

# Immigration, Minority Rights, and Catholic Policy-Making in Post-War Canada

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*This paper addresses the Canadian Roman Catholic episcopacy's approach to such issues of public interest as immigration and minority rights between 1945 and 1965. The definition of the Church's involvement in temporal matters, it is here argued, requires an understanding of the institutional interests of Catholicism and traditional Catholic approaches to governance. The conceptual framework offered by contemporary administrative and policy studies now better enables scholars of Catholicism to assess the social and political significance of the Church in this period. Catholic bishops were not indifferent to immigration or the rights of minority groups, but chose to address these matters by utilizing "discreet" channels of interaction consistent with corporatist governance. Quebec and Ontario are taken as illustrative examples of jurisdictions where Catholics were respectively the majority and a minority.*

*Le présent article traite de la manière dont l'épiscopat catholique canadien a envisagé des questions d'intérêt public telles que l'immigration et les droits des minorités entre 1945 et 1965. La définition de l'intervention de l'Église dans les questions temporelles, soutient l'auteur, exige que l'on comprenne les intérêts institutionnels du catholicisme et les conceptions catholiques traditionnelles de la gouvernance. Le cadre conceptuel offert par les études contemporaines dans les domaines de l'administration et de la politique permet désormais aux spécialistes du catholicisme de mieux évaluer la signification politique et sociale de l'Église au cours de cette période. Les évêques catholiques n'étaient pas indifférents à l'immigration ou aux droits des groupes minoritaires, mais ils ont choisi d'aborder ces questions en empruntant des voies d'interaction « discrètes », compatibles avec la gouvernance corporatiste. L'auteur utilise le Québec et l'Ontario comme exemples de territoires où les catholiques constituaient la majorité d'un côté et une minorité de l'autre.*

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ON MARCH 10, 1965, Archbishop Maurice Roy spoke before a joint session of the Quebec Legislature in celebration of his elevation to the Roman purple. Pondering the relationship between Church and State at the time of the Quiet Revolution, the new cardinal recognized that Catholic interests were neither merely spiritual nor wholly removed from the political realm:

Le silence, que leur vocation impose aux hommes d'Église sur une foule de questions qui vous intéressent, peut laisser croire parfois à une certaine indifférence ... mais il n'en est rien. Vous trouverez difficilement des citoyens qui aient plus de sympathie pour vous, qui comprennent mieux combien le fardeau de vos responsabilités est lourd et jusqu'à quel point les hautes fonctions dont vous êtes chargés appellent la confiance et le respect. Ils savent tout ce que votre charge exige de lucidité, d'intégrité et de prudence.<sup>1</sup>

As his allocution drew to an end, Roy added, "La charge que Notre Saint Père le Pape vient de me confier ... m'oblige à un nouveau titre à me consacrer plus parfaitement au bonheur de la société civile dont je suis membre. La cordialité de votre accueil me prouve que vous l'avez compris."<sup>2</sup> Though a broad consensus remained on the influence that the Catholic Church was still to wield in the public affairs of Quebec, as Roy indicated, this was, in retrospect, the end of an era, one in which the Church had held a position of supreme importance in that province. For two centuries prior to Roy's address, the clergy had often been silent in public, but had striven to influence the course of policy prudently, behind closed doors, and had often complemented government action. The true extent of this kind of interaction between the clergy, policy-makers, and society can only be fully appreciated by considering areas of policy-making that have escaped scholarly attention and in which the Catholic Church was nevertheless active.

The present study addresses the issues of immigration and minority rights in the two decades from the end of the Second World War to Cardinal Roy's speech and, offering them as case studies, applies a policy-oriented framework to a religious subject. The Church's approach to both issues, in Quebec as in Ontario, was conditioned by its relationship to structures of policy formulation and implementation. While at first glance there seems to have been ambiguity in the way the Church operated, the institution did not equivocate on principle or in its approach; rather, the Church proceeded with prudence and discretion, with subdued visibility that led to some uncertainty as to the part it actually played. It is therefore crucial to explore further the Church's relationship to political structures and to the social and ideological context in which the institution evolved. Indeed, the rationale for the Church's "discreet" approach to governance lies only in part in its internal processes; its relationship to government and the perceived Communist menace, which threatened that relationship, were far more significant. In the end, the ideological context of the Cold War did not alter but reinforced the episcopacy's approach to temporal matters.

1 Maurice Roy, "L'Église et l'État du Québec," *Relations*, no. 292 (April 1965), pp. 124-125.

2 *Ibid.*

In this line of research, emphasizing the political significance of the Church from the Rebellions of 1837-1838 to the Quiet Revolution, Richard Arès discusses the “entremêlement des institutions religieuses et des institutions civiles, accompagné du rôle prédominant des clercs.”<sup>3</sup> The Church compensated for the limits and deficiencies of State power until the loss of the “union organique avec l’État,” on account of bureaucratization and secularization, after 1960.<sup>4</sup> Following Arès, historians Jean Hamelin and Nicole Gagnon have presented the Church as a “puissance politique,” highly visible while exerting various forms of hidden influence.<sup>5</sup> A recent turn towards social history, though otherwise valuable, has failed to do justice to these ties. Michael Gauvreau, for instance, depicts the Catholic Church as a loosely constituted, pragmatic, bottom-up organization, such that its institutional significance and power are lost.<sup>6</sup> Its Hierarchy was, in fact, attuned to public governance and managed the structures that defined both lay involvement in “Catholic” concerns and clerical interaction with government. Scholars must, in short, strike a better balance of the political with the social.

All of these efforts point to the value of fully utilizing the tools of administrative and policy studies in dissecting the historical problem of temporal Catholic activities. Mariana Valverde and Paula Maurutto have already opened fruitful avenues for such research. Regarding the nature of nineteenth-century welfare services, Valverde finds a “mixed social economy featuring (a) partial government subsidies to privately operated agencies and (b) government regulation of privately managed services.”<sup>7</sup> Addressing the larger methodological issue, she calls for greater emphasis on administrative mechanisms among scholars of social policy, and thus on the relationship between the political management of public funds and the private, often religious, delivery of public services.<sup>8</sup> Maurutto, on the other hand, has identified Catholic strategies that were “intertwined with state political initiatives” in anti-Communist surveillance during the inter-war period.<sup>9</sup> In national security, as in social services, there were shared interests and shared endeavours, not “two clearly defined, bounded and separate spheres.”<sup>10</sup> Pursuant to this approach, it is here argued that, until 1960, and shortly thereafter, the corporatist model of policy formulation and third-party governance in policy

3 Richard Arès, “L’évolution de l’Église au Canada français de 1940 à 1975. Survivance et déclin d’une chrétienté,” in Fernand Dumont *et al.*, eds., *Idéologies au Canada français 1940-1976, Tome III : Les Partis politiques – L’Église* (Quebec: Presses de l’Université Laval, 1981), p. 270.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283.

5 Jean Hamelin and Nicole Gagnon, *Histoire du catholicisme québécois : le XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, Tome 1 : 1898-1940* (Montreal: Boréal Express, 1984); see also Hamelin, *Histoire du catholicisme québécois : le XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, Tome 2 : De 1940 à nos jours* (Montreal: Boréal Express, 1984). Terence J. Fay, studying the strains imposed upon the Church in a pan-Canadian context, has considered the same “entremêlement” of government and religious institutions. See Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics: Gallicanism, Romanism, and Canadianism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002).

6 Michael Gauvreau, *The Catholic Origins of Quebec’s Quiet Revolution, 1931-1970* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005).

7 Mariana Valverde, “The Mixed Social Economy as a Canadian Tradition,” *Studies in Political Economy*, no. 47 (Summer 1995), pp. 36-37.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 54.

9 Paula Maurutto, “Private Policing and Surveillance of Catholics: Anti-communism in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, 1920-1960,” *Labour/Le Travail*, no. 40 (Fall 1997), pp. 113-114.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 116.

implementation characterized the relationship between the Catholic Church and government in Canada.

