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“AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER”: THE OUTREMONT DISPUTE OF 1988

An examination of the scholarly literature¹ written on the Outremont affair reveals that the event has not been studied for its own sake, but rather as supporting evidence used by scholars to highlight or justify particular arguments about the presence of antisemitism in Quebec, the weakness of Canadian Jewish organizations, or the incident’s influence on later happenings. Although these studies have shed light on a number of issues dealing with the Hasidim, the cursory treatment of the affair itself, omitting key elements of the incident, has precluded substantial analysis and comprehensive understanding not only of the affair, but also of its broader implications.

Not only would a historical approach make the Outremont affair the central topic of inquiry, it would also help to fill large gaps that exist in the history of Hasidim in Quebec. Although one must be careful not to use the affair to represent over fifty years of French-Hasidic relations in the province, it does provide us with a window through which to view and study the workings of this relationship. For example, the extensive media coverage and fierce public debate surrounding the affair took place while the two groups continued to coexist relatively peacefully. Therefore, viewing it exclusively as simply another example of antisemitism at work among French-Québécois would mean denying its many other dimensions. Up to this point, no scholarly discussions of the event have attempted to fully answer the questions that are the focus of an historian’s

inquiry: examining what actually transpired in Outremont in 1988; exploring the conditions that may have precipitated the controversy; uncovering what has happened since; as well as evaluating the media's involvement. A historical reconstruction could only benefit other scholars' work in this area.

The Outremont affair or "l'affaire Outremont," the term coined by the press and adopted by scholars, actually occurred on two levels: the political and the public, an important distinction that many scholars fail to make.² On 16 May 1988 two separate proposals were both put forth by Outremont city council members, Akos de Muszka and Pierre-Bernard Labelle, to modify existing zoning regulations to allow Congregation Minchas Eluzar-Munkatz to maintain their synagogue at 1030-32 Saint-Viateur and to permit Congregation Amour Pour Israel (Ahavath Israel) of the Vishnitzer Hasidim to build their synagogue at 1035 Saint-Viateur.³ Since 1969, a zoning regulation making that portion of Saint-Viateur Street residential rather than commercial has been in effect. It should be noted that even before 1988 Congregation Minchas Eluzar-Munkatz had been involved in a legal dispute with the city. Under the former administration of Pierre Desmarais, the city took the congregation to municipal court to have the construction of the synagogue halted and won its case. However, a difference in wording concerning the actual purpose of the building, though minor, was enough for the congregation to petition the Quebec Superior Court that reversed the decision of the Outremont municipal court. According to André Desnoyers, although the Urban Community of Montreal has officially classified the building as a synagogue and to most observers it does function as one, it is still considered by the Outremont municipality as a study hall and not as a synagogue.⁴ The synagogue, therefore, has been tolerated *de facto* by the city.⁵

However, on 16 May 1988 the motions put forth to change the zoning regulations were defeated: the first by a vote of 7-3 and the second by a vote of 6-4.⁶ Opponents included the three voting members of the opposition party, Parti du Renouveau

d'Outremont, as well as members of Mayor Jérôme Choquette's ruling party, Parti de la Réforme.⁷ The leader of the opposition party, Gérard Pelletier, did not vote. Furthermore, there is no indication that these two particular votes occasioned more discussion than any other.⁸

On 18 May, Gérard Pelletier released a communiqué in which he explained his party's opposition to spot-zoning by stating, among other things, that religious and ethnic groups should advise the city of their needs and intentions, both short and long-term, and that the PRO (Parti du Renouveau d'Outremont) considered urbanism to be a topic that concerns all residents of Outremont, with no plans modified until the interests of the rest of the population have been properly evaluated.⁹ With regard to the Munkatz property at 1030 Saint-Viateur, Pelletier hoped that the city would take the necessary means to stop the activities being held there and for the zoning regulations to be observed: "If the mayor does not act, we will demand that the law be applied and that the Inspection Agency send a letter to the proprietor to return the dwelling to its original purpose as a residence."¹⁰

On 6 June 1988, a General Assembly was held at the Outremont town hall where the zoning vote of 16 May was ratified and the dispute was discussed at length during the question period.¹¹ At least two representatives of the Vishnitzer Hasidim were in attendance and spoke at the meeting: Rabbi Zushe Silberstein and Mr. Mendel Hengel.¹² Rabbi Silberstein spoke of the need for the Hasidim to have a place for prayer without the city becoming a ghetto, alluding to a statement made by Pelletier in an interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) earlier that day in which he declared his opposition to Outremont becoming a Jewish ghetto.¹³ According to an article by Tristan Roy in an Outremont newspaper, Mendel Hengel's remark that not bringing his children to a synagogue would result in them being dragged onto the streets where they would become delinquents like other children, sparked hostility among residents in attendance.¹⁴

It appears that Jewish organizations only became involved in the dispute in June 1988. Three weeks after the initial request, in a 12 June article in the *Montreal Gazette*, Frank Chalk, chairman of the Quebec Region of B'nai B'rith, warned against immediately reading antisemitism into city council's refusal of bylaw changes.¹⁵ He also noted that there had previously been tension between the Hasidim and other residents, mentioning complaints that followed a five-day celebration in November 1986 to mark the visit of the Satmar rebbe, Moses Teitelbaum, to Outremont. Chalk set up a discussion group the following year to help ease the tension.¹⁶

On 22 June, at the request of Gérard Pelletier, a meeting was held between the Parti du Renouveau d'Outremont and the Vishnitzer Hasidim at the office of the League for Human Rights of B'nai B'rith. The meeting was chaired by Esther Benezra, co-chairman of the League, with Harry Bick, its national chairman, in attendance. Evidence suggests that at least one Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) representative, Michael Crelinsten, was going to attend the meeting, but was asked not to by B'nai B'rith. In a letter dated 22 June, Crelinsten, executive director of CJC-Quebec Region, acknowledged receipt of the letter sent by Harry Bick asking that the CJC not attend the meeting. He admitted that he was "concerned ... that B'nai B'rith feels it inappropriate for the executive director of another Jewish organization in this community to be able to participate as an observer at this meeting, particularly as I was specifically asked to be there by Mr. [Jacob] Lax, one of the principals in this situation."¹⁷ However, he did qualify his concern by stating that he respected B'nai B'rith's contacts with and influence on the City of Outremont and trusted that an equitable solution to the problem would be reached.¹⁸ It is interesting to note that while two representatives of the Vishnitzer group attended, Jacob Lax and Joseph Kizecnik, Gérard Pelletier was the only member of the PRO at the meeting.¹⁹

Hardly any of the information mentioned above has been previously noted in scholars' accounts of the affair. In the

past, scholars have briefly sketched the outlines of the Congregation Amour Pour Israel vote to change the existing zoning bylaw²⁰ without any mention of the Minchas Eluzar-Munkatz congregation. Most accounts also note that the main opponent of the re-zoning was Gérard Pelletier, a former FLQ²¹ member and leader of the municipal opposition, Parti du Renouveau d'Outremont. One of his objections to the proposed change was very general: that a religious building would alter the residential character of that sector of Outremont. However, he later revealed his cultural bias when he said, "We do not want Outremont to become a Hasidic town."²² Julien Bauer's account suggests that Pelletier's anti-Hasidim stance was largely political.²³ While that may be true, he fails to provide evidence to support such a claim. Valerie Stoker goes even further. She claims that Pelletier's opposition to the re-zoning was largely a xenophobic fear of a cultural and physical takeover of Outremont by the Hasidim.²⁴ Clearly, both Bauer and Stoker characterize Pelletier's opposition to the zoning change to be, first and foremost, anti-Hasidic.

