

A Tocqueville For the North? André Siegfried and Canada

Sean Kennedy

Volume 14, Number 1, 2003

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/010322ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/010322ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

The Canadian Historical Association / La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0847-4478 (print)

1712-6274 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Kennedy, S. (2003). A Tocqueville For the North? André Siegfried and Canada. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, 14(1), 117–136. <https://doi.org/10.7202/010322ar>

Article abstract

This paper argues that André Siegfried's writings on Canada played a critical role in shaping his vision of French national identity. Siegfried's studies of Canada have long been praised for their insight, but recent scholarship has emphasized his role in promoting both anti-Americanism and an exclusionary vision of what it meant to be French during the first half of the twentieth century. For Siegfried, Canada represented a site of managed contestation between British and French culture but also an early example of the deleterious effects of Americanization. His problematic view of French Canada as essentially conservative and unchanging in the face of such challenges reinforced his conviction that France itself should remain true to "traditional" values. The exclusionary implications of his ideas were most evident when Siegfried appeared to accommodate himself to the Vichy regime, but they also persisted after the Second World War.

A Tocqueville For the North? André Siegfried and Canada

SEAN KENNEDY

The Canadian nation, even though it shall have become American in its ways, may yet remain indefinitely a British colony.” Thus begins the closing paragraph to André Siegfried’s influential study *Le Canada: les deux races*, first published in 1906. Siegfried went on to suggest that while this process would mean “a victory for America,” it would also represent a triumph for “English statesmanship.” But, he quickly added, “in this destiny at once so diverse and so tragic, let us take care not to forget the old French civilization which faces the future with a joyous cry of hope.”¹ To a considerable degree these passages encapsulate Siegfried’s preoccupations. These included a focus on the gradual decline of British power accompanied by some admiration for British institutions, an intensifying concern about American influence, and a conviction that there was an enduring French civilization which had to face the challenges of a world in which the ‘Anglo-Saxons’ were increasingly to the fore. It is no accident that these sentiments coalesced in a book about Canada. For while *Les Deux Races* and Siegfried’s subsequent studies of the country have received praise for exhibiting a Tocquevillian prescience as far as Canada itself is concerned, they also need to be read in relation to his broader vision of France’s place in the contemporary world, a vision which a number of scholars have recently decried as essentialist and exclusionary. This paper argues that Siegfried’s ongoing interest in the development of Canada played a sometimes formative, and always significant, role in crystallizing his effort to define what it meant to be French in the twentieth century.

André Siegfried was a scion of the moderate French republican elite, and while he failed to join the country’s political class he went on to exert a major influence in shaping how that elite regarded France’s political culture and the country’s international prospects. Born in 1875, he was the son of Jules Siegfried, a member of the generation of leaders who did so much to consolidate the Third

1 André Siegfried, *Le Canada, les deux races: problèmes politiques contemporains* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1906), trans. as *The Race Question in Canada* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1907); subsequently revised as *The Race Question in Canada* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1966), translated and edited by Frank Underhill, 246-7. To differentiate between the two different books Siegfried wrote on Canada, all subsequent references in the text to the 1906 work will use its subtitle. Page references and quotations are from the English translation.

Republic from the 1870s onwards. The elder Siegfried came from France's liberal Protestant bourgeoisie, a group that heavily influenced the ethos of the new regime. He served in parliament from 1885 until his death in 1922, and melded a commitment to economic and political liberalism with a desire to ensure social order, believing that non-statist reforms would blunt the appeal of socialism. This was an outlook which his son fully shared, but he soon found that he was unable to emulate his father's political career.² Between 1902 and 1910 the younger Siegfried sought election on three occasions to no avail. As he put it, thereafter he would "continue to occupy myself with politics, but in the form of study and observation."³

He did so with growing success. A graduate of the prestigious *École libre des sciences politiques*, which was one of the primary routes to the upper reaches of France's civil service, from 1911 on Siegfried was a full-time professor there. Subsequently he established himself as an authority on French politics, publishing influential studies on electoral geography, regional voting patterns, the significance of religion and what today might be termed national political culture. In addition, Siegfried also became one of France's leading authorities on the English-speaking world. His first book, a study of New Zealand, was published in 1904. More famous were later studies of Great Britain and especially the United States. Indeed, the best-known of all Siegfried's works is his 1927 *Les États-Unis d'aujourd'hui*, which soon sold more than 130,000 copies and was quickly translated into English. Subsequently he ventured even further afield, writing about Latin America and Europe's place in a changing world.⁴

