dr. Goebbel's radio programs.

Phillips' visit to Canada had been preceded by that of a fascist-Ukrainian, W. Kissilevsky [sic], who spread the word that Phillips was coming as a "special emissary of Lord Halifax". From the day he set foot on Canadian soil, Phillips was enthusiastically hailed by fascist-Ukrainian organizations set up by representatives of the German Intelligence Service. The very friendly reception accorded to Tracy Phillips by these persons at a time when Germany and England were at war seemed rather strange, to say the least.

As a matter of fact, Phillips association with the fascist-Ukrainians dates back some years. In the summer of 1939 Phillips visited the town of Alassio, Italy, and spent a week at the Villa Romana, home of Jacob Macohin, a meeting place for Nazi-Ukrainian agents from all parts of the world . . . According to the London DAILY EXPRESS of December 5th, 1938, Macohin was then proclaiming his intention to lead a fascist-Ukrainian army of 600,000 men, trained and equipped by Nazi Germany, against Soviet Russia. Interestingly, W. Kisselevsky, who now serves as Tracy Phillips' private secretary, formerly worked as a propaganda agent for Macohin.

### Aid to War Effort?

Tracy Phillips has been in Canada for two years. His influential friends in England were doubtless useful to him in securing his present position with the Canadian Department of War Services. Phillips now works with a section of this Department called the Committee on Canadian Citizenship which has the function of organizing the foreign born behind the war effort of the United Nations.

It would appear to THE HOUR that, in view of his strange connections and expressed opinion, Tracy Phillips is hardly the man to organize effective support of the war effort or to give "advice" to the United States State Department.

With the publication of this article, the propagandist Philipps became a victim of his own genre. Moreover, as if the anonymous *Hour* article was not scalding enough, the respectable and widely-circulated *New Republic* reprinted it in 1942.<sup>87</sup> For the most part the allegations were true, if exaggerated. Philipps's papers contain superficial references at least to Myshuha, Dorothy Downe, Macohin, and fascist Italy. Amongst Kysilewsky's photographs is his portrait, taken on June 24th, 1938, standing on the beach at Alassio with "General Rossi" in blackshirt and riding boots. On at least one occasion Philipps passed a request for money through Kysilewsky to a group he described only as the "M's" --Kysilewsky was to convey it surreptitiously through "the brother" in New York. On the whole, though, the *Hour's* characterization of Philipps as a rabid agent of fascism was a distortion.

The article's content and tone convinced Philipps that the information emanated from a Canadian source; indeed, he deduced it could only have been the work of his arch rival, censor Ladislaus Biberovich.<sup>88</sup> But he had no proof. For the time being, Philipps's immediate superior T.C. Davis stood by him, but the Judge's departure for Australia was imminent. Minister Thorson was gone already, and General LaFleche was as yet an unknown quantity. Whatever its truth, the Ottawa mandarin buzzed with the news of the *Hour*.

R.B. Bryce, Treasury official, and future Clerk of the Privy Council, received a copy of the article from "a friend in New York" and circulated it to Clare Moyer, Secretary of the Wartime Information Board.<sup>89</sup> Lester Pearson mentioned the article at the Board's meeting, and Moyer had it distributed to Board members. Both Arnold Heeney and Brooke Claxton read the clippings, and when the articles reached General LaFleche he wrote to

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<sup>87</sup> *The New Republic*, 26 October 1942, 545. This version added an insinuation that Philipps was involved with a secret Ukrainian-Fascist terrorist group, the ODWU (Organization for the Rebirth of the Ukraine).

<sup>88</sup> Textual clues suggest it did emanate from Canada. It is unlikely that an American writing for a New York publication would refer to "the American State Department." Philipps claimed to have obtained postal intercepts that proved Biberovich's authorship, but the RCMP did not find the material convincing.

<sup>89</sup> NAC RG 36, vol. 13, file 8-9-1, R.B. Bryce to Clare Moyer, 26 October 1942.

Norman Robertson asking if there “was any grounds for the adverse comments.”<sup>90</sup> George Glazebrook was assigned to trace the origins and development of the Committee and Philipps’s role in its activities. Furthermore, Philipps sensed a new threat moving up the chessboard in the person of John Grierson, soon to take over as the Director of Wartime Information. As a result of the negative publicity, Philipps became a focus of attention for Grierson’s cadre of capable deputies: Donald W. Buchanan, Malcolm Ross and Arnold Davidson Dunton.

Philipps accurately talent-spotted the youthful Dunton as the rising star of this group, and he exerted his considerable charm on the younger man. On a personal and confidential basis Philipps began circulating to him intelligence reports he received from the RCMP, and generally passing by his office to share confidences. On November 13th he sent him an exchange of secret intelligence with the RCMP concerning a prominent Hungarian-Canadian, but Dunton was out of the office that day. Indeed, he was assigned to meet with Judge Davis, George Glazebrook and Saul Rae to discuss the future of Philipps and the Nationalities Branch.

In Judge Davis’s mind, Philipps and Kysilewsky already had resigned “on account of the attacks in American publications.” As Dunton recorded:

This means the disbanding of the Committee on Nationalities (with all its aliases). Davis said he was going to recommend to General LaFleche that . . . work on foreign-language press in Canada be transferred to WIB. He, Glazebrook and Rae said they would like to see an arrangement under which WIB was responsible for reporting on the foreign-language press and also for material going to it. They would like WIB to work closely on this with External Affairs which would formulate policy and consider in particular the question of direct contacts with foreign language groups other than through their press.

The way Glazebrook expressed it was: the Simpson Committee is disbanded and its paid employees set at large. Some can be rehired if wanted. He, Davis and Rae

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., L.R. LaFleche to N.A. Robertson, 2 November 1942. On 7 November 1942 T.C. Davis wrote to LaFleche supporting Philipps: “I unhesitatingly support Philipps in this controversy, as I am satisfied that he is a loyal citizen, intently desirous of rendering Canada and the United States every possible help in these difficult days.” Ibid., G.W. Simpson wrote to T.C. Davis on 17 November 1942: “from the start that Mr. Philipps was working under a huge handicap because of his matrimonial difficulties and the fact that as an Englishman he was interesting himself so directly in the matter of promoting sound Canadianism. I have never had any doubts as to his sincerity and good faith. It is absolutely impossible for me to believe that he had any fascist leanings whatsoever. [W]e were absolutely agreed regarding . . . the principles of free governmental institutions and traditions . . . It will be very difficult to find anyone with similar experience and talent. Dr. Kaye was of quite different temperament. He was without ambition and I think he joined us entirely out of a sense of duty. No one worked harder or more conscientiously”; the attack continued on 30 November 1943, when Glazebrook wrote to Heeney, Grierson, and Claxton attaching copies of “another article concerning the Nationalities Branch.”

are all doubtful about Kaye . . . they feel he is so tarred with the Philipps brush that his usefulness is questionable . . . he might be considered for straight reading and reporting work. Glazebrook and Rae know a young man of Russian extraction named [Leo] Malania whom they regard very highly.<sup>91</sup>

Clearly, Judge Davis did not expect Philipps to cling to his post, nor was the Judge mindful of General LaFleche's glacial progress in taking charge of the Ministry of National War Services. Philipps railed at LaFleche's inactivity, describing him to Kysilewsky as a "suspicious peasant," but it was only the General's disinclination to be rushed that stood between the European Adviser and outright dismissal. Through the winter of 1943, with Grierson at the helm of wartime information, the Philipps case percolated amongst External Affairs officers and Grierson's staff leading to Donald Buchanan's definitive brief on the "Ukrainian Question."

Through consultations with Glazebrook and Malcolm Ross, Buchanan determined that "no continuity of policy in regard to war information and Canadian groups of Ukrainian origin has ever been established" despite the efforts of agencies concerned with this question, which he listed:<sup>92</sup>

- (1) Committee on Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship, in which the work of Tracy Philips [sic] s centralized. (NWS)
- (2) Press Censorship under W. Eggleston and H.W. Baldwin. (NWS)
- (3) Censorship of Incoming Publications (Foreign) exercised in practice by Dr. Biberovich, working in co-operation with H.W. Baldwin. He also prepares a resume of Ukrainian Press Comment ( Canadian) for W.I.B. reports division. Biberovich is a well-educated Ukrainian, held in high regard by Press Censorship and by External Affairs. (Department of National Revenue)
- (4) Custodian of Enemy Property . . . E.H. Coleman . . . . This bureau is in charge of the seized Ukrainian Labour Halls. (Department of Secretary of State)
- (5) RCMP. . .they investigate subversive activities. (Department of Justice)
- (6) . . . External Affairs takes an extra-curricular interest in what other departments do in regard to Ukrainian groups in Canada.

Censor H.W. Baldwin advised Buchanan that while the left-wing press attacked Tracy Philipps there was little or no mention of his activities elsewhere: "The Nationalist Press, however, has been taking up all anti-Russian material, has reprinted verbatim the anti-Communist speech of Watson Kirkconnell." Buchanan reported that "Tracy Philipps

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., A.D. Dunton to D.B. Rogers, 13 November 1942.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., D.W. Buchanan to J. Grierson, 4 June 43.

travels, makes speeches, has personal contacts with editors of Ukrainian papers [and] has been attacked in editorial comment in some of the American Ukrainian papers.”

In red ink, Buchanan bolded the heading: **WHY THE QUESTION OF UNIFORM POLICY IS URGENT**. He explained that anti-Russian articles in right-wing ethnic presses and the activities of the Ukrainian-Canadian Committee had drawn protests from the Soviet Minister. The UCC's plea for Ukrainian self-determination, presented in a petition to the Canadian Government, particularly rankled the Soviets. Furthermore, committees on civil liberties passed resolutions protesting the action of the government in continuing to hold Ukrainian-Labour halls in custody.

Both External Affairs and the Press Censorship agreed with Buchanan's action plan. He foresaw a standing interdepartmental committee with a permanent secretary appointed from the WIB to coordinate policy regarding foreign-language groups. The Committee would begin with press sources and then move into radio and film as alternative propaganda outlets:

Glazebrook feels that [the Department of National] War Service must, if approached, consent to what is suggested above. There is no suggestion of doing away at once with the Committee on Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship, but if Tracy Philipps began to deviate for the uniform policy laid down by the inter-departmental committee, then of course his position would become untenable and he would have to resign.”<sup>93</sup>

Buchanan's dossier included “further confidential information about T. Philipps” received by Malcolm Ross from Glazebrook. The latter also confirmed “that the order in council for Simpson's Committee never passed, but that the Committee was called together by the Minister of National War Services.”<sup>94</sup> It met just twice in 1942 and “the minutes do not show anything beyond vague general discussion. Philipps' activities are impossible to define as he never sent to External Affairs copies of the material which he sent out to the Foreign Language Press in Canada.” That Malcolm Ross was prominent in the National Council for Soviet Friendship may explain why he attached a fresh copy of the *Hour* article to Buchanan's report, but not Philipps's published rebuttals. He confirmed that Philipps's 1941 book review in *The Manchester Guardian* did state that “[w]e have a great deal to learn from the way the Italian Fascists have colonized Libya.”<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., M. Ross to D.W. Buchanan, 7 June 1943.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., *The Manchester Guardian*, 10 September 1941. Philipps had visited Libya in 1939.

Armed with Buchanan's report, Grierson paid a visit to the Canadian prairies where he collected anti-Philipps testimony from a deputation of the Canadian Unity Council. They did not view Philipps as any kind of messiah. His Branch "was political," they told Grierson, "coloured from the outset. Instead of getting the whole thing together on a healthy basis, it announced guardianship over helpless divided Ukrainians." Philipps, Grierson jotted, "is associated with sanitizing the country," and this sanitization was itself a disease that needed treatment: "The Communists regard T.P. as Fascist and his presence was interpreted right away as divisive. He created resentment." Even the title of the Committee was considered to be insulting. "After fifty years they don't want T.P. a newcomer to say they are Ukrainians or Poles or . . . to have the impertinence to say where their Canadianism lies." Danes, Norwegians, Jews, Ukrainians and Poles, wrote Grierson, were "against setting up an Anglo-Saxon Committee of guardianship."

Upon his return Grierson wrote to General LaFleche reporting the views of these "English-speaking, French-speaking, Ukrainian, Armenian and Polish groups":

[A] positive policy was wanted, promoting a greater inter-acquaintance between the various ethnic groups . . . The delegation expressed strong views in the matter of Mr. Tracy Philipps. They said that under his direction the Nationalities Branch . . . had been divisive rather than unifying.

The interest of the Wartime Information Board is naturally . . . the whole matter of unity, particularly as between the various ethnic groups in the country . . . We were anxious to operate on a basis of co-operation with National War Services in this matter, but were doubtful of how the facts lay.

If you now see fit, I should like to examine with you the possibility of relating the information service to New Canadians with . . . the Wartime Information Board. I feel certain that a formula could be devised which would secure a healthy co-operation.

There is only one matter of which I am doubtful . . . [T]he influence of Mr. Philipps is divisive rather than unifying [and] a co-operative understanding in the matter of information could not be implemented while he remains a negative force in the set-up.<sup>96</sup>

## Censorship

A month after the initial meeting in October 1941 that created the Nationalities Branch, Tracy Philipps and George Simpson began receiving translations of foreign-language press articles from the press censors. Norman Robertson monitored these reports and occasionally forwarded his comments to Simpson. The machinery of censorship now open to him, Philipps exploited it to full advantage. In addition to receiving the routine

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<sup>96</sup> NAC RG 36, vol. 13, file 8-9-A, J. Grierson to L.R. LaFleche, 28 October 1943. The *Hour* article was tabled at the Wartime Information Board with Lester Pearson and others present. The file contains Grierson's handwritten notes from his Winnipeg meeting.

translation of foreign press articles, he read locally-intercepted mail on a selective basis and eventually had access to mail and cables intercepted by the centralized Allied censorship.<sup>97</sup>

Philipps had pressed his friend Vladimir Kysilewsky to join him when the Branch finally came into being. "I would not care to come to Ottawa," Kaye answered, "however well paid, to work among strangers in some office where there were a political or parochial atmosphere. . . . You know how I fear intrigue and mistrust 'politics'." He left an opening, though, writing that "if what were contemplated were to work closely with you, whose ways I know, and to work on the larger aspect . . . I know I could render real service and therefore be happy, and therefore would be inclined to accept."<sup>98</sup> Against his better judgment he joined Philipps in Ottawa where his small editorial section monitored the foreign-language press and supplied its editors with government information written in their own languages.

Philipps befriended the Director of Censorship, Col. O.M. Biggar, whose pro-Empire and staunch anti-communist outlook he found congenial. "Your new Division of co-ordinated censorship of all communications could help us with the most valuable material of all," he wrote to Biggar, "communications, including photostats of letters, concerning peoples, matters and persons of recent continental European origin whether in Europe, the Far East or the Americas." In an annex he explained "an essential feature of the enemy's campaigns of rumour and of poison" was the "whisper" used to "discredit public or private insinuations, and thus to undermine the people's confidence." The Communists, specifically, were "organizing attacks on the Canadian Government" to privately discredit "and thus to eliminate (in their own phrase) 'Coldwell of the C.C.F., and Mosher, Millard and Moore of the Trade Unions.' Such people's political aims and their private lives have been the subject of shameless misrepresentation."<sup>99</sup>

Philipps dropped in Biggar's ear the name of his cousin Charles des Graz, Director of the Imperial Censorship at Bermuda where mails were censored and trans-Atlantic cable communications intercepted. Philipps told Biggar, "I am already getting the information from Bermuda . . . . I should like a chance to chat . . . we may be able to furnish certain information."<sup>100</sup> Although his Ottawa manuscript collection contains only Canadian Censorship circulars, cover slips and letters indicate that he did receive and judiciously

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<sup>97</sup> There is no evidence Philipps had access to the high grade of diplomatic and counterintelligence material provided by SIGINT or other sources. On the other hand, in one of his files there is a crib sheet for coding messages he sent himself.

<sup>98</sup> TPP, vol. 1, file 21, V.J. Kaye to T. Philipps, 1 June 1941.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, file 31, T. Philipps to O.M. Biggar, 17 June 1942.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 June 1942.

distribute a certain amount of illicitly-procured intercepts. When Des Graz encountered Philipps during a visit to Ottawa in June 1942, he outlined the “the new coordinated censorship set-up in Washington” and instructed his cousin on how henceforth he might obtain material through the proper channels.<sup>101</sup>

Des Graz visited Ottawa twice after the war to offer advice on Canada’s peace-time censorship organization.<sup>102</sup> On September 6th, 1946, the newly-created interdepartmental Security Panel gave des Graz the floor. Heeney, Glazebrook and Norman Robertson listened as he sketched the development of imperial censorship during the war and announced that Britain had decided to maintain a peacetime “shadow” censorship organization. Returning to meet the Security Panel in July 1951, des Graz explained how Britain had silently recruited the core group of censors a new emergency would require. Networking behind the scenes through its own veterans, 2400 censors had been signed up and trained with not a breath of unwanted publicity.<sup>103</sup> Approximately two-thirds of the total Censorship staff would be women, he said, as was the case during the war.<sup>104</sup>

Censorship is often thought to be primarily *withholding* information to prevent the transmission of knowledge, ideas, images or objects perceived to be inimical to state interests. True, Des Graz affirmed, this was one of its functions; indeed, effective censorship required the complete “control of all channels of communication likely to be used for the transmission of such information.” This ran the gamut from telecommunications to postal services, from newspapers and publishing to broadcasting and films. Each medium required a different type of censorship organization and he went on to explain how these might be grouped.

The more important half of censorship, he continued, was less well known. This was as a supplier of Intelligence. As Commander G.R. Tottenham reported to the Director of Naval Intelligence after the meeting, des Graz “seemed to feel that Intelligence was the main

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101 Ibid.

102 NAC RG 24, “Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Security Panel,” 6 September, 1946.

103 NAC RG 24, vol. 769, file s-1950-21 pt. 4, N.A. Robertson to C.M. Drury, 14 February 1951. Canadian officials felt the need for such an organization, and its plan was given higher priority after Robertson advised Drury, Deputy Minister of Defense, that the United States Government’s willingness “to maintain an open border [in an emergency] depends on our ability to initiate active censorship on short notice in the event of war.”

104 Ibid., Minutes of the Sub Committee on Censorship Planning, 23 July 1951. Eric Gaskell, secretary of the Security Panel took the coordinating role in establishing the peacetime organization. R.G. Robertson attended the meeting on behalf of the Privy Council Office.

purpose of Censorship and that Security was quite secondary.”<sup>105</sup> Here the censor’s faculty for sensing deviance was crucial. During the war the actual tasks of covert listening, mail-opening, and transcribing telegraphic messages were performed almost exclusively by women. In the male-dominated security and intelligence organizations it was assumed that women were better fitted for such tasks, and not simply because they freed up men for combat-related work. Women, it was believed, had a special alertness to the subtleties of interpersonal communication and, if properly supervised, discretion. The gendering of electro-magnetic communications was not lost on censorship and intelligence chiefs. Naval Intelligence considered their women censors such a valuable resource that they jealously guarded their identities for fear of inter-agency poaching.<sup>106</sup>

The senior-ranking woman within the Canadian security establishment at the end of the Second World War was Mary Oliver. As administrator of the top secret signals intelligence branch she was instrumental in the rapid postwar expansion of Canada’s SIGINT capability. She was also sister to Norman Robertson. To what extent their careers were interdependent is unknown; it is said by former insiders that his protection helped her rise to a position of authority in the male-dominated signals intelligence establishment. Having helped start up the signals intelligence work in Canada, she accrued influence beyond the purely administrative role of her office.<sup>107</sup>

On the other hand, security screenings eliminated women, too. In May 1943, when Muriel Chapin of Montreal applied for temporary editorial work in the Nationalities Branch, Philipps asked the RCMP for a security check. John Leopold replied that Chapin was once “a member of a Montreal Committee of the Spanish Children’s Relief Campaign” and she was suspected of subscribing to the *Canadian Tribune*. Chapin’s application was rejected, and a week later Leopold added “it has now been learned . . . [she] is secretary of the Montreal Branch of the Writers, Artists and Broadcasters War Council . . . . Our

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<sup>105</sup> NAC RG 24, vol. 769, file s-1950-21 pt. 4, G.R. Tottenham to Director of Naval Intelligence, 24 July 1951.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix to Minutes, 7 August 1951, “Refresher Training Course in National Censorship.” The DNI circled the word “women” in the appendix and commented marginally: “Hang on to our own ex-censors! An eye should be kept on what women turn up in Gaskell’s net, lest they be ex-wren censors.”

<sup>107</sup> In his biography of Norman Robertson, *A Man of Influence*, J.L. Granatstein lists Mary Oliver among his interviewees, and must be aware of her significance to the national history, but he remains silent about her clandestine work. Another Ottawa woman, Lois Moody, for many years jazz critic for the *Ottawa Citizen* newspaper, spent the early part of her career with the CBNRC as an analyst.

observations show that the Communists are taking some interest in this organization." "Thank you," wrote Philipps, "It is exceedingly lucky that we asked you."<sup>108</sup>

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By Christmas of 1942 Tracy Philipps verged on despair.<sup>109</sup> The brave face he put on rebuttals in the *Globe* and the *New Republic* of the *Hour's* character assassination masked an intense crisis. A legal opinion rejected court action, and his shrill protests elicited few words of support. A *pro forma* offer of resignation had not been refused, and he stayed on beyond a self-imposed deadline without receiving any endorsement. Kysilewsky retreated to his farm, nursing a stress-aggravated health condition. Philipps himself was in pain, strapped into a back brace after being "run into on ice by children on a sledge-out-of-control." He was astonished and further disheartened to learn that LaFleche, despite the edict grounding him to his desk, hardly seemed to know who he was. Encountering the General on the street outside their office building, the latter said merely, "Good morning, Mr. Tracy," and went inside.

Norman Robertson had become an ominous figure whose resounding silence Philipps believed was the product of Ladislaus Biberovich's influence with George Glazebrook.<sup>110</sup> Indeed, discreet raids on LaFleche's file cabinets confirmed to Philipps that machinations behind the scenes were working towards his dismissal, possibly even the closure of the Nationalities Branch. His belief that "poison gas" was being spread by

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<sup>108</sup> NAC, TPP, vol. 1, file, 9, T. Philipps to J. Leopold, 6 May and 21 May 1943; Leopold to Philipps, 11 May and 18 May 1943.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, file 38, "Odd Notes." Philipps's heavy pencil embossed whole pages with a palimpsest of overwrought thinking. The spatial organization of his cursive writing is shattered, and the reader discerns only broken phrases, such as "The f-b received us almost messianically . . . deceived into believing Can - Govt. interested in them . . . One asks nothing better than a chance to reconcile the divergencies with R[obertson?]." Written over these themes are statements of anguish about his domestic situation. Finally, over the top of everything, and circled: "For all of us, the present is the past flowing into the future."

<sup>110</sup> NAC RG 36, vol. 13, file 8-9-1, J. Grierson to G. Glazebrook, 15 May 1943: "Will you please keep Arnold [Davidson Dunton] posted on your conversation with Norman [Robertson] regarding the Ukrainian-Canadian affair and the implication so far as the Tracy Philipps committee is concerned?"; RG 25, file 75(s) "Government Supervision of Foreign Language Groups in Canada," N.A. Robertson to W.L. Mackenzie King, 1 June 1943. Robertson advised the Prime Minister that nationalist stirrings of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee made relations with the Soviets "more delicate and difficult." The Government's "contacts with the foreign language groups generally are pretty confused and unsatisfactory." He hoped Grierson would "straighten out the press side of the picture, but I am more worried about the [Nationalities Branch] . . . I do not think they have the right men for the job . . . the wrong men can do a good deal of mischief."

Biberovich prompted him to denounce the censor to the RCMP, naming him as a crypto-communist and the anonymous slanderer both of his good name and that of the Simpson Committee. The RCMP received Philipps's anti-Biberovich blast with caution, but nonetheless within a few days the Chief Censor brought up the question of an anti-Philipps article in *Narodna Wolya* with Biberovich.

Biberovich admitted to his supervisor A.W. Merriam that he had been Ottawa correspondent for *Narodna Wolya*, "one of the very few independent, truly democratic Ukrainian publications." True, he had criticized the Ukrainian Canadian Committee as ineffective. Indeed, he told Merriam that the Committee "showed its complete incompetence in connection with the plebiscite on the conscription issue when, even in Winnipeg, Ukrainian polling divisions returned negative majorities." Sydney Roe, his former chief, received an anonymous letter questioning Biberovich's right as a civil servant to write for a newspaper, and he was asked "to discontinue my journalistic work which I immediately did."<sup>111</sup>

After that, he said, "my wife started to supply Narodna Wolya with a weekly news letter, which fact I reported to Mr. Roe. Mrs. Biberovich is a native Canadian, a university graduate [and] a competent free-lance writer both in Ukrainian and in English." Biberovich was outraged by Philipps's insinuations: "I have not written the said anonymous letter," he insisted, "I challenge Mr. Philipps . . . to prove my authorship of the letter in question, or suffer the consequences." The true reason for Philipps's enmity was due to his helping Philipps's estranged wife: "This is the back ground of Mr. Philipps antagonism toward me." Yet Biberovich did not stop there:

Mr. Philipps affiliation with the Canadian Ukrainian Committee goes back to the year of his arrival in Canada in 1940. Originally there existed two Ukrainian committees . . . on Mr. Philipps' insistence were these two committees merged . . . He is thus [its] spiritual father . . . He needed the committee to get a permanent position in Ottawa, which he finally achieved . . .

Mr. Philipps seems to be a typical soldier of fortune, with a rather shady past . . . Being a pathological liar, Mr. Tracy Philipps is likely to create much additional troubles and confusion owing to his unbalanced mind. Personally I wonder if a man occupying a government position should be permitted to launch a police hunt against another civil servant, instead of acting through the proper channels.<sup>112</sup>

Philipps also attacked Biberovich through Watson Kirkconnell, friend of the English language press censor, Wilfred Eggleston. Kirkconnell wrote to Eggleston that

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<sup>111</sup> NAC, MG 30 D282, W. Eggleston Papers, vol. 17, file "Biberovich," L. Biberovich to A.W. Merriam, 15 December 1942, "Re: Ukrainian Canadian Committee and Mr. Tracy Philipps."

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

“postal intercepts I have seen” proved Biberovich’s authorship of the *Narodna Wolya* letter. Supposedly, Biberovich had written that Prof. Glazebrook “is interested in the foreign-language press and on his initiative there will soon appear reviews of that press in the English language.”<sup>113</sup> Kirkconnell warned:

If Biberovich persuades the ingenuous Glazebrook to let him prepare the reviews, there may be interesting complications. The Communist group in Toronto also seems to be getting advance confidential information from some source in Ottawa, but the complicity of Biberovich in this is not so clearly proven.

Kirkconnell’s letter puzzled Eggleston, who knew Biberovich well enough to judge him politically conservative. Kirkconnell wrote again: “I seriously feel that the Philipps-Kolessa-Biberovich feud has been a red herring across the trail, and that Biberovich has been duping your Department and External Affairs. I . . . urge you, confidentially, to be on your guard.”<sup>114</sup> Eggleston expressed confusion and feared “that you have been misinformed” by Tracy Philipps:

Please don't misunderstand my attitude about your drive on the Communist Press. Why should I object to that? Do you suppose it would have been possible for me to have held my post for three years without developing utter contempt for the whole pack of them? . . . If you can prove he is a Red you have really shown up cruelly a bunch of fairly bright people who have been almost daily contact with him . . . I wish I understood your reference to . . . placing of credence of Biberovich above the RCMP translators. Do you believe the sheets you mentioned in your speech . . . are being . . . "whitewashed" by Biberovich . . . ? It's news to me. We banned the originals – mainly on Biberovich's reports. He tipped us off when the spiritual successors came on the scene . . . . We've been watching them suspiciously ever since . . . . In all this Biberovich has been invaluable. Where is the "whitewash"?

Biberovich was engaged by Sydney Roe . . . a good old English boy, a former Press Gallery man for the Conservative press, a cautious civil servant. Syd had been excluding Red literature for a good many years . . . . He would have a pretty good nose for a Communist. He praised B. in the highest terms . . . B.'s present chief is Arthur W. Merriam, an active Conservative . . . private secretary to R.B. Bennett for five years, and I think a good Catholic. Arthur values B. as highly as Syd did [and as do] Charpentier, and Baldwin and Girouard, our deputies. They have had constant discussion with B . . . . Until you made the suggestion, I had never entertained the slightest suspicion about him.<sup>115</sup>

Reading Eggleston’s frank but nervous endorsement of his bureau’s anti-communist bona fides, Kirkconnell was “mystified” in turn:

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., W. Kirkconnell to W. Eggleston, 8 January 1943.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., Kirkconnell to Eggleston, 24 January 1943.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., Eggleston to Kirkconnell, 20 February 1943.

My problem is this: since its formation fifteen months ago, our Committee has been under fire from the Left . . . the Ottawa correspondent of NARODNA VOLYA has played a part . . . In conversation with Norman Robertson, I found that his department had been somehow influenced against the Committee and was in favour of sacking Kaye and Philipps. The known intimacy of Glazebrooke [sic] and the assumed correspondent of NARODNA VOLYA led me to leap to a conclusion, perhaps unwarranted. <sup>116</sup>

Suspicious of Biberovich lingered, and may or may not have contributed to his summary dismissal from the Censorship in 1946 for unexplained “special reasons.” Knowing the background, Eggleston took up his case with various Cabinet Ministers and officials trying to undo what both he and Biberovich believed was Tracy Philipps’s treachery. For his part, Kirkconnell reserved judgment even when he learned through Eggleston that one of Philipps’s Ukrainian contacts confessed on his deathbed to slandering Biberovich to the RCMP at Philipps’s behest.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, when eventually Eggleston received a report about Biberovich’s file it included none of the denunciations mentioned. Biberovich’s dismissal had some deeper cause.

After five years of fruitless lobbying for an explanation to this mystery, Eggleston was invited by intelligence chief George Glazebrook to visit his office for an off-the-record chat.<sup>118</sup> “I have looked into the case,” he said, and he explained the true reason for Biberovich’s dismissal. Whatever it was, Eggleston kept it to himself, and he took his distance from Biberovich, who never obtained another government post. That Biberovich’s dismissal occurred during the period of the Gouzenko disclosures raises the possibility that he was somehow implicated with the espionage case. More likely, it was involvement in the Ukrainian free movement that put him out of favour. Or perhaps Philipps had even craftier means to damage his adversary’s reputation. On the other hand, by interpolating his feud

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., Kirkconnell to Eggleston, 24 February 1943.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. The contents of this file record Eggleston’s years of inquiries on behalf of Biberovich. The latter learned from friends as far afield as Los Angeles that RCMP agents had visited them with questions about his political leanings. On 10 May 1951, H. Winkler M.P. wrote to Eggleston that the Minister of Justice, Stuart Garson, “has drawn the Biberovich file [and] none of the parties suspected by Biberovich of being his worst enemies appear to have anything to do with the file.” The RCMP judged him to be a “Rightist rather than a Leftist.” In a “note to file” Eggleston recorded that Paul Gegeychuk of Winnipeg had signed a deathbed affidavit that “at the instigation of Tracy Philipps, he made false charges against Biberovich.” Kirkconnell dismissed Gegeychuk as a “self-confessed liar”. He was “frankly astonished” to find “him now fathering his unsavory tales on Tracy Philipps, whom I have always found the soul of honour.”

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. G. Glazebrook to W. Eggleston, 10 July 1951. Eggleston had written to Glazebrook on May 29th: “As a liberal I have been much exercised the by the injustice [Biberovich] appears to have suffered.”

through the censorship-intelligence-propaganda complex Philipps did nothing to improve his own chances.

### **Intelligence**

The frequent and close interactions between the Censorship, the Department of External Affairs and the Wartime Information Board, as seen through the Philipps case, did not extend so freely into the headquarters of the RCMP. The Mounties kept to themselves, and they were not implicated in the efforts to get rid of Philipps. On the contrary, when it became obvious that the Englishman's claim to be under attack had substance, Assistant Commissioner Mead's suspicion fell not on Philipps but on his opponents. If Philipps was, as he described it himself, "tolerated with amused curiosity" in his own Department, he was taken seriously by the Mounties, almost until the end.

Lord Milner, chief of Britain's Eastern Mediterranean Secret Intelligence during the First World War, nicknamed Philipps his "live wire," and electrification became Philipps's favoured metaphor for disseminating "Britishthinking" to ethnocultural minorities. Philipps's former connection to British Imperial Intelligence carried weight with the RCMP. The federal police responded collegially to Philipps's disdain for "weak-liberal assimilators" with no first-hand knowledge of handling ethnocultural minorities. Only experienced "reintegrators" such as himself, an "electrical engineer" in the field of culture, knew how to combine intelligence, censorship and propaganda in order to bring minorities around safely to "Britishthinking."<sup>119</sup>

During his three-month contract as an RCMP irregular in 1941 he traveled about Canada interviewing foreign-born workers and conveying his impressions to S.T. Wood. But the "almost messianic" reception he met reverted to suspicion as his foreign-born contacts realized that Philipps had nothing concrete to offer on behalf of the Government. Their "innate resistance to Ministry of Information style propaganda," Philipps wrote to Wood, was part of a fear of the "clever cousins of wolfish Political Police" familiar to them in their own countries. Not unreasonably, they began to suspect Philipps of ferreting for information rather than genuinely seeking their cooperation.<sup>120</sup> S.T. Wood also began to wonder about the motives of this clever British cousin.

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<sup>119</sup> TPP, vol.2, file 20, T. Philipps to C. Payne, 30 August 1943: "Lord Milner was kind enough to call me his 'live wire' . . . If I were not more-than-sometimes right, I should be just as much an imbecile as an experienced Electrical Specialist"; *ibid.*, "CULTURE CLASH OR COMPOSITION? ASSIMILATION OR RE-INTEGRATION?"

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, file 25, T. Philipps to T.C. Davis, 22 October 1941.

For example, Philipps's expense claims for first-class rail travel, not to mention valet services, generous tips and use of taxis, triggered alarm bells in the frugal RCMP.<sup>121</sup> Commissioner Wood took a dim view of such extravagances, and ordered Philipps in no uncertain terms to adapt his lifestyle to the spartan regime expected of an RCMP officer. For his part, Philipps chided the RCMP for operating *reactively* and not as a truly anticipatory and event-shaping intelligence agency should. He suggested that the RCMP secretly institute foreign-language newspapers to strengthen and control moderate opinion in the ethnic communities, and that foreign-language radio broadcasts be produced on the same basis. Wood demurred, receiving advice that there were already sufficient "friendly" papers through which to convey the Mounties' point of view. On the other hand, he approved of Philipps's ideas for radio broadcasts, although these fell outside the scope of the RCMP.<sup>122</sup>

S.T. Wood was not about to let Philipps or any other civilian know the full extent of the Mounties' intelligence capabilities. Yet Philipps's raids on his superiors' file cabinets yielded indications of how the Mounties did on occasion shape events in advance. Through the activities of Constable Michael Petrowski, Philipps glimpsed an interaction of intelligence and propaganda components at this early stage of their development.

Petrowski was an undercover Mountie who reported on nationality groups of Slavic origin. As an active participant in Ukrainian organizations he identified their communist and fascist elements and monitored the strength and intentions of Free Movements. A difficulty emerged, Philipps learned, with Prof. George Simpson's appointment as Chairman of the Committee on Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship. Judge Davis wanted Simpson to have the benefit of RCMP intelligence reports, but this raised an awkward problem. The RCMP Commissioner advised Davis:

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid. vol 1, file 7. Philipps relentlessly lobbied S.T. Wood until the latter permitted him ten days unpaid vacation at Shediac, N.B. But on 18 August 1941, Wood categorically refused to pay for valet services, and ten days later, after learning Philipps was traveling first-class, Wood advised him tartly that "Officers are not permitted other than standard berths."

<sup>122</sup> NAC RG 146, RCMP, "Tracy Philipps." Anticipating the Cold War move into mainstream publishing by Intelligence agencies (e.g. *Encounter Magazine*) Philipps lobbied the RCMP to launch foreign language newspapers. They were reluctant to do this. Neither did they subscribe to his view that international socialism was an outdated illusion of Western leftists, who failed to understand that Stalin had fully "renationalized" the Soviet Union. S.T. Wood wrote to Judge Davis, 8 July 1942: "I cannot subscribe to the contention advanced by Mr. Philipps that Communism is dead in Russia." Two of the twenty-five existing labour periodicals, he went on, can "be induced, without running any great risk, to publish material emanating from Government sources."

Professor Simpson's name is prominently linked with the [Ukrainian] Convention . . . . Under the circumstances, and in order to avoid embarrassment or ill-feeling, it might be good policy to treat [Petrowski's] report as strictly confidential.<sup>123</sup>

Indeed, had Petrowsky reported "on a highly confidential conversation with a member of the executive who revealed plans for forming a Free Ukrainian Movement in London." This was "regarded as top secret." Petrowski also wrote that if Simpson was not involved, he was at least aware of and "favoured this decision." Davis agreed with the RCMP Commissioner that Simpson "would note immediately that someone was in attendance at these gatherings on behalf of the RCMP and making reports [and] might rather resent this."<sup>124</sup> Not much could be revealed to Simpson since even severed versions of the reports would signal the presence of a police informer in his closest counsels. Eventually, it was determined that a careful briefing by Inspector Saul might convey certain important points without attracting Simpson's interest to the source of the information.<sup>125</sup> Knowing this, Tracy Philipps allowed nothing to Simpson, but he gave Michael Petrowski a wide berth.

Philipps's reports were received and read by Assistant Commissioner F.J. Mead, Director of Criminal Intelligence. When the RCMP passed Philipps over to Judge Davis at the end of his initial three-month employment, Mead became his primary contact, and to some extent Philipps sensitized him to the reality of life for cultural minorities. Indeed, he described the illiberal consequences of the forced choice of nationality, explaining that "we are not applying at home the principles for which we are inviting them to fight abroad" F.J. Mead highlighted the following paragraph in Philipps's report:

They are being told [by hostile propaganda sources] that "Canadian citizenship purports on paper to offer equality and security. But when that equality and security is inconvenient to the Anglosaxons, they invalidate its value . . . so, when a citizen needs it most, it only lets him down. Therefore those who try to become good Canadians, and who rely on Canada's citizenship, need not expect anything in the future but to be betrayed. When 'they' in effect regard you as aliens and enemies,

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<sup>123</sup> TPP, vol. 1, file 12. S.T. Wood to T.C. Davis.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., file 15, Davis to Wood, 6 November 1941.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, files 11,13, 15. Somehow Philipps obtained Michael Petrowski's secret report of October 1940 on the Hetman Organization as well as various reports on the Ukrainian Canadian Committee, the Ukrainian National Federation, and on a Ukrainian Convention held in Chicago. Among other things, he learned that Petrowski was keeping a close eye on Bill Burianyk; *ibid.*, vol. 1, file 11, T.C. Davis to S.T. Wood, 5 December 1941, agreeing Simpson should be briefed by Saul, and that the notes of that conversation might be passed back to Petrowski.

how can you feel they are your fellow citizens and your friends?" It is pressing that we should . . . counter the effect of this poisonous propaganda.

A strong case can be made for denaturalization of individual unworthy citizens, however rich. This action would clear the way . . . to rehabilitate the full value to our citizenship to any generation or Canadian community as a whole without weakening the powers of the Federal Police.<sup>126</sup>

Philipps concluded by calling for coordinated resistance "to disintegrating unCanadian propaganda by extremists." The solution was at once punitive and positive, selectively targeting troublesome immigrants for denaturalization while using counter-propaganda to "lead men by their hearts where one cannot drive them with sticks, or even by regulations."

Mead wrote to Inspector Saul: "There is a lot to this. I should like to discuss it with you." In reply to Philipps, he allowed that although the Defense of Canada Regulations initially were necessary as a precautionary measure, now they provided a target for provocateurs amongst immigrant groups. He agreed the Government should exploit the ceremonial value of naturalization (and punitive denaturalization) rather than simply using it to register aliens as potential security risks "as our enemies claim." It was true that "minor police officials" in some cases "exercise officiousness" towards people who "desire nothing more than to be assimilated as Canadians." Indeed, he believed that

on the whole the behaviour of the 'New Canadians' of enemy origin during this war has been as good as any other section of the community. If the government were to now tell them, in effect by lifting the impugment of their loyalty of having to register in the manner prescribed for enemy aliens, this would be received as a striking manifestation on how Democracy works in war time and would make these people appreciate more than ever before the advantages of British citizenship.<sup>127</sup>

In expressing these personal views to Philipps, Mead drew attention to the force of the forced choice of citizenship, and he sought to redress the alienation of the liberal state from its own norms. Philipps seized the opening to champion the cause of Doukhobor and Italian internees, Chaplain services in minority languages in the Armed Forces, and foreign-language broadcasts on the CBC.

Yet, Philipps's lobbying for minority rights attenuated as he came under personal attack in the press in the autumn of 1942. In fact, the frequency of his requests for security checks on individuals grew in reverse proportion. Mead responded to dozens of Philipps's queries, which invariably brought attention to individuals' rumoured communist

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<sup>126</sup> RG 146, RCMP File "Tracy Philipps," T. Philipps to F.J. Mead, 10 August 1942.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, Mead to Philipps, 14 October 1942.

tendencies.<sup>128</sup> When the defamatory *Hour* article came to John Leopold's attention in September, 1942, he judged that Philipps must already have learned of it, and reported to Mead that it "is a bombastic statement and although based on certain known facts the attack is unwarranted." Leopold was unmoved when Philipps wrote to S.T. Wood denouncing Ladislaus Biberovich as the *Hour's* anonymous source. He advised S.T. Wood that "there is nothing we can do about it nor do I think it advisable to take any part in the controversy." He examined "postal intercepts" forwarded by Philipps but concluded that "if there is a certain communist tendency . . . it cannot be described as prejudicial" and Philipps's "personal grievances [are] really of no interest to us as a police organization."<sup>129</sup>

Philipps adapted his tactics accordingly and instead of attacking Biberovich directly, he cast doubt on his immediate enemies: John Grierson and his associates. Recalling the RCMP's genuine interest in his ideas about foreign-language CBC broadcasts, he supplied the RCMP with correspondence showing how the initiative was being blocked by Grierson. Philipps brought the issue to a head, pointing out to Grierson that his plan had RCMP support. When the General Manager of Wartime Information refused to direct the CBC to cooperate, Philipps made an end run through Arnold Davidson Dunton, Grierson's deputy, encouraging him to break ranks with his chief. "If you were in agreement," he wrote, "the [directive] could issue from this office." Dunton replied immediately: "the General Manager is opposed . . . therefore it is impossible to say we are in agreement."<sup>130</sup>

The Mounties read these exchanges, supplied by Philipps. Mead noted to Leopold: "There appears to be a concerted lack of support to this Branch -- can you suggest why?" No doubt Leopold had suggestions to offer. Philipps may not have known it, but the RCMP already doubted Grierson's "reliability" and had opened a file on him. On the other hand, Philipps's escalating hysteria undermined his credibility. His latest plea asked for RCMP backing in responding to the criticisms of Arthur Raymond Davies of Toronto. Philipps wrote to Wood complaining that "the odds are overwhelmingly in favour of the libeller," so he prevailed upon him "to trace the motives and source of these attacks."

"It is difficult to say what the writer is driving at," Leopold noted, laconically:

Mr. Philipps apparently thinks he has become the victim of public and political sabotage and it will be noted he requests help tracing the motives and sources . . . .

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<sup>128</sup> In the case of one Dr. Radwan, an Indian spiritualist traveling through Canada, Philipps advised Mead to contact MI5 in New Delhi.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, J. Leopold to F.J. Mead, 7 October 1942 and 16 November 1942.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 January 1943, "Summary of correspondence re: foreign language broadcasting."

[He] appears to be unduly sensitive, or perhaps he likes to play the role of a political martyr. In either case it is a private matter . . . . If every public servant or figure would be so sensitive, the courts of Canada would be devoting most of their time to hearing libel actions.<sup>131</sup>

Inspector Saul instructed that no reply be made pending further inquiries; after consulting with Leopold, Mead drew the matter to Commissioner Wood's attention. Thereafter, Philipps's two-way traffic with Mead and Wood ended. Despite the Englishman's redoubled flow of reports, tips and emphatic statements of record, the Mounties elected to stand back and let matters run their course.

### Contagion

From the outset F.A.M. Webster emphasized the heightened sensory capacities of the British agents in *The Man Who Knew*. They have learned from Africans how to track "the spore of a man" even through a city, and to hear or smell the earliest signs of trouble. The Coloured League's lethal airship, made of some transparent material and armed with a fantastic weapon, was immune to the usual air route surveillance maintained at British posts during its journey from Afghanistan to Egypt. Only Phillip Tracey had the savvy to spot it and shoot it down. But defeat of the Coloured League cannot be achieved solely through early warning systems and superior Intelligence. Rather, through its diffused medicalized consciousness the Empire will tamper with coloured blood, in a way that prefigures mid-century developments in bacteriological weapons.

The novel's climax occurs in Underground Calcutta. Wearing ammonia-soaked white shrouds, Peter Pirow and Jim Carruthers are led beneath the city to attend the Grand Council of the Coloured League. Phillip Tracey has engineered their presence to witness the terrible end of the leading insurgents, part of a plan he executed through the mysterious Agent #4. Traveling across Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa, Agent #4 had met with each dissident group preparing for the great rebellion, and he infected them with a plague. Thus, within moments of the arrival of Carruthers and Pirow at the council chamber--not a grand hall, as they expected, but a "mean little apartment, hung with rugs"--the leaders of the Coloured League will be stricken with the illness:

We saw a shrouded figure which reclined upon a low divan. In a semi-circle before this strange figure . . . squatted maybe twenty men of various nationalities. The majority of them were Hindus and Mohammedans of India, there was, however, at least one well known Arab chief . . . two frock-coated Turks wearing the fez, a couple of Egyptians . . . a very famous West African king . . . and other men from

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., F.J. Mead to J. Leopold, 8 July 1943

various coloured races . . . some Russian Bolshevnik emissaries, a bearded Afghan, a yellow-faced Lama from Tibet and a sprinkling of over-dressed American negroes. (312)

As they watch, the assembly falls into chaos, and the victims writhe in their death agonies. The two agents, protected by their Ku Klux Klan-like medicated sheets, close in on the divan, where the shrouded figure is revealed to be Agent #4:

I am the so-called Polish Jew peddler who gave you certain papers and instructions . . . You have helped to save the world from a colour war [and] saved white women and children . . . from degradation . . . .

I went to China . . . there I found a disease that kills slowly and from which there is no reprieve until I found the secret. I took that plague myself and I have carried it to the uttermost ends of the earth. Wherever sedition has been talked or a rising planned, there have I gone. Every hand that has clasped mine is palsied already and soon will be cold in death . . . You must segregate the natives where I have passed. Phillip Tracey will receive instructions . . . . Thus the disease I have spread may be stamped out--but let it run its course in Russia . . . . The great gold treasure the people of India have saved is hidden here . . . use it to alleviate the ills of India's suffering millions. The gold is theirs by right.<sup>132</sup>

"Thus passed the Man Who Knew," Carruthers mused, "we never learned his name, nor even knew his nationality . . . the greatest secret service agent the world has ever seen."

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In the period of their fiercest combat at the end of 1943, Tracy Philipps and John Grierson entered into an odd interlude of cooperation. It came courtesy of Dr. W.E.B. Dubois, through the communicative circuits of the Black Atlantic. In May 1943, a rumour discouraging employees from donating blood had coursed through a war munitions plant in Quebec. The rumour held that the blood would be sent overseas "to save lives of Chinese and Negroes." In a plea to change their attitude, the editor of the plant newsletter wrote an article reassuring the workers that their blood would never be used for such purposes. When this reached the sensitive antennae of Dubois, he reprinted it in *Phylon's* "Chronicle of Race Relations" under the ironic heading: "Canada has come forward to reassure Asia and Africa," and with the afterword: "Attitudes like that here indicated are of sinister import."<sup>133</sup>

Philipps brought the item to Grierson's attention, vouched for Du Bois's credentials and raised concerns that the story might be used "to the detriment of the reputation for fair-

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<sup>132</sup> Webster, *Man Who Knew*, 314-315.

<sup>133</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, "Chronicle of Race Relations," *Phylon* (Summer 1943), 377.

dealing of the sister-nations of the British Commonwealth.” In effect, he wrote, “the quotation tends to give an impression that, in Canada's war industry plants, the racial myth and racial discrimination are practiced by a ‘master race.’”<sup>134</sup> A report requested by Grierson from labour liaison officer David Petegorsky supported what Philipps had written. “Unfortunately the quotation from “PHYLON” is all too true,” he confirmed, and “it was most embarrassing. The Editor was fired . . . and authorization for the issuance of a house organ was withdrawn from Canadian Car Munitions.” Worse than that:

copies got into the hands of the local Negro and Chinese communities who naturally raised quite a fuss about it. The Editor actually appeared before the Congregation of the Negro United Church and apologized. Someone else sent a copy to Diefenbaker, who raised the question in the House and the pot boiled over.”<sup>135</sup>

It happened that Grierson had just received further ammunition against Philipps from Arnold Heeney, George Glazebrook, and Brooke Claxton, but he thanked Philipps for bringing the matter to his attention. He forwarded Petegorsky’s report, adding “it is unlikely that the same sort of thing will occur again.”

Philipps was not satisfied. He cautioned Grierson that:

PHYLON is apt to collect and publish a 'picture gallery' of the English-speaking nations' attitude towards Jews and colour. We might, I think, be able to circumvent any follow-up detrimental to Canada in any subsequent issues. [W]ould you care to let me have a brief text, either for them to publish or as part of a personal and confidential letter to Dr. Du Bois "not for publication"? I shall take no action unless I hear from you.”<sup>136</sup>

After consulting Dunton (“Should we let Philipps do this, or take other steps ourselves?”) Grierson asked Philipps to reply “unofficially” to Du Bois, explaining all the circumstances, but avoiding any mention of *Hansard*, since Diefenbaker “did not bring the whole issue out into public view . . . apparently careful not to raise a storm of publicity.” Because Philipps knew Du Bois personally:

it would be better for you to do this than for either you or me to send an official statement intended for publication . . . . Published denials or letters of explanation are, as you know, not usually as effective as a friendly word with the editor.

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<sup>134</sup> NAC, RG 36, vol. 13, file 8-9-A, T. Philipps to J. Grierson, 23 November 1943.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, D. Petegorsky to J. Grierson, 1 December 1943.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, T. Philipps to J. Grierson, 16 December 1943.

Aside from a slight prickle in the last sentence, Grierson's tone was not hostile: indeed, he "very much appreciated" Philipps's willingness to follow the matter up, and his letter would be of "considerable service."<sup>137</sup>

The munitions plant rumour drew attention to the figures of contagion and purity of blood in Canadian racism, connecting it to the 'white consciousness' prevailing in various degrees from Cape Town to Toronto. Through *Phylon*, Du Bois reflected this back on Canada, and in Philipps's struggle with his fellow Briton Grierson the health metonym was transfigured into another set of meanings about purification and sanitization. In Canada's nascent cultural bureaucracy the mark of impurity and contagion had settled on Philipps himself. Philipps was "unhealthy," "divisive," "a negative force," promoting "Anglo-guardianship" that was by turns "mischievous," "incomprehensible," "pathological" and "mentally unbalanced." Even as Grierson wrote warmly to Philipps, he received a press censorship report prepared by Biberovich's section underlining a denunciation of Philipps, Kysilewsky and Kirkconnell that had been published in Toronto's *La Vittoria* the previous week. Philipps and his Branch were diagnosed as a diseased limb of government that had to be severed if the purity of national culture was to be preserved. All that was required was a physician to perform the amputation.

### **The England Report**

Robert England arrived in Ottawa on April 6th, 1944 to prepare his report on the reorganization of the Nationalities Branch. Already he had an activities report from Philipps, "done for the General himself" when LaFleche took over from Thorson fourteen months earlier. "Rest well," wrote Philipps, "It's nice to have you here."<sup>138</sup> In fact, Philipps had been the sole occupant of the Nationalities Branch since the last remaining stenographer took sick leave. He wrote to Kysilewsky, still convalescing at his farm, that "the Hindu Kush [Dr. W. Kushnir] is hanging around Ottawa with the Armenian, & bodes no good. It was the latter who has taken him to Ext. Affs. and to LaFleche. *Usque quo, in Domine.*"<sup>139</sup>

Deputy Minister Chester Payne had the effrontery to allow to Philipps that a new director, a "Canadian," would soon be appointed for the Nationalities Branch. Obviously passed over, the implication for Philipps was clear. The man who once trekked from Eastern to Western equatorial Africa via Lake Kivu, discoverer of the *Lutra Paraonyx Philippsi* (a

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., Grierson to Philipps, 21 December 1943.

<sup>138</sup> NAC, Robert England Papers, vol. 3, file 1, T. Philipps to R. England, 6 April 1944.

<sup>139</sup> TPP, vol 1, file 4, T. Philipps to V. Kysilewsky, 1 March 1944.

species of otter), member of Lawrence of Arabia's immortal company, and whose ancestor was once Governor of Nova Scotia, was reduced to suffering indignities from the most timid and procedural of bureaucrats. Haughtily, Philipps pointed out that there was a type of official who would punish a subordinate who broke with procedure in order to save lives, just to pad his own position. It was this type of attitude, he told Payne, that had ruined a once-great civil service.

When not seeking to terrorize the Deputy Minister, Philipps lobbied friends and acquaintances for support, signing his letters "S.O.S.," searching for an escape hatch in advance of England's descending hatchet. A former military intelligence compatriot living in London, Col. R. Meinertzhagen, could offer no help. Meinertzhagen wrote that he "did not know you had transferred your dynamo efforts to Canada where from what you say you seem to have done well." But Meinertzhagen had retired from Military Intelligence two years before:

The modern army has no use for my age nor my experience which is out of date and perhaps almost senile. . . . The present DMI is no friend of mine and I have no influence . . . If you are after UNRRA, there should be no difficulty. . . . They send you to a school to learn what you learned 40 years ago, guarantee nothing and then place you under a man who knows less about administration than you do. . . . Such an upheaval as this is bound to leave its mark on humanity . . . and all the worst side of human nature will manifest itself. That is what you want to get mixed up in. If I were twenty years younger, I should also want to lend a hand, but at 67 I should only burn my fingers.<sup>140</sup>

With no prospects in England, Philipps pursued the United Nations Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration, lobbying hard both for himself and Kysilewsky. Overtures there showed promise although, unknown to Philipps, Chester Payne had scuttled Kysilewsky's chances by providing a negative health report.<sup>141</sup> On the other hand, Payne and Robert England nurtured Philipps's application in order to avoid, if possible, the adverse publicity sure to follow his outright dismissal. In London, Norman Robertson tested out Sir Eric Machtig, Permanent Under Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, who let it be known in no uncertain terms that the British would not take Philipps back, nor

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, file 25, Col. R. Meinertzhagen to T. Philipps, 26 February 1944. .

<sup>141</sup> NAC, MG 32 Vol 445, "Vladimir Julian Kaye (Kisilewsky)," Personnel File, C.P. Holmes to UNRRA, 25-7-44: "Mr. Payne, the Deputy Minister reports that there is no doubt as to Dr. Kaye's loyalty . . . His health, however, would not appear to be satisfactory. Dr. H.T. Douglas . . . would consider Dr. Kay [sic] a poor risk." Payne had a second objection, though: he "could not release Dr. Kaye for some two months at the moment since he is the only man to bridge the gap between an old branch of Nationalities and a new Citizenship Division now being formed."

recommend him to anyone else.<sup>142</sup> That left just UNRRA, and the delicate matter of supplying a sufficiently positive character reference. Gambling that UNRRA would not consult the British Foreign Office separately, a carefully-worded letter went out over Payne's signature to Joseph P. Harris, UNRRA's Personnel Director in Washington: "I send you, herewith, our estimate as requested of [Tracy Philipps's] loyalty, character and suitability, together with details of his present work, experience and proficiency." Philipps, it attested, was employed by the Canadian government for three years; "he is a loyal servant and colleague . . . his linguistic gifts are notable, and he has considerable literary talent as well as a gift of presentation of viewpoints in public speech." Relief work "would give him a greater sphere of usefulness because of his special competence and experience in this field."<sup>143</sup> With this judicious characterization the fate of Tracy Philipps passed into the hands of UNRRA's Joseph Harris.

Hume Wrong's pessimism at External Affairs "that UNRRA would appoint Philipps to a post without checking with the United Kingdom authorities" proved unfounded.<sup>144</sup> On the day of what otherwise would have been his final showdown with Robert England, Philipps was already en route to Washington: "I am so sorry not to see you again," he jotted to England, "Things had to be arranged after Sat. office hours in order to fall in with the wishes of those who for some time have been calling. Good luck to you."<sup>145</sup> RCMP Commissioner Wood received Philipps's cheerful note, with an extract from Martin Dies's testimony on "communist smear activities against public servants," and a reprint from the journal *Nineteenth Century*: "Climate and the Arctic Route."<sup>146</sup>

On May 19th, the Washington *Colonist* reported Philipps's appointment as "chief of planning for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration Section." In Ottawa, Fred Rose and Dorise Neilson attacked General LaFleche in Parliament for his department's association with Phillipps and Kirkconnell.<sup>147</sup> In view of Philipps's departure,

<sup>142</sup> NAC, Robert England Papers, vol. 3, file 1, N.A. Robertson to H. Wrong, 4 May 1944. On April 29th, Wrong had written to Robertson "I doubt Machtig will be helpful." A week later Robertson replied that he discussed it with Machtig "to little purpose" since the latter "cannot conscientiously recommend [Philipps]."

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., C. Payne to J. Harris, 4 May 1944

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., H. Wrong to C. Payne, 4 May 1944.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., T. Philipps to R. England, 13 May 1944.

<sup>146</sup> NAC RG 146, RCMP file "Tracy Philipps," T. Philipps to S.T. Wood, 17 August 1944.

<sup>147</sup> NAC, Robert England Papers, vol. 3, file 1, press clippings, 20 May 1944.

England advised the Minister not to reply. Instead, he wrote a speech for LaFleche announcing a new era in minority relations. Without mentioning Philipps, he corrected the impression that he was “Dr.” England: “I am neither professor nor Dr. nor have a title of any kind.” He tabled his report, and then set Kysilewsky to work on uncontroversial tasks. Finally, at the end of June 1944, his reorganization took effect when Frank Foulds was appointed Director of the Nationalities Branch, soon to become the Citizenship Division of the Secretary of State.

After two years of criticism regarding his Englishness and evident unfamiliarity with Canadian minority groups it must have astonished Tracy Philipps to learn that the man cultivated as his replacement was the Acting Chief of Inspection Services for Plant Products of the Department of Agriculture. Indeed, when Frank Foulds presented his credentials at External Affairs, Léon Mayrand wrote in consternation to Hume Wrong that

Mr. Fouldes [sic] has as yet a rather hazy conception of the problems involved. . . . He seems to divide foreign language groups into a good lot (respectable, loyal, solid, substantial) and a bad lot (leftists, Communists). . . . I would suggest that Mr. Fouldes be asked to come in at the earliest opportunity and that the Under-Secretary or a senior officer should have a long chat with him.<sup>148</sup>

What quality did Foulds have that Philipps lacked, particularly if he shared the latter’s anti-communist outlook? Perhaps it was a matter of “character”: as an average anglo-Canadian, Foulds was not expected to have special insight into the affairs of minority groups, indeed only someone utterly normal and unexceptional would be a reliable node for their interaction with official Ottawa.

### **Homesick**

With Foulds's arrival on the scene, Canadian characterizations of Tracy Philipps cease. The man who lobbied hardest for minorities’ cultural rights during the Second World War in Canada was also the emissary of a reactionary ideology whose chronotope had faded like the disintegrating Union Jacks and imperial insignia decking the Anglican Cathedral in Ottawa. Both F.A.M. Webster’s *The Man Who Knew* and the records of Tracy Philipps share a remarkable disinterest in *place*. Like Webster’s fiction, Philipps’s copious writings—frequently typed adjacent to the window of a train compartment rumbling

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<sup>148</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 5772, file 173(s), “Appointment of Frank Foulds as Director of Citizenship Division of Department of War Services,” L. Mayrand to H. Wrong, 20 October 1944.

across the Canadian landscape—are utterly insensitive to topographic variety, qualities of light, sound, or variations in flora or fauna. If landscape is mentioned at all, it is merely by reference to place names. *Geographical space*, by contrast, is stressed continuously. That is, a specifically colonial space constitutes the scene of utterance for both Webster and Philipps, and each utterance refers back to the European metropolis. In this sense, Tracy Philipps was a character who moved through Canada as a series of imagined locales produced solely with reference to the colonial centre. In his gaze they were granted no other criteria of visibility, and this disturbed Canadians' fragile sense of being at home in their territory. His overt anti-communism was perhaps "premature," but it was insufficient to justify his removal. Rather, his anachronistic presence reminded Canadians of their colonial origins.

At UNRRA, it did not take long for Philipps's "fingers to get burned." Just seven weeks after his departure, Nationalities Branch secretary Gwen Baxter reported to Robert England in Victoria, "I ran into Capt. [Duncan] Cameron yesterday and had a little chat with him. He gave me a very private bit of news for you which was quite in line with your predictions - T.P. has left UNRRA and gone to Turkey but no details are forthcoming."<sup>149</sup>

In Ottawa, surrounded by his closest friend's enemies and tormentors, Vladimir Kysilewsky lost heart for his work. His premonitions of "politics and intrigue" had more than materialized, and the single purpose for his coming to Ottawa—to work closely with Philipps—lay in ruins. Yet he stayed with the Citizenship Branch for nearly two decades. He shuttled between various cultural minorities, conveying their views, and supplying articles in their languages for their presses. The RCMP tapped him for information on communist elements, and he watched the unveiling of the new citizenship apparatus following the passage of Paul Martin's Citizenship Act in 1946.

Just how anachronistic and displaced he felt is captured in his Christmas letter to Tracy Philipps in 1957:

Is it fifteen years since you gave the Christmas party for children at the Roxborough? Do you remember? . . . The war was on, London was bombed, friends were killed. In Ottawa, too, we had our tribulations, although of another kind. I think --it is better to forget it.

When I have the 'blues", I feel "homesick". I miss the bygone days. I miss the old pictures on the walls. I even miss the rather sedate atmosphere of the Edwardian times, if you remember. It was unthinkable to raise one's voice.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>149</sup> NAC, Robert England Papers, vol. 3, file 1, G. Baxter to R. England, 26 July 1944. In this letter, Baxter also informs England that, in error, Chester Payne advertised the new positions in the Citizenship Division as designated "males only."

<sup>150</sup> TPP, vol. 2, file 4. V.J. Kysilewsky to T. Philipps, 14 December 1957. Kysilewsky continued: "Dad did not like "gossips" and we were reminded to speak about everybody



Figs 45 and 46. Two views of Vladimir Kysilewsky at Nationalities Branch Christmas party, 22 December 1944, room 156, New Supreme Court Building. At left, he plays a toy xylophone; in the second photo he sits, second from the right, next to the rack of foreign language periodicals. Gwen Baxter, Robert England's informant, is leftmost of the four women sitting behind the desk. (NAC PA 195826, PA 195827.)

One feature of *dystopia* surely is a break or disjuncture between lived subjectivity and its actual locale of existence. The dweller, even of the nomadic variety, has an advantage over the occupier in being sure about time and place. Occupiers are always no-place, since their referent is always elsewhere, locales are always “seen as” part of a wider geography of governance. The *dispositif* of national culture intensified a set of discursive practices that provided a degree of cognitive stability to a whole continent of persons suffering various states or stages of colonial displacement. But it did so at the expense of repressing its own provenance as the “White Atlantic,” demolishing these “locales” by the forced choice of nationality.

Tracy Philipps’s strange genius derived from the double consciousness of the White Atlantic. Perhaps even more than its colonial and imperial past he represented their averted future, a set of cognitive mappings that invoked decaying and finally, imaginary, referents:

Like Nansen, under whom I had the honour to work in east Europe, Lawrence of Arabia made clear . . . the bitter lot and final disillusionment of those of us who give our lives to work for men of other blood and less mechanised minds in the uphill struggle towards [a] better understanding among mankind . . .

In the services of the Crown, which has been the second religion around which my ideals have resolved, I have spent a lifetime far from the men and women of my race . . . But today, for deep reasons, some of which you happen by chance to

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as if the person would be present . . . How well I remember the discussions about the latest plays of Ibsen or Sigrid Undset . . . At first I was bored with Maeterlinck, [mother’s] favourite philosopher . . . but then we found delight.”

know, I have had almost enough. I have been both humiliated and disillusioned . . . suffered both the public kiss of Judas and the private betrayal of Delilah. I begin to feel the nostalgia and the need of sight and sound, of the slow shy touch, of those of my own kindred and of my own kind in my own home. <sup>151</sup>

It is a paradox that with nationality comes an ontology of homelessness, a 'state' within the state that no amount of modernity can satisfy. In part, this is because the modern locates the primordial home in the prehistoric. Not so much in Europe's own pre-history, although this is what Heidegger, and later, Habermas, have in mind. Rather, imperialism displaced the "primordial" home of the colonized Other, assigning actually-existing Others to an ongoing prehistoric status, far back on the long road to national development. This generalized condition of homelessness is the repressed knowledge that keeps Tracy Philipps running backwards and forwards, never completely in the grasp of national history, through psychic time.

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<sup>151</sup> TPP, vol. 1 file 22, T. Philipps to Wasil Swytsun, 22 July 1941.

## CHAPTER 6

### LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR: THE RCMP AND THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD, 1948-53

INTERVIEWER: This was at the same time as *Neighbours* . . . a period where the Film Board was under great attack. It was felt there were communists at the Film Board; in fact, three people were fired. Do you recall if you were ever on a list or under suspicion since you had been in China?

NORMAN MCLAREN: No, I don't think so. I don't consider *Neighbours* a political film.

INTERVIEWER: Could you tell me about the technique used?

NORMAN MCLAREN: Very simply . . . treat a human being as animatable material.

*Has Anyone Here Seen Canada?*

#### **The Eye of Canada**

In January 1945 John Grierson stated in his radio address, "The Changing Face of Propaganda," that "there is a paradoxical point where a national information service must become international to fulfill itself. [Nation states] have at many points sublimated their national interests to international ones." With the end of the war approaching it was now the "logic of the national information services" to turn to think of the "cooperative world to which their nations are pledged."<sup>1</sup> To some extent this meant inviting motion pictures to treat questions related to international development. But for Grierson, the more important question was not so much the *content* of films but rather how images "direct men's vision and determine their loyalties," in the Kantian sense of a "structuring structure." "[W]e are concerned not only with the conscious processes of the mind," he said, "but with the subconscious ones which insensibly govern the pattern of men's attention and the manner of their action." Semantics were less important than the widest possible dissemination of a certain gaze, the construction of a specific type of filmic observer: an 'audio-visual citizen'.

"Documentary," Grierson once declared, "was from the beginning an anti-aesthetic movement." The history of that movement is confused, because:

we always had the good sense to use the aesthetes . . . we liked them and needed them. We were concerned not with the category of "purposiveness without purpose" but with that other category beyond which used to be called teleological.

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<sup>1</sup> John Grierson "The Changing Face of Propaganda," *Free World* (January, 1945), rpt. in James Beveridge, ed., *John Grierson, Film Master* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), 218.

[R]eformers. . . concerned—to use the old jargon—with "bringing alive the new materials of citizenship," "crystallising sentiments" and creating those "new loyalties from which a progressive civic might well derive."<sup>2</sup>

Audio-visual citizenship necessitated new protocols of reception whose lines of development were not easy to predict. He cited "the disintegration of the image in Cézanne and the abandonment of perspective in abstract painting" as a precedent for his view that "the deeper needs of mankind will not always be the apparent ones." For this reason, abstraction was "an important directive to modern thought and appreciation," overruling all question of representation: "Such manifestations I account as new forces . . . of appreciation which attend changes in technological pattern and therefore of the pattern of human relationship in society."<sup>3</sup>

Artists, or "aesthetes," as he called them, were invaluable sensorial interpreters of these "changes in technological pattern." Modern artists were not to be thought of as individual geniuses, endowed with gifts of "personal expression," but rather as early intimators of social patternings "within the technological economy." Film-making was not art-for-art's-sake but a means of saturating the field of filmic communication with a generalized audio-visual rationality suitable for national government. For this reason, Grierson gave film distribution special emphasis in the early development of the NFB.

Donald Buchanan had pioneered the distribution of non-theatrical motion pictures in rural Canada by founding the National Film Society in 1935.<sup>4</sup> Grierson charged Buchanan with putting this initiative on a war-time footing, and in articles such as "The Projection of Canada" Buchanan explained that the "making of motion pictures is a mixture of mechanism and art, and the mechanism looms large."<sup>5</sup> Crediting Grierson with encouraging "films that relate familiar scenes to wider concepts of citizenship and statehood," he celebrated the NFB's expanding non-theatrical distribution network, then

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>4</sup> Charles R. Acland, "National Dreams, International Encounters: the Formulation of Canadian Film Culture in the 1930s," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 3:1 (Spring 1994), 7, points to a "hegemonic moment" in Canadian cultural discourse, well in advance of Grierson's arrival, when Donald Buchanan and others first sought to link education and national culture through film.

<sup>5</sup> Donald Buchanan, "The Projection of Canada," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 13:3 (April, 1944), 1. Of the early NFB films, Buchanan singles out *Canadian Landscape* (1940), a documentary account of A.Y. Jackson's painting tours made by Graham McInnes and Budge Crawley. It represented a "more subtle approach to nature" than that found in pre-NFB government films such as Bill Oliver's "Grey Owl and the Beaver" series.

consisting of seventy mobile film units, each serving a circuit of twenty villages, most “populated by citizens of foreign origin.” Buchanan explained that the true test of national cinema was the rural circuit:

Here the real test of the documentary movie comes. Will these people respond to its stimulus? . . . [A]t first they seem to be merely passive spectators. A new movie technique, however, is proving effective in encouraging these and other audiences to come forth with their own opinions.<sup>6</sup>

Three-minute “discussion movies” tagged at the end of the main feature showed panels debating the film’s themes, and guiding the verbal responses of the rural audiences. “In such ways,” Buchanan wrote, “the motion picture becomes a gadfly to social discussion. It can relate one part of the nation to the other.”<sup>7</sup>

In a companion article, “Canadian Movies Promote Citizenship,” Buchanan reported that projectionists “are being trained to gather and make reports on these opinions so that there may be a two-way transmission of ideas.”<sup>8</sup> One projectionist reported that it was “a revelation to see the morale improvement” as a result of the films and the interactive discussions. Buchanan’s enthusiasm echoed Grierson’s, describing the rural circuits as an “experimental venture in the use of modern means of communication in the service of citizenship.”<sup>9</sup>

Accounts of these early rural circuits record the wonderment occasioned by the arrival of cinema in remote places where electrification remained a dream. Much is made of generators and film projectors being hauled on dogsleds to isolated villages in winter, and projectionists sleeping with their equipment to prevent it from freezing. One projectionist arrived at a village hall to find that the audience had turned the chairs to face the film projector. In another case, viewers tumbled backwards off a bench when a train appeared to sweep over them.<sup>10</sup> These anecdotes signal the marginal integration of as-yet unformed observers to new protocols of reception.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 7-8.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Donald Buchanan, “Canadian Movies Promote Citizenship,” *Canadian Geographical Journal* (March 1944), 123.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>10</sup> C.W. Gray, *Movies for the People: The Story of the National Film Board’s Unique Distribution System* (Ottawa: National Film Board of Canada, 1977), particularly Chapter 7, 45-47: “Between 1942 and 1946 . . . [i]t was a common experience for NFB projectionists

For Grierson and his wartime NFB team it was “common sense” and not analyses of film spectatorship and human perception that guided the development of a distinctly “Canadian” diegetic. Ordering the spatio-temporal limits of national territory and population within a consistent audio-visual representational field helped mobilize a polyglot people for war. It was a question of establishing the minimal communicative rationality through which the “call” of authority could be disseminated. Early NFB films such as *Peoples of Canada*, *Iceland on the Prairies*, *Ukrainian Winter Holiday* and *Poland on the Prairies* were the Film Board’s earliest attempts to establish this national diegetic among hundreds of thousands of “foreign-born” Canadians. This initiative combined the pen of Tracy Philipps’s ally, Watson Kirkconnell with the film units of his nemesis, Grierson, in a common project to fashion “Canadians All” from the mosaic of nationalities .

Circuit audiences introduced to the “Discussion Quiz” accompanying Gordon Sparling’s *Peoples of Canada* in 1941 were told that this “film carries an impressive measure of understanding and tolerance at a time when jungle-born fears and hatreds on which Nazi-Germany was nourished are again clouding men’s minds.”<sup>11</sup> In no other country “are inter-racial relations better than here.” This was credited to “the fact of the original division of the land into two tongues and nationalities,” whose “unusual degree of tolerance . . . has been expanded to cover all the later arrivals.” Discussion points focused on the benefits to Canada of large-scale immigration and the best means of assimilating immigrants to Canadian citizenship.<sup>12</sup>

Soon after taking up the Film Commissionership in 1939 Grierson engaged the Canadian film-maker Evelyn Spice, a veteran of his General Post Office film unit in Britain, to write a treatment for *Peoples of Canada*.<sup>13</sup> From rural Saskatchewan, Spice indulged

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to discover, in their first film round, that one-half or more of the people in their audiences were seeing a motion picture with sound for the first time.”

<sup>11</sup> NFB file, “Peoples of Canada,” n.d., Condensed Guide for Film Utilization, Discussion Quiz.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., The actual quiz begins:

- Q. Are there any Canadians of descent purely native to this country? A. The Indians
- Q. Have they rights of Canadian citizenship? A. They have no vote.
- Q. Where did our first citizens come from? A. France and England.
- Q. Should people from other lands be encouraged to retain their national habits?
- A. As long as they can be useful . . . they are contributing to our culture.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. E. Spice to J. Grierson, 17 November 1939. Spice’s reluctant acceptance did not augur well for the film’s message of multiculturalist tolerance: “I was reluctant,” she told Grierson, “To tell you the truth I am horrified at the thought of the fat Jewess in the outer office & the frightful camera outfit who don’t know enuf about inside lighting.”

Grierson's cartographic obsession by supplying a script that began with an unfurling map and the commentary: "Up the river went the first people of Canada to unroll the map of the third largest country of the world."<sup>14</sup> As the map opened on Quebec, Grierson's busy editorial pencil deleted Spice's mention of the Pope, and he toned down her references to the "guidance of the church" in French Canadian life. He retained her emphasis on the North and the use of aerial shots, including the film's penultimate image of a vertical zoom-in to a tight close-up on the Parliament buildings in Ottawa, before ending with "a resumé of faces and environments . . . prominently featured in the film."

Screening the first cut of "Peoples of Canada" in November 1940, Grierson judged Gordon Sparling's direction too literal, lacking the "inside life" and "depth of feeling" Sparling ought to have found on-location amongst ethnic minority groups.<sup>15</sup> "The film was shot too stiff to script," Grierson complained, and "there is a tendency to pile on the trimmings: elaborate and complicated opticals." He railed that these "don't make up for 'inside' lacks; they will, if anything exaggerate them," and he vetoed Sparling's proposed use of "fancy parchment" as a background for the main titles.<sup>16</sup>

Grierson and producer, Stuart Legg, had been unmoved by Sparling's account of his restaging the Hutterites' first arrival at the Regina train station. Responding to Legg's criticism that the prairie sequences "lacked a smell of truth and authenticity," Sparling wrote that the problem was not that his subjects were "wooden actors," but that they were completely uncomprehending of their relation to the camera. With "the appearance of the big out-fit," Sparling reported, they became "very shy and suspicious," their gestures "self-conscious and hesitant."<sup>17</sup> In psychoanalytic terms, there was neither mirror identification with the camera nor complicity with its gaze. The new citizens as yet lacked

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Grierson struck "people of Canada" from this sentence and substituted "white men."