It is on this note that most scholars end their accounts of the incident as it took place at the municipal level and go on to discuss how it played itself out in the media. From William Shaffir's articles, one reads that on Jewish holidays the French-language daily, *La Presse*, published front-page articles and editorials that many Jews and non-Jews alike found offensive and antisemitic. On Rosh Hashanah, *La Presse* published a front-page article by Roch Côté with the title, « Outremont se découvre un 'problème juif' », stating that Hasidim are a "bizarre minority, with the men in black looking like bogeymen and the women and children dressed like onions."²⁵ On Yom Kippur, the paper ran an editorial apologizing for the title but suggested that it was misunderstood by Jews, yet another example of "tensions between the francophone majority and groups who chose English as their language."²⁶ Shaffir also cited Gérald Leblanc's articles in *La Presse* that argue that Jews' affiliation with Montreal's anglophone community was the reason

behind French Canadian-Jewish tensions and consequently concluded that the Hasidim are a problem in Outremont because they do not speak French.²⁷ Shaffir's summary shows that opposition existed among French Canadian journalists in the city towards the Hasidim, with anti-Jewish feelings mixed with anti-English ones. Without supporting evidence, Shaffir easily explained this hostility by arguing that the main opponents of the zoning change were new French-Canadian professionals in Outremont who found the Hasidim to be a quaint, but annoying group who hampered their efforts at renovating and modernizing the area. Furthermore, he suggested that many French-Canadians felt threatened because the Hasidim reminded them of their own vanished French-Canadian culture under the authority of the Catholic Church.²⁸ The Outremont affair was simply the public voicing of these tensions.

Although Julien Bauer does not offer an explanation of the affair as such, he concurs with Shaffir that French-Canadian professionals with links to the media were the main critics of the Hasidim. His is a much more critical assessment than Shaffir's. However, considering that his purpose is to denounce the rise of racism and antisemitism in Canada as well as the appeasing and inefficient leadership in the Canadian government and Jewish organizations, this is not surprising. Bauer is the first to mention *Le Journal d'Outremont* as another newspaper that published what some felt to be antisemitic articles. In fact, he begins by declaring that the paper "used the zoning problem as the start of a racist campaign."²⁹ Like Shaffir, he mentions *La Presse* as a culprit, but also recognizes Lysiane Gagnon as the "first anti-racist voice in *La Presse*" for her vehement denunciation of the anti-Hasidic campaign.³⁰ He ends on an ironic note by thanking *La Presse* and *Le Journal d'Outremont* for turning the zoning change in Outremont into a national concern for all Jews.

Valerie Stoker's description is clear and well-written, yet still lacking in detail. Although she relies heavily on Shaffir's analysis of the *La Presse* articles, she goes on to state that the French press later modified its coverage of the Hasidic commu-

nities with columns critical of the original coverage; unfortunately she offers no examples.³¹ As well, she focuses on the positive outcome of the incident by remarking that since the controversy, Outremont papers have offered balanced articles that aim to explain Hasidic holidays and the history of different congregations.³² Although this is true, Stoker does not provide evidence of the impact of such positive press coverage in light of later controversies involving the Hasidim in Outremont.

Although these reviews and conclusions carry some validity, a more complete study of the political and public manifestations of the Outremont affair would examine more wide-ranging evidence and therefore, lead to more authoritative conclusions. For example, a comprehensive examination of the media coverage suggests that the Hasidim had both detractors and defenders in the French media as well as among Outremont residents. In addition, many more people and organizations were involved than would appear from the scholarly literature. In *Le Journal d'Outremont*, French Canadian residents wrote letters that both opposed and supported a Hasidic presence in the neighbourhood. The summer issues published letters by residents Claude Jasmin³³ and Monique Thérien. Many of the problems Jasmin outlined in the July issue of the newspaper regarding the Hasidim were seconded in a letter written by Thérien in its August issue. In addition, Thérien highlighted the Hasidim's unwillingness to look at or talk to other people as well as the noise that they caused by their Friday night services.³⁴ Moreover, she equated Hasidim to all Jews and called them both a backward people who have all of the money and privilege in the city: "It is the children of these Jews who have been buying our houses here these past years. It is the Jews who have money."³⁵ It is obvious that Thérien felt threatened by the Hasidim and considered Outremont to be equally at risk.

On the other hand, there were just as many people who wrote to the editor denouncing the letters of Thérien, Jasmin, and others. Although some were from leaders of the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Human Rights League of B'nai B'rith,

many were written by French Canadian residents of Outremont. One letter in particular, written by Irène Arsenault, reminded the paper's readers that Monique Thérien's letter resembled Nazi propaganda during the 1930s. Among other things, she stated that Hasidic Jews could teach many people the value of life and family: "If they have many children it is because they know the value of large families and sacrifice 'materialism' to achieve this."³⁶ Another resident, Jacques Brisson, wrote that the type of racism and ignorance expressed by Thérien and Jasmin could only lead to antisemitism and a lack of humanity on the part of society as a whole.³⁷ In its September issue, *Le Journal d'Outremont* provided factual information on the history of a Jewish presence in Quebec and attempted to explain the beliefs of the Hasidic community to the larger community.

