

for Rusyns, even in their ancestral home. Where should their loyalties lie: With the state that possessed their lands? With their own ethnic group? With the large Ukrainian community, or even the community of Slavic nations? Or with the linguistically and culturally diverse peoples of the Carpathian Basin? For those Rusyns who settled in America, the options were even more numerous, as they could also feel an obligation of loyalty to their new homeland. Furthermore, for these immigrants, religious identity came into question as well. In their homeland they had belonged to the Greek or Eastern Rite Catholic Church. In America they found the Roman Catholic hierarchy at best unsympathetic to the practice of Greek Catholic traditions or, at worst, hostile to the idea of ethnic parishes and the preservation of ancestral cultures. Such circumstances contributed to the abandonment of Catholicism by many Rusyns and their "return" to the orthodox faith, and they led to the emergence of two distinct branches of the Greek Catholic Church in America: the Byzantine Ruthenian and the Ukrainian. But this was only one part of the tortuous evolution of the Rusyns' religious life in the New World.

Magocsi also discusses the Rusyn community's organizational and political evolution, its culture, and attempts at group maintenance. The main theme of these aspects of Rusyn-American life is the continuation of debates over the questions of group loyalty and identity. Of special interest to Canadian readers is chapter 9, which deals with the Rusyn experience in Canada.

Magocsi's book is well written and crafted. It is lavishly produced with numerous illustrations, statistical tables, and maps, as well as detailed appendices offering useful information on the Rusyns' past and present in North America and in the homeland.

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Jeffrey A. Keshen — *Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War*.
Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996. Pp. xvii, 333.

In *Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War*, Jeffrey A. Keshen undertakes a systematic examination of Canada's use of propaganda in the various media during this pivotal event. Most Canadians believe that the war signaled Canada's emergence from colony to nation, itself a propaganda truism that Keshen stands on its head. It was the postwar realization of the mendacity of the propaganda, he argues, that helped Canada to nationhood.

The public accepted the persistent propaganda clichés of imperialist jingoism, nativism, and naiveté. Common belief has it that the Great War provoked a form of totalitarian censorship. Yet Canada's Chief Censor, Lt.-Colonel Ernest J. Chambers, a zealous ex-newspaperman, used persuasion to leash the mainstream press. He saved his scissors to suppress some 253 publications of ethnic and political minorities, whom he feared were fifth columnists or radical leftists.

Spared from seeing graphic pictures of the carnage or from hearing, reading, or

seeing first-hand accounts of the horrific battles (Allied film censorship was so total as to render recording of actual battles almost non-existent), the Canadian public blithely continued to perpetuate romantic notions about combat in which their brave, patriotic, and Christian conquering heroes bore a divinely inspired manliness and selflessness. What remains extraordinary is that typical soldiers largely reiterated these myths in letters and diaries to spare their loved ones anguish.

War was sport by other means, and Keshen reminds the reader that propaganda crowded that “the game” offered great compensation to its players, promising soldiers respect and female adulation. The troops’ own newspapers were among the few voices of dissent, but these were almost exclusively sarcastic safety valves filled with carping about the leaders and black humour to vent frustration. Keshen concludes that Canadian soldiers ultimately widened the postwar breach between participants and outsiders that never closed. Yet why did most troops reinforce idealistic notions during the conflict? The average recruit had not gone beyond Grade 6 and perhaps could not articulate the world in which he was literally mired. That soldier also believed that quiet resolve, duty, honour, and patriotism were his lot. Besides, it would not do to tell one’s family back home about the widespread drunkenness, smoking, swearing, gambling, and whoring that were part of many soldiers’ leaves. One shocking suppressed statistic was that 66,346 soldiers were treated for venereal disease, some 4,000 more than the total who died as a result of the conflict.