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. J. Grierson to G. Sparling, 18 November 1940.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. J. Grierson to S. Legg, 24 February 1941. Grierson opposed using Lorne Greene as narrator: "I play with the notion of having [Leonard] Brockington do the commentary . . . his is the best known voice in Canada . . . which is in any case a great deal more civilised than Lorne Green's." [sic].

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. S. Legg to G. Sparling, 13 May 1940. When Stuart Legg viewed the rushes sent from Regina he complained to Sparling of excessive "wobble" resulting from what he deduced was hand-held operation of the bulky Eyemo camera. "This is fatal," wrote Legg, but Sparling responded coolly that "the risk of a slight wobble is far out-weighed by getting natural action and expression . . . Used with discretion and good cutting, the Eyemo shots are not readily identifiable."

audio-visual competence not only as *observers* able to identify with that gaze, but also they remained innocent of a voyeuristic ability to *imagine themselves behaving as its objects*.

Sparling also reminded Legg that Evelyn Spice's portrait of mutual tolerance was at best proto-factual:

We have been getting a bit of criticism about the characters we are chasing, particularly the Doukobors and other "communities". People out here say they do nothing for Canada, demand exemption from military services, flout our laws continually and do not put their profits back into circulation in Canada. No authority can be found for our statement that the Chinaman is the unofficial banker of the prairies, nor that the Mennonites were invited to come over because of advance farming methods. The former, by and large, are anti-social and send all their profits out of the country. The Japs are the same. The Mennonites wrote over asking what conditions and treatment they could expect here. It was purely an escape mechanism. Their methods are primitive - not advanced. One man asked me "Aren't you admitting there are a few 'white' people in the West?"<sup>18</sup>

Grierson's damnation of the film during production was undone by the picture's success when released in the winter of 1941. One letter of congratulation from Regina praised "the true atmosphere created in *Peoples of Canada* by taking pictures on the spot."<sup>19</sup> In a quaint pre-Cold War usage of the term "propaganda," the writer told Grierson, "if anything, it surpasses your previous 'propaganda' films, all of which struck me as interesting presentations." A newsreel version of the film was granted international distribution under the *Canada Carries On* series and a three-reel French version including extra footage shot in Quebec was released for screenings in that province.

In 1943, the Psychological Warfare Executive in London cited *Peoples of Canada* as a model for future propaganda films. The NFB should be:

putting across the concept of the United Nations as an international new order . . . the breakdown of natural barriers, racial barriers . . . showing the triumph of organisation within Canada itself . . . The possession within Canada of a large number of racial minorities, many of whom still speak their native languages but

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. G. Sparling to S. Legg, 24 May 1940. With this use of the word "white" one wonders whether Sparling's difficulty finding lively film subjects had something to do with his own attitudes towards his subjects: "I think that objection can easily be taken care of by the addition of about five words to the script: 'To the English, Irish and Scotch were added many strange new faces.' (Or words to that effect!). . . . We are also taking the liberty of substituting Hutterites for Mennonites since the latter have largely given up their special dress and living methods, while the former still live in their picturesque colonies. We are also on the trail of some Icelanders."

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. G.H. Michell to J. Grierson, n.d. April 1941.

have adopted a specifically Canadian culture and viewpoint is a very important propaganda contact with Europe.<sup>20</sup>

In 1944, the Political Intelligence Directorate rated the film as "excellent" for use in re-educating Nazi POWs, thus fulfilling Grierson's ambitions in every direction.<sup>21</sup>

José Arroyo points perceptively to a militaristic quality in Grierson's personality, a would-be "propaganda General." Grierson viewed Hollywood in 1939 as "one of the greatest potential munitions factories on earth," and its theatre of war was "spread across the earth with an audience of a hundred million a week."<sup>22</sup> If, by comparison, Ottawa presented modest possibilities at least the Canadian government was receptive to his view that film could help shape "the pattern of civic appreciation, civic faith, and civic duty which goes with them." Grierson wanted film spectators who responded to its call to *order*:

They mean nothing--literacy, knowledge or skill, the whole lot of them--if they do not make for *order* in the world . . . we have failed [to realize] the implications of the change which the technological revolution has brought upon us . . . we have become more and more citizens of a community we do not adequately see. Under our feet go wires . . . . A simple weather forecast is a daily drama of complicated observation . . . . We do not see [that] this is the fact of modern society . . . we are slow to adopt the habits of thought which must necessarily go with interdependency, if we are to control the forces which we ourselves have released. We have given ourselves a new kind of society, but we have not yet given ourselves the kind of imagination or the new conception of citizenship which makes it tolerable.

I think it is no wonder that we are full of frustrations and neuroses of one kind or another.

That the NFB was about to be shattered by the Cold War, ruining the careers of Grierson and many others, would have shocked those who, during the war, shared his statist, not so say authoritarian, outlook on the form and function of documentary cinema.

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<sup>20</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 32,11, file 5353-AB-40 "Canadian Liaison with UK," A. Marshall to J. Golightly 31 December 1943. The NFB's Ross McLean had written to J. Golightly on 22 October 1943, asking "What sort of films are considered [by the Psychological Warfare Executive] fit for use in liberated territories? Should we tell them what beautiful people they are? . . . or that democracy is a beautiful thing and we intend them to enjoy it? . . . or that they had better do what they are told?" This flippancy did not impress senior External Affairs officials, but Arthur Calder Marshall of the British Ministry of Information replied in kind: he wanted more films like *Peoples of Canada*, rather than the Frank Capra pictures, which tell the story "as it would be seen by God, if God was an American."

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, M. Moore to T.A. Stone, 21 November 1944.

<sup>22</sup> José Arroyo, "John Grierson: Years of Decision," *Cinema Canada* (December 1989): 15-19.

Grierson directed the NFB for only five years, but he left an indelible mark on the organization and its personnel. One of his earliest recruits was animator Norman McLaren, who arrived in Ottawa from New York in 1941, and who stayed with the NFB for the rest of his career. For Grierson, the fact that he and McLaren hailed from the same Scottish village licensed him to treat the latter as a slightly daft younger brother for whose way in the world he had assumed responsibility. Yet, the "aesthete" McLaren did not necessarily share Grierson's outlook, perhaps least his views about cinema and citizenship. Grierson may have coined the NFB's motto "The Eye of Canada," but as will be seen McLaren enjoyed tricking that eye with his animations, most forcefully with his 1952 animated short, *Neighbours*.

Grierson disparaged *Neighbours* with more than his usual acerbity, calling it "a very naive film," and doubting McLaren's intellectual merit:

I wouldn't trust Norman round the corner as a political thinker. I wouldn't trust him round the corner as a philosophic thinker. That's not what Norman is for. Norman is for "Hen Hop." "Hen Hop." that's wonderful! And so many other things. That is his basic gift. He's got joy in his movement. He's got loveliness in his movement. He's got fancy in his changes. That's enough.<sup>23</sup>

Why did the documentary film master so disparage what McLaren considered to be his greatest work? Created during the nightmare of the NFB's "security scare," *Neighbours* was amazingly successful; against all the odds winning an Academy Award. Perhaps McLaren found a way to image the 'state' within the state, and to reveal the "frustrations and neuroses" suppressed by Grierson's model for civic film spectatorship.

### The Censor

McLaren worked at his table at the National Film Board for year upon year, laboriously filtering the passage of light through film, a miniaturist hand-painting images on each frame. Assuming the same posture, the Access to Information censor in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service patiently filters the passage of historical signs through page after page of text, shading and cross-hatching the state's self-projection into historiography. As an animator, McLaren understood the principle of invertibility inherent to censorship: he made images appear to move on the screen by releasing light through scraped openings on black, exposed film, while on clear stock he blocked light with ink. With the same gestures, the censor patterns the release of data into historiography by blocking out words and

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<sup>23</sup> John Grierson in *Creative Process: Norman McLaren*, dir. Donald McWilliams (Montreal: NFB, 1991); film documentary.

phrases, or, where rules require it, inverting the process to reveal a few fragments here and there on otherwise blank pages. Both animator and censor route the spectator's attention through plays of obscurity and revelation, deferral and release.

The censor's upstream filtration of historical signs forces historians to reveal how our authority as narrators depends upon a fetish, just as McLaren's animations at times reminded audiences that "motion" in cinema is illusory. Although historians quietly disavow the past's appalling absence through rhetorical effects, conjuring up illusions of plenitude, censorship makes such disavowal unsustainable. Professionalism dictates that readers be told when such-and-such is only *likely* to have been so, was *apparently* the case, or that "\_\_\_\_" *almost certainly* was so-and-so. Indeed, unless narrative "suturing" is traded up to outright embroidery, qualifiers flock into accounts based on censored sources to menace their claim to empiricity.

South African critic J.M. Coetzee describes the writer internalizing the censor to form a "mirror couple" whose "vicissitudes of blockage and deflection [are] inherently incompatible with political practice." Any political discourse about the censor "is a discourse of control: either of taking control of the censor or evading his control."<sup>24</sup> Confronting "the censor in the genre of polemic," he writes, inevitably follows "a course of accelerating violence and loss of difference," finally bending the writer in one way or another to the censoring authority.

The secret files concerning the RCMP Security Service's purge of suspected Communists from the National Film Board have been released piecemeal through Canada's Access to Information apparatus over the past decade. They are typical of the intentionally-shattered security intelligence records that weaken rather than strengthen narrative accounts. Of 810 pages of material accumulated by the RCMP between June 1948 and June 1953, for example, 253 pages have been blanked out entirely and the remaining pages are pockmarked with excisions.

Yet, this is hardly a catastrophe. Taken in this sense of invertibility, as a play of presence and absence, the censor's gesture in fact adds the contemporary signature of the State to traces left by its Security Service's investigations of yesteryear. The removal of names, file numbers, references to "police techniques" and exchanges with other governments may taint the empirical authority of a narrative, but these patterns of withholding may also enhance our impression of the State's modes of envisioning information, and its interest in fostering a certain kind of national history. This is germane to the somewhat counter-intuitive question posed here in reading these files: to what extent was

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<sup>24</sup> J.M. Coetzee, "Breytenbach and the Censor," *Raritan* 10:4 (Spring 1991), 83.

the National Film Board *continuous* with the State's internal security apparatus in patterning Canadian citizenship during the Cold War?



Fig. 47. Opening tableau of Norman McLaren's *Neighbours*, Jean-Paul Ladouceur and Grant Munro. (NFB.)

## Neighbours

The metaphor of “neighbours” is not emphasized here as an ironic play on the Security Service’s treatment of the Film Board, but rather to expose a spatial logic of neighbourliness encoded in the records of the investigation. Suburban neighbours occupy bounded, individuated plots, but the ongoing division of property depends on the constant reproduction of shared beliefs. As a result, property lines are never as stable as site surveys might suggest; privacy and discretion are flexed by gossip and rumour, provisional solidarities formed during summer barbecues may recede into winter aloofness; imprecise parking habits may be tolerable for just so long. In sum, the aspect of neighbourliness that concerns us here is not the presumed fixity between these socially-defined spaces but rather neighbours’ constant *sensing* for any alteration in their bilateral conditions of existence.

Canada’s capital city was situated prudently, a hundred miles north of the giant American neighbour, where the Rideau River drops to meet the Ottawa. Just south of the city at a rock formation known as “Hog’s Back” the Rideau Canal diverts from the river’s natural bed, running in straight reaches to descend a flight of locks between the Chateau Laurier and the Parliament. The shallow bed of the Rideau follows a different course, describing slow arcs, and passing the RCMP’s austere Overbrook headquarters, housed in a

former monastery. This was the epicentre of a security chill that settled over "progressive" employees of the federal civil service after Soviet cipher clerk Igor Gouzenko's defection became public knowledge in February 1946. Half a mile further on, National Film Board studios once flanked the curtain falls where the Rideau cascades into the Ottawa. Grierson built the National Film Board there in a disused sawmill.

Given the spatial proximity of the RCMP to the Film Board it not surprising that space-time routines intersect at the level of individual employees. In the files, for example, is a memorandum of March 27th, 1952, by Mark McClung, the Mounties' specialist in political philosophy. Son of the pre-eminent Canadian feminist and social reformer, Nellie McClung, he took the opposite tack from her political activism to work for the RCMP's anti-subversive squad. From his office in the Overbrook Headquarters he wrote and edited briefs on suspect organizations throughout the Cold War. In this memo to Superintendent George B. McClellan, officer in charge of the Special Branch, McClung is revealed as one neighbour held apart from another by what they have in common, the very motif Norman McLaren was at that moment exploring not far downstream, shooting *Neighbours*.

Moving to Golden Avenue in a western suburb of Ottawa in May 1951, McClung and his wife had struck up an intermittent friendship with the \_\_\_\_\_'s, neighbours who, as it happened, were NFB employees under investigation as suspected Communists. "I must go back some months," McClung wrote, "to explain the oddness" of their most recent encounter:

2. We moved our house in \_\_\_\_\_ last May and I think in the same month met the \_\_\_\_\_ at the home of \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ is a distant relative of \_\_\_\_\_ and as you are aware a well-known lawyer and Liberal Party man. From that time on there have been occasions when the \_\_\_\_\_ would invite us over for a beer usually on Sunday noons and these invitations were reciprocated by us but at no time did I feel that \_\_\_\_\_ was taking a particular interest in me, although he knew from the beginning that I work for the RCMP.

3. During the fall, I happened to mention this connection to Sgt. McLaren and then read our file on \_\_\_\_\_. Since that time I have continued, as before, neither seeking nor particularly avoiding \_\_\_\_\_ company. Until last Tuesday, I suppose we have been in their home four or five times and they in ours as often.

4. That afternoon my wife phoned me to say that \_\_\_\_\_ not his wife, had phoned and rather abruptly invited us for supper the same evening. The short notice and the manner of the invitation seemed odd to us but we accepted. The other guests were: \_\_\_\_\_ (phonetic spelling) whose husband is a Film board man but absent from the dinner at work; \_\_\_\_\_ the orchestra man, I believe; \_\_\_\_\_, a BBC man who has just arrived in Canada for a 6-months visit having to do with television.

5. Throughout the evening, the bulk of the conversation was on movies, theatre, Eskimos, \_\_\_\_\_ trip to Karachi, and other fairly safe subjects. Occasionally however it took turns that made me feel I was expected to react. For example

\_\_\_\_\_ denounced \_\_\_\_\_ condemnation some months ago of her \_\_\_\_\_'s organization as Communist-inspired. Again, \_\_\_\_\_ claimed the plan to move the NFB to Montreal is a secret political deal between Duplessis and the Cabinet. These themes were not pressed and the talk moved on to more neutral subjects. We left at about 11:45 but the others showed no signs of moving.

6. This is the first time we have been invited for a meal at the \_\_\_\_\_ and it actually was mentioned that two other people, not named as far as I can remember, were to have come but at the last moment fell ill. One interpretation therefore is that we were invited to fill in. On the other hand \_\_\_\_\_ may have been instructed to invite us and, perhaps being reluctant to do so, displayed the abruptness my wife detected over the phone.

7. It hardly seems credible to me that this was a serious attempt to feel me out as a possible weak link in our chain because of the rather crude and abrupt approach used but, after discussion with Cpl. McEwan, the incident seemed worth describing for the file.

8. May I ask for your advice for future occasions? According to \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ now owe the \_\_\_\_\_ a meal with at least beer and an atrocious wine called "Manoir St. David".<sup>25</sup>

As witness to the Mounties' surveillance and manipulation of NFB suspects over the previous three years, McClung wrote with well-founded circumspection. His suggestion of a parity in these domestic transactions with his neighbours subtly emphasized the boundary line in their association. Perhaps as intended, granite-faced George McClellan's attention lighted on the reference to wine: "I think there is no harm in Mr. McClung letting this thing develop—if it will," he wrote, "It may be a feeler, At any rate—anyone who serves Manoir St. David deserves rigorous scrutiny."

McClellan had recruited McClung, a former Rhodes Scholar and naval intelligence veteran, after the Gouzenko Affair as a civilian expert to help the Security Service differentiate potential subversion from loyal dissent. "Policemen don't read books on politics, this a political kind of thing and we want guys with your kind of education to come in and research for us," he told McClung. It was not an unqualified success. Thirty years later McClellan implied to the NFB documentarian Donald Brittain that civilian employees employed after the war for their putative intellectual abilities proved indeed to be "weak links" in the chain: "I don't know that a man who has taken a course in political science is necessarily better than a man who has lived with a subversive party for ten years of his

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<sup>25</sup> NAC, RG 146, Access to information request 93-A-00082, McClung to McClellan, 27 March 1952.

life."<sup>26</sup> For his part, McClung told Brittain the Security Service was "blinkered," and described the "epitome of the true mounted policeman" in less than flattering terms:

In his own mind he is an omni-competent human being. He can go anywhere and do anything any time. He can govern the North, he can catch murderers, he can catch dope traffickers, he can do everything. And he does this because of his very special training. Now that's one trait in him. The other trait is profound anti-intellectualism, they distrust the thought process and any person who thinks in any deviant way at all is suspect.<sup>27</sup>

The purging of Film Board staff has been derided as a McCarthyist episode of police excess and official cynicism urged on by aggressive private film interests, yet reading the police files suggests that a neighbourly sensitivity towards deviation forms a neglected part of the explanation.<sup>28</sup> Cultural nationalist historiography portrays John Grierson's NFB as a candle of enlightenment snuffed out by reactionary philistines, a poignant "might-have-been" in the history of Canadian cinema.<sup>29</sup> I suggest rather that it was a *continuity* in the purpose of the two organizations, not a vast disparity, that defined the pattern of the "security scare."

### A Punch in the Eye

Norman McLaren once showed a British documentary crew how *Neighbours* was born in 1951 from dissecting the trajectory of a punch.<sup>30</sup> "A punch accelerates quickly,"

<sup>26</sup> George McClellan in *On Guard For Thee*, Part 2, "A Blanket of Ice," dir. Donal Brittain (Montreal: NFB, 1981); film documentary.

<sup>27</sup> Mark McClung, interview by James Littleton, 15 January 1981. NAC, ISN 61911.

<sup>28</sup> Don Wall, "The Files," in Len Scher, ed., *The Un-Canadians: True Stories of the Blacklist Era*, (Toronto: Lester, 1992), 127. Wall, a former RCMP analyst, recalls that he reviewed the NFB files and concluded that "[t]here was very little to the scare." Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse write in *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-57* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 249, that "one might almost think there was some deadly game of espionage and counter-espionage going on—until one remembers that the 'suspects' were nothing more than documentary film makers."

<sup>29</sup> Rick Salutin, *Globe and Mail*, 25 January 1986, D2: "I noticed [Peter Pearson] talking to a very nice-looking older woman. She was talking animatedly, and then I noticed she was crying. Later I asked him why the woman was crying. He told me her name was Evelyn Cherry and that she had worked at the Film Board in the early days. He said she was talking about a witch hunt, a purge that had taken place there. . . . I didn't know there had been this explicit attempt to quash the Film Board's interest in social issues."

<sup>30</sup> *The Eye Hears, the Ear Sees*. Gavin Millar, dir. (London: BBC Television, 1970); film documentary.

he said, his right fist moving delicately in lengthening increments towards his actor's left cheek. He counted out the "click . . . click . . . click" of the animation camera to demonstrate how increasing each segment of the gesture created the illusion of acceleration when projected at normal speed. Actor Grant Munro grinned at the gentle arrival of McLaren's fist, and turned his cheek away as if from the force of the blow. Using this technique the gentlest gesture might appear extremely violent.



Fig. 48: Norman McLaren shooting *Neighbours*, 1952. Photo: Evelyn Lambart (NFB.)

If five years of investigative activity into the Film Board were accelerated into a single gesture, the records of the RCMP Security Service would share this profile of the punch. A wind-up of surveillance and data collection preceding a sharp blow of dismissals and trauma, leaving a lingering bruise of censorship. The following sequence of "exposures" render that gesture in the form of a "damaged" narrative, digesting the records in their shattered state without explicit interpretation but leaving intact the traces of internal police dialogues. The pattern of police activity forms an unseen backdrop to *Neighbours*, and the final section of the chapter discusses McLaren's defiance of the security scare and NFB self-censorship.

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**"NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA - PENETRATION OF - CANADA  
GENERALLY"<sup>31</sup>**

**1. July to December, 1948, 240 pages (108 pages removed)**

On June 24th, 1948, Supt. George McClellan advised his investigators that James J. McCann, Minister of National Revenue, was "somewhat concerned about the possibility of Communist activity among the [NFB] employees." The substance of the Minister's request for investigation of six of the almost six hundred Film Board employees is excised, but the decision not to take Film Commissioner Ross McLean into his confidence necessitated an "indirect" approach. By early July, surveillance and research suggested, as McClellan reported to Commissioner S.T. Wood, that at least two of the six suspects had "strong Communist Party connections."

In spite of the investigators' discretion, employees immediately went on the defensive:

Unfortunately, hearsay information is making the rounds and these various stories are exaggerated as they are carried from person to person. Numerous incidents have been related to brand this person or that one a Communist and it has often occurred that in an effort to trace the story to its origin we have found ourselves stalled right in the middle of the procedure.<sup>32</sup>

The "term 'Communist' itself," Cst. Miller continued, had become "an obstacle" as a result of the "general international situation." "Well-meaning and well-educated persons will brand any person a Communist who shows signs of being critical of one or several of our government's institutions . . . assisted by ensuing rumour, a good citizen can often be victimized."

Spurred to a "concerted effort to pry further into the activities of certain members who are in the employ of the Film Board," investigators duly produced new information. Commissioner Wood advised Minister McCann on July 15th that "persons other than those mentioned by you . . . may be Communists." He asked the Minister "without creating comment" to obtain a nominal role of all NFB employees, adding that "it would also be

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<sup>31</sup> NAC RG 146. RCMP files entitled "NFB - Penetration of - Canada Generally" have been released to the National Archives of Canada as a result of Access to Information requests. For the years 1947-1960, see RG 146, Volume 1975, file 93-A-00053 (3 parts), Volume 1976, Files 93-A-00080 (3 parts), 93-A-00081 (3 parts), 93-A-00082 (3 parts).

<sup>32</sup> In James Beveridge (ed.) *John Grierson, Film Master*, 214, Evelyn Cherry recalled that when Grierson left the staff "acted like sheep running for the fold, with no shepherd to guide us . . . we bleated around in a strange lost manner, rushed for individual cover, sold out our personal friends for gain--in all, acted as if we should never have been worthy of hire to serve our country."

preferable if [it] contained the full Christian names . . . in order that we can make an accurate check against our indices.”<sup>33</sup>

While issuing security clearances to two NFB administrative employees who agreed to swear to secrecy, Superintendent O. Lariviere wrote to Commissioner Wood on July 21st wondering if, “in view of the information obtained . . . you may consider the possibility of having steps taken to preclude \_\_\_\_\_'s appointment to the position mentioned.” An unnamed officer proposed that “something should be done to prevent \_\_\_\_\_ from taking up a position with the United Nations,” and that “\_\_\_\_\_ is suspicious because he is too clean.”

At the end of July the investigators found names of three NFB employees on mailing lists seized on May 28th from the Victory Book Shop in Montreal, described as “a centre for distribution of Communist literature . . . shut down by police action.” The briefs accumulated new references drawn from Sgt. D.E. McLaren’s historical name-searches through files on organizations. On another front, an informant put “\_\_\_\_\_” under suspicion because he was “not considered personally financially able to” pay for a planned trip. All this information was to be kept from informants “for fear of drying up sources.”

Sgt. McLaren’s research found NFB Distribution Director Jack Ralph (whose name accidentally passed the censor’s hand) on the Canadian-Soviet Friendship Council in 1945, as well as the Quebec Committee for Allied Victory. Moreover, Ralph publicly opposed Quebec’s anti-Communist “Padlock Laws.” A four-page brief described these and other associations, but only a few references remain, such as a neighbour’s comment to investigators that Mrs. Ralph had been heard to utter “left-wing views.”

In August, a general reticence in one case turned to outright revocation. This employee “stood out conspicuously during his last days in the Film Board . . . critici[zing] anything and everything pertaining to Communism and it is calculated someone must have spoken to him about his former attitude.” A few suspects convinced investigators they were “loyal and trusted citizens,” while others remained under suspicion. One man “would be an active Communist were it not for the fact that he was scared.”<sup>34</sup> One suspect’s name had resurfaced from “the Espionage enquiries in 1945-46.”<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> The next released page in the file, following two removed documents, is an organization chart containing the names of suspects. Beneath the name of Ross McLean are the names of forty-seven administrative, technical and creative personnel.

<sup>34</sup> This man was distribution officer for medical films under Jack Ralph. Cpl. McLaren reported that he had worked against the anti-communists in the Civil Service Association and that “he was formerly \_\_\_\_\_ and it is alleged that he still ‘worships the man.’”

<sup>35</sup> As disillusioned employees left the Board at the end of their three-month contracts, investigators attempted to determine their destinations and contact their prospective employers. Doris Rands in Len Sher, *The Un-Canadians*, 85-87, describes fleeing by car to

On September 17th, a heavily-censored page allows only that new individuals were being "carded," and an investigator reported "a strong tendency to be cautious on the part of all those who formerly expressed sympathies towards Russia or those who were critical of our governmental policies. [T]here is general suspicion in the ranks of the National Film Board that their organization is under investigation." He went on to question the appropriateness of conducting such a strenuous investigation in the case of the Film Board, and the statement of an informant who claimed the rumour of "communistic or radical activities was an injustice to the organization" was cited at length:

\_\_\_\_\_ was of the opinion that while there are certainly some individuals who bear watching, the great majority are loyal to Canada, although critical of several of our government's policies. \_\_\_\_\_ opined that the youth of Canada is taking a keener interest in politics today than ever before; many of these are men and women who served during the last war who not only fought for the preservation of the democracies but are continuing in their efforts to make Canada better and more prosperous . . . The contention was advanced that a conglomeration of such people thrown together, most of whom are still imbued with their college-day "Academic Freedom", causes discussions to take place where people often argue for the sake of argument and the more precocious of these are often misunderstood, particularly by those who adhere to the traditional "old party" lines. \_\_\_\_\_ thought that with so many rumours going around about the "Red" Film Board it was gratifying to know that various suspects are being concentrated on as this would certainly eliminate many over whom these rumours cast a shadow and would, at least, give a clearer picture of the Film Board to authorities, all of which would be in the Film Board's favor.

## 2. January to June, 1949: 102 pages (45 pages removed)

In January, dossiers accumulated on each of apparently twenty-eight suspect individuals. A new name was cross-referenced from the subscription list of the Canadian Seamen's Union paper *Searchlight*. Inspector John Leopold traced fifty-six persons who signed a protest under the auspices of the Civil Service Association. Fifteen proved to be current NFB employees so he attached



Fig. 49. Neighbours examine the flower. (NFB.)

adverse slips to their files "with suitable comment against each." Insp. R.A.S. MacNeil complained that it "is unfortunate that we have no background information on many of these employees . . . and that it is therefore essential to approach this security problem in such an indirect manner." On February 25th, the *Toronto Telegram* reported that G.J. Fraser, M.P.,

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Regina where RCMP officers attempted to dissuade prospective employers from hiring her husband.

"calls for an inquiry and suggests communist infiltration." The Premier of New Zealand was "asking for an investigation of that country's Film Board. They have Communists in there." warned Fraser, "I am not saying whether we have them or not." On the same day, Inspector MacNeil reviewed records from the NFB's film library, noting a film "twice drawn from storage under very suspicious circumstances," the second time by "a woman . . . described as being one of the well-known Communists."

G.G. "Bill" Crean, of Defence Liaison II, the intelligence division of the Department of External Affairs, posed a new security question regarding the NFB. Invited to participate in "The World Union of Documentary" in Warsaw, Crean questioned the appropriateness of Film Board employees associating directly with a Soviet-bloc organization. An estimate of the Warsaw organization's status was requested of "Mr. Dwyer" (British MI6's North American liaison was Peter Dwyer). Responses from Dwyer and Canada's Warsaw Legation, though withheld in the released material, were sufficiently negative for Crean to conclude that "on the basis of this information we should suggest that the National Film Board of Canada should gracefully decline."

Increased correspondence with foreign intelligence agencies regarding the movements of NFB employees abroad included a report on \_\_\_\_\_'s visit to Moscow in 1935, \_\_\_\_\_'s work in England with \_\_\_\_\_ in 1948-49, and information from British or American sources concerning \_\_\_\_\_ in Toronto who was with British Security Coordination in New York in 1944. "She was romantically involved with one of the Gouzenko suspects and considered to be a 'parlour pink.'" The RCMP provided the \_\_\_\_\_ with briefs on NFB suspects who were either in or likely to visit the U.S.A.

Insp. Leopold's inquiries through government channels concerning one "employee of high standing in the Film Board" followed informants reports that a spider-like John Grierson ran the NFB by "remote-control" through a cadre of faithful deputies. Adverse information on Grierson and fellow Briton Stuart Legg exhumed from the early 1940s judged Legg to have been an "appeaser" and "defeatist" based on informant reports of his original script for "The Tools of War" (1941).<sup>36</sup> On October 10th, 1949, D.E. McLaren, now Corporal, extracted information from a 1943 report on Grierson stating that:

\_\_\_\_\_ was recently appointed \_\_\_\_\_ of the Wartime Information Board and that in addition to these duties he will continue to act as \_\_\_\_\_. From the information at hand it would appear that \_\_\_\_\_ is a Communist sympathizer and as such any press releases or films prepared under his direction might reflect his sympathies . . . . It is significant that he described "We" (Canadians) as "a peasant and proletarian people."

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<sup>36</sup> NFB file, "Tools of War." This file contains Legg's scripts, none of which substantiates the informant's claim, which nonetheless shows that the RCMP had informants within the NFB as early as 1941.

Six years on, the Mounties remained suspicious. Cpl. McLaren noted for the file Grierson's admission to the Kellock-Taschereau Commission that "he knew and liked PAVLOV . . . the NKVD head."<sup>37</sup> Cpl. McLaren's memorandum concluded that " \_\_\_\_\_'s association with The World Today Inc. in New York City after leaving the Film Board does not lessen the suspicion attached to him."<sup>38</sup>

### 3. July to December, 1949: 136 pages, (38 pages removed)

Suspicion cascaded over Grierson's remaining Film Board associates. Ross McLean and James Beveridge were believed to be closest to the source and their relationships to Grierson were explored in detail. Informants told Cst. Miller that McLean "showed signs of weakness" and possibly was "being blackmailed." The informant recounted that McLean spotted Grierson in the 1930s



Fig. 50. Neighbours "flying." (NFB.)

"when he was on the staff of our Canadian Legation in London." McLean was "quite a brilliant young man and thought to be a \_\_\_\_\_." Miller reasoned that McLean owed his Commissionership to Grierson and felt a "sense of obligation" to favour the Griersonian "group" within the NFB. This explained his presence at "the gay private parties" of this "clique," his toleration of "shady financial angles" and "wastage," and supported the view that he was susceptible to Grierson's continuing influence.

Cpl. McLaren also assembled a detailed personal history of an employee whom McLean permitted to travel to Russia that autumn. An informant described "the conduct of these Canadians, being filled up with Vodka by their hosts and fawning over them," as presenting a "very repulsive scene particularly when one considered the positions of trust and confidence they hold in the Canadian Government."

<sup>37</sup> Unknown to Grierson, the Gouzenko espionage inquisitors were unable to determine if Pavlov had operated a NKVD network in Canada separately from the GRU "Neighbours" (as the Soviet secret services then referred to each other). For inviting doubt Grierson could not have picked a more damaging Soviet official to acknowledge as a friendly acquaintance. For Grierson's testimony see Robert Bothwell and J.L. Granatstein, eds., *The Gouzenko Transcripts: The Evidence Presented to the Kellock-Taschereau Royal Commission of 1946* (Ottawa: Deneau Publishing, 1982), 341-343.

<sup>38</sup> For an account of FBI records pertaining to John Grierson see Kirwan Cox, "The Grierson Files," *Cinema Canada* 36 (June/July 1979): 16-24.

On November 16th, Cst. Miller assembled information received from a female informant repeating the possibility that a Grierson "clique" was blackmailing Ross McLean. She recalled that McLean "became involved in some difficulty "at the High Commission in London in the late 1930s" and Grierson "took him under his wing and made him the Deputy Film Commissioner."<sup>39</sup> In a highlighted passage, Miller explained that Grierson felt an obligation since without McLean "providing the liaison . . . plus the influence . . . he would not have accomplished what he did." On the other hand, "having made a fizzle of his job in the Canadian Legation" McLean had "little hope for a good position." The informant called him "backward and suffering from a complex of inferiority . . . he was saved by Grierson's call at the critical moment and... he has always felt a keen sense of indebtedness."

Although the dynamic Grierson was prone to impatience with McLean, he recommended that McLean succeed him as Film Commissioner.<sup>40</sup> The fact that McLean knew "little or nothing about the Film Industry," did not matter, and the "combine of close associates" remained intact. McLean depended on Grierson's four "old reliables" to run the Board, knowing "all too well that the 'big four' are carrying him and he knows, too, that the 'big four' know it." These four were "allied more closely than any union could bind them" and McLean accepted their direction rather than be met with a "wholesale 'walkout' and thereby cut his own throat."

"\_\_\_\_\_" reported on McLean's performance at a recent conference in Halifax where, "as the highest ranking Government official" McLean "had the most marvelous opportunity to build up the prestige of the Film Board" and "failed completely." He "did no lobbying, no entertaining--worst of all, failed miserably on the platform . . . in fact, was continually trying to hide . . . his complete lack of gumption." Bearing Cst. Miller's conclusion that Grierson "is still running the Board by remote control" the brief on McLean was forwarded to Commissioner Wood (whose reaction is withheld from the released documents).

Through their clippings service the investigators watched an anti-NFB media campaign waged by its enemies gather momentum in late October and crescendo on November 17th when a front-page exposé in the *Financial Post* revealed the Defense Department had suspended their

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<sup>39</sup> Grierson instructed Frank Badgely to hire Ross McLean and Evelyn Spice to work on "The Peoples of Canada", paying McLean as 'researcher' twice the amount Spice received as writer. See NFB file, "Peoples of Canada", J. Grierson to F. Badgely, 20 November 1939.

<sup>40</sup> The informant was wrong on this point; Grierson recommended James Beveridge, not Ross McLean.

use of NFB services due to security concerns.<sup>41</sup> Documents concerning the decision to allow Ross McLean's tenure as Film Commissioner to expire in January 1950 are removed.

Remarkably, the damaging *Financial Post* article is not amongst the filed clippings, but investigators read follow-up articles the next day on the *Toronto Daily Star* and the *Ottawa Journal* stating that Prime Minister St. Laurent was "visibly embarrassed" by the leak.<sup>42</sup> Minimizing the scale of the investigation, he allowed that the "very few" policemen assigned to the investigation found the task so distasteful that they were "reluctant even to go about securing the information." The Labour Progressive Party paper, *The Canadian Tribune*, implied that F.R. "Budge" Crawley, a pioneer Canadian documentarist whose private Ottawa film company had grown up entwined with the NFB, was behind it. The *Tribune* accused Crawley of helping to orchestrate a campaign against the Film Board's monopoly over Government film contracts, and of personally confronting Ross McLean with a "secret blacklist supplied by the RCMP to Crawley Films" naming "50 Film Board workers who should be fired as 'reds.'"<sup>43</sup>

The *Tribune* article sparked a two page report by Inspector MacNeil, the contents of which have been blocked out. But a document remains to shed at least some light upon the *Tribune's* claims. On November 22nd, three days after the *Financial Post* article, R.W. Wonnacott, in charge of the RCMP's Identification Branch, received a call from Crawley reporting a threatening call received by his firm's switchboard operator. The caller said "I would suggest that \_\_\_\_\_ lay off talking to the Press, as they are just looking for trouble. The Minister wants you to know that he doesn't like this." Crawley requested police protection

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<sup>41</sup> The *Sudbury Daily Star* and the *Kitchener Record* reported on 23 October 1949 that the RCMP were investigating charges that NFB staff enjoyed private screenings of "Soviet propaganda pictures . . . flown to Ottawa in sealed diplomatic pouches." Cst. Miller noted that Distribution Director Jack Ralph "regarded it as a 'story' with no foundation."

<sup>42</sup> Daniel J. Robinson, "Falling Into Line: The National Film Board, Foreign Policy, and the Cold War", *National History* 1:2:0-0 (1997): 158-172, shows how senior officials in the Department of External Affairs likely took a hand in leaking information to the *Financial Post* regarding the suspension of Defense contracts to the NFB.

<sup>43</sup> This action remains unsubstantiated, but Crawley's involvement in some manner is consistent with René Bonnière's description of Crawley in James A. Forrester, ed., *Budge: F.R. Crawley and Crawley Films* (Lakefield, Ont.: Information Research Services, 1988): 43. Crawley, he said, is "a Maoist in that he creates a crisis and the way to solve these crises is the way that the film happens." *Ibid.*, 35. In 1949, Ross Mclean refused Film Board support for Crawley's *The Loon's Necklace* which went on to earn more than a million dollars. Crawley claimed that McLean told him "It's a small picture and I don't think it is the sort of film for the Film Board."

“against any possible wilful and malicious damage to his premises [because] some of the officials of the Film Board cannot be considered as friendly towards him.”

The RCMP used the unwanted publicity surrounding the NFB investigation to measure reaction among leading Party members. Inspector MacNeil wrote to the Officer commanding “O” Division’s Special Branch in Toronto, Ken Shakespeare, noting that the screening “has been discussed in the House of Commons and the Press generally . . . it is essential that we obtain as much information as possible concerning repercussions, particularly with Communist circles.” The technical nature of the “urgent attention” given this request is deleted.

Shakespeare responded that “there have been no repercussions to speak of within Communist circles as a result of the publicity.” Party members were “apathetic,” leading Cpl. McLaren to comment that “the most significant feature is the lack of reaction among those who might have been expected to show concern.” In the NFB’s Toronto bureau, also under surveillance, Cst. J.T. Halward reported “a decided lack of talk around the office,” that a general “bad feeling exists”, and that “leftist employees such as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have become very cautious in discussing controversial issues such as the present one.” John Leopold's attention turned to Montreal, monitoring \_\_\_\_\_ on a temporary assignment with \_\_\_\_\_, a private film interest awarded military contracts. He learned that she was making an “innocuous” children’s film and not exposed to the Defense Department projects.

Press clippings reported Opposition leader George Drew's virulent attack in Parliament on the Film Board’s reliability, as well as Minister Robert Winters' response that no NFB films were currently withdrawn from circulation due to leftist content. Liberal Member for Toronto-Spadina David A. Croll pleaded for “a little understanding”:

These people are a little different from the average civil servant. They are artistic people, imaginative people. They are wrapped up in their work. They are zealous. They don't press their pants, nor comb their hair as often as some people would like them to do.

Cpl. McLaren assembled four pages of (excised) material on \_\_\_\_\_ “who will likely become second in command after [Ralph] Foster leaves.” An additional page concerns a former employee in Quebec City who had called \_\_\_\_\_ to offer any “under cover” help she could give, allowing that she was “lying low until the Film Board affair is cleared up.”

On the ground, Sergeant Keeler and Cst. J.H. Korntoff stalked NFB suspects through Ottawa neighbourhoods “without arousing suspicion”, in one case noting visitors “engaging in what appeared to be serious conversations.” An informant attended a “beer session” amongst NFB employees in Toronto in early November but his report of insider talk and office gossip is largely eliminated from the released document. The reports mention Norman McLaren, who was known to be temporarily in China with UNESCO. Due to “the bust-up” with McLean and other reasons excised from the file his imminent return to Ottawa was deferred.



Fig. 51. Norman McLaren and Wolf Koenig filming neighbours “fencing.” (NFB.)

#### 4. January to June 1950: 140 pages (29 removed)

The *Canadian Tribune* pricked the Mounties’ ire by stridently accusing the Government of subjecting the NFB to “a witchhunt,” and calling for the Board’s removal from direct “political control of the government.” The *Globe and Mail*’s headline--“Film Board Shakeup Pending”--more accurately predicted the impending sequence of events. Protests from organizations such as the Canadian Association for Adult Education, the Ontario Association of Film Councils, and individuals such as lawyer Frank Park, earned them renewed police scrutiny. E.L. Gibson, Secretary of the O.A.F.C. wrote to the *Ottawa Citizen* calling for a letter campaign: “As a self-governing nation in the British Commonwealth, Canada cannot afford to weaken one of her most effective tools for use in forging and strengthening her status.”

Gibson’s letter coincided with the national distribution of a “special edition” of the *Ottawa Citizen* containing a series of editorials defending the NFB. In an attempt to provoke public response to what they believed was a “calculated plan to destroy the Film Board,” a group of employees distributed tens of thousands of copies to individuals and organizations across the country. The RCMP traced the distribution of these papers, mailed anonymously from the Besserer St. postal station. In the case of the National Council of Women of Canada, which received thirty copies, the RCMP stymied further distribution. “Needless to say,” O. Lariviere reported to the Commissioner, “\_\_\_\_\_ is not mailing them and will advise her co-workers accordingly.” On the other hand, the Ottawa Special Branch reported to Headquarters that they “could find no visible connection” between any of the NFB suspects and the Labour Progressive Party.

Cst. Korntoff’s suspicion lighted upon individuals within the NFB who once retrieved from storage a secret British Admiralty film, *Spotting Fall of Shot*, “when no one of due authority had granted them that privilege.” Korntoff received similar information (excised)

relating to *Exercise Adonis* and concluded his report with information that "an animator is now claimed to be a protégé of \_\_\_\_\_ which may speak for itself."

Ross McLean's departure for UNESCO in January, 1950, accompanied by his deputy Ralph Foster, coincided with reports that a "majority of employees have an insecure feeling in regard to their job, there is no liaison whatsoever between offices; and working under these conditions is understood to be most difficult."<sup>44</sup> An investigator noted "the clique will fight and buck the new Commissioner at every turn," and a rumour was circulating that the first film made under Arthur Irwin's regime was to be titled "You Can Get Ulcers Too." The clique's attempt to raise enough money to buy Ross McLean a Buick car as a going away gift was to "show the Government that a mistake was made in changing Commissioners." When the subscription fell short amidst acrimony, "they settled for a cheaper one" and their intended message "did not materialize." Cpl. McLaren wrote out the names of the "Big Four" and eight names forming the next tier, assigning them with letter grades "x", "y" and "z". He suggested to McClellan that due to "the clique's reported attitude towards \_\_\_\_\_ perhaps more dismissals will be necessary."

Cpl. Darrell McLaren's study of the *Citizen* articles yielded a thoughtful report.<sup>45</sup> "From our point of view," he wrote, "these articles and [the] editorial might be boiled down to two main points." Without commenting on the editorialist's plea that the NFB's "vitality to the development of Canadian culture, no less that to its unity as a nation," McLaren focused on "the voluble and studious effort . . . to trace the recent attack on the Film Board back to private interests and the huge powers of Hollywood." This was "dealt with so thoroughly," he wrote, "that the average reader would very likely come away with the impression that the 'security

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<sup>44</sup> Tom Daly, in D.B. Jones, *The Best Butler in the Business: Tom Daly of the National Film Board of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 53 passim, attributes the Griersonian documentary philosophy to Gurdjieff as a way of explaining his own "continuity" through the security scare: "A film is a line of attention that the audience goes through, and if you break that line, you break the connection between the film and the audience . . . . It is actually the force or energy that connects our *conscious* life with anything . . . . In fact, one's conscious inner life consists *solely* of what our attention has fallen on since the beginning of our life. There are many blanks in its memory, while the physical body has never ceased to record and respond on its own level to every impulse . . . . Everyone wants to take this attention from us, but it is the priceless thread that connects us to ourselves. So it matters what we put it on, when it comes to our own choice." In the following pages Daly's initial aversion to Arthur Irwin changes with the revelation that he was more like the new Commissioner than he thought.

<sup>45</sup> Mrs. D.E. McLaren, interview by author, 15 February 1998. Darrell E. McLaren was born in 1911 in Vancouver (three years before Norman McLaren). He received a BA in Liberal Arts from the University of British Columbia. In contrast to the active role of women in the Film Board, Mrs. McLaren never entered the Overbrook Headquarters where her husband worked for many years.

angle' of the Film Board situation is only incidental to, and perhaps only a part of, the greater plan of private industry to cripple this great public institution."

Insp. MacNeil found this "very interesting" as he did McLaren's second point, drawing "attention to the 250 film councils and the 5,000 other urban organizations, as well as some 3,300 rural outlets, which have been integrated by the Film Board into a vast co-operative organization throughout the country.<sup>46</sup> Should the government intend to whittle away the Film Board . . . such a move could meet with widespread resistance from the public."

While Arthur Irwin was guided through securing the resignations of three designated employees, new inquiries concentrated on Jack Ralph's distribution department. They found evidence of extensive use of NFB films by ethnic and labour organizations, and one letter that met with their approval. An executive of United Steelworkers, Local \_\_, wrote to a Film Board employee in Toronto to complain about the "well-known Communists that somehow by chance appear in the film -- for instance \_\_\_\_\_."

[O]f course, you and I have deplored this aspect on many occasions. The new change in leadership . . . I imagine, will assure the elimination of this kind of subtle propaganda, which will in turn make their films more acceptable to labour.

Forgetting to remove a sticky note, the censor here for once added rather than removed an indication. In shaky, elderly characters he wrote that "this letter is probably not releasable but it gives the perspective from which labour viewed the NFB in 1950." Shortly following receipt of this letter, \_\_\_\_\_ of the Toronto Branch of the NFB "received notice of his dismissal . . . along with several others on the dismissal list." This despite protests from a deputation from the Ontario Association of Film Councils, whom MacNeil doubted were "people of any significance." To be safe, he requested that Cpl. McLaren acquire "some background which would reflect [their] reputation and political tendencies."

Fragmentary references show the Mounties investigating NFB film distribution in Guelph, Ontario, and placing surveillance on a couple newly arrived in Ottawa to work at the Film Board. Informants "heard them condemn racial discrimination, particularly with regard to Jews and Negroes" and reported that they seemed prepared "to argue this question . . . .The above will illustrate the ease with which Communists, like \_\_\_\_\_, are able to obtain employment in the Government service, more especially the National Film Board."

The *Canadian Tribune* attributed the four latest NFB dismissals to the RCMP's investigation of the *Citizen* special edition. The *Tribune* pointed to the coincidence of dismissed employees with the NFB names on the Civil Service Association petition. Cpl. McLaren noted

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<sup>46</sup> Gary Evans, *In the National Interest: A Chronicle of the National Film Board of Canada from 1949 to 1989* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 7, reports that in 1948 the Film Board served nine million viewers in community showings.

for the file that Insp. MacNeil's interrogations of the four employees were conclusive, and he suspended a fingerprint search then underway. After being "told very pointedly by \_\_\_\_\_ that he was to leave . . . and that security considerations were not involved" one of the employees finally took responsibility for "the preparation of the questionable articles . . . and for the arrangements to . . . distribute one hundred thousand copies . . . throughout the country." Further disciplinary actions were afoot, McLaren noted, citing Irwin's instruction to the Toronto office to have " \_\_\_\_\_ discharged", and " \_\_\_\_\_" is to go in the near future." The terminations were in effect by the end of March, but investigations of these individuals continued on new files.

The music director, Eugene Kash, "great friend of \_\_\_\_\_," attracted renewed police interest for his vociferous objection to his friend's dismissal. Kash called it "a dirty deal, most unfair kicking a fellow out without an explanation." In another case, the RCMP accepted a reinstatement because the original termination was in error: "it can safely be assumed she is not one of the 'clique', \_\_\_\_\_ claim her to be on the right side." A letter clipped from the *Montreal Gazette* attracted a long investigator's comment, excised from released copies. The letter accused the Government of using the public dismissals of three employees as a screen: "after a month's lull there will be more," it was charged, "thus hacking away at guarded intervals."

Cpl. McLaren reported on his work comparing lists of invitees to NFB parties and receptions to similar lists for social events at Soviet-bloc embassies, patiently tracing out connections between Film Board employees, diplomats and government officials, noting with interest that his cross-references had yielded \_\_\_\_\_ of the Canada Foundation and \_\_\_\_\_, the Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs. Over the signature of Assistant Commissioner Nicholson, the RCMP advised their British counterparts on May 27th, that \_\_\_\_\_ was preparing to leave for England, noting his separation from another NFB film-maker \_\_\_\_\_, who was living in New York City, and asking the British to advise them regarding his associations and activities while serving as the NFB's representative there.<sup>47</sup> Research produced names of individuals who had vouched for the passports of suspect NFB employees.

In June Film Commissioner Irwin advised reporters that the security screening was complete and that the NFB was again cleared to meet all film and still photography requirements of the Department of National Defense. On a clipping from the *Citizen* reporting M.P. Allistair Stewart's charge that a "smear campaign" had forced these workers out, Insp. MacNeil noted coolly to Cpl. McLaren that "I understand this will include, among others, \_\_\_\_\_." Cst. Korntoff reported that one employee "confessed to be most sorrowful to have anything to do with the Reds and as far as can be ascertained is now leading a more rational

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<sup>47</sup> Denied the Film Commissionership, James Beveridge became the NFB's liaison officer in London. His wife, filmmaker Jane Marsh, had moved to New York.

life." He noted that "a most uneasy atmosphere exists at the NFB. No one appears to be sure of their ground and seem to be jockeying for positions . . . careful whom they talk to and what they talk about." No irony was intended or taken when one informant denounced a colleague assigned to write a Labour Board film, *Teamwork Yesterday and Today*. This "Leftist" writer was furious at having to revise his script to conform with Irwin's new regime. The informant predicted that in addition to the three employees forced to resign publicly "there are 50 more -- 30 who will be asked to do the same and 20 that are a headache." Supt. McClellan remarked "Close Estimate!"

**5. July to December, 1950 55 pages (9 pages removed)**

In July 1950, the Mounties noted Norman McLaren's return to Ottawa from China amongst a flurry of employee departures. Cst. Isber noted that McLaren "is described as a genius in his field of work, one phase of which is to draw soundtrack on film." He also reported the "general atmosphere of wariness and expectancy" and the "keen awareness" of Arthur Irwin's "intention of stabilizing the status of the Board by operating it in much the same way as a business venture." Irwin's managerial intentions "and also the International situation, has caused all members, especially those who have shown Communistic or radical tendencies to become most reticent."

According to Cst. Isber's informants, Norman McLaren himself was non-communicative, and "attempts to secure \_\_\_\_\_'s views and learn of his activities" encountered difficulties because he was such a "quiet, reserved person." Isber noted that "it might take a little time to adduce his views and theories" but that efforts would continue to be exerted "with the ultimate submission of forms 215 in mind, should they be warranted."<sup>48</sup> The animator dropped below the threshold of police attention, surfacing only in December on a press clipping announcing his participation on a jury to judge a children's art contest. The investigation produced reports of little significance, such as two employees known to be "at a cottage together," and Insp. Larivière admitted to the Commissioner that "exhaustive inquiries have failed to bring anything to the surface which would indicate sentiments of a subversive nature," and "numerous individuals against whom suspicion was reflected [are] cautious even in their conversations with intimates."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> "Forms 215" apparently authorized more intrusive surveillance measures.

<sup>49</sup> The exceptions were a husband and wife whose left-wing activities in the 1930s were re-examined. Evelyn Cherry took Arthur Irwin's hint and resigned in December 1950 and took work teaching at a business college; her husband Lawrence remained with the NFB for several more years. Irwin thought "Cherry was paranoid" and that she, Nick Balla and Jack Ralph were in "a communist cell" of eight persons; Evelyn Cherry credited Irwin's regime

## 6. January to June, 1951 17 pages (3 pages removed)

Through the winter further inquiries into the distribution system showed that "while not an integral part of the Board, persons affiliated with [Film] Councils feel that their affiliation is more than that of a 'consumer'." Information was gathered on various individuals involved in these Councils.

The following summer a story clipped from the *Citizen* reported Arthur Irwin's initiative to move the Film Board to Montreal. Irwin also announced "a new international information film program to be known as 'Freedom Speaks.'" He went on to say that:

This program will present the every-day pursuits of Canadians in their work and worship, in their social and political relationships . . . [T]he drama of ordinary Canadian people in a democracy and its approach will be realistic and honest. It will reflect for the peoples of other countries something of the values which Canadians, as a free people, believe to be basic in a democratic society.<sup>50</sup>

## 7. July to December, 1951 37 pages (9 pages removed)

In the fall, renewed complaints from a disgruntled former Film Board employee in Vancouver, \_\_\_\_\_, jolted the RCMP investigation.<sup>51</sup> In a telegram to the Prime Minister, he reiterated earlier accusations that Grierson continued to direct the Board from abroad; he accused the NFB of ridiculing the Canadian navy and Canadian prisons, and of distributing films "to be used against the Canadian people by Soviet sympathizers." He also accused the NFB of harbouring "perverts," including one convicted pedophile. "Is it true," he asked, "that the RCMP has a large file on the NFB? If the above questions are true while Canadian boys are shedding their blood in Korea should not something be done about such a vile situation? And who is protecting the NFB? I would like to know if these questions can be answered. Will be in Ottawa this afternoon."

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with crushing the idealistic nationalism of the Grierson period. See NAC MG 31 D, Evelyn Cherry papers, Vol. 14, file 1 "Resignation from NFB," and NAC MG 31 E97 Vol. 23, Arthur Irwin papers.

<sup>50</sup> Evans, *In the National Interest*, 24-25. Norman McLaren demurely credited the creation of *Neighbours* to a visit by Irwin to his studio proposing a project "of international significance." Through the fall of 1951 McLaren and his two actors--fellow NFB animators Grant Munro and Paul Ladouceur--shot *Neighbours* in Rockcliffe Park, not far from the John St. studios, courtesy of funding appropriated by the Psychological Warfare Committee.

<sup>51</sup> This was "Douglas Ross Sinclair." See Cox, "The Grierson Files," for similar charges Sinclair sent to the FBI.

The informant detailed his objections to Cpl. McLaren during two-hours of meetings. In a five page memorandum McLaren reminded McClellan of a previous Vancouver report of May 3rd, 1949, based on the remarks of the same individual, who was described as "earnest, sincere and devoid of personal antagonism." McLaren considered it "advisable to go a step farther," and noted "unnatural detachment" and "eccentricity, to say the least." With increasing coherence, though, and apparent reliability, he went on to impress McLaren that it was principally \_\_\_\_\_, the NFB's London representative, who was the conduit for Grierson's influence, "despite the efforts" of Arthur Irwin.

Darrell McLaren's internal inquiries to the Criminal Investigation Branch refuted the claim that \_\_\_\_\_ had once been charged for pedophilia, but the informant reiterated his claim that "the staff at the John and Sussex Street establishment contains a considerable number of 'queers.'" His main complaints were against Grierson and the supposed 'clique', whose "unscrupulous" activities had included the ousting of various employees with "anti-communist attitudes." He cited various cases of the Distribution Department pursuing outright the cause of Soviet propaganda, naming various films and organizations. He decided to remain in Ottawa overnight in order to inform McLaren of one final item, that since 1947 the NFB had circulated still photographs "showing the RCMP in a ridiculous light," providing him with the archival reference number for one such photograph.

This telegram to Prime Minister St. Laurent reactivated security concerns over the NFB in the Defense Research Board and the National Research Council. A typewriter stolen from the NRC's Chalk River nuclear facility was reportedly somewhere on Film Board premises. Cst. P. Isber cautioned that intensifying inquiries as a result of these new allegations might rekindle publicity and he recommended stepping up the investigation only "after the lapse of a reasonable period."

Isber also broached the issue of homosexuality with a delicacy appropriate to the Force's male homosocial culture:

Enquiries have also been conducted concerning immorality at the Film Board . . . although no tangible indication of it is available, rumours are prevalent that several members of the John Street Branch are so afflicted. I hasten to add, however, that such rumours are related by individuals who depend on appearance and mannerisms . . . it would be unfair to credit such allegations without some more substantial evidence. \_\_\_\_\_ mentioned in the telegram of \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the persons whose appearance and mannerisms create such an impression. The "artistic" personnel of the Film Board are, to a large extent, individualistic to the point of being considered "queer" but whether this feature is sufficiently conclusive to confirm suspicions is very questionable. Nonetheless, it will be a little difficult to quell such rumours as long as people associate peculiar modes of dress and peculiar mannerisms with "queer" individuals.

Inspector McCombe emphasized this paragraph, noting for the Commissioner that "rumours have been circulating for some time about several members of the 'Artistic' group at

the John St. Branch". But on December 5th, 1951, Insp. MacNeil "informed Mr. Irwin verbally . . . that the investigations had failed to reveal any evidence to back up the allegations."

**8. January to June 1952, 38 pages (11 pages removed):**

During the winter of 1952 the NFB staff provided little of interest to the Security Service. In the week of Mark McClung's dinner with his neighbours at the end of March news clippings reported renewed interest in the security problem and the formation of a special Parliamentary Committee to review the operations of the Film Board. In April out-going Security Panel Secretary Eric Gaskell visited Arthur Irwin to present his successor, the British intelligence expert Peter Dwyer. By June, the press clippings record Arthur Irwin actively rebuilding the Board's image before the Parliamentary Committee, announcing the Board's general theme of "Canada - A Developing Nation," and the distribution through NFB circuits of a "very excellent" Crawley industrial film. Police inquiries followed Irwin's comment to the *Citizen* that "the Board has two men taking shots in Korea." A directors' group, meeting for informal discussions in various homes, apparently had faded away.

**9. July to December 1952, 40 pages (2 pages removed):**

Staff members continued to be exceedingly cautious until December when a few suspect employees organized a Korean War benefit concert at the University of Ottawa's Academic Hall. Informants sprang to life to report various activities and eavesdrop on conversations. Mark McClung renewed his interest in the filmmaker Robert Anderson, writing, "this is more derogatory to Anderson than any other item I have seen. Do you think it would be possible to ask "A" [Ottawa Divisional Headquarters] if perhaps \_\_\_\_\_ could find out?"<sup>52</sup>

Cst. Parsons learned of a party in the "home of \_\_\_\_\_ to raise funds for Korean children," and wrote that "most of the invitations were sent to people employed at the NFB . . . meaning they would have to be Communist or Communist sympathizers," prompting Supt. McClellan's epithet, "OPINION!" Only broken phrases from the report of an informant attending the party passed the hand of the censor: "she is a 'pro-active' thinker," "\_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>52</sup> NAC RG2 Vol. 234 File S-100-2-S-1 Security Organization--Course at Rockcliffe RCMP Barracks, December, 1952. During a three-day interdepartmental course for security officers organized by Peter Dwyer and held at the RCMP's Rockcliffe barracks, NFB security officer Michael Spencer heard McClung's lecture on "The theory and history of Communism." Peter Dwyer spoke on the "Soviet Secret Intelligence Services," George McClellan on "The history and development of Communism," and Insp. Terry Guernsey on "Soviet Intelligence Operations on Canadian Government Departments." The Englishman Spencer, graduate of Rugby and Oxford, was active in the wartime NFB as well as military film units. He was designated the Film Board's Security Officer in 1950, a fact which became public knowledge in 1953. See N.F.B. Archives historical file, "Michael Spencer."

shows considerable interest in the distribution service," "\_\_\_\_\_ 's wife is an English girl, and appears to be a 'progressive' type.'" On the night of the concert, police took plate numbers from cars around Academic Hall while informants inside eavesdropped. One suspect attending the benefit concert apparently confronted one informant with a direct question: "What's the matter, do you think it's subversive?"

**10. January to June 1953 5 pages (2 pages removed):**

Although it was suspected that twenty-five dollars from the benefit's proceeds was handed secretly to the Labour Progressive Party, an extended diary date was set for the next NFB report. On May 1st, Cst. Parsons noted without comment the January announcement of Arthur Irwin's appointment to the High Commissionership in Australia. With greater interest, he wrote that on March 19th, "\_\_\_\_\_ was given wide publicity when his picture \_\_\_\_\_ commonly called "Neighbours", won the Motion Picture Academy Award ("Oscar") for the best short documentary film." Parsons continued:

[T]he 21-3-53 Ottawa Evening Citizen [carried an article by] JOHN BIRD of the Southam News Service, [who] describes the movie adequately: "Love thy neighbour" depicts two men who acquire neighbouring houses in a typical development on the outskirts of any city. They begin by being good friends and sharing the lawn in common, without a barrier. Shortly, a marigold pops to bloom amid the grass. Each admires it and takes pleasure in its fragrance and color. Then some question arises as whose side it is on of the undrawn property line . . . Rival fences go up, and are torn down...the story of human greed is told in simple brutality . . . wives and children are slain almost incidentally . . . turning faces of friendliness into faces of primal savagery. This is the story of the destruction and disintegration of human character under greed's urge. It ends with the neighbours, killed by each other, lying in adjacent newly dug graves. Two marigolds pop out and bloom, one upon each gravepit.

Here a bemused Supt. McClellan interjected, "OH NO!"; Parsons concluded his summary evenly, noting that the film "provokes fierce controversy, some seeing it as 'pacifist propaganda' others as a leftist onslaught upon the sacredness of property rights." The award of an Oscar to McLaren was surprising "because of Hollywood's dread of political controversy." Parsons recorded that "The above newspaper article is being kept on [McLaren's file]" noting that the animator "is still with UNESCO in India."

**Aftermath**

Over the next several years surveillance continued and the dismissal list grew shorter. In 1954, a story appeared in the *Ottawa Journal* based on un-named RCMP sources, announcing that the NFB's Michael Spencer had been appointed "a special security officer for close liaison with the Justice Department and the RCMP's anti-subversive squad." An

intensive screening system weeded out unreliable applicants to

the Board. A new form containing questions such as "Country from which paternal ancestor emigrated to Canada" accompanied fingerprints, addresses for the previous ten years with dates, a full list of relatives, including in-laws, their addresses and employers. Although there were "no questions which require a direct assertion of



Fig. 52. Neighbours' graves. (NFB.)

loyalty . . . it is understood that risks should be avoided at all costs, regardless of the professional qualifications of the applicant, or even his or her lack of personal subversive leanings."

In 1955, the new Film Commissioner, Albert Trueman, crossed the country advising audiences to be wary because, although he had seen no indication of it personally, "it is perfectly possible to use [the Film Board] for propaganda purposes." Cst. A.M. Barr, reported that "\_\_\_\_\_ has now managed to oust all of the former circuit men in South-western Ontario." In 1958, Darrell McLaren, by then Inspector, advised the RCMP Commissioner that a search had been undertaken on the "MacBee Keysort Punch Card System" to produce "a complete list of all known subversives actually in the employ of the National Film Board." The advent of automated data retrieval on "punch cards" also permitted group searches of cultural agencies such as the NFB, the CBC's Domestic and International Services, and the Canada Council. Although there were "still a few employees of interest to our Directorate," he wrote, the "full scale clean-out after 1949" resulted in the removal of "some 40 employees" and effectively cleared the Film Board of suspicion.

### Screenings

If passing on to readers the textual damage of censorship brings historiography to the brink of incoherence, the alternative of "repairing" the preceding narrative obscures the discursive effect of the Access to Information procedure. The intended removal of all names other than those of the investigators shows that the secret policemen were nothing if not genealogists. Michel Foucault's insight that authority individuates to totalize is affirmed by the hundreds of names entered in these files, and excised again before the pages were released through the Access to Information procedure. As a sensing system, the Security Service and its myriad informants worked at the level of the name, testing its connections

through other individuals to Soviet and other un-Canadian influences. Their removal denies the pleasure of reading for the name as a linking element in narrative; as ciphers they contribute nothing to characterization.

The focus on names in security screening shows how the 'centre-periphery model' of Communist subversion generated a strict criterion of data selection, creating a surface of visibility upon which a certain image of Canada was projected. Cultural historian Michael Denning believes that Cold War cultural studies have too frequently complied with this "fetishization of Party membership" and over-emphasize "the narrative of affiliation and disaffiliation."<sup>53</sup> He suggests that the centre-periphery model has misrepresented a broader social formation within which "Party membership was not that central" even for many people who described themselves, generically, as "communists". This view is borne out in the NFB screening by the RCMP's failure to demonstrate any direct Party influence.

If we accept Denning's point and set the Security Service's favoured model to one side, different sorts of questions emerge. Why, for example, during five years of "screening" NFB employees, was it not considered necessary to screen a single film? Why was the domestic and international reception of films produced by the Board never studied? Why did it go unremarked that a significant number of the Board's films were made by women, many of whom were on the list of suspects?<sup>54</sup> The absence of these lines of inquiry suggest that the Security Service, habitually focused on (male) labour agitators and leaders of immigrant groups was unequipped to "screen" the Film Board.

Indeed, the Security Service's sensing system was so attuned to patterns of names that it remained oblivious to the production of audio-visual consciousness so central to the Film Board's role. This lacuna suggests that the NFB's legitimacy as the promoter of "audio-visual citizenship" was already taken for granted in the common sense of the investigators. Mark McClung's description of the security police as "blinker" can thus be extrapolated to include this very special blindness that Norman McLaren made the object of oppositional practice in *Neighbours*. To locate this practice I will turn again to what John Grierson sought to achieve through the Film Board.

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<sup>53</sup> Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1996), xviii.

<sup>54</sup> In constituting Canada as zone of masculine protection, it is noteworthy that the RCMP did not differentiate between men and women either as suspected subversives or informants during the Film Board investigation. See as well the discussions in the forum of NFB women, *Four Days in May* (Montreal: National Film Board, 1976), for another perspective on the security scare.

## Audio-Visual Citizenship

At this stage in its development the Security Service had little critical understanding of the audio-visual apparatus itself. Generally, the investigators shared the myopic vision that permits spectators to be drawn into unconscious identification with an audio-visual diegetic. In particular, they overlooked how persuasive propaganda triggers emulative desire in film spectators by representing a model who desires some object, some person, or even a state of affairs. To operate this triangulation between spectator, model, and desired object, mimetic desire as an effect of cinema requires that the audio-visual apparatus recede behind the head of the spectator. The technological mediation of the apparatus must be tacit in order to produce certain kind of viewing subject.

As a propagandist, John Grierson sought to minimize the cognitive intrusion of film technology in the audio-visual consciousness he promoted through Film Board productions. This is why he insisted on a standardized diegesis, something that came up in his exchanges with NFB directors during the war. His basic insight was that the masses must see *themselves* represented on the screen realistically, and without obvious mediation, before they would emulate cinematic images as models of civic conduct: "This all-seeing eye of the motion picture is a very prescient power." Speaking to Canadians in a 1944 CBC broadcast, he said:

[T]he film can give us the scene as a living whole . . . a sense of the communion that exists in spite of the apparent distance in our daily lives . . . It is, and who does not want it, a way of national self-realization.<sup>55</sup>

"National self-realization" was to be janus-faced: integrating citizens domestically within a national population even as their image was projected externally to integrate the nation within the international community of nations. He concluded this address with a formulation that still provides the NFB with its corporate motto: "why can't we say and be done with it, the National Film Board will be the *eyes of Canada*. It will . . . see Canada . . . whole, its people and its purposes."<sup>56</sup>

The catch-phrase "eyes of Canada" partly was intended to describe a surveillant and disciplinary "panoptic" apparatus, but moreover it suggested that the Film Board was to be just one node in a cross-national network of audio-visual production and reception. Envisaging Film Boards for all nation states was Grierson's theme from the 1930s through

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<sup>55</sup> Broadcast by John Grierson on January 21st, 1940, in James Beveridge, *John Grierson, Film Master* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), 143.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* (The NFB motto is now rendered monocularly as "The Eye of Canada.")

to his comment to James Beveridge in 1970 that "the greatest export of the Film Board" was "the Canadian Film Act itself."

It's been translated into many languages, . . . the model of serious intention by the cinema in the service of government, all over the world... [W]hat has been good is the Film Board's service to the government with its initial intention of reflecting the country to itself and to the world . . . . The Film Board has been important in saying to countries of very different kinds, all over the world, that *the film is an instrument of very great importance in establishing the patterns of national imagination*.<sup>57</sup>

Grierson's global filmic apparatus was to be an "interlocking web" patterning each national "imagination" as an independent entity, but also ensuring its isomorphism with all the others. The isomorphism was not just institutional, facilitating the international exchange of films, nor purely technical, establishing common standards. Pre-eminently it was *cognitive*, a shared diegetic to be projected evenly all around the globe at twenty-four frames per second. Organizing patterns of cultural nationalism was to be cinema's great educational contribution to what Grierson called "teleology":

You may find [Americans] a little extravagant in their need to pronounce themselves one-hundred percent hygienically pure Americans, but damn it, it really is, I think, that way. . . you've got to use the imaginative media, like television or radio or films, to the hilt . . . .<sup>58</sup>

Peter Morris has shown that in the years immediately following Grierson's departure the Film Board continued to pattern and frame the nation's population and territory within standardized spatio-temporal and social coordinates.<sup>59</sup> He noticed a "generalized reality" in NFB films that denied "the events any specificity of their own." His description is succinct:

[I]ts ideology is clearly characteristically postwar Canadian. Social change is possible and desirable but should be gradual. Everyone has a place in Canadian society and everyone should be in his/her place. Canada is a well-managed society and problems only arise when people do not trust the managers to manipulate the levers on their behalf.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Grierson interviewed at York University, 1970, in *ibid.*, 152, emphasis in original.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Peter Morris, "After Grierson: The National Film Board 1945-53" in Seth Feldman, ed., *Take Two* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1984), 187.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* Of particular note is Don Mulholland's 1947 RCMP drama "File 1365: The Connor's Case". The chase is seen only from the Mounties' perspective and never from that of the pursued man. Robert Anderson's series of films on mental health similarly takes the perspective of the medical establishment.

That the success of the Film Board in disseminating audio-visual citizenship extended even to the Security Service is demonstrated by Cpl. Darrell McLaren's respectful description of the NFB as "that great public institution." Darrell McLaren steps forward here as Norman McLaren's security alter-ego, another "mirror-couple" whose vicissitudes mark a boundary. When Darrell traced the animator's background and associations his films went unexamined. When Norman affronted audio-visual citizens with *Neighbours* he disrupted that taken-for-granted transparency of film spectatorship that Darrell never questioned, and its jarring effect reveals the continuity in purpose between the Security Service and the Film Board.

### Palindromes and Desire

As photographic representation *Neighbours* is wholly unsatisfying, even grotesque. The props are bland: two deck chairs, bungalows painted on two simple flats, a white picket fence, a weedy marigold. Even the neighbours' white shirts, slacks, and pipes appear identical. The overall effect is not exactly a "doubling" but something looser, the visual expression of a palindrome. McLaren permitted slight differences between the neighbours (e.g. their ties and facial hair) but the palindrome is blazed in the headlines of the newspapers they read in the opening sequence of the film. The palindrome (Peace . . . War, War . . . Peace) is a pivot point that supplies the key to the film's rationality. Read simultaneously from beginning to the end, and from the centre outwards, pleasure in palindromic reading is yielded by the tension between the serial rationale of a sentence and the radial rationale of the palindrome. A solely linear reading of *Neighbours* as a simplistic allegory of war yields little pleasure.

Palindromic reading, on the other hand, locates the marigold as the focal point of mimetic desire between the two men and the source of escalating violence. One neighbour observes the other's deep desire for the flower and his desire is drawn in turn. Yet the very equivalence of the neighbours in relation to that point neutralizes viewer identification with either of them as a potential model. McLaren's hermetic scheme denies the film the necessary imbalance or internal difference to ignite mimetic desire and elicit mimetic action from its viewers.<sup>61</sup> When one neighbour places the fence "one inch to the left" of the flower to claim it as his own (recalling Grierson's claim to be at any time "one inch to the left" of the government in power), the other imitates the action and moves the fence one inch to the

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<sup>61</sup> The concept of mimetic desire discussed here is that developed by René Girard. For a useful synthesis and development of the Girardian model see Paisley Livingstone, *Models of Desire: René Girard and the Psychology of Mimesis* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992).

right. By blocking our identification with either neighbour, McLaren's *mise en scène* was implicitly anti-Griersonian and well outside the NFB tradition discussed above.

The BBC's documentary on McLaren, *The Eye Hears, The Ear Sees* echoed Grierson's criticisms, judging *Neighbours* to be "unsatisfying," an "uneasy . . . mixture of over-simple philosophy and surprising violence." With ineffable British understatement the commentator deemed McLaren's application of an animation technique to human actors "occasionally whimsical rather than playful," and intoned with relief that he "never returned to the theme of *Neighbours*." McLaren was unswayed, maintaining that "if all my films were burning in a fire I think I'd prefer *Neighbours* to be saved."<sup>62</sup>

Exactly what is meant here by "over-simple philosophy"? Read in a linear way, McLaren's insistence on equivalence in the two neighbour's compartment and beliefs implied, preposterously, that there was no difference between rival ideologies in the Cold War. It was this calculated over-simplicity, I suggest, that vaulted the film over the hurdles of censorship raised by Arthur Irwin's new NFB regime. As the police files show, at Overbrook RCMP Headquarters the film was dismissed by George McClellan as sentimental. It is as if McLaren supplied the authorities with a feeble linear allegory in order to deflect attention from his transgression of film spectatorship itself.

My reaction to the film as a schoolboy in the late 1960s was memorable enough for it to become embedded in my own NFB-influenced audio-visual consciousness. I do not recall mapping the warring neighbours' conflict on to an East-West partition of the world; I associated it immediately with the neurotic (in)security of suburban life, where one norm-enforcing neighbour might cross the property line and mow another's lawn if it grew an inch or two too high. I recall, too, a reaction of what Eve Sedgwick calls "homosexual panic" at the sight of the two men's violent embraces, near kisses, and torn clothing, imagining the intimacy experienced by the two actors making the film. As McLaren intended, perhaps, I was forced to consider my own relation to the filmic apparatus and desire.<sup>63</sup>

### **Pixillation**

McLaren acknowledged his debt to the pioneering *trucage* films of Georges Méliès in France at the turn of the century, and subsequent ad hoc experimentations by Hans

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<sup>62</sup> Maynard Collins, *Norman McLaren* (Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1976), 69.

<sup>63</sup> That McLaren wanted the film to be poised between both readings is clear in his doubts about complying with distributors who wanted to cut the baby-bashing scenes. McLaren agreed, but only because he worried that these scenes had skewed the formal balance he was trying to achieve. See NFB file, "Neighbours."

Richter, Len Lye, Richard Massingham and others. A deeper genealogy of *Neighbours* might be traced to the 1880s and Gilles de la Tourette's close studies of the human gait and erratic mannerisms, and Eadward Muybridge's experiments in step-photography at the University of Pennsylvania. Rigorous segmentation and analysis of human gesture at this historical juncture, as philosopher Giorgio Agamben has noticed, prophesied both the advent of motion pictures and a crisis in the realm of human gesture resulting from the widespread mechanization that made such pictures possible. "In the cinema," Agamben writes, "a society that has lost its gestures seeks to re-appropriate what it has lost while simultaneously recording that loss."<sup>64</sup> In ceasing to resist that paradox, *Neighbours* transgressed cinema's fetishistic protocols of reception.

Reaction to McLaren's use of the pixillation technique as a distanciation effect emerged in reports of the film's reception when it was released in the summer of 1952. Although critics at the Edinburgh Film Festival were ecstatic, (the *New Statesman* called it "the best abstract I have seen by Norman McLaren for a long time," the *Daily Mail*, named it "the film of the festival . . . a ferocious eight-minute parable of war and peace . . . that wears a freezing smile on its face . . . It is brilliantly good."), *The Manchester Guardian* warned readers that "the audience is led laughing uproariously into a nasty little corner where Mr. McLaren, without warning, kicks it in the teeth."<sup>65</sup>

In North America, too, distributors were uneasy with the film. Maurice Crompton, coordinating distribution for the NFB, reported that "all the major distributors including Fox, Loew's, M.G.M., Warner Brothers, (Paramount refused to look at it) . . . turned [it] down for a variety of reasons: principally poor technical quality, and 'gruesome scenes'." The picture was screened in New York for the Normandie Theatre and Radio City Music Hall "and had a flat turn-down in each case." It was accepted only by the Trans-Lux, Lexington (albeit "with enthusiasm") for a ten-week engagement.