With regard to other journals and newspapers, attention became more focused on the Outremont zoning dispute after Roch Côté's article appeared in the 13 September issue of *La Presse* in which he stated, among other things, "But we don't cross the residential-zoned Saint-Viateur street like we cross the Red Sea," and "The Jews of Outremont are ready to wait a little longer, but not as long as for the Messiah."³⁸ The *Canadian Jewish News*, *The Gazette* (Montreal), *L'Actualité*, and *Le Devoir* (known to be the organ of Quebec nationalism), all denounced his article, focusing the majority of their columns on the antisemitism that the controversy elicited. In Jacques Godbout's essay for the December 1988 edition of the French monthly, *L'Actualité*, he reminded his readers of how similar the Hasidim and the French are, calling the Hasidim the guilty conscience of the French: "We don't like to see the Hasidim proliferate because it reminds us of who we were, our national consciousness, our old-ways, our solidarity, preoccupied with our survival. The Hasidim want to be unique and distinct, so do we."³⁹ He also reminded his fellow French-Quebecers that they, too, were once the victims of the same cultural accusations that some francophones were making against the Hasidim: French-Canadians did not want to integrate into Canadian society; they

had too many children; their Catholic children were not allowed to play with Protestant ones; French-Canadian women were only good for giving birth; they wore a loud and ugly style of clothing; spoke an incomprehensible language, and knew nothing of the world except the responses to the Small Catechism.⁴⁰ The prominent Quebec historian and long-time advocate of French-Jewish rapprochement, Jacques Langlais, writing in *Le Devoir*, cautioned French-Quebecers to be careful of their racist accusations since they might lead to a further exodus of Quebec residents to other provinces or to the United States.⁴¹

Support for the Hasidim was also found in the writings of *La Presse* journalist, Lysiane Gagnon. During the Outremont affair, she wrote two articles that asserted, tongue in cheek, that Outremont residents could coexist with others who were more difficult than the Hasidim: “‘delinquents, discothèques, half-way houses’ – without speaking of the supreme calamity, neighbours who do not get involved in your affairs.”⁴² She ironically suggested that perhaps some Québécois might wish to establish a homogeneous village where everyone named Gagnon or Tremblay mowed their lawn on the same day and at the same hour.⁴³ Both she and Louise Robic reminded the public that it did not matter that the Hasidim spoke English or Yiddish since they kept their communications with others to a minimum and, therefore, would not drastically alter the urban linguistic situation. Not only do articles such as these help to put the situation into perspective, they also show that there was no consensus of opposition among writers of *La Presse* or within the larger French community towards the Hasidim. All this gives the lie to facile generalizations about antisemitism in Outremont.

The negative comments expressed by a number of Outremont residents as well as the articles that appeared in *La Presse* elicited a quick response from Jewish organizations in Quebec, specifically the CJC⁴⁴ and the Human Rights League of B'nai B'rith. The public and private correspondence of these organizations at the time of the controversy suggest an interesting relationship, not only with their Hasidic counterparts, but

also between each other and other involved groups. This evidence is essential to an understanding of the affair.

After the publication of Monique Thérien's letter in *Le Journal d'Outremont*, a response was sent by the executive director of the Quebec Region of Canadian Jewish Congress, Michael Crelinsten, to the editor of the paper. Dated 25 August, the letter raised some important points concerning the anti-semitic nature of Thérien's correspondence: "The issue for Ms. Thérien is clearly not that these houses have been purchased from French families, but that they have been purchased by Jews."⁴⁵ He also stressed the legitimacy of different cultural groups in a given society and the positive attributes that such diversity could lend to the multicultural fabric of Canada. In the private correspondence between Crelinsten and the President of the CJC, Morton Bessner, a more troubled and apprehensive tone was taken. In it, he suggested that institutional anti-semitism may have been at the root of the municipal council's synagogue decision, although he emphasized that spot-zoning changes had created problems in the past in both Montreal and Toronto without any indication that religious or cultural prejudice was involved.⁴⁶ According to him, it was imperative that they remain "vigilant but not over-reactive" in the face of this possible "time-bomb."⁴⁷ It appears that even two months after, the CJC had not conducted a thorough study of the vote and remained uncertain of its exact nature. He added that they should not assume rampant antisemitism and that they should adopt a non-contentious approach to a proposed meeting between the CJC and the editor of *Le Journal d'Outremont*.⁴⁸ Interestingly, no mention was made of any meeting between the CJC and either municipal party in Outremont. Clearly, the CJC's concern lay with the negative press coverage and not with the municipal council vote.

The Human Rights League of B'nai B'rith also wrote a letter to *Le Journal d'Outremont* emphasizing not only the anti-semitic tone of Jasmin and Thérien's letters, but also the rights and freedoms that the Hasidim shared with every other citizen

in Canada.⁴⁹ In addition, in an article entitled, “Our neighbours, Hasidic Jews,” B’nai B’rith offered a general description of Hasidic beliefs that they thought would lead to further understanding and respect on the part of the general population. It is interesting to note that no complaints were made by the Hasidim to B’nai B’rith’s League for Human Rights – Canadian Jewry’s only human rights organization dedicated to the pursuit of human rights for all, combating antisemitism and fighting racism – during the Outremont affair. It was only in 1999 that many Hasidim publicly protested that they were feeling harassed and intimidated by Outremont resident, Céline Forget.⁵⁰ According to B’nai B’rith, this confirmed what its officials had suspected for quite some time: due to the hesitancy of many Hasidim to come forward with reports of antisemitic incidents, the annual numbers recorded by B’nai B’rith over the years had not reflected the reality of the situation. According to the 1999 report, “many [Hasidim] claimed that it is extremely common to have coins thrown at them, or to have a passing car slow down for its passengers to hurl antisemitic epithets, make references to Hitler, or give the Nazi salute.”⁵¹ When Céline Forget was elected to the Outremont municipal council in 1999, B’nai B’rith issued a news release stating that it hoped Forget would use her new position to better the relationships among groups in Outremont and to ease any worries that certain residents might have because of her election.⁵² Such a delayed response illustrates that there had been hesitancy among Hasidim to seek assistance from larger non-Hasidic Jewish organizations. On the other hand, their willingness in recent years to come forward with reports of antisemitism could suggest that Hasidim are becoming more self-confident and more likely to issue complaints than they were before.⁵³

After the appearance of Côté’s article in *La Presse*, both the Canadian Jewish Congress and B’nai B’rith’s League for Human Rights issued statements of protest. According to an article written by Crelinsten and Jack Jedwab, Director of Community Relations for CJC-Quebec Region, Congress

“interpreted the *La Presse* coverage as an unambiguous and dangerously provocative example of antisemitism with potential ramifications that reached far beyond the Poale Zedec incident.”⁵⁴ Over the next two months, as the Outremont story gained greater coverage in English and French papers, both groups expressed a desire to form a coalition of Jewish organizations and an ecumenical group to assist in education and understanding. The findings suggest that the proposed group and meeting were agreed upon without first seeking the approval of the Hasidic community. This not only demonstrates Hasidim’s marginal place in Quebec and in the Jewish community, but also the assertive position taken by the CJC. In a letter addressed to Morton Bessner that offered recommendations as to who should sit on the ecumenical committee, Crelinsten suggested only at the end that it might be wise to consider inviting Mr. Kisner, a member of the Belzer community, to join the deliberations.⁵⁵ Among those considered to sit on the council were Lysiane Gagnon, writer for *La Presse*, Pierre Anctil, then-professor at McGill University, the historian Jacques Langlais, and Father Stéphane Valiquette, a long-standing supporter of Hasidic-French rapprochement. The CJC’s main focus in creating this council was to concentrate, “in a high profile fashion,” on antisemitism and not to allow the issue to be reassessed as a linguistic or a Québécois nationalist controversy.⁵⁶ Clearly, the CJC wanted to present the Hasidim as victims of antisemitism, with or without direct Hasidic involvement and with or without a proper study of the event, responding solely to the way the media presented it. Furthermore, one could argue that the CJC wanted to take control of the situation, interpreting it as it saw fit without necessarily understanding the exact nature of the incident.