### **Corporatism as “Elite Conciliation” and Third-Party Governance**

Philippe Schmitter defines corporatism as “a particular ... arrangement for linking the associationally organized interests of civil society with the decisional structures of the state.”<sup>11</sup> Hierarchical, corporatist associations represent “the interdependent functions of an organic whole” and have “a quasi-legal status and a prescriptive right to speak for their segments of the population. They influence the process of government directly, bypassing the [parliament]. They are agents of authority. They deputize for the state in whole sectors of public life, and they have duties delegated to them that properly belong to the civil service.”<sup>12</sup> Applying the term to Canadian realities, Robert Presthus presents corporatism as “a conception of society in which government delegates many of its functions to private groups, which in turn provide guidance regarding the social and economic legislation required in the modern national state.”<sup>13</sup> This understanding is premised on the existence of associations “whose legitimacy is not open to further question, openly consulting, lobbying and making strong, matter-of-fact representations to the Canadian government.”<sup>14</sup> Until 1965, Gregory Baum states, the Catholic Church was one such vertical association that enjoyed a corporatist relationship to the federal and provincial governments.<sup>15</sup> Canada’s bishops, acting as spokesmen for the faithful, and political leaders belonged to two wholly different spheres of activity in principle, but together they took part in “elite conciliation,” here defined as mutual support and consultation in matters of public policy.

Kees van Kersbergen argues that such collaboration lies at the heart of the Catholic social and political project. Analysing the emergence of “Catholic” parties in Europe, Kersbergen emphasizes the role of the “politics of mediation” in Christian democracy: “the religiously inspired, ideologically condensed and politically practised conviction that conflicts of interest can and must be reconciled politically in order to restore the natural and organic harmony of society.”<sup>16</sup> As a result of the bishops’ privileged, pre-existing relationship to government, denominationally Catholic political parties never emerged in Canada. From the beginning of the British Regime, colonial authorities perceived the clergy to be the natural leaders of the French Canadian people, a conservative force that could

11 Philippe C. Schmitter, “Still the Century of Corporatism?”, *Review of Politics*, vol. 36, no. 1 (January 1974), p. 86. The ideological usage of the term, in connection with the regimes of inter-war Italy and Germany for instance, is not considered in this study; “corporatism” here describes not a statist form of societal organization to which some regimes have historically laid claim but a specific relationship in the system of Canadian policy formulation.

12 Schmitter, “Still the Century of Corporatism?”, pp. 96-97; Roland Huntford, quoted in “Still the Century of Corporatism?”, p. 100.

13 Robert Presthus in V. Seymour Wilson, *Canadian Public Policy and Administration: Theory and Environment* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1981), p. 60.

14 Wilson, *Canadian Public Policy and Administration*, p. 60.

15 Gregory Baum, *Catholics and Canadian Socialism: Political Thought in the Thirties and Forties* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1980), pp. 72-79, 83-86.

16 Kees van Kersbergen, *Social Capitalism: A Study of Christian Democracy and the Welfare State* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 2.

be co-opted in the fulfilment of British designs in exchange for a Catholic *droit de regard* over matters affecting French Canadians, and, later, other Catholic groups. Presthus ties corporatist policy-making to “Tory conceptions of society as a collective organic entity in which cooperation is more common than conflict and group claims are prior to those of the individual.”<sup>17</sup> Rooted in both “Old World” British and Catholic traditions, corporatism was the basis of the natural alliance between Church and State as early as the eighteenth century and maintained into the twentieth.

The Catholic Church also abided by the principle of subsidiarity, which called, first, for the utmost decentralization of public services and, second, for State provision of services only as a last resort, if no private entity, such as the Church, could effectively provide them. From Confederation to the post-war period, the federal and provincial governments identified certain areas of social and economic activity as public concerns, subject to government regulation and oversight but left to the management of religious institutions by virtue of special partnerships. These were manifestations of third-party governance, which provides that groups outside government, very often corporatist associations, become “intimately involved in the implementation, and often the management, of the public’s business.”<sup>18</sup> They are delegated “ministerial duties” and the “exercise of discretion over the use of public authority and the spending of public funds.”<sup>19</sup> In this, Lester Salamon distinguishes “command-and-control” systems, linked to Welfare State bureaucracy, from collaborative systems typical of public-private partnerships.<sup>20</sup> As the example of immigration shows, the administration of Canadian public policy was neither wholly public nor private, but a balance of State leadership and, in this case, Catholic influence and implementation.

### **A Case of Third-Party Governance: The Church and Immigration<sup>21</sup>**

The most notable manifestations of Catholic governance were to be found within the jurisdiction of the Government of Quebec, especially in health care, social services, and education. Less noticeably, Catholic organizations partnered with the federal government in immigration and immigrant integration, complementing

<sup>17</sup> Robert Presthus, *Elite Accommodation in Canadian Politics* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1973), p. 21.

<sup>18</sup> Lester M. Salamon, ed. *The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>21</sup> Canada admitted two million immigrants from 1946 to 1962 in addition to a quarter of a million refugees. British immigration still predominated and Italians and Germans were admitted in high numbers when the Canadian government removed their countries from the “enemy-alien list” in 1947 and 1950 respectively. Yet it is the high admission of refugees from Soviet-occupied countries that distinguishes this period, notably on account of fears of Communist infiltration. See Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 313, 323, 340. See also, for additional information, Paul-André Linteau, “Les grandes tendances de l’immigration au Québec (1945-2005),” *Migrations*, no. 34 (2010), pp. 30-41. An in-depth portrait of the forces that directed immigrant integration in this period may be found in Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006). Iacovetta exposes the limits of post-war liberalism and offers a valuable framework for understanding the process of “Canadianization.” Yet little attention is paid to religious bodies. As the following paragraphs indicate, the Catholic Church was one gatekeeper of immense social and political influence.

the work of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. A fifteen-page report by Auxiliary Bishop Francis Allen of Toronto, commissioned by the Supreme Council on Immigration, a Catholic body, provides some sense of Church-State collaboration in this area.<sup>22</sup>

Responding to papal exhortation, shortly after the Second World War, the national assembly of bishops, the Canadian Catholic Conference, which eventually established its secretariat on Sussex Drive in Ottawa, organized among its members a Committee of Immigration for Canada. Archbishops James McGuigan of Toronto and Paul-Émile Léger of Montreal, whose respective dioceses welcomed most immigrants and refugees to Canada in this period, would sit on this committee.<sup>23</sup> Allen offered praise for the efforts of Léger who, in 1952, took charge of immigration in Montreal in connection with the Rural Settlement Society of the Province of Quebec. The matter was near and dear to Pius XII, as explained in the apostolic constitution *Exsul Familia*, and Léger could not ignore his patron's interest in an issue of such proportions. In December, 1955, Léger, who had been president of the Committee of Immigration, communicated to the priests of his diocese the urgency of addressing the challenges of immigrant integration on the upcoming Feast of the Epiphany.<sup>24</sup> Léger among others organized a dominical collection destined to support displaced persons and local and international immigration services.<sup>25</sup> With lay volunteer organizations the clergy sponsored foreign citizens, provided English night classes for immigrants and refugees, offered them financial support and help finding employment, and arranged for family reunification.<sup>26</sup>

22 Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto [hereafter ARCAT] ALIM07.01 (a), Francis V. Allen, "Report submitted to the Supreme Council on Immigration," 1957. This section is primarily concerned with Church relations with the federal government. Though immigration was and remains, constitutionally, a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments, Premier Maurice Duplessis of Quebec did not establish structures or a legislative framework that would ease the process of immigrant integration in his province. In fact, the government of Quebec remained inactive until 1965, and a provincial department of immigration only came into being in 1968. It then fell upon the Catholic Church to fill the administrative vacuum and support federal action with local initiatives and direct appeals to popular charity. In many ways the Church led the way in the advancement of immigration issues. The only measure put forth by Duplessis, providing public support to Hungarian refugees in 1957, was drafted in response to a request by Cardinal Léger. Duplessis did so on the basis of visceral anti-Communist sentiment, but also to attract Léger's good graces. Martin Pâquet finds, in Church requests for greater state involvement and Premier Jean-Jacques Bertrand's references to *Pacem in Terris*, religious influence over the ultimate intercession of the Quebec government in the field of immigration. See Pâquet, *Vers un Ministère québécois de l'Immigration, 1945-1968*, "Les Groupes ethniques du Canada," no. 23 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1998), pp. 5-6, 8, 11, 15-16.