The judgment of "poor technical quality" by the major distributors was less a comment on McLaren's competence than on the pixillation technique itself, and perhaps the progressive degradation of the quality of the image near the end of the film, when its colour drains into harsh polarization.<sup>66</sup> The NFB's New York representative, Janet Scellen reported that the

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<sup>64</sup> Giorgio Agamben, "Notes on Gesture," in his *Infancy and History: Essays on the Destruction of Experience* (London: Verso, 1983), 137.

<sup>65</sup> NFB, "Neighbours" file. The *Times Educational Supplement* thought it "more religious than any explicitly religious film."

<sup>66</sup> Through numerous viewings I have concluded this is not a special effect but simply the transition of early to late autumn light on McLaren's outdoor set.

"Marquee" people . . . are very much impressed with the film and with the genuine appreciation with which it is being received by their audiences, but they do feel that the people are bewildered and that a short explanation of the technique involved would be helpful . . . As you remember, Ezra Goodman of Time Magazine made a similar suggestion after he had seen the film."<sup>67</sup>

Scellen endorsed the request that "a short introductory explanation . . . be placed in front of NEIGHBOURS."

This viewer uneasiness, I suggest, stems not just from the film's violence but from McLaren, as he put it, "tampering with the tempo of human action." The lumbering illusion of "reality" projected at twenty-four frames-per-second was undercut by "hyper-natural exaggerations and distortions of normal behaviour." He achieved this, he wrote, "by manipulating the acceleration and deceleration of any given human movement." He played with the limitations of human visual perception:

Once it is assumed that the actor being photographed by a movie camera can stop between any or every 24th of a second, a new range of human behaviour becomes possible. The laws of appearance and disappearance can be circumvented as can the laws of momentum, inertia, centrifugal force and gravity; but what is perhaps even more important, the tempo of acting can be infinitely modulated from the slowest speed to the fastest. Apart from the apparently spectacular feats . . . it is possible to use the technique in a concealed way behind what appears to be normal acting. Or . . . in a less concealed way . . . a caricature type of movement . . . tampering with the tempo of human action.<sup>68</sup>

Pixillation in *Neighbours* does not, as elsewhere, signify the exhilarating forward rush of modernity. At the outset the two neighbours light their pipes in "real time" while reading their papers, and one man casually hands matches to the other in an unforced gesture. Only when the flower sprouts behind them on the property line does the tempo change. The trees exhibit the characteristic shakiness of time-lapse photography, and the neighbours "skid" across the grass without leg movements, "fly" around their yards like dancing Cossacks seized at the peak of their jump. A disjointed and parodic balletic choreography ensues until the camera relaxes into real time once again while the neighbours attempt to negotiate ownership of the flower. As chivalric fencing with pickets turns to

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid. Glover and Mulholland demurred from this and similar requests from other distributors. The entire distribution picture changed when *Neighbours* astonished critics by winning the Oscar for best documentary short of 1953. *Neighbours*, as the NFB's Director of Distribution told his field agents, was suddenly "the most promotable item you will ever get to work on."

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. Norman McLaren, "Some Notes on Stop-Motion Live-Actor Technique," 12 August 1952.

brawling the pixillation effect returns to exaggerate their wild struggle, culminating in the clubbing of wives and children apparently with vicious force.

### **Imitative Violence**

In June 1955, NFB. Producer Tom Daly received a letter from Celia M. Anderson, of the New York University Film Library. "I spoke to Miss Janet Scellen some weeks ago," she wrote, regarding the showing of *Neighbours* to a group of "disturbed and delinquent children with an average attention span of two or three minutes." Typically these children reacted to "ordinary classroom films . . . with restlessness, fighting or a general apathy":

Since their lives are full of violence . . . at home . . . in the streets and at school, I suggested we try NEIGHBOURS . . . The results were rather astounding. These ordinarily restless children were completely attentive, and identified deeply with the fighting in the film. The film had to be shown twice and discussion was lively.

The reactions were spontaneous and not the result of a controlled psychological experiment. The teachers explained "that men who fought like this became savage" but they also directed the children's "attention to the fact that mountain goats do not 'pick fights' but fight to protect their families" and that this "kind of battle . . . is socially justified." The children were still talking about the film two months later and "incorporated it into their spelling, reading, original stories, drawing and painting." The children decided this was what they called a "grudge" fight and suggested re-staging the neighbours' fight in a "good" or "clean" way. McLaren's film both "flattered" the boys and made them "self-conscious." With the "desks pushed back into a square . . . both boys fought with fixed smiles . . . they didn't want to look like the men in the picture."<sup>69</sup>

McLaren's "music", anticipating the impact-driven, machinic sounds of Nintendo, was photographed directly on the film's optical track using his box of indexed sound cards. Aurally, *Neighbours* thus alienated audio-visuality from the reality effects that Michel Chion calls "materializing sound indices."<sup>70</sup> This 'anachoric', or echo-less, environment contributes to the neighbours' aura of dislocation, suggesting their infinite transposability from suburb to suburb; the scene is 'placeless' except in reference to the disputed property line, a spatial

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid. Although they were amazed by this "unheard-of concentration for children of this type of background" neither teacher nor librarian felt able to draw conclusions. There were no "traumatic reactions to NEIGHBOURS which might have occurred with 'normal children.'" They concluded simply: "we have paid too little attention to the possibility of indirect learning."

<sup>70</sup> Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 114-117.

abstraction, and no "echo-location" reflects the sound signature of the particular locale. In the absence of ambient aural information, the listener is confronted with a transgressive audio apparatus intent on revealing its own register of violence: "It was a silent, hostile, disturbed and mischievous boy," wrote Celia Anderson, "who became suddenly and intensely articulate, saying: "The music talked. I heard it."

The patterns of imitative behaviour prompted by the film amongst these children suggests that *Neighbours* can be read not only as (weak) allegory of war but as a deconstruction of the mimetic desire produced by cinematic images (which may or may not be a device in war propaganda). To the extent that imitative desire was the conceptual engine of John Grierson's utilitarian philosophy of film, McLaren here made his old master one target of the critique by disturbing the fetish of film spectatorship.

Grierson utilized film to bring order and management of difference within national populations, just as a herding instinct focused the Security Service's attention on the strays and black sheep in order scare the "normal" population into correct social patterning. The 'disturbed' students responded to *Neighbours* by forming a provisional solidarity, a 'singularity' that could not readily be integrated into audiovisual citizenship. Indeed, as an oppositional practice McLaren's "parable" reveals the invisible continuity between the NFB and the RCMP as "ordering" or "patterning" forces in Canadian society, the former proceeding through persuasiveness of cinema, the latter creating disturbance, suspicion and fear to illicit self-organizing patterns of compliance.

### **Norm-enforcement**

The Film Board was jolted into such patterns of compliance by the security scare. As McLaren and his team worked on *Neighbours* they witnessed Arthur Irwin busily restoring the Board's legitimacy both in the eyes of the Department of External Affairs, to whose machinations behind the scenes he owed his appointment, and the RCMP, whom the Film Commissioner feared. For the former, the International Film Program was designed to meet the secret Psychological Warfare Committee's Cold War objectives.<sup>71</sup> To assuage the latter, dismissals in the order of forty or fifty people were obligatory, beginning with three forced resignations for public and Parliamentary consumption, the rest to be hacked away at

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<sup>71</sup> NAC RG 25 vol. 8060, file 2755-A-40. Irwin's propaganda initiative exceeded the expectations of the Department of External Affairs, necessitating Charles Ritchie's carefully-drafted letter of 15 July 1952 in which the Under-Secretary L.D. Wilgress (a staunch anti-Communist with a seat on the NFB) advised Arthur Irwin that these films were "leaning too much in the direction of straight propaganda."

regular intervals. The sacrifice of scapegoats was the price of a clean bill of health, and Arthur Irwin's promised ambassadorship lay on the other side of this unpleasant task.

Even before his Academy Award for *Neighbours* the perennial prize-winner McLaren was considered untouchable, despite his unabashed left-wing background and "peculiar" lifestyle. Perhaps for this reason his young protégé, Gretta Ekman, was targeted instead. McLaren had first seen examples of her experiments with painted film when he returned from China in 1950. He was "struck by the kind of imagination behind them, the miniature scale on which she was accustomed to work and her technical skill with fine detail".<sup>72</sup> He showed her how to make a drawing bench at home and gave her a roll of blank film. She returned a few months later "with this little animated film . . . a remarkable job, and one which I felt we could well use." Impressed with her seriousness, he wrote that she was "the only Canadian artist whom I have tried to encourage in hand-drawn animation." To McLaren's dismay, the new Film Commissioner suddenly forbade her further work in the Board.

In the spring of 1952 *Neighbours* had grown to be a more demanding project than expected, and as the deadline approached for sending two films to the Festival of Britain, McLaren decided to edit Gretta Ekman's film, still sitting on his shelf, as a "quickie" to meet the deadline. Setting aside *Neighbours* for a few days, the film *Twirlygig* was produced by McLaren, combining Ekman's animation with music by Maurice Blackburn. It was ready for shipment to Britain when the catch occurred. Arthur Irwin saw Gretta Ekman's name in the credits and demanded it be removed, prompting Norman McLaren's fury to overflow in three memoranda venting his rage at the Film Board's abjection before the security authorities.

He pointed out that she had not been on staff or on the premises to make the film. It was "home-made" prior to her resignation. "It is true of course that she is left-handed and has reddish hair," he wrote, but although she had known some communists "she herself is not one nor has ever been." He listed his further objections to Irwin's decision:

- She is not in any way involved in work remotely connected with security.
- Her talent is a rare one, and not available elsewhere.
- The use of her animation eased my problems in meeting a commitment.
- If she is a fascist, anarchist, nihilist, communist or Christian pacifist it is not known those of us who are acquainted with her here, and I should imagine even less to the general public. Her name on a film credit will not mean anything to the public.

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<sup>72</sup> NFB file 51-228 "Square Dance Stereo," Norman McLaren to Donald Mulholland (copied to Arthur Irwin), 5 May 1952.

At least, not until they have seen her work and then it may come to mean a young artist with some promise of talent.

- I would urge that her security status be looked into right away . . .

- I consider it a matter of grave concern if we have to discriminate against her work or name, without really serious cause.

- I would wish to stand up for the principle that the NFB is interested in the work of an artist for its own merit, irrespective of the philosophic and political opinions of the artist.<sup>73</sup>

McLaren gave short shrift to Irwin's verbal justifications for his decision. The Commissioner argued that by suppressing her name the Film Board might avoid controversy and so continue to buy her films from time to time, hoping that in due course the "climate of freedom from fear" would improve to the point where "she may be publicly admitted to be the author of her own work."

McLaren wrote:

The fact of her name appearing on the credits publicly is sufficient in the opinion of the ~~Commissar~~ Commissioner to run a grave risk in the matter of the Film Board's public relations. He has therefore asked that it be removed. In doing so, Maurice Blackburn and I feel quite strongly that we wish to have our names withdrawn from the film too.<sup>74</sup>

He would not be swayed on this point, and, in effect having censored Irwin's censorship, he sent *Twirlygig* off to England as an anonymous contribution to the festival.

Irwin knew that the significance of Ekman's name to the *public* was irrelevant. What McLaren did not accept was that in the Security Service's universe of significant names the appearance of Gretta Ekman's credit might attract renewed suspicion and cast doubt on Irwin's effectiveness in "cleaning up" the Film Board. The fact that the young artist was not a security risk was also irrelevant. Unlike law enforcers, the "norm-enforcing" neighbours at the Overbrook Headquarters watched only for further signs of deviance, never really expecting to find outright illegality.

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Even as the Film Board reeled from the RCMP's punch, it continued to order and pattern a national diegetic in the routine production and distribution of its films. Other than *Neighbours* there was little resistance to Grierson's ideas about audio-visual culture; if

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., n.d., unaddressed memo by Norman McLaren. The cluster of documents related to the issue of Ekman's credit are stapled separately and heavily creased, as if McLaren carried them around in his pocket for several days.

anything, the internalization of censorship through the "red scare" made the Film Board a *less* effective propaganda agency for a time because its film-makers became too self-conscious and lost the "naturalness" Grierson had always demanded. Recognizing the continuity of purpose between cultural and security agencies in shaping citizenship during the Cold War undercuts the mythologized loss of a progressive nationalism at the Film Board during the security scare. This mythology misrecognizes Grierson's pragmatic mix of information and disinformation in the service of government as a pure expression of 'progressive' national culture, forgetting his claim that "Censorship is the central institution by which national priorities are maintained."<sup>75</sup> Cultural nationalist historiography thereby forms a "mirror-couple" with the censor's black markers and white corrector fluid. By polarizing culture and security, and reinforcing the 'centre-periphery' model of communist affiliation, it obscures alternative patterns and remains blinkered to oppositional practices such as McLaren's *Neighbours*, directed not to enforcing national culture but opposing its efficient subornment of difference to liberalism's managerial logic.

The censor has released Mark McClung into historiography owing his NFB neighbours a bottle of the atrocious wine, "Manoir St. David." The unrequited gift crops up in the file like the wobbly marigold that sprouted as the last uncensored "difference" between McLaren's homogeneous characters. It signified the prohibited possibility of intellectual conviviality with his NFB friends, something McClung desired but instead ridiculed to forestall George McClellan's suspicion. Perhaps his withholding of any decisive gesture in favour of the Film Board suspects contributed to the disturbance McClung internalized and later sought to quell by criticizing the activities of the Security Service. When asked if the "subversive element" he studied and reported on in the 1940s and 1950s represented a significant threat he replied: "No. Inwardly we didn't believe a word of it. It was no threat to the security of the nation."<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> John Grierson in Beveridge, ed., *John Grierson*, 308.

<sup>76</sup> Mark McClung, interview by James Littleton, 15 January 1981. NAC, ISN 61911.

**PART III**

**REMEMBERING-TO-FORGET**

I do believe you think what now you speak.  
But what we do determine oft we break.  
Purpose is but the slave to memory.  
Of violent birth but poor validity . . .  
Most necessary 'tis that we forget  
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt . . . .

Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (III sc. 2)



Figs 53 and 54. Louis St. Laurent at 1949 Liberal Party Convention; St. Laurent receiving Report of the Royal Commission on the Arts Letters and Sciences from Vincent Massey, 1951. (NAC.)

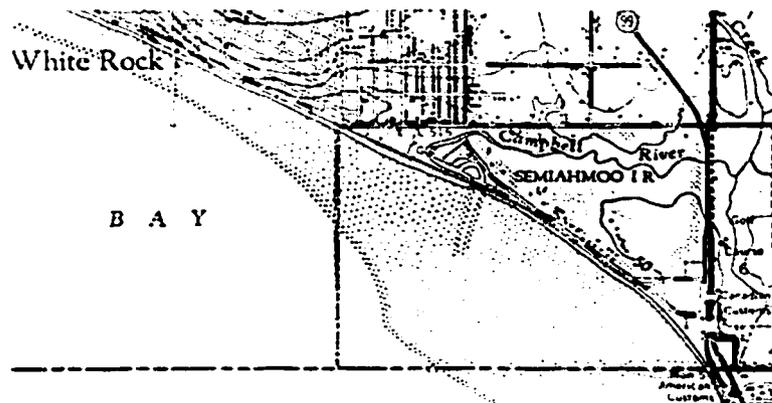


Fig 55. Topographical Survey, detail, White Rock, B.C. and Peace Arch Park, ca. 1961. Horizontal line indicates international border on 49th parallel.

## INTRODUCTION

[T]he essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things.

Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*

Secrecy about secrecy was the British way.

David Vincent, *The Culture of Secrecy*

Denied the intellectual conviviality of his NFB neighbours by the security scare, over the years Mark McClung cultivated a circle of mostly male friends who similarly occupied the liminal zone between national culture and state security during the late 1950s and 1960s. Gathering for lunches at a corner table in Sammy's restaurant in Ottawa's Belle Claire Hotel, rising cultural luminaries such as broadcaster Patrick Watson of the CBC and grey eminencies such as Henry Hindley, policy-maker with the Secretary of State Department, were received warmly by representatives of the state security intelligentsia: McClung of the RCMP, Peter Dwyer and Don Wall of the Privy Council Office. Other regulars included, at various times, External Affairs' Arnold Smith, author of the Royal Commission report on the Gouzenko Inquiry, and John Starnes of Defense Liaison II. From the cultural side, Naim Kattan and David Silcox, Canada Council officers, and CBC producer Gordon Cullingham attended, along with Bill Taylor, Director of the Museum of Man. If women rarely ventured into this fraternity, journalist Starr Solomon was the prominent exception, although the Canada Council's Ann Coffin attended from time to time.<sup>1</sup>

Patrick Watson recalls "a curious frivolity in this intercourse with the security folk." The security people seemed to enjoy mingling with their counterparts in the cultural sector, perhaps vicariously experiencing their greater freedom of speech and association. They envied the nobility of artistic endeavour by comparison to what both Don Wall and Mark McClung described as "soul-destroying" compromises exacted by security work.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Don Wall, Patrick Watson, Anne Young, interviews by author. Henry Hindley papers, NAC MG 30 E516, vol. 5, file 5.8, pp. 10-11. Hindley states that "the membership (undocumented, of course) has changed over the years. When I first was allowed in, there was a preponderance of people from the Canada Council, the Privy Council Office, and the Treasury Board, quite a few who had been in the 'cloak and dagger' business of security and intelligence." After the Belle Claire was torn down the group shifted briefly to Sam Koffman's new premises before settling into the Press Club located above the Connaught Restaurant on Confederation Square, and later in the National Press Building.

<sup>2</sup> Don Wall and Mark McClung, interviewed by James Littleton, NAC, CAVA 1987-0416, ca. 1981. Don Wall told Brittain that "dealing with secrecy and suspicion and doubt, is in the long run a soul-destroying business and there's just no escaping that"; McClung stated:

What permanently divided the two spheres was the security group's sworn vows of secrecy, and yet what bound them together was the intimacy attendant to that secrecy. It was a matter of discretion. Though the Belle Claire lay adjacent to the *Ottawa Journal*, the handful of journalists at the table observed an unspoken publication ban.

This is not to suggest that McClung's circle carelessly shared state secrets. To the contrary, their discussions ranged widely, pre-eminently lighting on cultural or literary topics. Self-consciously patterned after Dorothy Parker's circle at New York's Algonquin Hotel, the literati of this martini-driven, smoky corner indulged in similar displays of wit. Eventually, the group was acknowledged as an informal Ottawa institution when Sam Koffman installed a round table accommodating eighteen or twenty people. In a sense, these lunch parties paralleled the rise of the "quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations," or "quangos," through which the so-called "arm's-length" formula granted the federal arts and culture agencies limited autonomy from government. The frivolity mentioned by Patrick Watson should not obscure a crucial mapping function under way, elaborating a secure set of discursive practices for the emergent cultural bureaucracy.

Organizations have loci of authority which may or may not coincide with their organigrams, pay scales and decision-making hierarchies. In some cases the executive function is guided directly or indirectly even by relatively junior employees who come to personify the 'conscience' of the organization. Not exactly 'shop floor control', with that term's implication of oppositionality and class consciousness, rather these localized nodes of influence operate positively, attracting heedful attention from senior figures on account of special knowledge or experience, personal charisma, or recognized genius in a particular field of activity.

Around McClung's table a quasi-official repository of both secret and erudite knowledge combined to influence the profile of the national cultural project. Its key figure was McClung's fellow Oxonian, Peter Dwyer, and its key attribute was a tacit understanding of the relationship between official secrecy and public culture. Sammy's regulars interwove a new cultural sensitivity into the suspicious and xenophobic security establishment, fashioning the supple "zone of protection" necessary to waging Cold War.

The security dimension of Second World War cultural policies intensified during the peak interval of Cold War insecurity, the very years when the Massey-Levesque Royal Commission on the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1949-51) charted Canada's cultural future. The Massey-Levesque Report forecast the governmentalization of a whole series of

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"Security work is predicated on human distrust . . . this means everyone is suspect. And it gets to you . . . . Over the long term it is soul destroying."

practices or “tactics” that would stitch a national cultural regimen into the fabric of Canadian citizenship.<sup>3</sup>



Figs. 56-58. CBC International Service: worker on antenna, 1949; control room, Sackville N.B., 1949; POWs in Montreal studio, faces censored, 1945. (NAC C1438, 44-46.)

Intersecting neatly with disciplinary and surveillance functions, national cultural policy entered here into a Faustian agreement with the national security state. In return for financing the development of a substantial cultural sector these agencies were to foster certain lines of development, and foreclose on others. In the vein of Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, legitimate culture was to preside over and neutralize the anarchic potential of popular culture, "ethnic" arts and, to the extent possible, American mass media. Cultural policy was to keep public trust commensurate with official secrecy.

### The Anatomy of Secrecy

The final three chapters inquire into the relation of official secrecy to national culture, asking to what extent the citizen's "right to know" was pre-conditioned by a *cultural* imperative to secrecy and confidentiality. Cultural nationalism effaced certain illiberal and illegitimate by-products of the system of nationality, not least by separating culture from security in public discourse. Peter Dwyer called the nation's greatest artistic expressions "the shining things which really count," and it is understandable why it was unconscionable to view them as implicated in any way with the black limbo of state security and official secrecy.

The Cold War refined and diversified a sensorial interplay within the culture-security complex. An ensemble of receivers and powerful transmitters were

<sup>3</sup> Kevin Dowler, "The Cultural Industries Policy Apparatus," in Michael Dorland, ed., *The Cultural Industries in Canada: Problems, Policies and Prospects* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1996), 339: "As a security apparatus, the [cultural] agencies operate as forms of both discipline and surveillance . . . . The central problematic of liberal governance -- *omnium et singularum* -- is to be solved through the regimen of culture."

directed externally to wage what James Eayrs called "the Battle of the Antennas."<sup>4</sup> An internally-directed Thus Mark McClung could describe the security function as "everything that is not campaign of censorship, intelligence and propaganda performed its quiet work, too, installing a discursive jamming device in Canadian public culture that separated the spheres of culture and security. A chain of binarisms coded them as light/dark, civilized/ uncivilized, pure/ contaminated, truthful/ deceptive, and open/ secretive. civilized," and the arts as nourishing the "soul" against the corrupting influence of state security services. Both he and Don Wall counted Peter Dwyer as an exceptional case whose long service in security intelligence never eroded his humanist commitment.

The scrambled connections between culture and security signal a second order of state secrecy. Its presence can be diagnosed only inferentially, like black holes in space. Cultural nationalist accounts balk at recording the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as the instrument of broadcast censorship, Radio Canada International and the National Film Board as instruments of propaganda, the National Library as a clearing house for open-source Soviet intelligence material, the National Archives as guardian of sensitive national security documents, the Multiculturalism programme as a nest for immigration investigators, or the National Arts Centre and the string of Centennial Auditoria as fortifications against not just American mass culture but the alternatives portended by the Cultural Front of the 1930s and 1940s. The Canada Council, above all the others, occupied the loftiest and most unsullied place in the national culture. The unacknowledged links between state security and national culture were tantamount to *obscenities* in the cultural nationalist regime of historical observation.

A basic distinction between *official* secrecy and *cultural* secrecy clarifies this point. Official secrecy is the routine guarding of privy information which, if revealed, might adversely affect the national interest. In the decades under study here official secrecy was enforced by the Official Secrets Act, the Defence of Canada Regulations, the National Archives Act, and in later years by the Access to Information Act and the Government Security Policy. These measures prevented civil servants from making unauthorized disclosures and kept various types of records and information from public review. Less obviously, journalists, academics and politicians were trained to the revelatory rituals that manage publication of state secrets, neutering their potential to excite change. The muted and short-lived repercussions of such releases mark points where official secrecy enjoined this second type best understood as *cultural* secrecy.

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<sup>4</sup> James Eayrs, "New Weapons in the Cold War: A Study of Recent Techniques in International Propaganda," *International Journal* (1952): 36-47.

Cultural secrecy is not directly enforced by laws or administrative orders but rather circulates through public culture generally, pumped by state information and culture agencies. During the Second World War and throughout the Cold War, cultural secrecy tacitly combined with official secrecy to regulate the horizon of truthspeakings in Canadian society. Cultural secrecy was the citizen's need *not* to know in the 'need-to-know' climate fostered by the security state. In Benedict Anderson's memorable phrase it was the citizen's *remembering to forget* information unassimilable to the national culture and its official narrative, a willed amnesia that selected out certain knowledge.<sup>5</sup> Reg Whitaker goes so far as to call such secrecy "the defining characteristic of the Canadian Cold War on the home front."<sup>6</sup>

In his famous 1882 address "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" Ernest Renan explained how French citizens must "already have forgotten" (*doivent avoir oublié*) certain historical events that jeopardized France's cohesiveness as an imagined historical community.<sup>7</sup> "Forgetting," Renan reminded his Parisian audience, and even "historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation." By implication, the recent humiliation of Prussian occupation would become yet another historical event for French citizens to remember-to-forget in the national interest. National culture never rests on laurels (or disasters), but restlessly re-affirms itself through a "daily plebiscite." This day-to-day, second-to-second *presencing* of the nation carries the citizen's obligation already-to-have-forgotten into the present as a kind of paradox of alert insensitivity. In this version of civic nationalism *remembering to forget* is essential to the ongoing reproduction of the nation as an historically-stable entity.

In chapter one, the origins of this cultural conditioning to secrecy were discerned in the erasure of aboriginal people from the cultural nationalist regime of wilderness representation.<sup>8</sup> There is the complete absence of radio antennae from Canadian landscape

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<sup>5</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso: 1991), see Chapter 11, "Memory and Forgetting."

<sup>6</sup> Whitaker, *Double Standard*, 18.

<sup>7</sup> Renan, "What is a Nation," in Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration*, 11.

<sup>8</sup> Not forgetting, though, that, aboriginal people all along have been targets of security intelligence. Many such RCMP files have been partially declassified. Reg Whitaker, "The Politics of Security Intelligence Policy-making in Canada II, 1984-91," *Intelligence and National Security* 7:1 (January 1992), 66, cites George Erasmus, responding to the fact he was a CSIS target: "I do not care about CSIS, I am not interested in formal complaints [i.e. to the Security Intelligence Review Committee], about CSIS getting all excited about our looking closer and deeper into their affairs . . . I want to get them out of our lives."

art of the first half of this century--the very decades of an unprecedented floriation of antennae in both wilderness and pastoral lands of Canada. As was pointed out, the radio equipment was filtered both from the representation of landscape and from the cultural nationalist regime of observation itself, even as signals intelligence and broadcasting became central to the culture-security complex. Apparently, landscape and secrecy go together: Michael Dorland calls Canada "a thoroughly hidden country," where "a territorial configuration of mouths" established "silence as the cultural norm"; one of Canada's most "secret corners," David Stafford points out, is Ottawa, where discretion "can be as thick as the ice in the Rideau Canal." He attributes this to the residual influence of Whitehall and British bureaucracy, where as Peter Hennessy writes, "secrecy is built into the calcium of a British policy-makers bones . . . it is as much a part of the English landscape as the Cotswolds."<sup>9</sup>

The final three chapters challenge this residue of British secrecy in Canada. Chapter seven takes up the case of Peter Dwyer, whose criss-cross career in state security and cultural administration was influential in shaping Canada's federal cultural project and its internal security. Chapter eight revisits a matter in which Dwyer was deeply implicated: the defection in Ottawa of Igor Gouzenko in September 1945, carrying evidence of a secret Soviet spy ring. Aspects of the case remain official secrets to this day, but its importance to the *cultural* secrecy of the Cold War has an almost architectural solidity.

Repossessing this story from cultural secrecy begins with examining the British presence in Ottawa during the Second World War. To what extent were Canadian officials the object of British manipulation as well as Soviet intelligence-gathering? There is also the question of why the news media were so resistant to publishing security intelligence stories. Was the *Ottawa Journal's* refusal to publish Gouzenko's startling information purely a case of incompetence and compartmentalized decision-making? Or does it indicate the anachoric, "padded-cell" quality of cultural secrecy? Even though by September 1945 the war was won, the *Journal's* Elizabeth Fraser later recalled how the cipher clerk's route to publicity was barred by the generalized "ambience of controlled news."<sup>10</sup> This "ambience"

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Dorland, "A Thoroughly Hidden Country: *Ressentiment*, Canadian Nationalism, Canadian Culture," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 12: 1/2 (1988), 132; David Stafford, "The Delicate Balance: Security, Liberty and the Canadian Intelligence Community," Canada House Lectures, No. 55, 3 March 1993, 5; Peter Hennessy, *Whitehall* (London: Fontana, 1990), 346-47.

<sup>10</sup> John Sawatsky, *Gouzenko: The Untold Story* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1984), 29. Anne Collins, *In the Sleep Room* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Denys, 1988). The CIA-funded experiments in Montreal's "sleep room" in the 1960s were not simply "thought control," but prescribed amnesia, the patients lost their memories.

of secrecy in matters of national security is so 'natural' that its perniciousness to liberal arguments that news media defended the public's "right to know" is often overlooked.

### **The Right to Know**

R. Gordon Robertson, a civil servant influential in security issues for more than three decades, made the case for official secrecy in a 1972 address. From dismantling Japanese-Canadian internment at the end of the Second World War to the October Crisis of 1970, when he was Chairman of the Security Panel, Robertson learned the rationale for secrecy from within; indeed, he helped frame the present Access to Information legislation. Speaking to the Royal Society at a meeting in St. John's, he presented the problem of official secrecy in Donald Rowat's formulation: balancing the state's "need for secrecy" with the public's "right to know." In Robertson's opinion, news media too-readily published material supplied by whistle-blowers. Frowning on "the rather festive mood" surrounding a string of leaked Cabinet confidences, he argued that they:

questioned the action of whoever may have been responsible for an unauthorized disclosure that, if intentional, was contrary to the oath taken by all officials and others who deal with classified information.

He set out four justifications for such oaths, and for official secrecy generally: national security, personal privacy, international relations and effective government.<sup>11</sup>

Two imperatives to secrecy were axiomatic: national security, he said, is "pretty generally agreed" to be exempt from public disclosure; second, information whose release might prejudice the interests of the state in its bilateral or multilateral relationships with other states is subject to restriction not just in Canada but in every state. In the third case, he said, "there exist a number of classes of information that most countries accept should be secret . . . where an individual's right to privacy must prevail." In particular, the Cabinet's own deliberations present a privacy issue. Cabinet privacy, he argued, is built into the very name *Privy Council* and is essential to his fourth justification for secrecy: "effective government."

In a parliamentary system, he argued, it is vital that Cabinet proceedings be held *in camera* because its decisions must not be attributable to any single minister but always to the Cabinet as a whole: "Ministers have a right to talk and argue, to be wise or to be foolish, with the knowledge that privacy is accorded to them, too." In a 1980 interview, when

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<sup>11</sup> R. Gordon Robertson, "Official Responsibility, Private Conscience, and Public Information," an address to the Royal Society of Canada Annual Meeting, St. John's, Nfld., 6 June 1972 (Library of Parliament, Ottawa); also see Don Rowat, *Administrative Secrecy in Developed Countries*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

journalist Tom Earle asked Robertson about his role in developing the Access to Information and Privacy Acts, he said, "If it were known that their [i.e. Ministers'] positions were different from the decision that finally came out, the opposition in the House of Commons would drive a coach and six through government. It would be destructive."<sup>12</sup>

The official who feels he or she is blowing the whistle over some particular issue in fact frustrates the effective operation of democratic government over the long term:

In short, the collective executive that is the heart of our Parliamentary system must have secrecy: it cannot work without it . . . . Cabinet documents, whatever their content and whatever their nature, cannot be regarded as "public" simply because a decision has been reached. They must . . . all be considered confidential until the expiry of whatever period—it is now set at thirty years—will ensure that their publication can have no significant effect . . . .<sup>13</sup>

The checks on any abuses that might be perpetrated under the cover of official secrecy were twofold. The first was that the *outcomes* of confidential Cabinet discussions became known in due course when legislation or administrative regulations were tabled, and then tested by passing through the houses of Parliament under the scrutiny of the media and other interested parties. A further responsibility lies with historians and other researchers not sworn as Privy Councillors who, upon the release of documents after the statutory period, must develop deeper assessments of governments' confidential activities based on the records themselves. In this way, successive governments are restrained both in the short and long terms from concealing improper, illegal, undemocratic and illiberal practices behind the screen of cabinet confidentiality.

Shortcomings in Robertson's argument point up problems both in his liberal philosophy and its imperfect realization. Robertson's first and second justifications—the fact that secrecy, particularly concerning security matters, is a necessary condition of nationality—returns to the critique of the "forced choice" developed in chapter four. He as much as admits that secrecy is in the essence of that system, a symptom of the forced choice that catches all in its totalizing discourse of "international relations." The international system itself enmeshes each member state in a binarism of international cooperation *versus* international competition that makes secrecy unavoidable. Ideally, a state's various alliances and information-sharing agreements hold rivalry and cooperation at equilibrium, forestalling violent conflict, but this approach to collective security escalates a state's imperative to secrecy with regards to its deepest intentions. The priviness of such intentions is identical with the strength of its claim to sovereignty (and this is why, in the era of electronic

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<sup>12</sup> R.G. Robertson, interview by Tom Earle, transcript. Library of Parliament.

<sup>13</sup> R.G. Robertson, "Official Responsibility, Private Conscience, and Public Information."

communications, secret codes and ciphers quietly restored a priestly caste in cloistered halls adjacent to governments, discreet guardians of the ineffable distinctiveness of each nation's sovereign political rationality).

He relied upon the disclosure-in-time principle to justify official secrecy, implying that national security secrets are *sub specie* to knowable Orders-in-Council. Accountability for the raw matter concealed by such secrecy is traceable, at least in general terms, to Orders receiving public scrutiny in the manner he described. Yet, the *secret* Order-in-Council is kept secret on a permanent basis precisely to avoid such scrutiny, and one suspects it is a necessary instrument in sustaining his blanket exemption of "national security" matters. Everyone "pretty generally" agreed with that. Yet, by his own logic, should not these secret orders have been *most* open to post facto scrutiny, as they were the least checked, and most open to abuse at the time?

Robertson may have skirted this issue to avoid discussing the threat the secret Order-in-Council presents to civil liberties. Bypassing every check and balance, the secret Order leaves the citizen reliant solely upon individual characteristics of decision-makers whose public accountability effectively is suspended. Here, in his characterization of such officials as decent, civilized people, hard-pressed by a bewildering flow of complex developments, he implicitly asked his listeners to take a leap of faith. Where one might wish for a system designed to isolate and expunge bad bureaucratic apples and their illiberal practices, our attention is drawn instead to the goodness of shiny specimens. Given the litany of internments, expropriations, clandestine penetrations and manipulations of legitimate dissident groups and ethnic communities, and even state murders, one might be forgiven for distrusting this subornment of rights to the "efficiencies" necessary to a liberal state's competitive/ cooperative jockeying with other states.

In fact, the checks on official secrecy that Robertson mentions are flimsy and solely concerned with Cabinet documents. The complete removal of other types of information from public release remains problematic even to this day. The tiny fraction of security intelligence files transferred to the National Archives, for example, are not released as a coherently-archived record group. Rather they are pecked open in piecemeal fashion through researchers' individual Access to Information Requests.<sup>14</sup> The records are severed not by the Archives staff, but off-site and extensively by CSIS itself. And who comprises the National Archives Review Unit which decides the fate of these materials? Oddly, it contains no representative from the National Archives, rather its members are unidentified

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<sup>14</sup> For a recent critical assessment of Canadian Access to Information see Alasdair Scott Roberts, *Limited Access: Assessing the Health of Canada's Freedom of Information Laws* (Kingston: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 1998).

former employees of the agencies concerned, readers E.P. Thompson witheringly dubs "anti-historians." This appellation may be harsh; but given the obstructive methods of release, an assessment of the disposal of documents by CSIS is possible only through the occasional anomalies that crop up in the process of research.<sup>15</sup>

I have mentioned here only the records of the former RCMP Security Service held by CSIS, but at least several other Departments of Government or their agencies, are even more reclusive. The Communications Security Establishment, heir to the CBNRC, is virtually a closed book as are intelligence agencies within the RCMP and the Defence Department. As John Bryden reports, the individual researcher has the sense of operating against unseen adversaries. He returned to DND files that he had consulted previously only to find crucial documents had been removed.<sup>16</sup>

Can the historical researcher evaluate the practice of official secrecy? This is a *mise en abîme* in public information in which certainty is scarce, but the answer perhaps lies less in the flat denial of access to certain documents than in the way the Access to Information function trains researchers to a highly-controlled revelatory ritual. The "right to know" withers in the calculated damage applied to the documentation, the piecemeal access to it, and its reception into a populace acculturated to secrecy. If Gordon Robertson avoided any consideration of how secrecy worked, culturally, it is because the state's need for secrecy was *incommensurate* with the citizen's "right to know." The right was constituted pursuant to a *pre-given* imperative to secrecy that is a feature of the 'forced choice' of nationality. The dispersion of official secrets into a widely-shared public secrecy was a mutually-reinforcing process. Official secrecy withheld what could never be forgotten if known,

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<sup>15</sup> In passing, three observations: 1) there is evidence of a simple ignorance of historical relevance. For instance, why destroy the file of Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois when more than a thousand pages of material gathered on Paul Robeson were retained and released (albeit severed by CSIS, partly at my expense)? Could it be that the name "Du Bois" simply did not strike the former officers as having significance? 2) the systematic removal of documents with "top secret" designations (or higher) in effect limits the releasable records to relatively mundane transactions and case files rather than the policy and administrative records of senior management. 3) There is ample internal evidence in the released files of an enormous collection of surveillance photographs, films and audio recordings created by the RCMP Security Service over a period of decades. My requests for these met with a complete blank, and ultimately, the CSIS's representative at the National Archives advised me that all such audio-visual materials were destroyed prior to transfer.

<sup>16</sup> John Bryden, *Best-Kept Secret: Canadian Secret Intelligence in the Second World War* (Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1993), 332. See also Gregory S. Kealey "The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the National Archives, and Access to Information: A Curious Tale," *Labour/Le travail* (Spring 1988): 227-32.

whereas cultural secrecy sutured the periodic release of information inadmissible to its regime of observation.

The following chapters follow from the premise that the right to know will count, as a civil right and as a human right, only when it is met by a concomitant civic *obligation to remember*. When J.L. Granatstein reminds readers of their “hard” obligation as citizens to be mobilized to the national defence in times of emergency, he takes for granted that the state knows best what citizens should remember and forget. No doubt cultural secrecy, born in the “need-to-know” and “loose-lips-sink-ships” regimen of wartime, was necessary to the elite-driven political and cultural administration that R. Gordon Robertson called “effective government.” But what ideological work was performed in his hitching the adjective “effective” to governance?

In chapter nine, Paul Robeson sings at the Canada-U.S. border into an absorptive pall of cultural secrecy. His North American career foundered as the internalization of state secrecy during the 1940s and 1950s fortified North Americans' ears against him. The 1952 Peace Arch concert puts into stark contrast the problems of dwelling versus occupying, the neurotic ‘state’ within the state, and its culture of secrecy. Despite J.L. Granatstein’s fulmination, remembering-*not*-to-forget is a much “harder” obligation than that met by his free volunteers discussed in chapter four. Indeed, his question--“Who Killed Canadian History?”--takes on a different complexion.<sup>17</sup> For, if citizens are aware of history primarily as a branch of government information, they might well be forgiven for forgetting too much. In retrospect, the passing of Paul Robeson’s great popularity in Canada into this state of amnesia provides a starting point to begin reimagining citizenship.

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<sup>17</sup> Graham Carr, “Harsh Sentences: Appealing the Strange Verdict of *Who Killed Canadian History?*” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 28:1/2 (Spring/Summer 1998): 167-76. For insight into Granatstein’s Faustian compact with the national security state see RCMP reports in NAC RG 146, file 93-A00039 Pt. 1, “York University, 22-12-67 to 12-7-68,” departmental minute, 30 May 1968. Granatstein was prepared to trade off the freedom to publish his research (undergoing a security clearance and agreeing to hold “material under bond in vaults for an agreed period of years”) in exchange for insider knowledge. As the writer of the minute states, Prof. Granatstein’s “intention was . . . to supplement [public knowledge] in ways beneficial to us as well as to historians.”

## CHAPTER 7

### STATE SECURITY AND CULTURAL ADMINISTRATION: THE CASE OF PETER DWYER

There is no better image of the logic of socialization, which treats the body as a 'memory-jogger', than those complex of gestures, postures and words which only have to be slipped into, like a theatrical costume, to awaken by the evocative power of bodily mimesis, a universe of ready-made feelings and experiences.

Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*

Espionage is the secret theater of our society.

John le Carré

Peter Dwyer. Who can explain him, who can tell the reason why?

Henry Hindley

If John le Carré is right to call espionage a secret theatre, Igor Gouzenko's defection from the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa on the night of September 5th, 1945 struck some of its leading players with stagefright. Indeed, the cipher clerk's defection had so many short and long term ramifications for the nascent Canadian security state that its status as a historical event of causal import is almost beyond question. The event caused Peter Dwyer, the British Secret Intelligence Service's liaison officer for North America, to speed from Washington to Ottawa for Gouzenko's debriefing, little knowing that it would place him at the forefront of accelerating developments in both Canada's state security and its cultural administration. Security-wise, the sensational case licensed a tough-minded upgrading of Canada's internal security measures. Culturally, Gouzenko's revelations helped abort the "progressive" movement in Canada, striking a decisive blow in favour of the national cultural project mapped out in the Massey Report several years later.

Yet any portentous "event" which becomes as axiomatic in historiography as the Gouzenko case has done nonetheless remains susceptible to an inverse causal reading. Rather than follow up Gouzenko's volition as an historical actor, one can search the density of social forces for the cleft or abscess that drew him forth, irresistibly, without reference to any exercise of individual will on his part. The matter of will, or free choice, in Igor Gouzenko's "unscheduled" arrival into RCMP care, is revisited in chapter eight, but the example raises the question of how the "scheduled time" of the Canadian nation, its chronotope, or its collective 'cognitive map', was *rescheduled* by Gouzenko's precipitous action. Peter Dwyer is a commendable guide in this matter because the line management of

both the security and cultural dislocations that followed, inasmuch as they devolved on a single individual, fell to him.

Peter Dwyer is not unique in having a dual career in security intelligence and in federal cultural institutions. G. Hamilton Southam, head of the Intelligence division of the Department of External Affairs (DL-2) founded the National Arts Centre. Canada Council Chairman Mavor Moore's talents served Military Intelligence and the Psychological Warfare Committee during the war.<sup>1</sup> Yet the archive reveals Dwyer's career to have been astonishingly central to postwar Canadian culture and national security. The Canadian career of "Janus," as he was code-named, occupies the crossroads of two ready-made narratives whose mutual repulsion in cultural nationalist historiography surely signals some clandestine attraction.

On the cultural front, the decades-long foment for a federal cultural policy, punctuated by the Kingston Conference of Artists in 1941, the Massey-Levesque Royal Commission in 1949-51, resulted in the eagerly-awaited implementation in 1957 of its Report's central recommendation, the creation of the Canada Council.<sup>2</sup> Milestones in the history of Canada's internal security arrangements, on the other hand, include the RCMP finding their anti-communist *raison d'être* in the Winnipeg General Strike, Canada's investment in a signals intelligence establishment during the Second World War, and the Cold War elaboration of a censorship-intelligence-propaganda apparatus following Gouzenko's defection.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mavor Moore, *Reinventing Myself: Memoirs* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1990), 107: "The IS -- what is it about these initials: first Intelligence and Security and now [CBC's] International Service?" See Moore's obituary of gallery director and former intelligence officer Moncrieff Williamson in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, May 1998; University of Regina Special Collections, Theodore Heinrich papers. Heinrich, who was Royal Ontario Museum Director and also founder of the Visual Arts programme at the University of Regina, was an American Art Intelligence Officer in Germany after WWII.

<sup>2</sup> Maria Tippet, *Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts before the Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Paul Litt, *The Muses, the Masses and the Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); J.L. Granatstein, *Canada 1957-1967: the Years of Uncertainty and Innovation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986); André Fortier and D. Paul Schafer, *Review of Federal Policies for the Arts in Canada (1944-88)* (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of the Arts, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> Gregory Kealey, "The Early Years of State Surveillance of Labour and the Left in Canada: The Institutional Framework of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Security and Intelligence Apparatus," *Intelligence and National Security* (July 1993): 129-48; Reginald Whitaker, "Origins of the Canadian Government's Internal Security System, 1946-52," *Canadian Historical Review* (Spring 1984) 155-183; John Bryden, *Best Kept Secret: Canadian Secret Intelligence in the Second World War* (Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1993).

Hypothesizing concordances between these narratives is to enter an historiographical no-go zone associated with that Wesley Wark calls the “national insecurity state,” and what Gregory Kealey describes as “a popular mentality that stresses insecurity within.” Indeed, Michael Denning goes so far as to call the parallel American process a “cultural civil war” fought out within the apparatuses of culture and the state.<sup>4</sup> Occupying these interstices, Peter Dwyer’s biography forms a hybrid narrative which, by his own design and a measure of good luck, failed to coalesce in public discourse during his lifetime. By design, he kept significant aspects of his career from public view; but he was lucky, too, that cultural secrecy safely absorbed various official secrets with which he was associated.

### **Harry Dexter White**

In November 1953, one such secret threatened to upset Peter Dwyer’s Canadian career. It concerned Harry Dexter White, an American Treasury official on Henry Morgenthau’s staff in the early 1940s who sat opposite British negotiator John Maynard Keynes at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944. In November 1945, the FBI received information that suggested Harry Dexter White supplied the Soviet Union with confidential government documents. Potentially, this was a serious breach of security, and it posed an immediate dilemma for President Harry Truman when he learned of it in February 1946. Within days White was to be confirmed as American Director of the International Monetary Fund. Sensing partisan motives, Truman resisted pressure to block the appointment, but White remained under FBI surveillance for more than a year, until his name surfaced publicly in the spectacular allegations made against Alger Hiss by Elizabeth Bentley and Whittaker Chambers. In August 1948, just two days after White delivered a passionate defense of civil rights before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, he suffered heart failure. His untimely death heightened FBI suspicions, but effectively it left moot his guilt or innocence of espionage.<sup>5</sup>

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Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, *Cold War Canada: the Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> Kealey, “The Early Years,” 143; Wesley Wark, “Security Intelligence in Canada, 1864-1945: The History of a ‘National Insecurity State,’” in Keith Neilson and B.J.C. McKercher, eds., *Go Spy the Land: Military Intelligence in History* (Westport, Ct: Praeger, 1992): 153-78, and Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 77: “Indeed, it was the growing influence of the Cultural Front in the state cultural apparatuses and the major cultural industries that provoked the cultural civil war known as the ‘Red Scare’ or ‘McCarthyism.’”

<sup>5</sup> David Rees. *Harry Dexter White: A Study in Paradox* (New York: Coward, McCann and

The Canadian angle on the White enigma emerged on Capitol Hill in November 1953 following by-election losses elections for the Republicans, who controlled both the White House and the Congress. To divert attention from both the electoral setbacks and also the high-flying Senator Joseph McCarthy, on November 6th Attorney-General Herbert Brownell produced new information regarding the White case. Speaking to the Chicago Executives Club he accused former President Harry Truman of allowing the promotion of Harry Dexter White to a sensitive post even though he knew White was suspected of being a Soviet informant. From Kansas City Truman dismissed Brownell's charge as partisan demagoguery, but the spat gained altitude when McCarthy flatly denounced Truman as "a liar."<sup>6</sup>

Ignoring a subpoena from the notorious McCarran Committee, Truman explained to a nation-wide radio audience from his home in Kansas City that Harry Dexter White was allowed to take up his new post in order to facilitate on-going FBI investigations into Soviet espionage rings. The explanation struck most Americans as reasonable, but calling Attorney-General Brownell "mealy-mouthed" and "phony" hardly placated Truman's Republican adversaries. Following the broadcast one Washington journalist described the atmosphere as "charged with political thunderheads."<sup>7</sup>

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover obeyed a subpoena to appear before William E. Jenner's Senate Sub-Committee on Internal Security and he took issue with Truman's explanation.<sup>8</sup> In unprecedented and gripping televised testimony, he stated that the former President had ignored his specific warning about Harry Dexter White, conveyed in a memorandum of February 1st 1946 to Truman's national security advisor, General Harry

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Geoghegan, 1973). Rees admits that the evidence is inconclusive but believes White likely was guilty. More recently, Bruce Craig, "Unsealing Federal Grand Jury Records: The Case of the Harry Dexter White Transcript," *The Public Historian* 20:2 (Spring 1998) tends toward the opposite conclusion.

<sup>6</sup> Cauter, *The Great Fear*, 48-49, attributes Truman's hesitancy to act against White to his deep suspicion of the Republican fear-mongers; Cauter views Brownell's attack on Truman as an attempt to steal some of McCarthy's "glamour."

<sup>7</sup> *Ottawa Journal*, 11 November 1953, "McCarthy Calls Truman a Liar"; 12 November, "Truman Won't Answer Subpoena"; *Ottawa Evening Citizen*, 17 November 1953, "Truman Lashes back at Brownell's 'Mealy-Mouthed, Phony' Attack," and "The White Case -- Truman Defends Action."

<sup>8</sup> *Montreal Gazette*, 18 November 1953, "Promotion to Monetary Post 'Hampered' FBI --Hoover."

Hawkins Vaughan.<sup>9</sup> In the concluding paragraphs of this memo Hoover introduced the Canadian dimension, stating that a “highly placed” Canadian government source had: reported that the British and Canadian delegates on the International Monetary Fund may possibly nominate or support White for the post of President of the International Bank, or as Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund. It is further commented by my Canadian source that if White is placed in either of these positions he would have the power to influence to a great degree deliberations on all international financial arrangements.<sup>10</sup>

The tabling of this document by Attorney-General Brownell jolted the Canadian government. As journalist James Minifie reported from Washington, Canada’s Ambassador Arnold Heenev was “greatly vexed” by the disclosure; in Ottawa, Prime Minister St. Laurent called it a “disagreeable surprise.”<sup>11</sup> In normal circumstances, they said, such national security matters were handled confidentially between the two governments. With packs of Congressional and Senatorial Un-American Activities inquisitors vying for public attention and partisan gain, the circumstances were anything but normal.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, Brownell’s release of this memo was not considered in Ottawa to be accidental, but the by-product of a second issue involving the defector Gouzenko, then living incognito under RCMP protection. The *Chicago Tribune* had charged (with some truth) that the Canadian government had been less than forthcoming about Gouzenko’s information, asserting that the Soviet defector possessed new facts he would impart only to Jenner’s Sub-Committee.<sup>13</sup> Lester Pearson’s refusal to produce Gouzenko infuriated

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<sup>9</sup> J.E. Hoover to H.H. Vaughan, 1 February 1946, NSA VENONA internet site: [www.nsa.gov:8080/docs/venona/docs.html](http://www.nsa.gov:8080/docs/venona/docs.html). According to this site Hoover sent five memos to the White House concerning Harry Dexter White between November 1945 and July 1946.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> James Minifie, “Canada Protests Security Breach in Spy Probe,” *Ottawa Journal*, 20 November 1953; “PM Says Hoover’s Mention of Canadian a Nasty Surprise,” 18 November 1953.

<sup>12</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 8561, file 50303-40, pt 1.1, “United States Investigations into Subversive Activities in US--Implication of Canadian Officials.” On a despatch from the Washington Embassy dated 9 September 1948, Escott Reid highlighted for Pearson’s attention Richard Nixon’s naming Harry Dexter White in Congress as an espionage suspect, in addition to Alger Hiss. Nixon also praised the Canadian Government’s firm handling of the Gouzenko suspects in order to obtain swift convictions. The despatch described the general pattern of developments as “sensational” and warned that “no less than seven committees and sub-committees, embracing some 150 of 531 members of both houses, were conducting separate probes involving Communism, and were competing for headline publicity.”

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Seeking to avoid publicity, the Canadians had not conveyed to the HUAC investigators what the FBI had known since 1945, namely that Gouzenko’s disclosures

Jenner and his Senatorial colleagues, and the release of Hoover's memo was only one of several coercive and disruptive measures unleashed to crack the Canadians' resolve. The names of Harry Dexter White and Igor Gouzenko dominated Canadian headlines for nearly three weeks, disturbing the supposedly cordial bilateral relations symbolized by the arrival of President Eisenhower and his wife in Ottawa on November 13th for a state visit.

On November 17th, Lester Pearson learned he would be denounced in New York the next day by a right-wing commentator, Victor Lasky. The attack was calculated to increase pressure on Pearson to capitulate in the Gouzenko matter.<sup>14</sup> Speaking to a luncheon meeting of the Women's National Republican Convention, Lasky dredged up old rumours to accuse Pearson himself of supplying privy information to the Soviets:<sup>15</sup>

Lester Pearson has long been baiting the U.S. at the United Nations . . . . That's his privilege. We've been baited and insulted by masters. But what is inexcusable is Mr. Pearson's determined effort from preventing accredited American investigators from following up Canadian angles to Soviet espionage . . . Bob Morris had planned to ask Gouzenko about the Harry Dexter White case . . . but Mr. Pearson, through an underling, can issue a statement that Gouzenko knows nothing more . . . . Mr. Pearson has effectively squelched any investigation into alleged Soviet ties of not only his closest aide, but of himself . . . . [Herbert] Norman has been promoted to the post of Canada's High Commissioner to New Zealand . . . . According to Miss [Elizabeth] Bentley's testimony, while Mr. Pearson was Minister Counselor in the Canadian Ministry in Washington before the war he transmitted vital information to a Red spy ring she headed . . . . Perhaps Mr. Pearson did not know he was being used. But as soon as word of this testimony got around [the] shocking allegation was stymied.<sup>16</sup>

Pearson dubbed Lasky's charges "false to the point of absurdity," and the

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pointed to "an assistant" to Secretary of State Stettinius.

<sup>14</sup> RG 25 vol. 8561, file 50303-40, pt 1.1, "United States Investigations into Subversive Activities in US--Implication of Canadian Officials," R.A. MacKay to L.B. Pearson, 17 November 1953: "[George] Ignatieff has just phoned me to say that he has been informed by Miniffe [presumably James Minifie], who had seen the text of the speech, that Laskey [sic] will say that you transmitted vital information to a Red Spy Ring, that Elizabeth Bentley so testified . . . and that that testimony was suppressed at your request . . . . The speech links the above statement up with our refusal to produce Gouzenko and Herb Norman's 'promotion' to New Zealand."

<sup>15</sup> James Littleton, *Target Nation* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Denys/CBC, 1986): 31-37, sets out how the McCarran subcommittee extrapolated from Elizabeth Bentley's testimony to cast suspicion on Pearson and other Canadian officials.

<sup>16</sup> An anti-Communist propagandist with CIA connections, Victor Lasky edited the *American Legion Reader*. See his profile on Namebase, [www.pir.org/namebase](http://www.pir.org/namebase), intrnet site. Lasky apparently was referring to Bentley's purported conversations with Hazen Sise, the NFB's liaison officer in the Canada's Washington Embassy during the war.

Canadian government responded negatively to the State Department's formal note on behalf of Jenner requesting access to Gouzenko. Within External Affairs, Lasky's description of high-flier Herbert Norman's assignment to New Zealand as a "promotion" was noted with grim amusement, but publicly it was pointed out that the FBI had been involved throughout Gouzenko's debriefing in 1945-46, and had questioned him as recently as 1949. By Gouzenko's own admission, they said, he had nothing new to give.<sup>17</sup>

Canadian newspapers were uniformly skeptical of Brownell, the Jenner Committee, Lasky and the *Chicago Tribune* (McCarthyism's notorious house organ) and the various attempts to intimidate Pearson and the Canadian government. Editorial writers were unconvinced of any likely value in further testimony from Gouzenko. Yet, in order to discount the charge that a Canadian official supplied information to the FBI, a degree of clarification by the Canadian government was essential. As the *Ottawa Journal* put it, if the allegation were true, "that would leave the inescapable conclusion that Mr. Hoover's 'highly placed Canadian' had warned the FBI, but not his own government" about White's impending promotion.<sup>18</sup>

That was the embarrassing and perplexing question, for which nobody, including the RCMP, had a ready answer. After checking their records the Mounties were no closer to identifying the mystery official than intelligence officials at External Affairs. Commissioner L.H. Nicholson communicated to Pearson on November 18th that "an immediate search . . . has failed to reveal any trace that any member of this Force offered any comment on the matter."<sup>19</sup> Prime Minister St. Laurent admitted to the Parliament that "so far we have not found anything."<sup>20</sup>

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As front-page headlines shouted of "red scares" and muscle-flexing superpowers, the inner pages of the Ottawa newspapers recorded the capillary action of births, deaths, marriages, and listings for various entertainments on offer. On page ten of the November 14th *Ottawa Journal* appeared a brief announcement for Peter Dwyer's one-act play

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<sup>17</sup> *Ottawa Journal*, 20 November 1953.

<sup>18</sup> "Doubt Top Placed Canadian Warned FBI White Soviet Spy," *Ottawa Journal*, 18 November 1953.

<sup>19</sup> Solicitor General of Canada, ATIP Division, Document 114 117-90-83, file "Harry Dexter White."

<sup>20</sup> "Tip Forwarded to President, Senators Told -- Officials Doubt Hoover Report Correct," *Globe and Mail*, 18 November 1953.

*Hoodman-Blind*, “a brilliantly-conceived phantasy” that shared first prize in the Ottawa Little Theatre’s national playwriting competition.<sup>21</sup>

Dwyer's theatrical success presents a point of intersection between the public and the private, between the front page and local news. By the time he arrived at the Ottawa Little Theatre for the premiere performances of the award-winning plays, the revival of the Gouzenko and White cases had placed him in a situation almost more fantastic than that conceived of in *Hoodman-Blind*. For of all the Canadian security officials he alone could identify Hoover's Canadian informant. This he was loathe to do, for the secret belonged to Britain, not to Canada, and his dilemma pitted one nation's Official Secrets Act against that of another, underlining Dwyer's extraordinary status in the Canadian government. He had sworn the Canadian Oath of Secrecy on April 26th 1950, but had not yet formally acquired citizenship, and thus severing his previous sworn commitments to a foreign government. In effect, Dwyer was suspended in the forced choice of nationality, or else was the servant of two masters.<sup>22</sup> What of the witty fencing with secrets in *Hoodman-Blind*? Soon his actors would be winking at the well-heeled Little Theatre audience about “lettres de cachet” and “political annihilation,” phrases laden with secret irony.

### Janus

Fourteen years later, in January 1970, the Toronto *Globe and Mail* published a feature-length profile of Peter Dwyer upon his appointment as Director of the Canada Council. Writer John Burns dispensed with Dwyer's prior connections to British Intelligence in his opening sentence:

Nothing will embarrass Peter Dwyer more than a profile which dwells on his wartime career in the British Secret Intelligence Service. He believes it is no more relevant to his appointment as director of the Canada Council “than if I had been the commander of an anti-aircraft battery.”<sup>23</sup>

Burns's use of *wartime* as the locator of Dwyer's intelligence-related activities is

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<sup>21</sup> “Talented Casts To Present Winning Workshop Plays,” *Ottawa Journal*, 14 November 1953.

<sup>22</sup> Patricia Close, “Citizenship and Security,” Research Paper, MacDonald Commission, partially declassified as Solicitor General, ATIP file 8400-80, 16. During the probationary period the applicant for naturalization must “illustrate foremost allegiance to the current democratic processes of the Canadian nation-state.”

<sup>23</sup> John Burns, “The New Chief of Handouts to the Arts,” *Globe and Mail*, 17 January 1970.

reiterated in various extant biographical sketches, suggesting that it was a standard phrase in the minimal personal information Dwyer supplied when called upon to do so. This diffidence dissuaded Burns from pursuing the connection very far. But then, as *Saturday Night* Editor Robert Fulford wrote in 1982, the arts administrator was notoriously reticent about the earlier period of his career. By Fulford's estimate he was "the least known but perhaps the most permanently important" of the cadre of British imports who created so many of Canada's institutions during the post-war period. Yet, "Dwyer never wrote his memoirs—he believed to do so would be unprofessional—and his career remains shrouded in secrecy."<sup>24</sup> Effectively sidelined by illness in 1971, Dwyer deposited his personal papers not with the National Archives but on a burning pyre in his suburban Ottawa back yard. He died on New Year's Day, 1973, aged 58.<sup>25</sup>

The *Globe's* John Burns profited from the Soviet double-agent Kim Philby's naming of Dwyer as a former British intelligence officer in his 1968 memoir *My Silent War*.<sup>26</sup> Without Philby's calculated indiscretion Dwyer might have kept details of his earlier career within an intimate circle of friends and associates. Philby recalled Dwyer apparently with genuine fondness, although the sentiment was no longer reciprocated.<sup>27</sup> As Burns enlarged on Dwyer's life, attentive readers may have noticed that the war years formed only a lesser fraction of a secret service career under both British and Canadian governments. In fact, between graduation from Oxford in 1936 and his resignation for health reasons in 1971, Dwyer spent eighteen years each in the security intelligence field and in the arts, with notable overlaps. Ultimately, Burns was not convinced that Dwyer's earlier activities were "irrelevant," and judged instead that "the qualities which made him an outstanding intelligence agent should stand him in good stead at the Council."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Robert Fulford, "The Canada Council at Twenty-Five," *Saturday Night* (March 1982), 36.

<sup>25</sup> Chris Dwyer, interview by author, 4 March 1996.

<sup>26</sup> Kim Philby, *My Silent War* (London: 1968), on Dwyer: "I knew him for a brilliant wit, and was to learn that he had a great deal more to him than just wit." Alan Edmonds, "Spy and superspy: one man's view of Kim Philby," *Macleans* (April 1968), 3. Edmonds' overture to Dwyer while preparing his review of *My Silent War* produced nothing: "Dwyer will not discuss the Fuchs case or his secret service life."

<sup>27</sup> CBC Radio Archives, Max Ferguson Show, 3 January 1972. Dwyer could not conceal the bitterness he felt towards Philby, telling Ben Wicks, "well, it was *treason* of a form, wasn't it." On the other hand, Dwyer told Naim Kattan, interview by author, 31 March 1996, that Philby was "so charming and cultured, you would have liked him."

<sup>28</sup> Burns, "The New Chief."

## Oxford Whispers

As the pre-eminent sociologist of *cultural imposition*, Pierre Bourdieu provides a useful theoretical accompaniment to the case of Peter Dwyer. For several decades Bourdieu has been the patient student and ineluctable critic of delicacies, niceties and refinements that legitimate the hierarchies in social relations. His sociological studies are intimate close-ups of Europeans in their home settings, narrowing in on the fine grain of their cultural practices and language games.<sup>29</sup> Especially important to the imposition of taste by 'legitimate' culture, according to Bourdieu, is "the market which decides the value of literary and artistic works." Cultivated choice brings success in this symbolic market, so the value of the chooser and the manner of choosing is crucial. What the tastemaker thus acquires "is a sense of the legitimate choice so sure of itself that it convinces by the sheer manner of the performance, like a successful bluff." By knowing where and when to invest or disinvest in "directors rather than actors, the avant garde more than the classical," self-assured arbiters of taste reinforce their monopoly on legitimate culture.<sup>30</sup> Peter Dwyer's family origins and education conferred this in-built confidence in cultural choice "through immersion in a world in which legitimate culture is as natural as the air one breaths."<sup>31</sup>

Born June 17th, 1914, in his family's home at 55 Knollys Road, Streatham (in south London), Peter Dwyer grew up in close proximity to "legitimate culture." Through his childhood and education he came to possess what Bourdieu calls the "infallible taste of the 'taste-maker,'" trained to police "the uncertain tastes" and vulgarity of non-legitimate culture. In a biographical note written when he joined the Canada Council in 1958, Dwyer recorded that his grandfather was an opera singer and a conductor, his grandmother a member of the chorus of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and "other members of the family were professional actors." On the other hand, his father was of Irish extraction and worked as a civil servant in the India Office, thus exposing his son to the traditions of imperial administration.<sup>32</sup> Following school years as a day boy at nearby Dulwich College,

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<sup>29</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction, A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge, 1989), and *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990). See also Nicholas Garnham and Raymond Williams, "Pierre Bourdieu and the Sociology of Culture" *Media Culture and Society* (July 1980) 209-223.

<sup>30</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 99.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 474.

<sup>32</sup> NAC RG 32, Acc 85-86/096, Box 39, "Peter Michael Dwyer," personnel file. (Henceforth "NAC, Dwyer personnel file"). Copy of Entry of Birth, General Registry Office, London.

a school “steeped in theatrical tradition,” the nineteen-year-old Dwyer left for Oxford in 1933 to take a degree in modern languages.<sup>33</sup>

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In the 1930s, Oxford’s Keble College was an all-male Anglican college, intended for “gentlemen intending to live economically,” and presided over by clerics who its internet site now dubs “ecclesiastical worthies.”<sup>34</sup> There Dwyer acquired fluencies in French, Spanish, Italian and German, and self-assurance enough to live by his wits in that famously wit-infested conclave.<sup>35</sup> Although he was a bright student, studies yielded to extra-curricular commitments to the undergraduate paper, *The Cherwell*, the Oxford University Dramatic Society (OUDS) and the University Opera Club.<sup>36</sup> As a member of the Drama Society, he acted in and provided musical accompaniment for various productions. His one-act play, *The Mask on the Wall*, was deemed the “most outstanding” in the OUDS “Smoker,” an annual one-act play festival.<sup>37</sup>

Pierre Bourdieu demonstrates how cultural dominance is both inherited and acquired, and how it is reproduced through a system of practices clustered in a “habitus.”<sup>38</sup> Peter Dwyer was born into circumstances of modest economic capital but he accrued disproportionately high levels of *cultural* capital because of his particular familial and educational “habitus.” A habitus is a “structuring structure” that durably reproduces both the form and content of social distinctions from generation to generation. In the

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<sup>33</sup> Dulwich College, historical profile, [www.dulwich.org.uk](http://www.dulwich.org.uk), internet site. Founded as a school for the poor in 1618 by Shakespeare’s rival Edward Alleyn, prominent graduates included P.G. Wodehouse and Sir Edward Shackleton.

<sup>34</sup> Keble College, [www.keble.ox.ac.uk/about.khtml](http://www.keble.ox.ac.uk/about.khtml), internet site.

<sup>35</sup> NAC Dwyer personnel file. He graduated a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Modern Languages, 3rd class. Incidentally, Keble College housed the British security service MI5 during the war.

<sup>36</sup> For example, Dwyer’s weekly diary in *The Cherwell*, “Samuel Pepys--Undergraduate” recorded on November 19th, 1934, 144, the chiding of his “Tewtor”: “I am ever after writing of my diary and other matters soe I do neglect his pesky essays.”

<sup>37</sup> “O.U.D.S. Smoker”, *The Cherwell*, November 30th, 1935, 157. He submitted this play, or a version of it, to the OLT competition in 1951/52; it received an honourable mention.

<sup>38</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 170. “The habitus is both the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgements and the system of classification . . . of these practices. It is the relationship between [these] two capacities which defines the habitus.”

habitus of the tastemaker, subjects engage easily in the "right" cultural practices, fully conversant with the aesthetic knowledge that can differentiate formally between classes of cultural practices. Always in a position to point out vulgarity, a mere accent displays the tastemaker's command of the entire pattern of such practices. Indeed, certain accents, according to Bourdieu, may even have power to silence:

The properties attached to the dominant--Paris or Oxford 'accents' . . . have the power to discourage the intention of discerning what they are 'in reality', in and for themselves, and the distinctive value they derive from unconscious reference to their class distribution.<sup>39</sup>

This unconscious power to *discourage the intention of discerning what things are in reality* bears on Peter Dwyer's subsequent enforcement of cultural secrecy in Canadian society. In English Canada the Oxford 'accent' itself had this power to control what might signify as valuable in the realm of legitimate taste, and is a derivative of what David Vincent calls "gentlemanly secrecy."<sup>40</sup> As Graham Spry (later a Canadian broadcasting pioneer) enthused to Arnold Heeney in 1923: "There is not a world like the Oxford world. It is the clearing house of intelligence, the whole knowledge of man is concentrated, invisible, but ever present to the view."<sup>41</sup> By naming this visible/invisible "intelligence," Spry pointed to that tacit agreement *not to signify* that underpinned cultural secrecy. Thus Oxonian wit and charm might *prevent* certain significations with exactly the same firmness that it supposedly concentrated "the whole knowledge of man" within its *habitus*.

All accounts agree on Peter Dwyer's civility and charm. In presenting the *Diplôme d'honneur* of Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) to Dwyer in 1971, CCA Director Alan Jarvis voiced his "affectionate admiration," pointing out that Dwyer had "acquired that characteristic which marks the true Oxford man -- a refusal to take oneself too seriously!"<sup>42</sup> At Oxford "Dwyer began to polish a wit that has indeed become internationally famous, as well as a critical faculty which prefers a keenly honed rapier to the bludgeon," and Jarvis invoked the hush of secrecy surrounding Dwyer's 'wartime' service:

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, see Part 1 generally.

<sup>40</sup> David Vincent, *The Culture of Secrecy: Britain 1832-1998* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 22, "a strategy which sought maximum privacy for the civilized, and complete publicity for the unwashed."

<sup>41</sup> Douglas Owsram, *The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 144-145.

<sup>42</sup> NAC Dwyer personnel file. Allan Jarvis, *Diplome d'honneur address*, 18 October 1971.

Peter would not wish me to dwell at any length on his career in British intelligence . . . Suffice it to say that the mind which earned such high praise in war continues to serve with equal brilliance in more peaceful areas . . . I see he is already blushing and displaying that so well-known wry smile.<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand, charm did not detract from Dwyer's underlying firmness. "Tough, in a quiet way," recalled one of his superiors; "warm, courteous, strict," according to one of his subordinates.<sup>44</sup> Something pre-emptive about Dwyer's charming firmness was characteristic, too, of the positive construction of secrecy into national culture. This style of prohibition, tacitly enforced through accents, looks and gestures, correlates those who controlled official secrecy with the fraction that arbitrated cultural choice. As Graham Spry, and no doubt Arnold Heeney, too, understood perfectly, English Canada was enmeshed for most of the twentieth century in a generalized socio-political discourse in which "intelligence" and "intelligentsia," gathered under signs like "Oxford," governed the right to signify in legitimate culture.

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If Dwyer's extra-curricular writings at Oxford tempered his academic standing they won him other, perhaps more useful, distinctions. Mixed exam results were offset by his appointment as *The Cherwell's* sub-editor in December, 1934, and succession to the editorship followed six months later. Over the next three years he contributed more than a hundred items including poetry, reviews, essays, experimental theatrical dialogues, short stories and a weekly diary.

His first *Cherwell* essay, "Shakespeare and the Cinema," argued that almost all of Shakespeare's plays lend themselves to cinematic treatment, announcing precociously that "*Hamlet* must be produced by Eisenstein, *Henry IV* by Korda, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* by René Clair."<sup>45</sup> The film camera and film-editing guided audiences effortlessly through Shakespeare's rapidly shifting scenes, he wrote, minus the upstage "thunder of stagehands removing a courtyard." His own dramatic dialogues showed promise. In deft

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<sup>43</sup> Alan Jarvis directed the National Gallery during Dwyer's years of internal security coordination in the 1950s. Mischievously, Jarvis drew attention to Dwyer's intimate "knowledge of workings of public administration" gained through "services within government, prior to joining the Canada Council."

<sup>44</sup> Robert Bryce, interview by James Littleton, ca. 1981, NAC 1987-0416; Naim Kattan, interviewed by author; Reg Whitaker, *Double-Standard*: 19, Peter Dwyer's "liberalism was sharply circumscribed by an overriding concern with the Communist threat."

<sup>45</sup> Peter Dwyer, "Shakespeare and the Cinema," *The Cherwell*, 3 November 1934.

renderings he recorded the voices and banter of fellow students, exhibiting a talent for close listening and a level-headed approach to the rival ideologies on offer in the mid-1930s.<sup>46</sup> If he betrayed a degree of personal political uncertainty and flirted with Oxford's chic nihilism, it was superseded by his pursuit of the class fraction that arbitrated taste in legitimate culture. As announced in "Shakespeare and Cinema," he anticipated a career disseminating high culture through mass communications.

Dwyer's weekly comic diary "Samuel Pepys -- Undergraduate" embellished a weekly account of his social activities in seventeenth-century phrasings, unwittingly supplying that most valuable type of information: lists of names, associations and records of travels. The device of "Pepys" is telling, too, because its comedy lay in the diarist's disarming ingenuousness and indiscretion. At his lightest, Pepys was the inconstant courtier both of the "fair Eliz.," a frosty Scottish beauty, and the fiery "Luccia." In darker moments, though, Dwyer recorded his disaffection with the world--"Ours is essentially a tragic generation"--and he expressed his apprehension at their likely sacrifice in an impending conflict.<sup>47</sup>

As he learned languages and developed as a writer and actor, his *Cherwell* contributions also trace a submergence into the "wizardly" domain of national security. The sociable Pepys began to include names whose connections with British Intelligence eventually surfaced in the open literature.<sup>48</sup> The circle around a don named Gilbert Highet and his wife, novelist Helen McInnes, opened to include the young Dwyer. A decade later he and Highet worked together in BSC in New York.<sup>49</sup>

Through the Oxford University Dramatic Society, Dwyer began to mix with BBC Drama Producer Val Gielgud, and actors John Gielgud, Vivien Leigh, Peggy Ashcroft, David King-Wood, and Gyles Isham. Gyles Isham was a decade older than Dwyer and heir

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<sup>46</sup> Peter Dwyer, "Oxford Party," *The Cherwell*, 8 December 1934. Dwyer responded to a play by a fellow student by publishing his own dialogue:

PAT: You fool, you're supposed to have sufficient intelligence up here to put you above the rut of society.

A COMMUNIST: Intelligence! What use is intelligence in this twentieth-century chaos? . . . It's not we who are rotten but the whole state of the world."

A POLITICIAN: We're at a point in history where civilisation is breaking down."

<sup>47</sup> Peter Dwyer, "Is Oxford Degenerate?" *The Cherwell*, 26 October 1935.

<sup>48</sup> Max Beloff, John Gywer, Robert Irving, and Airey Neave are cited in Robin Ramsay, ed., *A Who's Who of the British Secret State* (Hull, U.K.: Lobster, 1989).

<sup>49</sup> Hyde, *Room 3606*, 205.

to a baronacy whose country seat was Lamport, not far from Warwick. In the 1930s, Isham was also a successful stage and film actor. In 1935, the year "Pepys" first mentions him, Isham appeared in David O. Selznick's *Anna Karenina*, with Greta Garbo. That year he also made *Regal Cavalcade* based on a short story by Val Gielgud and Eric Maschwitz. Maschwitz's writing and directing skills were later employed in BSC's "black" propaganda unit, "Station M," purportedly secreted somewhere within CBC's Toronto plant during the war.<sup>50</sup> In 1937-38, Gyles Isham went on to appear in Edmond T. Greville's anti-German propaganda films *Under Secret Orders* (1937) and *I Married a Spy* (1938), and when war broke out, he served British Intelligence in the Middle East. In 1935 he had hinted at his Intelligence connections to Dwyer at Oxford, who reported the contact cryptically in an article called "Words and People":<sup>51</sup>

"Words and People" appeared during a week when Dwyer dined with Gilbert Hight and Helen McInnes. For some reason his habitually secure and easy-going manner turned to a caustic derision of fellow students for vulgarizing the word "wizard," as in "He's a *wizard* Rugger Player," or last night's film was "*wizard* cinema." No doubt such policing of others' language for vulgarity is a sure way of accumulating cultural capital. Yet Dwyer's uncharacteristic stridency here suggests that there was something more on his mind. The final paragraph veers off into a cryptic aside:

Do you know my friend *Eusebius*? You would never think to look at him that his life was one constant round of diabolic machinations. You would think he was a normal individual: his grey trousers for instance never have a crease in them, and his jacket is of a very ordinary brown tweed. You would never see him dressed without a club tie—he belongs to so many clubs and is fond of beer. He has a pleasant face, kindly and good-natured, with a mop of thick black hair above it. He is himself well-made and good at games, and likes on sight everyone who does not sway at the hips in walking—and they like him. And yet everything with which he is associated has magical significance; poor fellow, he is hemmed in by wizardry. He has pictures of his school on the walls of his room, and respect in his heart for God. Who would have thought he had dealings in horrible magic, that everything he touched was "Wizard, wizard, wizard"?