In his lifetime Siegfried was rewarded with various distinctions for his efforts, and after his death in 1959 was regarded as a pioneer in several fields. In 1932 he was elected to the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques* and

-
- 2 For the contribution of liberal Protestantism to the nascent Third Republic, see Philip Nord, *The Republican Moment: Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), esp. 106-7. On Jules Siegfried, see Terry Nicholas Clark, *Prophets and Patrons: The French University and the Emergence of the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 111-6; Sanford Elwitt, *The Third Republic Defended: Bourgeois Reform in France, 1880-1914* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 156-69; and Janet Horne, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France: The Musée Social and the Rise of the Welfare State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 107-20. For Siegfried's recollections about his father, see André Siegfried, *Mes souvenirs de la III^e République: mon père et son temps, Jules Siegfried 1836-1922* (Paris: Éditions du Grand Siècle, 1946).
 - 3 For details on the elections, see Pierre Favre, *Naissances de la science politique en France 1870-1914* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), 260-71; for Siegfried's comment see Jean Pommier, *Notice sur la vie et les travaux d'André Siegfried (1875-1959)* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1961), 7.
 - 4 For a list of Siegfried's books, not including his numerous journal and newspaper articles, see <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/immortels/base/publications>, accessed 22 January 2003.

in 1933 he secured a position at the prestigious Collège de France. In 1944 he was elected to the Académie française, and then presided over the creation of the Fondation national des sciences politiques after the Second World War. He also became a regular contributor to the Parisian daily *Le Figaro* and continued to travel and produce books on a variety of themes, ranging from postwar French politics to studies of South Africa and India to the 1950 work *L'Âme des peuples*, a comparative analysis of national 'temperaments' in Great Britain, France, the United States, Germany and the Soviet Union.⁵ By this time Siegfried's pre-1914 work on French electoral geography had evolved into a sub-discipline, with scholars such as Maurice Duverger refining his early emphasis on the need for tables and graphs to track political opinion.⁶ Siegfried's views on France's international significance, particularly in relation to the United States, also became a touchstone for much subsequent work. Scholars of Franco-American relations concur that he did much to influence the later preoccupations of French intellectuals concerning America, especially with respect to their anxiety about the growing cultural influence of the United States.⁷ In his comparative study of world civilizations, for instance, when examining the USA the famed *Annales* historian Fernand Braudel cited Siegfried repeatedly and approvingly, sharing his view that as civilizations the United States and continental Europe were far apart. Braudel's fellow historian Phillip Ariès also prized what he saw as the breadth of Siegfried's interests and his incisive commentary on foreign cultures, concluding that Siegfried's work was truly in the tradition of Alexis de Tocqueville.⁸

When considering Siegfried's views of Canada it is thus crucial to remember that they form part of a much broader oeuvre. Nevertheless, the country clearly held an enduring interest for him. Beginning in 1898, he visited Canada three times before publishing *Les Deux Races* in 1906. Siegfried returned in 1914, just before the outbreak of the First World War, and published further observations about Canada in a more journalistic form. During the War itself he served as an interpreter, for a time with a Canadian unit. He travelled to the country again in 1919, though most of the subsequent decade was taken up with diplomatic service and writings on Britain and the United States. Then in 1935

5 See Pommier, *André Siegfried*; and Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, ed., *L'Oeuvre scientifique d'André Siegfried* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation des sciences politiques, 1977).

6 Favre, 304-6.

7 See, for example, Richard Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 2; Bernadette Galloux-Fournier, "Un Régard sur l'Amérique: voyageurs français aux États-Unis, 1919-1939," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 37 (1990), 314; David Strauss, *Menace in the West: The Rise of French Anti-Americanism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), 68-70.

8 Fernand Braudel, *Grammaire des civilisations* (Paris: Les Éditions Arthaud, 1987), trans. by Richard Mayne as *A History of Civilizations* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 475, 479, 483-4; Philippe Ariès, *Le Présent quotidien 1955-1966* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), 160-1.