23 ARCAT ALIM07.01 (a), Allen, Report; ARCAT MGRC38313, Allen to Joseph Ferretto, March 28, 1958.

24 "Le jour de l'Immigration (6 janvier)," *Semaine Religieuse*, vol. 112, no. 52 (December 30, 1953), p. 826; Paul-Émile Léger, "L'Immigration," *Mandements, Lettres pastorales, Circulaires et Autres Documents* [hereafter *MLCD*], *Tome vingt-huitième* (1956), p. 3708. In regard to the holdings of the Archives diocésaines de Montréal, such items as bishops' correspondence and personal notes from the period after 1925, the last year of Archbishop Paul Bruchési's "active period," are not accessible to researchers or to the public at large. Indeed most of these items have yet to be catalogued. For the period following the Second World War, researchers must therefore rely on documents published in these years or turn to the collections of other dioceses.

25 Léger, "L'Immigration," p. 3708.

26 ARCAT ALIM07.01 (a), Allen, "Report"; ARCAT MGDS49.85, McGuigan to Ildebrando Antoniutti, November 20, 1947; ARCAT MGSU17.50, McGuigan to Claude J. Mulvihill, March 18, 1957; ARCAT

In the realm of policy-making, Allen noted the existence of “a government charter, ‘Catholic Immigrant Aid Service,’ which allows us to consolidate the work of the Church among our immigrants.... The structure of such organization is based on the first principle that all activities of the Church in the immigration field are subject to the Hierarchy.”<sup>27</sup> The episcopacy was then directly responsible, as attested by the creation of the Committee of Immigration, for fulfilment of this partnership with the federal government from the top down. Allen wrote of close cooperation between local offices of the Department of Immigration and diocesan authorities, but of more difficult relations in Ottawa because “a case becomes one among thousands at this level and therefore it is more difficult to effect personal consideration.”<sup>28</sup> Here lies the assumption that the bishops ought to have the opportunity to intervene personally on specific questions in immigration—and this is precisely what they did. In 1954, for instance, Cardinal McGuigan asked Minister Jack Pickersgill to reconsider deportation proceedings undertaken against an Italian woman living in Toronto. Four years later, the cardinal wrote to Minister Davie Fulton, a Catholic, so that he would in turn communicate with the minister of Citizenship and Immigration to prevent the upcoming deportation of a Portuguese man, against whom false charges had been brought. Pickersgill suspended the proceedings for a year, while Minister Ellen Fairclough, in the second case, rescinded the order.<sup>29</sup> “Des prêtres et des apôtres laïques,” Léger had told a radio audience, “ont rivalisé de zèle, de dévouement et d’esprit d’initiative pour remplir auprès des Néo-Canadiens un rôle de protection et de direction discrète mais presque toujours efficace.”<sup>30</sup>

The senior leadership of the Church wielded political influence proportional to its efforts, such that Pope Pius XII congratulated “les évêques de l’Amérique,” in July, 1955, for working to amend legislation so as to better support immigrants.<sup>31</sup> The International Catholic Migration Commission was then pressing the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations to study discriminatory barriers in the international movement of peoples.<sup>32</sup> Later that year, in response to a resolution of the Economic and Social Council, the Committee on the Welfare of Immigrants, a Canadian Catholic body, voted to request an amendment to the *Immigration Act* of 1952 that would end the practice of deporting public charges. This resolution landed on the desk of Cardinal McGuigan, enabling him to raise the matter with

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MGSU17.63, J. B. Lanctôt, “Progress Report on programs outlined in 1956 Memorandum concerning a proposal to extend Catholic Immigrant Services to all ethnic groups and the adaptation of the CIAS charter for this purpose,” November 4, 1957; ARCAT MGSU17.75, Mulvihill, “Annual Report 1958.” For greater detail on specific Church initiatives, see Julien Harvey, “L’Église catholique de Montréal et l’accueil des immigrants au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Études d’histoire religieuse*, vol. 59 (1993), pp. 89-103.

27 ARCAT ALIM07.01 (a), Allen, “Report.”

28 *Ibid.*

29 ARCAT MGSU17.70, McGuigan to Davie Fulton, May 23, 1958, and Fairclough to McGuigan, June 3, 1958; ARCAT MGPO06.39, McGuigan to Pickersgill, October 8, 1954.

30 Paul-Émile Léger, “Causerie prononcée au Poste CBF, le 8 janvier 1952, au cours d’une émission consacrée au problème de l’immigration,” *MLCD, Tome vingt-troisième* (1953), p. 945.

31 Raoul Drouin, “Les Immigrants,” *Semaine Religieuse*, vol. 114, no. 27 (July 5, 1955), p. 510.

32 Service des archives de l’Archidiocèse de Sherbrooke [hereafter SAAS] P1026/325.1 (71), Service d’information de la C.C.C., “Texte intégral de l’intervention de la C.I.C.M. demandant à l’ECOSOC d’étudier à fond le problème de l’immigration,” July 15, 1955.

public officials.<sup>33</sup> Yet, though close cooperation between the uppermost religious and political leadership persisted, the role of the Church was increasingly threatened by State bureaucratization.

In connection with the wide admission of Hungarian refugees in 1956-1957, Wallace McCutcheon, president of the Catholic Canadian Welfare Council, asked Pickersgill to clarify the extent of federal immigration services, including sponsorship, financial aid, and medical care.<sup>34</sup> The answer made plain the overlap between Church- and State-provided services. Further expansion of bureaucratic mechanisms would soon undermine religious action and make it expendable. In 1953, Kelley and Trebilcock observe, denominational groups successfully contested a directive of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration "to its overseas offices which sought to curb church participation in immigrant selection in Europe."<sup>35</sup> A limited number of pre-approved religious groups, including Catholic Immigrant Aid Services and the Rural Settlement Society, would retain the power to "not only process and approve sponsored immigrants, but also select non-sponsored immigrants."<sup>36</sup> A new directive, in 1958, recognized churches' involvement in immigration but "removed their privileged position in selecting immigrants."<sup>37</sup> Several years later, a delegation of the Canadian Welfare Council, to which the Committee on the Welfare of Immigrants reported, met with Prime Minister John Diefenbaker and three Cabinet ministers "to negotiate further the limits [which] should be set on the responsibilities of private agencies such as CIS [Catholic Immigrant Services] interested in sponsoring refugees for immigration to Canada."<sup>38</sup> Religious and political leaders again sought to reconcile the charitable concerns of the Church and the manpower needs of the State. Religious involvement in the process of immigration was ultimately diminished, but immigrant integration remained an important area of Catholic activity.

Church institutions did not merely represent Catholic interests in a corporatist sense. The episcopacy also proceeded by moral education, inculcating ostensibly depoliticized Catholic values to shape the action of laypersons. Dominical homilies, the Catholic press, and radio broadcasts were together important vectors in the dissemination, among the faithful, of episcopal exhortation. "Perhaps the outstanding social problem among immigrants in Canada will always be, in certain areas, lack of acceptance in his chosen community," Allen had indicated.

There is some opposition to the movement of immigrants among our Canadian people, especially among the less enlightened members of our communities. To offset this, the Church ... tries to educate our own people in the spirit of Christian charity.... We do try to have the immigrant accepted by the members of our parishes

33 ARCAT MGSU17.36, Lanctôt to McGuigan, October 28, 1955.

34 SAAS P1026/325.1 (71), Pickersgill to McCutcheon, March 25, 1957.

35 Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, p. 338.