Propaganda’s success could also be measured in the public’s willingness to hate the enemy, whose atrocities were legion. In such a context, truth was the first casualty, aided by the impact of Canada’s peripatetic news mogul, Max Aitken. As Canadian *Eye Witness*, he saturated Allied populations with tales of Canada’s pluck and courage on the battlefield, which British censors promptly curbed. Aitken also encouraged visual fabrication of “actuality”, both in photos and on film. By 1916 the Allies were producing newsreels, the majority of which showed faked battle scenes. Most Allied actuality footage was in the form of marching regiments and artillery firing, the newly introduced tank, occasional dead Germans, and plenty of destroyed churches. (Few knew that church steeples were used by Allied soldiers for reconnaissance purposes, hence were fair targets.) Keshen implies that the Canadian public was more interested in seeing the travelling war trophy collection, yet he does not mention that the two-minute newsreel was part of every film show and probably reached a larger audience. One thinks, for example, of the hatred generated in *Victory Loan Trailer 1918*, in which “the merciless Hun” destroys a Canadian military hospital from the air, killing a dutiful nurse and her patients.

Conscription is discussed in the context of propaganda and Ottawa’s torpid adoption of a centralized management and national publicity campaign. Keshen breaks no new ground as he reiterates the well-known scandals as well as the miserly and insensitive approach of Minister of Militia Sam Hughes. If propaganda failed to make much of a difference in recruitment, including in Quebec, the author does not state the real reason for the initial enthusiasm and flood of volunteers for the Great War — the majority of those recruits were British-born. The ebb in recruitment late in 1916 was as much a fact of demographics as it was of casualty lists from the Somme.

Keshen parallels the Australian conscription experience to Canada's. He demonstrates that the Aussies, too, were wedded to imperialist ideology, also romanticizing front-line reports and maintaining a more strict censorship than compliant Canada. Australia sheltered a vulnerable public from grim battlefield truths but ended up losing its conscription referendum, in part, Keshen insists, because it had no identifiable group like French Canadians on which to focus as "slackers".

The author states that Prime Minister Robert Borden acted out of a sincere belief in the necessity of conscription, especially after seeing Canadian casualties while overseas. One wishes that Keshen might have used his facts to break from this traditional interpretation. Borden's popularity had been slipping as casualties grew; he was in real danger of losing the next federal election, and his offer of a coalition government with a cabinet of equal numbers of Tories and Liberals would leave him as prime minister and the deciding vote in any cabinet debate. Keshen musters the evidence to show that the election of 1917, with legislation stacked in favour of the government, was one of Canada's most treacherous political moments in terms of English-French relations. He details the role of pro-conscription propaganda, and the reader realizes the sobering fact that Borden's Union government propaganda was so racist and damaging as to provide anti-federal ammunition to future generations of Quebec nationalists. Yet Keshen's last word is in defence of Borden, leaving this reviewer wishing for a courageous historical revision some 80 years after the fact.

A few caveats: There are insufficient examples of posters to give the reader a sense of the graphic and verbal appeal of the propaganda as one would expect in such a book. Probably cost considerations explain their absence in this otherwise excellent exposition. Keshen errs in his discussion of the National Film Board production, *The Kid Who Couldn't Miss*, a critical attack on war ace Billy Bishop. As a result of the Senate hearing, the Film Board labelled it a docudrama, but refused to withdraw the film as critics had demanded. It remains in circulation as a flawed but early example of how recruitment propaganda was supposed to work on the Canadian public. One wishes, too, that Keshen had explained the origin of the term "Johnny Canuck", which he uses throughout the book to identify the typical Canadian soldier.

When the war was over, the mask of falsehood fell away and Canada began to reject the imperial myth once and for all, realizing that it had been a cruel irony to be treated as colonial inferiors by the arrogant British. As for propaganda, it had earned such a negative grade that the British burned all papers of their propaganda ministry. Fortunately for Jeffrey Keshen, Canada did not. Thus, overall, *Propaganda and Censorship* is a worthy addition to the historiography of the Great War and widens significantly the public's understanding of propaganda and its impact on that event.

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