Dwyer supplied no other clue as to who this mysterious friend might be, nor which "school" was pictured on the walls of his room. The ecclesiastic reference was a feint, if "Eusebius" in fact referred to *Euseby* Isham of Pytchley, founder of the Lamport estate,

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<sup>50</sup> Eric Maschwitz, *No Chip on my Shoulder* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1957); Nicholas J. Cull, "Did the Mounties and the NFB fake Nazi Atrocities?" *Globe and Mail*, 3 June 1995. Incidentally, I found no trace of "Station M" in CBC operational records.

<sup>51</sup> Peter Dwyer, "Words and People," *The Cherwell*, 19 October 1935.

whose descendant through his fourth son, John, was Gyles Isham.<sup>52</sup>

Dwyer's detached observation that Eusebius was "hemmed in" and somehow restricted by his secret powers suggests that Dwyer himself was brushed by but not yet seized by the "wizardry" that gripped his friend. "Words and People" marked a general shift in the tone and substance of Dwyer's *Cherwell* contributions. The threat of a European war figured more frequently, and his short fiction concerned mysterious characters gifted with supernatural powers, meeting secretly in Italy or France for opaque purposes. His tone became more cutting, tracing a new edge of confidence and superiority beneath his self-effacing humour.

A sea-change at work pulling Dwyer away from the artistic world is captured in "The Bridge in the Parks," a whimsical *Cherwell* essay:

There is perhaps no more pleasant pastime than that of listening to the conversations of other people. There are, of course, those lucky few who can place their ear at the keyhole without any moral qualms; but these superhuman creatures are few and far between . . . There are places where one has excellent opportunities for this fascinating method of listening in; cocktail parties, for instance—but this is most half-hearted eavesdropping, for your real eavesdropper gives his complete and undivided attention to the matter . . . And your honestly disinterested listener could do no better than to take up his station on the top of the bridge in the parks. Here he can overhear the most delightful snatches of talk . . . Here he can meditate on humanity.<sup>53</sup>

A week later he returned to the theme of eavesdropping from the bridge: "gathering the character and interests of a man from a few chance words."<sup>54</sup> If not supernatural, Dwyer's heightened faculties of awareness must have been a source of satisfaction to the talent-spotters; but by then, his Canadian friend Don Wall says, Dwyer was being "cultivated" in MI6's "country house system."<sup>55</sup>

During his final Oxford term, Peter Dwyer glimpsed a distant Canadian horizon when Grey Owl appeared at the Oxford Town Hall. A review in *The Cherwell* titled "Wild West" reported empty seats, "owing perhaps to the poster's description of [Grey Owl] as The Modern Hiawatha."<sup>56</sup> But the audience's initial skepticism evaporated as they were

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<sup>52</sup> See Isham genealogy, [www.oblevins.com/Blevins/D0013/G0001340.html](http://www.oblevins.com/Blevins/D0013/G0001340.html), internet site.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Dwyer, "The Bridge in the Parks," *The Cherwell*, 25 May 1935.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Dwyer, "On Sundays," *The Cherwell*, 16 November 1935.

<sup>55</sup> Author's interview with Don Wall, March 1996.

<sup>56</sup> "Wild West," *The Cherwell*, 1 February 1936.

won over by a "brilliant lecture, illuminated with mordant humour and illustrated by some very fine films." How mordant, they did not know: "Grey Owl said in passing he was not sure where he was lecturing," wrote the reviewer, never suspecting that the bookshelf at Beaver Lodge held a copy of *Round About the Mitre at Oxford*.

Grey Owl's sly undercutting of Oxford's claim to "the whole knowledge of man" was of no concern to Pepys, undergraduate, who was busy recording hijinks with the likes of Gyles Isham. Crammed in the front seat of Vivian Leigh's car, Dwyer and Val Gielgud recited the "Lay of Horatius":

and we just get to "like an eagles nest hangs on the purple crest of purple Appenine," when Milady Vivian goes to sleep and the car goes up on a bank . . . . Look, says Milord Gielgud, we be going awry . . . . La, what a todo.<sup>57</sup>

A starry outing, but Pepys interjects a terse aside: "*Saturday*: with Milord Rob Long in a car to Warwick, And drives back through the night at a fearful pace, so that my stummick turns to water."

### **Secret Intelligence Service**

In the event, Dwyer's career did not gel immediately. After graduating with a third in 1936, he stayed on in Oxford for a summer as actor and publicist with the Repertory Theatre. In May, he went to London to record the part of the Welsh Captain for a BBC broadcast of *Richard II*; later that month fascist leader Oswald Mosley visited Oxford and his uniformed bodyguards forcibly ejected hecklers from the meeting. That autumn Dwyer joined 20th-Century Fox's European Story Department as an Assistant Editor.<sup>58</sup> He told the *Globe and Mail*'s John Burns in 1970 that this involved "touring the Continent scouting new plays and novels and rewriting them in short story form for consumption in Hollywood." "He did not say so," mused Burns, "but the job would have proved a perfect cover for an intelligence agent, which is what he became in a formal way in 1939."<sup>59</sup>

He was instructed to "go to Broadway," MI6's London base, and he trained in its

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<sup>57</sup> "Samuel Pepys - Undergraduate," *The Cherwell*, 3 November 1934.

<sup>58</sup> *The Cherwell*, 2 and 30 May 1936; Don Wall, interview by author. As Assistant Editor for Fox, Dwyer claimed to have "discovered" actress Joan Greenwood.

<sup>59</sup> Anne Young, interview by author, 26 June 1998. Dwyer amused associates with the ineptness of his call-up by MI6 in 1939. The telephone rang and a voice muttered, "My name is Dwyer." "So is mine," Dwyer whispered, and the caller rang off in embarrassed confusion. Henry Hindley, NAC MG E 516, vol. 5, file 5.8, 18, recounts the same story, but rather less funnily than Young.

temporary quarters at Bletchley Park.<sup>60</sup> He served as an intelligence officer behind the lines in France, where evacuation from the coast in 1940 followed hard upon a frenzied cross-country drive from Paris, pursued by German police.<sup>61</sup> Stationed in Latin America, he witnessed the Imperial Censorship at Bermuda, where his duties included monitoring the Duke and Duchess of Windsor from an adjacent yacht. In June 1942, while serving as Second Secretary of the Panamanian Consulate (in reality, MI6 station chief) he married Nora Darlington, a colleague from the Consulate, at the First Municipal Court of Panama City.<sup>62</sup>

In Washington by the end of 1942, Dwyer befriended Mark McClung in the “men’s bar of the Mayflower Hotel.” McClung had a risk-free “luxury job” editing a confidential intelligence bulletin for the Canadian Navy; Dwyer was attached to British Security Coordination. According to McClung, Dwyer became “second” under its chief, William Stephenson, the so-called “Quiet Canadian.” Under the BSC rubric Dwyer headed SIS’s counter-espionage division (Section V) in North America.<sup>63</sup> Dwyer is credited with smoothing relations between British Intelligence and the FBI, as well as their rivals, the fledgling OSS (Office of Strategic Services, precursor to the CIA). From 1942 onwards he was the frequent guest of his RCMP counterparts in Ottawa.<sup>64</sup>

After the war Dwyer stayed on in Washington as MI6’s liaison to American and Canadian security agencies. It was during this transitional period that the thirty-one year old officer flew to Ottawa on September 9th, 1945, with colleague Jean-Paul Evans for the debriefing of Gouzenko, and he remained in the Canadian capital for extended periods

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<sup>60</sup> Florence Fancott, interview by author, 4 April 1996. Ottawa actress Fancott grew up in Bletchley village and she recognized Dwyer when he joined the Ottawa Little Theatre in 1950: “We knew he was part of some hush-hush group.”

<sup>61</sup> NAC, Dwyer personnel file; Chris Dwyer, interview by author. Their Renault’s poor steering nearly cost them their freedom. Dwyer awoke, exhausted, on the deck of a PT boat, pummelled by empty brass shell casings from the anti-aircraft gun.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.; Donald Brittain’s documentary *On Guard For Thee*, Part 2, contains a still photo of Dwyer and his associates in a Panama City bar, ca. 1942. Dwyer jauntily holds a cocktail, and his cane suitcase rests at his feet.

<sup>63</sup> Hyde, *Room 3606*, 19. William Stephenson was dubbed the “quiet Canadian” by playwright and OSS propaganda specialist, Robert Sherwood (also a member of Dorothy Parker’s circle at the Algonquin).

<sup>64</sup> NAC, Dwyer personnel file.

through the arrests, detention and interrogation of the espionage suspects.<sup>65</sup> Dwyer probed Gouzenko with questions through RCMP interviewers, most particularly, according to McClung, to “get [Alan] Nunn May,” a British physicist working on atomic research in Canada and leaking secrets to the Soviets.<sup>66</sup>

According Chapman Pincher, Dwyer’s telegram conveying the substance of Gouzenko’s revelations was received at MI6 headquarters in London by Kim Philby, who promptly relayed it to Moscow.<sup>67</sup> By any measure, it was a devastating act of treachery from someone Dwyer counted as a friend. Unaware of Philby’s duplicity, Dwyer continued his work, impressing his Canadian hosts to the extent that his recruitment into Canadian service three years later by Norman Robertson was considered a coup. When he left Washington, Dwyer gave up what a historian of MI6 calls “the most important field post in the Service.”<sup>68</sup>

As Clerk of the Privy Council, Robertson chaired the Security Panel, an interdepartmental committee formed after the Gouzenko debacle to coordinate the Government’s internal security. Robertson deemed Eric Gaskell, the Privy Council Officer assigned to security matters, too inexperienced and he had angled for Dwyer, a proven counter-intelligence specialist. Dwyer, on the other hand, was mindful of his young family, and by then knew that the British SIS was unsound, even if the unraveling of the Cambridge

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<sup>65</sup> David Stafford, *Camp X* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1986), 260-263. See Stafford's interview with Jean-Paul Evans about his involvement in the case.

<sup>66</sup> Mark McClung, interview by James Littleton, ca. 1981, NAC CAVA 1987-0416.

<sup>67</sup> Chapman Pincher, *Too Secret, Too Long* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1984), 104-110. Pincher reports that Dwyer’s telex in MI6 archives is creased and folded in four as if Philby pocketed it, showed it to his contact, and afterwards replaced it in the file. The habitually suspicious Pincher remarks that Dwyer was “an able officer, about whom there have never been any official doubts.” According to Svetlana Gouzenko, her husband first saw Peter Dwyer in newspaper photos “when he took a public post in Canada.” Released VENONA decrypts include Moscow’s transmission to Philby’s NKVD controller [BOB] on the evening of September 17th, 1945, confirming that Philby’s [STENLI’s] “information does correspond to the facts”; the Soviets feared for the safety of their networks following the defection.

<sup>68</sup> Anthony Cave-Brown, “C”: *The Secret Life of Sir Stewart Menzies* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 696. A less flattering portrait of the British security services in Washington is found in Francis Thompson's *Destination Washington* (London: Robert Hale, 1960). This savagely homophobic account by Thompson, the Embassy's security officer (1948-51), jubilantly reports on organized gay-bashing with his FBI counterparts. Thompson frequented the men's bar of the Mayflower Hotel and must have known Dwyer, but in his jaundiced eye “most members of the security services [were] no more than well-meaning amateurs.”

spies Burgess, MacLean, Philby and Blunt had not yet begun.<sup>69</sup> Most importantly, Dwyer was expert in a field Canada sorely needed to upgrade: the security of atomic research.

Dwyer's guardedly informative Canadian Civil Service application, dated November 29th 1949, cited three Canadians "well acquainted" with his work: George Glazebrook, G.G. Crean, and Edward M. Drake.<sup>70</sup> The latter was a Ukrainian from Saskatchewan who headed the Communications Branch of the National Research Council (CBNRC). He was Dwyer's superior upon arrival in Ottawa. Significantly, Drake's name appears only with a residential address, whereas Glazebrook's workplace was identified as the Department of External Affairs. That Dwyer associated Crean with National Defence College hints at Dwyer's little-known teaching function in Canada.<sup>71</sup> The form required further that he list "three British Subjects" who had known him for "at least three years." In addition to Norman Robertson, Dwyer named Thomas Drew-Brook of Toronto, formerly with British Security Coordination, and Sir Robert Mackenzie Barr, Security Officer for North and Central America in the British Embassy in Washington.

Despite such impeccable bona fides Dwyer's application was *pro forma*. Fred T. Rosser, the NRC's Director of Personnel and Administration was personally responsible for recruiting secret communications personnel, and he wrote on November 30th, 1949, that Dwyer's "appointment has been approved by the President [Chalmers Jack Mackenzie] in conversation with Mr. Glazebrook. It is expected that Mr. Dwyer will be ready to take up his duties about March 1st."<sup>72</sup>

Before leaving Dwyer introduced Kim Philby to Washington. His successor arrived from London in September 1949. Over the next several months the brilliant mole could only watch on helplessly as Dwyer "nailed" Klaus Fuchs, a German-born British atomic

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<sup>69</sup> Peter Dwyer, interviewed by Ben Wicks, Max Ferguson Show, January 1972 (CBC Radio Archives). Dwyer interjects: "Who says I didn't suspect him? We knew it was Kim Philby. Kim Philby crossed one's mind," but then adds, confusingly, "he was tied to so many people and so many things . . . one refused to believe it . . . it was surprising, yes."

<sup>70</sup> NAC, Dwyer Personnel File.

<sup>71</sup> Chris Dwyer, interview with author. In the early 1950s Dwyer taught at a Canadian "spy college" then operating at or near the Kemptville Agricultural College, south of Ottawa. John Starnes, in his "Dissemblers" trilogy, loosely based on his experience as head of the RCMP Security Service, refers both to "McClung" and to an "Agricultural College." See his *Scarab* (Ottawa: Balmuir, 1982), 51, 93.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, F.T. Rosser memo to file, 30 Nov 1949; author's interview Don Wall. NRC Archives, C.J. Mackenzie Diary, 2 November 1949: "Mr. Glazebrook in later in the afternoon to discuss matters in connection with Communications Research--." Unfortunately the entry cuts off at that point.

physicist who had leaked Manhattan Project secrets to the Soviets. Using decrypted Soviet communications as a cross-reference, Dwyer turned up Fuchs name on a list of train reservations. In 1972, Dwyer explained to cartoonist Ben Wicks (avoiding any mention of the intercepts) that Fuchs once made an error by changing his reservation from a bunk to an apartment, leaving a trace that years later revealed him to have been in the wrong place at the right time.<sup>73</sup> The exposure of Fuchs's long run as a Soviet agent tarnished British intelligence services, but it boosted Dwyer's reputation as he travelled to Ottawa with his family in March, 1950.<sup>74</sup>

### **Hurdman Bridge**

Dwyer formally joined the Canadian public service on April 21st, 1950, reporting to the Privy Council Office in the late afternoon of April 26th to swear the Oath of Office and the Oath of Secrecy and to pose for his security pass photo.<sup>75</sup> Nobody understood better than he the gravity of these oaths and the consequences of breaching them. They account for his destruction of personal papers many years later:

I do solemnly and sincerely swear that I will faithfully and honestly fulfill the duties which devolve upon me and that I will not without due authority on that behalf disclose or make known any matter or thing which comes to my knowledge by reason of my employment. So help me God.<sup>76</sup>

A further declaration recorded his understanding "that these provisions apply not only during the period of employment but also after employment . . . has ceased." He further undertook, "on leaving the Department, to surrender any sketch, plan, model, article, note or document acquired by me in the course of my official duties."

Nominally "research officer," Dwyer in fact served in a senior capacity at the Government's top secret signals intelligence establishment. The CBNRC was born when

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<sup>73</sup> CBC Radio Archives, Max Ferguson Show, 3 January 1972, pre-recorded phone interview with Peter Dwyer; Robert Chadwell Williams, *Klaus Fuchs, Atom Spy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 116-20.

<sup>74</sup> NRC Archives, C.J. Mackenzie Diary, 6 February 1950. When the Fuchs story broke, NRC President C.J. Mackenzie was grilled on the security of Canadian atomic research.

<sup>75</sup> Dwyer Personnel File, Rosser to Dwyer 21 April 1950, marginal note. The stamp-sized negative of Dwyer's security photograph fell loose from inside the binding of his Government personnel file when I unfastened the metal clasps. Normally, such photos are removed during file screening.

<sup>76</sup> RG 37, Vol , 48, "Privy Council Office" file, July 1947, Security Booklet issued by Arnold Heeney, Chairman of the Security Panel.

Gouzenko's timely disclosures saved Herbert Norman's wartime Examination Unit from an order to stand down.<sup>77</sup> Instead, the Unit was placed on permanent peacetime footing under the cover of the NRC. Fred Rosser recorded on Dwyer's personnel file that "[t]he members of the Selection Sub-Committee are agreed that Mr. Dwyer is admirably qualified to head one of the main sections of the Branch." Dwyer's exact function was not specified, but Rosser liked to describe the NRC's electronic eavesdroppers simply as conducting "non-scientific research in the field of communications."<sup>78</sup>

Initially, Drake's unit was nestled behind the De la Salle Academy, the auditorium on Sussex Drive used by the fledgling Canadian Repertory Theatre. One electronic eavesdropper recalls mingling from time to time during breaks with actors such as

Christopher Plummer and Amelia Hall, who had no inkling of their

neighbours' secret work.<sup>79</sup> By the time Dwyer arrived in March 1950 the Communications Branch had taken up larger premises on the southeast perimeter of the city.

Photographs of CBNRC's "Nunnery," as it was called, are not available in official archives. The Noviciate of the *Soeurs de la charité* was their idyllic sanctuary for decades before the Department of National Defense commandeered it in 1941 to serve as the Rideau



Fig. 59. Peter Dwyer, Security pass photo, April 26th, 1950. (NAC PA 192730.)

<sup>77</sup> See John Bryden, *Best Kept Secret*, and Wesley Wark, "Cryptographic Innocence: The Origins of Signals Intelligence in Canada in the Second World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 22:4 (October 1987): 639-665.

<sup>78</sup> Don Wall, interview by author. Rosser used this description when he recruited Wall, then an M.A. candidate at the University of Saskatchewan, in June 1950.

<sup>79</sup> Jaffrey Wilkins, interview by author, 13 May 1998.

Military Hospital. Reluctantly, the Sisters agreed to relocate their novices to the Mother House in Ottawa's Lower Town.<sup>80</sup>

The Noviciate outlasted its usefulness as a religious institution, worn down by its service as a hospital. Yet the building's situation in a sequestered field overlooking the embassy district of Sandy Hill made it an ideal site for Col. Drake's Communications Branch. In August 1948, after Drake had called to complain "about his

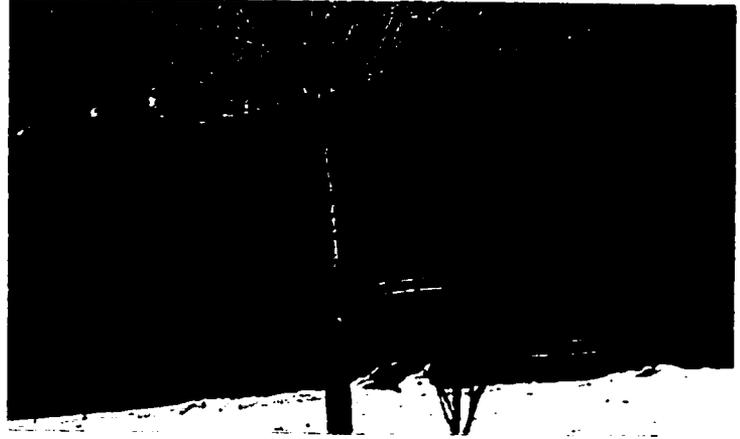


Fig. 60. Noviciate Hurdman Bridge, 1922 (*Archives, Soeurs de la charité d'Ottawa.*)

cramped office space," C.J. Mackenzie wrote in his diary "I think we may be able to get the Rideau Military Hospital for him."<sup>81</sup> If it is true that nursing sisters still occupied the Noviciate's lower levels when radio interception equipment was installed behind the upper windows, then the military hospital harboured an intercept site for some period of time prior to late 1948 or early 1949 when the Branch's personnel moved in.<sup>82</sup>

Dwyer was welcomed to the Branch by Mary Oliver, recently returned to her administrative post after a year as CBNRC's liaison with the British Government's Code and Cipher School.<sup>83</sup> C.J. Mackenzie's diary allows that during her absence an initiative

<sup>80</sup> Soeur Marie-Gilbert, interview by author, 26 March 1996. She was a novice at Hurdman Bridge when the Military took it over in 1941, and recalls the novices' loss of liberty moving from the open countryside to the stricter environs of the Mother House; DND, RMH 3-6-1-A, 13 January 1941. Lt. Col. H. Buck wrote in English to the Mother Superior on January 13th, 1941, appreciating the sisters' "sacrifice of such serene surroundings," adding thoughtlessly that their "sacrifice was exceptionally small when compared to that of many other communities."

<sup>81</sup> C.J. Mackenzie Diary, 25 August 1948.

<sup>82</sup> DND correspondence file, *Soeurs de la charité*, Ottawa. One small matter of record is the nuns' financial arrangement with regards to their electronically-alert tenants (whose previous quarters by coincidence were adjacent to the Mother House). When Peter Dwyer arrived on the scene in 1950 they collected a quarterly rent of five thousand dollars; NAC RG 2, vol. 2654. Cabinet decision 12 May 1954. By comparison, in 1951 the RCMP paid \$370,000 per year to rent the almost adjacent monastery headquarters from the Archdiocese of Ottawa; in 1954 the cabinet approved its outright purchase for \$5,250,000.

<sup>83</sup> C.J. Mackenzie Diary, 17 January 1949: "Mrs. Oliver from the Communications

was taken to create a new section in the Branch, apparently devoted to counter-intelligence, and to be equipped with the latest technology. He made reference neither to this section nor to Peter Dwyer after visiting the “Nunnery” for the first time on April 13th, 1950, but it is unlikely Mackenzie overlooked the opportunity to meet a new employee of such star status in the secret world.

When Dwyer arrived Col. Drake was embroiled in a struggle with the Joint Intelligence Committee, and he lobbied Mackenzie at lunch that day not to concede the NRC’s authority over the Branch. Drake kept Mackenzie onside by dropping into his office from time to time with tantalizing tidbits of news,



Fig. 61. CBNRC, Hurdman Bridge, aerial view, 1952. (NAPL 12504-31A.)

and he was supported in this particular interdepartmental scuffle by External Affairs’ G.G. Crean. Knowing that Crean was “not anxious” that the CBNRC be drawn into the direct purview of the Defence Department, Mackenzie wrote with satisfaction: “We are neutral.”

The NRC deserves more vibrant accounts of this period than those provided by former Chief Censor, Wilfred Eggleston; the reasons he was selected by Mackenzie to write them are obvious.<sup>84</sup> The NRC’s creativity in scientific research and its quasi-independence

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Section came in to see me. She is leaving for England where she will spend a year as liaison officer with the opposite unit in England. She . . . will become technically efficient as well as proficient on the administrative side”; 28 February 1950: “Mrs. Oliver in at noon to give me a report on her work in England in her very secret field. Apparently the cooperation between our two countries is growing better every day and more confidence is being shown in our group.”

<sup>84</sup> Eggleston's *Scientists At War* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1950), *Canada's Nuclear Story* (London: Harrap, 1966), and *Research in Canada: the National Research Council, 1961-66* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1978) breathe not a word about the NRC's Communications Branch. On the other hand, a beguiling dottiness in Mackenzie's diary records the peculiarity of clandestine electromagnetics during the Cold War: sociable visits from the personal courier of top-secret electronic gadgets sent to Col. Drake from England; an associate's "fantastic theory about all life being electricity" that brought him personal philosophical equilibrium; and a pesky scientist who accosted the NRC chief with "another one of his inventions." Mackenzie fumed: "he is always on something that is impracticable . . . [T]his time he wishes to set up a central broadcasting facility connected with telephones so that anyone can dial in and get any program on the Continent."

from government made it an obvious administrative model for any new arts and humanities council. Invited to participate in the discussions of the Massey-Lévesque Commission in 1949, C.J. Mackenzie professed disinterest, but he hosted the commissioners to a sherry party in the Council Room. Mackenzie knew and liked Grierson, occupant of an adjacent office during the war. When Arthur Irwin, the new Film Commissioner, dropped by after his appointment in 1950, the NRC Chief judged him "very sound and an attractive person who should get on well."<sup>85</sup>

Dwyer worked for almost two years under the rubric of the NRC, although he rarely had reason to visit its main headquarters. The focus during those years was on the Chalk River atomic facility, Canada's high-stakes gamble in nuclear technology. Mackenzie visited the Chalk River nuclear research station frequently, and he met regularly with Crean, Glazebrook and Drake to discuss nuclear security. As Dwyer put it in *Hoodman-Blind*: "A certain friendly rivalry has developed, they are trying to ruin our universe; we are trying to ruin theirs. Of course," he continued:

we could probably tamper with its atomic structure, we might even try that in a couple of hundred years or so. However, at the moment we are concentrating on the destruction of that small part of its spiritual structure which has so far become apparent to the mind of man. The attack is more subtle, more satisfying. Certainly more civilized.<sup>86</sup>

### "Get thee to a nunn'ry"

On the fourth level of CBNRC's "Nunnery" the radio sets were still mounted in walnut cabinets. The spire of Parliament was clearly visible, rising above the embassy district across the river.<sup>87</sup> Just beyond the limits of the Noviciate's grounds, Hurdman Bridge connected Ottawa East to the countryside lying on the east bank of the Rideau River. During the early 1950s the Hurdman Bridge facility was the nerve centre of Canada's Cold War, allied with the larger American and British SIGINT establishments. The Branch's administrative sections occupied the Nunnery's lower levels, preparing briefs to be transported twice daily by armed courier across the bridge and downtown to the Privy Council Office in the East Block of the Parliament.

Dwyer's *Hoodman-Blind* was written during his two year stay at the Nunnery and,

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<sup>85</sup> C.J. Mackenzie Diary, 14 February 1950.

<sup>86</sup> Peter Dwyer, *Hoodman Blind*.

<sup>87</sup> Chris Dwyer, interview by author. Chris Dwyer recalls visiting the Nunnery, climbing up to the top floor and seeing the electronics mounted in wooden cabinets. His father once brought home an early Ampex tape recorder to record music.



Fig. 62. Soeur Joseph-André at Noviciate entrance, ca. 1927. (*Archives, Soeurs de la charité, Ottawa.*)

that has descended over Elsinore. "Hoodman-Blind" thus evokes the thick atmosphere of secrecy that mires Hamlet in its truth-resistant encumbrance.

"Hoodman-blind" was also an apt metaphor for signals intelligence, as Dwyer knew from his wartime training at Bletchley Park and now from his work at the CBNRC's "Nunnery." This was true especially during the late 1940s and early 1950s when accurate radio direction finding remained a serious limitation. The lines that follow on in Shakespeare's "hoodman-blind" stanza reinforce Dwyer's oblique analogy to electronic surveillance:

Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,  
Or but a sickly part of one true sense  
Could not so mope.<sup>89</sup>

Dwyer's allusion here is double. The practice of signals intelligence itself suffered

<sup>88</sup> NAC MG 28 I 30, Ottawa Little Theatre, vol. 10, 1952-53 Annual Competition, file "Peter Dwyer, *Hoodman-Blind*."

<sup>89</sup> David Bevington, ed., *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, Third Edition (Glenview: Ill.: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1980), 1102.

given that official records remain closed, it takes on special significance.<sup>88</sup> He set the action "on the outskirts of Paris on a summer's eve, 1788," with a dramatis personae consisting of just two characters: Adelaide, Comtesse D'Alembert, and Lupus, an antique dealer. Its epigraph--"what devil was't that thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?"--is drawn from *Hamlet*, Dwyer's favourite Shakespearean play. In Act III scene iv the Danish Prince begs his mother to see how the "devil," his uncle, has cheated her at "hoodman-blind" (blind-man's buff); her good faith has blinded her to the murderous truth of his uncle's succession. He challenges her to break the grip of cultural secrecy, assaults her willed forgetfulness, and rails against the amnesia

from imperfect sensory faculties, but moreover, the very existence of these electronically sensory organs of the state depended, paradoxically, on the dulling of human senses. Where the Official Secrets Act reminded security workers to have “ears without feeling,” another reflex jogged the public to blank out antennae, secret installations and radio-related research.

*Hamlet* was the focal point in Dwyer’s lifelong passion for Shakespeare, according to Naim Kattan, Dwyer’s literature officer at the Canada Council. He recalls a car breakdown in the late 1960s en route to a conference in Muskoka when, to his delight, as rain ran down the windows, Dwyer recited the play from memory, inflecting his voice to play each role in a virtuoso solo performance.<sup>90</sup> To what extent did this fascination with *Hamlet*, par excellence the Shakespearean discourse on intelligence and national security, reflect Dwyer’s affinity for a man detained from fulfilling his artistic promise by dark matters of state? Kattan laughed and changed the subject: “The Canada Council was very small then . . . he was not at all that way.”<sup>91</sup>

Like Shakespeare, Dwyer wrote *Hoodman-Blind* in the context of a state capital riddled with intrigue. Dwyer’s memory brimmed with its secrets, just as Hamlet, too, is burdened by the knowledge of what amounts to an official secret, namely that his uncle poisoned his father in order to succeed to the throne. Hamlet’s secret is contained within a social context of cultural secrecy that is by no means receptive to such a revelation. The rot of Denmark lies not just within the walls of Elsinore but in the minds and language of its populace, rightly insecure about their country’s fate. Even stout-hearted sentry Marcellus, early witness to the apparition of Hamlet’s father, warns ruefully of “ears fortified against our story.”

Like Hamlet, Peter Dwyer was the carrier of great secrets against which ears were fortified. Even if he broke sworn oaths and violated the unwritten code of gentlemanly secrecy, to publicize his knowledge of Canada’s secret immigration cases, its practice of signals intelligence, its security and intelligence capabilities and personalities, or the true story of Gouzenko’s defection, his words would be absorbed by cultural secrecy. In fact, his relationship with secrecy was too advanced for him to contemplate breaching it, at least, directly. Like Hamlet, he dealt with his secret burden through wordplay. As readers already

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<sup>90</sup> Naim Kattan, “Décès de Peter Dwyer,” *Le Devoir*, 3 January 1973: “Par je ne sais quel hasard, j’ai fait allusion à Shakespeare. Je découvris alors une des grandes passions de Peter Dwyer. Il s’est mis à reciter ‘Hamlet’, avec des changements de ton, des nuances et surtout un amour pour le texte qui nous fit regretter l’arrivée de l’autre voiture.” Kattan added: “Il n’avait pas une conception idéologique ou politique de ce rôle.” Kattan told Elizabeth Gray on CBC Radio’s *Anthology*, 17 February 1973, that Dwyer had a “personal relationship with *Hamlet* and with Shakespeare.”

<sup>91</sup> Naim Kattan, interview by author.

may have noticed, his quoting “Hoodman-Blind” alliterated racyly on the secret location of the Communications Branch at “Hurdman Bridge.” This was not an inconsequential secret; the government successfully concealed the existence and location of the CBNRC from Canadians for decades.<sup>92</sup>

The ghostly patriarch swears Hamlet and his frightened companions to secrecy. He impresses on Hamlet that he must *remember* the secret. Famously, Hamlet’s vacillating “purpose is but the slave to memory.” And yet there is something implausible about Hamlet lacking “will” to exact revenge on his uncle. Rather, his father’s anguished spirit knows that Hamlet cannot successfully reveal this most potent of all state secrets in Denmark’s present culture of secrecy. With “the people muddled: unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,” and honest men counted “but one in ten thousand,” how can Hamlet act before the rationale for his action is expressible in the discourse of his fellow Danes? Only through the play within the play can Hamlet provisionally articulate his official secret, and so flouresce the guilty conscience of the king, without invoking outright censorship.

I questioned Don Wall, Peter Dwyer’s close friend and colleague, and actor of small parts at the Ottawa Little Theatre in 1952-53, about *Hoodman-Blind*. He whistled and shook his head, saying “We couldn’t figure out what he was up to with that one.” In Janus’s two-faced play, the players, like those in *Hamlet*, uttered certain guarded truths regarding which Dwyer himself was sworn to secrecy.

### *Hoodman-Blind*

Ottawa’s lack of a proper theatre troubled Mayor Charlotte Whitton. To little avail she lobbied her reluctant federal counterparts to invest in a substantial national theatre complex containing 4800 seats in two auditoria, on an eight-acre site at Lansdowne Park.<sup>93</sup> Another decade of discussion intervened before the impending Centennial celebrations in 1967 and the personal impetus of G. Hamilton Southam brought about the construction of the National Arts Centre. It was Whitton’s initiative that prompted Peter Dwyer to draft

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<sup>92</sup> NRC, C.J. Mackenzie Diary, 9 February 1949. “[A] great flap today about a BUP reporter who is making enquiries re communications work. I do not think he is after Drake’s show we will have to be careful.” In 1974, CSE Director Kevin O’Neill was filmed by a CBC *Fifth Estate* crew, woodenly exiting the CSE’s Tilley Building and driving off in his car. Stretching readers’ credulity, Jeff Carruthers, “Few in Ottawa know of secret NRC group,” *Globe and Mail*, 11 January 1974, reported that the CSE had been so secret that its existence surprised even Prime Minister Trudeau when he learned of the broadcast.

<sup>93</sup> RG 2, Acc. #1990-91/154, box 55, file N-30, “National Theatre - Official.”

what likely is the first sketch for what became Canada's premiere performing arts centre. Dwyer's knowledge of theatre was unique in the Privy Council Office, as was his active role in the Ottawa arts community where he promoted children's concerts, wrote program notes for the Philharmonic, and sat on the Board of the Little Theatre.

His paper on the proposed national theatre was taken by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Jack Pickersgill, to his meeting with Whitton to discuss her proposal.<sup>94</sup> "Ideally," wrote Dwyer:

a new auditorium in Ottawa should provide once and for all and in one attractive place the present make-do facilities which are scattered about the city. That is to say it should provide accommodation for meetings up to convention size, for plays, opera and ballet, and for concerts.

A generous lobby was essential because "one of the real pleasures of theatre and concert going is the meeting of friends." An auditorium in Malmö, Sweden, inspired his sketch of a 1600-seat hall suitable for opera, ballet and concerts, with a movable partition that reduced it to an intimate 800-seat theatre. If less magnificent than Whitton's scheme, his was more substantial than anything his superior Robert Bryce had in mind. At most, thought Bryce, a modest hall attached to the planned new National Gallery would suffice. Dwyer warned Bryce that "[a]nything new which might be built must never repeat the mistakes made in the small stages of the Glebe and Tech [high school] auditoriums. The stage must be bigger than the average theatre goer ever suspects."<sup>95</sup>

On the evening of November 18th, 1953, Dwyer was in the cramped backstage of the Ottawa Little Theatre on King Edward Avenue, in what was once the Eastern Methodist Church. Nervous excitement spread through the dressing rooms as word arrived that Governor General and his entourage had taken their seats. Dwyer and director Julia Murphy offered last minute encouragement to their formidable Countess, Florence Fancott, and to Lupus, Donald Shepherd, who by day was a Carleton University professor.<sup>96</sup>

Founded in 1913, the Ottawa Drama League was incorporated in 1952 as the Ottawa Little Theatre, a voluntary organization that was (and remains) a true theatre club, in the sense that such amateur clubs once existed across Canada before the Massey Report

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., Peter Dwyer to Robert Bryce, 8 September 1954.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. Although not located at Lansdowne Park, the National Arts Centre is much closer to Whitton's original specifications than either Bryce's or Dwyer's. It occupies almost exactly the eight-acre area foreseen in her proposal. It has three auditoria, totaling more 3650 seats, and its Opera stage is one of the largest in North America. See *The National Arts Centre: A Retrospective* (Ottawa: National Arts Centre: 1994).

<sup>96</sup> Florence Fancott, interview by author, 4 April 1996.

recommended the development of professional regional theatres.<sup>97</sup> The national playwriting began in 1939, attracting high-profile adjudicators and promising writers of the calibre of Robertson Davies. As a result, it would be a mistake to imagine the audience waiting to see *Hoodman-Blind* and the other winning plays as a gathering of strangers. Rather they formed a tightly-knit social network whose canon of good taste was embodied in their grand patron, Vincent Massey, the first Canadian-born Governor General, who attended that evening to present the playwriting awards.

...

When the main traveller glides open, the opening moments of the play will perform Dwyer's customary communicative maneuver, drawing the audience into the Countess's confidence. With this charming invitation into a magic circle the spectator will feel the embrace of cultural secrecy. Once inside, Adelaide seems to forget about her audience, and indeed *they* forget they are inside. Wizardry requires above all the drawing of such magic circles, and this was Peter Dwyer's charming pattern, both in his security and cultural work.

With discretion assured, the Countess discloses an illicit liaison earlier in the afternoon with Pierre, the Marquis de Longueville:

Well, yes, perhaps it was a little unwise. But you can have no idea what has happened. We were standing in front of the mirror there . . . (pausing) Perhaps you'd better go and look at the mirror behind the screen . . . Sh! For heaven's sake don't scream like that or you'll bring the servants in! No, you idiot, of course it isn't painted on. It's a reflection which has simply remained permanently on the glass . . . just stuck there! Naturally, I look as if I were enjoying myself. I was, at the time--and so was Pierre, I assume.

She doubts it possible that help can arrive before her husband returns in just half an hour, but she has sent for Lupus, vendor of the offending mirror. "Frightened?" she muses, "No, I don't think I am frightened of Lupus." Even as she speaks a "rather brilliant flicker of summer lightning" ushers in the antique dealer, "a man of middle age, white-faced and rather puffy."

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<sup>97</sup> Iris Winston, *Staging a Legend: a History of the Ottawa Little Theatre* (Carp., Ont.: Creative Bound, 1997). Fire destroyed the church in 1970; in 1972 a fully-equipped purpose-designed theatre, with a fly-tower and modern stage systems, took its place.



Fig. 63. Florence Fancott as Adelaide in *Hoodman-Blind*, Ottawa Little Theatre, November 1953. Photo: Van. (F. Fancott.) The main curtain sweeps open to reveal Adelaide, Comtesse d’Alembert, in her boudoir. An ornate screen conceals a large mirror on the wall. Sensing intrusion, she runs her hand along the proscenium line, searching for the fourth wall, gasping at its complete disappearance. “Really,” she says, acknowledging the public’s gaze, “this is quite intolerable.” She scolds the audience for intruding “on my privacy without so much as a by-your-leave.” But clearly she is agitated about something else, and elects “to imagine that all of you are just one person and invite you in so that I can talk to you in absolute confidence. I know I can rely on your discretion.”

The Countess does not “relish anticipation which oversteps the limit of what is possible,” but heavy-lidded Lupus, his mouth full and red, protests that he just happened to be passing by her house. He examines the screen placed before the mirror, chiding her for not consulting him before she bought it:

At the moment it rather obscures the Venetian mirror you had from me. Now there is a rarity . . . Murano craftsmen, of course. However, like all quattrocento mirrors the quality of the glass leaves something to be desired, madame . . . (casually) or not?

Lupus anticipates her wish to return the mirror to him immediately, even letting him keep the money she paid, but: “[t]his remarkable generosity is offered provided I remove the mirror now?” he pauses, “before your husband returns?”

Here Dwyer’s stage directions explain that the Countess’s “whole attitude to Lupus changes.” She invites him to sit and offers him brandy: “You and I must have a long, pleasant talk.” She observes that he seems “remarkably well-informed about an intimate and unusual occurrence which took place in this room not more than one hour ago.” Now expansive, Lupus tells her: “I make it my business to be well-informed, my dear countess,” adding that “the essential of this particular indiscretion is that while the substance of it has passed, the shadow--shall we say?--remains.” He enjoys the closing trap, imagining that



Fig. 64. Florence Fancott and Donald Shepherd in *Hoodman-Blind*, 1952. Photo: Van. (F. Fancott.)

“in these days of ‘lettres de cachet’--of scandal and moral rectitude, political annihilation . . . you would miss these rather charming surroundings, the luxury, the comfort.”

The glass is a surveillance technology that Lupus boasts “is entirely new, something I invented myself as a matter of fact,” but what Dwyer seeks to demonstrate is that such devices can have no purchase on reality except in relation to ideological belief.<sup>98</sup> Lupus will remove the offending image only on the condition that Adelaide sign a document consigning her immortal soul to him. “You may recall that Faust paid it. A mere nothing, of course.” But Adelaide is unimpressed: “Why yes. I believe that tedious Marlowe wrote about it . . . I never could tolerate the Elizabethans. So many scenes, so many people and all that shouting. Very untidy, really.”

With this reference to the playwright/spy Marlowe Dwyer hints that there is more to the Countess than Lupus imagines. He faints when she holds up a crucifix, but neither can she look at it herself. When Lupus lights the candles with wizardly prestidigitation, she scoffs, telling him to save such trickery for the servants. Preparing to sign the agreement, she shows complete disinterest in its contents: “I never read papers before I sign them, they always commit one to something tiresome which of course one has no intention of carrying out.”

Lupus’s “brief instruction in moral principles” ensures that she knows which ones she is breaking by signing the contract: “At the moment we are working with the ten commandments as our standard. Of course there have been other standards.” The essential “is that they should be believed and disregarded in action.”

Adelaide receives his tutelage demurely, like a schoolgirl:

ADELAIDE: The last lessons I had were from a nun.

LUPUS: Bah! The time I’ve wasted with nuns . . . .

ADELAIDE: I suppose this is rather like an extension course. The nun’s used to teach us about embroidery and men.

LUPUS: All about men?

ADELAIDE: No, all about embroidery.

<sup>98</sup> Dwyer perhaps knew Tennyson’s “In Memoriam”: “Again our ancient games had place / The mimic picture’s breathing grace / And dance and song and hoodman-blind.”

Exasperated, he exhorts her to understand that “the spiritual values which are established in this universe (he gestures to the windows) were devised by a group of which I am not a member . . . I will call this particular group the Good.” His group, “The Evil,” resides in “another part of the space-time continuum . . . an entirely separate universe [created] on very different physical and moral principles, because the entire structure was planned down to the smallest detail.” “All I ask,” he pleads, “is that you believe what you are doing is wrong—and yet do it, believing it to be wrong.”

With only moments remaining before the arrival of her husband, Adelaide’s mood has changed. She hears nightingales and looks out at the cypress trees, “black flames burning darkness.” She turns to Lupus, “No, no, I shall not sign your little paper.”

LUPUS: But surely you understand? Believe me, madame, it would be better.

ADELAIDE: But I do not believe you, Lupus. I do not believe, Lupus. And so I cannot sign your little paper to any purpose. I only know, Lupus. I know all the things that please me. The nightingales in my garden, the tall cypress and the stars. But I believe in nothing.

Her soliloquy continues for several minutes, naming delights of the five senses, reiterating six times, “I believe in nothing.” She knows “the instant pleasure of bright morning . . . the blessing of firelight uttered over a lover . . . the oboe of the wind in a courtyard, and the sound of a lute which is faint in an inner room,” she revels in the “murmur of voices before a high old evening, and the pulse of music temperately timed,” and “the half delight of a lover’s hand along the thigh, lingeringly withdrawn.” Yet, she believes in nothing:

I know the dark divisions of the rose, the antique scent of marjoram, sage and thyme; the subtle distillation of perfume meticulous in vials, and the bright blazon of all summer flowers. I believe in nothing. I sail in the quinquereme of my senses, and I believe in nothing. (Triumphantly) Non credo, Lupus, non credo.

The antique dealer reels backwards, astonished. Adelaide is “wicked beyond thought . . . you have consigned belief to a limbo where you belong yourself . . . We must look at you and pass.” The image in the mirror vanishes: “nothing evil can withstand the onslaught of a mind that does not believe in evil,” and Lupus reflects on his failure. “My reputation will suffer. My prospects for the future will be damaged. The word will go around the lesser fiends: Lupus has lost his cunning . . . I shall be ruined.” He eyes her closely. “The only thing that could have defeated my purposes . . . One might almost think that you yourself were . . . oh, but that’s impossible.”

The Count’s carriage is heard, but Lupus lingers, grumbling at the nightingale’s song—“One of my opponents’ more successful efforts,” and he exits, moaning, “how the

Archangel will laugh." The Countess uses the same wizard-like gesture that she could not have seen him make earlier to douse the candles, and the main curtain travels closed, leaving her at the window, in silhouette, uttering "a strange harsh laugh."

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At the evening's close, Vincent Massey presented the awards to the winning authors. Yet Dwyer's appearance on the stage that night did not mark a beginning but rather the end of a writing process begun in his student days. *Hoodman-Blind* proceeded to the Eastern Ontario Drama Festival, and in 1959 the Ottawa Little Theatre gave it a new production updated to an Art Deco setting. Yet Dwyer submitted no further scripts and, as far as can be seen, he ceased writing plays altogether. In the fall of 1954, two of his poems were published in *Saturday Night*, and as "Janus" he continued to write about television in the *Ottawa Citizen*. His most lasting literary legacy would be his contributions to the Canada Council's *Annual Reports* from 1958 to 1971.<sup>99</sup>

So what are the messages of this coded artifact handed by Peter Dwyer from behind his veil of secrecy? In terms of "traffic analysis" obviously it reiterated the cultural norms prevailing during initial period when the arts in Canada were governmentalized.<sup>100</sup> As a play of manners "steeped in the European tradition" it won the praise of Adjudicator John Hoare for not having "anything to do with Canadian life," for eschewing realism and being "beautifully stylized." Invoking the strategy that Pierre Bourdieu calls "aesthetic distancing," Hoare judged that Dwyer had "raised the whole standard of the competition to the plane of imagination, schooled to form and style."<sup>101</sup>

But there is more encoded here. It is a case of getting past this controlling accent that, as Bourdieu shows, has power, in and of itself, to discourage any intention to discern what something is 'in reality'. One message encoded in the play, with its hints at secrecy, surveillance, blackmail, political ideologies, and supernatural beings, was its call to discretion, conveying by means of an accent and a wink: "hush hush." Moreover, a jarring quality in Adelaide's passionate renunciation of 'belief' in favour of the "quinquereme" of her senses (five masts, like the CBNRC antenna arrays, except each intercepts a different

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<sup>99</sup> Peter Dwyer, "Fall," *Saturday Night*, 11 December 1954 and "Loon," 13 November 1954; Canada Council, *Annual Reports*, 1958-59 to 1970-71.

<sup>100</sup> See Tippet. *Making Culture*, 9: "They were the preservers and keepers of the established and the familiar, and very much content to be so."

<sup>101</sup> NAC MG 28 I 30, Ottawa Little Theatre, vol. 10, file "1952-53 Annual Competition," Adjudicator's notes; Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 34-35.

register of sense impressions) signals the playwright's rejection of "belief" in favour of primordial pleasures. Ambiguity has crept into Dwyer's scene of utterance, for it is uncertain if he addressed his audience from inside or outside the Cold War belief system. This raised practical difficulties for Florence Fancott when she delivered the lengthy and slightly clumsy "*non credo*" speech, for Dwyer's autobiographical voice threatened to overwhelm his fictional characterization of the Countess.

The point is made even more clearly in a passage cut from the script during rehearsals. What Dwyer intended to be Lupus's final speech presented actor Donald Shephard with a similarly difficult key change. At no other time does the antique dealer betray the existence of an introspective voice that speaks in Middle English cadences. Standing on the threshold of the apartment, Lupus was to say, in an aside:

Now like a hawk my heart, not poised at pitch, sits hooded at wrist; and the agile falcons of the blood are tassle-gentle to my will. (Gesturing towards the mirror)  
There, my true fletcher, there was my quarrel over the thumb-rest -- into the windless precincts of summer, fallen to the gold of my years. Here at the turn of the stairs the laughter is faint from the anterooms, where bishops and lamplighters, *pieds-en-l'air*, are playing at Hoodman-Blind.

Dwyer excised this passage even though it contained the sole reference to the play's title. This "third" voice from the threshold intruded too obviously into the fictional diegetic. The mirror, a wizardly surveillance technology used for entrapment and blackmail, the "lamplighters" (a trade term for SIS technicians), Gouzenko suspect, Matt "Nightingale," were *double entendres* calculated to appeal to intelligence insiders, following previous references to Marlowe and the embroidering of "nuns." Don Wall recalls that he and Dwyer, on entering the CBNRC's Nunnery would pause on the threshold at the turn of the stairs and listen to a strange acoustical reverberation in the central stairwell.<sup>102</sup> Within the anterooms "bishops" and "lamplighters" indeed played at an electronic version of hoodman-blind. And if the phrase *pieds en l'air* protrudes, perhaps it is because the image is not one of dancing (*jambes en l'air*) but rather of putting one's feet up, or lying on the floor with feet in the air, suggesting yet another metaphor for the radio antennae feeding signals to the CBNRC listeners.

In Lupus's final speech, the allegory culminated in what sounds like the author's brooding on his own condition. When Dwyer wrote these lines in 1952, during his time at the Nunnery, his career had reached a threshold. After a two-year waiting period he was poised to take responsibility for coordinating the Canadian government's internal security. On the night of *Hoodman-Blind's* premiere in November 1953 he was eighteen months into

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<sup>102</sup> Don Wall, interview by author.

the new job. Even as the play subtly helped to normalize the culture of secrecy, it also sent back to its author a fresh reminder of his own ambiguous status, perilously hemmed in by his own wizardry.

### **Culture and Security**

Dwyer had taken up his PCO position in March 1952 during a period fraught with Cold War paranoia. It was remarkable that someone not yet a Canadian citizen could occupy such a sensitive post, and indeed, Norman Robertson obtained special approval from Prime Minister St. Laurent to waive the citizenship requirement in Dwyer's case.<sup>103</sup> Dwyer alluded to the promotion from Hurdman Bridge to the Parliament's East Block in *Hoodman-Blind* when Lupus boasts: "I handle all the cases of minor sensuality—a sort of third secretary of our mission here." He goes on:

Of course it does call for a certain delicacy of touch, and I flatter myself that I've done rather well since I was first posted . . . I have great hopes of being moved up to the blasphemy desk as soon as it falls vacant.

The line likely drew a laugh, but of all people Norman Robertson was best positioned to appreciate it. Having stationed Dwyer at the "blasphemy desk" he now had a capable Secretary for the Security Panel, a civilian of sufficient heft to deal with their military counterparts, someone well able to head various security sub-committees, and to serve as instructor in counter-espionage techniques. In these duties Dwyer redefined and expanded the position of his predecessor Eric Gaskell (also an author, incidentally, and former Secretary of the Canadian Authors' Association) who Robertson assigned to censorship planning on a full-time basis.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> NAC RG 2, vol. 232, file s-100-1, N.A. Robertson to L. St. Laurent, 29 January 1952. Dwyer was granted Canadian citizenship in 1955. Dwyer's initial "top secret" memo to Robertson, 4 March 1952, indicated his surprise at the Security Panel's ignorance of counterintelligence, and its preoccupation with "trivial matters of physical security." Reading the minutes and documents Dwyer concluded: "it has not so far concerned itself with what seems to me the heart of the matter — the operations and the targets of foreign intelligence services within Canada . . . our main purpose must be to deny intelligence to the agents of foreign powers . . . We seem to have been throwing up earthworks without very much consideration of the firepower of the real enemy." He urged upgraded measures, including further penetration of front organizations and the "acquisition of defectors."

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* Norman Robertson to Deputy Ministers and heads of federal agencies, 22 April 1952. Robertson sent Gaskell around the circuit of senior officials introducing Dwyer. For Gaskell's CAA activities see Lyn Harrington, *Syllables of Recorded Time: The Story of the Canadian Authors Association, 1921-81* (Toronto: Simon and Pierre, 1981), 193-94.

In fact, Dwyer brought his own distinctive approach to a whole range of cultural and security matters. In both spheres his *modus operandi* had four notable features that amount to what might be called "intimate sensing," a cultural corollary to the machinic remote-sensing technologies employed in signals intelligence. First, there was open-mindedness. Dwyer's natural curiosity made him a collector of diverse information. Second, was his capacity to focus. Not a dilettante, he eliminated non-essential aspects of any problem. Third was indoctrination, confiding information selectively to secure loyalty and discretion. Finally, he installed multiple and highly specific feedback mechanisms in order to obtain high-grade information from narrowly-defined targets.

He employed this approach with his departmental security officers in a course given at the Rockliffe RCMP barracks in 1952. These no mere security guards but senior officials, often with military service backgrounds, appointed confidentially to serve as security liaisons to the RCMP and the Security Panel. To pique their curiosity, Dwyer suggested they read Noël Coward's story "The Wooden Madonna" to understand how ordinariness itself ought to be regarded with suspicion. He taught them to notice:

the secretary who for no apparent reason stays after office hours, the filing clerk who occupies himself for an unreasonable length of time at one particular cabinet, the office messenger who takes too long to carry papers from one room to another, the charwoman who consistently stays behind in a room when others have moved on.<sup>105</sup>

He advised them that "the presence in a file of documents which have been folded for no apparent reason should always be a cause for suspicion." (Alas for him, Philby's folding of his Gouzenko telex had caused no such suspicion at MI6) He confided in the assembled officers, laying out the organizational plan of Soviet intelligence and its range of targets, but he stressed that "[w]hat has been set out here is not the blueprint of an organization, but the salient features of a pattern." With these salient features in mind the officers would be sensitized even to minor anomalies in their Departments, but on no account was any action to be taken by a security officer until both Dwyer and the RCMP's Special Branch had been notified.

In the matter of security of Arctic defense installations, he persuaded the Joint Intelligence Committee to rescind a blanket security cordon placed over the entire District of Franklin in favour of concentrating security measures around sensitive installations. He explained that this not only provided better security for the air defense and radio intercept

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<sup>105</sup> Solicitor General of Canada, ATIP Division, Security Panel Document SP-121, Peter Dwyer, "The Soviet Secret Intelligence Services: A Guidance for Security Officers," 3 May 1952; also see chapter six, note 48.

sites but also a greater chance of detecting the presence of enemy agents. For example, passengers on the five Arctic supply ships were required to submit personal history forms to the Department of Transport on the pretext of preventing disease from spreading amongst the Inuit, but in reality the information circulated to Dwyer.<sup>106</sup>

In October 1952, the *Globe and Mail* disclosed that for five dollars any foreign intelligence agency could obtain the *Canada Air Pilot* and discover the location of every Canadian airfield, including the secret ones in the north. "Strange thing, security," wrote George Bain.<sup>107</sup> Dwyer soon received a report from the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys that a suspicious-looking man with a Russian accent had attempted to purchase the said publication. The man was Mr. Ogorodnikov, the Ottawa Tass Representative. Half a century later the incident seems comical, but it prompted serious discussions about restricting access to open source information. Air Intelligence Chief Edwards thought it "one of those problems peculiar to our democratic way of life." George Glazebrook advocated a principle of step-to-step reciprocation with the Soviets. RCMP Counter-Intelligence officer Terry Guernsey allowed that other Russian purchases of the *Air Pilot* had been monitored and suggested the whole question of open sources be put up to the Security Panel. Reading these responses, Dwyer proposed that a core group of influential journalists be given an off-the-record briefing to demonstrate how Bain's story was detrimental to national security. At the same time he recommended better measures to enhance feedback when Soviet agents attempted to acquire public documents.<sup>108</sup>

Dwyer's security and culture briefs coincided with the induced birth of Soviet Studies and Russian language programmes in the Canadian universities. This became a high priority in the 1950s, and Dwyer chaired a sub-committee of the Security Panel whose task

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<sup>106</sup> NAC RG 2, vol. 235, file S-100-6, "Security Organization - Arctic Security, 1952"; P.M. Dwyer to N.A. Robertson, 5 April 1952; R.G. Robertson to N.A. Robertson, 4 April 1952, "Dwyer's memo seems sensible . . . [he] suggests that security restrictions should be related not to latitude or to region . . . but rather to the intrinsic nature of any particular place or thing."

<sup>107</sup> George Bain, "Low-Priced Peek at Secrets," *Globe and Mail*, 8 October 1952.

<sup>108</sup> NAC RG 2, Series 18, file S-100-11-S, P.M. Dwyer to J.W. Pickersgill, 29 October 1952. "It occurs to me that the significance of this incident is that a Canadian newspaper man gave the Russians what they thought was useful, and what, for all he knew, may have been very valuable information. . . . this story might be given to the press off the record at a convenient press conference . . . since it shows so clearly what damage a senseless disclosure might do"; RG 25, vol. 4249, file 8531-40 pt. 3. Dwyer wrote with the same suggestion to Glazebrook at External Affairs, where Hume Wrong thought that "Mr. Pearson might be interested in this curious relationship between the press and -- others," and he instructed the Press Office to take note.

was to coordinate the rapid development of Soviet expertise for Canada's intelligence-related agencies, including External Affairs and the Defense Research Board. Dwyer brought in National Archivist W. Kaye Lamb, and the fruit of this association can be found in the National Library's extensive collection of open-source Soviet material. The universities were major partners, particularly the University of British Columbia. The entire project was "put up" to the Canada Council immediately after it was created in May 1957. Robert Bryce wrote to John Deutsch, his successor as Secretary of the Treasury Board, that "Albert Trueman should be prepared to consider proposals in this field as possibly one of the most important and imaginative projects in the field of the humanities."<sup>109</sup> Dwyer restrained Ross MacDonald, engaged to coordinate the new programme, from unilaterally implementing the Committee's suggestion for a summer school of Russian language studies: "Better to have this come from the universities."<sup>110</sup>

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On the cultural side, Dwyer's pattern of "intimate sensing" influenced various developments following upon the Massey Commission Report. During the weeks and months of security reorganization Dwyer's influence in cultural matters widened, and in 1953 he entered an almost schizophrenic period of rapid development on both fronts.

Incoming Clerk of the Privy Council, Robert Bryce, knew of his security expert's artistic background from having approved Dwyer's pay reclassification before leaving the Treasury Board. Later he recalled that "we were fortunate to obtain Dwyer" whose security intelligence experience made him especially sensitive to what Bryce called "degrees of confidence" in civil servants. Soviet agencies targeted Canadian officials, particularly homosexuals, to "get them into compromising positions, take pictures and then blackmail them."<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> NAC RG 2, Acc. 1990-91/154, vol. 15, file C-34 "Canada Council - Offl.", R.B. Bryce to John Deutsch, 2 May 1957. Bryce added that "for the reasons indicated" Trueman should not state this priority "first" in representing the activities of the Council. See also RG 2 file N-14 "National Library - Offl.," 1952-58.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, P.M. Dwyer to R. MacDonald, 2 April 1957.

<sup>111</sup> Robert Bryce, interview by Littleton, ca. 1981, NAC; NAC Dwyer personnel file, during his brief tenure at the PCO Jack Pickersgill completed delicate negotiations initiated by Norman Robertson to raise Dwyer's status without divulging the specifics of his work.

The public announcement that Bryce had replaced Pickersgill in the PCO coincided with *Hoodman-Blind's* premiere on November 18th, 1953.<sup>112</sup> Almost immediately upon his arrival in the East Block, Bryce received Dwyer's brief on the Massey-Levesque Report's recommendations for fostering the arts and culture in Canada. During the subsequent months he recognized in Dwyer's passionate interest a vision for an engaged federal arts programme that might achieve tangible outcomes. There was no shortage of interested parties willing to draft legislation for the prestigious Canada Council, but Bryce deemed Dwyer the ideal officer for the job, adding this to his security responsibilities.<sup>113</sup>

By the autumn of 1953, the proposed arts council had been mooted for almost two years. Discussion had focused on the proposed council's executive and salary structure, and its line of reporting to Parliament. The temperature rose slightly when Escott Reid of External Affairs squared off with the PCO's Gordon Robertson to defend the 'arm's length' principle. Robertson felt that the new council would be accepted more easily if it were placed under the direct control Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and characterized as a practical arm of the citizenship apparatus. Anything less directly accountable might seem to be imposing 'Culture' upon Canadians. Reid argued that the Council visibly must be free from government interference.<sup>114</sup>

Dwyer set his mind to fashioning an outline for legislation to create an "arm's length" Canadian council along British lines, but his initial proposals went further, injecting a fresh and unbureaucratic perspective into the deliberations. His first eight-page brief on the subject circulated from Gordon Robertson to Jack Pickersgill (by then Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) and on to Prime Minister St. Laurent. It had a twofold thrust: a) the new Council should take a strong and imaginative line on arts education, and b) it should foster professional rather than amateur development in the arts. In both cases, argued Dwyer, it was a matter of cultivating *taste*.

The formal recognition of children in the mandate and functions of the Canada Council was crucial to a society lacking a strong cultural tradition. He pointed out that what

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<sup>112</sup> The theme of blackmail was in the air: on November 16th the Metropolitan Opera celebrated its seventieth anniversary by opening a new production of Gounod's *Faust*.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, R.B. Bryce to P. Pelletier, 30 August 1954. "[R]elating to the Canada Council, Peter Dwyer is very much interested in this and it would be quite satisfactory to have him devote some of his time to these affairs, for which it would seem to me that he is qualified."

<sup>114</sup> Rg 2, vol. 140, C-34 "Canada Council - Offl.- Secret, 1951," E. Reid to N.A. Robertson, 28 September 1951, R.G. Robertson to A. Heeney, 1 October 1951. Reid wrote: "the minority, which has hitherto done in Canada what little has been done for the arts, letters and music (not infrequently at considerable sacrifice), will almost certainly be alienated . . . . It should be as independent as possible."

may “determine the ultimate success or failure of the Council’s work” is the creation of future audiences:

The forms of expression used by the various arts are, as it were, languages; and these, like any languages, are more effectively absorbed in childhood when the natural receptiveness and innate good taste of children has not been debauched by long exposure to bad entertainment.<sup>115</sup>

Culture, he argued, should not be thought of a pedagogy, but as something *sensual*. Mere pedagogy emphasizes “learning rather than pleasure,” he wrote, and “one observes how the glory of Shakespeare is laid waste for examination purposes.” Arts appreciation ought to be based on pleasure, in which case children “should absorb the media effortlessly.” Over time, Canadians might acquire culture, as he defined it:

[in] an ability to enjoy (with the vagaries of personal taste) what previous generations of dedicated people have agreed provides our most profound pleasures, and . . . to apply that ability to the works of one’s own generation.<sup>116</sup>

He warned that Canada’s tradition of amateurism in the arts presented a barrier to ‘culture’ in this strong sense of art appreciation. Channeling government funding through the Council to “voluntary groups” which traditionally had supported the theatre, ballet and music, presented the “very real danger” that they might “impose their own taste on the artists,” undoing the central purpose of the new Council:

In some cases this does not matter: but in many cases it does, because a willingness to ring doorbells in or organize ladies’ teas in a good cause provides no assurance that the people who do so should be arbiters of taste. It can be particularly damaging in the theatre where, in addition to limited taste . . . an unduly strict moral outlook can come between the actor, the writer and their livelihoods.<sup>117</sup>

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, he reasoned, the aristocratic patron “was usually a man of taste whose direct relations with the artist were sympathetic.” As patrons, the present voluntary groups cannot be said “to have replaced the stimulus of his culture.” Indeed, “would it not be our hope,” he asked, “that in the course of some years a good many of the less valuable voluntary groups would, like the Marxian state, wither away?” To

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<sup>115</sup> NAC RG2 , vol. 15, file C-34, Peter Dwyer to R.G. Robertson, 16 October 1953, with attachments. Robertson noted for St Laurent that “Dwyer of this office is very interested in the Canada Council. [This paper] contains some interesting views which you might like to see.” Ibid., 19 October 1953, Robertson replied to Dwyer: “PM saw this & undoubtedly read it. I don’t know what his reaction is, but he will have weighed and considered it.”

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

the greatest extent possible the new arts council should deal *directly* with artists and their professional organizations to achieve the highest possible standards. Working solely through existing voluntary organizations "might well serve merely to perpetuate one of the conditions which it is being set up to correct."

Dwyer's play on the "Marxian state," in conjunction with his doubts concerning the existing voluntary arts organizations, is a cue to what made the Canada Council project so important within the PCO, and why someone of Dwyer's background was detailed to coordinate its development. It was not enough simply to *create* the new council, it had to be given firm and dynamic direction if it was to have the desired effect on Canadian society.

For its part, the Labour Progressive Party trumpeted a very different aspiration for the new Canada Council. Its 1955 report *The Rising Tide of Democratic Canadianism and the Fight to Put Canada First* assailed St. Laurent's government for not acting quickly to create the Canada Council.<sup>118</sup> "Cosmopolitanism," the report stated, "is the anti-Canadian philosophy of St. Laurent and his ruling class" out to dominate the cultural industries. Cosmopolitanism "imbued Canadians with a sense of submissive inferiority," and represented a "betrayal of the culture of Canada . . . and its national interests." The LPP disputed the "supine views" of liberal intellectuals like Frank Underhill, Marcus Long and Bruce Hutchinson, arguing that "Canadians have accomplished great things . . . a long list leading across Canadian history to Bethune."

Despite the fact that "the ruling class of Canada has always been spineless on questions of culture . . . [and has] compromised with British and U.S. imperialism," there are persistent examples of a true people's culture:

Reuben Ship's famous satire against McCarthyism, *The Investigator*, mirrors the undying bonds of friendship that unites the peoples of Canada and the U.S. in their common struggle against reaction, fascism and war. When 40,000 people gather at the Blaine Peace Arch to hear Paul Robeson sing it is a proof of that solidarity.<sup>119</sup>

The LPP Cultural Commission demanded the immediate passing of the Canada Council legislation, so that "when it is established the people can make use of it to press their cultural demands upon the government." Through the new Canada Council, "Canadian participation in UNESCO . . . can contribute to the increasing cultural exchanges between Canada and the Soviet Union." A thousand copies of the report were printed "for circulation among cultural workers."

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<sup>118</sup> *The Rising Tide of Democratic Canadianism and the Fight to Put Canada First*, Cultural Commission, Annual Cultural Conference of the LPP, Toronto, April 1955.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

Needless to say, the LPP's views were not shared by "cultural workers" within the Privy Council Office drafting the Canada Council legislation. For Peter Dwyer, in particular, it was high culture's enhanced sensibilities, in combination with liberalism's "moral conscience," that dissolved competing claims to cultural legitimacy by all of these "less valuable" groups. A commitment to professionalism was essential in the face of a threat from a popular formation that, as the LPP claimed, at times had been vibrant and appealing. Dwyer knew that Vincent Massey's desiccated and aesthetically-conservative notion of high culture would never be stimulating or engaging enough to grip Canadians' imagination in the way that the progressive Cultural Front once had done. This is one reason he emphasized pleasure and enjoyment, produced through a commitment to professionalism, and linked these to the idea of a national conscience.

This blending of professionalized culture with a national conscience perplexed Robert Bryce when he read the opening sentence in Dwyer's draft for St. Laurent's speech introducing the Canada Council legislation. In retrospect it seems understandable that Dwyer, busy revoking or denying citizenship to persons capriciously tagged as security risks by the RCMP, purging socialists and homosexuals from the civil service, and generally weighed with suspicion, distrust and secrecy, should have introduced the Bill as he did. Paraphrasing Anatole France, he called the Council's creation "a moment in the conscience of Canada."<sup>120</sup>

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In preparing the Canada Council legislation Dwyer also prepared his escape hatch from security work. In writing the Council's bylaws he shaped the role and functions of the Director and Associate Director, whom it was assumed would be an Anglophone/ Francophone pair, towards straight executive functions and supervision of the university funding programmes. There was no doubt about who was the ideal person to fill the yawning gap in arts supervision that emerged during the first year of the Council's operation. Moreover, Robert Bryce was not overly impressed with Canada Council Director Albert "Bud" Trueman's "shilly-shally" attitude to the Council's Parliamentary accountability. The Council needed a trusty hand for its potentially controversial arts funding programme. At the same time, Herbert Norman's 1957 suicide had touched Dwyer's credibility as the government's internal security coordinator. While not directly Dwyer's responsibility, the Americans' suspicions regarding Norman had a way of attaching themselves to the "liberals" around Pearson and in the Privy Council Office.

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<sup>120</sup> NAC RG 2, Vol., file C-34, Prime Minister's speech drafted by P.M. Dwyer, 11 January 1957, R. Bryce, note: "this does not appeal to me as having much point."

In any case, privately Dwyer was increasingly fatigued by his security role, and his disenchantment deepened when one day he opened the door of his suburban Ottawa home to find MI6's Maurice Oldfield and his team of molehunters "on the doorstep." Oldfield, reputedly a model for John Le Carré's character George Smiley, was an old accomplice of Dwyer's, but the two-day interrogation (presumably part of Oldfield's FLUENCY investigations tracing Soviet penetrations of British Intelligence) left him exhausted and irritated with security intelligence and its bottomless well of suspicion. In sum, there is no shortage of reasons for his departure from the Privy Council Office in 1958 to become the Canada Council's Supervisor of the Arts Programme.

Laudatory memoranda in his personnel file confirm that Dwyer's departure from the PCO and the cessation of his formal status as a civil servant were regarded as a qualified loss by senior bureaucrats Robert Bryce and Arnold Heeney. Qualified, that is, in that they reserved the right to call upon him from time to time with "special matters." Once engaged in Canada Council affairs, Dwyer applied his full organizational and analytical faculties to patterning government subsidies to the arts. Positioned to implement his plan for a professionalized cultural sector in an enduring way, his influence reached far into Canadian cultural scene for the next decade and more.

### **Soundings**

Eighteen months after moving to the Canada Council, an inquiry from Vincent Massey reached Dwyer's desk, wondering about the bona fides of the Canadian Council of Authors and Artists: "They have asked me to accept a life membership . . . I am very reluctant to accept such invitations unless I am certain of the standing of the body concerned."<sup>121</sup> Dwyer replied that the Council "is a radio and television union . . . and holds its charter from the Canadian Labour Congress." Albert Trueman forwarded this information to Massey, writing that he could "not say anything about the standing of the Council," and adding meaningfully: "perhaps that is a matter which is evident from the nature of the body itself."

Part of Dwyer's application of "intimate sensing" in the arts sector was to elaborate a multi-faceted interface between artists and government. He pioneered the use of "soundings," each of which brought together twelve to fifteen selected representatives of a particular artistic discipline for a weekend of off-the-record exchanges with Council

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<sup>121</sup> NAC RG 63, vol. 1377, file "Massey, Vincent (Patron)," V. Massey to A. Trueman, 19 October 1959, and attachments.

<sup>122</sup> RG 63, vol. 1364, file "Soundings, 1969."

officers. At one such meeting in 1969 with English-language publishers at an apartment rented by the Canada Council in Montreal, Dwyer told the dozen or so initiates that

we have had a fair number of soundings of this kind. They have been with actors, painters, peintres et sculpteurs, ballet company managers, singers . . . and we have found them extremely valuable.

He joked about Dr. Spooner, of New College, Oxford, and how even "tenors" had changed "the tenour of our ways." But there was just one caveat: "About what is said here—we think it should not be in any way secret, but private." If any participant wanted to publicize any information arising from the sounding "please say so, and we will be more circumspect."<sup>122</sup>

As "a jack of all trades and master of none" he deferred the detailed discussions to literature officer Naim Kattan, instead stressing how in general the Council was concerned with the artist "as an individual" and had devised "pretty elaborate systems" to take "good professional advice and follow it as far as we can." Services to the arts, he said, form "the hidden part of the iceberg," and he mentioned that information services were now centralized within each discipline through the Canadian Theatre Centre, the Canadian Music Centre, National Theatre School, and French and English book publishers' councils. For several years he had lobbied for the creation of a similar information centre for the visual arts.

If each sounding with artists formed a new "magic circle," off-the-record briefings of his Canada Council officers formed an even tighter one. In an undated and unsigned page of notes in the Canada Council's "Soundings" file from 1969, the outline of "PMD's paper . . . 'right & known'" survives. He drew on his counter-intelligence experience to explain the importance of the distinction between what is "right" and what is "known." That is, counter-intelligence information concerning suspect individuals or organizations often becomes "known" but cannot meet the legal test as evidence in a court. What is not knowable to a court about a certain individual may nonetheless be known to be "right" by officers of the state, who also know that "any government would permit measures to stop his activities." Thus American CIO leader Walter Reuther may not be a Communist, he told them, but then "is Reuther a reasonable man?" The note-taking officer scribbled: "if it looks like duck, walks like a duck, has webbed feet & quacks - then I say it is a duck! (a communist)."<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> RG 63, vol. 1364, file "Soundings, 1969."

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*; Author's interview with Naim Kattan. Beneath Dwyer's affability Kattan detected an innate concern for security. For example, he once instructed Kattan, who commuted from

To "know" definitively if such unofficial criteria of selection helped officers guide grant monies away from politically-problematic individuals or organizations is not possible. It seems "right" to raise the suspicion given the RCMP investigators' obvious chagrin at not being able to spot in the Council's activities any pattern of subversive activity.<sup>124</sup> Of all the cultural organizations during Dwyer's period of arts supervision, the RCMP's heavy hand fell lightest on the Canada Council. If Dwyer's security connections, regularly refreshed around the table at Sammy's, or his thorough knowledge of the RCMP's anti-subversive activities and personalities, unduly protected the Council, documentary evidence for it is sketchy. In 1965, the Director of Security and Intelligence, William H. Kelly, wrote to the Commanding Officer of Ottawa's "A" Division, concerning an undisclosed person or organization:

Reference is made to your report of November 25th, 1964, in which you suggest that there may be some \_\_\_[one line exempted]\_\_\_ Canada Council. We do not share your doubts in this connection for the following reason.

2. As we understand it the Canada Council is a relatively small and compact organization. The \_\_\_[four line exemption]\_\_\_.

3. In view of the above will you please \_\_\_[one line exemption]\_\_\_.<sup>125</sup>

### Confession

Between leaving the Ottawa Little Theatre with his playwright's award and arriving at the East Block for work on November 19th, 1953, Peter Dwyer decided to confess his involvement in the Harry Dexter White case. The morning newspapers provided no comfort. The gadfly George Bain explained to *Globe and Mail* readers that the Jenner Sub-Committee's pressure tactics against Pearson, and their demand to re-interview Gouzenko, were products of their lack of direct access to FBI files. Deprived of that database by statute,

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Montreal to work with the Council, never to lose physical contact with his briefcase, whenever possible keeping it between his knees.

<sup>124</sup> NAC RG 146, PUC, file "Canada Council". From 1958 the RCMP ran file checks on Council members, executive officers, and every grant recipient named in the Annual Reports), as well as monitoring press clippings for grants to organizations and other Canada Council prizes. While Toronto's Arts Club Theatre and various individuals and groups were investigated, Insp. McLaren felt the briefs were "inadequate," and suggested "the press clippings service has failed to produce reports on the Canada Council grants."

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., William Kelly to O.C. "A" Div., 6 January 1965; As Assistant D.C.I. in 1962, Kelly inquired "What is the full extent of Canada Council grants to communists?" In a marginal note, one investigator wondered "Can we work this through \_\_\_?" and D.S.I. George B. McClellan concurred. Kelly was to "please discuss approach with me." These excisions may or may not refer to Peter Dwyer. They filed a clipping, in which Dwyer states: "people are beginning to learn that culture is not like castor oil--to be taken because it is good for you, they are finding that it is something to entertain civilized people."

their publicity machine required inputs from other sources and Canada presented a likely target for their bullying tactics. Secretary of State for External Affairs, Lester Pearson, bore the brunt of an attack that Dwyer's information could help deflect.