36 *Ibid.*

37 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

38 ARCAT MGSU17.82, Lanctôt to McGuigan, February 26, 1960; ARCAT MGSU17.83, Lanctôt to McGuigan, April 8, 1960.



into their activities and to interest our native population in their problems. Our Catholic organizations in Canada are now very active in this field.<sup>39</sup>

Pickersgill's predecessor, Minister Walter Harris, thanked McGuigan for "providing the necessary leadership and assisting the educational program being carried on constantly by the Citizenship Branch of this Department."<sup>40</sup> The episcopacy encouraged the faithful to act in the spirit of Christian charity to ends that often echoed those of the State, but kept for themselves matters of policy.

Roberto Perin's emphasis on the role of Canadian religious institutions as "forceful lobbyists and intermediaries" and on their "privileged position" in the field of immigration highlights the place of these institutions within a corporatist system of governance. The public provision of services by Catholic structures was made possible by "personal and written representations" and close collaboration between public servants and clerical and lay Catholic leaders, as noted above.<sup>41</sup> Catholic action in minority rights, though not based on service provision, would rest on the same vision of Church-State relations.

### **Catholic Responses to Discrimination and Marginalization**

Historians have documented the involvement of Jewish organizations, other ethno-cultural groups, and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in anti-discrimination campaigns, but have paid little attention to the efforts of Catholic leaders. Offering the best consideration of post-war minority rights campaigns in Ontario, Ruth Frager and Carmela Patrias find that Roman Catholics "were noticeable by their absence."<sup>42</sup> Brian Howe has more accurately indicated that "Ontario's major churches initially were reluctant to endorse the idea of fair practices laws, believing instead that education was the proper solution," though the four principal denominations, including the Catholic Church, had endorsed such legislation by 1951.<sup>43</sup> In the same line, Christopher MacLennan, Ross Lambertson, and Dominique Clément have produced remarkable studies of human rights and civil liberties in Canada, yet in all three surveys the Church is absent save for several passing references.<sup>44</sup> This omission is attributable not to the Church's neutrality—indeed it was not neutral—but to conceptual and methodological approaches that fail to grasp fully the Church's "elite" approach.<sup>45</sup>

39 ARCAT ALIM07.01 (a), Allen, "Report."

40 ARCAT MGPO06.31 (a), Harris to McGuigan, September 7, 1951.

41 Roberto Perin, "The Churches and Immigrant Integration in Toronto, 1947-65" in Michael Gauvreau and Ollivier Hubert, eds., *The Churches and Social Order in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), pp. 275-277, 285.

42 Ruth Frager and Carmela Patrias, "'This Is Our Country, These Are Our Rights': Minorities and the Origins of Ontario's Human Rights Campaign," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 82, no. 1 (March 2001), p. 11.

43 Brian Howe, "Human Rights Policy in Ontario: The Tension Between Positive and Negative State Values" (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1988), p. 130.

44 Christopher MacLennan, *Toward the Charter: Canadians and the Demand for a National Bill of Rights, 1929-1960* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003); Ross Lambertson, *Repression and Resistance: Canadian Human Rights Activists, 1930-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Dominique Clément, *Canada's Rights Revolution: Social Movements and Social Change, 1937-82* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008).

45 It is inaccurate to claim that the Catholic Church was absent on this issue, nor should the near-invisibility

Catholic concern for the rights and well-being of minority groups was apparent in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. With the encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*, Pope Pius XI had, before the War, spoken forcefully against the Nazi regime's assaults on human dignity, paralleled by racial laws in Italy.<sup>46</sup> The race hatred of Fascism was as hostile to the Catholic view of the fundamental organic unity of Christian society as the class warfare of Communism. Already, at the end of the War, the Catholic Church opposed the King Government's plan to deport interned Japanese Canadians.<sup>47</sup> In Montreal, where Jews were the third largest denomination, *La Semaine Religieuse* invited Catholics to consider their Jewish neighbours with greater respect.<sup>48</sup> In fact, the Church would soon place the "refutation of prejudice" at the centre of its pursuits in minority rights to ensure that immigrants would face no barriers in housing, employment, or other dimensions of their new lives in Canada.<sup>49</sup>

With the renewed admission of Catholic groups from Europe, immigration stimulated episcopal interest in the abrogation of discrimination. Anticipating *Exsul Familia*, which appeared in 1952, McGuigan considered the challenges of immigration and the responsibilities of the receiving country. The cardinal favoured raising the level of admissions, firmly opposed discriminatory barriers, and called for the proper support of New Canadians on the grounds of social justice. Government action in this direction, he told the faithful, required public openness to ethno-cultural diversity: "it is not for us to hand-pick those whom we wish to have in our country and to draw up a minute list of regulations. Let us recall that Hitler tried that scheme. Rather, let us do all we can to establish the fact that there is a moral unity among mankind irrespective of national origins."<sup>50</sup> The end of discrimination in immigration had to be sustained by protecting the rights of minority groups now living in Canada, in contrast to totalitarian Communist regimes. "[O]ur new Canadians come from countries where the bell of freedom no longer rings," McGuigan explained. "They yearn to hear its human tone once

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of the Church in organized campaigns be taken as indifference to minority rights. The bishops sought to sensitize the faithful and made use of their role in governance, however discreetly, to advance the principles of dignity and equality embedded in Catholic thought. The application of policy models to Catholic work in this and other areas of public concern, insufficiently explored on account of conceptual and methodological boundaries, now presents a better opportunity to grasp Catholic interests and approaches in the temporal realm.

46 SAAS P1026/323.12. For a more complex discussion of the Church's stance on the persecution of Jews, see Frank J. Coppa, "Between Anti-Judaism and Anti-Semitism, Pius XI's Response to the Nazi Persecution of the Jews: Precursor to Pius XII's 'Silence'?", *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 47, no. 1 (Winter 2005), pp. 63-89, and "Between Morality and Diplomacy: The Vatican's 'Silence' During the Holocaust," *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 50, no. 3 (Summer 2008), pp. 541-568.

47 Clément, *Canada's Rights Revolution*, pp. 41-42.

48 Georges Thuot, "Apostolat de l'Intérieur, VI – Les Juifs," *Semaine Religieuse*, vol. 106, no. 7 (February 12, 1947).

49 ARCAT ALIM07.01 (a), Allen, "Report"; Emilien Messier, "Immigration : pensée de l'Église," *L'Action nationale*, vol. 43, no. 5 (May-June 1954), pp. 393-394; Paul-Émile Léger, "Allocution prononcée au Cercle Universitaire à l'occasion de l'inauguration des Amitiés Franco-Néo-Canadiennes, le 17 février 1955," *MLCD, Tome vingt-sixième* (1955), pp. 2753-2761.

50 James C. McGuigan, "Moral, Material Gains In Reception of Exiles – Bell of Freedom Rings in Canada for Displaced," *The Telegram*, September 1, 1951, p. 8.

again, and they are overwhelmed to find that it is possible in this country. Their experience can help us to appreciate and cherish our own rights.”<sup>51</sup>

When, in the following decade, an investigative report revealed the extent of colour segregation in Dresden, Ontario, where African Canadians accounted for 20 per cent of the population, it also became apparent that the only “white” house of worship where the minority was welcome without discrimination was the Catholic church.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, the enunciation of fundamental rights in the papal encyclical *Pacem in Terri*, in 1963, had concrete precedents in Canada and elsewhere from the Second World War forward. Beyond immigration, it was the curtailment of rights and freedoms in Soviet Europe, religious freedom particularly, that gave the Church the ultimate impulse. Henceforth, materialism and oppression would belong to the East just as Christianity and the preservation of human dignity would define the West.<sup>53</sup> The principle was clear, even more so in relation to predominantly Catholic minority groups; if there were any ambiguity, it was in the Church’s manner of addressing social injustice, chiefly because it did not air its grievances in the public square.<sup>54</sup>

One instance is particularly telling. In 1948, the CBC invited Charles Grant, a former prisoner of Nazi Germany, to deliver a series of radio lectures on the treatment of ethnic and religious minorities in Canada. Grant turned to the Archdiocese of Toronto to obtain “material on discrimination ... directed against members of the Catholic faith.”<sup>55</sup> Chancellor Allen replied “His Eminence has no case histories which he could supply for your pruprose [*sic*]. Catholics ... complain less of discrimination against them than of discrimination in favour of members of fraternal organizations from which Catholics are necessarily excluded. Catholics have other complaints of what they consider to be discrimination in regard to school taxes, for example, but presumably these problems would not come within the scope of your discussion.”<sup>56</sup> Allen’s response indicates a misapprehension of minority rights, namely that positive discrimination is, concurrently, negative discrimination. More to the point, Allen’s statement was less than candid, for

51 *Ibid.*

52 Ross Lambertson, “‘The Dresden Story’: Racism, Human Rights, and the Jewish Labour Committee of Canada,” *Labour/Le Travail*, no. 47 (Spring 2001), p. 61.