Siegfried made a lengthier trip to Canada, publishing newspaper articles and in 1937 a second book, *Le Canada, puissance internationale*. Following another visit in 1945 he produced further articles, and a revised edition of the latter book in 1947.⁹ Both books, it should be noted, were rapidly translated into English and enjoyed commercial success. And while Siegfried's views on Canada did evolve, his central preoccupations remained consistent. The country's complex relationships with Britain and the United States, its emerging sense of nationhood, and the dynamics of English-French relations were at the heart of his analysis.

Several Canadian scholars have subsequently praised Siegfried's insights. The historian Frank Underhill edited a new translation of *Les Deux Races* in 1965 with the conviction that "[i]f we Canadians had shown the intense interest in ourselves which our American neighbours have shown in themselves ever since the Pilgrim Fathers landed, and if, being interesting to ourselves, we had continuously attracted the interest of inquiring students from other countries, Siegfried's volumes on Canada would have become classics, as Tocqueville's two volumes on democracy in America have become."¹⁰ While not going quite so far, more recent works have also commented favourably on Siegfried's assessment of Canada. Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English laud *Les Deux Races* for providing a "brilliant study of prewar politics," while John Boshier praises him for articulating a "benevolent republican" view of Canada, in contrast to more recent Gaullist machinations.¹¹ The most detailed exploration of Siegfried's views of Canada comes from Gérard Bergeron, who develops a systematic comparison between his observations and those of Tocqueville. Bergeron notes a number of striking parallels. Both men were from families with a Norman, North Atlantic orientation; both shared a liberal outlook; and both were interested in international developments from a European perspective. And while Bergeron concludes that Siegfried's work lacked Tocqueville's analytical depth he clearly regards Siegfried as an insightful, and somewhat neglected, commentator.¹²

While the scholars who take an interest, substantial or passing, in Siegfried's views of Canada have relatively favourable opinions of him, histo-

9 Siegfried's last visit would be in 1955, though he would not publish anything substantial on Canada deriving from it; he outlined the chronology of his visits in a lecture given at Harvard University: Centre d'Histoire de l'Europe du Vingtième Siècle, Archives d'Histoire Contemporaine, Fonds Siegfried [hereafter CHEVS] 5SI 4, dr.1, "Le Canada il y a cinquante ans et aujourd'hui," 14 December 1955.

10 Underhill, *The Race Question in Canada*, 1.

11 Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English, *Canada, 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 41, 47-8; J.F. Boshier, *The Gaullist Attack on Canada, 1967-1997* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 247-8.

12 Gérard Bergeron, *Quand Tocqueville et Siegfried nous observaient* (Sillery: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1990), see the introduction and chapters 6-7.

rians considering other aspects of his career have become decidedly more critical. Some scholars of French perceptions of America suggest that Siegfried was a superficial thinker who was happy to convey racist views of African Americans and other groups to a French audience and promoted anti-Americanism, even though he evinced some admiration for the USA's economic dynamism.¹³ Several historians of French nationalism have recently argued that Siegfried made an important and deleterious contribution to defining Frenchness. Pierre Birnbaum argues that he was obsessed with the defence of Western civilization by the white race and that he held antisemitic views. Gérard Noiriel concurs, asserting that Siegfried's prominence as a writer and educator served to legitimize xenophobia. Zeev Sternhell maintains that Siegfried provides a key example of how racist attitudes had come to permeate the outlook of the ostensibly liberal republican elite during the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁴

These two apparently disparate ways of looking at Siegfried can, in fact, be linked. His writings about Canada played a critical role in crystallizing his increasingly rigid conception of French identity, though their influence was incremental rather than dramatic and needs to be situated in relation to his other works. Gradually, Siegfried articulated a vision of the enduring French 'personality' which had troubling implications. He did so by considering the prospects of French civilization in Canada in relation to British institutions as well as ongoing Americanization, and linking the Quebec experience both implicitly and explicitly to that of France itself.