In the *Ottawa Journal's* front page story on the Gouzenko case and the Harry Dexter White mystery, Prime Minister St. Laurent expressed doubt that Hoover's reference to the "highly placed Canadian official" was accurate, but that a document search was underway. On page two, columnist Judith Robinson cited an anonymous source who had called her with a "strange story." Igor Gouzenko had fingered Harry Dexter White in 1946, her source allowed, after he was shown a letter from the U.S. Treasury personally dictated by White refusing to exempt Gouzenko's magazine royalties from an excise tax. In the letter, White referred to the cipher clerk as "that Gouzenko" prompting the excitable Russian to take offense and name White as a Soviet spy. This dubious information appeared alongside equally confusing stories naming Mackenzie King or otherwise Norman Robertson as Hoover's secret source. It could not have been welcome breakfast reading for Peter Dwyer.<sup>126</sup>

It is safe to assume he read the papers that morning. On page fifteen of the *Journal*, above the headline "High Standards Are Revealed," Dwyer appears with the other winning playwrights beside Vincent Massey on the Little Theatre stage. With this report, the *Ottawa Journal* had failed again. On September 5th, 1945, they dismissed Gouzenko as a crank and a world-shaking scoop slipped from their grasp. In this case the answer to the question dominating their front page—which highly placed Canadian official tipped off the FBI about Harry Dexter White in 1946?—lay inside their own paper. They even had a photograph of the culprit, since the person in question was Dwyer himself. The wall separating culture from security, state from civil society, and two sides of Janus's personality had collapsed: the time for confession had arrived.

In January and February 1946 Dwyer had been in Ottawa deeply engaged in the Gouzenko case. Apparently without the knowledge of his RCMP counterparts he had sent a telex through secure British communications links to the FBI's Lish Whitson. It passed through Dwyer's assistant in Washington, Miss Geraldine Dack. She had transmitted Dwyer's warning regarding Harry Dexter White to Whitson thus prompting Hoover's letter of February 1st to President Truman. Dwyer's telex stated that his information emanated from "informed diplomatic sources" and he claimed to have the "blessing" of

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<sup>126</sup> George Bain, "Writer Claims Mackenzie King Tipped FBI on White's Loyalty," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 20 November 1953. The story naming Mackenzie King as the source ("All signs point to that fact") was written by Isaac Don Levine for the Scripps Howard Newspapers. Levine was a Russian-born, anti-Soviet journalist specializing in Soviet intelligence services, and ghost-writer of accounts by previous Soviet defectors.

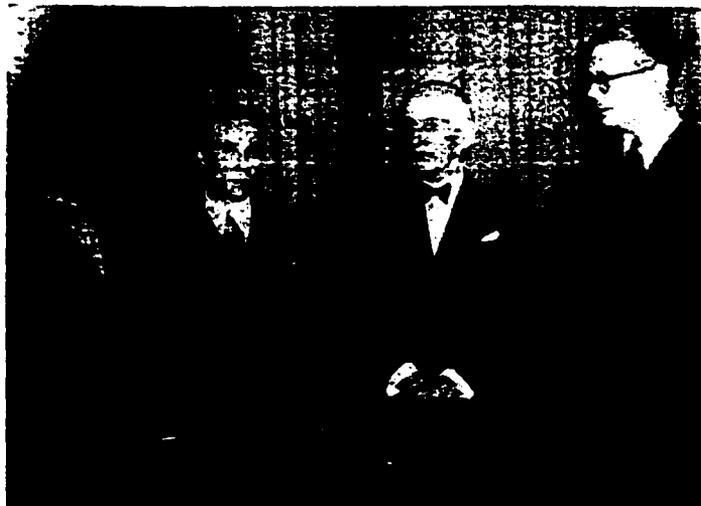
the RCMP, as well as the FBI's Ottawa liaison Glen Bethel in passing it on. This "blessing" was not a matter of record with the RCMP, and, given the urgent attention given to Pearson's request for a document search, it seems likely that Dwyer exaggerated the degree of inter-agency consultation in the matter.

In retrospect, it emerged that Dwyer's information concerning White's election to the IMF was wrong, or else was designed to manipulate the Americans. At the office later that day Dwyer received a copy of a memorandum on this subject from Bill Crean to Arnold Smith. Smith wrote the Kellock-Taschereau Report on the Gouzenko affair in 1946, and in 1953 he was in Pearson's office fielding the various incendiary national security issues for the Minister. Crean reported to Smith that according to the Bank of Canada's Louis Rasminsky it was constitutionally impossible for the Canadian or British representatives to have influenced Harry Dexter

White's appointment to the IMF in 1946. Furthermore, as a Canadian delegate at the time, Rasminsky assured Crean he received no advice regarding White from anyone.<sup>127</sup>

That same day a ciphered telegram was received in External Affairs from Arnold Heeney in Washington reporting on an "exceedingly frank and private" conversation with

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1953.



PRIZE WINNING PLAYWRIGHTS MEET THE GOVERNOR GENERAL—Three of the four top prize winners in the 1953 Canadian Playwriting Competition are seen here with Governor General Vincent Massey. From left to right: James E. Green of Windsor, Ontario; J. M. Robertson of Toronto; and J. M. Robertson of Toronto. The winners of the competition are: Best Play—'The Little Theatre' by J. M. Robertson; Best Screenplay—'The Little Theatre' by J. M. Robertson; Best Screenplay—'The Little Theatre' by J. M. Robertson; Best Screenplay—'The Little Theatre' by J. M. Robertson.

### High Standards Are Revealed At Prize Plays Competition

Will Show Film At Rockcliffe Home and School

An unusually high standard of playwriting and production was revealed in the 1953 Canadian Playwriting Competition. The presentation of the top plays at the 1953 Canadian Playwriting Competition was held at the Rockcliffe Home and School. The winners of the competition are: Best Play—'The Little Theatre' by J. M. Robertson; Best Screenplay—'The Little Theatre' by J. M. Robertson; Best Screenplay—'The Little Theatre' by J. M. Robertson; Best Screenplay—'The Little Theatre' by J. M. Robertson.

Fig. 65. *Ottawa Journal*, 18 November 1953.

<sup>127</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 8561, file 50303-40, pt 1.1, "United States Investigations into Subversive Activities in US--Implication of Canadian Officials," G.G. Crean to A. Smith, 19 November 1953.

General Walter Bedell Smith, Under-Secretary of State, ex-CIA Director and a former U.S. Ambassador to Moscow. Bedell Smith allowed that normal diplomatic channels would provide little recourse to attacks on Canadian officials by the Un-American Activities committees. Such charges were "purely political" and the Administration would do well merely to keep President Eisenhower "above the dust and dirt." Regarding Hoover's letter concerning Harry Dexter White, he said "it must be remembered that J. Edgar Hoover was a power unto himself, that he would never 'go out on a limb' by divulging on one hand or withholding on the other information which he thought might be to his own political advantage and that of the FBI." Although Bedell Smith promised to follow up the matter, Heeney judged that "no satisfactory result is likely". "In view of the exceedingly frank and private nature of some of the remarks," he advised, "I would be grateful if only the minimum circulation were given this telegram."<sup>128</sup>

With such pressures at play, in whom ought Dwyer confide? In all likelihood he went first to MI6's liaison officer with a warning that he felt obliged to reveal his involvement in the affair. This may well have prompted exchanges in London between the new "C", Sir John Sinclair (recent successor to Dwyer's former chief, Sir Stewart Menzies) and Canadian High Commissioner Norman Robertson. There is no available record to confirm this, nor where Dwyer may have turned next. Likely it was not to his immediate superior Bryce, new to the PCO and apparently not involved in this case. Possibly Dwyer spoke with Crean or Glazebrook in External Affairs and the matter was discussed by these parties before or after the Security Panel meeting on November 20th.

As journalists continued to spin the story in various directions, Pearson's aides began a process of damage control. To prevent the issue from opening up another strata of state secrets the hard-boiled Arnold Smith was assigned to prepare Pearson's statement. With Smith, Crean, Glazebrook, and R.A. Mackay to assist him it hardly seems credible that Pearson needed more help. Norman Robertson's hurried recall from London suggests the importance attached to the intertwined problems posed by White and Gouzenko. Robertson denied to reporters these were reasons for his return, but the documents show his full involvement.<sup>129</sup>

In Washington, George Ignatieff assembled the transcripts of relevant testimony before the various Un-American Activities committees and also obtained assurances from Robert Morris (Secretary of the notorious McCarran Committee) that despite Victor

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., A.D.P. Heeney to L.B. Pearson, 19 November 1953.

<sup>129</sup> November 1953 also happened to be the month in which the Soviet spy "Gideon" turned himself over to the RCMP.

Lasky's provocation Lester Pearson would not be targeted personally.<sup>130</sup> R.A. Mackay instructed Charles Ritchie that he and Crean be called out of the Security Panel meeting if any new development warranted it. Crean and MacKay thought it dangerous to state there was reciprocity of information with the Americans since it might force the Canadians to permit the publication of information better kept secret. As well, they pointed out:

there is the previous note in which we deleted the references to Stettinius and in this instance, at least, we did not give the Congressional committee all the evidence about an American citizen which was received from the Gouzenko testimony.<sup>131</sup>

As Secretary of the Panel, and with unparalleled knowledge of the Gouzenko affair's significance to Western counter-espionage Dwyer was acutely aware of the issues raised by revealing his role in the Harry Dexter White case. Yet, when he confessed his centrality in the intrigue, supplying his Canadian colleagues with the crucial telex to Hoover, otherwise he failed to remember many relevant details. The entire matter, he thought, "may have been inspired by Sir William Stephenson."

On November 24th as Arnold Smith put the finishing touches on Pearson's statement he sent urgently to Crean: "Please let me know immediately whether Harry Dexter White's name or any reference to him did figure in any of the evidence obtained from Gouzenko, or else obtained in Canada as a result of his evidence here, e.g., did it figure in the famous notebook . . . within the next hour or so."<sup>132</sup> White's name, according to a telephone reply from Inspector Hall of the RCMP, "was not in the notebook and did not appear in the evidence." Apprised of Dwyer's involvement, Smith was left to ponder the deeper implications of Gouzenko's apparent connection to White at the earlier date.

Finally having in hand the exact ciphered telex Dwyer had sent in January 1946 the External Affairs team worked in earnest to protect Pearson. In New York, Pearson told a UN Correspondents' luncheon on November 24th with obvious relief that the "Government has found the document" and that he would be returning to Ottawa to make a full statement.<sup>133</sup> From Britain, the Intelligence-friendly Reuters wire doused North

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., G. Ignatieff, Ottawa despatch, 23 November 1953.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. R.A. MacKay to C. Ritchie, 20 November 1953.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., A. Smith to G.G. Crean, 24 November 1953. Israel Halperin's notebook became famous in 1951 when it was revealed it had contained Klaus Fuchs's name, a crucial fact apparently overlooked during the Gouzenko inquiries.

<sup>133</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*, November 24th, 1953.

American media with headlines such as “US Allies Perplexed, Dismayed Over White Case” and “What Has Got Into Our American Friends?”<sup>134</sup>

On November 25th, prior to Pearson’s public statement, the entire matter was presented to “C,” Sir John Sinclair, in a comprehensive top-secret communication that quoted Peter Dwyer’s entire 1946 cable verbatim (“in case you are unable to trace the message in your files”).<sup>135</sup> The Canadian despatch reviewed the entire situation, including Dwyer’s inability to remember all the relevant details. “C” was put on notice that Pearson would present the House of Commons with the true information on the following day, irrespective of possible repercussions to the British secret services. The Canadians warned Sinclair that a member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery had worked in BSC during the war “and if he wishes to publish Dwyer’s name, he is probably aware of Dwyer’s official position at that time.” The despatch concluded by saying that “the only security information Canadian authorities ever possessed on White came from American sources.”

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It is possible that enough disinformation had already circulated in the press for Pearson’s team to have allowed the matter decay on its own. Mindful of American witch-hunters, the Minister insisted that the air be cleared with a full public statement. Addressing the print and broadcast media downstairs from Dwyer’s office in the East Block, an obviously-tired Pearson was forced to stop repeatedly because of technical problems with the broadcast equipment. He rehearsed the Gouzenko case in detail, regretting the American Senate Sub-Committee’s public airing of security information normally exchanged confidentially. He explained that the FBI always had access to Gouzenko, and had interviewed him as recently as August 1950, and that Gouzenko had no further information, despite the claims published in the *Chicago Tribune*. He announced one concession: the Jenner Committee might interview Gouzenko, but “quietly and confidentially” and under strict Canadian auspices.

On the matter of Harry Dexter White and the mysterious informant, he stated that the American claim that a highly placed Canadian official had transmitted information regarding White was incorrect. “The fact is that the only information which the Canadian authorities had . . . came from the FBI.” It was not from Gouzenko, he insisted, nor from any other Canadian source. The tip to Hoover rather was a “personal reminder . . . that is all it was . . . from a security official not of the Canadian government, but who was stationed in

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., London despatch, 12 November 1953. For the full text see Appendix I.

Ottawa to maintain liaison with the Canadian security authorities on behalf of the security services of a friendly third power.” Beyond this Pearson did not go, and his tone was conciliatory: “It is clear that in the stress and tension of the moment—and it was a difficult time—the author of the telegram must have misunderstood the details of information regarding the prospective appointments to the IMF. I find it easy to understand and sympathize with this mistake.” He concluded with a lengthy paean to the bonds of friendship and cooperation between two countries that shared the world’s longest undefended border, vigilant partners in the struggle against World Communism.

These latter remarks in Pearson’s lengthy statement passed without press commentary. Indeed, the Harry Dexter White case disappeared entirely, and no further mention was made of the “highly placed” Canadian informant. The unidentified reporter who might have publicized Dwyer’s name remained silent. George Bain and the other parliamentary journalists who had followed the story shifted their attention to the American response to Pearson’s Gouzenko offer. Brooke Claxton, Minister of National Defense, and soon to be first Chairman of the Canada Council, seized newspaper headlines the next morning, warning of the imminence of a “Red H-Bomb.”<sup>136</sup> Claxton’s announcement reminded Canadians of the near-war relations with the Soviets and reinforced Pearson’s more subtle call to secrecy.

Pearson had emphasized that security information was normally exchanged *confidentially* between the Western allies, implying that further American breaches of confidence might result in less than frank exchanges. His careful exoneration of the liaison officer also was a cue to reporters that further questions into his identity were unwelcome. The official secret was left undisturbed even though it obviously led on to further and more difficult questions about Canadian relations with foreign intelligence agencies, and about the Gouzenko affair itself. To what extent were such foreign intelligence agencies, especially Dwyer’s British SIS employers, using Canada as a field for covert operations against the Soviets? What other secrets had been withheld from the Canadians in their own capital? Why had Norman Robertson returned to Ottawa from London in such haste on November 23rd? The filtration of cultural secrecy ensured that the friendly liaison officer’s role in the White case was erased. Like the ubiquitous hilltop antennae, it was marked as information to remember-to-forget, and the train of inquiry ground to a halt.

Although Pearson’s admission that the source was a foreign liaison officer is publicly available—albeit buried late in the press reports of his tediously long statement—intelligence historian James Barros’s 1977 article makes no mention of it. Reviewing these

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<sup>136</sup> *Ottawa Journal*, Nov. 26, 1953.

events he states merely that the information in Hoover's 1946 memo to Vaughan "evidently originated in Ottawa," although this was "impossible to prove."<sup>137</sup> In an (unsupported) footnote he writes: "In 1946, one well-placed official in the Canadian government believed White was the more serious problem [than Alger Hiss] since he was closer to the policy-making apparatus." Is this mere speculation, or was Barros provided with what he thought was inside information? Either way, for those still interested in the matter he restored Hoover's disinformation with the aura of historical fact.

### **The Secret Theatre**

The secret theatre of national security indeed has a backstage larger than any theatre-goer ever imagines. Cultural secrecy is the absorptive black masking that boxes in its sightlines, obscuring the backstage technical plant where bishops and lamplighters, actors and stagehands mingle. It is the limbo against which shining things are made to really count. It entrains the citizen as a perspectival observer to view human action as if the stage represents an entire world, and not a visual confection arranged for their eyes. It is a theatre whose illusion is durably enthralling, and eminently transposable into every new medium.

On the other hand, it glamorizes national security to describe it as a "secret theatre." Granted this palliative metaphor, spies and informants become consummate actors, and the often harrowing consequences of their actions seem make-believe. It also implies a reversal of the optics of the panopticon. Instead of watching the prison population from a central tower, the watchers flatter themselves that their actions are indirectly witnessed, or at least imagined, by that population. Indirectly, the "secret" domain of state security broadcasts its truths through the artifice of theatre, film and television, neutralizing any possibility for critical examination in an unaesthetized civics of public memory.

Dwyer's impresario role in national culture and state security shares the ambivalence of the secret theatre metaphor. As Naim Kattan says, "He *was* an artist. He loved the artist, in a candid way." Dwyer is remembered by his contemporaries with admiration for his dedication to cultivating high achievement in the arts and for his sensitivity to each new artistic development. Alan Jarvis regarded Dwyer as an arts administrator who achieved "true objectivity," citing Dwyer's own words: "mature enough to give thoughtful opinion, young enough to embrace what is new."<sup>138</sup> And yet, despite such praise, the motif of

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<sup>137</sup> James Barros, "Alger Hiss and Harry Dexter White: The Canadian Connection," *Orbis* (Fall 1977): 598-99.

<sup>138</sup> NAC, Dwyer personnel file, Alan Jarvis, 18 October 1971.

Dwyer's success nonetheless was woven into some larger and more obscure pattern that comprehends his parallel commitment to state security.

...

By the time of Dwyer's appointment as Director of the Canada Council in 1970 the emphasis had shifted to cultural relations with Quebec. He wrote confidentially to Michael Pitfield, Clerk of the Privy Council, to the effect that attempts by the Secretary of State Department to increase its direct control of arts funding outside the arm's length relationship with the Canada Council were ill-advised. There is no evidence that his friends from Sammy's, Mark McClung or Henry Hindley, supplied him with inside information through their offices in the Secretary of State, but Dwyer certainly was well-informed.<sup>139</sup> "The arts are one of the binding forces of the country," he reminded Pitfield:



Fig 66. Peter Dwyer and secretary Lillian Breen, 1966. (NAC PA 196852.)

Our relations with Quebec are extremely difficult and, as you know, Jean Knowall Tremblay [Jean Noel Tremblay, Quebec Culture Minister] is impossible. Nevertheless we have managed to keep a very large percentage of Quebec artists along with us and we even manage informal meetings on the private ground of Montreal with officers of the *Ministère des Affaires Culturelles*. I should take it ill if anyone else goes galumphing across these tenuous links as long as we can hold them together.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>139</sup> NAC RG 63, vol. 1364, "Secretary of state," P.M. Dwyer to M. Pitfield, 12 July 1968. This "personal and confidential" letter is filed along with an internal memorandum from Under-Secretary of State G.G.E. Steele to his Minister, Maurice Lamontagne, 13 June 1968. Steele justified their department's independent grant-giving on the basis that the Canada Council had concentrated on the fine arts, "displaying little interest in film, broadcasting, museums, folk arts and crafts." (Henry Hindley's unpublished memoir, p.11, reports that the conversation at Sammy's "ranged over a vast field of subjects, often of a confidential nature.")

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

Dwyer thought Pitfield might, in speaking with Ministers, mention Council officers' skill in traversing the "fertile field for public misadventure the arts present," and the Council's record of protecting the government from embarrassments that can occur when grants are misplaced.

During the October Crisis in 1970 Jacques Ferron, medical doctor, writer, and political agitator brought his fabular novel *Le salut de l'Irlande* to completion in a frantic week-long writing marathon. Like Dwyer, Ferron was an allegorist. He set his novel in the *Front de Libération du Québec's* home turf on Montreal's south shore, aligning local anti-British sentiment with the liberation movement in Northern Ireland. C.D.A. Haffigan is an Irish-Canadian "effelquois" with four sons, of whom Tim, Buck and Mike appall their father by joining the RCMP's anti-subversive squad and the Canadian Army. The fourth, Connie, is swayed to FLQ activism. (The names are unmistakable references to Tim Buck, Louis Kon and Mike Buhay, leading Canadian Communists in the 1950s.)

Ferron was a socialist organizer and perennial political candidate (eventually leaving the *Rassemblement pour indépendance nationale--RIN--* to form the Rhinosceros Party). In the 1950s he was a director of the Canadian Peace Congress, and no doubt the subject of a sizable RCMP file. In every respect Ferron was the type of *engagé* political author whose outlook was diametrically opposed to that of Peter Dwyer. Thus Ferron's dedication of *Le salut de l'Irlande--*"À monsieur Peter Dwyer"--is as surprising as it was well-aimed. With one stroke Ferron triangulated Dwyer's part-Irish heritage, his previous associations with British and Canadian security services and his pivotal position in Canadian writing and publishing, placing them against the background of the current crisis.

Ferron correctly intuited Dwyer's hostility to "effelquois" aspirations. After students occupied the *La Maison Canadienne* in Paris during the October Crisis, the Canada Council Director approached Freeman Tovell and the External Affairs' Security and Intelligence Liaison Division to "ask whether any progress had been made in identifying Canadian students [in Paris] who had indicated sympathy with FLQ objectives during the recent kidnapping cases." That British diplomat James Cross remained in FLQ hands obviously was a matter of great concern for British as well as Canadian security services. Dwyer explained that it would be a "matter of considerable delicacy for the Canada Council" if any of the students in question were found to be its grant recipients. He did not personally feel they could be penalized by the Council unless specifically charged with an FLQ-related crime. The inference, albeit presented "in rather vague terms," was that the Council's files contained fairly extensive information on such persons. In view of the fact that the Canada Council "was known to be averse to receiving classified information," Dwyer's inquiry was referred to Marc Lalonde in the Prime Minister's Office. Lalonde had

already requested this information, and "fragmentary" intelligence relevant to Dwyer's inquiry already had been received from various Canadian observers in Paris.<sup>141</sup>

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Peter Dwyer's tenure as Canada Council Director was cut short by illness in 1971. While convalescing in January 1972 he spoke from his home with political cartoonist Ben Wicks in an interview broadcast on the freewheeling and unserious *Max Ferguson Show*. Wicks dabbled in journalism and his unlikely telephone conversation with Dwyer was the high point of a rambling discourse on the Kim Philby case. Dwyer's slow and cautious responses betrayed his declining health, but his mind was as acute as ever. Birds can be heard chirping in his back yard. The most striking aspect of the conversation is its play of accents: one hears Wicks, a British war evacuee who retained a distinctive cockney flavour, in dialogue with Dwyer's smooth Oxonian voice, still exuding charm, habitual discretion, and inclined to slightly florid turns of phrase. In the lead-up to the interview Wicks narrates the Philby story, gleefully emphasizing that the exalted idiocy of the British upper classes resulted not only in high-profile Intelligence debacles, but in hopeless filing systems, maintained by secretaries of high pedigree but low patience for detail.

No doubt Dwyer sensed that Wicks's recreation of the Philby story was to be a political cartoon, verbally caricaturing its principal agents, and not the "English English" he shared with Hindley. The interview proceeded awkwardly, with Dwyer signaling both a willingness to talk and yet cueing Wicks, in that complex para-linguistic call to discretion, *not* to ask the penetrating questions. Wicks's cheerful admiration for Philby's audacity drew from Dwyer an expression of bitterness at having had his own work compromised:

WICKS: Do you ever correspond [with Philby]?

DWYER: No, we don't correspond . . . . I think what he did was, well, *treason* of a form, wasn't it? And it's not something I wish to have anything to do with.

Intrigued and confused, Wicks lurched through the rest of the interview without ever discovering Dwyer's exact role in Philby's exposure, or the precise ramifications of Philby's treachery to the Gouzenko and Fuchs cases. "So it was completely wasted," Wicks concluded, speaking of MI6 activity during Dwyer's time. "Well, I wouldn't put it as high as that," Dwyer replied, "but I would say he did a great deal of damage indeed." With that the window for further questions closed, and when Dwyer died on New Year's Day, 1973, he

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<sup>141</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs, file PSIR 7-1-6-1, E.R. Rettie to file, 23 October 1970; E.R. Rettie to Marc Lalonde, 23 October 1970.

carried most of his secrets with him. It was also Kim Philby's sixty-first birthday, typically celebrated with "a small circle of senior KGB officers in his Moscow apartment."<sup>142</sup>

...

McClung's table at Sammy's has a dubious place in Canada's cultural history. Three of its leading figures, McClung, Dwyer and Wall were the security intelligence component's cultural specialists. After Dwyer left the Nunnery for the Privy Council Office, Wall hankered after something "a little more real" than SIGINT. He went to work in McClung's editorial section in the RCMP where his assignments included screening the CBC International Service and the National Film Board. He and McClung monitored the CBC radio and television broadcasts for signs of Communist infiltration. Before long Wall went on to work as Dwyer's assistant in the Privy Council Office, and took over as Secretary of the Security Panel when Dwyer joined the Canada Council. McClung resigned from the RCMP after an altercation with Cliff Harvison, the tough investigator who interrogated the Gouzenko suspects, after he took over as Director of Security and Intelligence.

Estimates of the effects of secrecy on civil servants vary. Robert Bryce shrugged it off, telling Donald Brittain "you learn to live with it in due course."<sup>143</sup> On the other hand, Don Wall and Mark McClung agreed it was corrosive to morale, leading in some cases to substance abuse and shortened lives.<sup>144</sup> If Dwyer survived the Harry Dexter White crisis of

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<sup>142</sup> Anthony Cave-Brown, *Treason in the Blood: H. St. John Philby, Kim Philby and the Spy Case of the Century* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), 599; NAC RG 149, vol. 74, file 6.11 "Correspondence with Peter Dwyer." Before his death Dwyer served as programming consultant to Hamilton Southam and the National Arts Centre, but his health prevented him from taking on the role foreseen, which included drafting NAC Annual Reports. (Henry Hindley took over the the task.) Dwyer had opposed Southam's annual summer opera festival, so it was an unusual gesture from one ex-intelligence chief to another. Gratified, Dwyer counseled Southam to develop an opera audience in Ottawa with popular favourites before risking more esoteric productions. Regarding Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (presented lavishly in the summer following Dwyer's death) he wrote, "I think it would be a very courageous thing to do in view of the lack of sophistication of your summer audience." Forever seeking accurate feedback, he proposed a survey to test Ottawans' tastes in opera.

<sup>143</sup> Robert Bryce, interview, 1981. Bryce was touchy about this question:

Interviewer: Does having access to secret information take a human toll . . . ?

Bryce: Yes. But you learn to live with it in due course. You, its . . . um. I can't think of people breaking down owing to the anxieties they had, but . . . ah, it does have some effect . . . Okay?

Interviewer: Okay.

<sup>144</sup> Don Wall and Mark McClung, interviews by Brittain and Littleton, NAC, ca. 1981.

1953 to reinvent himself in the Canada Council, one senses that he never completely eradicated a feeling of loss lingering from that Faustian contract first presented him by Gyles Isham or someone like him at Oxford. The whole process of culture and security was blended in him, and inextricably wound him into the culture of secrecy.

In his final memorandum to his colleagues at the Canada Council, slowly pecked out on a typewriter and signed shakily with his left hand, there is a catch in the voice, and a tremulous tone that suggests dismay at having been carried off track by that larger pattern:

I have to let everybody in the office know that I shall not be returning to work with the Canada Council. There is one essential reason: the doctor [says] it would be at least April before I could come back to work. This is obviously unacceptable to all, and I have informed the Prime Minister.

I shall miss what you do in the arts very much. These are the shining things which really count. So always remember that when some blast-off goes through your hands, ill-written and on paper torn from a notebook, it may be from someone who will give his name to our time. Which I certainly shan't.

Good luck to you all.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> NAC Dwyer personnel file, typed note to Canada Council staff, 19 November 1971.

## CHAPTER 8

### PULP HISTORY: REPOSSESSING THE GOUZENKO MYTH

The [painter's] ability to reproduce a given object with photographic accuracy is not the only criterion of good art . . . . Though when one says "like," one usually means visually like, there are other ways of identifying objects. What about like by atmosphere, like in sound, like by touch, like by smell; to say nothing of more abstract tests, which are best made by saying, "what does the picture convey?"

Elizabeth Harrison, *Self-Expression Through Art*, 1951

[Churchill] stressed very strongly what realists [the Soviets] were. He called them 'realist lizards,' all belonging to the crocodile family. He said they would be as pleasant with you as they could be.

W.L. Mackenzie King, *Diary*, October 1945.

#### **The painter as sensor**

Elizabeth Harrison's 1944 painting of lunch hour in wartime Ottawa patterns and prefigures impending events with considerable prescience.<sup>1</sup> At the tail end of the queue shuffling towards the distant buffet, the balding Norman Robertson, heavy-lidded and prematurely stooped, appears lost in his own thoughts, and oblivious to the crowded scene. At the head of the circuit of lunching officials, George Glazebrook bears his tray across the centre of the cafeteria. The University of Toronto historian was seconded to work under T.A. "Tommy" Stone in the fledgling intelligence branch of the Department of External Affairs in January 1942.<sup>2</sup> Glazebrook's weak-chested frame, sunken shoulders and high forehead project a cerebral air which is nonetheless slightly insipid. Trailing him at the far left is Jack Pickersgill of the Prime Minister's Office, leaning backwards as if caught off balance. Although not exactly reeling, Pickersgill, like Glazebrook and Robertson, lacks the poise of other 'shrewd and correctly-dressed' figures in the crowded scene. For instance, the unsmiling Mr. Burge, a British information official who stands directly ahead of Pickersgill and raises a reproving eyebrow at the viewer.

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<sup>1</sup> Born in London, England in 1907, Edith Elizabeth Harrison studied painting before moving to Canada in 1933. An active member of the Canadian Federation of Artists, she also served as Supervisor of Art Education in the Kingston Public Schools.

<sup>2</sup> NAC, RG 25, vol. 2936, file 2960-40 "Appointment of George Glazebrook." University of Toronto President H.J. Cody wrote to Norman Robertson on December 30th, 1941: "I know you will find Mr. Glazebrook an admirable colleague - intellectually keen, full of knowledge, and conscientious and thorough in all his work. We wish him godspeed in his service with you for our country and for the great cause."



Fig. 67. Elizabeth Harrison, "Cafeteria, Chateau Laurier, 1944." (NAC.)

At a table at the far right are two other British officials, Mr. Laughan and Joe Garner (later Lord Garner). Garner, languidly forking his cake, leans close to discuss some private matter in tones low enough to escape the notice of Norman Robertson. Standing directly behind them, Robertson seems aloof even to the backhanded whisper of the man ahead of him, directed to the uniformed Wren on his left. Trudy Janowski of the NFB--the dark-haired woman standing four places ahead of Robertson in the queue--casts a concerned look over her shoulder in the direction of Glazebrook, Burge and Pickersgill. The three British representatives project an alertness and confidence notably lacking in the three isolated and introspective Canadian officials. Significantly, these civilian overseers of the Canadian security establishment were all to play important roles in the Gouzenko affair.

Elizabeth Harrison works a separation between the upper area of the painting containing the figures just described and the five figures who dominate the foreground, one of whom represents herself. Just off-centre, she is the young woman with tightly-pinned hair whose head partially obscures the loping Glazebrook. Her attitude is that of a listener, tuned in not just to the swank soldiers dominating the conversation at her table but also the

general room ambience. Aurally (for this is above all an *aural* painting) it is Harrison herself who connects her four friends to the officialdom around them. Except for her cocked ear the young subalterns betray no inkling of the invisible forces and burdens stressing their secretive and divided elders.

Two years earlier, at a table here in the cafeteria, Norman Robertson and Judge T.C. Davis discussed over lunch the idea of centralizing the cable, radio and postal censorship units under the Department of National War Services.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps they touched, too, on the matter of Davis's troublesome protégé, Tracy Philipps. Believing the room noise sufficiently absorbed their voices, the two mooted Robertson's censorship plan in some detail before noticing a man next to them obviously listening in. Once observed, the eavesdropper picked up his tray and left, but before long Robertson learned that the man worked under Chief Telegraph Censor, L.S. Yuill. Apprised of the incautious conversation, Yuill sought to pre-empt any proposal to restructure his department. Within a few months he was relieved of his post in favour of the trustier Wilfred Eggleston.

A year passed before Robertson's attention was drawn to the fact that before his departure Yuill had instructed his department to monitor the telephone communications between the Soviet Embassy and their Halifax consulate.<sup>4</sup> This practice was noticed only when George Glazebrook deduced that an unattributed intercept received from the RCMP was an exchange between Soviet embassy staff.<sup>5</sup> In retrospect, one marvels that the rather suspicious conversation it contained did not immediately step up concern in External Affairs regarding surreptitious Soviet intelligence-gathering in Canada. Yet Robertson's concern was not for counterintelligence. Rather, he sought to forestall any potential embarrassment to External Affairs should the RCMP's interception of foreign legations' communications become known.

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<sup>3</sup> See Bryden, *Best Kept Secret*, 123-4.

<sup>4</sup> RG 25, vol. 5699, file 4-J(s), "Special Censorship of Telephone Conversations." This "most secret" material reveals that in 1943 the Department of External Affairs was concerned with the degree of censorship applied to consular communications in general. There were strong indications that the FBI and possibly other U.S. agencies were routinely intercepting all Canadian Embassy calls. One such report prompted Pearson in Washington to request of Robertson that he explore formalizing certain reciprocal exemptions with the Americans. This proposal went nowhere, but the problem was still fresh in mind when the question of Canadian interceptions of Soviet communications cropped up.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Glazebrook must have been on the look-out for such an example since the RCMP identified the communicants by their phone numbers alone. In his neat miniature script Glazebrook wrote "probably Soviet Consulate" and then crossed out "probably" after verifying the number. When queried, the RCMP allowed that the conversation was recorded on cylinder at Halifax and translated at their Ottawa headquarters.

Glazebrook expressed his concern just a month previously that the RCMP operated its own telephone censorship, pointing out that its "total extent is not known."<sup>6</sup> Glazebrook felt that External Affairs would best be protected if all interception of landline calls fell under the Director of Censorship, Col. O.M. Biggar. Robertson agreed, but when Glazebrook broached the matter with Commissioner S.T. Wood the implacable police chief divulged neither the extent nor the specific targets of RCMP in-house censorship facilities, and he discouraged any idea of centralization under Biggar.<sup>7</sup> That was October. Now in November, with the Soviet Ottawa-Halifax phone intercept in hand, Robertson wrote firmly to Wood that "it would hardly seem necessary at the moment to monitor calls between these two offices." Evidently the Commissioner complied, ordering the immediate cessation of telephonic monitoring of "various foreign consular officers in Halifax."<sup>8</sup>

These records demonstrate that the RCMP maintained a counterintelligence effort against the Soviet ally throughout the war. They qualify the government's public attitude of hurt surprise following Gouzenko's disclosures. On the other hand, some twenty months prior to Gouzenko's defection, Norman Robertson restricted one means of sensing vibrations of Soviet intelligence activity in Canada. Indeed, Gouzenko would marvel at the ease with which Zabotin's GRU contacts in the Halifax Legation obtained sensitive information.<sup>9</sup> To what extent is Elizabeth Harrison's Norman Robertson--a man with his eyes and ears closed--more accurately rendered than J.L. Granatstein's omnipresent "man of influence"? Harrison observed an official inundated with the stimuli and information generated by war mobilization, one who had internalized the war emergency to such an extent that he no longer mentally processed all of its implications.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Glazebrook reported to Robertson on November 2nd, 1943 of his verbal exchanges with the suspicious and homophobic Commissioner Wood. Wood allowed that RCMP censorship monitored embassy phone conversations "only for cases of espionage or suspected espionage," but "there is no possibility of it being misused." Glazebrook then retreated from his idea of restricting RCMP phone censorship. He reported to Norman Robertson that "there seems every reason to believe the present system is free from abuse. No doubt it would be more satisfactory if all monitoring were under censorship but I suspect that this could not be done without difficulty." Robertson concurred, lukewarmly: "I think these arrangements are pretty free from objection."

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. S.T. Wood's capitulation to Robertson on December 23rd is carefully phrased: "The names of the various foreign consular officers in Halifax have been forwarded under secret cover to our Officer Commanding at that point to ensure that all necessary precautions may be taken to ensure that under no circumstances will incoming or outgoing calls respecting these officials be censored by members of this Force."

<sup>9</sup> Igor Gouzenko, *This Was My Choice* (Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1948 ), 222-23.

Mapping the lunch time crowd with a palette of greens, browns and yellows, Harrison acknowledged the crowd itself as a camouflage for concealed forces.<sup>10</sup> The action flows around three hubs. The buffet queue forms the largest circuit, looping around from Robertson to Glazebrook. This counter-clockwise movement is replicated in the flow of conversation at Harrison's table, and in Joe Garner's and Mr. Laughan's tight circle at the right. These circles of influence are so forceful that they seem to exert a kind of bio-power, further hunching Norman Robertson's shoulders, and comically contorting Pickersgill's midriff. If the surface of a lunch time crowd seems innocent enough the camouflage tones reveal a fluid swamp replete with quicksand and concealed predators.

In 1944 Elizabeth Harrison worked as a press reader alongside Kathleen "Kay" Willsher, deputy registrar in the British High Commission. Although Willsher was probably unaware of it, the confidential information she occasionally passed to Fred Rose and Eric Adams made her one of Col. Zabotin's prize informants.<sup>11</sup> Harrison knew nothing of Willsher's clandestine activities, but her wartime assignment to the British High Commission explains why these officials figure so prominently in her painting. It accounts for her awareness of a certain superior attitude in their deportment and demeanour. She was as surprised as anyone when, perhaps sixteen months after composing this image, Kay Willsher suddenly vanished into RCMP custody. When Harrison learned of the government's ruthless treatment of her colleague and of the other suspects, she helped found the Ottawa Civil Liberties Union to protest the deprivation of their legal rights. Harrison became Willsher's prison visitor, helping maintain her spirits through three years in Kingston Penitentiary.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> André Biéler and Elizabeth Harrison, eds., *Kingston Conference Proceedings* (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Arts Centre, 1991). Camouflage painting was one of the topics discussed at the Kingston Artists' Conference held in June 1941.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Harrison, interview by author, 16 April 1996; Robert Bothwell and J.L. Granatstein, *The Gouzenko Transcripts: The Evidence Presented to the Kellock-Taschereau Royal Commission of 1946* (Ottawa: Deneau, 1982), 168. Kay Willsher had access to secret and top secret material. On the other hand, she was not privy to operational intelligence matters. She testified to the Royal Commission that documents classified above 'top secret' bypassed the Registry altogether; A tantalizing trace of Soviet and British positioning in wartime Ottawa occurs in the guest book of Hull's Café Henry Burger. Above Colonel Zabotin's expansive signature on the page for 11 October 1943 is the controlled cursive of Patrick Duff, second secretary of the British Mission, who dined at a nearby table.

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Harrison, interview by author; NAC, MG 30 D282, Wilfred Eggleston Papers, file "Ottawa Civil Liberties Union, 1946." According to Eggleston's records, Mrs. Harrison attended the founding meeting, chaired by the NFB's Stan Rands, at which former Chief Censor Eggleston agreed to accept the Chairmanship on a temporary basis.

In his autobiography, Igor Gouzenko records that he too visited the Chateau Laurier cafeteria during this period to drink a glass of beer in the company of Anatoli Kirsanov. An engineer-economist with the Soviet Embassy, Kirsanov had been the Gouzenkos' neighbour during their first year in the apartments at 511 Somerset St.<sup>13</sup> Sensitive as she was, Elizabeth Harrison could never have plucked from the crowd the Russian cipher clerk who was about to short-circuit the flows of energy she imaged so accurately. This tableau leaves the troubling suggestion that even a year before Gouzenko's defection a young artist sensed in these Canadian officials their vulnerability to outside manipulation. Her painting serves as a corrective to cultural nationalist historiography that routinely de-emphasizes the residual anglophilia and colonial dependency that formed the other half of officials such as Robertson and Glazebrook. These accounts provide endless coverage of Colonel Zabotin and his ring of informants, but what of their equally predatory British counterparts?

### **Papier Mâché History**

Historians of the Cold War agree that Igor Gouzenko's defection in September 1945 and the subsequent spy scare that gripped North America were of paramount importance in the development of Canada as a 'security state'. As James Littleton puts it, Gouzenko's exposure of GRU intelligence activities "helped to precipitate Canada's plunge into the Cold War" and "set off a reaction that would have reverberations for years to come."<sup>14</sup> Within the Canadian government the case underlined the need for enhanced sensory capacities both in electronic and human intelligence. On one hand, the wartime Examination Unit, the SIGINT section slated to be disbanded, suddenly was given permanent new life as the Communications Branch of the National Research Council; on the other, an interdepartmental Security Panel was created as a nerve centre to coordinate and tighten the government's internal security.<sup>15</sup> As discussed in foregoing chapters, the Gouzenko fall-out began a purge in agencies such as the National Film Board and it altered the career paths of people like Peter Dwyer and Mark McClung.

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<sup>13</sup> Gouzenko, *This Was My Choice*, 238; NAC, RG 25 vol. 4249, file 8531-40 FP, Kirsanov arrived in May 1944; Ottawa City Directory, 1944.

<sup>14</sup> James Littleton, *Target Nation: Canada and the Western Intelligence Network* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys/CBC Enterprises, 1986), 17.

<sup>15</sup> Bryden, *Best Kept Secret*, credits the Gouzenko case with the creation of the Security Panel and the decision to continue with an expanded program of signals intelligence, but he argues that in imitating the British pattern of security and intelligence coordination Canada missed an opportunity to establish a centralized Intelligence directorate.

Apart from the silent upgrading of security and intelligence in government priorities, the Gouzenko case marked a decisive shift in public sentiment hitherto favourably disposed towards the Soviet ally. Instead of Canada-Soviet friendship the public now sought purification of Canada's national culture and neutralization of potential enemies within. How coincidental was it that the sensational publicity accorded the Gouzenko case coincided almost exactly with Winston Churchill's resounding "Iron Curtain" address in Fulton, Missouri? The two events provided durable images of ideological polarization and physical partition, images that persisted until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. As has been recounted in the now huge literature on the Cold War, repressive tendencies followed swiftly upon the breakdown of the anti-fascist alliance at the end of 1945 culminating in the purges of McCarthyism, loyalty tests, a proliferation of secret police surveillance and the operation of "star chambers" north and south of the forty-ninth parallel.

That the Gouzenko affair was catastrophic to public trust in the Canadian Left is axiomatic. As will be seen, the case of American singer Paul Robeson's visits to Canada records a polarization in public culture that damned virtually any dissenting opinion as communist-inspired, somehow in the service of Soviet national interests. Concurrently, Canada's postwar federal cultural policies, as prefigured in the influential Massey-Lévesque Commission Report, sought to commandeer "culture" as the civilian arena for a similar process of national purification. In contrast to negative and preventative measures taken in areas such as immigration policies, police penetration of dissident groups and extensive civil service security vetting, these positive and pre-emptive measures saw the establishment or enhancement of federal cultural institutions to shape and guide national cultural development.

This is not to say that Gouzenko's action alone was a sufficient or even necessary condition for the demise of progressivism during this period, but his defection crops up almost uncannily at this break in social discourse where an entire set of beliefs, attitudes and cultural practices were marked as security risks. The sign "Gouzenko" came to serve as a "memory jogger," prompting legions of Canadians to remember-to-forget their former progressive affiliations. If other Soviet defectors brought information to western intelligence services, perhaps even more sensitive information than Gouzenko's, no such case had such an impact on public culture as his. It is precisely the *uncanny* efficacy of the Gouzenko affair in the western propaganda-censorship-intelligence complex that invites further attention.

Five decades of accumulated historiography directed to the Gouzenko case have failed to put closure on a gnawing sense that the received narrative is incomplete.

Indeed, its uncanniness cannot be contained within the explanatory model assigned to it in such texts. One version of Gouzenko's defection has become a litany reiterated in nationalist historiography at every opportunity as justification not just for the government's illiberal internment of the espionage suspects but its actions generally in face of the Soviet threat. Cold War "national history" thus has had a vested interest in maintaining a specific rendering of the Gouzenko case, adding layers to an already thick tissue of disinformation.

The stakes vested in Gouzenko's story indeed are high. One could argue the slow defeat of the Left since the late 1940s has been nudged ahead at every historiographical turn by some aspect of his legend. Any suggestion that it is laced with falsity--a charge made from time to time since 1946--typically is heaped with derision.<sup>16</sup> Professors Bothwell and Granatstein write that:

Some skeptics on the Left still believe the Gouzenko case was an elaborate ruse designed to encourage the advent of the Cold War. There is no evidence that this is so or that the Canadian government eagerly seized on the role that had been given to it.<sup>17</sup>

The event is considered beyond re-evaluation. But is it? If another interpretation were to prevail, particularly one that finds this monument in national history to be a papier mâché construction, what might be done to pick up lost traces of a vibrant progressive movement it helped to suppress? It is not often remembered that at the time of Gouzenko's defection a "peoples' artist" like Paul Robeson could fill a Toronto arena with ten thousand excited listeners, swept up by his call for human rights and progressive social change.

*April, 1997*

At my usual seat in the reading room of the National Archives, I worked facing several document storage boxes, each containing a volume of files. I had opened and begun to study a volume from Record Group 25, the records of Canada's Department of External Affairs. These particular files were from the secret "small 's'" series, normally cleared on a case by case basis by the National Archives' Access to Information officers. Many files in this series are permanently closed, and open volumes have been thoroughly vetted prior to release. In these particular files, though, I noticed a superior quality of documentation. The material concerned Canadian officials and the U.S. Un-American Activities Committees, the

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<sup>16</sup> Solicitor General - ATIP Division, Document 141, file 117-91-99 "Security Screening in the NRC, 1940-46." Judge T.C. Davis, Canada's High Commissioner to Australia sent despatches to Ottawa on April 15 and 17, 1946, describing a "hysterical" meeting of the Australian Association of Scientific Workers which "charged that the Gouzenko affair was put-up by Western Intelligence to discredit the Soviet Union, and passed resolutions calling for the freeing of Nunn May and [Dr. Raymond] Boyer."

<sup>17</sup> Bothwell and Granatstein, *Gouzenko Transcripts*, 18.

use of passports to control the movements of Communists, and certain activities of Igor Gouzenko under RCMP protection. As I began to work through the material, I paused to order up another series of files garnered from cross-reference indices on the covers.

I traversed these pages not knowing that my second request had triggered alarm bells behind the scenes. Due to a handling oversight I had been provided with still-classified material, and within fifteen minutes an agitated Access to Information Officer appeared at my table and without warning swept the box away. She advised me that all notes abstracted from these records must be erased from my computer's memory. "I don't think so," I replied, "you'd better check about that." Half an hour later, the section head for military and intelligence records invited me to accompany him to a meeting room where the resident CSIS liaison officer was waiting. He closed the door behind us, and they peppered me with questions about what I learned from the closed volume, and requested that I show them my notes.

As I listened to their inquiries, not saying much, I thought about the mass of information that I have been refused permission to view, and an even greater trove sent to destruction with only the security service's word it was not of historical interest. I thought of the then-current scandal of document destruction by officials in the blood system and the Government's high-handed hobbling of the Somalia Commission inquiry, itself a product of Ottawa's propensity for secrecy and disinformation. When asked directly to hand over my notes, I refused. It was claimed that the National Archives had the right to exact them forcibly, but they chose not to press the issue.

Later, I pieced together what I had learned before the files were seized. The significance was not immediately clear to me but gradually a pattern emerged that convinced me that the Gouzenko myth as we know it is only partially "true" and that certain missing aspects of the story would alter contemporary perceptions about culture and security during the Cold War.

### **Realist Lizards**

To begin with I will rehearse what has become the standard account of the case, provided by Sir William Stephenson, the so-called "Quiet Canadian," who headed British Security Coordination during World War Two. Stephenson subsequently took credit for masterminding various intelligence episodes during the war, including the initial handling of

Gouzenko at the time of his defection.<sup>18</sup> The various books propagating Stephenson's reputation as a great spymaster are fine examples of "pulp history." Lacking any shred of documentary basis for the claims made (Stephenson's unilateral destruction of official records is breathtaking) the books freely crow INTREPID's anti-democratic machismo and penchant for British imperialism. In fact, Stephenson's self-image projected in these books is reminiscent of "Phillip Tracey" in *The Man Who Knew*: the empowered white European meeting secretly with men of his type in gentlemen's clubs, serving at once the interests of plutocracy and imperial self-preservation. The eminently clubable Stephenson had his writers, H. Montgomery Hyde and later William Stevenson, render a consummate insider, self-consciously attuned to the Churchillian attitude.

Over the past decade or two Stephenson's role in wartime intelligence has gradually been cut back to size. Disgruntled with the Icelandic-Canadian millionaire's flagrant breach of the intelligence community's professional code of silence, former intelligence professionals furtively attacked Stephenson's self-directed hagiography from the wings, casting doubt on his claim to greatness, albeit without providing greater access to any relevant documents still in existence.<sup>19</sup> In spite of their efforts, though, Stephenson's version of the Gouzenko case remains dominant insofar as this episode in Canadian history is popularly remembered, affirmed over a period of decades in at least twenty printed accounts, his own sales running into the millions. Through sheer weight of copy his remains the most widely-known description of the defection and the Canadian Government's response to it.

H. Montgomery Hyde, a former BSC officer, set out Stephenson's version of events in his 1961 book *Room 3606*.<sup>20</sup> In this work, later re-issued as *The Quiet Canadian*, Hyde celebrated Stephenson's secret wartime career, drawing variously on his own knowledge, Stephenson's recollections and a secret BSC history. This was compiled at Stephenson's behest at "Camp X" near Oshawa in the dying days of the war by Gilbert Highet, Peter Dwyer's Oxford mentor, and children's author Roald Dahl, among others. As

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<sup>18</sup> H. Montgomery Hyde, *Room 3606*, (New York: Dell Publishing, 1964), 19. The nickname was coined by American playwright and OSS propagandist, Robert Sherwood.

<sup>19</sup> Timothy Naftali, "Intrepid's Last Deception: Documenting the Career of Sir William Stephenson," *Intelligence and National Security* 8:3 (July 1993): 72-92; David Stafford, "Intrepid: Myth and Reality," *Journal of Contemporary History* 22: 2 (April 1987): 303-318; Reg Whitaker, "The Politics of Security Intelligence Policy-making in Canada: II 1984-91," *Intelligence and National Security* (January 1992), 60. Whitaker points to the "occupational disability" of security intelligence specialists wherein failures are more likely to be publicized than successes.

<sup>20</sup> Hyde, *Room 3606*, ch. 8, "Finalé".

they wrote, original documents were destroyed and the organization itself was wound down.<sup>21</sup> When an independent scholar, John Bryden, examined this history he judged that “it was deliberately cooked to cast BSC in the best possible light at the expense of both the Americans and the Canadians.”<sup>22</sup> That Hyde’s account of the Gouzenko defection was similarly cooked is now a matter of record.

“Late on the night of September 6, 1945,” Hyde began, “William Stephenson, who happened to be on a routine official visit to Ottawa, called on Mr. Norman Robertson, Under-Secretary of state in the Canadian Department of External Affairs, at his private residence.” Stephenson had learned earlier that day that a Soviet Embassy employee had contacted the Justice Department “through the RCMP” offering to furnish information and he wanted to know if Robertson knew anything about it. Robertson told him that a Soviet cipher clerk named Gouzenko indeed had presented himself to the Justice Department but that the Prime Minister had instructed officials “to do nothing for the time being for fear of the diplomatic repercussions.” According to Hyde, Stephenson immediately understood the unique opportunity the defection presented and he advised King to have the cipher clerk brought into the RCMP’s protective custody the following morning.

Hyde explains that Gouzenko, after receiving final notice of recall to Moscow, made the momentous decision to defect to Canada rather than return home to an uncertain future. He did so not only to enjoy Canada’s higher standard of living, but also to “do something big for this country” by giving “complete documentary proof of the Soviet spy system in Canada.” With this noble ambition in mind:

he went through all the secret files, turning down the edges of those telegrams and other documents which seemed of particular interest. Then, on the evening of September 5th--the day before he was due to hand over--he surreptitiously abstracted all the documents which he had marked, tucked them under his shirt and quietly left the Embassy for the last time.<sup>23</sup>

That Gouzenko took his story directly to the *Ottawa Journal* “says much about his belief in the democratic processes of the country,” wrote Hyde, but as luck had it the newspaper’s night editor brushed him off, telling him to take his documents to the RCMP. “The next day [Sept. 6th] he returned to the newspaper to no avail and then trudged from office to office with his wife and child, seemingly getting nowhere.” That night he watched

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<sup>21</sup> Stafford, *Camp X*, 252 passim.

<sup>22</sup> Bryden, *Best Kept Secret*, 272.

<sup>23</sup> Hyde, *Room 3606*, 257-58.

through a neighbour's keyhole as Vitali Pavlov, the NKDV station chief, and three others from the Soviet Embassy forced their way into his apartment. Confronted there by two Ottawa police constables, Pavlov and the others retreated from the scene.

At 4 a.m. there was another knock at the door, this time a low careful one. 'But whoever it was left before I could identify him,' Gouzenko wrote afterwards. In fact it was Stephenson and Stone, who had come to reconnoitre the position.

The next morning Gouzenko was debriefed at RCMP headquarters while his wife and child remained in his neighbour's apartment under police protection. It was only then, on September 7th, that the RCMP Special Branch learned the details of a network of GRU informants operating in Canada, most crucially that it included a British scientist, Dr. Alan Nunn May, who possessed knowledge of Anglo-American atom bomb research. Stephenson, Hyde recounts, sent "two of his most experienced staff to help with the inquiries" at a "remote country location" where Stephenson placed his "secure telekrypton facilities at the disposal of the Canadians for the purpose of communicating with London and New York."

The "Corby Case," code-named after the bottle of whisky that sustained "the tired group of men" directing the investigation from Norman Robertson's office, was to remain secret for five months "due to the discovery of further evidence of similar espionage in the United States." In February, 1946, the Washington columnist Drew Pearson "got hold of the story through some leakage, the source of which was never discovered." The arrests and publicity followed and Gouzenko painted "the most remarkable picture of international espionage to be presented in this century." Hyde concluded his account of Stephenson's supposed role in the case, writing "It is not generally known that but for the intervention at a critical moment of [Stephenson], who never sought the limelight, Igor Gouzenko might not have been alive to tell the story."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> In William Stevenson's widely discredited *Intrepid's Last Case* (New York: Villard, 1983), a Reagan-era rewrite of the Gouzenko case and the British molehunt, Stephenson changes his story, hinting not only that he had had prior contact with Gouzenko, but that he had engineered the defection. As the Gouzenkos fled from office to office on Sept. 6th, denied sanctuary by Mackenzie King and Norman Robertson, Stevenson reports that Robertson's hostility to the "director of a secret British organization [pulling] strings in the Imperial manner" (53) was overcome by providing him with a foretaste of Gouzenko's list of Canadian traitors. As Whitaker and Marcuse, *Cold War Canada*, 60, point out, "if proven this account would reveal a case of massive deception, duplicity and the manipulation of elected official by the security agencies."

Aspects of the foregoing account have at least an air of reality, and these essentials along with a few more facts are reiterated in accounts by the key people involved: the RCMP's Charles Rivett-Carnac and Cliff Harvison, as well as Malcolm MacDonald, then serving as British High Commissioner to Canada. This version appears, too, in multiple renderings by historians such as J.L. Granatstein. Presumably Gouzenko did follow the itinerary Hyde described, and was twice rebuffed by the newspaper staff as well as the various Canadian officials with whom he came in contact. No doubt he and his family were in danger for a period of time, and once in RCMP hands the interrogation team did include British intelligence officers Peter Dwyer and Jean-Paul Evans. The debriefing occurred primarily at Camp X, the former BSC sabotage training centre near Oshawa, where the "telekrypton" encryption device and the powerful HYDRA transmitter provided secure communications. Yet, as John Bryden has shown, important aspects of the Stephenson/Hyde account are deliberately misleading.

The key point is that Stephenson was not in Ottawa at the time of the defection. He arrived from New York two days later to play a minor role. Bryden's signal contribution has been to prove beyond reasonable doubt that Sir Stewart Menzies himself, the head of British MI6 customarily known as "C", was in or near Ottawa at the time of Gouzenko's defection. In an inspired piece of detective work Bryden located Menzies's signature in the guest book of the Seignior Club at Montebello, Quebec, entered on September 6th, 1945. This startling indicator, so at odds with Stephenson's widely propagated version of the events, leads on to the possibility of a deeper deception that Bryden leaves dangling: namely, that the defection was not purely Gouzenko's "choice" but rather a product of a British intelligence operation conducted on Canadian soil without the knowledge or consent of the Canadian government. If this hypothesis is true, the entire edifice of propaganda, censorship, and intelligence built upon Gouzenko's "choice of freedom" must be attributed not to the natural unfolding of latent Cold War rivalry but to an intentional policy pursued by elements within the British intelligence establishment at the end of the war.

Perhaps Bryden's and others' deflation of INTREPID's claims to greatness overlook his more general significance. No doubt the Winnipeg-born millionaire was meddlesome and manipulative, an empire-builder whose disrespect for human rights and international law is laid bare in the Hyde and Stevenson hagiographies. Indeed, the Stephenson legend cultivated in popular non-fiction sits uncomfortably with his reputation for public service.<sup>25</sup> In the end, he is an embarrassing figure, whose activities reflect badly

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<sup>25</sup> A CSIS training school at Camp Borden is called the Sir William Stephenson Academy.

on national history as it is overtaken by more heterogeneous historical perspectives. On the other hand, it is worth attending to certain details that differentiate him from his contemporary, Tracy Philipps, that other embarrassing character discussed in chapter five.<sup>26</sup>

Where Philipps was shaped by experience with racial problems in the imperial governance of Africa and the Middle East, Stephenson's formation is marked by a particularly Canadian orientation to communications technologies. He must be seen as Canada's pioneer *polluter of distances*, in the sense that Paul Virilio identifies speed and the collapsing of distances by electronic communications as a site of ecological concern.<sup>27</sup> Not just a saboteur and propagandist by disposition, Stephenson dedicated himself to the *acceleration* of informatics, the collapsing of distance by electromagnetic means. An airman in World War One, he went on during the interwar years to make a fortune exploiting the invention of radio photo transmission, revolutionizing the global dissemination of visual information. Behind his interest in cryptography and wireless technologies was a pronounced will to television, and eventually, to surveillant telepresence. It was not as an intelligence specialist that Stephenson entered high circles of influence but rather as a telecommunications pioneer .

So, even if revisionists are right to reduce his contribution to the Gouzenko case to merely the provision of secure communications via the telekrypton machine and his HYDRA transmitter, it is arguable that these are not mere technical details. Stephenson was one of the first high priests of Cold War (dis)information and the electromagnetic forces that intercepted and disseminated it in Canada from the 1940s onwards, inuring its civic culture to regard electromagnetic-omnipresence as a zone of secrecy. Thus the prominent HYDRA antenna at the top-secret Camp X sabotage training centre near Oshawa, Ontario was explained away as a transmitter site of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.<sup>28</sup>

If public uneasiness regarding this migration of the human sensorium into the radio sphere did find expression, its only uncensored utterance came from the mentally-

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<sup>26</sup> NAC MG 30 E350, vol. 2, file 27. On 12 September 1946, in London, Philipps sent his copy of the Kellock-Taschereau report to "My Dear Lord Justice," writing that "[t]here is nothing surprising about the Report, except perhaps that the Canadians are surprised." He sent a copy to V.J. Kaye in Ottawa, adding, "Pity yr. street is not BEVIN!" (referring at once to Kaye's former address on Bavin St. and the political wilderness conservatives occupied while Ernest Bevin reigned in the foreign Office).

<sup>27</sup> Virilio, *Open Sky*, 40: "another area of research beckons: the area of *ecological pollution*. The pollution not only of air, water and other 'substances', but also of the unperceived pollution of 'distances' . . . we should be equally anxious to study this pollution . . . triggered by the growth of real-time technologies."

<sup>28</sup> Stafford, *Camp X*, 251; Hyde, *Room 3606*, 155.

disturbed. For example, the man who presented himself to the *Ottawa Journal* during the period just prior to Gouzenko's defection, warning of secret radio signals. Editor Ken Parks justified his failure to recognize the import of Gouzenko by recalling that "we had all kinds of nuts come into the office. We had one guy who used to come in and claim that they were watching him from an empty building across the street and putting electric waves on him."<sup>29</sup>

Was that man's paranoia so different than that of senior officials of the Department of External Affairs? In the years preceding the defection there was growing concern about a whole range of issues associated with invisible "electric waves." The Canadian government's success in intercepting and deciphering foreign wireless traffic, for example, was inversely proportional to its own officials' escalating paranoia regarding the security of their own communications. Lester Pearson wrote nervously from Washington to Norman Robertson in March, 1943:

We frequently suspect that the U.S. Censorship listens to and interferes with even calls between the Legation and Ottawa . . . . Quite apart from censorship, we suspect that some agency . . . listens in to our calls for intelligence purposes.<sup>30</sup>

After conferring with Tommy Stone, Robertson admitted he was resigned to the situation and "inclined to the view that it would be better not to bring this matter up with the United States authorities." Even if somehow forced to admit to such monitoring, J. Edgar Hoover was unlikely to accept any Canadian exemption when "we have reasonable evidence that the FBI goes to the point of monitoring calls from one United States Government agency to another in Washington."<sup>31</sup>

**. . . a little naive in England.**

Tommy Stone's absence from Elizabeth Harrison's painting is conspicuous. "I hardly need to tell you that if I can I shall thumb a ride on the first available aeroplane" he wrote in March 1944 to C.D. Jackson in London, although it was not until August that he slipped Norman Robertson's grip to become Canada's senior political warfare liaison in

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<sup>29</sup> Sawatsky, *Gouzenko*, 24.

<sup>30</sup> RG 25, vol. 5699, file 4-J(s), L.B. Pearson to N.A. Robertson, 2 December 1943; Robertson to Pearson ("Most Secret"), 9 November 1943.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

London.<sup>32</sup> Finding himself somewhat lost on the talent-crowded stage of Allied propaganda, Stone occupied himself lobbying his British and American counterparts to include Canadian content in their broadcasts and sought to persuade Ottawa to make more aggressive use of prisoners-of-war in propaganda activities.<sup>33</sup>

Soon after his arrival in London he met with John Grierson, inviting along the High Commission's enforcer, Campbell Moodie. Stone dispensed with the "my dear John" familiarity of his previous salutations and staked his turf as the Canadian propaganda coordinator in London. Grierson's private conversations with Sydney Bernstein, Chief of the Films Division for the Political Warfare Directorate, and former film director of the Ministry of Information, rankled Stone, who wrote to Robertson:

My impression is that between the two of them, they have worked out some kind of plan for the complete re-education of Europe through the medium of film and they decided the political thesis on which this education was to be based. You will notice that there is a tendency in the correspondence, of which I enclose copies, to discuss matters in which, to put it mildly, we should at least be informed.

Stone complained that Grierson "was as slippery as the proverbial eel . . . and it was difficult for me to get anything definite out of him as to the subject of these conversations."<sup>34</sup>

Stone's immediate superior was Vincent Massey, another anglophile susceptible to British honours and recognition. "My chief in London in this work, the High Commissioner, has asked me to convey an expression of his appreciation," Stone wrote to Robert Bruce Lockhart upon his departure in November, "Mr. Massey is, as you know, very interested in political warfare matters and in the development of a close liaison between London and Ottawa in this field." Dreaming of British honours, Massey's and Stone's "close liaison" did not ensure sensitive critical feedback to Norman Robertson. Rather their pawn-like availability to British political warfare objectives left them only dimly aware of British intentions. A young Captain with Intelligence and propaganda training who shouldered the actual liaison work for Stone was Mavor Moore, years later Chairman of the

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<sup>32</sup> RG 25, vol. 3217, file., 5353-AB-40, "Canadian Liaison," T.A. Stone to C.D. Jackson, 6 March 1944. Jackson (a Vice President of Time Inc.) served in London as Eisenhower's deputy for Political Warfare.

<sup>33</sup> Don Page, "Tommy Stone and Psychological Warfare in World War Two: Transforming a POW Liability into an Asset," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 16:3/4 (Fall-Winter, 1981): 110-119.

<sup>34</sup> RG 25, vol. 3217, file "NFB." Robertson issued a tepid remonstrance to Grierson requesting he keep External Affairs better advised of his activities.

Canada Council. He still marvels how Britain's propaganda coordinator Ivonne Kirkpatrick completely withheld from Stone that "MI5 engineered the whole [Rudolf Hess] caper."<sup>35</sup>

The Department of External Affairs' wartime Psychological Warfare records are shaded with such anglophilia. From London, Stone wrote to his deputy Glazebrook:

It was really very amusing about the [NFB] film called A MAN AND HIS JOB. After the film was over Walter Adams quietly remarked that, in view of the fact that they had had unemployment insurance in Germany since the time of Bismarck, and, in view of the fact that the present Deutscher Arbeitsfront had had, at least before the war, probably one of the best unemployment insurance organisations in any country, he doubted that German prisoners would be very impressed by the fact that Canada had instituted legislation to this end in 1940 and he felt rather inclined to the view that they might even make mock a little of the implication that Canada was a pioneer in this field. . . . [I]n parentheses, I would add that I do not think this picture should be shown outside of Canada. It is even a little naive in England.<sup>36</sup>

The Canadian ambition to enter the world arena of political warfare is a fascinating subject in itself, but it bears on the Gouzenko question precisely as an index of the diversion of Canadian intelligence officials from their own government's sovereign interests in this field. The Department of External Affairs' senior officer assigned to propaganda and intelligence, T.A. "Tommy" Stone, was primarily interested in expanding Canada's political warfare and propaganda in Europe, at the expense of domestic censorship and intelligence functions. Anglophilia, and a desire to be at what he perceived to be the centre of activity, blinded him and George Glazebrook to "realist lizards" lurking in their own camp. Thus, despite his presence on the night of the defection, Stone was absent from Ottawa during crucial counter-intelligence failures, adding to the lack of preparedness recorded in painter Elizabeth Harrison's perceptive brushwork.<sup>37</sup>

### *Explanans*

Clearly the Canadians were vulnerable, but what points favour the hypothesis that Gouzenko's defection was the product of a British Intelligence operation? Since *papier*

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<sup>35</sup> Mavor Moore, *Reinventing Myself*, 95-96.

<sup>36</sup> RG 25, vol. 3217, file 5353-V-40 "Co-operation of National Film Board with PWC," T. Stone to G. Glazebrook, 22 November 1944.

<sup>37</sup> NAC RG, vol 3211, file 5353-Z-40, T. Stone to N.A. Robertson, 15 August 1944. "The Russians are now attending the Central Directive meetings . . . Lockhart handles the Russians, of course, with great ability . . . He has opened all the possible files of the P.I.D. to the Russians . . . P.S. I should add that the General [Vassilieff] brought along with him this morning an extremely pretty and capable lady interpreter who introduced a note of sweetness and light into the meeting."

*mâché* history is crafted from mulched documents—so often the fate of security and intelligence records that reflect badly on the state concerned—direct empirical support for the hypothesis is unlikely to be found. If definitive records of prior British involvement in the Gouzenko defection exist they are out of reach, locked in classified British archival fonds. The argument must proceed by piecing together other traces, beginning with the rationale for such a brazen intervention, and by examining the pattern formed by closed and missing documents.

Why might the British Intelligence have wished to provoke an espionage crisis in Canada in 1945? An answer to this question forms as we understand that the *eminence grise* behind the defection was not William Stephenson, nor even Stewart Menzies per se, but rather Menzies's immediate superior, Winston Churchill, the wartime British Prime Minister whose appetite for covert operations was matched with long experience with security intelligence matters. As David Stafford demonstrates, Churchill's enthusiasm for dirty tricks and sabotage betrayed a certain immaturity and a "boy's own fiction" approach to the use of intelligence in high politics and war.<sup>38</sup> According to Stafford, operations directly inspired by Churchill tended to misfire, and if the present hypothesis is correct the Gouzenko defection failed in part because it did not produce instant publicity. On any longer view, though, the operation surely must be credited as a brilliant success.

In July 1945 Churchill's premiership ended in a surprise electoral defeat in part because the war-weary British public demurred from his strident claims that Soviet fifth columns were busily undermining the Western Alliance from within.<sup>39</sup> Out on the election stump Churchill found the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact forgiven or forgotten. Britons warmly credited the Red Army with absorbing the Axis blow and rallying valiantly to rout Hitler's forces. The most important personages graced the platforms at Soviet Friendship rallies.

On the other hand, it had been obvious to Churchill for many months that from Britain's perspective the West's postwar relations with the Soviet bloc ought to become defensive as soon as possible in order to curb growing Soviet influence. It appears he relished the thought of renewing the anti-Bolshevik *cordon sanitaire* policed by Menzies's organization during the interwar years. It was a policy that potentially lent new life to the Empire. But Churchill's paranoia and renewed militarism did not appeal to exhausted

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<sup>38</sup> David Stafford, *Churchill and Secret Service* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1997), 344. Churchill was "exceptionally well-acquainted with . . . intelligence techniques [and] grasped the importance of signals intelligence. Yet, by character excitable and impulsive, he was often mesmerized by the original texts of intercepts, irresistibly drawn into their tactical and operational use."

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 314-16.

Britons turning to rebuild a nearly bankrupt nation. Pertinent to the current hypothesis is this: Churchill's anti-Soviet election platform created a need to produce the right sort of hard evidence in support of his anti-Soviet fearmongering.

SIS chief Sir Stewart Menzies forged a close working relationship with Churchill during the crucial years of the war.<sup>40</sup> It was he who supplied the Prime Minister with daily ULTRA briefings on intercepts decoded at Bletchley Park. Churchill's at times amateurish interpretation of raw decrypts provoked irritation in the intelligence services and enmity towards Menzies for placing his personal influence with the Prime Minister above sound intelligence practice. By the summer of 1945, with Tito proving unmanageable in the Balkans and Stalin's cynical betrayal of the Polish Resistance, Churchill and Menzies both swung around to the familiar pre-war anti-Soviet stance. Internally, they began eliminating left-leaning elements in their own services as early as Spring 1944.<sup>41</sup> It is not unreasonable to expect that they also sought means to jolt public opinion and terminate the "Soviet friendship" movement in advance of the oncoming conflict.<sup>42</sup> Menzies's own pre-eminence in the British intelligence services hinged largely on his Prime Minister's continued success. Churchill's election rhetoric as well as his postwar policy outlook, placed an onus on both men to convince not just the British public but Britain's military allies of the presence in their midst of a subversive Soviet fifth column.

In his biography of Stewart Menzies, Anthony Cave-Brown states that "C" left London just twice during the war. The man who "never went anywhere beyond St. James's unless in the Imperial interest" flew to Algiers in 1942, climbed to a rooftop and heard the assassin's pistol fire three shots into the stomach of Admiral Darlan, below in a nearby building.<sup>43</sup> British protection of Darlan, roundly denounced by De Gaulle, had become an

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid. See also Anthony Cave Brown, *"C": The Secret Life of Stewart Menzies* (New York: Macmillan, 1987); Nigel West, *MI6: British Secret Intelligence Service Operations, 1909-45* (London: Granada, 1985).

<sup>41</sup> Thompson, *Beyond the Frontier*, 95. Churchill wrote on 6 April 1944 "[We] are weeding out remorselessly every single known Communist from all our secret organizations."

<sup>42</sup> VENONA traffic, 8-13 June 1945. Ciphred warnings alerted Soviet intelligence sections abroad, including Ottawa and Halifax, that a "foreign intelligence service has recently begun to show an unusually large amount of interest in Soviet diplomatic post and is setting itself the aim of trying to extract documents." Larry Black, "Canada and the Soviet Union in 1945," in Donaghy, ed., *Uncertain Horizons*, 285-304, argues that Moscow had already discounted the Canada-Soviet friendship movement because Canada's vulnerability to "intra-imperialist" tussles between Britain and the U.S. made an independent pro-Soviet stance out of the question.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., and Cave Brown, "C," 452.

embarrassment to Churchill in his dealings with the Americans. The unfortunate young assassin, led by his SIS handlers to believe his act would make him a national hero, instead met summary execution. That Stewart Menzies took personal interest in rectifying the Darlan situation has only one thing to do with Gouzenko: "C's" presence in Ottawa, too, on the day of what became the most sensational defection of the century. It brings to mind Peter Dwyer's Countess, who did not relish "anticipation which oversteps the limit of what is possible."

As it transpired, Churchill was out of office by the time Gouzenko absconded with his trove of secret documents and could have had no official knowledge of the defection. Perhaps the cipher clerk was as difficult for the SIS to handle before he defected as he proved to be afterwards for his RCMP keepers. Whatever the reason, the action came too late for Churchill's immediate electoral needs. Worse, the *Ottawa Journal* failed to seize the story, leaving an opening for Mackenzie King to put his clamp on it. There the matter rested, wrapped in secrecy.

It is possible that King continued to delay publicizing the matter after his October visit to Britain precisely because he suspected that Churchill had deliberately visited this nightmare on him. The Canadian Prime Minister found it odd that when he unofficially disclosed the above-top-secret case to Churchill in October, 1945, "it did not seem to take him by surprise."<sup>44</sup> Indeed, Churchill seemed better briefed than Attlee, the new Prime Minister, and mentioned his plan to make a speech "of some significance to British-American relations" in Fulton, Missouri. Churchill flattered King, telling him that other Canadian leaders were "as children" compared with him, adding a pointed message: publicize the Soviet espionage case as soon as possible.<sup>45</sup> On the contrary, King turned the situation to his advantage by using Gouzenko's disclosures to secure the top-level meetings from which Churchill had excluded him during the war.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> J.W. Pickersgill, ed., *The Mackenzie King Record, Vol. 3* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 84-86. On 26 October 1945. King wrote: "A little wine was served, and also some vodka . . . brought from Russia. Mrs. Churchill told the waiter not to use it, but to throw it out. She said brandy was a better substitute. It was clear that the vodka had been brought in with view to discussing Russian conditions."

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*; Whitaker and Marcuse, *Cold War Canada*, 39. Regarding King and security intelligence see Stafford, *Camp X*, 36: King was "unaware of the structure being created," indeed Charles Vining noted that he and Stephenson "knew that King would not allow a British operation to operate in Canada."

<sup>46</sup> Whitaker and Marcuse, *Cold War Canada*, 50-54, show that King wanted to dispose of the Gouzenko case quietly and with a minimum of publicity in December 1945, but was dissuaded from doing so by RCMP Commissioner S.T. Wood.

If rank and file Canadians were shocked when eventually they learned of the espionage cases six months following the defection, it cannot be said that the western intelligence community was unduly surprised. That NKVD and GRU networks were then operating abroad was well-understood within the British intelligence services, who indeed ran their own such networks, and routinely intercepted Soviet wireless communications. In the days leading up to Gouzenko's defection the Soviets noticed that the "greens"--western counter-intelligence agents--were trying to "turn" some of their sources, and about the same time the Americans were close to achieving "complete encirclement" of their New York Consulate.<sup>47</sup>

Yet if Churchill and Menzies perhaps possessed means to expose Soviet agents operating in Britain or in the United States, they shied away from anything so directly provocative. *Indirect* means to secure long-term British influence in American policy were preferable. Canada's "in-between" status as a junior partner in the Anglo-American alliance and its full integration in that alliance's media and propaganda circuits recommended Ottawa as the most appropriate setting for such an operation. Furthermore, Canada's counter-intelligence capability was disproportionately small in relation to the role its agencies then played in atomic research. To adapt Wesley Wark's phrase, Canada's "loss of innocence" in wartime security intelligence was ripe for a grand dénouement.<sup>48</sup> Inducing a Soviet defection in Canada under the noses of the RCMP presented little difficulty and relatively little risk. At worst, the Canadians would be taught a useful lesson in counter-espionage, at best it might accelerate a negative change in public attitudes against the Soviet Union.