53 For a comprehensive survey of early Cold-War-era Canada, see Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

54 In Ontario, with the support of the CCF, the Drew government passed the *Racial Discrimination Act* in 1944. Premier Leslie Frost oversaw the adoption of fair employment and accommodations practices legislation in 1951 and 1954 respectively. Efforts in this direction were led by the Association of Civil Liberties, under the guiding hand of Irving Himel, which did not collaborate with the Communist Emergency Committee for Civil Rights. Until 1946, when the social-democratic Montreal Civil Liberties Association came into being, the only rights association in Quebec was a branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union, a Communist organization formed in reaction to the Padlock Law (see below). Neither of the Quebec groups showed interest in ethno-cultural discrimination. The *Ligue des droits de l’homme*, formed in 1963, also privileged civil liberties over egalitarian rights such that, over the course of a generation, no large-scale campaign for minority rights emerged in Quebec, whereas Ontario had led the way. “[B]y the early 1970s,” writes Clément, “Quebec was virtually the only province in Canada with no human rights legislation on the books” (*Canada’s Rights Revolution*, pp. 38-50, 98-101, 103).

55 ARCAT MGSP09.01 (a), Grant to McGuigan, February 4, 1948.

56 ARCAT MGSP09.01 (b), Allen to Grant, February 6, 1948.

McGuigan and his staff had been recently alerted to such cases of prejudice. Faithful Catholics had notified McGuigan of the distribution of anti-Catholic tracts in Montreal; they had asked that public institutions in Toronto be closed to individuals and groups aiming to promote intolerance, citing such an instance; and they had requested that “a Catholic authority” rebut attacks on the Quebec Church that *The Telegram* had lately published.<sup>57</sup> These documents were still in McGuigan’s possession when Grant made an appeal for concrete examples. In the end, the leaflet published as a result of the radio lectures made only one brief mention of Catholics.<sup>58</sup> At last, in or about 1949, the cardinal produced a statement that would be taken and repeated by minority rights activists as the official Catholic position: “We must endeavour to accord to all men of whatever colour or creed equality in the fundamental rights of the human person ... equality in the respect due to man’s dignity ... equality before the law ... equality of rights to employment.”<sup>59</sup> Beyond moral education and discreet political influence, however, efforts in this direction would be left to the activists without the organizing support of the Church.

It is possible to ascribe the bishops’ reluctance to speak publicly on the issue in part to the Charbonneau Affair. On May 1, 1949, Archbishop Joseph Charbonneau of Montreal rose to the pulpit at the church of Notre-Dame and declared his full support for the striking asbestos miners of the dioceses of Quebec City and Sherbrooke. Charbonneau called on the provincial government to humanize the Labour Code and went so far as to speak of an organized conspiracy aiming to crush the province’s working class. Eight months later, the popular archbishop was removed from his episcopal seat and the news of his “resignation,” supposedly on account of ill health, was met with sadness and outrage. Many believed that the archbishop had himself been the victim of a conspiracy, perhaps organized by Premier Maurice Duplessis and conservative elements within the episcopacy. The reasons for the dismissal of Charbonneau are still extremely obscure; many plausible theories have been advanced, none entirely validated.<sup>60</sup> The most striking point here is the connection made in the public mind between the political statement, spoken from the pulpit, and the dismissal. The reason for that connection is clear. It was highly unusual for Catholic authorities to speak so explicitly, in a

- 57 ARCAT MGDA30.19, Pierre-J.-O. Boucher to McGuigan, May 10, 1944; ARCAT MGDA31.18, Vincent Colgan to Robert Saunders, copy, April 25, 1945; ARCAT MGDA32.04 (a), J. L. Alfred Trépanier to McGuigan, January 14, 1946. Some Catholics’ sympathy for the regimes of Germany and Italy and their objections to the Soviet alliance during the war raised the ire of “patriotic” Protestant groups and legitimated lingering anti-Catholic bigotry. With the descent of the Iron Curtain, Catholics’ patriotic credentials now seemed impeccable, but Protestant concerns remained. John Moir contends that “Protestant statements about Catholicism were not so much ‘anti-Catholic’ as they were ‘anti-papal,’ that is, opposed to ‘political Catholicism.’ Almost invariably, political perceptions, not religion, stirred Protestant fears.” See Moir, “Toronto’s Protestants and their Perceptions of their Roman Catholic Neighbours,” in Mark G. McGowan and Brian P. Clarke, eds., *Catholics at the “Gathering Place”*: *Historical Essays on the Archdiocese of Toronto, 1841-1991* (Toronto: Canadian Catholic Historical Association – Dundurn Press, 1993), p. 314.
- 58 ARCAT MGSP09.06, Charles Grant, “Home Again,” leaflet, CBC radio broadcast produced by Ross McLean, 1948 (Toronto, 1949).
- 59 ARCAT MGPO06.25 (c), “A Brief from the Association for Civil Liberties to the Premier of Ontario” (Toronto, Morris Printing, ca. 1950).
- 60 Hamelin, *Histoire du catholicisme québécois (Tome 2)*, pp. 110-116; Lionel Groulx, *Mes Mémoires – Tome IV : Huitième Volume 1950-1967* (Montreal: Editions Fides, 1974), pp. 247-279.

public forum, against government policy. Rather, prelates preferred to exercise pressure in private. They acted as mediators so as to compress social claims and restore the organic unity of society, precisely as Archbishop Roy sought to do during the same strike.<sup>61</sup>

The Charbonneau Affair encouraged the Canadian episcopacy to tread carefully in political debates while deterring them from open activism at the street level. Prelates more likely to address social justice in political terms had in effect been warned, whether or not Charbonneau had really been punished for his politicized plea on behalf of the miners. The event certainly invited caution on McGuigan's part, as his decision to consult with the papal delegate on a related matter indicates.<sup>62</sup> It also proved detrimental to organized labour and minority rights campaigns, whose activists had sought public Catholic support in their efforts. Its negative effect was especially felt as it coincided with a major thrust of the Association for Civil Liberties (ACL), then advocating the enactment of a provincial bill on fair employment practices and a Senate report on human rights and freedoms.<sup>63</sup> Public statements by the clergy could harm the privileged relationship between the episcopacy and their partners in government much as they could harm the Church's future ability to act as a social and societal conciliator. Léger went so far as to refuse, as a general rule, to be photographed with political figures.<sup>64</sup>

As Charbonneau was organizing his exit, Charles Grant made a new, more cautious and perceptive attempt to harness Church influence. He informed Auxiliary Bishop Benjamin Webster of Toronto that the ACL would soon meet with Premier Leslie Frost to "[ask] for legislation to remedy racial and religious discrimination in the fields of (a) employment; (b) housing; (c) public accommodation."<sup>65</sup> "[S]ome way might be arranged," Grant wrote, "for making it known that you approve of the principle of the brief, either by your personal attendance ... or by the reading of a statement in your name."<sup>66</sup> As a further incentive, he explained that Communist groups had not taken part in a recent preparatory meeting and he enclosed a list of groups that supported the efforts of the ACL. Among the delegates were fifteen religious groups and nearly as many labour organizations, as well as Chinese, Japanese, and African Canadian groups and the Canadian Polish Congress. Grant added that Canon Judd of the Church of England would

61 Countless prelates played the same part as Roy in other labour conflicts. For instance, in Cowansville, also located in Quebec's Eastern Townships, the arbitration of the *curé* was decisive in resolving a dispute involving locked-out textile workers and factory management, enabling all parties to circumvent the organizing efforts of Communist leaders in that area. See Andrée Lévesque, "Le Québec et le monde communiste : Cowansville 1931," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 34, no. 2 (September 1980), pp. 171-182; Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics*, pp. 250-251.