The first signs of this approach appear in subtle ways in *Les Deux Races*. To be sure, Siegfried did not write the book with the express intent of commenting upon French civilization's global prospects. His chief task, as he described it, was to illustrate the challenges that Canadians encountered in forging a coherent national identity at the dawn of the 20th century. The major problems facing the new nation were "[a]n immemorial struggle between French and English, Catholics and Protestants", and the fact that "an influence is gathering is gathering strength close by ... which may some day become predominant – that of the United States." Yet while the theme of cultural conflict between English and French was one which reached beyond Canada, initially Siegfried seemed disinclined to make too much of it. Interestingly it was his editor,

13 See, for instance, Strauss; Kuisel; and Marie-France Toinet, "The Lawyers' Verdict," in Denis Lacorne, Jacques Rupnik, and Marie-France Toinet, eds., *The Rise and Fall of Anti-Americanism: A Century of French Perception*, trans. Gerald Turner (London: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 189-204.

14 Pierre Birnbaum, "*La France aux Français :*" *histoire des haines nationalistes* (Paris: Seuil, 1993), 145-86; Gérard Noiriel, *Les Origines républicaines de Vichy* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 1999), 254-61; Zeev Sternhell, *Ni droite ni gauche: l'idéologie fasciste en France*, third edition (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2000), 30-43.

Armand Colin, who suggested that the book incorporate the subtitle of *Les Deux Races*, seeing more clearly than its author the centrality of the French-English cultural conflict to the book.¹⁵

It must also be said that Siegfried accepted that historical and institutional evolution had produced a French Canadian society distinct from the former metropole in several respects, suggesting that he was at this time ambivalent about adopting a fixed conception of what it meant to be French. Between contemporary Quebec and France, he observed, there “stretches the Atlantic and the French Revolution.” French Canada had eluded the challenges to the institutions of the ancien régime, most notably the Catholic Church, which had taken place after 1789. This resulted in a state of affairs with which Siegfried was dissatisfied. While he credited the Church with preserving French culture, it had done so only within the context of promoting its own values. The result, in his view, was educational backwardness and intolerance; he was quick to observe that there was no place for a French Protestant such as himself in Quebec society.¹⁶ But in contrast to what he saw as a monolithic vision of French culture promoted by the church, Siegfried was fascinated by the extent to which some French Canadians had embraced British institutions and mores; he believed this was the case with Wilfrid Laurier and Henri Bourassa.

Yet while Siegfried acknowledged some contingent features of French-Canadian identity, this observation co-existed with a belief that the cultural and political gap between French and English Canadians was vast and would persist, and that Quebecers retained fundamentally ‘French’ qualities. Noting the intense politico-cultural clashes over the issue of French language schools in the province of Manitoba and the divisions between French and English Canada regarding the Boer War, Siegfried concluded that “[w]henver a question comes to the front in Canada, involving conflict between the races, the irreconcilable division immediately appears.” To him this demonstrated how, notwithstanding “superficial” internal divisions, “our French-Canadian kinsmen [have] a line of action of their own.”¹⁷

Phrases along the lines such as “our kinsmen” recur throughout Siegfried’s book and there is a temptation to dismiss them as mundane, but this would be an error. Siegfried clearly believed that nearly fifteen decades of separation had not substantially altered a national character which, beyond language itself, illustrated an ongoing affiliation with French civilization. He suggested that it was the Norman origins of Quebec settlers and that region’s Atlantic orientation which explained why French Canadians had adapted to British institutions.

15 Siegfried, *Race Question in Canada*, 14; CHEVS 2SI 16, dr. 5, Armand Colin to Siegfried, 23 January 1906.

16 Siegfried, *Race Question in Canada*, 27, 82, 186.

17 *Ibid.*, 97, 173.

More generally, he insisted that a spiritual, even mystical, connection to the “mother country” remained, despite the profound societal differences between Quebec and France.¹⁸ This conviction soon intensified. In subsequent public lectures given in France Siegfried increasingly stressed his pride in French Canada’s feat of cultural survival, concluding that: “...it is a sign of the extraordinary vitality of our French soul which, defeated, trampled underfoot, and cursed by Destiny, always revives, and from the very milieu of its ruins, cries out in confidence and hope in the future.”¹⁹