### **This Was My Choice**

If Gouzenko was induced to defect by British operatives one would have thought that by now the secret would have emerged in secondary accounts. Not necessarily. Few would ever have known for sure, and disclosure of this fact would be especially resisted if Gouzenko, as has been suggested, brought with him more extensive code and cipher information than has been admitted. Such materials have farther-reaching implications than

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<sup>47</sup> VENONA traffic, September 1945. Four days prior to Gouzenko's defection Moscow was concerned that the informant DENDI "is being developed by the greens." On 16 Sept. the Soviet post in New York reported that "local intelligence means to achieve complete encirclement of the consulate. We are [subject] to great risk." An earlier defector, Krivitsky, already had exposed Soviet intelligence-gathering in America before his mysterious death in a New York hotel room. Kravchenko defected in 1944 from the Soviet Purchasing Mission, AMTORG.

<sup>48</sup> Wark, "Cryptographic Innocence."

simply his naming a number of informants. Indeed, as Bryden has speculated, such a code book may have provided the VENONA cryptographers with essential keys that accelerated their decryption of years of intercepted Soviet communications. Each government and security agency, including the GRU, had reasons not to press the matter.<sup>49</sup>

In terms of propaganda, disclosure of the full extent of the operation would have undermined the multi-faceted Gouzenko campaign to harden western attitudes against the Soviet Union.<sup>50</sup> The widely distributed Kellock-Taschereau Royal Commission Report attracted immediate international publicity, but over the longer term the Gouzenkos' serialized articles and books (Igor and Svetlana Gouzenko each published an autobiography in addition to Igor's novel), a Hollywood film, various television appearances and steady media coverage over the years added up to an unparalleled anti-Soviet propaganda coup.<sup>51</sup> As a result it was virtually impossible for anyone to be heard when they asked what seemed an obvious question: was Gouzenko's motto "This Was My Choice"--the title of his autobiography--an example of Orwellian double-speak?

Interviews conducted with Gouzenko's contemporaries in the 1980s by journalist John Sawatsy reveal that both *This Was My Choice* (1948) and Gouzenko's epic novel *The*

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<sup>49</sup> Bryden, *Best Kept Secret*; from the Soviet side, post-communist contributions such as Pavel and Anatoli Sudaplatov, with Jerold L. and Leona P. Schecter, *Special Tasks: The Memories of an Unwanted Witness--A Soviet Spymaster* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1994), 215, 217, raise the general level of uncertainty around Gouzenko. Sudaplatov recalls that the case "had deep repercussions," effectively blocking atomic espionage operations in the U.S. by the end of 1946. He remembers there was suspicion that the FBI, in order to mislead them, had falsified a cable from the Soviet Consulate Office in New York reporting Harry Gold meeting Klaus Fuchs at his sister's house.

<sup>50</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 4249, file 8531-d-40 pt.1, "Publication of Igor Gouzenko's Autobiography." Even as the espionage suspects were on trial, an approach to External Affairs by intelligence writer and anti-Soviet provocateur Isaac Don Levine, armed with an introduction from Sir George Sansom, British Far East intelligence expert, sought world rights on behalf of Reader's Digest and Putnams to ghost-write Gouzenko's autobiography. Despite the promise of international release and royalties of \$20,000-\$30,000, External Affairs' Hume Wrong judged the Russian-born Levine an inappropriate choice and thought "some native Canadian talent might be found." The RCMP's F.J. Mead preferred Gouzenko be kept in isolation, particularly from Levine, "for security reasons," but he encouraged External to seek a world-wide publishing deal for him.

<sup>51</sup> In brief: 1947 saw *Cosmopolitan* run a series of articles as well as Bernard Newman's *The Red Spider Web: The Story of Russian Spying in Canada* (London: Lattimer, 1947); Gouzenko's autobiography, *This Was My Choice*, appeared in 1948 along with Zanuck's film *The Iron Curtain*. 1954 saw Gouzenko's novel, *The Fall of a Titan*, appear and filmgoers heard him narrate the epilogue to Jack Alexander's *Operation Manhunt*. Svetlana Gouzenko's *Life Before Igor* appeared in 1960. In addition, the case was the subject of countless articles, television and radio programmes. In the 1950s the CBC was criticized in the press for not developing a television series based on Gouzenko's exploits.

*Fall of a Titan* (1954) were team efforts.<sup>52</sup> Various figures such as journalist A.W. “Andy” O’Brien and Mervyn Black, the RCMP’s chief Russian translator, wrote parts of these two seminal works of anti-Soviet propaganda. The bulk of *This Was My Choice* describes Igor’s upbringing and career prior to his assignment to Ottawa. In each episode Stalin’s brutal regime is laid bare, revealing communism to be a cynical ideological cloak for tyranny. The miserable condition of the Soviet people, half-starved and persecuted by Stalin’s secret police is matched only by their incomprehension of the true freedom available in the west, and their government’s implacable campaign to destroy it. Experiencing democratic life while stationed in Ottawa, it strikes Gouzenko that duty to his infant child obliges him to defect and to further the fight for freedom.

Certain facts are added to colour Gouzenko’s claim that he acted alone, impulsively, and at the last possible minute. For example, he is warned by Colonel Zabotin that British agents have arrived in Ottawa to assist the RCMP’s counter-intelligence efforts, and that “as a cipher clerk, the counter-espionage is liable to become interested in you and make life uncomfortable as well as dangerous.”<sup>53</sup> Other passages seem intent on explaining certain irregularities in his work habits prior to defecting. It is claimed he was meticulously careful in the suspicious Embassy environment, assiduous in his work, and often remained at his post after regular hours: “The tension was severe,” he wrote, “[w]e began locking up loose papers in the safe or in desk drawers even before leaving for a quick visit to the washroom. Several times I returned to the office after being nearly halfway home, just in case I had left some paper on or around my desk.”(236)

Where the autobiography is vague about what may have triggered Gouzenko’s recall to Moscow, Malcolm MacDonald’s memoir recalls that Gouzenko once accidentally left a secret document exposed on his desk, and although excused by GRU chief Zabotin, the charwoman (an NKVD watcher) spotted his omission and reported it to the “neighbours.”<sup>54</sup> The autobiography allows that Gouzenko overheard his colleagues

<sup>52</sup> Sawatsky, *Gouzenko: The Untold Story*, interviews with Andy O’Brien, Lydia Black, and esp. Don Fast, 140: “I would say Black wrote the book”; Igor Gouzenko, *The Fall of a Titan*, trans. Mervyn Black (New York: W.W. Norton, 1954), 140.

<sup>53</sup> Gouzenko, *This Was My Choice*, 201 (subsequent page references are as indicated); Chapman Pincher, *Too Secret, Too Long*, 112, reports that British counterintelligence officers visited Ottawa in late or early 1945, including Guy Liddell of MI5. Other shadowy visitors in 1944-45 included BSC’s Herbert Sichel, Peter Dwyer, and possibly “C’s” cousin and close associate, Rex Benson.

<sup>54</sup> Malcolm MacDonald, *People and Places* (London: Collins, 1969). See chapter fifteen, “The Gouzenko Affair”, 185. “According to the story I heard, he felt that the moment for his change of loyalty had arrived when an error which he made in the Embassy was discovered and reported to the powers-that-be in the Kremlin. By mistake he once left a

discussing Dr. Alan Nunn May's meeting in Montreal with his Soviet contact. Nunn May, he learned, was terrified because already he suspected he was being watched by the RCMP. Gouzenko's recall may have been simply a routine staff rotation, but the propaganda writers' intensification of detail around his handling of documents, the specifics of his work schedule, and allied counter-intelligence betray the *papier mâché* quality of disinformation. The questions forms of itself: had Gouzenko pilfered documents for the British prior to September 5th?

Letting pass the internal contradictions, exaggerations and paranoia that reduce *This Was My Choice* to the level of pulp history, it is important to note the efforts made to let no doubt accrue as to Gouzenko's motivation, to explain oddities in his behavior during the period before his defection, and to justify irregularities in his subsequent actions, not least his taking the story directly to the newspapers rather than to the police. He claimed to have feared the RCMP as much as he did the NKVD. Yet if truly he believed that Canada ran its own version of the Soviet police state, why defect? His information included no indication that he should fear Soviet penetration of the RCMP, although this possibility is given great play by William Stevenson. Gouzenko went to the *Ottawa Journal* first, I suggest, because his British handlers sought to detonate an anti-Soviet media explosion. If so, they were dupes of their own propaganda extolling the virtues of a free and unfettered Western press.

### The Propaganda Voice

In retrospect, the marks of multiple authorship in *This Was My Choice* are obvious. Perhaps they resist effacement because propaganda's public voice eradicates the writer's specificity. This autobiographic subject notably lacks either the "fictional" or "historical" truth that derives from a narrative having fine consistency with the communicative context of reading.<sup>55</sup> On one hand, the possibility for "fictional" truth in *This Was My Choice*

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secret document lying among various unimportant papers on his desk . . . . He reported the slip-up to his boss, the military Attaché, a certain Colonel Zabolin . . . a capable and genial man [who] held his tongue . . . . Unfortunately . . . the document . . . had been noticed by a certain significant female . . . the charlady . . . an agent of Moscow's Secret Police (the NKVD) . . . under . . . Vitali Pavlov."

<sup>55</sup> Ross Chambers, *Room For Maneuver: Reading [the] Oppositional [in] Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Gouzenko as "narrator" is a composite of propaganda writers whose ends can only be served by disproportionately accentuating Gouzenko as *narratee* rather than *narrator*. As the 'object' of the narrative, the character Gouzenko (i.e. the narratee) attains primacy over Gouzenko the 'subjective' narrator who tells the story. This splitting is a feature of any autobiographical text but the balance between narratee and narrator is upset in texts subordinated to propaganda imperatives.

evaporates in direct proportion to the difficulty of casting Gouzenko as a hero when equally he was a traitor and an informant.<sup>56</sup> To satisfy fictional truth in this case, the structure of myth requires that Gouzenko make some sacrifice, probably a fatal one, to fulfill the narrative. But Gouzenko, by his own admission, became “a small but happy pebble on the democratic beach,” adequately pensioned, “with the entire security system of a free country ranged solidly behind him.” (294, v)

On the other hand, even if the multi-authored “autobiography” misrepresents certain events, it never was intended to be read as fiction but rather as history. This points up the problem for characterization in propaganda: how to satisfy readers with the complex resonance of “historical truth” while still meeting propaganda objectives. Historians, unlike novelists, are ethically obliged to regard their historical characters *as actual subjects*. In the case of Gouzenko’s “autobiography,” the unethical aspects of his own characterization were not directly or solely detrimental to himself as a historical subject, but rather to *readers* drawn to misconstrue his true motivations. This suggests that disinformation is distinguishable from propaganda by the nature of change intended. Disinformation is directed against an object, person or organization in order to undermine, restrict or provoke some action affecting that object. In short, it meddles with *sovereignty of its object*. Propaganda, on the other hand, is specifically directed against *readers*. It seeks to reconstitute their subjectivity through their acts of reading.

The character “Igor Gouzenko” was the product both of disinformation and propaganda. The disinformation regarding his intentionality (i.e., exaggerating his volunteerism) was essential to the efficiency of the propaganda (i.e. persuading readers to view Gouzenko as a model for their own conduct). With intentions presumably consistent with those of the Canadian state, the authors fashioned a character who apparently without outside interference chose a dangerous course because he had come to believe in the liberal capitalist way of life in Canada. Yet, at the very least, the exposure of the specific disinformation concerning William Stephenson’s presence on the scene demands a reconsideration of the propaganda effect and the change it sought to produce in readers.

If this hypothesis is correct, the very emphasis placed on Gouzenko’s “choice” in *This Was My Choice* points to the heart of the deception: normalizing the forced choice of nationality in civic culture in order to collapse the space for dissent. The specific disinformation is incidental to this broader propaganda objective to cast progressivism as

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<sup>56</sup> Heros and villains here form an unstable pair. For example, there is no reason why Emma Woikin, Zabotin’s informant in the Department of External Affairs’ cipher room, and in a sense Gouzenko’s opposite number, should not be “heroic” from the Soviet perspective. See June Callwood, *Emma* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1984).

the folly of misrecognizing Soviet self-interest. Helping to package the loose coalition of social movements that constituted North American progressivism as *unpatriotic* was the central propaganda achievement of the Gouzenko case, even though it flew in the face of who Gouzenko was and what he had done.

Indeed, the character “Gouzenko” in *This Was My Choice* sits uneasily with the man described by friends and acquaintances. Leslie McKechnie came to know the defector well and later remarked, “I always wondered how he had the courage to defect. Because he didn’t look the type.”<sup>57</sup>

In his cabin on the *Queen Elizabeth*, steaming across the North Atlantic to America on the last day of October 1948, Mackenzie King “read for some little time from Gouzenko’s book ‘I Chose Freedom’”:

It is a book everyone should read. Very revealing . . . of Russian communist methods. The more I think of it, the more it seems to me that it has come about through Canada having opened her legations and subsequently Gouzenko’s actions and disclosures of what he saw in true Democracy in Canada, that our country would have been the spearhead to free the Nations of communist activity.<sup>58</sup>

King’s syntax leaves the meaning of this entry a little obscure. One gathers that after three years, he felt that he had recuperated the Gouzenko case for Canada’s national interest. The sting of surprise had settled into a tone of self-congratulation. Through a lucky chance King had seized the propaganda spearhead from the British and claimed for himself and for Canada the distinction of freeing “the Nations” from communist activity.

Further down the chain of responsibility, though, Lester Pearson and Bill Crean had treated the production of Gouzenko’s autobiography with great caution. Pearson thought Crean “would have to be pretty discreet” in disclosing information to the American publicists of the case, and counseled against providing any of them with direct access to the principals or to the primary documentation.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> John Sawatsky, *Gouzenko: The Untold Story*, 150. Propaganda expert James Eayrs (*ibid.*, 17) was impressed by Gouzenko’s “utter lack of self-knowledge.”

<sup>58</sup> NAC, W.L. Mackenzie King Diary, 31 October 1948. Microfiche T-261. It is strange that King should have confused Gouzenko’s *This Was My Choice* with Victor Kravchenko’s *I Chose Freedom: The Personal and Political Life of a Soviet Official* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1946).

<sup>59</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 4249. file 8531-D-40 pt. 1. G. Crean to L. Pearson, 7 October 1946.

## The Fall of a Titan

Gouzenko's novel *The Fall of a Titan* takes the same crude anti-Soviet propaganda line, but here it is underscored by an oblique self-reflexivity lacking in the autobiography published six years earlier. *The Fall of a Titan* won a Governor-General's Award for Gouzenko in 1954 and by any measure was a highly successful first novel.<sup>60</sup> Of particular interest here is its almost obsessive concern with the processing of disinformation in national history. Gouzenko's protagonist, Feodor Novikov, is a young historian whose spectacular rise to academic prominence is orchestrated by the NKVD.<sup>61</sup> He is not only their informant and operative, but he has no professional objections to "remaking history" for propaganda purposes.

During a Party official's speech, Gouzenko writes,

They all realized that they were present at the remaking of history. The expression on their faces became strange, not so much surprised as embarrassed, or perhaps wary . . . [For] after the remaking of history follows a purge . . . . Feverishly [Feodor] began to search his past for the least hint, for the smallest reason why he might be in the path of this remaking of history. But his whole career was concerned with ancient history; he had nothing to fear. He looked at Gorin with interest. "Will he swallow this lie like all the others?"<sup>62</sup>

The novel emits hints on one hand that history is subject to manipulation (suggesting implicitly that Gouzenko as author knew more than he told us about his own place in history) while on the other it rehistoricizes the Soviet project as a self-interested nation, conforming to the principle of nationality while disguising itself in a cloak of world communism. Gouzenko's readers learn not only that the Bolsheviks used Marxist ideology to mask their intense nationalism, but that they had done so from 1917 onwards. His conclusion? Any sympathy for Marxism in the West willy nilly supports not international socialism but the belligerent Russian nation state.

Feodor Novikov's ruthless intrigues outclass departmental politics in most universities, fictional or real. With NKVD help he navigates his "brilliant" thesis *On the*

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<sup>60</sup> The Governor General's Award for Fiction was administered by the Canadian Authors' Association. Shortly to be headed by Watson Kirkconnell, its former secretary, Eric Gaskell, was the PCO's coordinator of a shadow postal, telecom, broadcast and press censorship organization. The Chairman of the Governor General's Awards Committee in 1954 was Frank Stiling, University of Western Ontario.

<sup>61</sup> "Novikov" is also the name of the counsellor of the USSR's London embassy who reassured George Ignatieff in 1943 that the Comintern truly was defunct and Soviet diplomats were not its agents.

<sup>62</sup> Gouzenko, *The Fall of a Titan*, 136-37 (subsequent page references are as indicated).

*Sources and Origins of Ancient Slav Culture* past the ossified Academic Council to win lofty favour in the Politburo itself. Anticipating a shift in the Party's orientation, Novikov "proves" that the Russian Empire was born of an ancient Slav culture "conceived in the south of Russia" far from western influences. "While all the historians around him were still beating the old drum, Novikov suddenly introduced a new and startling rhythm," exposing the orthodox accounts as mere inventions and "fairy tales." (77)

Stalin is interested in Novikov's career: "Give him plenty of help. In everything," his deputies are told:

I know that many historians disparage him among themselves, because he is breaking the faith with established truth. But that, I think, is tommyrot. Truth! Truth! What good is it to people who have convictions? From people such as Novikov all young specialists should take an example. (219)

In the face of Stalin's endorsement, the University Director's former condescension and aloofness towards the neophyte lecturer quickly dissolves. The man fawns over Novikov, names him a Full Professor, and of course soon must hand over the Directorship. The price Novikov must pay for such swift ascent emerges in Stalin's ominous wish, conveyed through the NKVD, that he befriend the eminent writer and poet Mikhail Gorin. Novikov cynically courts and later rejects the poet's daughter, and in the novel's climax he suppresses self-disgust and obeys the instruction to murder Gorin. Thus falls the "Titan" of Russian letters who personified the conscience of the nation, brutally silenced by Stalin's favoured historian.<sup>63</sup>

With this ideologically-inverted Brechtian *verfremdungseffect*, Gouzenko's readers are estranged from Novikov, whom they witness suspending his humane and liberal inclinations. But by positioning the reader within Novikov's divided consciousness the text opens up an unintended reading of the historian's relations with the secret police, showing how each supports the other in propagating certain misrepresentations of the past. Irresistibly, for students of Canadian historiography, the novel brings to mind Prof. George Glazebrook, the University of Toronto historian whose ascendancy in Canada's intelligence-censorship-propaganda complex coincided with the novel's publication in 1954.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid. *The Fall of a Titan* plays on Stalin's rumoured order that writer Maxim Gorki be poisoned.

<sup>64</sup> The patchy records of the Canadian Authors Association, under whose auspices the Governor General's Awards Board operated in the 1950s, provide no insight into the 1954 selection process.

There is no available evidence that Glazebrook took a personal hand in the writing of *The Fall of a Titan*, but doubtless it was a matter of interest to him as Head of External Affairs' Defence Liaison (2), Director of Communications Security, and Chairman of the Psychological Warfare Committee. Prof. J.L. Granatstein, another historian with close ties to government, records a remarkable exchange with Glazebrook concerning his role during the wartime years:

The method of operation was that Stone and Glazebrook saw Robertson to seek his permission to do some particular job. Robertson offered his comments, almost always helpful, and assented or refused. Nothing was written down. Intelligence, said Glazebrook, "is handled like no other subject. It's purely personal and almost entirely oral."<sup>65</sup>

As the testament of a professional historian this is a remarkable statement. The historical value of "the purely personal and almost entirely oral" is weak at best.<sup>66</sup> Glazebrook's bare-faced lie to Sawatsky regarding the presence of William Stephenson at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club on Sept. 6th, 1945, changes its terms altogether: "I have a photographic memory of Robertson and Stephenson sitting on a sofa and Stephenson having this story told to him for the first time. Later on he went and hid behind the bushes, watching the building where Gouzenko was hiding."<sup>67</sup> With this statement Glazebrook disclosed a megalomania peculiar to certain historians which quests not for an omniscient "total history" but rather subverts and if necessary reinvents historical signs to *influence* events as well as to chronicle and interpret them. Like Gouzenko's Feodor Novikov, George Glazebrook secretly and audaciously blended his roles as historian and historical actor.

One of Gouzenko's minor characters Alexei is a "literary man" who only imperfectly controls his dissident impulses. Over dinner Alexei jabs at Feodor Novikov, "I have always thought that historians described revolutions but did not make them." Novikov agrees coldly that the "task of historians is to write about facts of the past, and not to imagine them." But, then, historians tend merely "to repeat each other," Novikov continues:

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<sup>65</sup> Granatstein, *Man of Influence*, 180.

<sup>66</sup> The phrase "purely oral" sits uncomfortably with the concessions which permitted Granatstein's "oral history" project to proceed in the first place. See page 283 note 17.

<sup>67</sup> Sawatsky, *Gouzenko*, 46-47.

As you know, frequent repetition is still not evidence of truth. Particularly when the disclosure of new historical facts--"

"Have you uncovered such facts?" Alexei asked him outright. Red spots suddenly appeared on his cheeks . . . .

"Yes some facts have been uncovered. But most of them were known long ago. Only they were concealed or presented in a distorted form. No, I haven't made any revolution. I have simply re-examined the facts."<sup>68</sup>

Feodor Novikov rises in the Academy of Soviet Russia because at once he controls the representation of the past while having direct access to forces that shape the future. His condescension toward Alexei and "literary people" in general is part of a deadly disciplinary rivalry coursing through *The Fall of a Titan*. Fatally, writers and poets are disconnected from the empirical realm, condemned to an endless and endlessly dangerous "sputtering of saliva and quotations of Shakespeare and Pushkin." (99) The disciplinary rivalry within the academy for influence with the state pits the emotive force of literature against the empirical and conceptual authority of social science. The coldly analytical Novikov encounters the passionate and moralistic Gorin over the chessboard to play out this disciplinary struggle between history and literature, witnessed by the architect Shchusev.

This "simple game of chess" becomes "a satanic game with fate itself," and Novikov's first move is to claim the game for his discipline: "History and chess," he remarks, "are very much alike." Gorin counters, pointing out that in history "all the moves have been made" whereas the essence of chess "lies in creative work, in the knowledge that one can alter its course. The game of history, unfortunately, one can only contemplate." Novikov responds by defending history as a science "always moving forward, developing and each day drawing nearer to its goal--the highest objectivity." History requires creativity, and not merely retrospective contemplation. Gorin is unmoved. He holds up a castle and asks, what can one do with facts except contemplate them? "Only in fantastic novels can scientists alter the past." Tiring of these maneuvers Novikov takes the upper hand both on the board and in the conversation with a move to doctrine: "Marxism defends Partyism from the historian, to understand it as the highest form of objectivity, to repudiate the acceptance of apparent facts." (191) Gorin is thus right to view historical facts as chess pieces to be "combined and moved around without end." The poet reacts defensively: "we writers, artists, what should we do?" Novikov is near to achieving checkmate, but verbally

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<sup>68</sup> Gouzenko, *Fall of a Titan*, 101-2. Mervyn Black's authorial hand may be detected in Alexei's suspension of his own writing for personal security reasons. Black's widow Lydia claims, in Sawatsky, *Gouzenko*, that her husband, a would-be writer, wrote parts of the novel as well as translating it. The character Alexei has found a "private haven" in translation where "he is required to decide nothing, nor to think for himself: the material . . . is selected, read and approved by a government official."

he relents slightly, allowing that “the intuition of the artist is sometimes worth the logic of the man of science.” But this does not appeal to the architect, Shchusev, who interjects that combining artistic intuition with precise historical procedure “wouldn’t be history, but porridge.”

The novel's engagement with the venerable problems of historical objectivity and history's relation to literature has greater sophistication than is required either for its plot or its propaganda message. Gouzenko introduces an intertextual dissonance that inevitably frets at the veracity of his own legend. This is exacerbated by making a literary hoax crucial to the novel's plot development. The discovery of a lost manuscript from 1907 miraculously proves Stalin's anticipation by two years of Lenin's thesis in *Materialism and Emperiocriticism*. The unveiling of Stalin's early treatise occurs in an atmosphere of strained belief at a gathering in a magnificent new archives, an edifice which Feodor Novikov suddenly understands was specially built for “the discovery of Stalin's work.” (139) Even the cynical Novikov marvels how “History is being changed before my eyes.” He cannot suppress theorizing about how the Soviet intelligence-censorship-propaganda complex has created a society where survival depends on dodging a scapegoating mechanism run amok. Moreover, he sees that whatever appears in the dubious realm of government information, *architecture* itself cannot lie. (117)

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Not everyone involved was prepared to go so far as George Glazebrook in propagating disinformation concerning the Gouzenko case. Malcolm MacDonald, former High Commissioner, does not affirm William Stephenson's presence but simply refers to “a senior figure in the British secret service.”<sup>69</sup> Charles Rivett-Carnac of the RCMP Special Branch is even more circumspect. His leaden and self-absorbed memoir *Pursuit in the Wilderness* contains just one quotation from another work, a lengthy passage setting out the circumstances of Gouzenko's defection in the words of none other than H. Montgomery Hyde, Stephenson's appointed scribe.<sup>70</sup> Other insiders such as Peter Dwyer chose to leave no written memoir of the case at all. In his 1952 course for security officers he allowed that Colonel Zabotin was overconfident in believing he could safely run agents directly, without employing an “illegal resident” to act as intermediary.<sup>71</sup> Dwyer's only

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<sup>69</sup> MacDonald, *People and Places*, 189.

<sup>70</sup> Charles Rivett Carnac, *Pursuit in the Wilderness* (London: Jarrold's, 1967), 304.

<sup>71</sup> Solicitor General, ATIP, Security Panel Document SP-121, Peter Dwyer, “The Soviet Secret Intelligence Services: A Guidance for Security Officers,” 3 May 1952, 10.

public comment occurred in a 1960s television interview, and his remark is curious in light of Gouzenko's fascination with the use of toilet tanks in public washrooms as dead letter drops, and Dwyer's penchant for coded allegory. Yes, Dwyer grinned, Gouzenko had information that led to the arrest of Alan Nunn May, but "the rest was crap."<sup>72</sup>

### Primary Records

If the secondary accounts leave some doubt as to the reliability of Gouzenko's story, available primary records weaken it further. These records will be treated as three classes: inconsistencies, hidden agendas, and absences.

#### a) Inconsistencies:

Amongst the files I was given by accident in April 1997 at the National Archives of Canada was a file called "Request of U.S. Sub-Committee on Internal Security to interview Igor Gouzenko."<sup>73</sup> Pearson, as we saw in chapter seven, was forced to capitulate to the Americans' request, but it was a Pyrrhic victory for Jenner's publicity-hungry Sub-Committee. With little choice but to accept the Canadians' terms, they met Gouzenko in conditions of utter secrecy and under a media blackout. The American investigators agreed to limitations on the nature of their questions, and to the mediation of Gouzenko's responses through the auspices of a Canadian Chairman. The venue provided by the Canadians for the meeting was the Seignior Club at Montebello, Quebec, but more specifically, the Manoir Papineau, the old Seignior itself nestled in the tall pines on a point a few hundred yards downstream from the famous Chateau.

The Chateau Montebello is an architectural curio, a massive log structure with a central vaulting tower with bedroom wings projecting off like spokes from the hub of a wheel. It was built in 1930 almost exactly on the original penitentiary plan, an elaboration of Bentham's panopticon design that permitted surveillance from the centre tower down each corridor of cells. Of course, this floor plan was the Chateau's only resemblance to a penal environment. With its famous golf course and wilderness hunting range, in every other respect it was a luxurious and highly exclusive resort. Exclusive to the point that the

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<sup>72</sup> June Callwood, *Emma*, 124. Chapman Pincher, *Too Secret, Too Long*, 626, quotes a letter from Gouzenko to the RCMP dated 6 May 1952 stating that "the favorite places for a dubok [dead letter drop] are . . . toilets (inside the water tank )."

<sup>73</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 8561, file 50302-40.

membership page in its handsome promotional booklet stated outright that “racial and social restrictions apply.”<sup>74</sup>

During the war anti-Semitism marred the Seignior Club visits of American high officials, and the policy persisted even in 1962.<sup>75</sup> Throughout the Cold War an annual Meeting on Canadian Information Abroad was sponsored at the Seignior Club by the Information Division of External Affairs. These luxurious encounters of thirty or forty top communications officers, held in secret, refined the government information officials’ personal contacts in the realm of news media and corporate communications. At the 1962 meeting *Star Weekly* Editor John Clare voiced a concern that cropped up from time to time over the years, calling it “ironically inappropriate for a conference called to discuss Canada’s image abroad to meet in a club that does not welcome Canadians of all religions and racial backgrounds.” Nothing was said about this in the keynote address delivered by External Affairs veteran Marcel Cadieux, but Clare added, facetiously: “perhaps it is a good idea that the proceedings are secret, in case word of this somehow got overseas and became part of our image.”<sup>76</sup>

Chad Gaffield’s description of Eastern Ontario as the “buckle of the bilingual belt” is an apt phrase, but geographically misplaced insofar as these elites were concerned.<sup>77</sup> The intersection of French and English political rationalities occurred rather on the north side of the Ottawa River in the Seignior Club. The exclusivity of that Club, and also its American origins and affiliations, fused a socio-political accommodation in which French-English differences receded in favour of complacent class interests and corporate dynastic genealogies. The companionable qualities of secrecy and exclusivity made Montebello a wilderness annex of metropolitan clubland, and a haven for the Intelligence brethren.

It would be possible to pass over these unpleasant aspects of the Chateau Montebello, whose days of extreme exclusivity ended when the operation was taken over by Canadian Pacific in 1970, had it not served as base camp for the Gouzenko adventure. The

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<sup>74</sup> “Presenting the Seignior Club in the Province of Quebec,” undated booklet ca. 1935, National Library of Canada.

<sup>75</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 5758, file 81(s), “Anti-Semitism Re Reception of Mr. Sol Bloom at Seignior Club [sic]”.

<sup>76</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 5220, file 8100-F-4-40 pt. 5, Report of Conference 8-9- November 1962.

<sup>77</sup> Chad Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict: the Origins of the French-Language Controversy in Ontario* (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987), xiv; Brooke Claxton, “La Petite Nation and the Papineaus: Background to the Seignior Club,” (mimeographed booklet, 1957, National Library of Canada).

decision to interview Gouzenko at the Seignior Club in December 1953 may seem oddly familiar in that it was where SIS Chief Stewart Menzies was installed at the time of the 1945 defection.<sup>78</sup> In 1953 it presented obvious advantages of comfort, seclusion, security and close proximity to Ottawa (it was an easy two-hour drive), but still well outside the twenty-five mile radius around Ottawa beyond which Soviet Embassy staff required permission to travel. It had the merit, too, of special secure phone lines running direct to the East Block in Ottawa, whose privacy was ensured by Bell Canada.<sup>79</sup>

By the time Igor Gouzenko arrived at Montebello in an RCMP motorcade he was highly agitated and fearful that an attempt would be made on his life. His insistence first on bringing a young student with him from Toronto as a witness, and then switching cars just before entering the Montebello grounds struck his RCMP handlers as bizarre precautions. One wonders if he truly feared assassination by his former *Soviet* employers.<sup>80</sup> As it turned out, he arrived without incident. After keeping the assembly waiting for some minutes he finally took his place at one end of a table presided over by a Canadian judge, flanked by grim-faced Bill Crean. The Americans had accepted Pearson's condition that only Senators Jenner and McCarran and their counsel Robert Morris attend; the RCMP was represented by Mark McClung, and Justice Department official David Mundell.<sup>81</sup>

Later McClung scoffed that the entire process was an embarrassment and that Gouzenko, as predicted, had absolutely nothing new to add.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, the transcript of the proceedings records a very different Gouzenko from the assertive man portrayed in the Kellock-Taschereau Report. Shy, faltering and mumbling, the only point he seemed intent on making was that richer incentives would surely entice more Soviet embassy staff members to defect. Hardly riveting testimony from a man who had shaken the world seven years earlier. That is, except for one small inconsistency. At one point Gouzenko blurted out

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<sup>78</sup> Bryden, *Best Kept Secret*, 273, reports that Menzies, regular member #145, joined the Seignior Club on 22 September 1940.

<sup>79</sup> NAC RG 2, Acc. 1990-91/154, Box 7, file "Bell Canada"; RG 2, Vol 239, file U-15-USSR-Offl., A.D.P. Heeney to L. St. Laurent, 7 March 1952. Soviet Embassy staff were restricted to a twenty-five mile radius of Ottawa in retaliation for similar restrictions on Canadian diplomats in Moscow.

<sup>80</sup> Sawastky, *Gouzenko*, 135-40.

<sup>81</sup> M. McClung, interview by Sawastky, *Gouzenko*, 136-37, drafted a speech to be used in case Gouzenko "disappears . . . I was given access to all the Gouzenko files. It was fascinating . . . so we drafted a speech which exposed him for what he was." Mundell was involved in the spy trials, and with R.G. Robertson drafted the 1946 Citizenship Act .

<sup>82</sup> M. McClung, interviewed by James Littleton, ca. 1981, NAC CAVA 1987-0416.

that he had told “them”—a group whose identity passed unspecified—that “they must to go in and get the other cipher clerk.” That is, as the GRU’s clerk, Gouzenko had no access to NKVD traffic. Soviet espionage in Canada would have suffered an even more severe setback, he said, if Vitali Pavlov’s cipher clerk Farafontov had been induced to reveal the NKVD’s networks.<sup>83</sup>

Two questions are likely to strike the reader of this testimony: when could Gouzenko have made this suggestion except *before* his defection? And to who might “them” refer except the British Intelligence? Once Gouzenko fled the cipher room with secret documents it was nonsensical to suggest either to the RCMP or to anyone else that a second cipher clerk might be induced to defect from the same embassy. Gouzenko’s statement at Montebello is intelligible only if it referred to a discussion prior to the defection, and it recalls obvious seams in Gouzenko’s testimony before the Kellock-Taschereau Royal Commission in May 1946. In one instance, speaking through RCMP interpreter Mervyn Black, Gouzenko responded to the Commissioners’ invitation to ask any questions or introduce any other matters not already raised in the proceedings:

Gouzenko: I can’t think of anything now . . . but just something occurred in my mind which I told Mr. Black I wished to tell you, and to tell people. I still worry, and I just expressed surprise to Mr. Black that there were not taken steps to expose the NKVD system and other systems.

Q. What steps would you have in mind?

MR. COMMISSIONER TASCHEREAU: Mr. Williams, I think if the witness tells us exactly what he knows about the NKVD, as to steps, we will see to that.

THE WITNESS: Of course I do not think it is up to the Commission. First I asked Mr. Black to arrange some more or less private conversations--

MR. COMMISSIONER TASCHEREAU: I would not like to hear the witness on that, I think, Mr. Williams.<sup>84</sup>

Taschereau cut short Gouzenko before he ventured into a more secret layer of discourse than is reflected in these transcripts, themselves ‘top secret’ and not released for thirty-five years. The second Commissioner, Kellock, subsequently steered the question of NKVD cipher clerks off in a harmless direction.

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<sup>83</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 8561, file 50302-40; Gouzenko, *This Was My Choice*, 220. Farafontov’s presence among the four Soviets who broke into Gouzenko’s apartment raises the question of whether or not Gouzenko *did* take NKVD as well as GRU material.

<sup>84</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 2620, file 7-1-5-7, Volume 48, 5280, proceedings of 15-17 May 1946.

Is it plausible that Gouzenko suggested his idea of turning an NKVD cipher clerk to someone prior to September 5th, 1945? It seems likely that he did.<sup>85</sup> That it might have been an agent of the Canadian government hardly seems possible. From all the available evidence the surprise of Canadian officials on all levels was too genuine, as was their initial reluctance even to accept Gouzenko into custody. Given the architecture of the situation it is difficult to imagine that the relevant party was of any other stripe than British.

The British Mission celebrated the opening of the Canadian Parliament with an Earnescliff garden party on the afternoon of September 7th, 1945. The previous night Pavlov and the others had broken into Gouzenko's apartment during their futile search for the cipher clerk and his stolen papers, only to be chased off by Ottawa Police. The next day, High Commissioner Malcolm MacDonald greeted the Soviet Ambassador Zaroubin: "You look as if you'd been out fishing all night. The fish can't have been biting." MacDonald records that Pavlov, who was accompanying the Ambassador "looked startled."<sup>86</sup> This supercilious remark always has been explained away merely as MacDonald's uncanny power of observation. By his own account, he did not know about the defection until Norman Robertson's phone message reached him "a few minutes later." Or, is it yet another instance of anticipation which oversteps the limit of what is possible?

b) hidden agendas:

Next are the deeper implications of Peter Dwyer's backstage activities in Ottawa in January 1946 concerning Harry Dexter White. The previous chapter exposed once and for all that Dwyer was the mysterious "Canadian" source who tipped off J. Edgar Hoover regarding White's impending promotion. This new fact suggests several points.

1. Foremost, it shows that Dwyer was pursuing an agenda evidently not known in top Canadian intelligence circles. True, the text of the telegram that he instructed Geraldine Dack to show to the FBI's Lish Whitson in Washington indicates that Dwyer perhaps confided privately in some RCMP counterpart. Yet Commissioner "Nick" Nicholson maintained closer relations to the External Affairs' intelligence set-up than did other

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<sup>85</sup> Bill MacDonald, *The True Intrepid: Sir William Stephenson and the Unknown Agents* (Surrey: Timberholme, 1998), 176. In New York, Jean Peacock was retained by BSC to operate the coding machine after other staff had departed in 1945. She told MacDonald that "I was the only one left . . . and they apparently got worried that there was a message coming through, and it was about Gouzenko." She went back "two or three times and decoded the messages about Gouzenko . . . and that was in August or September, I guess it was in September." Or was it both?

<sup>86</sup> MacDonald, *People and Places*, 183.

Commissioners, and undoubtedly he was truthful in his memorandum to Pearson professing the RCMP's inability to trace the information. Within the Department of External Affairs, as well, the Harry Dexter White intrigue clearly came as a surprise to Norman Robertson, Arnold Smith, George Glazebrook and Bill Crean. The crucial point is that in January 1946 when Dwyer sent the communication to the FBI through Miss Dack he was in almost daily contact with these four Canadian officials. Why did he conceal it from them? When finally he admitted to sending the telex, why was his memory so faulty?

One possible answer to this riddle is that Dwyer could not reveal the source of the Harry Dexter White information without confirming that some earlier contact with Gouzenko had occurred. If the British initially withheld any information passed to them by the cipher clerk prior to September 5th, 1945, this material could not subsequently be introduced into the ongoing Canadian inquiries. Arnold Smith was so puzzled by this inconsistency that he had the RCMP double check that White's name never appeared in the evidence, particularly Israel Halperin's notebook. Dwyer's incomplete recollection of the exact circumstances of the Dexter White telegram, and his careful suggestion that it perhaps was inspired by Sir William Stephenson, invites further reading between the lines.

By 1953 it is safe to assume that at least Pearson, St. Laurent, Robertson, Pickersgill, Stone and Glazebrook would have known or else strongly suspected that an ulterior British hand lay behind Gouzenko's defection. Others around them might have deduced the fact, too. The tone of Crean's telex to "C" is formal to the point of reproof, as if to say "devil take you and your devious schemes," while of course leaving no doubt they would protect the secret. If this tiny handful of Ottawa officials had become keepers of Britain's Gouzenko secret it explains their consternation when possible connections between Harry Dexter White and Igor Gouzenko were mooted openly in the press in November 1953. The seriousness was such that Norman Robertson rushed home from London to help manage the crisis. Robertson brought only one thing not already available to Pearson and his competent team of senior officials: an encyclopedic grasp of the true facts of Gouzenko case as opposed to the layers of disinformation it had accumulated. Robertson was best equipped to sort out the myriad implications for Canada's foreign relations if unfriendly elements south of the border somehow prodded Gouzenko to reveal these concealed facts.

The tone of irritation in the telegram to "C" is consistent with the sting Robertson must have felt from the very moment he began to equate Menzies's presence at the Seignior Club on September 6th, 1945, with having been the dupe of British SIS in his own capital. If Robertson nearly suffered a nervous breakdown over the Gouzenko defection, it must have come as a shock in 1953 to learn that Peter Dwyer, his hand-picked

internal security coordinator, had kept him in the dark about Harry Dexter White in 1946. On the other hand, Pearson's gentle treatment of Peter Dwyer suggests that a view was taken that Dwyer had merely followed orders, a pawn in a deeper game than even he could have fully understood at the time.

2. In another file in External Affairs's top secret "small 's'" series is a brief correspondence that again evokes the "'state' within the state," wherein madness lifts constraints on truthspeaking. In the "Klaus Julius Emil Fuchs" file are three handwritten letters dated in May 1950 in which an unemployed aviation mechanic, James Stephens, of 931 Cathedral St. in Montreal, claimed to have secret knowledge of the Gouzenko case.<sup>87</sup>

Stephens read in the newspaper that a British M.P. had demanded to know why British Security Services failed to notice Klaus Fuchs's name when it first surfaced in the Gouzenko evidence, and if perhaps the Canadian government had suppressed this information. Stephens wrote to Lester Pearson advising him that the British knew more than they were saying, because he had supplied them with a crucial piece of intelligence prior to September, 1945:

Allow me to inform you that Scotland Yard got their information from Somerset House. From a friend of mine who was a clerk there. I told him that the top men who the government was employing for Atomic Energy Research would still have their hatred for the British and would he consult his chief at Somerset House to ask Scotland Yard to have them watch. [As] he would make one false move and they would have to watch him for a long time as he would go to the Russian Embassy. And then to go in and get him. My friend name was William Hoitt. Now the denial of the Labour Attorney General in the British House of Commons that no information had been obtain from Canada (Written in Hansard) And then his retraction of that statement for the benefit of the Intelligence Service afterwards [is] stealing another cake. As I am the man who told to consult his chief at Somerset House. I am the writer of the letter that went through the post (Censor) to Bristol and on to Scotland Yard. When the present Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Mr. St. Laurent was Minister of Internal and External Affairs in the Rt. Hon. Mackenzie King's Government. The substance of the letter was written thus.

Dear Lilian and Clara

Etc. Etc. Etc.

Stop

[large "z" figure]

Commence.

Now the Russians are getting hold of the Atomic Energy Secrets. And theirs a Canadian Member of Parliament envolved in it, and others. And if they want any

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<sup>87</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 4482, file 50026-40. James Stephens to Lester Pearson, 3 May 1950 and two subsequent undated letters.

more information they will have to go in and get the Russian Chyper Clerk. As theirs not a Socialist or Communist has cannot be bought by a good job or Gold. You can let Scotland Yard have this letter if you like. Hoping everything is alright in Bristol.

\_\_\_\_\_ [line in original]

Now I went to the R.C.M.P and ask the Serg. in charge of the subservid squad to get me an interview with Chief Commissioner. But he refused. As he stated if I had read the papers I would have read that they caught him going round to Newspaper Editors offering the information. But the present Prime Minister know's where the real information came from. And the Serg. ask me to bring him some nice cake like that.

Well if Canada can look after a Russian, Canada can certainly help me.<sup>88</sup>

George Glazebrook did not file his initial reply to this strange missive. Whatever he wrote did not satisfy Stephens, who provided further "cake" in a second letter stating his knowledge that secret wireless personnel were trained at "the old Restanton Home on Queen Mary Road." Stephens believed that his wartime achievements warranted Pearson's obtaining him employment, as his benefit was shortly to run out. Replying over Arnold Heeney's signature, Glazebrook suggested that Stephens "get in touch with the local office of the Department of Labour."<sup>89</sup>

Glazebrook's brush-off of Stephens as a crank is not surprising. If a kernel of truth lay behind Stephens's allegations he clearly was not a man who would be widely believed. On the other hand, Glazebrook handled the matter personally during a very busy period. Moreover, he took the precaution of placing Stephens's letters on a top secret file rather than in a file for crank correspondence. This "top secret" designation removed the letters to the highest category of confidentiality. He assigned them to his working file on the Klaus Fuchs case.

James Stephens's correspondence arrived at a most irritating moment for Glazebrook, just as he was sifting through departmental files in an attempt to piece together the Canadian government's acquisition of knowledge concerning Klaus Fuchs and his activities. It had become public knowledge that Fuchs's name had appeared in Israel Halperin's notebook, seized during the Gouzenko espionage inquiries in 1946.<sup>90</sup> This information cast further doubts on the reliability of MI5 and MI6, whose remaining

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 3 May 1950. Spelling and syntax unaltered.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. A.D.P. Heeney to J. Stephens, 16 February 1951.

<sup>90</sup> Halperin was acquitted. See Paul Dufour, "'Eggheads' and Espionage: The Gouzenko Affair in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 16:3/4 (Fall/Winter, 1981): 188-98.

credibility with the Americans would soon evaporate following the sudden disappearances of Soviet moles Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean in 1951. Had the Canadian government failed to pass on Fuchs's name in 1946? If it had been passed on, why had the British failed to pick up on the connection and left Fuchs in place until late 1949? Pearson fielded such questions while Glazebrook rifled the files searching for facts. Oddly enough, MI5 staff in London were unable to find references to Halperin's notebook in their own files. The British Foreign Office formally requested clarification from the Canadian Department of External Affairs regarding what, if any, information from the notebook was provided to their own intelligence services during the espionage inquiries.

As best as Glazebrook could discern, Peter Dwyer and Lish Whitson, the FBI's counter-intelligence man, were apprised of and given free access to the notebook throughout the inquiries. As the Canadians were not party to the actual reports sent back to London or Washington he could not determine if Fuchs's name had been noticed. It was pointed out that evidence seized from the suspects filled an entire room. If in retrospect the notebook entry of Fuchs's name seemed an obvious oversight, at the time it was just one particular in a huge assemblage of data. Only later, after decrypts permitted Dwyer and his associates to deduce Fuchs's guilt, did it stand out from the background. This rather inadequate explanation was the best Glazebrook could offer.

There is a circular connection between Dwyer's use of decrypts in the Fuchs case in 1949 and Gouzenko's presumed assistance in breaking Soviet ciphers after 1945. Stephens's correspondence touched on both matters, although his central claim was to have supplied British authorities with the tip regarding the cipher clerk. Was Glazebrook aware of the extent to which Gouzenko's cipher information contributed to the eventual capture of Fuchs? If so, he knew that disclosures linking Gouzenko to Fuchs's capture risked exposing the extent of Soviet vulnerability to Western cryptography. At that moment, the possibility of Stephens reopening the Gouzenko case, even if the chances were remote, was treated seriously by Glazebrook in the immediate context of the Fuchs case.

c) Absences and withholding:

The status of government information concerning the Gouzenko affair might best be described as one of selective withholding. Files recording attitudes and decisions of key Canadian officials in the RCMP, the Privy Council Office, the Prime Minister's Office and the Departments of Justice and External Affairs even after fifty years simply are not available. On the other hand, there is a surfeit of relatively innocuous material, some of it published by Professors Bothwell and Granatstein in *The Gouzenko Transcripts*. Certain files have been opened that provide insight into the Gouzenko propaganda phenomenon,

such as 20th Century Fox's securing film rights to film the Gouzenko story as *The Iron Curtain*.<sup>91</sup> A slender file exists concerning Igor Gouzenko's autobiography, but it ceases before the crucial period during which the text was written and published.<sup>92</sup> Where are the files containing the traffic between the Canadian principals involved in the case: Norman Robertson, G.G. Crean, George Glazebrook, Tommy Stone and Charles Rivett-Carnac, not to mention Dwyer and Whitson?<sup>93</sup> The pattern of documentary release suggests that elements of the story have been withheld.<sup>94</sup>

While Glazebrook and Robertson have loomed large in this account, the third Canadian official in Elizabeth Harrison's painting, Jack Pickersgill has remained in the background. Pickersgill's significance to the case lies in his proximity to Mackenzie King, a Prime Minister who preferred to remain uninformed of the detail of intelligence and security. Pickersgill fielded such matters for the Prime Minister and it was he who supervised the editing of King's diary for publication of the *Mackenzie King Record* after

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<sup>91</sup> For a full account of Daryl Zanuck's commandeering of Gouzenko's story see Daniel J. Leab, "'The Iron Curtain' (1948): Hollywood's first Cold War movie," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 8:2 (1988): 153-88. Leab shows that former OSS Chief William "Wild Bill" Donovan attempted to have Gouzenko sign with literary agent Gertrude Algase; In NAC RG 25, vol. 5783, file 219-B(s), "Negotiations With 20th Century Fox for Film Rights, etc., involving Igor Gouzenko," G.G. Crean and L.B. Pearson were reluctant to supply Zanuck with direct assistance or information. Curiously, Crean advised Pearson that the suggestion of Algase as Gouzenko's literary agent came not from Donovan but "Mr. Stephenson," presumably Sir William Stephenson.

<sup>92</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 4249, file 8531-d-40 pt.1, "Publication of Igor Gouzenko's Autobiography." In this case, Isaac Don Levine sought to act as ghost writer for Gouzenko.

<sup>93</sup> Another key participant was NRC President C.J. Mackenzie. According to his diary, he learned of the defection several days later. Diary entries proceed as usual throughout the period, but there is a conspicuous three week gap in his correspondence file (NAC MG 30 B 122, vol. 3, file 5-2) beginning on *August 28th*. Thirty to forty pages of correspondence typically were generated by the NRC chief in any three-week span. They are missing; the file resumes Sept. 25th, with a letter to Sir John Cockcroft about vetting all atomic-related press statements. In this light, the exact date of the atomic research director Cockcroft's clandestine night visit to Ottawa from Montreal to be briefed on Alan Nunn May's duplicity is crucial. Malcolm MacDonald, *People and Places*, 192, does not explain why *he* (and not C.J. Mackenzie, Cockcroft's nominal superior) should have been the one to notify Cockcroft. It is possible the missing correspondence contains traces of Cockcroft's activities during the week prior to the defection on September 5th which might inadvertently telegraph Cockcroft's advance knowledge of Nunn May's duplicity.

<sup>94</sup> James Barros, "Alger Hiss and Harry Dexter White," fn. 28: "I cannot help but note that Gouzenko's file in the State Department's name index file for 1945-50 (National Archives, Washington) may have been tampered with . . . The initial FBI reports from Washington were indexed—the index cards have now been removed from the file."

King's death in 1950. If there is one person who was familiar with the entire contents of King's diary it was Pickersgill.

It has long been known to scholars that Pickersgill's edition of Mackenzie King's diary glosses various events and withholds a certain amount of material in order to downplay King's eccentricities. Now that the unexpurgated diary is available, it is possible to wade through the King's punctilious and candid chronicle of his activities over a period of decades. Of the entire span only the folders containing November 10th to December 31st, 1945, are missing. This blanks out that most crucial period of King's role in the Gouzenko investigation, after he traveled to England and the United States to confer with British Prime Minister Clement Attlee and American President, Harry Truman. The removal of these diaries—reportedly by Pickersgill himself—is surely significant to the pattern of absence in the existing documents. How tenable are the conflicting explanations that circulate: a) that the folder was removed and destroyed because the elderly Prime Minister at the relevant dates was intensely paranoid, seeing a Soviet spy in every associate, or b) that he was trying to make a secret deal with the Soviets to bury the case? Even if King did enter a phase of extreme vacillation, these explanations are implausible. The *Mackenzie King Record* was pruned carefully precisely to withhold even more embarrassing details. It is reasonable to suggest that the material in that folder was compromising on a larger scale to have warranted its permanent removal or destruction.

To understand the pattern of absent documents perhaps it is useful to examine King's actions, or rather his pattern of inaction. From the beginning, the Prime Minister wanted no part of Gouzenko, innate caution warned him away from all the implications the cipher clerk's defection presented to the Canadian government. Yet the extended delay before authorizing the RCMP to round up the suspects, against all British advice, hints that another quality in Mackenzie King took precedence: that maddeningly recessive intransigence that made him a crafty leader, one who took the necessary actions but not necessarily the actions expected. He may once again have turned the tables on an opponent. Recall that the Gouzenko story was forced into the open only when Washington columnist Drew Pearson was leaked details of the case just days before Churchill's Missouri address; left to King's discretion the matter would have dragged on in secrecy. King may have confided excessively paranoid views to his diary, while trying to dispose of the case quietly; it is also possible he understood perfectly that only a fluke had frustrated the British plan for Gouzenko to receive instant publicity. If this was the case, prolonging his own importance and centrality in the case as well as Churchill's frustration became his policy, a policy perhaps recorded with a degree of satisfaction in the missing pages of his diary.

## Explanandum?

An objection to the hypothesis presented above is the lack of decisive empirical corroboration. I have tugged at the corners. But the same objection applies equally to the official version of the story. Exactly the same classified documents must be released to clarify if Gouzenko acted alone or with outside connivance. In the absence of direct evidence, the circumstantial evidence better supports the hypothesis that Gouzenko did not "spring forth unarmed." Indeed, the disinformation circulated by George Glazebrook and William Stephenson, and repeated slavishly in Canadian historiography, fatally taints the received version of events.

The disinformation casts doubt not only the content of their accounts into question but also their form. In terms of content, British orchestration of Gouzenko's defection ought to form a working premise pending the release of further information. Formally, the historiography that sedimented the Gouzenko myth in civic memory must be analyzed as a discursive formation that performed specific ideological work within the *dispositif* of postwar cultural nationalism.

Indeed, repossessing this inaugural event in Canadian Cold War discourse might unblock the excavation of alternative histories its propaganda helped to suppress and futures it helped to avert. Taken as a set of outcomes, social discourse is, to borrow from Gouzenko, an architecture that cannot lie. The re-examination of this suppressed past and the alternate futures it displaced begins not with apologetics for Soviet Marxism but rather with critiquing the architecture of the Canadian cultural nationalist formation. This profoundly anti-intellectual project conjoined culture with security in order to establish the Canadian state as an intellectually-sanitized zone. Slowly, the arch-villains of the Gouzenko saga, the so-called spies of Zabotin's network are being recuperated into a post-Cold War historiography as the idealistic young progressives that they were, with a few cynical exceptions.<sup>95</sup> People who intended no harm, and did no harm to Canada, as such, but who were in most cases deeply harmed themselves by the scapegoating impulses of an insecure society, exacerbated by reactionary elements in the British Establishment.

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Painter Elizabeth Harrison sensed the pattern, and unwittingly traveled close to the truth of the matter. In 1944 her husband Eric Harrison was in Italy serving as a war

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<sup>95</sup> Gordon Lunan, *The Making of A Spy: A Political Odyssey* (Montreal: Robert Davis, 1995). See [www.yorku.ca/research/cwen/liveswom.htm](http://www.yorku.ca/research/cwen/liveswom.htm), internet site, for Judith Alexander's sympathetic biographical sketch of the economist Agatha Chapman.

historian attached to the Canadian forces. Twenty years later he tried to put her sensory acuity into words:

It has always been my good fortune in life to be a friend of artists. I married one. It is a unique indebtedness. For as my masters at school taught me to read, my artist friends have taught me to see. They have not given me the analytic and commanding visions of a painter, confident in perception and technique. But at least they have cured me from being purblind to some of the facts before me . . . the complex revelation of a face, the colour of a mood.<sup>96</sup>

Elizabeth Harrison's image prefigures a Canadian "loss of innocence" through Gouzenko's defection. The jolt it supplied to Canada's infant censorship-intelligence-propaganda complex rescheduled the development of national culture and state security. It secured a substantial postwar commitment to SIGINT and continued censorship, it prompted the rapid intensification of counter-intelligence measures and internal security vetting, and it implicated the Canadian government in the full orchestral range of the internally-directed propaganda produced by its British and American allies. In sum, it jogged Canadian officials to remember their place in the international sphere of security intelligence and propaganda, and integrated Canada into the logic of rivalry/cooperation dictated by the forced choice of nationality. At the same time, it condemned an entire area of cultural practices to a zone that Canadian citizens would henceforth remember-to-forget.

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<sup>96</sup> W.E.C. Harrison, introduction to Charles Comfort, *Artist at War* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1956), x.

## CHAPTER NINE

### “I CAME TO SING”: PAUL ROBESON’S THIRD SPACE

The past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption. There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one. Our coming was expected on earth. Like every generation before us we have been endowed with a *weak* Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim.

Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” 1940

On a typically damp Autumn day in November 1995 I drive with my father over to Peace Arch Park, nine hectares of manicured flower beds, trees, and lawns that separate Blaine, Washington from White Rock, British Columbia. We park near the Canadian customs station and walk down the long gentle slope to the Peace Arch itself, a whitewashed concrete monolith planted in the middle of the intermediate zone between the two border stations. In theory, the park is under continuous surveillance, but I notice that it feels like a voided space, a lull in the overlap of two formidably-policed jurisdictions.

My shoes have absorbed the grass's wetness but as I walk I think, absently, that apart from the ubiquitous nineties minivans trickling past, it could easily be the 1950s. The condos of White Rock that stare out blankly into the bay are masked from view by the tall trees of the Semiahmoo Indian Reservation hemmed in along the shore. Beyond the railway tracks, on the seaward side of the park, the beach casts a scent of brine and wet cedar and small waves can be heard churning up pebbles and broken clamshells.

The citizens of White Rock, on my informal poll, are mostly retired white collar workers from other parts of Canada. Strolling the boardwalk and the pier, they seem anxious to preserve the homogeneity of their lives and, for the most part, neither have interest in local history nor in the pre-history of the Straits Salish who once summered in this bay. It is virtually unknown amongst the occupants of the condominiums and gated communities that in the 1950s the singer and actor Paul Robeson gave a series of outdoor concerts at the Peace Arch, sponsored by the B.C. District Office of the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers (IUMMSW). Like so many of its battlefields, the cultural civil war left no obvious traces here.

Recalling the presence of thousands of British Columbian workers and their families to hear Robeson sing and speak on the afternoon of May 18th, 1952, is thus to recuperate many small gestures of courage. And yet my rapport with this audience is an uncertain one. Although born on this coast I grew up at the far end of this international boundary in Atlantic Canada. I was recruited into the burgeoning cultural sector shaped by

Peter Dwyer and his associates around the table at Sammy's. In the mid 1970s Canadian cultural nationalism was tantamount to a religion in newly professionalized regional theatres, flush with Canada Council munificence. Even Atlantic folk cultures were caught up in a process of governmentalization, leaving precious little space for the progressive cultural movement to engage with a new generation. Under this lowered thought ceiling, the postwar federal cultural policy built its secure infrastructure. I had no idea that the Paul Robeson records in our collection once counted as political dynamite.

As a result, my steps towards the Peace Arch do not follow a well-worn path of local knowledge but one long overgrown in the National Archives, retracing the steps of secret policemen, union officials, journalists and audiences. The 1952 Paul Robeson Peace Arch concert does have a tiny niche in historiography.<sup>1</sup> Reg Whitaker places it in a wider pattern of censorship: Sir Ernest MacMillan's summary dismissal of the "symphony six" from the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and the cancellation of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's performances in Sudbury for Mine-Mill workers. One could mention innumerable (but often almost traceless) cancellations, dismissals, demotions and transfers of broadcasters, filmmakers, musicians and other cultural workers who dared to display progressive tendencies in the post-Gouzenko period. As was discussed above in chapter six with reference to the NFB, a Cold War meta-narrative tests the strength of a person's Party affiliations against the state's illiberal practices, finally arriving at measured judgments of what was proper or improper conduct.

Yet there are aspects of the Peace Arch concert that exceed this configuration. Even half a century later, Robeson's border intervention is a memory that, in Walter Benjamin's phrase, "flashes up at a moment of danger." Amazingly, Robeson's "dangerousness" is not considered by his traditional enemies to have abated even with his death in 1976 and the passing of the Cold War. Their sustained attacks suggest that his legacy remains a wound not so much to "Americanism" as the system of nationality itself, calling forth severe criticism of his "wrong-headed" and "irrational" political aspirations, and his "flawed"

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<sup>1</sup> In Martin Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (New York: New Press, 1989) for example, the concert surfaces as the high point of a dismal year of harassment by the FBI and neo-fascist elements bent on extinguishing his career; in Whitaker's *Double Standard*, the event is evidence of the anti-communist imperative in immigration policy; in Mine-Mill histories, the 1952 concert and the three annual concerts that followed it are cited as cultural achievements of the union. Mike Solski and John Smaller *Mine-Mill: This History of the Mine Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada since 1985* (Ottawa: Steel Rail, 1985) give Robeson short shrift, but see Al King with Kate Braid, *Red Bait! Struggles of a Mine Mill Local* (Vancouver: Kingbird, 1998) and Mercedes Stedman et al., eds., *Hard Lessons: Mine Mill Union in the Canadian Labour Movement* (Toronto: Dundurn, 1995).

interdisciplinarity.<sup>2</sup> These critics emphasize the stereotypical figure of a Communist stooge, a political naïf, and a man of remarkable but limited talent who nonetheless presented a veritable risk to national security. These writers react forcefully when any retrospective *softening* of Robeson's uncompromising positions recuperates him as an American cultural nationalist hero, singing Earl Robinson's *Ballad for Americans*.<sup>3</sup> These two mutually-antagonistic stereotypes breathe life into the durable opposition of "American/Un-American" while remembering-to-forget deeper challenges that Robeson posed. Five decades on, the unreconstructed Robeson remains intolerable to conservatives *and* liberal cultural nationalists alike.

### A Cultural Deficit

It is November again here by the Peace Arch, but in fact the long winter of Cold War has passed without the arrival of spring. For decades the Cold War saturated the paradigmatic relation between Canada's "nationalism" and its "nationality," forbidding any separation of the two in political discourse. Canada's sovereign uniqueness (*nationalism*) and its integration in the system of nation states (*nationality*) were stapled together and filed away in the interest of national security. Now, with the national security barometer restored to fair weather, it seems that any relaxation of that urgency, any exhumation of that particular file, portends a return of the repressed and a legitimization crisis. No one wants to speak of the *cultural* deficit accumulated by the liberal state during the post-war decades.

Theoreticians urge that historiography ought not be restricted to configuring signs on that plane of consistency where nationality fuses with nationalism as one indivisible formation. J.A. Pocock, for one, points to how alternative historiographies might be reauthorized:

When we define the paradigm as prescribing an authority structure in the act of performing an intellectual (or linguistic) function, it must follow that a multivalent paradigm, performing diverse functions in diverse contexts . . . simultaneously designate[s] and prescribe[s] diverse definitions and distributions of authority; nor is this surprising once we remember that a political society contains a great variety of authority structures.

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<sup>2</sup> See Lee Siegel, "The Red and the Black", *The New Republic* (January 1999): 18-26, who criticizes a recent Robeson traveling exhibition for downplaying his political activities; Barry Finger, "Paul Robeson: Flawed Martyr," *New Politics* 7:1 (Summer, 1998): 132.

<sup>3</sup> Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 115-16, recuperates Robeson into a cultural nationalist narrative, singing Earl Robinson's "unofficial anthem of the Popular Front" during his triumphant 1940 national tour. Capacious as it is, Denning's "laboring of American culture" cannot circumscribe Robeson's full range.

The attempt by 'national history' to limit historical representation to the plane of a single authority cannot forever contain multiple histories that, as Pocock says, "may have diverged widely from one another" even if they occurred in the same spatial and temporal frames. "These are phenomena," he writes, "between which relations can be found."<sup>4</sup>

So, too, does Michel de Certeau's concern for the oppositional practices of everyday life lead him to highlight in Foucault's historiography:

the impossibility of separating its spectral analysis of cultural history from its awakening to that obscure ray of light defracted in it. Its philosophical discourse announces an "anxiety of language," taken in the physical and fundamental sense--an uncertainty which rises up from the subterranean shifting to infiltrate the coherency of our certitudes. The affirmations proper to a culture are delivered over to this uncertainty and opened to questioning. All discourse finds its law in death, "the innocent, good earth beneath the lawn of words."<sup>5</sup>

I pass through the centre of the Peace Arch examining the comparatively flimsy iron gates, fixed to the inner walls in a permanently open configuration. It strikes me that the shrill expressions of cultural nationalism in Canada and the United States during the Cold War obscure the longer-tracking rise of 'nationality' as the discourse governing cultural difference and mobile populations. One realizes how oft-discussed 'alliance politics'--from the Concert of Europe, through the League of Nations to the United Nations Organization--also served to reinforce a less obvious and even mundane systematization of national administration. The persuasive blurring of nationalism and nationality allowed Cold War alliance politics to pulverize the constituency that once ventured here to listen to Paul Robeson, reducing them to a condition of more or less silent individuation within the security state.

Of course, many people continued to act according to the general attitude of progressivism, but these acts were sharply circumscribed by the imperative to cultural nationalism. What the Cold War placed in a state of detention, by branding as Russian-inspired and unpatriotic, were potential alternative "authority structures" of the type suggested by Pocock. In the absence of such structures, communities or constituencies could form only after passing through the forced choice of nationality, compressed into the "shrewd and correctly dressed" rationality of "Canada" as one hub in the international system of nation-states.

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<sup>4</sup> J.G.A. Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 18.

<sup>5</sup> de Certeau, *Heterologies*, 174.

The cultural historian who arrives at the Peace Arch wants to kneel down and dig the good earth beneath the lawn of words in order to release that obscure ray of light, to open up a space for signification between nationality and nationalism. My account begins far afield and high aloft, but it descends to strike into the structure of the Peace Arch itself, plunging deep into its base. For there, sifted from the fine grain of the event, are the tiny chips and shards of greater formations, and the possibility that Robeson's presence here momentarily blasted a 'third space' from what Walter Benjamin called historicism's "homogenous, empty time."<sup>6</sup>

### **Narrative I: Coliseum**

At eight-thirty in the morning of May 18th, 1947, five years to the day before his first Peace Arch concert, Paul Robeson arrived at Malton Airport near Toronto on a Trans-Canada Airliner from New York. He stepped into a posse of reporters seeking his reaction to the Toronto Police Commission's speech ban on his concert that night in the Coliseum? "This is practically unbelievable," he told them, "I expect to sing tonight, but if I wanted to speak and I was not allowed to do so I would think it was a fascist act."<sup>7</sup>

Just a few weeks earlier in Peoria, Illinois, Robeson arrived to find, as he said, "the whole town under a wave of terror." The City Council cancelled his concert, and fifty policemen blocked access to the hall. At a small frame house on the town's south side the singer held a press conference: "I have been around the world and the only time I have seen hysteria reach these heights was in Spain under Franco and Germany under Hitler." Peoria's Mayor Treibel called the forty-nine year old, six-foot three-inch, Columbia-trained lawyer and former football star, "a pretty smart boy." The Mayor claimed that "all the council and I were trying to do was prevent riots . . . . It was only common sense . . . certainly not fascistic." Then he reversed a decision to allow the Citizen's Committee to host a reception for the singer in a room at the City Hall.<sup>8</sup>

Leaving Peoria, Robeson proceeded to the Progressive Party Convention in Chicago, sharing the stage with presidential candidate Henry Wallace, before defiantly returning to perform in a venue not controlled by the mayor and his council. "I am not easily frightened," he announced, but in truth such expressions of courage increasingly brought

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<sup>6</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, 253-264.

<sup>7</sup> "Seeing Spy Under Every Bed Robeson Says of Toronto Ban," *Toronto Daily Star*, 17 May 1947.

<sup>8</sup> "U.S. City Bars Paul Robeson," *Montreal Gazette*, 19 April 1947.

persecution upon his local sponsors and supporters.<sup>9</sup> Now in Canada, at the Malton airport, he told the reporters that he had “been saying all over the U.S. that Toronto people would find this harassment unbelievable.”

Unbelievable or not, Annie Buller, publisher of the *Canadian Tribune* and promoter of the Coliseum concert was browbeaten at a Police Commission hearing into agreeing that Robeson would not speak during his performance. Controller John Innes instigated the ban, stating:

He's anti-British, and as far as I'm concerned he won't appear here . . . . Some of the veterans associations might go in there and break a few heads of these Communists . . . . Anyone who has his son educated in Russia has no place in our democratic set-up.”<sup>10</sup>

CNE Manager Elwood Hughes assured the press that “Robeson couldn't get any more than about 15 subversive words out of his mouth before he would be stopped.”<sup>11</sup>

At Malton Robeson offered no more words of protest, but before being driven into Toronto to prepare for the concert he diagnosed what he viewed as a principal source of the hysteria: “I think the trouble in Peoria was a direct result of the Russian spy scare you had here in Canada. You are looking for a spy under every bed. If the Canadian and American people aren't careful there will be no democratic privileges of any kind left.”<sup>12</sup>

That evening at the Coliseum, as six thousand people waited with nervous expectancy they observed a phalanx of off-duty police officers taking up positions around the arena. Finally, cheers and applause erupted as the singer appeared and mounted the platform. Robeson's easy confidence and infectious smile dissolved the edge of fear that had formed. When finally the ovation subsided, he winked and stepped up to the microphone.

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<sup>9</sup> *The Daily Tribune* published a United Press wire story dated 13 August 1947 reporting the revocation of the Negro Branch of the Peoria Legion's charter “after the visit of Paul Robeson . . . last April.”

<sup>10</sup> “Toronto may ban Robeson: Ponders whether concert would breach peace,” *Montreal Star*, 17 May 1947.

<sup>11</sup> “Will Robeson be allowed to spout Communism? Police Board to decide,” *Toronto Globe and Mail*, May 17th, 1947.

<sup>12</sup> “Seeking spy under every bed Robeson says of Toronto ban,” *Toronto Daily Star*, May 17th, 1947.

Seven years earlier, in October, 1940, Sub-Inspector George B. McClellan suggested that Robeson be barred from entry to Canada under the War Measures Act. McClellan wrote to the Officer Commanding "E" Division in Vancouver: "In view of ROBESON's definitely anti-British feeling, it is considered the Immigration Department may wish to give some consideration to his entry to the country."<sup>13</sup> The singer's RCMP file commenced even earlier, in June 1937, when he sang for the Republican troops in Spain. At a rally in London's Royal Albert Hall he announced he had withdrawn his son, Paul, Jr., from a Massachusetts school in 1935 "after he was subjected to a policy of racial prejudice."<sup>14</sup> The boy, Robeson said, would receive his education in the Soviet Union.

Vancouver immigration officials declined to act on McClellan's suggestion in 1940 but the same advice would be renewed with mounting insistence in the coming years as Robeson's Canadian following grew. At a Vancouver rally of the Anti-Fascist Mobilization Committee for the Soviet Union in 1941, an RCMP informant estimated that 2500 persons packed the 2300 seat hall for the "real attraction," Paul Robeson. The singer spoke of "his own background and made a plea for closer relations with the Soviet Union . . . [and] called for a second front." He called attention to the plight of imprisoned communist leader Earl Browder, and then sang "the old Wobbly song 'I saw the ghost of Old Joe Hill' . . . It was noticeable that only a few of the old-timers understood and led the applause, and old BILL BENNETT was kept busy answering questions about it in the section where he was seated." Robeson's appearance, the report noted, "received considerable publicity in the local press."<sup>15</sup>

The following spring Robeson's tour of eastern Canada prompted similar enthusiasm. In Quebec City on May 20th, 1942, he sang for the Quebec Committee for Allied Victory, drawing an audience of twelve thousand. Dr. Raymond Boyer of the National Research Council acted as Master of Ceremonies.<sup>16</sup> Constable J.E.M. Barrette's report stated that Robeson provided his services for free, and that "his renditions . . . consisted of songs mostly depicting the sufferings of slaves and the oppressed." After renditions by the *Quattour Alouette* and the Negro Guild Choralities, Robeson returned to

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<sup>13</sup> NAC RG 146, ATI 96-A-00053, vol. 4272, "Paul Robeson," (henceforth "RCMP, Robeson file"), G.B. McClellan to A.S. Cooper, 16 October 1940.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., unidentified press clipping, 30 June 1937.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., A.H. Owen-Jones, CIB Intelligence Section, Vancouver, 24 November 1941.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., J.E.M. Barrette, Intelligence Branch, Montreal, 20 May 1942. The RCMP already kept a file on Boyer as a result of his organizing the Canadian Association of Scientific Workers.

speaking of his father, born a slave in the American South, and of his own travels around the world. He applauded President Franklin D. Roosevelt for releasing Earl Browder and dedicated a song to the U.S.S.R. Ovarations met his references to the "magnificent stand taken by the Red Army soldiers," whereas Robeson's dedication of a song to "the bombed persons of London brought very little applause" except from a thousand members of the Armed Forces in attendance. Insp. H.A.R. Gagnon credited the observed lack of support for "our British cause" to the fact that "80% of the audience were of foreign origin."

The press, telegraph and telephone censorships intercepted invitations sent to Robeson by left-wing Canadian organizations, providing the RCMP with early indications of his movements in Canada. In the summer of 1942 he visited Toronto for an eleven-thousand-strong rally of the Dominion Communist Labour Total War Committee at Maple Leaf Gardens. A week beforehand, Mel Doig of the *Canadian Tribune* complained of organized interference with the distribution of tickets for the rally and he encouraged attendance by all possible means, promising that the evening would contain "a dramatic surprise." For its part, the Intelligence Branch of Toronto "O" Division assured Ottawa headquarters that "this Rally will be fully covered," and indeed Constables Coulson, Jones, Raby, Shields, Spriggs and Weston attended in plain clothes.<sup>17</sup>

Of this group Norman O. Jones was destined to rise high in the Security Service, and his report of the Rally alluded to a certain 'Robeson effect': his air of dignity, physical impressiveness and charisma, mingled with an ineffable vocal authority. Jones wrote that "the 'dramatic surprise' was a twenty-five minute speech by Paul ROBESON entitled 'The Armies of Freedom':

Mr. ROBESON is a fluent speaker and stressed the fact that he has for years been interested in the struggle against Fascism while singing in many countries. He praised the common man in England, the Loyalist army in Spain and the Chinese. He spoke of Russia in glowing terms telling of the vast improvement of the lot of the common man in that country. This speech was well received by the audience and can only be described as clever and subtle Communist propaganda. Mr. ROBESON then sang several more selections and the Rally ended at 11 P.M. with the playing of "O Canada" and the marching out of the Armed Forces.<sup>18</sup>

If the RCMP remained deeply suspicious of these Soviet Friendship rallies, it is apparent from their size and warmth that this was not a view shared by sizable sections of

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Cst. Norman O. Jones, Toronto Intelligence Branch report, 27 June 1942.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

the public. Robeson's visits provided a focus for the progressive cultural movement at the peak of its popular appeal in Canada, bringing together a diverse public united by common, if vaguely-defined, pacifist and egalitarian convictions. When he returned to Toronto in the winter of 1943, the *Star* reported Robeson's address to a welcoming party of "hundreds of Toronto negroes" with an impromptu speech:

"Sometimes Negroes grow discouraged and decide to remain alone in their fight for equality, but this is a mistake," Mr. Robeson said. "The Negro problem is part of the problem of unfortunate people in every country." Only in Russia did he find no discrimination . . . His years in Britain interested him in the problems of the people of Africa, India and the West Indies, but he was unable to understand how the aristocratic or leisure class of colored persons from these countries sometimes allowed themselves to be divided from the lowest-placed people . . ."My father was a slave," said Mr. Robeson. "So how can I do otherwise than work for those who are in the lowest positions today?"<sup>19</sup>

On February 7th, the CBC carried an interview with the singer on the topic of cultural arts and education in Russia in which he cited the Yecouty people, whom he called "Russian Eskimos," as an example of how aboriginal people flourish when they have adequate social and educational resources. This portion of the discussion took up less than a minute and a half of the interview but it prompted RCMP Commissioner S.T. Wood's request for a transcript. Reid Foresee, Talks Producer for CBC's Ontario Region, briefly summarized the discussion but declined to produce "an exact typewritten transcription of the recorded interview." He pointed out that Robeson was briefed on censorship requirements prior to the interview and that a careful check of the recording prior to broadcast found nothing objectionable.<sup>20</sup>

The RCMP did not press the matter, but their concern over the presence in Canada of Robeson's voice on sound recordings, in films, and on the radio grew as the years passed. Gregory Vlastos, an academic serving as an Air Force "morale builder," drew negative attention for mentioning Robeson favourably in his addresses. Pro-Robeson remarks by musician John Goss in an informal lecture on "The Negro in the World of Music" were added both to Goss's and Robeson's files.<sup>21</sup> At a gathering in a Vancouver

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<sup>19</sup> "Negroes in Toronto Greet Paul Robeson," *Toronto Daily Star*, 8 February 1943.