B’nai B’rith took a somewhat different approach to dealing with the press than did the Canadian Jewish Congress. It issued a complaint to the Quebec Press Council against *La Presse* for the publication of six articles and one caricature by Jean-Pierre Girerd between 12 March 1988 and 4 February 1989 that they felt constituted “clear and repetitive violations of

the principles of equity and of respect in the coverage of the Jewish community.”⁵⁷ Of the six, Roch Côté’s article « Outremont se découvre un ‘problème juif’ » and the 14 September article by Gérald Leblanc entitled « Je plaide non-coupable » were directly related to the Outremont affair. In its defense, *La Presse* argued that in order to fully appreciate its principles of equity and respect, the Council would have to study all of its articles relating to Jews and Israel to see that “the coverage by *La Presse* offers a nuanced and even-handed portrait of the Jewish community and respect for the principles of objectivity, equity, the quality of information, and pluralism.”⁵⁸ On an apologetic note, it insisted that as a daily French-Canadian newspaper and as a product of cultural ethnocentrism it might make mistakes or lack sensibility towards other communities because of ignorance and the sheer number of texts published every day. It ended by saying that “if it is possible to establish fruitful relations with the Canadian Jewish Congress, such is not the case with B’nai B’rith. We believe that filing a complaint with the Press Council is not of the nature of bringing communities closer.”⁵⁹ In attempting to divide the Jewish community, *La Presse* established independent relations with the CJC and voiced its dissatisfaction with the way B’nai B’rith chose to contest its views. Not only does this highlight the different approaches taken by the two organizations, it also confirms that they were not working together against the paper.⁶⁰

One strategy that the Canadian Jewish Congress took was “to mobilize high level ecumenical [and political] support on behalf of the Chassidic community as well as to be better prepared for similar events that might unfold in the future.”⁶¹ Michael Crelinsten and Morton Bessner wrote letters to such people as Claude Ryan and Father Thomas Ryan, the director of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, thanking them for their support. These letters also reveal the task that the CJC felt it was undertaking. The letter addressed to Father Ryan stated that the Quebec Region of the Canadian Jewish Congress had “attempted to interpret the situation to the broader community”

and that they have had to respond “to the unfortunate and distorting press coverage that [the] situation [had] received in certain journals.”⁶² As an organization that prided itself on being the “parliament and voice of Canadian Jewry,” engaged in advocacy and planning at both the federal and provincial levels, the CJC’s involvement in the Outremont affair – a heated local dispute – must be questioned and analyzed.

In fact, a fear that surfaced during the incident was an overlapping of jurisdiction between the CJC and other Jewish organizations. Michael Crelinsten expressed his concern about this issue early on when he wrote to Morton Bessner: “I look to your recommendation as to how to manage the more general concerns raised in this memo, which go beyond the synagogue issue itself, so that we can serve the community of Outremont most effectively without our efforts being undermined or diluted by jurisdictional dispute within our own organized community.”⁶³ Interestingly, he did not question the CJC’s involvement in the controversy; however, he did think that its involvement might create tension with other organizations. A letter sent by Yechiel Glustein, Quebec regional director of B’nai B’rith Canada to Michael Crelinsten in September did welcome the possibility of joint community effort involving itself along with AJCS (Allied Jewish Community Services), the CJC, and the Council of Christians and Jews.⁶⁴ However, as the media situation intensified, both the CJC and B’nai B’rith appeared to work independently of one another, calling their own meetings with members of *La Presse* and with the Hasidic community. At no time did they publicly present a united front.

It appears that the Vishnitzer may have considered the two organizations to be too confrontational although the group did make selective use of their assistance. This could be attributed to different perceptions of the controversy and different strategies adopted by each group. Unlike the CJC or B’nai B’rith, perhaps the Vishnitzer have taken antisemitism for granted – the price of being in *galut* (exile) – which translates into a less confrontational philosophy when dealing with the

non-Hasidic world.⁶⁵ At the same time, perhaps they were unwilling to go on the offensive because it was the encounter with the other that worried them. Confrontations and culture contact might thus undermine their attempts at protecting their way of life.⁶⁶

It must be stressed that Hasidim participated actively in the municipal debate. At an information session called by Pelletier's party, Jacob Lax, spokesman for the Vishnitzer, argued for the synagogue by insisting that the four already in existence were not enough to satisfy the growing number of Hasidim in Outremont. He pointed out that in 1969, when Saint-Viateur was zoned as residential, there were only 200 Jews in Outremont whereas by 1988 they represented 10 percent of the population.⁶⁷ Furthermore, he stressed that building a synagogue in a commercial section of Outremont would not be consistent with the religious and moral values of Hasidim.⁶⁸ Although only two⁶⁹ representatives of the Vishnitzer community made an appearance at this meeting, Jacob Lax and Joseph Kizecnik, it is still worth noting that they did not, up to this point, shy away from confrontations with other members of the community. They defended their cause at municipal council meetings, speaking in both English and French, and did not refuse to make their feelings known to the wider community. After the Quebec Region of the Canadian Jewish Congress met with some members of the Hasidic community, a press release of the meeting was issued that stated "the Hasidic community is of the feeling that there is no real problem between itself and its neighbours in Outremont."⁷⁰ Again, whether this was purely for public consumption or represented a sincere belief is unclear. The Hasidim further supported their view by stating that minor tensions were sensationalized by the media and blown out of proportion, and that the prejudiced views of a small minority of the community should not be taken as indicative of the feelings of the majority: "We have lived in the community for thirty years and have experienced the most cordial and friendly of relations with our neighbours."⁷¹