62 ARCAT MGFA16.31 (b), McGuigan to J. H. MacDonald, May 16, 1950.

63 ARCAT MGPO06.25 (a), Himel to McGuigan, April 23, 1951.

64 Hamelin, *Histoire du catholicisme québécois (Tome 2)*, p. 141. Similarly, when Duplessis publicly evoked the support of the episcopacy for his proposed reform of social welfare services in Quebec, Bishop Albin Lafortune of Nicolet wrote to the premier to express how displeased ("très mécontent") he was to have his name thus thrown into the realm of political debate. See Robert Rumilly, *Maurice Duplessis et son temps, Tome II (1944-1959)* (Montreal: Editions Fides, 1978).

65 ARCAT MGSP09.04, Grant to B. I. Webster, January 20, 1950.

66 *Ibid.*

be in attendance.<sup>67</sup> The Roman Catholic Church would be conspicuously absent if McGuigan, Allen, and Webster again chose to remain silent.

Irving Himel, executive secretary of the ACL, thanked McGuigan, the following year, for his “invaluable support” and for “encouraging recognition and observance of basic rights and freedoms” when the Archdiocese of Toronto joined a growing consensus on the necessity of fair practices legislation.<sup>68</sup> At the end of the decade, as the ACL prepared to meet with Prime Minister Diefenbaker on the enactment of the Bill of Rights, Himel expressed the hope that the cardinal might send a declaration or personally attend the meeting.<sup>69</sup> Unlike Grant, Himel seems to have understood the “elite” character of Catholic approaches to policy-making. He had, on behalf of his colleagues, expressed the hope “that you [McGuigan] might write the Prime Minister in furtherance of this effort [the enactment of the Senate report], or otherwise support it in any way you deem advisable.”<sup>70</sup> The Church would have the opportunity to exert political pressures, in the interest of Catholic principles, without compromising itself on a public stage. To the cardinal, the editor of the *Canadian Register* wrote, “I do not know what is in the Report of the Senate Committee on Human Rights ... I imagine that the Catholic Secretariate [*sic*] at Ottawa has studied the report of the Senate Committee and will make any representations to the Prime Minister that Catholic interests may require.”<sup>71</sup> McGuigan had access to the highest authorities, as did the permanent office of the Canadian Catholic Conference, which acted as a lobby group for those whose interests coincided with those of the Church.

Elite conciliation did not occur uniformly. Bishops were not interchangeable; personal experience and personality did play a part in Church-State relations. McGuigan was particularly attuned to the needs of minority groups and was widely regarded by rights activists as a friend of their cause. In 1960, nearly a decade after the introduction of the Ontario *Fair Employment Practices Act*, the Ontario Anti-Discrimination Commission called on diocesan authorities, as Grant and Himel had, to obtain input on the Commission’s efforts and have a tract distributed on its behalf in Toronto.<sup>72</sup> Yet, in spite of this acknowledged interest, McGuigan’s public statements were few, which speaks to the discreet influence of the Church Hierarchy. This “elite” approach is quite apparent in the way he and his peers considered Charbonneau’s dismissal in private and in public. To the archbishop of Edmonton, McGuigan wrote that “[t]he whole affair is so filled with mystery ... we know nothing about the reason why the former Archbishop has left Montreal, we had better be careful.”<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, when a resident of Toronto wrote to McGuigan to express his outrage at Charbonneau’s forced exit, the cardinal reiterated the official explanation of ill health and stated that this

67 *Ibid.*

68 ARCAT MGPO06.25 (a), Himel to McGuigan, April 23, 1951.

69 ARCAT MGPO06.74, Himmel to McGuigan, April 16, 1959.

70 ARCAT MGPO06.25 (a), Himmel to McGuigan, April 23, 1951.

71 ARCAT MGPO06.25 (b), Henry Somerville to McGuigan, April 30, 1951.

72 ARCAT MGPO06.86 (a), Louis Fine to John A. O’Mara, September 12, 1960.

73 ARCAT MGFA16.31 (b), McGuigan to MacDonald, May 16, 1950.

departure was not the result of “outside interests.”<sup>74</sup> These two distinct discourses, one private and one public, were mirrored in public affairs, in terms of discreet political conciliation on one hand and depoliticized moral exhortation on the other. This was especially true in Quebec.

The bishops of Quebec had long seen themselves—in spite of increasing social diversity—as spokesmen for a national entity, the protectors of a certain cultural heritage and the guarantors of its survival. Nationalism did not seem so unchristian in a country where Catholicism was so closely identified with a single people, where indeed traditional nationalism assigned to the French of North America a providential mission.<sup>75</sup> Broad minority rights campaigns never emerged in Quebec, but rising immigration brought the issue of social integration and equality to the episcopacy’s attention. The tone was set as early as 1945, when the Canadian Catholic Conference declared, “Les minorités ethniques ont droit à leur culture et à leur langue. L’accès aux ressources économiques ne doit pas leur être restreint.”<sup>76</sup> This declaration, signed by Quebec’s Cardinal Rodrigue Villeneuve, who was Conference president at the time, and peers from across Canada, explained,

Nous souhaitons par-dessus tout voir la paix intérieure régner dans notre cher Canada, une paix faite d’entente et d’estime réciproques entre ... l’élément anglais et l’élément français, une paix faite aussi de bienveillance et de générosité à l’égard de toutes les minorités ethniques et religieuses qu’abrite notre vaste pays. Car ce qui fait la démocratie véritable ... c’est la poursuite sincère du bien commun dans le respect de la dignité et de [la] liberté de la personne humaine.<sup>77</sup>

Far from endorsing parochial forms of ethno-cultural preservation among minority groups or the majority, the Quebec bishops challenged the barriers that prevented minorities full admission into Canadian society. Statements of this kind were recurrent through the following decades. In 1954 and 1955, for instance, Léger devoted major addresses to the faithful to the question of immigrant integration,

<sup>74</sup> ARCAT MGPO06.94 (a-b), Frank Blessman to McGuigan, February 12, 1950, with reply, February 13, 1950.

<sup>75</sup> Though space constraints prevent further discussion of nationalism in Quebec, several points deserve mention. As Gauvreau rightly indicates, “since the late 1930s the church clerical hierarchy, following the lead of the Pope, espoused a more universalist interpretation of Catholicism that tended to overturn the nineteenth-century complementarity between clerical leadership and Quebec nationalism.” Nationalists, Duplessis included, increasingly found themselves, in immigration as in minority rights, in an uncomfortable position relative to Catholic teaching. Yet a demographic decline among French Canadians stimulated interest in immigration and careful integration as ways of sustaining the proportion of French-speaking Catholics within Canada, and some nationalists moved closer to the Catholic position. See Gauvreau, “From Rechristianization to Contestation: Catholic Values and Quebec Society, 1931-1970,” *Church History*, vol. 69, no. 4 (December 2000), p. 827; Michael D. Behiels, “The Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal and the Neo-Canadian Question, 1947-1963,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, vol. 18, no. 2 (1986), pp. 38-64, and *Quebec and the Question of Immigration: From Ethnocentrism to Ethnic Pluralism, 1900-1985*, “Canada’s Ethnic Group Series,” no. 18 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1998).