Siegfried obviously wished to ensure that French Canada would continue to thrive in the midst of a predominantly Anglo-Saxon civilization. To this end, he believed that while politically French Canadians would remain firmly attached to British institutions, republican France should pursue economic and cultural ties to support “our race.” It was necessary to encourage Quebec to modernize and depart from Catholic traditionalism, since only a more forward-looking society would be assured of survival. Currently, while French Canada was a “more refined, more distinguished, and more perfect” culture, it was “unable to conquer a [British] society which is more worldly, more vulgar, but incontestably better adapted to the needs of a new country.”²⁰ This was because Quebec society was in thrall to the Church but also because the essentially Protestant ethos of English Canada fed powerful anti-Catholic and anti-French reflexes.²¹ Yet Siegfried believed that there were grounds for optimism. In *Les Deux Races* he praised the adaptability of British institutions in preserving liberty for their non-English colonial subjects. He reiterated this sentiment five years later in a collection of essays on North America published by students of the *École libre*. Opining that the British would have the good sense to allow Canada growing autonomy in order to retain it within the empire, he explained that this was why he was a “friend and ... deep admirer of English civilization.”²²

But growing American influence also concerned Siegfried, and here he was less confident about the future. English Canada, he maintained, already displayed a strongly American ethos, albeit within the context of British institutions; for instance, he observed that parliamentary life in Ottawa consisted of “American actors on an English stage.” In Western Canada, geography and immigration patterns ensured that orientation towards the United States was even stronger. And

18 Ibid., 92, 112, 119, 126.

19 See CHEVS 4SI 2, dr. 2, “Conférence sur le Canada,” Havre 23 November 1906, and “Le Canada Français et la Vieille Civilisation Française en Amérique: conférence pour l’Alsace”, January 1910. Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent translations are my own.

20 Siegfried, *Race Question in Canada*, 180-6, 242-3.

21 Ibid., 179.

22 See A. Siegfried, P. F. Roz de Rousiers, de Périgny, and A. Tardieu, *Les Questions actuelles de politique étrangère dans l’Amérique du Nord: conférences organisées par la société des anciens élèves et élèves de l’Ecole libre des sciences politiques* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1911), 55.

while Siegfried conceded that French and English attachment to British institutions was powerful (albeit for different reasons) and believed that annexation was highly unlikely, he surmised that “[t]he danger does not take the form either of an attempt at conquest, a treaty of alliance or a plebiscite. It lies in the imperceptible daily transformation that by a slow steady progress is Americanizing the colony, its men, its investments and its manners.”²³ Though a common language opened English Canada to American influence more immediately, French civilization was also vulnerable, as the experience of Francophone migrants to New England demonstrated: “You may resist British civilization, but American civilization submerges you every time!”²⁴

Interestingly, contemporary Canadian reviewers, though regarding the book as stimulating and perceptive, appear to have been more ambivalent about Siegfried’s conclusions than later historians were. From Quebec there were objections that his criticisms of the Church were excessive. A faculty member at the Université de Laval, for example, appreciated Siegfried’s evident sympathy for French Canadians and his analysis of the political and economic situation in the province, but disagreed with his recommendation that the Church’s intellectual and spiritual influence be lessened, suggesting that French Canadians would have nothing to gain from being exposed to “troubling, poorly defined,” and presumably liberal ideals.²⁵ Conversely, a writer for the *Globe* felt *Les Deux Races* to be “lively and entertaining,” but maintained that Siegfried’s comments about anti-French sentiments among English Canadians were seriously exaggerated. Wrongly predicting that there would be no English translation, the reviewer concluded that “it would be for the benefit of Canada that the circulation of the volume be confined to French readers.”²⁶ William Lawson Grant, a Canadian teaching colonial history at Oxford, was more enthusiastic, writing to Siegfried that *Les Deux Races* was “quite the best which has been written on my country by either Frenchman or Englishman.” But in his otherwise laudatory review of the book for *Historical Publications Relating to Canada* he did imply that some of Siegfried’s pessimism about the future of Canadian identity was misplaced, suggesting that he might have given more credit to “the ideal of a full national life within the British Empire.”²⁷

His personal papers show that Siegfried paid attention to his reviews, but on the eve of the First World War his perceptions and concerns regarding Canada remained much the same. He returned to North America in 1914,

23 Siegfried, *Race Question in Canada*, 137, 187.

24 Ibid., 102.

25 CHEVS 2SI 16, dr. 3, K. Laflamme (Université de Laval) to Siegfried, 16 April 1906. Also, see Bergeron, *Quand Tocqueville et Siegfried nous observaient*, 115.