Finally, we must examine the conduct of the municipal council itself. In an article concerning the Outremont affair written in the *Tribune juive*, Yves Alavo, a communications counselor, stated that the apathetic stance taken by the municipal administration over the past years with regard to the pluralism issue in Outremont was partly to blame: "It is urgent ... to realize, Mr. Choquette and company, that homogeneity, a francophone ghetto, and castes are old-fashioned."⁷² Pierre Anctil concurs with this criticism of the council: "The city is to blame. They had been lax on the issue and it provoked such opinions from the citizens. It was unreasonable."⁷³ Anctil and Alavo are both correct in mentioning the municipal administration as a significant player in the incident. It does not appear that Choquette or any of the members of the municipal council took a firm stance in support of the Hasidim from early on. In fact, four of his fellow party members voted against him with regard to the Minchas Eluzar-Munkatz congregation and three voted against him with regard to Congregation Amour Pour Israel. In addition, Choquette never did publicly denounce the controversial writings that appeared in some publications, and at one point he suggested that the Hasidim were not doing enough to resolve the issue.⁷⁴ However, Choquette was later involved in establishing a permanent twelve-member intercultural committee based upon the recommendation of the Canadian Federation of Municipalities and the Cultural Communities Ministry of Quebec. In response to a letter written by Morton Bessner thanking the Outremont council for taking the initiative in establishing this committee, Choquette mentioned that already a number of Outremont residents had expressed interest in becoming members of the committee.⁷⁵

At Pelletier's request, an information session was organized, with the help of B'nai B'rith, in which the PRO and the Vishnitzer discussed the issue at hand. This certainly revealed a willingness by both sides to understand each other or at least to arrive at a *modus vivendi*. In a talk, Pelletier viewed the Vishnitzer's demands as selfish: "the Jewish community is not

the only one to have needs and at the same time, certain old age groups have been waiting nine years to find property to build a residence.”⁷⁶ His fear that other groups would be denied fair access to vacant lots was also coupled with his concern that the granting of the lot to the Vishnitzer would precipitate acts of racism and intolerance on the part of those residents who would oppose such a decision. On the other hand, Pelletier maintained that his opposition did not represent racism or antisemitism and in fact, stressed that the Hasidim were more accepted in Outremont than anywhere else in the world.⁷⁷ However, this statement must be interpreted in light of an earlier statement in which he declared that he did not want Outremont to become a Hasidic town. One could suggest that Pelletier was simply declaring concern for others to hide his antisemitic views.

Evidence reveals that synagogues were not the only buildings prevented from being erected in Outremont. An article in the 1 November 1989 edition of *La Presse* dealt with a recent dismissal by property owners in an area of Outremont of a proposal for a library in their residential zoning area. Property owners argued that it would lead to increased traffic and a loss of tranquility in the area; the proposal was defeated by a vote of 81 to 68.⁷⁸ The article also added that Outremont suffers from a paucity of available land, and that the surface area of private land is small and its cost per square metre high.⁷⁹ Considering this issue had been raised a number of times, the argument regarding the scarcity of land and its fair distribution put forth by some opponents of the zoning change should be considered as a serious concern that deserves more attention.

Since the Outremont affair, other disputes regarding the building of synagogues and Jewish centres by Hasidim have surfaced in the decidedly Jewish area of Côte Saint-Luc as well as in the more ethnically diverse Mile End, proof that such problems do not only occur in the more culturally homogeneous Outremont. When a Francophone Lubavitch group proposed to build Beth Chabad, a \$3-million community centre for French-speaking Jews, opposition arose from Jewish residents of Côte

Saint-Luc who felt that the centre would worsen traffic and congestion and lead to a devaluation of property values in the area. Perhaps this indicates some Jewish anti-Hasidic feeling coming into play. Even though the re-zoning change was passed by the municipal council in 2000, enough signatures on petitions were collected by residents to force the council to reconsider the change and eventually terminate the building project at that site.⁸⁰ A site was finally approved for the centre in January 2001. Also in 2001, the Belzer Hasidim of the Mile End district faced some difficulties in converting one of their houses into a synagogue for their growing community. Again, some neighbours opposed it, citing noise, double parking, and congestion on the sidewalks as probable outcomes of the synagogue construction. Others, however, supported the change and asked that the commission approve the project based on humanitarian grounds.⁸¹ Despite a city policy that opposed such a change, the Montreal city council approved the conversion with the promise that no further requests for additional space would be made by the Belzer.⁸² Although these incidents may not have occasioned as much media coverage as the Outremont controversy, they were nevertheless evidence that groups other than francophones opposed Hasidic expansionist projects and that forces other than antisemitism, such as xenophobia, ethnocentrism, and concerns over property value may have been at work.⁸³

An analysis of what actually transpired at the municipal level in May and June of 1988 shows that more occurred than simply a 6-4 vote against a zoning change. As for group responses, although the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Human Rights League of B'nai B'rith viewed the negative press coverage as a manifestation of antisemitism and subsequently dealt with it independently of one another, some leading francophone journalists saw it as proof of the unbridgeable gap that exists between French Canadians and Jews in Quebec. While it is certainly true that antisemitism and language tensions have existed in Quebec, considering them as the main or only factors that guided this affair would be misleading and inaccurate.

Perhaps the conduct of the Hasidim themselves and the municipality should receive our greatest attention. Although the Hasidim were willing to defend their rights and needs concerning the construction of their synagogue, they were not willing to become embroiled in the debate that was taking place in the papers. For them, it always remained an issue between themselves and the municipality of Outremont. To make it into something more, they felt, would have compromised their ideological opposition to confrontation. This did not conform to the political advocacy model of B'nai B'rith or to the modified British Board of Deputies model of the CJC.⁸⁴ As for the municipality, their mixed messages reflect the tensions among individuals as well as within the group. Taking these issues into consideration is a necessary step to setting the incident in a historical context. Only then can a study of the Outremont affair shed light on the nature of French Canadian-Hasidic relations in Montreal in the recent past and into the present.

Criticism itself has to be supported; by introducing new evidence and analyzing already discussed issues in light of previously unexamined material, this work accomplishes just that. General accusations of antisemitism or anti-Hasidism among the French Canadian population of Outremont cannot be made when it is known that there were both detractors and supporters of the Hasidim in Outremont as well as in the French press. Likewise, the fact that disputes involving Hasidim have occurred in areas that are not predominantly French Canadian and that even public institutions such as libraries have been prevented from being constructed in Outremont show that anti-semitism was likely not the only factor at play.