<sup>20</sup> RCMP, Robeson file, Reid W. Foresee to S.T. Wood, 11 February 1943.

<sup>21</sup> British-born vocalist Goss was called the "Canadian Robeson" as a result of his political activism (he ran as an LPP candidate in Vancouver). His light baritone lacked Robeson's sheer force, but he was a scholar of folk musics. In 1952 he was interrogated and ejected from the United States with writer Margaret Fairley after being paraded by FBI agents out of the Peace Congress banquet in New York. RG 25, vol. 5787, file 228-BP(s) pt. 1, L. Pearson to H. Wrong, "This matter seems to have been dealt with by the FBI in a

studio, Goss reportedly played cuts from various recordings and “eulogized” Robeson. In Montreal a *La Victoire* story, “Courage is Always Right,” mentioned the Paul Robeson Club, “a grouping of young negroes of Montreal who have progressive ideas.” Press censors supplied the RCMP with more than hundred pro-Robeson articles from *Liaudies Balsas*, *Ludove Zvesti*, *Novosti*, *Srpski Glasnik*, *Ukrainske Slovo*, *Wöchenblatt*, *Vapaus*, *Veestnik* and other minority language periodicals.<sup>22</sup>

At the end of 1944 Robeson crossed back into Canada for a day during the Detroit run of *Othello*.<sup>23</sup> He sang for and addressed striking auto workers in Windsor, and joined their pickets. An RCMP informant was present in Robeson’s luncheon party to report the singer’s off-the-record conversations. The singer told his Canadian friends of a recent encounter with an Oklahoma university president who accused Jews of perpetrating a communist conspiracy, a charge Robeson repudiated, telling the president that while not Jewish he was himself a communist.<sup>24</sup> The RCMP, following the usual routine, apprised FBI liaison Glen Bethel of this particularly damning admission, and Commissioner Wood’s office sent copies of the reports to the FBI in Washington, adding that “ROBESON mentioned the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, stating that he was not afraid of them, and would continue to fight fascism.”<sup>25</sup>

By the time Robeson returned to Toronto in November 1945 for three concerts at the Eaton auditorium, Igor Gouzenko had divested himself of Soviet secrets just an hour away at BSC’s Camp X. Already, Peter Dwyer and the others had pieced together the extent of Soviet penetration and the RCMP’s anti-Communist attitude hardened. If they had kept close tabs on Robeson before, now they followed his every move, opening new files on every person he came into contact with during his stay. Excisions from the released

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way to ensure maximum publicity and inflict the maximum of humiliation on those concerned . . . . If these Canadians were legally in the United States, it is difficult to understand why they should have been molested at a banquet.” But Pearson did not intervene on their behalf; Goss returned to England and died soon after.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., reports of 17 September 1943, 8 February 1944, 1 March 1944; *La Victoire*, 30 September 1944.

<sup>23</sup> See Duberman, *Paul Robeson*. 263-79. Robeson’s Broadway *Othello* was a breakthrough for black American actors.

<sup>24</sup> RCMP Robeson file, Windsor Detachment, report, 2 November 1944.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 28 November 1944. The RCMP supplied names of Canadians whom Robeson had met including Fred Rose and Stanley Ryerson, both of whom were already subjects of files. Also see Martin Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 253. In January 1943, Hoover recommended custodial detention for Robeson, and such a card was issued on April 30, 1943.

surveillance reports make it impossible to state with certainty that Robeson's telephone at the Royal York was tapped, but informants circulated around him at social functions, including a festive party at the apartments of Beatrice Marks and Lucy Giscombe at 469 Palmerston Blvd.<sup>26</sup>

The party fell quiet as Robeson gave an impromptu performance, singing "Joe Hill" and speaking about the anti-Soviet mood of American troops he met in Bavaria, including men of a Negro Regiment. "He alleged . . . definite reactionary anti-Soviet forces at work . . . placing Nazi leaders in positions of influence by the U.S. Army. He feared that America might . . . MIGHT . . . become a centre of fascism." At RCMP headquarters the following passage was highlighted: "He emphasized real danger of fascist growth in America. He said he felt so keenly about this situation he plans to abandon his present concert tour . . . and devote his whole time to fighting American fascism."

Among the names of many Labour Progressive Party luminaries noticed by the informant at the party is Mrs. Sam Carr. By then the Special Branch knew from Gouzenko's documents that her husband had worked for Col. Zabolin and was keeping a low profile. Their names, and the substance of Robeson's remarks were provided to the FBI. These reports indicate that Robeson sensed the political climate changing, but he had no idea of the tectonic shift underway in Canadian national security. The defection of Gouzenko made the happy occasion on Palmerston Blvd. the last carefree afternoon he would spend among his progressive friends in Toronto.<sup>27</sup>

At Christmas the RCMP guards presented gifts to the Gouzenko family, and Toronto's "O" Division noted the singer's return to Windsor "to help provide Christmas dinners for needy members of Ford Local 200 UAW-CIO." The police identified union members appearing with Robeson in surveillance photographs taken at the picket line and inside the Capitol theatre. While Canada's foreign language presses delighted in Robeson's high profile support for the Ford strikers, special note was taken by the RCMP of Nathan Cohen's praise for the singer in the Jewish weekly. Within weeks, the spy scandal erupted

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 11 and 19 November 1945. This address formerly was owned by industrialist George Weston, before being converted to apartments. It became known to the Toronto Special Branch when Saul Kolchin invited members of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion to rest over there upon their return from Spain.

<sup>27</sup> When he returned to Toronto briefly in May, 1946, the lack of RCMP data suggests he was careful not to attract further attention to any friends or associates, although the *Canadian Tribune* reported loudly that he endorsed support for that newspaper "as the most effective way for winning peace on the Canadian Front." In fact, nothing was placed on Robeson's RCMP file between mid-January and late-May 1946, suggesting that the Special Branch was deluged with work related directly to the Royal Commission inquiries.

in the press, and the tide of popular opinion turned against Robeson and his progressive Canadian friends.<sup>28</sup>

### **Furore in Quebec**

On November 4th, 1946, controversy swirled around the singer's date at the *Palais Montcalm* in Quebec City. The source of the trouble lay in a remark Robeson made six weeks previously when he led a seven-person anti-lynching delegation to the White House. Despite a terrifying wave of recent lynchings, this joint initiative by Robeson and Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois found President Harry Truman unsympathetic, indeed, he was unwilling even to hear out the group's prepared statement. When Mrs. Harper Sibley inquired how the Government's commitment to punishing Nazis at Nuremberg was consistent with the lack of prosecutions of lynchers at home, Truman replied irritably that the United States and Great Britain are "the last refuge of freedom in the world." On the contrary, interjected Robeson, the British Empire was "one of the world's greatest enslavers of human beings," a statement that ignited press commentaries doubting the very *rationality* of anyone making such a statement.

Two reporters from the Quebec *Chronicle Telegraph* bypassed Robeson's designated spokesman Lawrence Brown and bribed their way to the singer's suite in the *Château Frontenac*. The singer desired privacy, but the reporters coaxed him to answer questions. Their scoop article the next morning reaffirmed Robeson's criticism of the British Empire, and he added new explosive statements.

Singing and acting, he told them, were his means of aiding a fight against "a fascism that is much wider than the bonds of race or religion." Consider the social conditions in the colonized world, he told them, pointing to South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, the Malay States and the West Indies. Even in Canada, he charged, "the basic source of all oppression is the concentration of the great resources in the hands of a few privileged people." America supported the remains of fascism all over the world because the "big industrialists, financiers, and captains of industry are very frightened of a so-called Socialist world. Their greatest weapon in confusing the common people is . . . the Red bogey." The West should let the Soviet Union build its own way of life, he said, and the extent of personal freedom there compared favourably with many parts of the British Empire. How could South Africa be, in the words of Jan Smuts, "a model for the world" when "like Bilbo [sic] or Hitler he does not consider the black Africans to be people . . . certainly they have no rights . . . except the right to work as slaves." Greece, Spain, Indonesia and

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<sup>28</sup> RCMP Robeson file, reports of 18 July 1946, 3 and 8 August 1946.

Palestine had conditions of enslavement, too, and in Canada he decried “hysterical attempts” to break the back of labour.

The *Chronicle Herald*'s editors bristled with rebuke:

Where we think this artist makes a grave mistake from the point of view of ordinary courtesy is that while touring the British Empire countries . . . he does not hesitate to attack the British Empire in terms he can hardly expect to be other than offensive to many people in these audiences.<sup>29</sup>

The editors took umbrage at his likening Welsh miners to the “poor whites” in the American Southern States, and rejected any British connection to the inferior position of non-whites in South Africa. He seems to have in mind “a moral rather than physical slavery,” they allowed, but “he will have difficulty in proving that the British Empire is a sinner before anyone else . . . by comparison with the Soviet Russian republics for instance, it will have nothing to fear.” How could Britain’s Labour-Socialist government have enslavement as its policy? They accused Robeson of “very poor judgment and singularly bad taste,” suggesting in future he keep “his artistic career and political activities separate.”<sup>30</sup>

*L'action Catholique*'s Louis-Philippe Roy joined with his English “confrères”:

Si jamais l'ARTISTE revient à Québec pour alimenter sa caisse et faciliter "son combat" il se rendra compte que les Québécois n'ont pas oublié le POLITICIEN. Des notes fausses pourraient bien alors troubler l'harmonie de sa publicité. Les Québécois sont des gens qui souviennent. Tenez-vous le pour dit, M. Robeson.<sup>31</sup>

Behind the scenes such views were conveyed to the RCMP at the highest levels. Reporting at length on the difficulties Robeson’s visit portended, Cst. J.H.F. Chénier explained that James Halpin, the concert promoter was the victim of a smear campaign of a disgruntled competitor. Seizing on Robeson’s anti-British comments the “frustrated impresario” circulated a rumour that Halpin and Laval University “were bringing a Communist to sing in Quebec.”<sup>32</sup> This was only the beginning:

<sup>29</sup> “Paul Robeson Impenitent,” *Quebec Chronicle Telegraph*, 5 November 1946.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Louis-Philippe Roy, “Robeson Chante Faux,” *L'action Catholique*, 5 November 1946. “If ever the ARTIST returns to Quebec to raise money to facilitate “his fight” he will have to take into account that Quebecers will not have forgotten the POLITICIAN. False notes still would jar the harmony of his message. Quebecers have long memories. You will be held to what you say, Mr. Robeson.”

<sup>32</sup> RCMP Robeson file, Cst. J.H.F. Chenier, 8 November 1946. Chénier’s spelling is preserved in the following passages from his report.

The rumour spread like wildfire so much so that it was circulating in the Cardinal's Palace and very soon, Mr. Charland, the Assistant-Deputy-Director of the Québec Provincial Police phoned this office . . . and requested that we had an interview with Monsignor Pelletier, the Bishop of Québec who was to be the guest of honour with the Premier of the Province at the concert.

His Eminence accorded an audience to the writer. Monsignor stated that he did not want us to state if Paul ROBESON was a communist or not as he knew of his socialist ideas. What he requested was a certain assurance that ROBESON would not make any statement in Québec, as he (Mgr.) enjoyed very much Paul ROBESON's singing and added that he was in a delicate position, inferring that the Heads of Faculties of the University had declined their invitation to the concert on the ground that ROBESON was a communist. His Eminence was answered that we could not give him any such assurance but that the impresario had ascertained a promise from Robeson that he would not make any declaration during the concert.

His Eminence's final words on the matter are excised from the released copy of the report, but Chenier went on to detail the physical surveillance placed on Robeson from the moment of his arrival by train from Montreal. The fact that the secret of the singer's presence in Québec was poorly kept, he noted, resulted in the intrusion of the two reporters into Robeson's suite.

Chenier attended the concert and his description of it as "a brilliant success" perhaps betrayed personal feelings:

Mgr. Pelletier did not attend but Premier Duplessis was presiding. The artist did not make any statement except before an "encore" in the third part of the concert. He stated: "And now, a piece dedicated to a great allied in wartime and certainly a great allied in peacetime, the Republic of Soviet Russia" and then he went on to sing a Russian marching song by Moussorgsky . . . . This comment of ROBESON electrified the assembly, the concert hall was jammed to the rafters and many had come, it is believed, with the idea to witness a little "scandal" and everybody felt that it was probably the beginning of it; two priests and a young man went out, an English-speaking person behind the writer exclaimed to his party of three: "The dirty pig." but the commotion was of short duration and soon ROBESON had the audience nervousness subdued and obtained overwhelming applauses by his great rendition of this Russian march. He did not make any other allusion for the rest of his concert and it was ascertained that no other statement were made till he left on the morning train the next day.<sup>33</sup>

This encounter in the *Palais Montcalm* between the great left-wing activist and the arch anti-communist Maurice Duplessis, author of Québec's notorious Padlock Laws, could hardly be more dramatic. The two retired separately to their respective suites in the *Château Frontenac*. Robeson never returned to Quebec City.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

In Toronto the Special Branch assessed Robeson's visits in light of "renewed fraternal activity" observed among the numerous Mackenzie-Papineau veterans now returned to the city from the various theatres of war. Their places of employment were noted and, judging from the exemptions and the tell-tale phrase "information believed true," phone conversations were monitored. With Robeson's help the Mac-Pap "is coming to life again," warned Cst. Winmill:

an organization of this nature forms a good nucleus for a trained organization in an underground movement in case of a war with Russia and doubtless these same veterans will infiltrate into branches of the Canadian Legion.<sup>34</sup>

Citing Chenier's "report containing the furore created in Quebec City" Winmill wondered if "an immigration stop could be placed against ROBESON when he attempts to enter Canada from the USA or elsewhere."

Robeson's appearances in Québec, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver produced a negative stream of public reaction in the mainstream press. The *Ottawa Journal* doubted his claim that fascists existed in Canada and even if there were "we can deal with them ourselves." Women Liberals meeting in Toronto turned aside from their agenda to discuss the "harm" Paul Robeson was doing to Canada, agreeing he was more dangerous than LPP leader Tim Buck because of his charm and popularity as a singer: "If we Liberals don't bestir ourselves we might find ourselves in a Camp Belsen."<sup>35</sup> The *Globe and Mail* claimed that College Campuses were "Stalked by a Red Spectre," noting that the HUAC had named Paul Robeson in particular as "exploiting to the advantage of a foreign power the idealism, the inexperience, and the craving to join, which is so characteristic of our college youth."<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand, four thousand students at the University of British Columbia gave Robeson a tremendous welcome and listened as he encouraged them to "attend the Communist Forum to get a better insight into the struggle against fascism." The RCMP's "D" Division reported that in Winnipeg Robeson told students that "he intends to devote

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Toronto Special Section reports of 19, 22 and 27 November 1948.

<sup>35</sup> "Women Liberals Compare Paul Robeson to Tim Buck," *Globe and Mail*, 28 February 1947.

<sup>36</sup> "College Campuses in U.S. Stalked by Red Spectre," *Globe and Mail*, 16 April 1947; *Ottawa Journal*, 16 April 1947.

more time in future to the support of so-called “progressive” organizations, labor dramatic groups, etc.”<sup>37</sup>

These statements, placed against the background of the Gouzenko case, attest to the hardening of mainstream opinion against the singer as he prepared for his Toronto Coliseum date in May 1947. Yet, by amplifying the element of agitprop in Robeson’s speeches, both the media and the RCMP reports downplayed the visceral appeal he conveyed through his concerts and informal appearances. This unstated quality posed the true threat: Paul Robeson disarmed people’s cynicism, and he stirred their hopes for a better society. The consensus to silence him in Canada did not form around fears that he led a covert Soviet fifth-column. Rather they worried he seemed to activate resistance across a broad spectrum, obstructing Canada’s emerging national security culture. With Robeson on the scene it was more difficult for people to *remember-to-forget* their nation’s colonial residue of race discrimination, compromised sovereignty and structural inequality.

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According to *Star* reporter Wessely Hicks, the Coliseum crowd was “restless and nomadic,” waiting for Robeson to appear. Milling around the improvised stage even the six thousand people in attendance seemed lost in the vast “hall of steel girders, thousands of wooden chairs and a lot of space,” punctuated by “white-coated attendants selling soft drinks.”<sup>38</sup> Reviewing the concert in the *Tribune*, Arthur Walker admitted that the Coliseum “dwarfed the great Jewish Folk Choir” whose massed voices failed to overcome the acoustics. Reginald Godden’s four piano pieces fared better, as did virtuoso teenage violinist, Joseph Pach. He rounded out the first half with Saraste’s “Fantasy of Carmen” and “Der Zephir” by Hubay. Disoriented by the Coliseum’s resounding echo, Pach noticed neither the policemen nor the restless mood of the crowd.<sup>39</sup> His fiery violin technique won the audience’s attention in spite of the poor acoustics, preparing the way for “the favorite of the evening.”

Familiar with the Coliseum from singing there for Canadian troops several times during the war, Robeson strode onto the stage to what the RCMP report called “a

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<sup>37</sup> RCMP, Robeson file, Vancouver Special Branch, Cst. D.E. MacLaren, 17 February 1947; Winnipeg Special Branch, C.S. Hogg, 18 February 1947.

<sup>38</sup> Wessely Hicks, “Robeson Needles Police,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 19 May 1947. RCMP Robeson file, Cst. J.J. Cranney, report, 22 May 1947. Cranney estimated 5,000 attendees.

<sup>39</sup> “Paul Robeson Skips Speech But Songs Were Significant,” *Ottawa Journal*, 19 May 1947; Arthur Walker, “Robeson Speaks,” *Daily Tribune*, 19 May 1947: “he succeeded in making this concert a social, musical, and political document”; Joseph Pach, interview by author, March 1997.

prolonged standing applause.”<sup>40</sup> With the Police Commission’s ban in the air the crowd “sat expectantly waiting for him to make the forbidden speech.” They saw Robeson’s lips move, but the microphone was off. As he stepped back, shrugging to the sound technicians, members of the audience reacted, unsure of what was wrong:

“Go ahead and speak!” a voice exhorted. It’s a free country!” another shouted. “Whisper” advised a third. When the microphone was live, Robeson stepped close to it, the crowd stilled.<sup>41</sup>

“I’d like to tell you how happy I am to be here tonight,” he told them, “I’ll start with a song called “Over the Mountains, Over the Waves--Love Will find A Way.” This cued the audience to understand that Robeson was far from silenced by the ban. As Hicks put it, “He sang it and made every phrase vibrate with suspense and hidden meaning.” When Robeson introduced a selection from Mozart’s “The Magic Flute” he said “Mozart based this song on freemasonry--an idea that was subversive in its time.” “That brought the crowd to its feet,” wrote Hicks:

He sang “Oh God, Why Hast Thy Foresaken Thy People?” and made a great lament of it that was genius. He followed it by the Negro folk song “Scandalize My Name” and at each repetition of the title the crowd roared its approval.

The report of an RCMP undercover agent echoed the *Star*’s story, albeit without Hicks’s enthusiasm. Despite Annie Buller’s agreement that he would not make a speech “it was apparent from ROBESON’s selection of songs, and emphasis on certain words, he was able to convey to the audience their political meaning.”

Hicks wrote that Robeson “needled the police commission through its representatives, the score of uniformed men who guarded the exits of the Coliseum.” Time after time the singer, in announcing a number, “stepped up to the microphone and, pausing dramatically, eyed the crowd which sat waiting tensely for him to make the forbidden speech”:

Then Robeson would eye the nearest policeman, draw a deep breath and say: “And now, from the concert stage--” and announce his number. The intent was obvious and the audience . . . applauded his every inflection.

The RCMP undercover agents, busily identifying and recording names of persons in attendance, had no intention of intervening, though they took special note of Robeson’s short speech at the close of the concert. “Toronto has always been one of my favorite cities,

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<sup>40</sup> RCMP, Robeson file, Cst. Cranney’s report.

<sup>41</sup> Hicks, “Robeson Needles Police.”

and it still remains so," he said:

I know I'll come back many times to sing--and to speak here (loud applause) I sang all over Canada for Canadian troops during the war and I remember those days with affection. I stand for true democracy and I will fight to the end for the right kind of world--and for the people--with all the strength that is in me.<sup>42</sup>

...

The Coliseum concert echoed in the press for a number of weeks, sparking the most intense civil rights debate since the government's extraordinary detention and interrogation of the Gouzenko suspects the year before, and it added momentum to John Diefenbaker's campaign for a Bill of Rights. On the whole, a slender majority held that the Police Commission, goaded by Controller Innes and Mayor Saunders, wrongly imposed the restriction on Robeson's right to speak at the Coliseum. Even the mainstream papers objected to the threat of interference, taking care not to endorse Robeson's political views.<sup>43</sup>

The *Toronto Telegram*, *Peterborough Examiner* and the *Ottawa Journal* defended the speech ban, publishing letters to the editor in support of even more stringent anti-Communist measures. The Toronto municipal politicians who created the crisis played it both ways, continuing to vilify Robeson while denying that they placed any actual ban on him. They claimed that the whole affair was cooked up by communists as a publicity stunt. To prove it, they pointed out that Annie Buller willingly agreed that Robeson would not speak and then lied to the public in stating that it was a police commission ruling. Mayor Saunders said that he and Controller Innes were both "trapped" in an elaborately constructed "Mare's Nest." Innes, whose fuss had helped block an appearance by American writer Theodore Dreiser in 1942, stated with considerable insouciance:

I am here to serve the people of Toronto. I don't think anybody should put me in the position saying whether or not he should be allowed to Toronto. Why ask me? I have nothing to do with it. Why should I object?<sup>44</sup>

Disinformation began to choke the issue as the question of Robeson's civil rights gave way to whether he was a communist provocateur. The off-duty policemen, it was

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<sup>42</sup> RCMP, Robeson file, Cst. Cranney's report. The *Ottawa Journal*, 19 May 1947: "police officials stood by with notebooks."

<sup>43</sup> Editorial *Globe and Mail*, 20 May 1947, the writer linked Parliament's debate on a bill of rights with the Robeson incident, defending his right to speak, and pointing out that "police are only concerned in what they say after they have said it, not before."

<sup>44</sup> "Robeson Concert Police Privately Hired," *Toronto Evening Telegram*, 20 May 1947; "This Mare's Nest Was Elaborately Constructed," *Toronto Evening Telegram*, 23 May 1947: "it was falsely represented that the police were there with notebooks."

reported, did not represent the City but were paid for by Annie Buller as part of the Coliseum's rental contract. They received no instructions from their chief, Inspector Harrison, to stop Robeson if he spoke, nor to take notes. Furthermore, it was charged that Buller had protest leaflets printed prior to the Police Commission hearing. The Mayor maintained there was "not a tittle of evidence . . . that the Police Commission should apologize for anything."<sup>45</sup>

Within two weeks the issue had lost all clarity amidst the recriminations, evasions and exaggerations. Of all the newspapers only the *Prince Albert Herald's* editors kept sight of the fact that "while technically correct, Mayor Saunders did not adequately reveal the coercion exercised against the concert promoters." Quoting from a *Saturday Night* article, they pointed out that the Commission's coercion was implicitly financial in nature. Alone in a closed hearing, facing the (all male) Police Commission, clearly Buller had been intimidated.<sup>46</sup>

Andrew Brewin of the Civil Liberties League accompanied her to the hearing but was kept outside in the corridor. He told the *Star*:

We were not invited into the meeting . . . and do not know what took place there. The Mayor, however, saw us shortly after the meeting and assured us the board had taken no action. There is no doubt that he is technically correct. The question arises, however, whether the board did in fact exact a promise from the sponsors of the concert that Mr. Robeson should not speak. If they did, the argument that they took no action is surely specious. To require or exact such an undertaking as a condition of proceeding with the concert would surely be just as much an interference with freedom of speech as a direct prohibition.<sup>47</sup>

When Mrs. Buller emerged from the Commission hearing, visibly shaken, she defended Robeson to the reporters present "with considerable fire in her voice." After the concert she explained, rather tortuously:

All my life I have fought for free speech . . . I gave the assurance we would not make any subversive speeches. We have never made subversive speeches. I interpreted the commission's decision that they okayed the festival but did not okay a speech. I don't want the interpretation placed on me that I separate free speech from music. They go together.<sup>48</sup>

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45 "No Discrimination . . . , Mayor Declares," *Globe and Mail*, 27 May 1947.

46 "Mob Rule or Law Rule," *Toronto Saturday Night*, 4 June 1947; "Coercion by Indirection," *Prince Albert Herald*, 16 June 1947.

47 "Ask Police Commission to Apologize," *Toronto Daily Star*, 21 May 1947.

48 "Inspector Told Me we'd Need Police," *Toronto Daily Star*, 22 May 1947.

Was Robeson free to speak his mind? Technically, yes, but he might have exposed Buller to censure, possibly through the post-concert financial settlement with Coliseum Manager Elwood Hughes. The visible police presence was required, as the Mayor said, ostensibly for the security and safety of the audience and not for censorship purposes. Yet in every statement leading up to the concert he and other City officials warned of police intervention if Robeson spoke. In fact, the box office noticed a drop in ticket sales as prospective concert-goers were frightened off by Innes's prediction that anti-communist veterans would start a riot.

The conflicting reports of note-taking policemen are easily explained. True, Robeson puzzled Inspector Harrison's off-duty municipal officers by implying that they were somehow poised to stop the proceedings, and it is also true that they took no notes. On the other hand, as the RCMP reports cited demonstrate, a *federal secret police presence* in the persons of Cst. J.J. Cranney and other agents did attend, well-armed with pencils and notepads. But press articles such as Mary Lowrey Ross's inane "Left, Right, Left" in *Saturday Night* kept attention well away from the RCMP. Her fictitious interlocutor "Mrs. Nettleby" demanded to know "why police *with notebooks* should attend the concert of a great artist like Mr. Robeson." Ross mused, "maybe they wanted his autograph."<sup>49</sup>

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In Ottawa, the RCMP's John Leopold reviewed these reports and clippings and wrote to the Director of Criminal Intelligence that "the only solution I can see is to keep a man of this calibre out of the country, to refuse him admittance on the grounds that he is creating disaffection among his majesty's subjects." L.H. Nicholson agreed that "some steps should be taken to keep troublemakers such as this out." But he doubted "very much if we could expect any centralized action through External Affairs and Immigration." Nicholson told Leopold:

I have a feeling there would be a hesitation in laying down a policy and we would get nowhere if we pressed for it at this stage. I have in mind particularly what I have been told recently by Immigration as to the Government's desire not to impede the flow of visitors across the international border.<sup>50</sup>

Eighteenth months later Leopold tried again, and this time Nicholson wrote, "I agree." A detailed brief was prepared for the Cabinet Committee reporting Robeson's controversial statements, his memberships in five organizations considered to be

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<sup>49</sup> Mary Lowrey Ross, "Left, Right, Left," *Toronto Saturday Night*, 4 June 1947.

<sup>50</sup> RCMP Paul Robeson file, C.C. Winmill to J. Leopold, 27 May 1947; L.H. Nicholson to J. Leopold, 4 June 1947.

“totalitarian, communist, or subversive,” and attaching copies of adverse American HUAC reports. Of the Toronto Coliseum concert, Leopold suggested that “the whole controversy was engineered” by communists, despite the fact that his own file material clearly pointed to the Police Commission’s intimidation of Annie Buller as the true source of the fiasco.

In External Affairs, G.G. Crean wrote to Escott Reid, Acting Undersecretary, stating “it seems that Robeson is taking part in Canadian politics in a manner unbecoming to any foreigner in this country . . . . This is not the first time.” Crean recalled that Louis St. Laurent, as Justice Minister during the war, ordered Dreiser ejected from Canada the day after the American writer spoke of “the degenerate British aristocracy.” Reid thought this “irrelevant since we were compelled to do in war a lot of things we would not contemplate doing in peace.” But Crean backed the RCMP’s bid to block Robeson’s entry:

We . . . should do something to prevent Mr. Robeson continuing to make political speeches in Canada. We might approach the United States Embassy or the State Department, but there is little that they can do to prevent Robeson from entering Canada as he does not need a United States passport. I would be reluctant to see Robeson, the singer, refused entry to Canada but it is going to be difficult to separate him from Robeson the political propagandist . . . the only effective way is . . . to refuse them permission to enter this country, by putting them on the list issued by the special Cabinet Committee.<sup>51</sup>

Crean had the blessing of Eric Gill in the Privy Council Office and Leopold of the RCMP, who attached his brief to the submission. Nonetheless, Reid replied:

I am opposed to taking action to refuse Robeson permission to enter Canada or giving him permission only to sing. However, I would like to take it up with the Minister. Please therefore do a memorandum giving me text of cabinet decision on the exclusion of certain types of Communists, the interpretation given in practice to this decision, the memo of the previous Cabinet decision on Robeson, & pros and cons of neutralising him.<sup>52</sup>

Leopold discussed his Robeson brief with Robert Forsyth in the Justice Department. Forsyth was that Department’s Security Officer, and also acted as Igor Gouzenko’s press agent. He arranged with Deputy Minister Varcoe that Leopold personally hand him the Robeson brief on December 1st, 1948. Yet, even this direct overture failed. Eric Gill wrote from the PCO to S.T. Wood that “the Minister of Justice raised the question with the Cabinet at their meeting yesterday. Their decision was that Robeson

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<sup>51</sup> RG 25, vol 5787, file 228-AX(s), “Paul Robeson - Activities of”, G.G. Crean to E. Reid, 20 December 1948. Leopold’s brief is attached.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., E. Reid, marginal note to G.G. Crean.

should not be refused permission to enter."<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, Leopold's efforts had apprised top decision makers of the intelligence agencies' jaundiced estimates of the singer.

Robeson arrived in Toronto as scheduled and joined Dr. James Endicott on the platform at a Peace Conference in session at the Bathurst St. Church. The *Globe and Mail* derided the conference and castigated Robeson personally for his "dreadful nonsense," dismissing his speech as the "sophistries of a blatherskite." Slavery was abolished in British North America in 1793, the editorial huffed, "Canada has no need of lectures from him in racial tolerance."<sup>54</sup> After his concert at Massey Hall Robeson spoke to the B'nai B'rith Lodge of Toronto, saying "If speaking for my people and other oppressed peoples makes me a radical, I choose to be a radical." The *Telegram* went on to report the singer's minimum conditions for silence:

Robeson said he would "shut up" in Canada only when he saw strikers at Windsor given enough food to eat, or when Anti-Semitism disappeared and Asiatics were permitted to live in full equality. "It's not so good here for Negroes either--I can say it where they can't," he declared.<sup>55</sup>

### **Cognitive Maps**

The preceding narrative carries Paul Robeson back and forth across the international boundary, periodically generating traces in Canadian newspapers and government records before disappearing again below the forty-ninth parallel. The "space-building" that occurs through this narration consequently emphasizes the international boundary as well as certain common elements on either side of it. During these darkening years his travels stitched together a waning social solidarity among North American progressives, American and Canadian, and yet his presence also marked such people as security risks for both sets of authorities. My syntax places these events in familiar spatio-temporal frames, and this requires caution, for these very frames helped neutralize Robeson's popular impact and destroy his constituency.

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<sup>53</sup> RCMP Robeson file, E.W.T. Gill to St. Wood, 2 December 1948.

<sup>54</sup> "A Phony 'Peace Conference,'" *Globe and Mail*, 6 December 1948; Alex Barris's flippant "Accused of being 'Red'--Singer's Feelings Hurt" appeared the next day.

<sup>55</sup> "Robeson Lauds Negro Advance Under Britain," *Toronto Evening Telegram*, 7 December 1947. The headline ridiculed Robeson's positive reference to Jamaica and Trinidad in light of his "anti-British" stance, but the article itself is sympathetic. In the southern U. S., he said, someone might "blow my brains out" just for asking for a hotel room; "One can hardly say one lives in dignity." He praised the Toronto Jewish Choir's invitation to him as "a symbol of the unity between Jew and Negro as victims of oppression . . . If there is ever anything I can do in the struggle to live decently, call upon me."

As Gilles Fauconnier points out, words such as “meanwhile,” “already,” “simultaneously,” and “then,” locate language in shared cognitive maps. From the maze of mental spaces, phrases such as “In 1947,” “at the border,” or “sent to his American counterpart” foreground the cognitive domains associated with the nationalities of Canada and the United States.<sup>56</sup> The internal structuration of these two domains, while not identical, is considered isomorphic enough that a sign such as “progressive” can activate a cross-space mapping, reaching into both domains to denote similar groups.

Yet in the social discourse of the 1940s and 1950s the word “progressive” circulated as what mental space theorists call an *underspecified* sign. That is, it presupposed an order of things never actually achieved in Canada or the United States. Enunciating potential or hypothetical cognitive mappings, it tended to “float up” to less determinate spaces, unless blocked by operators such as “but,” “however,” or “despite.” Progressives typically used what Fauconnier calls the ‘analogical counterfactual’ to open a hypothetical mental space for imagining and discussing social change. For example, Paul Robeson consistently attacked American race discrimination by invoking the Soviet Union as a place where minorities enjoyed the dignity of equivalent citizenship. Since the analogical counterfactual requires the analog (in this case ‘Soviet egalitarianism’) merely to be *propositionally* true, Robeson created pressure within the space of the hypothesis for its empirical referent (i.e Euro-America) to achieve parity with the posited analog. The upward presuppositional float had this effect until blocked by signs demanding specification of the analog.

Robeson wrote the following in *Here I Stand* (1958) of his London years in the 1930s:

The British intelligence came to me one day to caution me about the political meaning of my activities. For the question loomed of itself: if African culture was what I insisted it was, what happens to the claim that it would take 1,000 years for Africans to be capable of self-rule?<sup>57</sup>

In this case Robeson used the analogical counterfactual to establish a *hypothetical* Africa at odds with the pre-structured chronotope of colonized Africa. The key phrase “what happens [if] . . .” launched Robeson’s hypothesized Africa as putatively self-governable. The counterfactual applied pressure for readers to agree that it should not take “1000 years” to achieve. Yet, as Robeson allows, the authorities came around to see him precisely to

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<sup>56</sup> Gilles Fauconnier, *Mappings in Thought and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 37-41.

<sup>57</sup> Paul Robeson, *Here I Stand*, (New York: Othello, 1958), 43. “There was a cultural logic to this cultural struggle . . . and the powers-that-be realized it before I did.”

caution him with an obvious implication of reserved force. Not a force proving Robeson's counterfactual 'wrong', but one that might block or jam the upward float of his counterfactual analogy. I will argue that this is exactly what happened to the sign "progressive" when it was addressed directly by the powerful discourse of nationality after Gouzenko, when such phrases as "must decide between" or "foremost allegiance" capped its upward float.

This is why the discourse of nationality problematizes the preceding narrative.<sup>58</sup> To ventilate the air of inevitability that consigns historiography to this particular set of cognitive mappings, I refer again to Bakhtin's concept of the "chronotope," particularly his sensitivity to historiography's double movement that, a) extracts spatio-temporal indices from archival texts, while, b) inscribing a fresh chronotope through its own textual production. So far, this chapter has avoided creating cognitive dissonance between what typically is written and read together from the "base space" of the nation's imagined community. Drawing from Fauconnier and Bakhtin, excessive or transgressive significations that lie at odds to the nationality's base space might be unblocked.

Indeed, the political implications of Fauconnier's analysis of presuppositional floats are striking. He notices that although such presuppositions may be prevented from "floating all the way up," they are not *cancelled*:

A presuppositional float will float up into higher spaces until it is halted. It will then remain in force for the mental spaces into which it has floated. In other words, inheritance is not an all or nothing process.

Historical pragmatics, then, far from ensuring seriality and closure, *reserve* the capacity to reactivate presuppositional floats halted at some previous point. Although dormant they are nonetheless still alive, seeds waiting to sprout again in natural language.

On this view, any base space, no matter how pervasive, is not immune to the reawakening in its own language of differential practices of signification. It is worth pausing over a few examples to see how the *dispositif* of cultural nationalism blocked presuppositional floats propagated under signs as "progressivism" and suppressed their occurrence in natural language. By reductively assigning the entire cluster of signs in that group (progressive, communist, etc.) to the competing *dispositif* of *Soviet* national interest, the *dispositif* suborned all public utterances to the forced choice of nationality, leaving no alterior space for signification.

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<sup>58</sup> As Fauconnier's work suggests, even subsidiary frames introduced by words describing scents, acoustics, or architecture will link more intimate locales back to a "base space."

This is evident throughout the proceedings of the Kellock-Taschereau Royal Commission in 1946. The suspects' exchanges with the authorities show how their cognitive maps became decontextualized, disallowed and purified through strict reaffirmations of the base space of nationality. In Kay Willsher's examination by Commission Counsel Gerard Fauteux, one finds preventative "structure-building" at work, efficiently propagating nationality as the base space for their dialogue:

FAUTEUX: You have been a member of the Party for a long time, have you not?

WILLSHER: Yes, but I mean I do not have any close contacts.

FAUTEUX: You must have some idea as to the inspiration of the theory of that Party, where it comes from?

WILLSHER: Well, there are similar parties in all countries.

FAUTEUX: From where would you say that those parties receive their instructions?

WILLSHER: I do not know that they receive instructions, I think they exist—

FAUTEUX: Do you know if they are federated?

WILLSHER: I do not know that there is any federation.

FAUTEUX: Or put it another way, what would be the interest of the Soviet Union in those parties?

WILLSHER: Because they are similar to the Party itself in its own country.

FAUTEUX: Because it was similar to what?

WILLSHER: Its own party. I mean, it is natural that they would not be antagonistic. I think each country carries out its own policy as far as possible. Naturally, they would support each other's policies to a certain extent. I mean, I believe, as I have read in *The Tribune*, the executive are Canadians, and they have a policy.

Fauteux uses space partitioning ("where") to limit Willsher's interlocutional possibilities. She finds him foreclosing on her scene of utterance, but her attempts to predicate a "base space" on "similar parties in all countries" will be blocked. The Commission is bent on isolating her cognitive map and preventing it from "floating up" to authorize a new supernational base space. Fauteux demands of her: do the communist parties in each country comply with the principle of nationality or not? If they do not comply, *de facto* they must be treasonous. If they *do* comply with the principle of nationality, one nation must predominate, and which one if not Russia? As Willsher was forced to adopt this syntax she slid into greater difficulty, speaking of "the Party itself in its own country," apparently admitting that the Party did indeed emanate from one country.

Fauteux's assertion of a cognitive map predicated solely on the actually-existing pattern of nationalities thus had disastrous consequences for Willsher, whose actions were then explicable only in terms of treason:

FAUTEUX: [B]eing called upon to make a decision as between your master and the country you were working for [Great Britain], on the one hand, and the Communist Party on the other, you told us you decided in favour of the Communist Party.

WILLSHER: Yes.

FAUTEUX: Whom do you think the Communist Party held loyalty to?

WILLSHER: As I say, I think they are in their own country, they are all connected because they all have the same aims in view? . . . I do not think of it in the sense of one country versus another; it was part of all countries.

FAUTEUX: I do not think of it as one country against another . . . . What about the effect if the information that you passed on to Mr. Adams was passed on to Russia; what about that?

WILLSHER: That would be a great misfortune. I did not think that was going to occur . . . . I think the Communist Party has done itself a great deal of harm. I do not think it has -- there would be an effect on public opinion which would be very strong over this kind of thing.<sup>59</sup>

When Willsher stated "I do not think of it in the sense of one country versus another; it was part of all countries," Fauteux trumped her invocation of a *supernational* base space as the cognitive frame for progressivism. Indeed, his "I do not think of it as one country against another" opened up a new preventative lattice in the base space of nationality by invoking the "iron curtain." Now the dialogue admits a cognitive map of *supernational* conflict wherein all nations align into two ideologically-conflicted groups. The *supernational* base space is saturated with the implication of Soviet national self-interest, preventing Willsher from relieving her distress by building upon a *supernational* ideal. Indeed, with nationality and nationalism considered identical, and with any upward claim to legitimacy blocked, Fauteux left the Englishwoman no alternative but to refuse to answer, or else accede to the Commission's delimited speech situation and so supply, irresistibly, everything necessary to her subsequent court conviction.

Willsher admitted to attending a study group at the home of Agatha Chapman, a young economist with the Bank of Canada. The RCMP seized Chapman, too, and brought her before the Commission. See how Commissioner Kellock neutralized the word "progressive" during her examination:

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<sup>59</sup> Bothwell and Granatstein, *Gouzenko Transcripts*.

CHAPMAN: No I am not a Communist.

KELLOCK: Are you sympathetic?

CHAPMAN: I am --- I do not know how to describe myself. Let us say I am progressive in my sympathies. That is how I would describe myself, and if you want to define progressive--

KELLOCK: I cannot define anything for you . . . we are interested in facts. You say you are not a member . . . would you describe yourself as a sympathizer?

CHAPMAN: Is this question relevant?

KELLOCK: The witness is not putting the questions.

CHAPMAN: I described my sympathies as progressive.

KELLOCK: If you want to dodge the question that's your privilege.<sup>60</sup>

To begin to recuperate the space foreclosed upon by these means it is not necessary to rehabilitate the Soviet experiment, nor even the term "progressive" itself. On the contrary, it is to reawaken ways of discussing and analyzing social and cultural history that is *not* already prefigured by a *dispositif* of any particular nationality, nor by the spatio-temporal connotations of "progress." At the moment they were caught up by the Gouzenko disclosures the progressives were developing cognitive maps--albeit half-formed and intuitive--within which the tenets of the "base space" of nationality and the concept of progress were matters of concern and discussion. It was their misfortune to have permitted these tentative imaginings to be so easily and cynically grounded to the sovereign interests of a rival state. Rejoicing in their failure, the political discourses of French and English Canada were free to progress their *status quo*, embracing one another in their richly romantic, exclusive, by times jealous and fractious, but ultimately empty conceptions of nationality.

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After their arrests, the suspects were interrogated at the Rockcliffe RCMP barracks by C.W. "Cliff" Harvison and M.E. Anthony. Norman Robertson's "Corby" group knew that Gouzenko's documentary evidence in itself had minimal probative value. A Secret Order in Council authorized the extraordinary suspension of the suspects' rights to legal counsel, counting on the shock effect of dawn arrest and secret detention to scare the them

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid. Unlike Willsher, Chapman had not breached an oath of office or secrecy. A criminal prosecution for hosting a study group in her home was dubious, yet she was tried. Acquittal did not undo the discrediting of "progressivism," and within a few years she fled Canada.

into quick confessions. The illiberal handling of the case has been the source of debate ever since.

Cliff Harvison described the interrogations as an “intensely interesting experience.” With the Soviets' own personality estimates of the suspects in hand, Harvison had a unique opportunity to understand their political motivations. He was surprised by the high calibre of these “ideological spies” and came to doubt they were “true Communists.” To explain their treachery he turned to the Kellock-Taschereau Report's account of “organized indoctrination” that sought to:

create in the mind of the study group member an . . . acceptance at its face value the propaganda of a foreign state . . . a gradual development of divided loyalties. [They] begin by feeling that Canadian society is not democratic or equalitarian enough for their taste . . . without reference to whether that other country is more or less democratic or equalitarian than Canada.

Indeed, a sense of internationalism seems in many cases to play a role in one stage of the course . . . The Canadian sympathizer is first encouraged to develop a sense of loyalty, not directly to a foreign state but to what he conceives to be an international ideal. This subjective internationalism is then usually linked . . . through indoctrination, with . . . the national interest of the foreign state.<sup>61</sup>

According to Mark McClung, Harvison epitomized the anti-intellectualism of the RCMP.<sup>62</sup> Yet, despite its downplaying the psychological brutality and dubious legality of the detentions, and despite his call for police activities to be kept under the wraps of official secrecy, Harvison's account nonetheless acknowledges a differential space of political signification, one that exceeded the Cold War formulation. Of course, Harvison believed this was a space wherein “the disintegration of normal moral principles, beliefs and character” ultimately exposed the suspects to exploitation by the Soviets. What is remarkable is his admission that “nationality,” and not communism, was at issue.

### **Iron Curtains**

Winston Churchill's address at Fulton, Missouri, on March 5th, 1946, followed swiftly upon the arrests of the Gouzenko suspects. Titled “Sinews of Peace,” it announced a postwar global partition with its compelling image of the “iron curtain.” Today Churchill's mighty metaphor is as effaced as its material referent, the Berlin Wall. Yet to nervous North American radio listeners in 1946 the high metaphorical charge of the “iron

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<sup>61</sup> C.W. Harvison, *The Horsemen* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 158-59.

<sup>62</sup> See page 238, note 24.

curtain” derived from the diverse series of tensions it evoked, three of which can be stated here:

a) *a re-weighting of post-war euphoria with a renewed discourse of sobriety*: Churchill rang down the fire curtain in the make-believe theatre of Soviet Friendship, converting it to Le Carré’s “secret theatre” of espionage.

b) *the ocular tension between prospect and refuge*: the iron curtain sealed off Eastern Europe from the West’s lamp of Enlightenment.

c) *the tension between the real and the virtual*. The intangible quality of international boundaries, their status as virtual demarcations were imaged as solid and inflexible curtains closed across Middle Europe.

Two-thirds of the way through his address in the gymnasium at Fulton, with President Truman at the foot of the dais, and with radio listeners tuned-in all over Canada and the United States, Churchill discharged his famous broadside: “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line [is] what I must call the Soviet sphere . . . .”<sup>63</sup> Many Soviet-sympathetic listeners already were reeling from the reports emerging from Ottawa concerning the Gouzenko spy scare. Now Churchill yanked away whatever remained of their hopeful “internationalism,” replacing it with the fearful realism of this hemispheric divide.

Deftly, Churchill justified the weighting of Anglo-American culture with renewed secrecy and security-consciousness in order to achieve parity with the Soviets’ formidable secret political police agencies. The enemy within must be ferreted out, while externally, vigilant sentries must track Soviet movements in the shadows. Less obviously, Churchill’s iron curtain augured a *virtual* system, that is, as a new regime of information. He called for reciprocal national measures to project the Atlantic Alliance into future decades, predicated not simply on the opposition of East and West but on an *accentuated regime of nationality* within which the Anglo-American alliance might hold sway.

The two central metaphors of his speech--“sinews of peace” and “iron curtain”--work together as a masterpiece of political indirection.<sup>64</sup> Behind Churchill’s theatrical

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<sup>63</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill, His Complete Speeches, 1897-1963*, Vol. 7 Ed. Robert Rhodes James (New York: Chelsea House, 1974), 7290.

<sup>64</sup> See Michael J. Hostetler, “The Enigmatic Ends of Rhetoric: Churchill’s Fulton Address as Great Art and Failed Persuasion,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83 (1997): 416-428. Hostetler argues that the muscle and curtain metaphors were not rival meanings but rather a rhetorical ensemble using “the muscle metaphor to frame and lead to the iron curtain.” The Anglo-American affinity is a “private qualifier” that defined Churchill’s listeners as members of that club. Churchill’s overall persuasive strategy was to “aim high,” assuming that his American audience’s rejection of his bold premise of outright Anglo-American

"curtain" image was his call backstage to muscle up *all* national frontiers, particularly those of "the fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples." As he predicted, the post-war period would see "the continuance of the intimate relationship between our military advisers, leading to a common study of potential dangers," and a covert elimination of communist fifth-columns by a strengthened and integrated intelligence-censorship-propaganda complex. As he hoped, securing Anglo-American hegemony within the United Nations Organization became "an open cause of policy of very great importance."

People knew the speech was boundary-raising. Even when Mackenzie King telephoned Churchill in Fulton with effusive praise, demonstrations were afoot in Britain and America protesting its warlike tone. Churchill encountered placard-waving protesters when he arrived back in New York.<sup>65</sup> An FBI wiretap recorded Paul Robeson's reaction to the speech. Speaking from San Francisco with Max Yergan in New York the singer demurred from Yergan's strident wording in a letter denouncing Truman and Churchill, but in subsequent public addresses Robeson said that the Fulton speech promoted a "more highly developed kind of benevolent Anglo-American imperialism."<sup>66</sup> Irrespective of controversy, the "iron curtain" instantly became the dominant geo-political metaphor of the Cold War.

### **Party Line**

Paul Robeson remains anomalous in the general pattern of disenchantment with the U.S.S.R.'s war against Finland, its pact with the Nazis, the purge of Trotskyists, and so forth. Although he became aware of the serious, if not the fatal flaws, in actually-existing Soviet socialism he renounced neither the Party nor the Soviet Union. Knowing of systemic anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, for example, he did not speak of it in the West, and even denied that it occurred. This silence, and his failures to speak up in favour of the Finns or the Trotskyists have been used to discredit him ever since.

Since Duberman's 1989 biography a recording surfaced in a Moscow archive supporting Paul Robeson, Jr.'s, claim that his father antagonized Stalin during a special Moscow concert in 1949 by dedicating the song of the Warsaw ghetto to Soviet Jewry and singing it in Yiddish. Everyone in the hall including Stalin understood Robeson's message

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world hegemony "might create the likelihood that a related premise of less bold suggestion would be accepted."

<sup>65</sup> Spencer Warren, "Churchill's Realism," *The National Interest* (Winter 1995-96): 38-49.

<sup>66</sup> Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 303-304.

perfectly. In the stunned silence that followed one person began a slow clap that gradually grew into a thunderous applause. Stalin abruptly shelved plans to release a record of the concert. In later years Robeson believed this type of action had made him a target of Soviet as well as Anglo-American security services.<sup>67</sup>

Certainly he remained a target of RCMP security intelligence, whose copious Robeson files reflect a subject considerably more complex than their own characterization of him as a mere mouthpiece of the Party Line. In general, Robeson emphasized repeatedly his primary concern for the civil rights of black Americans. Secondly, he attacked European colonialism and, like W.E.B. Du Bois, he confronted the liberal democracies with their illiberal tendencies, particularly their treatment of minorities. Finally, he earned his friendships with labour through personal associations, often irrespective of the Party, and operating well beyond its limited sphere as a rare point of intersection for a divided oppositional culture.

In the matter of Fred Rose, Robeson ran directly against the Party line. As the Labour Progressive Party's sole Member of Parliament, Rose's six year prison sentence for espionage came as a catastrophic blow. He and his party paid dearly for his covert liaison with Col. Zabolin. In retrospect his actions seem not only treasonous but craven and deluded compared with his responsibilities as the LPP's first elected representative. Voicing no such qualifications, Robeson became his defender.

The sinister villain of Zanuck's *Iron Curtain* does not match up to Rose's actual description. He was not a professional spy, but rather part of the organized Communist Party structure that tried to keep to windward of the progressive movement as a whole. Rose worked zealously on behalf of labour and minority groups, attempting to sway them to the Party, but also to raise the alarm against rising fascism, and not least the fascist tendencies of the RCMP. In a 1938 booklet, *Spying on Labour*, he attacked the RCMP's promotion of "disunity and prejudice inside the labour and socialist movements" through the use of stool-pigeons and provocateurs: "Spy-promoters always try to give the impression that all their investigators look for is the so-called 'subversive' activities of the Communist Party," the actual field of surveillance and interference knew no such bounds:

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<sup>67</sup> Paul Robeson Jr., CBC "As it Happens," January 1996; Duberman, *Paul Robeson*, 352-54. For a Canadian angle see "Robeson applauded when he appears on Moscow stage," *The Ottawa Journal*, 9 June 1949, reported that tickets were completely "sold in a few hours," that most Soviet leaders were in attendance, and that it was "one of the highlights of Moscow's musical season." The controversial encore is not mentioned, but "Scandalize my Name" he dedicated to the "so-called free Western press."

These same “gentlemen” never limited their activities to this one section of the labour movement . . . *Every one of them was also engaged in industrial and general espionage against the entire labour and progressive movement.*<sup>68</sup>

If any doubt remains that the RCMP’s “centre-periphery” model of Party affiliation deeply exaggerated the influence of the Party in the labour and progressive movements, Rose dispenses with it here. Nobody would have been quicker or happier to describe his party’s activities as forming its centre, and he did not do so. On the other hand, Rose’s attempt to sensitize progressives to the covert destruction of the cultural context for their movement by Government and industry was neither fanciful nor fear-mongering. If anything, he perhaps underestimated its scope.

The years in prison broke Rose, and upon release he fled ostracism in Montreal to exile in Poland.<sup>69</sup> Jack Pickersgill, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, took the opportunity to revoke his citizenship and cancel his passport, and henceforth denied his requests to visit his family in Canada. With considerable ruthlessness, Tim Buck’s Labour Progressive Party also abandoned Rose to his prison term and to his subsequent stateless limbo. Yet the RCMP recorded, almost with disbelief, Paul Robeson’s repeated public expressions of support for the disgraced M.P., steadfastly refusing to participate in his scapegoating. In Montreal, he looked out at an audience that included both Tim Buck and the RCMP’s undercover agent, J.E.M. Barrette, and said, “Tell him I was here and that I’ll be back—I mean Fred Rose.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Fred Rose, *Spying on Labour* (Toronto: New Era Publishers, 1938), 36. Emphasis his.

<sup>69</sup> For a sympathetic portrait see Merrily Weisbord, *The Strangest Dream: Canadian Communists, the Spy Trials, and the Cold War* (Montreal: Véhicule, second edition, 1994), 168-9. Rose, she points out, was a Polish-Canadian Montrealer, not an “alien” who fled “back home” to Poland.

<sup>70</sup> RCMP Robeson file, report of two sold out concerts in Montreal dated 17 January 1948. Although Robeson “refrained from making any political comments,” he dedicated “Joe Hill” to Fred Rose, with Tim Buck present in the audience. Commissioner Wood thought this “very interesting.” Within the Special Branch, Norman Jones wrote to Len Higgit, “You may come to see this from \_\_\_ angle.” Higgit replied, “\_\_\_, I guess should be advised. These deletions likely refer to Glen Bethel, who “noted with thanks” a letter sent to FBI headquarters containing these facts, along with names and descriptions of Canadians attending the concert, the concert’s printed programme, and information concerning the “assisting artist, Aube TZERKO.” On 20 December 1948, the *Montreal Star* called Robeson “irritating” after he remarked to Jewish school children that Rose was “a fighter for the poor,” and that “they won’t kill his spirit,” thus keeping alive an issue that the *Star* believed “the LPP would much rather allow to be forgotten.”

Robeson's presence in someone's home or in a vast assembly gave people courage to turn and resist the force of the forced choice. The complexity of this turning against the doxological flow of public discourse exceeds his assignment in Cold War historiography to the battery of Soviet propaganda.<sup>71</sup> Even the reports of undercover policemen betray signs that Robeson touched them personally with his performances. One aspect of this singular ability was his disinclination to be ironic. Pointing out obvious fabrications and distortions in the press was one thing, but cynicism only very rarely marred his statements and performances. Perhaps this lack of irony explains postmodernists' contemporary disinterest in Robeson. If so, that disinterest is inversely proportional to the wide admiration his unironic and uncynical encouragement of progressivism commanded during the dark years of the 1940s and 1950s.

Reviewing a Robeson concert in the University of Toronto's *Varsity* in 1949, student William Glenesk struggled for words to describe this quality. His voice was "a medium through which a principle was proclaimed . . . the equality of man." Although he "confined his message to song," Glenesk wrote, "one sensed from the supraliminal cues manifested in his performance and stage presence, an aura of vindication, a mind and soul harrowed by the piercing shafts of critical crowds."<sup>72</sup> As Weisbord writes of the Montreal progressives, "Raymond, Irene, Fred and Gilles, Robeson belonged to them, he was them. They called him Paul."<sup>73</sup> Long after Robeson was silenced, Irene Kon kept reactivating memories of his legacy: "Young people today should rediscover this man, who, long before they were born, was fighting for the rights of black people."<sup>74</sup>

Alas, for his friends, Robeson's own stamina and resources were finite, and the suspension of his passport privileges in 1950 restricted opportunities to earn foreign income. Across America, concert promoters, record producers, and broadcasters shied away from his name, cutting him off from audiences and exacerbating his financial problems. Canadian newspapers carried stories such as "The Red Pose of Martyrdom" and "Alien Propaganda not Welcome Here." On the other hand, there were helping hands, and his son Paul Jr. assembled a makeshift recording studio in his uncle's New York home. Robeson's lawyers exhausted every possible avenue in a war of attrition with the U.S. State

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<sup>71</sup> For example, Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991) dismisses Robeson out of hand.

<sup>72</sup> William Glenesk, "Art, Music Drama: Paul Robeson," *Varsity*, 5 December 1949.

<sup>73</sup> Weisbord, *Strangest Dream*, 86. She is referring to Raymond Boyer, Fred Rose, and Irene Kon. Gilles is identified only by *prénom*.

<sup>74</sup> Irene Kon, "A Reminiscence of Paul Robeson," *Black Voice*, 30 April 1973.

Department. Over the next eight years the singer gradually sank below the surface of world fame, unable to tend to his domestic or overseas followings. His health suffered, and his sure vocal command gradually eroded. Robeson's 1952 Peace Arch concert has special significance as his last great public performance for Canadian listeners.

### Passports

Dr. Robert Boyer emerged from Montreal's Bordeaux prison in 1950 to a ruined scientific career and the annihilation of the Canadian Association of Scientific Workers he had laboured to create.<sup>75</sup> He decided to travel abroad. Citing four countries he intended to visit, he applied for and received his new Canadian passport. Unfortunately, this decision coincided with nuclear scientist Bruno Pontecorvo's disappearance from Chalk River and re-emergence in Moscow. Similarly, scientist Leopold Infeld decided not to return to Canada from a trip to his native Poland. To make matters worse, the travel company handling Boyer's booking, either as a matter of course or because of his notoriety, passed on the information to the Canadian authorities. Meeting in Ottawa on October 25th, 1950, George Glazebrook and George McClellan executed a Cabinet decision to block Boyer's exit from Canada, ordering RCMP officers in Montreal to relieve him of his passport.<sup>76</sup>

Three months earlier, two FBI agents sought out Paul Robeson in New York with the same purpose. On his lawyer's advice he refused to surrender his passport, but this had no practical effect since the State Department announced on August 4th that it had been voided and all border points had been advised to prevent his departure. Robeson was not the first left-winger to suffer such a bar, but his fame brought renewed international attention to the U.S. government's anti-communist consular practices.<sup>77</sup>

Between the 1947 Coliseum concert and his passport suspension in 1950 Robeson's Canadian concert dates were moments of relative calm in an increasingly bitter struggle south of the border, culminating in 1949 with the singer's performance at

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<sup>75</sup> At a time when Soviet ally bore the brunt of the war, Boyer ignored his superiors and leaked his research on the high explosive RDX. See his unsentimental but sensitive portrait of the Bordeaux prison, *Barreaux de fer, hommes de chair* (Montreal, Éditions du jour, 1972) for an indication of what was lost as a result of the spy hysteria.

<sup>76</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 8561, file 50224-40, vol. 3, "Passport Security Measures Taken by Canada -- General," A.D.P. Heeney to G.B. McClellan, 25 October 1950.

<sup>77</sup> RCMP Robeson file, "The Case of Paul Robeson's Passport: A Fact Sheet," 29 February 1952. The FBI seized his passport on July 28th, 1950, "Among those similarly deprived are two outstanding Negro women leaders: Mrs. Charlotta Bass . . . and Mrs. Therese Robinson."

Peekskill, New York, where he sang into the sights of Klansmen's rifles. The progressives who attended the outdoor concert were beaten and stoned by so-called "veterans' groups," with tacit encouragement from State police. At a Paris peace conference Robeson electrified the assembly by charging that Black Americans would not fight the Soviet Union because their civil rights were better respected there than in their own country.<sup>78</sup> When the Korean War erupted in the spring of 1950, Robeson again called upon his people to demand their rights at home before volunteering to fight an imperialist war abroad. It was an intolerable repudiation of what J.L. Granatstein calls the "hard obligations" of citizenship.

Even as Robeson continued his tour to Scandinavia and then to Poland, Czechoslovakia and Russia, reports of his statements helped to cement mainstream opinion against him at home in America. On the other hand, North American ears were closed to the systematic obstruction of his recording and concert career by the FBI. The Bureau's relentless persecution of Robeson foreshadows the sinister COINTELPRO operations directed against Martin Luther King and Malcolm X in the 1960s. Disinformation regarding Robeson and the "communist menace" was propagated not just by high-profile informants such as Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley but by a host of alarmists and opportunists touring North America with lurid tales of Communist plots. Manning Johnson, for one, dubbed Robeson "The Black Stalin," playing up race fears by "revealing" secret communist plans to seize America and place 219 counties in nine southern states under Robeson's personal control.<sup>79</sup>

Robeson soldiered on, performing in churches, union halls and at outdoor events, recording and broadcasting wherever a friendly hand permitted it. No one doubted that the singer, irrespective of the Party Line he was accused of parroting, shouldered the burden of "courage" almost for its own sake during this period of great fear. He became a symbol of resistance to a relentless asphyxiation of the progressive movement in North American culture. When the Progressive Party under Henry Wallace failed in the 1948 elections Robeson did not capitulate. He held up the socialist world as an example in demanding civil rights for Blacks, social equality for all Americans, and the liberation of colonized peoples. By the time of his passport suspension in 1950, he had become an isolated figure.

That the American government and to a lesser extent the Canadian government sought to control movements of their citizens by revoking their passports indicates the

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<sup>78</sup> Canadian papers carried the story. See "U.S. Negroes Won't Fight Soviet Robeson Tells Red Paris Parley," *Montreal Gazette*, 21 April 1949. A related AP wire story two days later reported that a "disturbed and ashamed" official in Robeson's home state of Connecticut had proposed that the State Attorney General "keep this man out" of the state.

<sup>79</sup> "Robeson Wants to Become 'The Black Stalin,'" *Ottawa Journal*, 15 July 1949.

growing importance of consular policy in the postwar *dispositif* of nationality. Documents of safe conduct are of ancient provenance, but the notion of a world population identifiable individually through a common, nationally-administered passport regime is a recent concept, approximately coterminous with the creation of the United Nations Organization.<sup>80</sup> A striking aspect of this regime is the secrecy that attended it. As one scholar of international law puts it:

Our knowledge of state passports depends directly on the policy of the state to make its practices public. Unfortunately, the attitude in this particular area, with few exceptions, is to remain reticent.<sup>81</sup>

The primary reason for such secrecy was the integral place of the passport system in national intelligence services. British and Canadian passport officers abroad were agents of MI6 and the RCMP, combining consular duties with other information-gathering activities.<sup>82</sup> In this sensing system the passport was a crucial point of contact between the traveling citizen and state authority, marred only by citizens' stubborn belief that bearing a passport was their right and not a state's prerogative. Once at a customs point, this misapprehension normally subsided into a state of *apprehension*. As Paul Fussell writes:

For the modern traveler it is a moment of humiliation, a reminder that he is merely the state's creature . . . . It would be depressing to estimate the amount of uniquely modern anxiety experienced by the traveler returning to his own country when the passport officer slowly leafs through his book of pariahs.<sup>83</sup>

As a human corollary to radar, these consular practices processed border phenomena, intercepting information from travelers, immigrants, refugees and defectors. This is the outline of a great self-organizing system in which passports were crucial to

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<sup>80</sup> Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), chapter four, "The Passport Nuisance," esp. 30-34. Fussell traces literary allusions to the rise of the passport system after WWI. Increasing inconvenience at border-crossings through the 1930s (when Robert Byron could still observe "there is something absurd about a land frontier") by WWII became a "ritual occasion for anxiety." Fussell cites poet Basil Bunting ("The Passport Officer") but does not mention that Bunting was with MI6 for many years.

<sup>81</sup> Daniel C. Turack, *The Passport in International Law* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1972), 251.

<sup>82</sup> West, *MI6*; RCMP internet site, story concerning J.E.M. Barrette's years as a passport control officer.

<sup>83</sup> Fussell, *Abroad*, 30.

sensing out and processing various threats posed to the system of nationality during post-war decolonization and its population displacements.

Canada's position in these developments was dubious. The racism that divided the subjects of Britain's Empire into white and non-white categories, despite palliatives about differential rates of progress towards self-government, all along precluded any Pan-Empire citizenship status. Moreover, because the Colonial Office discouraged internal migration between regions within the Empire there could be no invariable issuance of passports to all persons subject to British rule. Canada's Citizenship Act of 1946 unilaterally forced Britain to treat the Dominions as distinct nationalities, as opposed to its protectorates and colonies. Even so, the ambiguity about nationality and citizenship would persist as a fracture line within the Commonwealth.

Achieving sovereignty in Canadian consular practices proved to be elusive and relational to British and American policy. On one hand, British consular policy reflected the tradition of common law. As Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, Secretary of State for Home Affairs, told a meeting of American correspondents in 1953, "we do not think in terms of mobilising the whole country towards a particular problem called cold war, but rather how to face the individual problems as they arise." Naturally, the Canadian officials took Fyfe's implicit message that British discretion, applied to particular cases, helped forestall *counter-mobilization* forming up in opposition to illiberality in consular practices.

As is well known, the Americans preferred to isolate, perhaps even invent, communists as a group and to treat them with a well-publicized policy of considerable harshness. The Internal Security Act of 1950 named "a world-wide Communist revolutionary movement" whose purpose was global domination: "Individuals in the United States, by participating in this movement, in effect repudiate their allegiance to the United States and transfer their allegiance to the foreign country which controls the Communist movement." The right of Americans to receive "protection and good offices of American consular officers abroad is correlative with the obligation to provide undivided allegiance." As a result, any person whose activities "promote the interests of a foreign country should not be the bearer of an American passport."<sup>84</sup>

During a trip to China in 1951 the Canadian radical Dr. James Endicott accused the U.S.-led force of using bacteriological weapons against the North Koreans. Endicott's charge exercised Canadian officials less with the matter of its truth or falsity than with possible U.S. reprisals aimed at Canadian policies that allowed Endicott to travel abroad in the first place. But the tight clamp-down on communist movements contemplated by hawks

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<sup>84</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 8561, file 50224-40, vol. 3, "Passport Security Measures Taken by Canada – General," U.S. State Department, press release, 24 May 1952.

in External Affairs prompted concern over the potential negative publicity it might cause and the dubious legal basis for such action.

The lone voice of Escott Reid argued for a third option that neither suppressed people's movements in secret and selective British fashion nor clobbered entire classes of person with sweeping American-style controls. In France and Italy there must be "Endicotts by the thousands," Reid wrote, and "no attempt is made to prosecute them or to refuse them passport facilities." He suggested "that we bear our Endicott with patience as part of the price we have to pay to maintain our democratic traditions." Canada should lead the free world by example, permitting dissenting voices to criticize even other members of the Atlantic alliance. What better way to build civic confidence in the North Atlantic community, he asked? He argued that an administrative order preventing citizens from traveling or expressing opinions had no statutory basis, and would only erode civic confidence:

The leader of the free world, the United States, is peculiarly subject to temptations to limit freedom of speech and freedom of movement. It would be unfortunate if Canada were to encourage these tendencies in the United States.<sup>85</sup>

Reid's views met with skepticism, but it transpired that the Department's legal experts favoured the British approach, arguing that "seeming to isolate one group—i.e. communists—for special treatment" was less preferable than the "more defensible practice of [pursuing] individual special cases."

Seizing the reports of Endicott's statements in China, the Jekyll-and-Hyde civil libertarian John G. Diefenbaker made a great show of the Government's handling of Canadian Communists. He demanded in the House of Commons that the Government adopt "better security measures" to control their exit from the country. Pearson sent Arnold Heeney behind the scenes to apprise Diefenbaker of the fact that Canada began tracking its passport holders' movements in Iron Curtain countries in August, 1951. Pearson's public response was rather more oblique. Irrespective of Endicott, he said, the broad purpose of consular facilities would remain the provision of assistance to Canadian citizens abroad.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid. E. Reid to L. Pearson, 23 April 1952. Reid's views did not impress Pearson: "Notwithstanding the position which you put so forcibly you would withdraw a passport from a Canadian who owes the government a hundred dollars . . ." The difference, Reid countered, was that revoking consular privileges on the basis of a person's political views left them no route of appeal.

<sup>86</sup> NAC RG 2, vol. 235, file s-100-11. Within the Privy Council Office, Peter Dwyer and his colleagues circulated a reprint of F.R. Scott's "Publishing False News," *Canadian Bar*

If the truth of Endicott's charges regarding bacteriological weapons remains murky, the incident shows the enhanced importance of the passport regime to the security intelligence function. As in censorship, where the greater value derives not from the suppression of communications but from information gleaned through the monitoring process. As Reid explained to Pearson, the Passport Office monitored "the names of 116 active Communists given us by the RCMP, but in fact we do not refuse passports to people on this list."<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, the information gained through these individuals' applications provided valuable personal information not always easy to obtain in other ways.

The Canadians noted with interest the rise and fall of the Australian government's passport campaign against its own Communists, requiring every traveler destined for a Communist country to obtain prior approval. "Legitimate" travelers' clearances inundated the Australian passport office while the tiny minority of suspects easily bypassed the process altogether. Unless legislated as such, passports proved ineffective as exit control documents. As affirmations of identity they facilitated entry elsewhere through visas stamped or placed in the passport by officials of the destination country.<sup>88</sup> As a result of the Australian fiasco, Canadian officials concluded that exits should not be controlled using the passport except in extreme cases.

In fact, the entire passport question was entering a new international plane, driven not by Opposition questions but by a covert drive towards international cooperation between the various Western nations' secret police agencies. The RCMP's control of consular and visa functions, and reports the Mounties' received from other police services, placed even External Affairs in a client relationship within the Government's hierarchy of secret information. George Glazebrook cautioned his Consular Division counterparts to treat all information which originated from the RCMP with the utmost care. Under no circumstances might these documents be taken outside the East Block to the Bank St. Passport offices, where there were known security "shortcomings." In citing material from such documents, officials were instructed that paraphrasing was essential in order to conceal the sources of information.<sup>89</sup>

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*Review* (January 1952), as a ready-made legal opinion on the Endicott case. By Scott's reasoning, Endicott might successfully have been prosecuted for "seditious libel." But this required the U.S. to admit that bacteriological weapons *were* used, for as Scott points out, "the greater the truth, the greater libel." The contemplated litigation proceeded no further.

<sup>87</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 8561, file 50224-40, vol. 3, E. Reid to L. Pearson, 20 May 1952.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, L. Wilgress to L. Pearson, 27 September 1952: "*Off the record*, it has been pointed out that passport controls without exit controls cannot prevent Canadians from traveling to Iron Curtain countries."

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, G. Glazebrook to Consular Division, 5 November 1952.

RCMP visa control officers and liaisons in Canada's foreign legations reached informal reciprocal understandings with their counterparts at the periphery of External Affairs' knowledge and influence.<sup>90</sup> On the other hand, the diplomats themselves sought bilateral information-sharing agreements with certain countries, while giving the cold shoulder to others. Taken as a whole, the Canadian passport regime was ideologically-sensitized through a haphazard series of formal and informal agreements, personal contacts, as well as by continued reliance on British Intelligence for clearances. The net result of these activities only rarely restricted the travel of Canadians, but it objectified their movements and their identities in a database carrying considerable exchange value in cross-national markets of security intelligence.

In some cases the degree of monitoring depended on the personality of a particular Chargé d'affaires. In Moscow, R.A.D. Ford fumed at the repeated failure of Canadian communists to check in with the embassy upon arrival and before departure: "it seems to be the general impression of Canadian travelers to Iron Curtain countries that they only have to report in person once . . . when they do care to report at all." This was true of almost every visitor, reported Ford, "with the exception of Mr. Pierre Elliott Trudeau who appeared willing to discuss his impressions of Moscow on various occasions during his stay." Ford forwarded to Ottawa the "flimsy excuse" provided by Mary Jennison in a handwritten note, claiming that "pressure of time has made it impossible to conform with the usual courteous formalities." When a Canadian trade union delegation visited Moscow, Ford was instructed to verify, "through all the sources available to you . . . the composition of this group." It was not known which delegates were Party members, but "the possibility is being considered here of impounding the passports of this group upon their return to Canada."<sup>91</sup>

In Ottawa, Dana Wilgress embarked on his fourth decade of vigorous anti-communism by taking a hand in consular policy.<sup>92</sup> His mettle shone once again when

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid. In an exchange between Canadian visa control, Paris, and William Kelly, Security Section at Canada House, London, P.J. Vaucher requested clearance to exchange information with the Sureté National (DST). His DST counterpart sought data concerning Soviet Diplomatic representatives and Canadian communists visiting France, "so that they could keep them under surveillance." George McClellan raised this with External Affairs only because its overture for such an arrangement with the French had been rebuffed. Glazebrook approved of sharing information concerning Soviet diplomats, but he was cautious about providing information concerning Canadian citizens on a routine basis. McClellan assured him that "reopening negotiations . . . could produce the converse effect of what is desired," implying the matter was settled between the two police agencies.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., despatch, 18 September 1951.

<sup>92</sup> Wilgress's career anti-communism began with a secret denunciation of Louis Kon during the 1919 Canadian Trade Commission to Siberia. L.D. Wilgress, *Memoirs*

Escott Reid queried the Consular Division regarding the passport renewal of M.P. Raymond Arthur Gardner of the LPP. Pearson was "holding on to the file" because, as Reid wrote, "the sponsor of the application is himself a communist." He wondered "whether we should accept a sponsor of this kind?" Wilgress encouraged taking a hard line against Canadian communists but here he argued against barring known communists from vouching for other persons' passports: "We would be hard put to justify our action . . . the latter would almost certainly demand publicly to be shown our authority for taking such action would be very difficult to produce wholly satisfactory answers."

On the other hand, he wrote, the current practice offered distinct advantages:

The name of every applicant vouched for by a known Communist is referred to the RCMP, who in this way sometimes discover Communists not previously known to them. It would appear to be a mistake to cut off this source of information. These applications are scrutinized more closely than others by the Passport Office . . . Perhaps if vouchers who are Communists are given enough leeway they may bring their own downfall. We are not likely to have many other opportunities to punish them for their subversive activities.<sup>93</sup>

Externally, Canadian consular policy felt its way towards the most advantageous international cooperation arrangements. In some cases this meant declining the overtures of other nations. During Tommy Stone's Ambassadorship to the Netherlands in 1952 he was approached by Baron van Boetzelaer of the Dutch Foreign Office, who allowed that an internal Benelux arrangement monitored the movements of communists by means of passport and consular facilities. When the Baron wondered if Canada might support expanding the initiative to include all NATO members, Stone gave him the brush off: "We told Baron van Boetzelaer that it might give rise to some objections from the Canadian point of view." Stone evidently knew without asking where Ottawa's preferred liaisons lay in the field of security intelligence.

These are apparent in a despatch from Oslo, where the Canadian *Chargé d'affaires* reported a similar approach by the Norwegian police:

I do not think it necessary to provide Inspector Bryhn with lists of Norwegians applying for visas to Canada. We can do as we have done in the past - have such Norwegians screened by British Intelligence . . . [T]here is less likelihood of a leak

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(Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967), 53, writes: "I got on well with Kon." Cf. Solicitor General ATIP, RCMP file "Louis Kon," Wilgress to Deputy Minister Trade and Commerce, secret letter, 7 May 1919, "I consider it my duty . . . to call to the attention of the proper authorities the necessity of watching [Kon] on his return to Canada . . . He is regarded as a Jew . . . holds socialist views [which] might possibly prove to be a menace."

<sup>93</sup> NAC RG 25, vol. 8561, file 50224-40, vol. 3, D. Wilgress to L. Pearson, 7 July 1952.

by taking this course. Even now, one cannot be completely sure there are not Communist agents in the Norwegian Police Force.<sup>94</sup>

Canada's continued reliance on British intelligence services perhaps explains Irish officials' coolness to a proposed reciprocal notification of the movement of Canadian and Irish Communists. A despatch from Dublin reported:

We can only take it that the Irish authorities, either because they feel that there is so little Communist activity in Ireland . . . or because of deliberate policy, are unwilling to commit themselves one way or another.