<sup>76</sup> “Déclaration du Conseil National de l’Épiscopat canadien réuni à Québec les 17 et 18 janvier 1945,” *MLCD, Tome vingtième* (1952), p. 114.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

notably pressing for accrued openness to cultural difference. “Seul le triomphe de la charité,” spoke the new cardinal, “peut assurer la victoire pacifique d’un peuple dont les éléments multiples doivent se fondre dans une unité qui respecte la personne et la liberté.”<sup>78</sup> His predecessor had been similarly concerned.<sup>79</sup>

There is little evidence of elite conciliation between the episcopacy and the Duplessis Government on this issue, but many signs of moral exhortation. This integrative effort was an extension of the Church’s functions in third-party governance, with volunteer laypersons and lower-level clergy advancing a Catholic vision of society and a Catholic mandate in public affairs. Yet, accounting for this popular appeal, it again bears noting that the Church did not politicize its public message or mobilize the flock to exert political influence; the episcopacy kept for itself influence over policy formulation and the direction of policy implementation. When Duplessis proved to be unresponsive to the interests of ethno-cultural minorities, the Church continued to work through its ordinary channels, as an extension of the State.<sup>80</sup> It did not rouse the population in a broad-based public campaign for the codification of human rights. Its traditional commitment to a corporatist form of policy-making is, however, only part of the reason for such reticence to make public statements on specific points of policy in Quebec as in Ontario. The ideological context must also be considered.

### **The Ideological Context as Constraint and Impetus**

While the Catholic Church found its hand in policy-making strengthened by its dedicated anti-Communism, the episcopacy continued to withhold public commitments to various social movements and political campaigns. Third-party governance and elite conciliation were both given an ultimate impulse, though in different ways, by the context of the early Cold War.

The rationale for Catholic hostility to Communism was only partially tied to the latter’s materialism: Communism had class struggle as its premise and revolution as the corollary, in contrast to the ideal posited by the Church, the organic unity of all social groups operating in concert with one another in hierarchical units. The right to own one’s labour and the fruits of that labour, without State intercession, was another point of contention, as was the Catholic principle of subsidiarity. It followed from this principle that the Church had a responsibility, with a

78 Paul-Émile Léger, “Allocution prononcée à Mont-Laurier, à l’occasion de la séance d’ouverture de la 31<sup>e</sup> Session des Semaines Sociales du Canada (Section française), le 23 septembre 1954,” *MLCD, Tome vingt-cinquième* (1954), pp. 2353-2359, and “Allocution prononcée au Cercle Universitaire ... le 17 février 1955,” pp. 2753-2761.

79 “L’unanimité dans l’appréciation et le regret,” *Semaine Religieuse*, vol. 109, no. 8 (February 22, 1950); Harvey, “L’Église catholique de Montréal,” pp. 94-95.

80 Clément, *Canada’s Rights Revolution*, p. 103. Dale Thomson makes a clear case for greater proximity between the episcopacy and Premier Lesage: “Léger had had a correct but hardly cordial relationship with Duplessis; he was ready for close cooperation with the new premier. He proposed a ‘golden rule’: if an initiative by one affected the activities of the other, they would consult beforehand, and if problems arose between them, they would be resolved in private, not in public. Jean Lesage agreed readily.... They agreed to meet regularly to discuss subjects of common interest.” Thomson provides examples of such cooperation at the height of the reform of the education system. Lesage played the leading part in organizing the elaborate ceremonies held at the Legislature on the occasion of Roy’s elevation to the cardinalcy. See Thomson, *Jean Lesage and the Quiet Revolution* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1984), p. 95, 306-307.



government mandate, to support faithful or nominal Catholic immigrants—much as it had a responsibility, borne out of religious conviction and self-interest, to halt Communist influence and infiltration, made more threatening by the rising number of immigrants and refugees from Central and Eastern Europe.

Self-appointed experts on Communist activities recognized that the bulk of New Canadians were in fact fleeing Soviet oppression and were less likely to support the Communist cause than second- and third-generation Canadians.<sup>81</sup> Yet, in the public mind, immigration would still bring subversive elements to Canadian shores, justifying ideological checks for prospective immigrants and refugees from Europe.<sup>82</sup> Far from relying on these checks, Catholic authorities worked to strengthen the newcomers' bond to the Church and to offer the Catholic faith as a shield. Some Hungarian refugees were only nominally Catholic, for instance, but the connection had to be preserved. "No doubt," wrote McGuigan, "there will be some of these people too who are Hungarian communists who hate Russia but who have been so deeply socialized that they do not want to bother about the Church. This is evident already from the Hungarian parish in Toronto itself."<sup>83</sup> In such cases the refugees might be reintegrated by placing them in faithful Catholic groups. Maurutto speaks in this sense of "a pervasive moral and educational campaign aimed at newly arriving immigrants" conducted by the Church.<sup>84</sup> National parishes and social and economic accompaniment would, in addition, preserve ethno-cultural minority communities from Communist influence while providing for their spiritual needs.<sup>85</sup> It is on the issue of minority rights, however, that the influence of the Cold War on Catholic approaches to policy is most apparent.

Allan Kent and Clem Shields of *The Telegram* reported in 1951 that Communists were countering RCMP enquiries into their activities by claiming discrimination and organizing civil liberties defence groups. Such front groups were operating under the umbrella of the League for Democratic Rights.<sup>86</sup> The reporters lamented the effect of Communist infiltration on real grievances: "Now," they wrote, "any legitimate plea in the realm of civil rights is suspect." Social democrats and liberal-minded members of the Civil Liberties Association, concerned about the presence of Communists in their midst, disbanded the organization shortly after the War. The non-Communists formed a new group under the leadership of B. K. Sandwell, "[b]ut the reputable association has been frustrated ever since by the similarity in names and the resulting confusion in the public mind."<sup>87</sup> In a context of supposed

81 ARCAT MGPO08.55, Allan Kent and Clem Shields, "No. 3 – DP's Make Poor Recruits – 'Front' Groups Are Red Backbone" in *Red Menace in Canada* (Toronto: *The Telegram*, 1951).

82 Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, pp. 342-343.

83 ARCAT MGSU17.46 (a-b), Lanctôt to McGuigan, December 17, 1956, with reply, December 17, 1956.

84 Maurutto, "Private Policing and Surveillance," p. 114.

85 Paul-Émile Léger, "Circulaire de Son Eminence ... au Clergé de son Diocèse," *MLCD, Tome vingt-huitième* (1956), p. 4012.

86 ARCAT MGPO08.55, Kent and Shields, "No. 8 – No Opportunity Is Overlooked – 1946 Spy Trials At Last Alerted Canadians To Communist Plans – But Infiltration Efforts Continue In Armed Forces, Civil Service" in *Red Menace in Canada*.

87 *Ibid.*

Communist influence, under the persistent threat of revolutionary materialism, this was reason enough to question organized minority rights campaigns.

The bishops of Quebec may have failed to distinguish the issue of minority rights from the campaign for civil liberties, a struggle that could only be led by those most threatened by the Padlock Law: Communists.<sup>88</sup> Léger echoed Kent and Shields on Communist tactics, which aimed to draw support from minor incidents or public controversies, and discussed the difficult position of the Church: “[Les communistes] attirent ainsi dans leur orbite des gens sincères qui veulent défendre des biens authentiques : liberté, patriotisme, meilleure économie, dignité de vie du travailleur, sécurité sociale. Si les catholiques refusent d’engager la lutte, les communistes auront beau jeu.... D’autre part, si les catholiques agissent, ils risquent d’être considérés comme des partisans de la co-existence.”<sup>89</sup> Léger called for vigorous social, economic, and political action, to be led by enlightened Catholics willing to heed episcopal authority. Such action would occur through Catholic structures and preclude involvement in multi-denominational or non-denominational campaigns, precisely to avoid cooperation with groups with questionable ideological ties. Elite conciliation, rather than involvement in broad-based social and political campaigns, would then remain the method of choice for advancing Catholic values.