Some fifteen years after the Outremont affair tensions between the Hasidim and their neighbours are still making headlines. On 13 May 2003, a bylaw was passed that severely restricts commercial bus traffic in the borough of Outremont, affecting Hasidim who rely on the service to and from New York City where many family members reside.⁸⁵ Although not occurring in Outremont, a second news topic involved the Belzer Hasidim

and their efforts to keep their almost twenty-year-old shul from closing due to its being located in a residential zoning area in the predominantly French-Canadian town of Val-Morin, Quebec.⁸⁶ Clearly tensions still exist between the Hasidim and non-Hasidic members of surrounding communities. That both these incidents occurred in predominantly French Canadian areas does not mean that differences do not reveal themselves elsewhere. What it does mean, though, is that the needs of all groups involved, including the Hasidim, have not yet been fully understood or tolerated by opposing groups, and inter-communal dialogue has been and continues to be a necessary component of social accord.

Notes

¹ Beyond the scholars discussed in this paper, one should also look at the following works: Pierre Anctil, « Judaïsme et orthodoxie à Montréal », in *Tur Malka: Flâneries sur les cimes de l'histoire juive montréalaise* (Sillery, Québec: Septentrion, 1997); Shauna Van Praagh, "The Chutzpah of Chasidism." *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 2 (1996): 193-215; Jan Feldman, *Lubavitchers as Citizens: A Paradox of Liberal Democracy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003).

² Pierre Anctil calls the zoning dispute a "pretext" for the media controversy in a chapter entitled, « Judaïsme et orthodoxie à Montréal », in his book, *Tur Malka*, p. 159. Other scholars, such as William Shaffir, do not go into detail about the council vote, but focus on the media coverage that it occasioned. Valerie Stoker is the only scholar to provide an account of the Outremont affair that includes a discussion of the ongoing tension, at the municipal level, between the Vishnitzer Hasidim and Outremont resident and city council member, Céline Forget. See Valerie Stoker, "Drawing the Line: Hasidic Jews, Eruvim, and the Public Space of Outremont, Québec," *History of Religions* (August 2003): 18-49.

³ In the plenary committee minutes, 1035 Saint-Viateur is referred to as lot 32-3-21-2 and 32-3-22-2. See « 882-5-23 », 16 May 1988 (Archives de l'arrondissement d'Outremont: Comité plénier du conseil: du 5 octobre 1987 au 19 décembre 1988), p. 137.

⁴ André Desnoyers, « Pas de zonage spécial pour deux synagogues », *Le Journal d'Outremont* (June 1988): 12.

⁵ Roch Côté, « Pas de passe-droit pour les congrégations juives, dit Choquette », *La Presse* (14 September 1988): A3.

⁶ « 882-5-22 and 882-5-23 », 16 May 1988 (Archives de l'arrondissement d'Outremont, Comité plénier du conseil: du 5 octobre 1987 au 19 décembre 1988), p. 136-37.

⁷ *Ibid.* The motion in favour of Congregation Minchas Eluzar-Munkatz was supported by Akos de Muszka, Pierre-Bernard Labelle and mayor Jérôme Choquette. Its opponents included Paul Asselin, Ludger Beauregard, Jacqueline Clermont-Lasnier, René Faribault, Claude Piquette, André Tremblay, and Jérôme Unterberg. The latter three were members of the opposing party. It should be noted that Jérôme Unterberg later become mayor of Outremont and has maintained his opposition to the zoning changes. The motion in favour of Congregation Amour Pour Israel was supported by de Muszka, Labelle, Beauregard, and Choquette. It was opposed by Asselin, Piquette, Clermont-Lasnier, Faribault, Tremblay, and Unterberg. It is unclear why Ludger Beauregard supported one motion and opposed the other.

⁸ According to the archivist for the borough of Outremont, M. Jean Leblanc, there are no verbatim records of the plenary committee meetings. However, there is no indication in the summaries provided that these votes were any different from others mentioned.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.* « Si le maire n'agit pas, nous allons demander que la loi soit appliquée et que le Service des permis et inspections fasse parvenir une lettre au propriétaire de cet édifice pour que cette demeure soit remise à son état original de résidence ».

¹¹ The archivist for the borough of Outremont, M. Jean Leblanc, informed me that votes go through two stages, the 6 June ratification being the second stage of the 16 May vote. The only evidence that I came across indicating that the vote had been ratified was a note, in pen, beside the 16 May vote that it had been approved on 6 June. It is unclear whether the General Assembly was called for the specific purpose of discussing the zoning dispute. According to an article that appeared in *Le Journal d'Outremont*, the issue quickly monopolized the question period, which suggests that other topics were also to be discussed. The regular thirty-minute question period lasted for more than two hours. See Tristan Roy,

« L'Hôtel de ville transformé en foire d'empoigne! » *Le Journal d'Outremont* (July 1988): 3.

¹² Rabbi Zushe Silberstein is a well-known Lubavitch figure in Montreal who has been an unofficial political mediator for the Lubavitch as well as other Hasidic groups. One of his strengths in this role has been his "rare" grasp of French. For more about Rabbi Silberstein, see Feldman, *Lubavitchers as Citizens*, p. 81-82. As for Mr. Mendel Hengel, it is unclear whether he is actually a member of the Vishnitz group or a representative from another Hasidic group.

¹³ Roy, « L'Hôtel de ville transformé en foire d'empoigne! », p. 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* Again, it is not clear from the article that there were residents other than Hasidim who publicly supported the zoning change at this assembly. Roy does mention that a resident stood up and asked for a revision of the decision, but it is not known whether he or she belonged to a Hasidic group.

¹⁵ Irwin Block, "Hasidim to press fight for new synagogue," *The Gazette* (12 June 1988): A5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* In 1985, the Hasidim strongly supported Outremont's controversial 'Bikini Bylaw' that forbade wearing bathing suits in city parks. Although the bylaw was dismissed three months later as being unconstitutional, tensions still persisted. Complaints were made against the Hasidim in June 1991 when the Belzer rebbe, Issachar Dov Rokach, visited his followers in Outremont. A parade by the Hasidim was held on St. Jean Baptiste Day and was considered by one municipal councilor to be an affront to Quebeckers.

¹⁷ Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives [CJCCCNA], K1 1988, box 8, file 8, letter, Michael Crelinsten to Harry Bick, 22 June 1988.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ André Desnoyers, « On serait rendu au point de l'intolérance raciste! », *Le Journal d'Outremont* (July 1988): 5.

²⁰ Both William Shaffir and Julien Bauer characterize it as a "stormy debate." Bauer, however, goes on to say that it was "an apparently innocuous event." See his article "Racism in Canada: A Symposium," *Viewpoints* 16, no. 5 (1989): 1. Furthermore, William Shaffir, Valerie Stoker, and various journalists from both anglophone and francophone newspapers state that the request was turned down by a council vote of 6-3. This could be the result of the 6 June vote. According to the minutes of the plenary

committee of the municipal council, the 16 May motion was defeated by a vote of 6-4. See Comité plénier du conseil: du 5 octobre 1987 au 19 décembre 1988 (Outremont, Quebec: Archives de l'arrondissement d'Outremont), p. 135.