Asked if he wished to "press the matter," George Glazebrook took the hint and replied, "not at this stage."

Given the Canadians' close interface with the American and British security advisements of movements of suspect Canadians were a matter of course. Glazebrook set out the procedure in some detail in response to a request from the U.K. High Commission for information regarding Canadian exit provisions. Already, he had supplied the High Commission with details of Canada's policy regarding look-out lists and the admission of undesirable persons, but as he set to work on a three-page reply to the second (two paragraph) inquiry he noted, "This is getting more difficult."

Under Canadian law, he wrote, passports in themselves cannot control movements, but the Cabinet's Standing Committee on External Affairs had determined that in rare instances that threaten national security a passport may be impounded. In Raymond Boyer's case, for example, the passport was seized while Boyer's travel plans were investigated. Boyer proved not to be a security risk so his passport was returned, with permission to travel not to "all countries" but only to the four countries he requested, one of which was the United Kingdom. "I might add . . . it was thought proper to notify the four countries concerned . . . so they might exercise their right to refuse Dr. Boyer admission."<sup>95</sup> A "notice to travelers" in Canadian passports, Glazebrook concluded, required that they appear in person at the relevant Canadian legation or embassy in Soviet-controlled territories to submit their travel plans, and to present themselves again before their departure.

As for the Americans, External Affairs had to rely on the RCMP to handle Hoover's FBI. For reasons discussed previously, Pearson and his staff did not share the same affinity

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., Oslo despatch, 31 December 1952.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., George Glazebrook to J. Thomson, 19 December 1952. Notification of Boyer's visit was sent through Canada House to the Treaty Division of the Foreign Office on December 6th, 1950.

with the American security agencies they did with their British counterparts. Nonetheless, consular issues were close to the forefront of U.S.-Canadian relations, with a strong expectation south of the border that Canada would cooperate in the anti-Communist crackdown. The U.S.-Canada border presented an obvious point of weakness for the U.S., which otherwise *did* use passports as a form of exit control.

If Paul Robeson had been a Canadian citizen, the government would have had to return his passport, as they did Raymond Boyer's. As an American citizen, the government had a case for keeping it. Although the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 repealed 1941 legislation requiring any U.S. citizen exiting the Western Hemisphere to hold a valid passport, effectively the earlier measure remained in force through a Presidential proclamation authorizing a State of Emergency. Without a passport no American could travel to foreign destinations other than Canada. As Daniel Turack writes, this resulted in a strange situation where:

a citizen of the United States could lawfully leave the United States and enter Canada without a passport, then fly to Argentina and return to Canada before returning without a passport (but not to Africa, Europe or Asia).<sup>96</sup>

Even after *Kent vs Dulles*, a 1952 U.S. Supreme Court decision guaranteeing the right to travel, a passport could still be denied or rescinded if there was doubt concerning the applicant's allegiance to the United States. Despite persistent attempts, Robeson's lawyers could not persuade the State Department to return the singer's passport.

Robeson's arrival at Blaine, Washington, without a passport, en route to perform at the Mine-Mill convention in Vancouver, B.C., thus put to the test a complex and not entirely coherent series of measures that had rung down the "iron curtain" not just at Checkpoint Charlie but even at nondescript American-Canadian customs points like the Blaine Peace Arch. Haphazard as it may have been, a globalized filtration system conditioned the movements of persons according to their perceived allegiances, and Robeson's intention of testing the openness of the world's longest open border had both Canadian and American officials exercised.

## **Narrative II - Peace Arch**

On January 12th, 1952, the RCMP's Special Branch in Vancouver learned from sources within the IUMMSW that Paul Robeson was expected to speak and sing at the Western District Convention on February 1st. In fact, this was not much warning, considering that the Union's press release reached Vancouver newspapers just two days

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<sup>96</sup> Turack, *Passport*, 9-10.

later. Reporters demanded to know from the RCMP and the Immigration Department if the Canadian government would permit the singer's entry, eliciting prevarication from the Immigration department, and a flat "no comment" from the Mounties. In fact, the RCMP's liaison officer in Washington notified the FBI on January 17th that Robeson intended to visit Vancouver in the near future.<sup>97</sup> While the Canadian officials believed the Americans would relieve them of any responsibility by blocking Robeson's exit, they took the precaution of seeking approval from the Director of Immigration, C.E.S. Smith, to prevent his entry into Canada, if necessary.

Cst. A.E. Thomas's report of January 12th included the names of four other American Union officials scheduled to attend the Convention, and he contacted his counterparts in the American immigration office in Vancouver to discuss the impending imbroglio. The Americans advised Thomas that, irrespective of Robeson not holding a valid passport, he could easily prove U.S. citizenship and thus it "would be difficult" to restrict his movements. Meanwhile, Mine-Mill District Chairman Harvey Murphy told the press that the Canadian Immigration Department "would not bar the American singer," the truth of which is refuted by Cst. Thomas's private conversation with D.N. McDonnell, Canada's Superintendent of Immigration for the Pacific District. McDonnell assured Cst. Thomas that neither he nor his staff had communicated with Harvey Murphy. Indeed, Thomas advised his superiors that the Superintendent of Immigration did "not believe that ROBESON would speak or sing in Vancouver, intimating that he has made some arrangements within his own Branch, to prevent ROBESON's entry into Canada."

In Ottawa, the Deputy Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Col. Laval Fortier, announced on January 29th "that Robeson has neither been admitted nor barred" because the Department had received no official advisement of his intent to visit Canada. Either Fortier was unaware of his own officials' plans, or he deliberately misled the public. The latter is more likely, because on the same day John Leopold wrote from RCMP headquarters in Ottawa to advise Cliff Harvison in Vancouver that "[e]fforts have been made at this headquarters on a very high level to have these five persons refused admission to Canada and the Director of Immigration has agreed to have Paul ROBESON stopped at the border." In fact, St. Laurent himself made the decision:

However, the Director of Immigration would not take action concerning the other four individuals without first consulting the Honourable W. Harris, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. The Minister also refused to take any action on his own and finally the case was referred to the Prime Minister. The decision finally

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<sup>97</sup> King, *Red Bait*, 116. Copy of internal FBI document dated 17 January 1952. Acting upon this Canadian tip the investigator checked and reported that Robeson's file contained no such information. The State Department then issued fresh advisements to border posts.

reached was that no action would be taken to \_\_\_\_\_ due to the fact that we have no physical evidence of their membership in the Communist Party, although the last three mentioned are executive officers of a Communist dominated Union.<sup>98</sup>

With reporters gathered around, Robeson broke the news to Bill Stewart, secretary of the Boilermakers union, Ken Smith of Mine-Mill, and the rest of the welcoming committee: "They used an extraordinary measure, under an old war measures act to prevent me from appearing in Vancouver. I am extremely sorry I won't be able to meet and greet my many friends in Canada." He believed it was:

a great moment in world affairs . . . when Negro people in the U.S. are under great pressure in their fight to be treated as full citizens . . . I have never before been refused access to any country . . . the repercussions of this refusal of the right of an American citizen to enter Canada will be felt throughout the whole world.<sup>99</sup>

In Vancouver, Harvey Murphy led a delegation to the U.S. Immigration office to protest the ruling, but Director Boyd merely stated that "Robeson's departure for Vancouver was not in the best interests of the United States." Murphy told reporters, "Everybody is living in a mental vacuum, afraid to hear what's going on."<sup>100</sup>



Fig. 68. Ted Cochrane and Paul Robeson arriving at Blaine customs terminal, January 31st, 1952. (UBC, Mine Mill) Even as they pulled in both Canadian and American authorities knew Robeson would not be crossing. As it turned out, the Americans acted first and Louis St. Laurent's decision was not exercised. Summoned into the office of Inspector Everett J. Strapp, Robeson contested the order for an hour, demanding to know its legal basis. He handled Strapp with diplomacy even when the latter's studied intransigence flared tempers in the unions' committee. After conferring with Washington, Strapp cited a 1918 war measure, and the singer had to accede to what he called his "domestic house arrest." Louis St. Laurent's decision remained secret.

<sup>98</sup> RCMP Robeson file, J. Leopold to C. Harvison, 29 January 1952.

<sup>99</sup> "Robeson Halted at U.S. Border," *Vancouver Daily Sun*, 14 February 1952.

<sup>100</sup> "Paul Robeson Under 'Domestic Arrest,'" *Vancouver Daily Sun*, 1 February 1952.

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The coda to Robeson's denied entry to Canada in 1952 was a technique he resorted to with increasing frequency. Using the same communications grid that carried advance warnings to frustrate his activities, Robeson cast his voice through the telephone lines. From the Marine Cooks and Stewards hall in Seattle, he kept his date with the miners by speaking over a line connected by George Gee of the Electrical Workers Local 213 into the public address system at Vancouver's Denman Auditorium. The RCMP's informant reported that Robeson's seventeen-minute presentation "sketched his interest in helping to promote 'decent working conditions' and to aid the Negro race." His voice "piped over loudspeakers" and he told the delegates that the exit ban "was an act of the U.S. administration, not of the American people," saying "I believe in American democracy and I am not discouraged by an incident like this." The signal faded out at times during his rendition of "the miners' song."<sup>101</sup>

Harvey Murphy moved that a protest be sent "to the Civil Rights Committee of the United Nations." Cst. Thomas wrote:

[Murphy] requested all those in favour to stand. It appears that everyone stood up, whereupon he requested that anyone opposed to the resolution should stand up -- no one did so. [Murphy] stated that "it is known that there are some FBI and RCMP agents with us but apparently we are unanimous in support of this resolution."

Murphy's humiliation of police informants had long since ceased to surprise the Special Branch; indeed, over twenty-three years his file had grown to such epic proportions that there was not much about the obstreperous union organizer they did not know.<sup>102</sup> Thus Cst. Thomas ignored the hilarity with which the delegates passed Murphy's motion. Too hilariously perhaps, since they appear to have underestimated the extent of RCMP penetration of the Union. "E" Division's Special Branch received copies of its executive agenda, a complete list of Convention delegates including a photograph of each. Perhaps most seriously, the Mounties took some hand in foiling a "possible formation of a new

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<sup>101</sup> RCMP Robeson file, Vancouver Special Branch report, 14 February 1952; "Robeson Heard by 2000 in Concert Over Telephone," *Vancouver Daily Sun*, 14 February 1952. The article reported that "B.C. telephone company officials said they were 'not concerned' about Robeson having used a long distance line . . . . The Royal Canadian Mounted Police had 'no comment' to make"; also King, *Red Bait*, 115.

<sup>102</sup> NAC RG 146, vol. 1191, file 93-A-00087, "Harvey Murphy and aliases."

congress made up of . . . unions expelled from the C.C.L.” The relevant passages are deleted from the report, but the informant knew that, behind the scenes, the idea had been “decisively ruled out and the matter did not appear before the convention.”

### **Concert Planning**

Before adjournment, Murphy proposed to invite Paul Robeson to the Peace Arch. The singer would “fly to the border anytime we ask him to,” Murphy said, “we will invite all the people and there will be thousands on both sides.”<sup>103</sup> The delegates set May 18th as the concert date and Murphy's staff set about publicizing the event, promoting the image of Robeson standing at the northern extreme of the United States, hailing Canadians across the international boundary.

Even though the event was to be free of charge, concert organizers faced a challenge in assembling a mass audience so far from Vancouver. While the *Pacific Tribune* exhorted readers to attend, Murphy's assistant Olive Anderson chartered twenty-three buses to ferry people to the border. She solicited support from businesses and fellow unions, enlisted sound engineers to provide a public address system, and to record the performance. Her attention to detail extended to engaging a photographer, W. Chass, and arranging a light aircraft from which to take aerial shots of the concert.

The intangible, continent-wide climate of fear proved to be the most difficult attendance barrier. The Peekskill terror weighed on peoples' minds, especially after hearing that veterans groups planned to disrupt the concert. Progressives' anguish over the impending execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg prompted the RCMP to note with interest “that Canadian Communists are now being called to support American subversives in their drive to secure reversal of the Rosenberg conviction.”<sup>104</sup> The Special Branch received transcripts of pro-Robeson radio broadcasts, and in Sudbury the singer's recordings were seized from a local radio station.<sup>105</sup> In Vancouver, the League for Democratic Rights resolved to oppose Justice Minister Garson's Criminal Code amendments clamping down on restive unions. On May 11th, just a week before the Peace Arch concert, Canadian immigration officers detained the octogenarian Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois

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<sup>103</sup> RCMP Robeson file, report, 14 February 1952; “Singer Set for Border Concert,” *Vancouver News Herald*, 14 February 1952.

<sup>104</sup> RCMP Robeson file, report on Civil Rights Congress, New York, 29 February 1952.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, transcripts of Mine-Mill broadcasts, February 1952, by E.L. Walker, Percy Berry and Al King, discussing the exit ban and playing a recording of Robeson's phone concert.

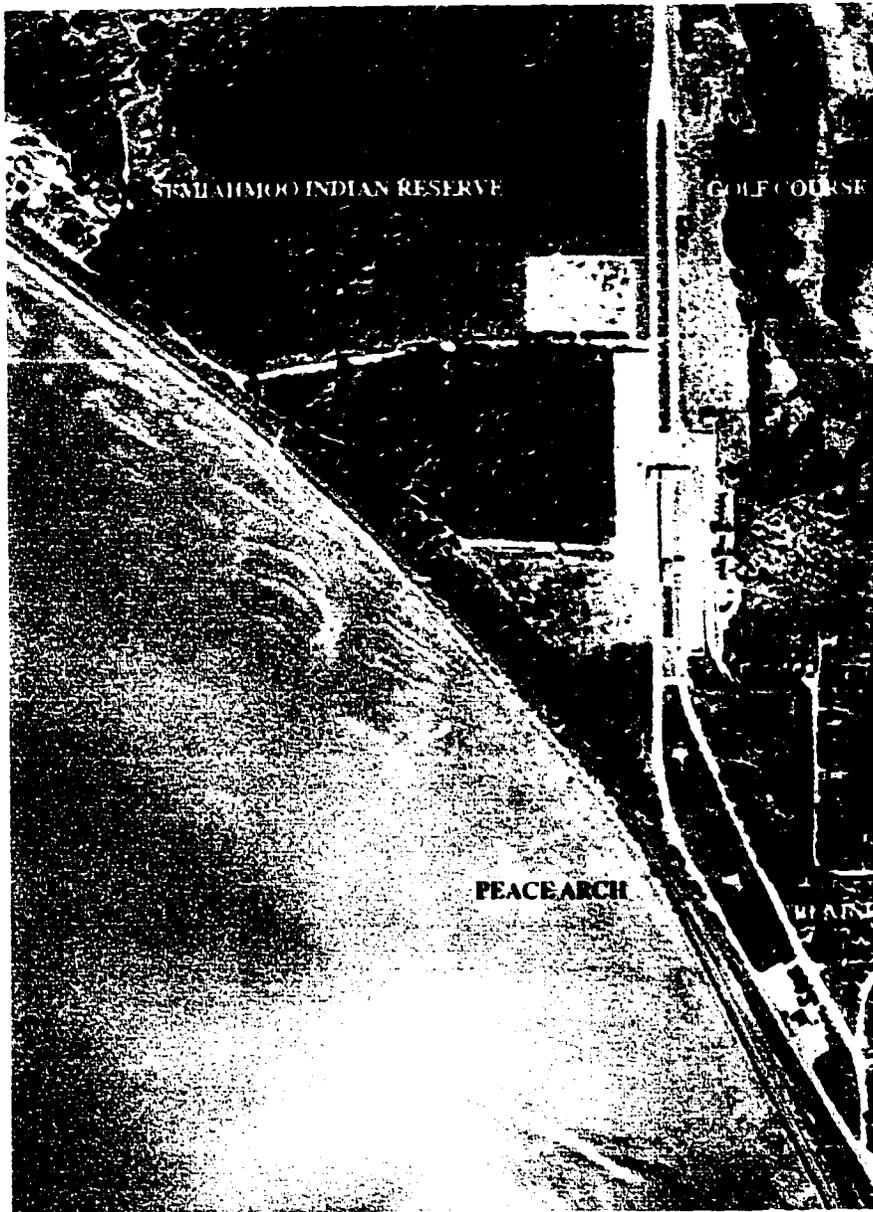


Fig. 69. Aerial Survey Photograph of Peace Arch environs, 1952. (NAPL 1594812, with text labels added by author.)

and his wife at Malton airport when they arrived to address a Peace Conference in Toronto. Immigration officials hustled them back to the U.S. on the next available flight. Still, the *Pacific Tribune* boldly pegged success of the Peace Arch concert at a turnout of ten thousand people.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, an unspoken understanding held that the concert *had* to produce a show of strength, even though everyone knew the authorities would take close note of who attended. For their parts, the FBI and the RCMP prepared to record car licence plates,

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., "E" Div. report on League for Democratic Rights, 14 March 1952. G.J. Archer pointed out to Harvison that Ukrainian attendance at the meeting was "a further example that these language groups are the backbone of such Communist controlled organizations"; For Du Bois's refused admission see Frank Park's letter in RG 146, file 92-A-000047 "IUMMSW - Canada, 643. "They waved to us as they got off the plane but that was the last we saw of them"; Regarding the upcoming concert: "10,000 progressive citizens are expected to be on hand to greet him," *Pacific Tribune*, 11 April 1952.

shoot still photos and surveillance film of the audience for identification purposes. The concert site gathered intensity as a field for image-gathering not just by Robeson fans snapping mementos, but by national police forces and the miners' union.

### The Concert Landscape

From an altitude of several thousand feet the aperture of an aerial camera opened on a locale whose surface is clearly marked by diverse cultural practices. The glassy surface of the bay cuts diagonally across the picture plane to leave a triangular patchwork of land comprising three major elements. First, there is the invisible border, the 49th parallel separating Canada from the United States, running across the bottom of the photograph. The Portal itself straddles this line just a few metres from the beach where it meets the Pacific Ocean. The boundary is arbitrary with respect to local topography, a geographer's abstraction. The park where people gathered for the concert lies between the two border posts; the maple leaf flower bed is a reminder that this is a 'geographic' space with vertical significance. To the south, at the bottom right is the edge of Blaine. Running north from the Canadian terminal the King George Highway exits decisively towards Vancouver, flanked on the seaward side by a Salish Indian reservation and on the other by the Peace Arch golf course. Thus, the international boundary triangulates the Indian reserve, suburban developments and the golf course.



Fig. 70. Peace Arch Park, detail.

The land surface is a recording medium for differentiated space-time routines. Applying a digital 'extrusion' filter to details taken from the large airphoto image, the landscape is rewritten as a set of histograms, equations which in this case sense for vertical information and are then "extruded" to dramatically enhance the depth of surface data.

Just north of the concert site, the Semiahmoo Indian Reservation is marked more by human feet than by car tires. No grid portions off the space and indicates "planned" development. Trees are felled for fuel, people have passed from house to house, to the shore and into the woods. The pattern of Salish routines revealed in this cyborg's visualization is centripetal, suggesting intensified activity at the centre, near the shore, with a gradual

blending into the surrounding landscape. The village is at once inside and outside the nation's chronotope, reserving a residue of a more intimately local gestural economy. If the inroads of the automobile and its ecology can be seen at all, clearly they have not yet achieved primacy.

In 1952 the outermost streets of Blaine, Washington, were still practically a rural setting. Yet, the cadastry here differs sharply from the

Salish land. The automobile *is* dominant, and the plan of an undifferentiated car-adapted landscape already is well-established. Zoning regulations have shaped the pattern of inhabitation around the automobile and the proliferation of suburbs it is opening up.

The time-space patterns in this image are conditioned by the invisible international boundary that arraigns local residents in the distant administrative centrifuges of Washington and Ottawa. Seattle lawyer Samuel Hill, builder of the Peace Arch, was head of the Pacific Highway Association and the B.C. Good Roads Association. Oddly, it was a point of pride for the concert organizers to have arrested the flow of traffic for several hours, jamming the highways for some distance on either side of the border.

The golf course that touches the north boundary of the Peace Arch Park shows that "town and country" are not polarized but rather fused together in a continuous regime of landscape perception. The 'wilderness' just across the road in the Semiahmoo Reservation has been idealized and tamed to the Arcadian memory of the eighteenth century English

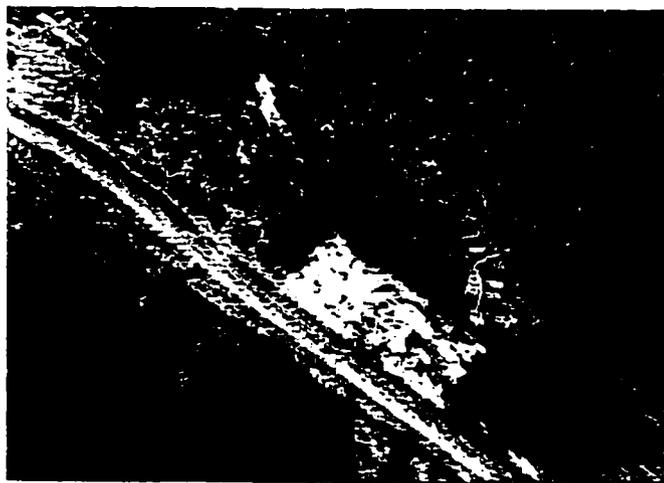


Fig. 71. Detail, Semiahmoo Reservation, extruded with digital filter.



Fig. 72. Detail, Blaine outskirts, 1952, extruded.

park. These links were part of 470,000 acres of golf courses in the U.S. in 1950.<sup>107</sup> The scallop-shaped fairways, ranged for driving projectiles, have cleared long swathes of forest like giant divets. As at Oka, the golf links act as a buffer zone between the Indian Reservation and the surrounding lands. The fact that the international boundary bisects this model town and country landscape underscores a continuity of norms in the cultural occupation of territory on both sides of the border.

The archaeological gaze notices traces of pre-history sedimented everywhere beneath the innocent lawns. By virtue of its Other-fixation it hones in on buried clam middens and other material remains of aboriginal habitation. But the spectral analysis of cultural history here must admit an interdisciplinarity that is self-reflexive enough to leave the Salish village aside and close on the Peace Arch itself. Strictly



Fig. 73. Detail, Peace Arch Golf Course, 1952, extruded.

speaking, the monument's recent provenance exempts it from any criteria of archaeological interest, though it marks a more or less solid boundary within that discipline's internal organization, dividing its American and Canadian associations, committees, and prizes. Shoulder to shoulder, it seems, the Euro-occupiers unrolled the continent-wide ground cloth of their national tents from east to west, finally pegging two corners down here, at the base of the Peace Arch.

High above, the north-facing pediment proclaims in bold characters: "BRETHREN DWELLING TOGETHER IN UNITY." Thus the portal-builders held in force certain states of existence north and south of the line. The Arch was the first such concrete structure in the world, states a park brochure, "reinforced with steel so that in the case of an earthquake, it would vibrate but would not crack."<sup>108</sup> Rising thirty metres above the ground, it is more substantial than the flimsy pickets that divided Norman MacLaren's warring neighbours, its sheer mass precluding their uncontrollable antagonism. The Arch not only commemorates "the lasting peace between the two countries," the park brochure states, "it

<sup>107</sup> Jolee Edmondson, "Hazards of the Game," *Audubon* (November 1987), 28. By 1985, golf courses covered 1,300,000 pesticide-soaked acres.

<sup>108</sup> "Peace Arch Provincial Park," B.C. Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing, brochure, ca. 1980, National Library of Canada.

show[s] the world, in a tangible way that neighbours, whether sovereign states or urban dwellers, can live beside one another in peace and harmony."

Despite such claims to dwelling, though, the Portal and its open gates perform, in architecture, the ambivalent relation between nationality and nationalism. Just as the statements "I am a Canadian" or "I am an American" signify at once systemic unity *and* sovereign difference, so the Arch represents less its constituent elements than the *system* that keeps them from the collapsing into, or annexing, each other. "Your people came on the *Mayflower*," it says, "mine arrived on the *Beaver*, we all arrived by ship." Such propositions were built into the Arch, forcing the forced choice to foreclose on non-complementary significations under erasure in the discourse of nationality. As sentinels of nationality, the American and Canadian customs terminals 'presenced' the limits of their national territories, poised to eliminate alien phenomena.

When the singer arrived at the Blaine customs terminal he was permitted to pass through into the park. His entourage converged on the Arch as he shook hands and greeted the audience. He mounted the stage where Harvey Murphy and his son William, Al King and his sister Olive Anderson were waiting. The stage



Fig. 74. Robeson approaches the stage, greeting members of the audience. (UBC, Mine Mill Collection)

was placed "twelve inches inside U.S. territory," Murphy said, but this was meaningless. As can be seen from the Mine Mill Union's photographs, the audience moved freely around the monument, irrespective of the actual border demarcation. Despite the boundary-emphasizing function of the monument, the park was in fact a liminal space wherein the two "nationalisms" cancelled one another out, even as the system of nationality redoubled the surveillance function. FBI and RCMP agents stumbled over each other in gathering intelligence data, obviating the usual liaison functions and introducing a certain confusion that any violence surely would have brought to the fore.

There was no violence, nor any heckling. Al King recalls that he and a party of miners, "mostly veterans, came the night before and spent the night and all day in the hills around the park, ready with weapons."<sup>109</sup> Threats of intimidation on the American side reportedly dampened the attendance by residents of Bellingham and Blaine, but the Mine-Mill irregulars met with no hostile elements.

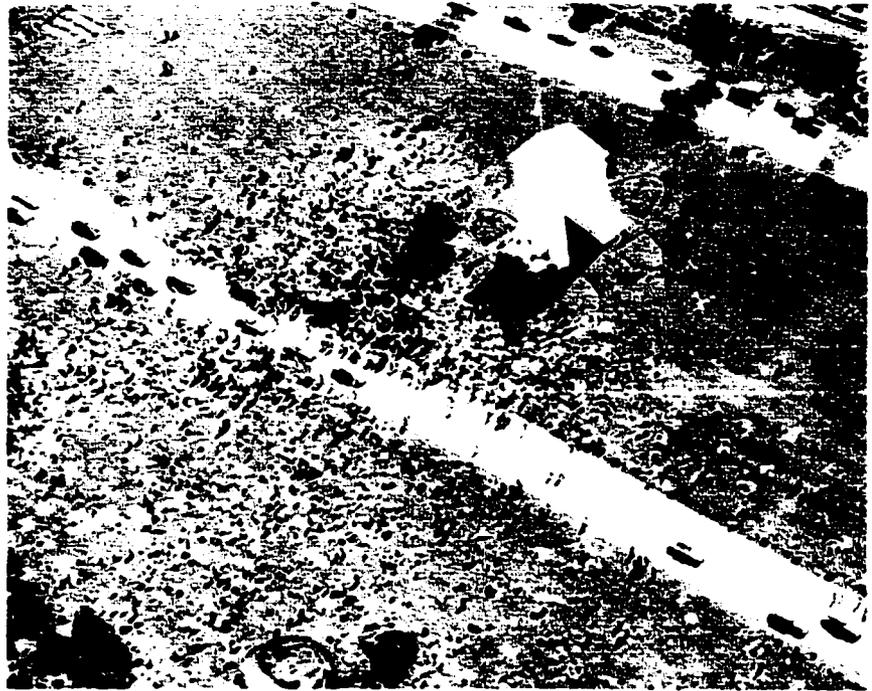


Fig. 75. Aerial view of 1952 concert. (UBC, Mine Mill) The Portal towers above the crowd assembling for the concert. The rear platform of a truck pulled up beside the arch serves as a stage. The roof of a van parked nearby is loaded with horn-style speakers fanned out to provide sound in every direction. The crowd concentrates around these two vehicles, but many people have spread blankets to sit on the gently rising slope.

### Songlines

At two-thirty, Harvey Murphy took the microphone and welcomed the throng in his hard-bitten way:

I know that you came to hear a singer, but you also came to demonstrate the brotherhood and fraternity of the peoples of the United States and Canada--we have a common mission in this world to march forward with the other peoples of this world for peace and security for all of us and (applause) for our children. And we are happy that we were the means of bringing you together, but I know that Paul Robeson--that name--what that stands for is what every decent man and woman in the world stands for.<sup>110</sup>

On the Peace Arch concert recording, "I Came to Sing", Murphy's descending cadence "we have a common mission in the world" sounds preachy. But when he says

<sup>109</sup> King, *Red Bait*, 115.

<sup>110</sup> Paul Robeson, *I Came To Sing* (IUMMSW/Othello Records, 1953), sound recording.

"Paul Robeson--that name," genuine warmth returns, and even relief--for this concert was a crowning achievement for him and the embattled miners union.

As always, Robeson's performance blended song and speech, civil rights and trade unionism, and the idiosyncratic, diasporic cultural figuration that Paul Gilroy calls the "Black Atlantic," a formation tied inextricably to the rise of nationality, and yet not represented in its historiographies. These "arts of darkness" are obscure to the dominant culture, Gilroy writes, due to "anti-discursive and extra linguistic ramifications of power at work in shaping [them as] communicative acts."

Robeson's and Lawrence Brown's achievement was to transpose the slave spiritual from an intra-communal carrier of black consciousness into an intercultural genre of resistance to oppression. Their earlier success in formal concert halls in Europe and America in the 1930s and 1940s carried the expressive culture of the black Atlantic into high cultural spaces normally reserved for "art for art's sake." Robeson's renunciation of these elite stages prompted criticism of his *interdisciplinarity*, and his refusal to separate art from politics.

The Peace Arch concert, like Robeson's concerts in general, resonates with Paul Gilroy's heuristic of the black Atlantic:

The expressive cultures developed in slavery continue to preserve in artistic form needs and desires which go far beyond the mere satisfaction of material wants. In contradistinction to the Enlightenment assumption of a fundamental separation between art and life, these expressive forms reiterate the continuity of art and life. They celebrate the grounding of the aesthetic with other dimensions of social life. The particular aesthetic which the continuity of expressive culture preserves derives not from dispassionate and rational evaluation of the artistic object but from an inescapably subjective contemplation of the mimetic functions of artistic performance in the processes of struggle towards emancipation, citizenship and eventual autonomy. Subjectivity is here connected with rationality in a contingent manner. <sup>111</sup>

The attribution of a *contingent* political rationality to black diasporic consciousness carried within music and songforms is Gilroy's innovative thesis. Robeson, too, believed that an unofficial "chronotope" was alternatively produced and transmitted by the popular musics of the world. From listening to and singing songs Robeson sensed a rationality contained in music that was only contingently connected, by "a mysterious inner logic", with dominant forms of political rationality. In the years following the Peace Arch concerts, when Robeson was diagnosed with a mental illness, one symptom was his "irrational" belief that an unremarked form of rationality connected disparate popular musics of the world.

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<sup>111</sup> Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, 57.

Perhaps Martin Duberman too quickly dismisses the singer's musicological thesis that a common pentatonic structure, as opposed to the seven-tone system of European classical music, underlies and connects most of the world's popular musics. This idea, Duberman writes, "is as true as it is obvious," adding that Robeson's obsession with it became an embarrassment to the singer's friends and family. In *Here I Stand* Robeson explored it in an appendix entitled "The Universal Body of Folk Music--A Technical Argument by the Author":

During the recent years of my enforced professional immobilization, I have found enormous satisfaction in exploring the origins and interrelations of various folk musics . . . which further confirm and explain my own and Lawrence Brown's interest in and attraction to the world body of folk music . . . . My people, the Negro people of America, have been reared on . . . pentatonic melodies, in Africa and America. No wonder Lawrence Brown introduced me to the music of Moussorgsky . . . Dvorak . . . Janacek; to ancient Hebraic chants; to the old melodies of Scotland and Ireland; to the Flamenco and de Falla of Spain . . . Armenia . . . Albania, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, and Poland . . . ancient Africa, Brazil and the Caribbean . . . [and] North American Indian peoples. And I have found my way to the music of China, of Central Asia, Mongolia, of Indonesia, Viet Nam and of India . . . with my "pentatonic ears."<sup>112</sup>

Citing musicologist Marian Bauer, Robeson was interested in songs as carriers of consciousness. Accustomed to *practicing* these songs on audiences all over the world, "living them" he said, he had felt the intense collective emotion they generated. Is it so surprising that he should have sought a concept of consciousness that was neither Marxist, Freudian, nor liberal? In Paul Gilroy's terms, the "obvious" in this case *is* innovative, not as musicology but in a performative mode where songs performed their own message. Duberman's dismissal notwithstanding, Robeson's ineffable quality as a musical and political performer was less in what he *said*, but what his music *showed*.

At the Peace Arch, Robeson's baritone overloaded the drivers of the Radio Engineers' horn speakers, challenging them to transmit the barrage of low frequency sound:

Water Boy, where are you hiding?  
If you don't come, I'm gonna tell your daddy.

As Barry Truax writes, acoustical power "is linked to the domination of space [and] the loudest sounds have always been associated with the most powerful forces"; the "extreme amount of physical energy required to produce low frequency sound in great quantities," such as earthquakes and thunder, often is considered "noise from the Gods."<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>113</sup> Barry Truax, *Acoustic Communication* (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1984), 113.



Fig. 76. Robeson at the microphone, 18 May 1952. (UBC, Mine Mill.) Broken down by daylight and urban air while taped to the wall in Mine-Mill's B.C. district office, this shot was selected for the *I Came to Sing* album cover and the 1953 souvenir programme. Chass filled the aperture with Robeson's body, the wide expanse of his dark suit giving him a heft commensurate with the massive white Peace Arch. High above, the star-spangled banner and the Dominion ensign flutter in a brisk south wind; symbols offset by Robeson's diffident smile, mischievous humility, and his tiny notebook. The border does not signify a radical break in the enveloping white consciousness; at most, a slight northward amelioration of circumstances. But even this slender difference Robeson will point to as a challenge for change.

His RCMP file records the "affection [that] had to be seen to be believed," the "prolonged standing applause," the "resonant voice [that] injected fire," the delegations that "cheered wildly," the "adulation" of people who "hung on his every word," the hope placed in him as "a great world citizen." The buds have burst open and his colleagues together turn a page, marking the image with an atemporal grandeur, holding out against the fragility of biographical continuity. That the subject, as an intentional agent, *can* persist through the shifting currents, density and discontinuities of social discourse is by no means certain. As the aperture opened, a coincidence of denotation and connotation, what Barthes labeled the "punctum" and the "studium," lends this image a sense not of a fleeting instant, but rather of what John Berger calls "duration."<sup>114</sup>

After his cycle of spirituals, Robeson spoke of his confinement and greeted his "beloved friends in Canada," acknowledging the audience's courage in assembling that day at the Peace Arch. He spoke of the social solidarity of diasporic black culture that long ago

<sup>114</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1981); John Berger, *About Looking* (New York: Vintage, 1991), 66-67: "There is never a single approach to something remembered. Numerous approaches or stimuli converge upon it and lead to it. Words, comparisons, signs need to create a context for a printed photograph in a comparable way . . . . A radial system has to be constructed . . . simultaneously personal, political, economic, dramatic, everyday and historic."



Fig. 77. Contact sheet, concert views, 18 May 18th, 1952. (UBC, Mine-Mill.)

extended along the underground railway to Canada. Citing the Christian church as the institutional site for the transmission of black culture, he traced the intellectual provenance of his own father's and brother's church in Brooklyn, tying its history to that of Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth. He wanted to "leave some feeling of what has influenced me so much" in his wide travels:

I have seen and experienced the oneness of mankind. Not the differences but the likenesses--the common human spirit that we see in the various peoples' songs. I cannot sing these songs today but I will read just a few words from some of them, to leave some feeling.

Sterling Stuckey views Robeson as "perhaps unique in the modern history of great performing artists" for bringing to "a fine consistency" the roles of "performing artist and philosopher of culture." His influence on "African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora was substantial materially and spiritually." Robeson's "most lasting contribution," he continues, "may be his most obscure: developing a more *spacious* conception of what being African could mean." Robeson and Lawrence Brown associated the spirituals they had popularized around the world with American manifestations of the African "ring shout," an expressive oral and gestural ritual. It is possible, Stuckey writes, that Robeson "was one of the few scholars of music in the

western world--perhaps the only one--to have demonstrated such analogues."<sup>115</sup> In Robeson's songs, the intensity of the slave experience resonated *within* modernity, inseparably, as one of its constitutive features.

## Cache

Where Robeson sang, near the base of the arch, just behind his improvised truck-

<sup>115</sup> Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 321-328, (emphasis mine).

bed stage, lies the monolith's cornerstone. Inside it is a cache containing items no one at the concert knew of, and yet, in a way, had remembered-to-forget. For it holds fetishes of nationality itself, deposited there during construction thirty-one years earlier when Samuel Hill spearheaded the campaign to commemorate one hundred years of peaceful co-existence by creating the Peace Arch.

Reposing in the wall beneath a bronze plaque bearing an image of the Pilgrims' *Mayflower* is a timber from that original vessel of Anglo-American colonialism. It measures twenty inches long and six inches square, and was the gift of the Quaker upon whose property near London the ship's remains lay. When Hill deposited it in the Arch in 1921, he



Fig. 78. Detail of aerial photo in close-up showing base of Peace Arch, May 18th, 1952. (UBC, Mine Mill.)

placed it inside a hammered steel chest weighing 172 pounds and fitted with seven locks. This chest was booty captured from a African slaver by a British naval vessel. The circumstances of the chest's donation are pertinent. It was the gift of Sir Basil Thompson, Scotland Yard's Director of Intelligence, who attended the inaugural ceremony.

The cache contains a film, "The Sacred Faith of a Scrap of Paper," produced by Samuel Hill and depicting historical events that ratify the claims made above on the exterior of the Arch, namely that the two countries were "children of a common mother" and that they were "brethren dwelling together in unity."<sup>116</sup> Three re-enactments recreate General Lafayette in American uniform inspecting French troops, and the signings of the Mayflower Compact and the Treaty of Ghent. Executed on December 24th, 1814, the latter defined the initial boundary between the United States of America and British North America. Canada contributed a timber from the *Beaver*, the first steam-powered ship to enter the Pacific Ocean, on June 18th, 1836, forerunner of the steamships that would secure British control of the Northwest coast.

<sup>116</sup> Marion Gerry, "The International Peace Arch (and a piece of the Mayflower)," *The Mayflower Quarterly* 56:4 (November, 1990): 316-318.

Samuel Hill sanctified the Euro-occupation of North America with artifacts that reinforce the international boundary as the legacy of shared British heritage, linking distance communications and naval power to the audio-visual observer. As fetish objects, they connect the abstraction of nationality and virtual time and space of film to this arbitrary line upon the earth.<sup>117</sup> Paul Robeson's presence just a few feet away, singing slave spirituals to

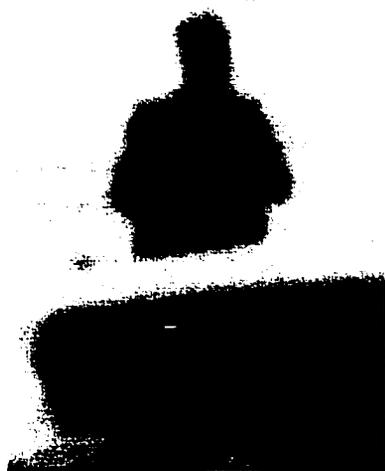


Fig. 79. Detail of rear-ground, Peace Arch Concert, 1955. (UBC, Mine-Mill)

an audience riddled with camera-wielding secret policemen forces buried connections to the surface: national origins owed to the enslavement of Africans, to shared understandings in security and intelligence, and the perpetuation of colonial occupation under new republican and liberal democratic guises.

True, Basil Thompson's strong-box was booty from a *captured* slaver. Yes, Hill included the Mayflower Compact in his film partly to recall the Society of Friends' decision to withdraw from the legislature in 1758 rather than support an Indian war. Yet, Thompson's main task in 1920-21, when he donated the chest to Hill's Peace Arch project, was to prevent communist-inspired subversion at home and in the colonies.<sup>118</sup> The Friends' gesture in favour of aboriginal peoples in 1758 did not prevent a virtual genocide over the next century. Indeed, it is anomalous in America's national development. Finally, Hill's *filmic* offering to the Portal's cache, dramatizing the origins of American national history, invoked a high order of mimetic magic.

Behind Robeson, and behind the Portal itself stands Tower Beacon #5, a guide to shipping in the Georgia Strait, establishing the marine frontier between Canadian and American waters. The antenna is a reminder that two national radio spheres are joined here in an electromagnetic zone of protection. Where the CBNRC plucked messages from the Babel of the airwaves and sorted them for processing in the cubicles of its foreign language experts, Robeson gathered and disseminated songs in such languages: Russian, Chinese, French, Polish Yiddish, Spanish, and English. At the Peace Arch he recited from the Chinese "Chilai," and in Yiddish, speaking of "the same brave people who fought back in Warsaw, in that epic of the Warsaw ghetto," and in Russian recited Shostakovich's call

<sup>117</sup> Recent geodesic surveys using "global positioning systems" locate the Peace Arch several hundred feet south of the "true" forty-ninth parallel.

<sup>118</sup> West, *MI6*, 54-55. Thompson is suspected of forging Sir Roger Casement's lurid diaries; eventually he was imprisoned himself on charges of sodomy.

for world peace. Where the intelligence-censorship-propaganda complex wrought a technocratic understanding of cultural diversity in order to manage it, Robeson touched deeper structures of communication, harmonics that emphasized both commonalities and differences in human cultures. The content of the song form itself resonated with a "strange inner logic" beyond the reach of the CBNRC's cryptography.

### The Third Space

Martin Duberman's account of the 1952 Peace Arch concert occupies two paragraphs and one footnote in his monumental biography. He recounts the financial difficulties overcome by Robeson's *Freedom* associates in arranging the tour, and the problem of

mobilizing local support in the face of FBI intimidation. The second paragraph concerns the concert itself:

The most successful single stop on the tour, from both a political and a financial point of view, was at the Peace Arch itself--largely because of the response from the Canadian side of the border. Thanks to the efforts of the Mine, Mill trade unionists, twenty-five to thirty thousand turned up on the Vancouver side for the concert; no more than five thousand mobilized on the American side (the American press estimated *total* attendance at five thousand; the Canadian press put the figure seven times higher). The FBI, predictably, was also there. While the Border Patrol took license-plate numbers, FBI agents filmed and photographed the event itself. Nonetheless, there were no incidents, and the sponsors laid plans for making the Peace Arch concert an annual event.<sup>119</sup>

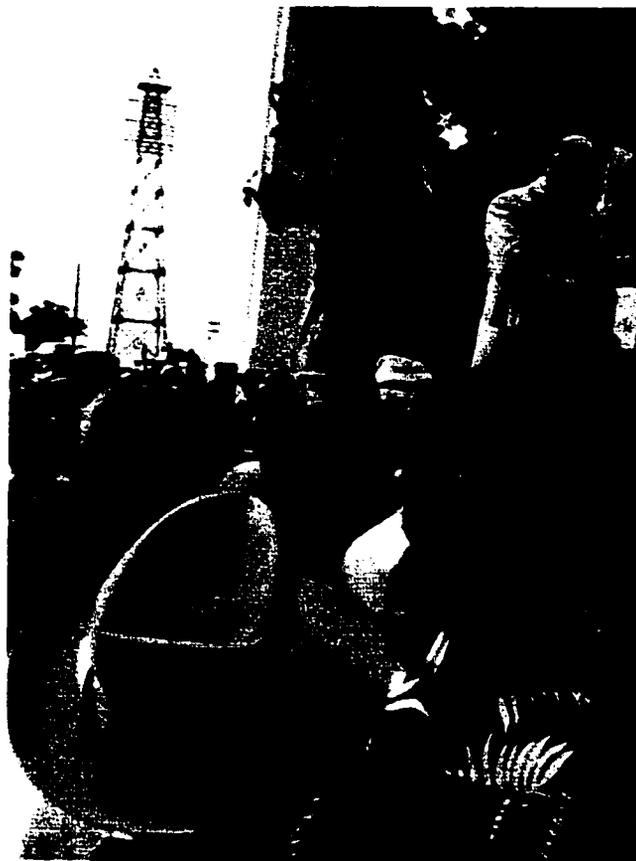


Fig. 80. Paul Robeson and Harvey Murphy. (UBC, Mine-Mill.)

<sup>119</sup> Duberman, *Robeson*. 400, 706, note 46: "[John Gray], field representative for the United Freedom Fund, who accompanied PR on much of the tour, reports: 'Mobilization on this side of the border was non-existent, although 1000 or so were there thru no special effort. Concert was *tops*. Response *grand*.'"

Duberman's account comes at the border from the American side. The Robeson concert is indexed not just in the biographical sequence of Robeson's life but at a limit of American cultural nationalist discourse. The Canadians are positioned outside Duberman's narrative voice, exempted from his damning narrative focus on American repressive state apparatuses.

Compare Reg Whitaker's account which introduces Robeson as a test of immigration policy:

Invited to attend the Canadian convention of the Mine-Mill union in 1952, Robeson was prevented from leaving the US--thus relieving Canada of having to bar him, which it certainly would have done, given the source of the invitation. Robeson dramatized the situation unforgettably by giving a concert just across the border at the Peace Arch Park in Washington state, attended by 30,000 Canadians on the British Columbia side; this event was repeated annually for the next three years.<sup>120</sup>

Whitaker's sources are primarily Canadian cabinet documents and newspaper accounts. His narrative voice mirrors Duberman's but from the other side of the border, and his narrative is focused on the ideological compliance of Canadian officials, indeed the isomorphism of Canadian and American internal security policy.

What both accounts share is nationality as the "plane of consistency" on which the event becomes visible. Both Duberman and Whitaker, conditioned to visualize the national boundary as a *binarism* by the newspaper reports and by the union's publicity, present the reader with the spatial image of Robeson standing on the American side facing the Canadian audience. We know from the Union's photographs that the space was indeterminate, with Americans and Canadians and their respective security agents freely mingling around the Arch. Ironic though both accounts may be, and however critical of their respective governments, they fail to evoke the liminality of the concert, its complex eruption into the landscape and soundscape of Semiahmoo.

In November, 1995, I walk around the Arch noticing the disposition of the site from a technical perspective. An obvious difficulty was how to place Paul Robeson near the portal itself, exactly at the border, while still keeping sightlines to him clear from the largest possible surrounding space. The trees, foliage and natural barriers made this location more problematic than if the stage was placed near the American customs building, allowing the audience to congregate in the full length of the park, thus taking advantage of the rising ground. But then, the inspection point would hardly have been suitable.

How then could forty thousand people be accommodated? In fact, the site chosen limited sightlines to an audience of five thousand people at most, and the Radio Sound

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<sup>120</sup> Whitaker, *Double Standard*, 170 passim.



Fig. 81. Peace Arch Concert, view from Canadian customs looking south to American customs. (UBC, Mine-Mill.)

Engineers horn system would have been hard put to serve more than that number. Standing where the stage was positioned, facing eastward, the scale of the park seems miniature compared to the written accounts (including reports which took into account a “Murphy-factor” and scaled his estimate back to fifteen thousand). The union's photographs contain no evidence of even 15,000 people.<sup>121</sup> Through sheer repetition, Murphy, and Tom McEwen in the *Pacific Tribune*, fixed their very high estimates on the public record. Caustic press attacks labeled them “Red Press Agents,” directed from Moscow. Yet, of the two organizations reporting the lowest figures, the RCMP counted 5,000, but it was TASS, the Soviet news service, which reported 4,500, the lowest number of all.<sup>122</sup>

The inflated estimates ought not temper admiration for Mine-Mill and Paul Robeson. To have congregated four or five thousand people this far from Vancouver under the combined gaze of the FBI and RCMP was a significant achievement by any measure. People were right to worry: the police photographed them, filmed them, took their license numbers, and, according to the file, Cliff Harvison intervened with a clandestine action which “will undoubtedly complicate matters within the Union, particularly insofar as \_\_\_\_\_ are concerned.”<sup>123</sup>

<sup>121</sup> “Three-Mile Car Jam at Robeson Concert,” *Daily Province*, 19 May 1952: “Murphy said . . . 40,000 persons . . . Customs officials set the figure at 15,000.”; Robeson Barred,” *Canadian Tribune*, 26 May 1952: “Upwards of 25,000 Canadians and over 2,000 Americans . . . 4,000 cars . . . 22 buses and 3,000 police.”

<sup>122</sup> NAC, RCMP, Robeson file, DEA Despatch 545, R.A.D. Ford, Moscow, “Canada in the Soviet Press.” TASS, May 20th: “the trade union organized a meeting on the Canadian-American border which was attended by 4,500 people. Paul Robeson appeared on a tribune constructed on the other side of the border. His performance was given over a loud-speaker”; RCMP, Cst. Thomas, 20 May 1952, “approximately 5,000 people.”

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* The action itself is excised. but Thomas added, “Further reports on this phase of activity may be anticipated.” The RCMP also kept their eye on “Sid and Jean Brown’s . . . 75¢ chicken plate supper” at their White Rock home after the concert.

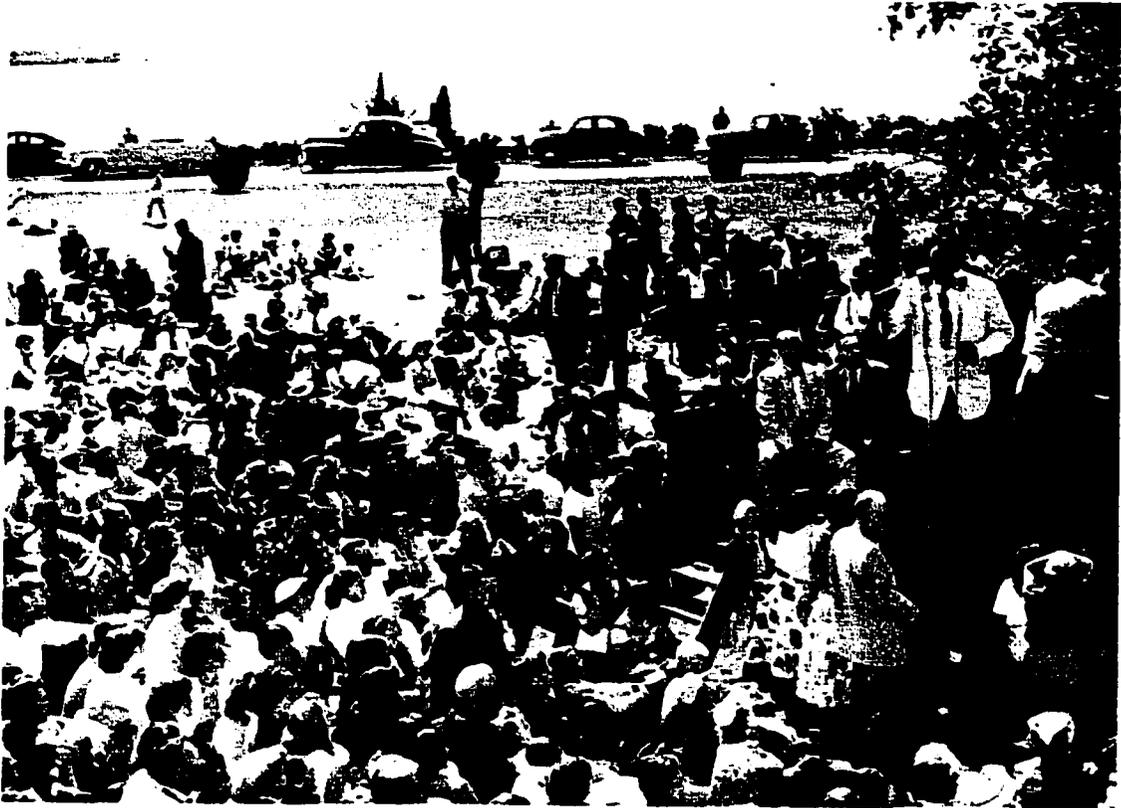


Fig. 82. Paul Robeson at last Peace Arch concert, August 1955. (UBC, Mine-Mill) Harvey Murphy. Lloyd Brown and Al King are visible on the platform to the left of Robeson.

Buried beneath the sea-floor, the eastward and westward movement of tectonic plates implacably stores up a mounting pressure. The forty-odd years intervening between this photograph and my visit to the Peace Arch are just an infinitesimal fragment of geological time. The *Scientific American* warns of impending earthquakes whose epicentre will churn the waters right here: tomorrow, or in a hundred years. To the right, just out of view, the Salish reservation is shrouded in trees, overlooking the tidal flats pocked with breathing holes of shellfish and edged with piles of sodden driftwood. In the distance the headland at Blaine, and beyond through the haze, the Olympic Peninsula, and coastal waters running all the way down to San Francisco, to Mexico, Chile, and Cape Horn.

In the foreground, a more immediate and fleeting temporality: Paul Robeson and his listeners. Every figure seems charged with a magic realism, each face a private concentration of being. One cannot hear Robeson's voice booming out from the speakers, but each person is fully immersed in the inaudible soundscape, each face discloses a certain dignity.

On the other hand, Murphy failed to grasp that its significance had less to do with actual numbers than with opening up a "third" space between the discourses of culture and national security, a brief moment which suspended the forced choice of citizenship. To borrow from Homi Bhabha, Robeson's *articulating world* opened up a new space for a Left discourse traditionally unable "to cope with forms of uncertainty and unfixity in the construction of political identity," a space which had no "need to totalize in order to

legitimate political action or cultural practice."<sup>124</sup> Robeson was blocked from exploring and elaborating it any further in Canada, but it is an afternoon that should be remembered, and remembered accurately.<sup>125</sup>



Fig. 83. Detail. Notice the cameras, including a film camera just left of the centre of the photo. The man is not filming Robeson, but rather the audience. Directly above him in the photo are a black couple, eyes intent on Robeson. They are the sole black Americans or Canadians to appear in any of the photos. The progressives were prevented from developing a critique of the fetish of nationality that could hold 'dwelling' and 'occupation' in the same frame, releasing the tension between the state and its own neuroses, and recuperating a civics of memory from the imperative to forget. Bakhtin writes that "Man has no internal sovereign territory, he is all and always on the boundary," but the real question is: what constitutes the boundary?<sup>126</sup>

In 1956, when finally he was permitted to enter Canada, his sold-out Massey Hall concert was an emotional occasion. Everyone could see that he had declined physically during his period of internal exile. Nonetheless, the Mounties intensified their pressure on him, applying intrusive surveillance measures, and supplying briefs which this time succeeded in his being banned from entering Canada. One of seven immense manual card indexes used at Overbrook was titled "Coloured Persons' Index." In 1956, Robeson's entry was transferred from it to the new MacBee punchcard system, both as ROBESON and under the alias ROBSON. Not that he ever used a secret identity, the suspicions were borne from inaccurate spelling by RCMP officers over the years.

The cancellation of an invitation to sing at Dalhousie University can reasonably be pinned on Security Service interference. Living in exile in London, Robeson considered moving to

<sup>124</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, "The Third Space," in Jonathan Rutherford, ed., *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 213.

<sup>125</sup> NAC, RCMP Robeson file, 5 April 1956.

<sup>126</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, trans. Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 96.

Canada, unaware that the government's antipathy toward him had not abated.<sup>127</sup> Given the way Canadian cultural and security policies intersected, it never did abate to any great extent.

Paul Robeson, Jr., believes that Western security services tampered with his father's health, leading to the massive and ultimately debilitating electroshock and drug treatment he underwent in a private London clinic in 1961-2.<sup>128</sup> The released Canadian intelligence files shed no new light on this mystery, other than showing the alacrity with which the RCMP cooperated with the FBI in this and other cases. Thanks to maverick producer Ross McLean, though, CBC-TV's "Close-up" carried Elaine Grand's extended interview with Paul Robeson, taped in London in November, 1960.<sup>129</sup> Grand and Reuben Ship, writer of the anti-McCarthyist radio satire *The Investigator*, had abandoned Toronto and taken up residence in London in order to escape the clamp-down on left-wingers in Davidson Dunton's CBC. After many months of delay by CBC's in-house censors Colonel R.P. Landry and W.E.S. Briggs, the politically-neutral Robeson item finally aired August 29th 1961, just about the time the singer was rushed to the clinic for the treatments from which he would never properly recover. Martin Duberman sets out the circumstances of his hospitalization, and he weighs the fact that Robeson already was seriously ill by the end of 1960 against the suspicions of police malfeasance. In his conversation with Elaine Grand the singer seems animated, passionate and charming, speaking of his childhood, linguistics and about music. By a few months only his rare interdisciplinary talent outlasted the CBC's ban so that his Canadian friends once more could hear and see him, and recall the great concerts and rallies he led in their cities during the 1940s.

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<sup>127</sup> Duberman *Robeson*, 493-94.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, see Chapter 24, "Broken Health," 498-521.

<sup>129</sup> Paul Robeson, interview by Elaine Grand, CBC TV, *Close-up*, aired 29 August 1961; video-cassette. NAC; NAC RG 41, vol. 197, file 11-18-36 "Close-Up," H.G. Walker to J.D. Nixon, 6 February 1961: "the Paul Robeson interview is scheduled for Close Up. Pls. do not let this become a commitment."

## CONCLUSION

Cultural theorists are fond of 'surface' metaphors. For Michel Foucault, social discourses produce "surfaces of visibility"; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari write of "planes of consistency" and subjectivity as a paradoxical "folding" on itself like a Möbius strip.<sup>1</sup> Giorgio Agamben toys with late capitalist culture collapsing into a "perfect exteriority."<sup>2</sup> For liberals the "plateau of equality" is a proceduralist surface upon which civil rights are located and cultural differences are arbitrated.<sup>3</sup> In essence these are all *visual* metaphors and as such they are susceptible to a common perceptual uncertainty: is a given surface to be seen from one side or the other? If surfaces mark frontiers in binary relations, do these metaphors at some level not always reinscribe their binarisms?<sup>4</sup>

Less obviously, though, 'surface' metaphors impute a certain 'tension' akin to the 'surface tension' known to fluid dynamics.<sup>5</sup> When a certain discursive configuration is produced as a surface of visibility, one is concerned not only with what data do and do not appear on that surface but what *tension* gathered them together on the same plane and gave them coherence.

A study commissioned by CSIS usefully applies this notion of 'surface tension' to the use of the polygraph. When Harvard psychologist and lawyer William M. Marston first published the polygraph concept in 1917, the report states, he "sought and obtained a great deal of public attention as the originator of the 'Wonder Woman' comic strip, which publicized more of his fanciful theories, including an infallible lie detector."<sup>6</sup> Marston's interdisciplinary sorties were "prolific and imaginative" but ultimately his "extravagant

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<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *One Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, Trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1993), 65.

<sup>3</sup> Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, 95.

<sup>4</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1973), 371: "History constitutes . . . for the social sciences . . . a fixed ground, and, as it were, a homeland; it determines the cultural area—the chronological and geographical boundaries."

<sup>5</sup> Surface tensions are measured in 'dynes', whose root is the Greek *dunamis*, i.e. force or power.

<sup>6</sup> Ernst and Young, "CSIS, Report on the Use of Polygraph Examinations in the Candidate Selection Process," Solicitor General of Canada, ATIP Division, n.d., 8.

public statements brought about an investigation of criminal fraud which ended with his being censured." Thus, an originator of the most celebrated bio-apparatus of truth was exposed as a fantasist and a deceiver.

This liar's paradox sets the CSIS study on edge and to stabilize these uncertainties the 'tension' principle is introduced a few pages later. The purpose of interviewing a subject prior to conducting a polygraph test:

is to explain to the examinee the futility of trying to 'beat' the instrument [and] to create a level of tension sufficient to ensure reaction to the questions. *The ability to create the 'right' degree of tension requires training, skill and experience.*<sup>7</sup>

Applied to state security and cultural administration as a whole this passage suggests a fundamental pattern: first, there is *persuasion* to prevent the examinee from trying to "beat" the instrument, then "a level of tension" is created as a surface of (mis)trust upon which the subject's reactions register. Metaphorically, this 'surface tension' describes how induced anxiety was generalized to help identify alien phenomena. With the optimal degree of tension subjects occupied the 'plateau of freedom' and responded to the call of authority, transmitted through an emergent audio-visual regime of landscape perception.

The foregoing narratives have traced the dispersal of lived subjectivity from immediate locales into this generalized field of anxiety and secrecy, seeking to draw forth these tensions, and also to mark points of rupture where alternatives "flashed up" as moments of danger. Cultural nationalism has tended to obscure the possibility that there are *other* plateaus of freedom, *other* legitimate political communities, *other* solidarities, intellectual or otherwise, than those celebrated in the civic birdsong of internal state propaganda. "Thus," Michel de Certeau writes,

behind the 'monotheism' of the dominant panoptical procedures, we might suspect the existence and survival of a "polytheism" of concealed or *disseminated practices*, dominated but not obliterated by the historical triumph of one of their number.<sup>8</sup>

This polytheism of disseminated practices is the "standing reserve" of historical signs that are not (or, not yet) in circulation. The standing reserve is the silent but expectant future, ready to receive even tiny shards which are shot through with what Benjamin calls *weak* Messianic time: Tracy Philipps's "serum," Marie Belaney's happy time "after the raspberries," before Archie bolted, and the "nice cake" delivered by James Stephens to the RCMP Overbrook Headquarters. There are, too, songlines that connect the ancient Plateau

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Emphasis mine.

<sup>8</sup> de Certeau. *Heterologies*, 188.

music of Semiahmoo to Paul Robeson's arrival in that soundscape with his "pentatonic ears," and linkages in the "black" and "white" Atlantics between Phillip Tracey's pulse, thrilling at the hypnotic drumming of Nabingi Expellers in *The Man Who Knew*, and traces of the "Ring Shout" that Sterling Stuckey finds in Robeson's performances.

This standing reserve of disseminated practices was held in check by the construction of the citizen as a specific kind of observer, formed in response to 'colonial panic'. Once the scenic picture plane was cleared of alien or incomprehensible phenomena, the occupiers' cognitive mappings of the territory stabilized sufficiently to permit the re-entry of "difference" into carefully partitioned containers. Put into Gilles Fauconnier's terms, it was a case of a national culture amassing enough "backstage knowledge" to proceed to invent the "multicultural" as a set of cognitive mappings. The language game of "new" and "old" Canadians effected a futher, more subtle dispossession of aboriginal peoples, recoding them as immigrants.<sup>9</sup> With the territory also imaged and imagined from above, any refuge from this observer vanished like Grey Owl's frontier (just as his publishers rejected "The Vanishing Frontier" as the title for his first book, substituting instead the gendered and historicized *Men of the Last Frontier*).

The problem of scale was resolved in the cultural nationalist observer by combining the Group of Seven's subjective *topoi* with machine-assisted geographical knowledge. This surveillant regime of landscape perception was at once romantic and filiating, scaled to the generic wilderness locale, and yet also a geographical surface of tension spanning the continent. If any dormant "incubus" stirred she would be noticed instantly. Indeed, long after the *Beothic* made her last circuit, alert Inuit "Arctic Rangers" supply reports of unusual phenomena to the Department of National Defence as a kind of aboriginal ground accompaniment to the great NORAD radar shield.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Gilles Fauconnier, *Mental Spaces: Aspects of Meaning Construction in Natural Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1985] 1994), xvi: "When language, mind and culture are the object of scientific study, the investigator is no longer a mere spectator. He or she is one of the actors . . . . The investigation that will reveal backstage secrets is also part of the main show, and clearly we are on intellectually perilous ground."

<sup>10</sup> *Hansard*, 11 March 1996. Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on renewal of NORAD agreement: "Even though Canada does not face the same threat . . . as it did at the height of the Cold War period the capability and the necessity to continue to exercise effective surveillance and control . . . are still basic defence requirements." Axworthy spoke of a "comprehensive warning capability" to identify criminal activities, smuggling, illegal immigration, terrorism, belligerent acts of rogue governments and to supply "unique" military and technological intelligence. This entailed the "need to coordinate national systems of surveillance and control . . . to ensure best protection for our citizens"

In fact, the censorship-intelligence-propaganda complex evolved contrapuntally during and after the Second World War in a duet of national culture and state security. A surfeit of security was obtained, but the 'freedom' advanced by liberal political theory 'plateau-ed' on the principle of nationality. Will Kymlicka stretches that theory almost past its outer limit to 'accommodate' cultural difference, yet he cannot seem to broach the question of cultural rights as it meshes with internal state security. But then, as Giorgio Agamben writes:

In the final instance the State can recognize any claim to identity, even that of a State identity within the State . . . What the State cannot tolerate in any way, however, is that the singularities form a community *without* affirming an identity, that humans co-belong *without* any representable condition of belonging . . . . Whatever singularity wants to appropriate belonging itself, its own being-in-language, and thus rejects all identity, and every condition of belonging, is the principal enemy of the State.<sup>11</sup>

**“Soft, a word before you go . . . .”**

Who experienced the rise of 'nationality' first? Paul Fussell's European literary travelers between the wars, especially the bohemians, were among the first northern Europeans to report feeling the force of the 'forced choice' at the passport counter. But Asians, Africans and others outside of Europe and America felt it long before. Closer to home, Newfoundlanders felt the forced choice of nationality acutely in 1949 when its enforcers, like Jack Pickersgill and William Stephenson, suddenly appeared in their locale. True enough, capitalism's struggle with socialism produced competing versions of "freedom" wherein merely borrowing the wrong library book might attract police interest.<sup>12</sup> But all parties in that space-time continuum colluded in intensifying the regime of nationality. Their censorship-intelligence-propaganda complexes produced tension by inching up perceptions of risk, provoking fear and mistrust, erecting antennas, tapping phones, intercepting mail and diffusing hosts of informants through the population. After the war, these complexes began to join, isomorphically, to form a kind of global "thought ceiling," under which, over time, national cultures became, to varying degrees, cultures of security and secrecy.

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<sup>11</sup> Agamben, *Coming Community*, 86-87.

<sup>12</sup> The FBI's "Library Awareness Program" alerted librarians to monitor use of certain books during the Cold War; Scott Lucas, "Campaigns of Truth: The Psychological Strategy Board and American Ideology, 1951-53," *The International History Review* 18:2 (May 1996), 301, quotes George Kennan in a 1949 memorandum: "we are strictly within our rights, and need feel no sense of guilt, in working for the destruction of concepts."

Paul Robeson's wayward bass never harmonized with this melody. Despite the huge success of his *Othello*, his voice had the kind of personality that did not lend itself to professional "acting," in the flexible sense of embodying different roles. As Roland Barthes once wrote after hearing a Russian cantor, with Robeson's voice "something" is there:

manifest and stubborn (one hears only *that*), beyond (or before) the meaning of the words, their form (the litany), the melisma, and even the style of execution: something which is directly the cantor's body, brought to your ears in one and the same movement from deep down in the cavities, the muscles, the membranes, the cartilages, and from deep down in . . . language.<sup>13</sup>

Those who criticised Robeson for this limitation as a performer (if it is a limitation) maintain that it placed operatic roles beyond his reach, and kept him from relaxing into jazz idioms. The only way for him to perpetuate his singing career, they say, was by cynically mixing it with politics.<sup>14</sup>

What is salient in this criticism is that the more one gives credence to the "limited talent" argument (setting aside for a moment who was or is being cynical) the more one has to ask: why did so many people listen and flock to his concerts? Was it because the "melisma" of that voice touched some deep reservoir of pain and hope, its muscles, membranes and cartilages 'remembering' the slavery that lay just one generation distant, experienced by Robeson's own father? In fact, the more certain these critics are that they are right, the more they point up a latent need for such forms of remembering.

### **No Peaks, No Valleys**

Historical periodizations tend to leave the impression of neat serial intervals--as in the Depression, the War, and the Cold War--even though the fine grain of a body's gestural memory shows there are plural and variegated processes at work in any time. It is not the "end" of nationality as an epoch or period that is open to question, but rather its degree of intensity. Perhaps counter-processes within the structure of modernity one day may remain when its protective shell finally is shed, when land borders go back to being "absurdities," and the peculiar "white noise" compressing human cultures into the postcolonial international bandwidth re-adapts to a more immediate soundscape.

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<sup>13</sup> Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," in Barthes, *Image - Music - Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 181-82.

<sup>14</sup> Siegel, *The Red and the Black*.

Heard from above, the history of the occupation rises like white noise, jamming the more delicate sounds. NRC President C.J. Mackenzie was amazed in 1949 when the Department of External Affairs sought his opinion on the suggestion of unilateral nuclear disarmament and putting a freeze on atomic research in Canada. He wrote to Arnold Heeney:

This whole business of atomic energy is very much like an airplane in flight. There are maximum speeds and minimum speeds but you cannot stop the operation mid-air without courting disaster.<sup>15</sup>

With Mackenzie's comment in mind, historians might help build the landing strip. Michael Denning writes of the Cultural Front that it established an "alternative intellectual world," what Raymond Williams calls a "structure of feeling," a structure that persisted in unexpected ways, here and there, through the Cold War.<sup>16</sup> One detects in the white noise of the cultural apparatuses subliminal traces of a resistance that opposes any further slide into excessive security, surveillance and highly-refined forms of censorship. In their post-Cold War drift, *in unexpected ways, here and there*, and without a definable form, something has been reactivated.

There are images that capture the ineluctable permeation of Canadian wilderness by the system of nationality. Grey Owl's coffin wrapped with the Union Jack for burial at Beaver Lodge in 1938 comes to mind, as do the tipsy golfers in the "Grey Owl Howl," who helped normalize the 'occult instability' of his legacy. In his landscape photography, there is a sense of what Heidegger called "the-coming-into-the-nearness of distance." No horizon, but rather a "presencing" of what is immediate: the lake, forest and sky. A landscape whose apparent stativity and silence on close scrutiny conceals a symphonic range of motion and sound. When Emily Carr worked this idea into paintings such as *A Rushing Sea of Undergrowth* (1935) a scurrilous commentator accused her of "casting swirls before pine." But then trivialization seems to be the standard response to these retrievals of 'landscape perception' from the colonial violators' fears of retribution.<sup>17</sup>

Norman McLaren's identical neighbours very gently and painstakingly clubbed suburban "normality" to death with white pickets in 1952. Over *their* grassy grave site lies

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<sup>15</sup> NAC MG 30 B122, vol. 5, file 5, C.J. Mackenzie to A.D.P. Heeney, 15 December 1949.

<sup>16</sup> Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 33, 64.

<sup>17</sup> Neil Morrison, interviewed by James Bannerman in "Portrait of a Public Servant, Ira Dilworth," *CBC Wednesday Night*, radio broadcast ca. 1962. NAC CAVA 2000347255; audio tape. Morrison credited D.B. Hollie with the remark, saying it infuriated Carr's friend Dilworth, the "anachronistic Victorian" who headed CBC's International Service.

the plateau of freedom, as closely-groomed as the golf course at Oka, Quebec. In the regime of landscape perception that partitioned culture and security as two separate domains the totem and the antenna must be 'seen as' held apart instead of being 'seen' held together. In the end, though, the question will form of itself: how can freedom be held to a plateau?

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## APPENDIX I

TEXT OF TELEX CONCERNING HARRY DEXTER WHITE  
AND PETER DWYER

On November 25th, 1953, this "most immediate" ciphered communication was sent from Lester Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs in Ottawa to Norman Robertson, the Canadian High Commissioner, London. In fact, both men were in Ottawa at the time, and Norman Robertson approved the wording of the text, as did Charles Ritchie, and G.G. "Bill" Crean. It was also circulated to Pearson's assistant Arnold Smith prior to its transmission to London. As head of DL(2), Bill Crean was the appropriate originator for a message to "C", the head of British MI6. This document is at present not available to researchers at the National Archives but was released to me through a handling oversight. The full text is likely to be of interest to other scholars:

**Most Immediate.** Following for Collins personally from Crean. Would you please pass the following message immediately to "C". Begins. For "C" from Crean. You will no doubt have seen reports of a letter [of February 1st, 1946] from Edgar Hoover to General Vaughan at the White House concerning Harry Dexter White (and which was released by Attorney-General Brownell). The letter purports to make it clear that the F.B.I. received a tip-off concerning White from a highly placed Canadian source or sources in the Government. After some research we have found a copy of a telegram which was sent to the F.B.I. on or about January 28, 1946 by Peter Dwyer who, you may recall, was at that time your Liaison Officer in Washington and was, in fact, at the relevant dates in Ottawa assisting in the examination of Gouzenko. Dwyer, you may know, is now a Canadian Government servant and Secretary to our Security Panel. Unfortunately Dwyer cannot recall the precise circumstances in which the telegram was sent, though he believes it may have been inspired by Sir William Stephenson, but it is clear that Hoover's letter is at least in part based upon the information and language contained in that telegram. The telegram was sent to Dwyer's office in Washington with the request that it be shown to Whitson of the F.B.I. on a personal basis. For convenience, in case you are unable to trace the message in your files, the following is the text:  
Quote. Show following to Lish Whitson personally. Begins.

1. For your most private information only we have learned from an informed diplomatic source something which would seem of great concern.
2. As you will know Harry White's name has been sent to Congress by the President for ratification as one of the two U.S. delegates on the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development under the Bretton Woods agreement. This, of course, is none of our affair.
3. However we now learn that the two British and two Canadian delegates will nominate and support White for the position of President of this Bank . . . With this backing we gather that White's nomination to this important post would be more or less forgone conclusion. [sic]
4. This would seem particularly alarming when taken in conjunction with the fact that Russia has not ratified the Bretton Woods Agreement.
5. Situation therefore is this. If we allow Canadian and British delegates to carry out their present plan, we allow them to place a Soviet agent in a position of utmost

importance in international relations. On the other hand we should not wish to warn our delegates without your complete agreement.

6. You will perhaps be aware of above and may have already taken steps with regard to it. For this reason we are consulting with you unnoofficially in this way and would ask whether you see any way out of this dilemma which concerns us all. We would appreciate your earliest advice in this as our delegates arrive on Friday.

7. This message has blessing of RCMP and has been shown to Bethel with whom matter has been discussed in fullest detail. Please keep para. 3 under your hat. I suggest you may like to make use of this channel of reply through Miss Dack.<sup>1</sup> Ends. Unquote.

2) So far as we can make out here, what in fact happened is that someone, ~~Canadian or otherwise~~ [this phrase is struck out], advised Dwyer that Harry White was about to be nominated to a post either in the International Bank or the International Monetary Fund. Although the telegram doesn't square with either the policy of the Canadian government toward the nomination of White at that time or, indeed, with the constitutional set-up of either the Bank or the Fund, it seems to us to have been quite a normal thing to tip off the F.B.I. in case they did not know that White's name was about to be sent to the Senate for confirmation as the United States member of the Executive Board of Directors of the I.M.F.

3) In the circumstances, my Minister and the Prime Minister feel they are bound to make a statement in the House and it will probably be done this afternoon. My Minister was anxious, however, that you should be aware of the line the Government proposes to take in the House before the statement is actually made. Perhaps the main point at issue for you is that the Government has seen no alternative but to refer to a message having been sent from Ottawa by a Liaison Officer from a third friendly power. I hope that in the circumstances no undue embarrassment will occur for you, though it is not impossible that the Foreign Office will receive press enquiries. There is also the possibility that the author's name may become public since a member of the Press Gallery here was employed in British Security Co-ordination in New York during the war, and if he wishes to publish Dwyer's name, he is probably aware of Dwyer's official position at that time. I am sure you will understand that the necessity for making a statement along these lines arises through the inaccuracies in Hoover's letter to General Vaughan when he chose to attribute, for reasons, unknown to us this particular tip-off to a highly placed Canadian source. I should, of course, add that the only security information Canadian authorities ever possessed on White came from American sources. Ends.

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<sup>1</sup> Geraldine Dack was Peter Dwyer's assistant in Washington.

APPENDIX II  
LIST OF SOUND IMAGES

Sound excerpts on audiocassette:

1. Peter Dwyer, interview by Grace Lydiatt Shaw, Ottawa, ca. 1966 . . . . . 3 mins.  
(National Archives of Canada)
2. Peter Dwyer, interview by Ben Wicks, January 1972 . . . . . 5 mins.  
(Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Radio Archives)
3. Paul Robeson, Peace Arch concert, May 18th, 1952, two excerpts . . . . . 5 mins.  
(IUMMSW/Othello Records, 1953) 3 mins.