The Canadian episcopacy had, in 1943, granted the faithful the right to vote for social democratic parties that were pledged to Christian principles, but many Catholics remained suspicious of the CCF on account of its Protestant roots and the risk of ideological drift to more extreme forms of State socialism.<sup>90</sup> To some, the party posed a threat to property rights, religious freedom, and subsidiarity; to others it offered a means of advancing social justice and infusing government with Christian values. These two conflicting views largely explain the lack of clarity and uniformity among bishops in their response to causes espoused by social democrats, including minority rights campaigns. The affinity between the ACL and the CCF, embodied by Charles Millard, E. B. Jolliffe, F. Andrew Brewin, and David Lewis, who were prominent members of both, was well known. These ties certainly conditioned the bishops’ reaction to the ACL and other activist groups. Duplessis wilfully blurred the lines between social democracy and Communism and persisted in citing the Church’s initial opposition to the CCF, not its stance after 1943. He was thus able to posit the Government of Quebec as the surest partner of the Catholic Church and to reinforce fears of creeping socialism outside the province. There were echoes of this in Ontario, where CCF leader Donald

88 The Padlock Law was so named for the extensive powers delegated to the provincial police, including the right to padlock premises occupied by suspected Communists. The law was passed by the Duplessis government at the urging of the Catholic episcopacy in 1937, following the federal government’s revocation of Section 98 of the Criminal Code. The Supreme Court invalidated the law in 1957.

89 SAAS A7,SA5, Léger to Georges Cabana, February 9, 1956.

90 “Déclaration de l’Episcopat canadien – Communiqué officiel de NN. SS. les évêques du Canada,” *MLCD, Tome vingtième* (1952), pp. 18-19. See Baum, *Catholics and Canadian Socialism*, pp. 128, 140, 143; see also Jeanne R. M. Beck, “Henry Somerville and the Development of Catholic Social Thought in Canada: Somerville’s Role in the Archdiocese of Toronto, 1915-1943” (MA dissertation, McMaster University, 1977).

MacDonald noted the guardedness of Catholic immigrants towards his party and shared his concerns with McGuigan.<sup>91</sup>

Clearly, the political environment of the early Cold War is extremely important in explaining the Church's approach to public affairs. The bishops were already committed to their duty to act as spokesmen for the flock and to the fulfilment of a corporatist, Catholic approach to temporal matters. The path of discreet elite conciliation would now be justified by the dubious allegiances of organizations outside the Church and potentially hostile to Catholic principles. Institutional walls were largely impermeable up to the highest level of Canadian Catholic leadership, where the bishops addressed policy in private discussions or private correspondence with leading decision-makers. Explicit Catholic commitments to groups or campaigns in civil society might corrupt Church activities, implicate it in questionable causes, or, by undermining its credibility, embarrass the government. Here lies the significance of assurances from minority rights activists and social democrats to Catholic leaders that Communists were not welcome in their respective organizations.

### Conclusion

In colonial times, celebrating close relations with British authorities, Bishop Joseph-Octave Plessis expressed the view, in Fernand Ouellet's words, that "[a] Catholic Church that was strong, influential, and faithful to its traditions, free in its movement yet dependent on the state ... would be an incomparable instrument of social and political stability and an obstacle to the rise of troublesome elements."<sup>92</sup> In Plessis's time, the ideological heirs of revolutionary France were the "troublesome elements"; in the twentieth century, that part was played by Communists. In fact, one might have expected to hear the very same words from Cardinal Léger. This position of ultimate power and prestige would soon unravel, however. The Quiet Revolution signalled the arrival of a secular and social-democratic nationalism in Quebec politics. The Pearson Government further extended the federal role in social welfare, crowding out the provision of services by "corporatist associations" in health care, for instance. In the same period, the Second Council of the Vatican led to a complex re-evaluation of Catholic thought, though the Church never abdicated its *droit de regard* over temporal affairs, as revealed by Cardinal Roy's address.

This study, which looks beyond education, health care, and social services, offers important findings for several long-standing historiographical debates. A policy-oriented approach, applied to alternative spheres, suggests that the Catholic Church was not a reactionary, pre-modern institution, but a valued partner of the liberal democratic State and one whose methods of influence were particularly suited to the ideological struggles of the early Cold War. Scholars of immigration and human rights should no longer dismiss Catholic involvement by alluding to the relative invisibility of Catholic leaders. The two case studies presented above

91 ARCAT MGPO08.35, Donald C. MacDonald to McGuigan, March 19, 1957.

92 Fernand Ouellet, *Lower Canada, 1791-1840: Social Change and Nationalism* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980), p. 70.

indicate that the episcopacy wielded power and influence in informal channels, due to its role in third-party governance and its ability to exert moral suasion upon a broad section of the population. Because of the informal nature of contact with political leaders, the true extent of the bishops' influence may never be fully apprehended, but such methodological challenges do not warrant depictions that portray the Church as a decentralized collection of lay organizations or an invisible—and therefore unimportant—participant in policy-making.

The Catholic Church would only offer a theological basis for the defence of human rights in 1963, with Pope John's *Pacem in Terris*. One present-day theologian has pointed to the complementarity of this appeal to universal values on the part of the Church and the latter's position as a "mediating social body" in a corporatist system of governance. It is in the nature of the Catholic Church to pursue, David Matzko McCarthy argues, "the good of society apart from the power of the state."<sup>93</sup> The defence of universal values required that the Church remain associationally tied but external to government. The Canadian Church did come to espouse the language of human rights at the time of the Second World War, inaugurating a period that grounds McCarthy's claim. Yet the emergence of this discourse largely coincided with the withering of corporatist policy-making and third-party governance. The 20-year window examined here was thus exceptional in the type of demands that the Church brought before public institutions according to the type of demand it could make, as a mediating body. In this sense it is especially important to separate the imperatives of the system of governance from the actual demands of Catholic leaders. While promoting universal values rather than seeking to impose its own values or practices, the Church still sought to advance its specific vision of society through its relationship to government. This relationship became one key vehicle, for instance, in the struggle against the perceived Communist threat and in the preservation of Catholic power and influence on a host of social issues.

This study of Catholic approaches to immigration and discrimination, with evidence of elite conciliation across-cultures, also counters Robert Choquette's claim that the Church was "fragmented into a series of ethno-cultural and linguistic lobbies" with "policies tending to balkanization" for a century after 1860.<sup>94</sup> Already, by the end of the Second World War, the Canadian Church had embraced a humanistic conception of society largely based on universal values and tolerance, and had come together, institutionally, through the Canadian Catholic Conference. If McGuigan acted rather independently from his peers in Quebec, his approach and the values undergirding it were largely the same. In the process, they fostered ethno-cultural understanding. Terence Fay argues that, after 1960, "[t]he bishops now played the role of societal goads rather than overlords and cautioned the Quebec majority that they should respect minority groups such as anglophones,

93 David Matzko McCarthy, "Human Rights and Pluralism in Catholic Social Thought," *New Blackfriars*, vol. 90, no. 1025 (January 2009), pp. 73, 84.

94 Robert Choquette, "The Archdiocese of Toronto and its Metropolitan Influence in Ontario" in McGowan and Clarke, eds., *Catholics at the "Gathering Place,"* p. 307.

allophones, and native people.”<sup>95</sup> In truth the evidence presented above supports the notion put forth by Behiels and Gauvreau that a fundamental reappraisal of Catholic approaches to identity, but not policy-making, began on the eve of the Second World War. In an indirect way, this study points to the difficult position into which Canadian Catholicism was thrust, as Quebec neo-nationalism burgeoned and the province’s bishops sought to nurture their relationship to political leaders, who recognized the privileges of the Church but could not reconcile corporatism and secular, bureaucratic nationalism.

Additional studies will likely further emphasize the common part played by political and religious elites in bridging cultural cleavages. In fact, though the third-party powers and privileges of the Church in Ontario were less extensive than those it enjoyed in Quebec, there too the bishops pursued the principle of subsidiarity and worked cautiously, through elite conciliation, to mould public policy. The frequent interaction between the governments of Canada and Ontario, various social movements, and Catholic leaders outside of Quebec—on matters other than education—is but one sign that the policy approaches of the Church in Quebec did not vary widely from a supposed Canadian norm. Differences between bishops and Duplessis on immigration and egalitarian rights and Duplessis’s unheeded attempts to harness the Church as a partisan political tool should, for the same reasons, challenge orthodox liberal representations of post-war Quebec.

95 Fay, *A History of Canadian Catholics*, p. 282.