²¹ Front de libération du Québec, a marginal terrorist organization devoted in the sixties and early seventies to achieving the independence of Québec through violent means.

²² André Desnoyers, « On serait rendu au point de l'intolérance raciste! » *Le Journal d'Outremont* (July 1988): 5. Translation is mine unless otherwise specified. « On ne veut pas qu'Outremont devienne une ville hassidique ».

²³ Bauer, "Racism in Canada," p. 1.

²⁴ Stoker, "Drawing the Line," p. 28.

²⁵ William Shaffir, "Montreal's Chassidim Revisited: A Focus on Change," in *Essays in the Social Scientific Study of Judaism and Jewish Society*, edited by Simcha Fishbane and Jack Lightstone, 305-22 (Montreal: Concordia University, 1990), p. 311. I am using Shaffir's translation.

²⁶ Ibid. Again, I am using Shaffir's translation.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Bauer, "Racism in Canada," p. 1.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Stoker, "Drawing the Line," p. 30. In a footnote, Stoker does refer to the work of Shaffir and his mention of Lysiane Gagnon's writings in *La Presse* as combating the anti-Hasidic stance of other journalists. Although journalists from other French papers also took up this cause, it must be made clear that the original critics of the Hasidim did not 'modify' their coverage in any way. See Shaffir's remarks in "Boundaries and Self-Presentation among the Hasidim: A Study in Identity Maintenance," in *New World Hasidim: Ethnographic Studies of Hasidic Jews in America*, edited by Janet Belcove-Shalin, 31-68 (Albany: State University of New York, 1995), p. 31-68.

³² Ibid.

³³ Judi Rever, "CJC welcomes PQ announcement of candidate withdrawal," *The Suburban* (6 September 1989), p. 3. According to Rever, former Parti Québécois leader, Jacques Parizeau, announced the withdrawal of Mr. Jasmin's candidacy due to the uproar created by his remarks regarding

Quebec's Jewish community and cultural minorities in his article, « Un racisme juif? » *Le Journal d'Outremont* (July 1988): 27. In it, Jasmin argued that the citizens of Outremont were the victims of Jewish racism and that the perpetrators were the Hasidim who were unwilling to acknowledge and speak to other non-Hasidic residents. He was angered by their unresponsiveness when he said hello or tried to talk to their children. Furthermore, he argued that it was stupid ('idiotement') of the Hasidim to not assimilate into the larger Quebec majority, charging that they lacked sensitivity to the fragile existence of the Québécois in Canada and North America. Any antisemitic conduct on the part of the surrounding community was due to the racist attitudes of the Hasidim

³⁴ Monique Thérien, « Vivre ensemble », *Le Journal d'Outremont* (August 1988): 12.

³⁵ Ibid. « Ce sont les enfants de ces juifs qui achèteront vos maisons d'ici quelques années. Ce sont les juifs qui ont l'argent ».

³⁶ Irène Arsenault, « Une attitude des années '30 », *Le Journal d'Outremont* (September 1988): 15. « S'ils ont beaucoup d'enfants c'est parce qu'ils connaissent la valeur des grandes familles et sacrifient le 'matérialisme' pour y arriver ».

³⁷ Jacques Brisson, « Le racisme est une plaie », *Le Journal d'Outremont* (September 1988): 15.

³⁸ Roch Côté, « Outremont se découvre un 'problème juif,' », *La Presse* (13 September 1988): A1-2. « Mais on ne traverse pas la rue Saint-Viateur, zonée résidentielle, comme on passe la mer Rouge »; « Les Juifs d'Outremont sont bien prêts à attendre encore un peu mais pas aussi longtemps que pour le Messie ».

³⁹ Jacques Godbout, « Les hassidim et les 'meechim,' », *L'Actualité* (December 1988): 180. « Nous n'aimons pas voir les hassidim proliférer parce qu'ils nous rappellent qui nous étions, notre repli national, notre refus du siècle, et qu'au temps de l'orthodoxie nous étions solidaires, préoccupés de notre survivance. Les hassidim se veulent uniques et distincts, nous aussi ». Godbout says that the Hasidim remind French-Canadians of the past in a more positive rather than negative sense. This should be differentiated from the views of scholars such as William Shaffir and Shauna Van Praagh who argue that Hasidim remind French-Canadians of their oppressed lives under the authority of the Catholic Church.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Jacques Langlais, « À Outremont, problème juif ou interculturel? », *Le Devoir* (21 September 1988): 9.

⁴² Lysiane Gagnon, « Vivre en ville », *La Presse* (24 September 1988): B3. « des voisins autrement plus difficiles – délinquents, discothèques ou maisons de transition – sans parler de la calamité suprême, celle des voisins qui ne se mêlent pas de leur affaires ».

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ An excellent study that charts Congress's implementation of "an assertive and pugnacious public relations philosophy that made it a champion of human rights in Canada" is Janine Stingel, *Social Discredit: antisemitism, Social Credit, and the Jewish Response* (Montreal & Kingston: MQUP 2000).

⁴⁵ Michael Crelinsten, "Letter to the Editor, Libre opinion," *Le Journal d'Outremont* (25 August 1988): 1.

⁴⁶ CJCCCNA, K1 1988, box 8, file 8, memo, Crelinsten to Morton Bessner, 26 August 1988.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Steve Scheinberg, "Letter to Editor, Libre expression," *Le Journal d'Outremont* (September 1988): 15.

⁵⁰ Janice Arnold, "Antisemitic incidents reported up in Montreal," *The Canadian Jewish News* (17 February 2000), available online at <http://www.cjnews.com/pastissues> (accessed 26 April 2003).

⁵¹ "Antisemitic Incident Report 1999" (Montreal: League for Human Rights of B'nai B'rith, 2000), p. 16. « un grand nombre de personnes ont déclaré qu'il arrivait très souvent qu'on leur jette des pièces ou qu'une voiture ralentisse à leur hauteur afin de permettre aux passagers de proférer des insultes antisémites, de faire référence à Hitler ou de faire le salut nazi ». It is unclear whether these incidents extend all the way back to 1988.

⁵² "News Release: B'nai B'rith inquiet du vote à Outremont," 8 November 1999 (Montreal: B'nai B'rith Archives).

⁵³ Undoubtedly, part of that self-confidence has come from the establishment of COHO (the Coalition of Orthodox Hasidic Organizations), modeled upon COJO (the Council of Jewish Organizations) of Boro Park, established in Brooklyn, N.Y.

⁵⁴ Michael Crelinsten and Jack Jedwab, “Racism in Canada: A Symposium,” *Viewpoints* 16, no. 5 (1989): 3. The Poale Zedec incident refers to the act of arson that occurred on 6 September 1988 at the Poale Zedec Synagogue in the Park Extension neighbourhood of Montreal.

⁵⁵ CJCCCNA, K1 1988, box 8, file 8, memo, Crelinsten to Morton Bessner regarding the mobilization of the ecumenical community re Outremont, 29 September 1988.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ « Communiqué: Décision du Conseil de presse concernant une plainte de B’nai B’rith Canada, région du Québec, contre La Presse », 18 February 1992 (Montreal: B’nai B’rith Archives). « Violations claires et répétitives des principes d’équité et de respect dans la couverture de la communauté juive ».

⁵⁸ « Décision: Dossier 89-02-09 », 11 February 1992 (Montreal: B’nai B’rith Archives). « la couverture de La Presse présente un portrait nuancé et équitable de la communauté juive et respecte les principes de l’objectivité, de l’équité, de la qualité de l’information et du pluralisme ».

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 10. « s’il a été possible d’établir des relations fructueuses avec le Congrès juif, [...], tel n’est pas le cas avec le B’nai B’rith. Nous croyons en outre que la démarche du B’nai B’rith avec le dépôt d’une plainte au Conseil de presse n’est pas de nature à rapprocher les communautés ».

⁶⁰ The Press Council rejected B’nai B’rith’s argument that the articles and the caricature demonstrated a lack of fairness and sensitivity in its coverage of the Jewish community. However, it did reproach Côté and *La Presse* for publishing an article that they felt could be considered offensive by some members of the community by suggesting that the Hasidim were solely responsible for the controversy.

⁶¹ Crelinsten and Jedwab, “Racism in Canada,” p. 3.

⁶² CJCCCNA, K1 1988, box 8, file 8, letter, Morton Bessner and Michael Crelinsten to Father Thomas Ryan, 30 September 1988.

⁶³ Memo, Michael Crelinsten to Morton Bessner, 26 August 1988.

⁶⁴ CJCCCNA, K1 1988, box 8, file 8, letter, Yechiel Glustein to Michael Crelinsten, 16 September 1988. In his letter, Glustein apologizes for not being able to attend a meeting convened by the CJC “without prior consultation and clearing of dates.” It is unclear whether such a meeting was held. Furthermore, I have found no evidence to suggest that such a joint

community effort ever came to fruition.

⁶⁵ Regardless of their rootedness in their respective countries, some Jews acknowledge that, at best, they are tolerated by the majority population and therefore have to pursue a policy of conciliation and quiet intercession rather than confrontation. Historically, the more conciliatory and quiet approach taken by the Vishnitzer is not new. Indeed, it is in keeping with the political policy of the Orthodox party, Agudath Israel, founded in 1912. Agudath Israel has been the upholder of the pre-modern, pre-emancipation stance of Jewish representation, contrasting with the ‘new Jewish politics’ that developed in the early twentieth century in Eastern Europe. The pragmatic policy of *shtadlanut* (intercession), complying with government policies while at the same time quietly intervening on Jews’ behalf, has been the mainstay of the party.

⁶⁶ Samuel Heilman, “Quiescent and Active Fundamentalisms: the Jewish Cases,” in *Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements*, edited by Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby, 173-96 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 184. This approach of quiescent fundamentalists is in contrast to active fundamentalists who, as their name suggests, are more active, radical, and animated in confrontations with other groups.

⁶⁷ Desnoyers, « Pas de zonage spécial pour deux synagogues », 5.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Perhaps sending only two was a conscious decision. Filling the hall with bearded men in black robes might have had a provocative effect.

⁷⁰ CJCCCNA, K1 1988, box 8, file 8, meeting with the Hasidic community of Outremont, 20 September 1988.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Yves Alavo, « Des autochtones aux Hassidiques: vivre ensemble », *Tribune Juive* (November- December 1988): 13. « Il est urgent [...] de réaliser, Monsieur Choquette et compagnie, que l’homogénéité, le ghetto francophone et les castes sont dépassés ».

⁷³ Anne-Marie Perrotta, “antisemitism in *La Presse*,” *The McGill Daily* (21 September 1988): 4.

⁷⁴ Arnold, “Outremont tensions perplex community officials”, p. 9.

⁷⁵ CJCCCNA, K1 1988, box 8, file 8, letter, Jérôme Choquette to Morton Bessner, 1 November 1988. In his letter, Morton Bessner writes that

CJC is « profond[é]ment préoccupé » with the newspaper coverage, especially *La Presse*. However, he does offer the help of the CJC as spokesman for the Quebec Jewish community and in any other capacity that Choquette and the committee would deem appropriate. CJCCCNA, K1 1988, box 8, file 8, letter, Morton Bessner to Jérôme Choquette, 5 October 1988.

⁷⁶ Desnoyers, « Pas de zonage spécial pour deux synagogues », p. 5. « la communauté juive n'est pas la seule à avoir des besoins et qu'entre autres, certains groupes de personnes âgées attendent depuis neuf ans pour trouver un terrain où se construire une résidence ».

⁷⁷ Irwin Block, "Hasidim to Press Fight for New Synagogue," *The Gazette* (12 June 1988): A5.

⁷⁸ Florian Bernard, « Pas de bibliothèque dans un secteur résidentiel d'Outremont », *La Presse* (1 November 1989): A11.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Waller, "Canada," *American Jewish Year Book 100* (2000): 283.

⁸¹ Janice Arnold, "Shul expansion opposed by neighbours," *The Canadian Jewish News* (16 November 2000), Available online at <http://www.cjnews.com/pastissues> (accessed 19 April 2003).

⁸² Waller, "Canada," p. 298.

⁸³ Cornelius Jaenen puts forth this argument in his article, "Thoughts on French and Catholic antisemitism," *Jewish Historical Society of Canada Journal 1* (Spring 1977): 17.

⁸⁴ Certainly during the interwar years, the Canadian Jewish Congress was the overarching and centralizing institution for Canadian Jewry in the same way as the Board of Deputies had been in Britain. The CJC served as the main national representative of Canadian Jewry, engaging primarily in external relations on behalf of the community. In later years, other national Jewish organizations such as B'nai B'rith and the Anti-Defamation League have challenged the CJC's centrality in the Canadian Jewish polity. See Daniel J. Elazar and Harold M. Waller, *Maintaining Consensus: The Canadian Jewish Polity in the Postwar World* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990).

⁸⁵ David Lazarus, "Outremont bus bylaw could end up in highest court: lawyer," *The Canadian Jewish News* (29 May 2003): 6.

⁸⁶ Janice Arnold, "Chassidim Fighting to Keep Laurentian Shul From Closure," *The Canadian Jewish News* (29 May 2003): 3.