26 *The Globe* (unsigned), 28 April 1906.

27 CHEVS 2SI 16 dr.3, W.L. Grant to Siegfried, 24 May 1906; W.L. Grant, review of *Le Canada: les deux races*, *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada* 11 (1907), 144-8.

carrying out a wide-ranging tour of the continent, especially the western American states and Canadian provinces. In his view the trends he first traced in *Les Deux Races* had intensified. In a series of letters to his native city's newspaper *Le Petit Havre* subsequently published in book form as *Deux mois en Amérique du Nord* in 1916, Siegfried noted that while a Canadian identity continued to coalesce, it remained precarious. Wilfrid Laurier, one of its ablest exponents, had been defeated in 1911, attacked by French Canadian nationalists and English Canadian imperialists alike. The Canadian economy was booming, but the ingress of American capital and values proceeded swiftly. This was especially noticeable in the West, where economic change had unfolded, in his view, at a reckless pace. Here developments mirrored the economic ethos of the United States, so different from that of Europe: "Following Darwin, in Europe it is normally a need which results in the development of an organ. In America, the organ is created, in the hope, indeed in the certitude, that it will bring about a need."²⁸ But while the American 'model,' whose impact was already so obvious in Canada, might be undesirable in some ways, it was clear to Siegfried that France could scarcely afford to ignore the challenge it posed.

By the First World War, then, Siegfried's vision of Canada was that of a country where a French-speaking civilization had endured in the midst of cultural hostility, partly because of the tenacity of the Church and relatively accommodating British institutions. His writings displayed a recurring tension between the recognition that Quebec had evolved quite differently compared to France and an insistence that a fundamental spiritual unity between the two persisted. In making these points Siegfried drew upon an emergent conception of French identity which he had encountered during his education. Though his work did not follow strict disciplinary conventions – his chair at the *École libre* was in geography – and his ideas had been strongly influenced by his predecessor in that position, Paul Vidal de la Blache. Best known for his 1903 *Tableau de la géographie de la France*, Vidal exemplified the complexity of French thinking about national identity at the turn of the 20th century. Biological racism was a minority trend; more established were the views of Ernest Renan that French nationhood was a matter of will and choice, "a daily plebiscite" in his famous phrase.²⁹ But also influential were the ideas of Vidal, who held to a cultural-territorial vision of Frenchness. Vidal asserted that the French nation was constructed in the sense that it was product of a "myriad of daily interactions, complicated over the centuries by the possibility of new kinds of relations." But he simultaneously held that such processes in due course gave

28 André Siegfried, *Deux mois en Amérique du Nord: à la veille de la Guerre* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1916), 10-12, 17, 28-32, 122-3.

29 Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 107-11.

rise to lasting patterns of settlement and ways of life, in short, an enduring if elusive national “personality.”³⁰

Such a conceptualization implied a determinism at odds with the role that Vidal ostensibly gave to contingency in nation-building. This was an ambivalence that Siegfried’s own work reflected, since he insisted upon the deep affinities between Quebec and France notwithstanding their marked cultural differences and divergent histories. That conviction proved to be significant for his subsequent writing, for *Les Deux Races* represented the first time that he explored French-speaking civilization in depth. In subsequent publications he went further in this direction, with growing emphasis upon an essential French ‘temperament.’ In his 1913 book *Tableau politique de la France de l’Ouest*, subsequently recognized as a pioneering work of French political science, Siegfried concentrated upon regional rather than national ‘character’. But his general conclusions regarding how one might characterize such identities points to his underlying belief that they were narrowly circumscribed. Asking the question “[w]hy ... are some populations docile, others restive, and lastly others impervious to any external action,” Siegfried’s response was that while “the property system, the social structure ... [and] various other circumstances give the beginnings of an answer ... ultimately one reaches it (and is it not an admission of defeat?) through the mystery of ‘ethnic personalities.’”³¹

Just as Siegfried’s comments about the survival of a fundamentally French soul in Canada foreshadowed his later analyses of France itself, his early observations about America displacing Britain as the preeminent Anglo-Saxon influence in Canada developed into a broader, recurring theme in his writing. His first book on the English-speaking world, *La Démocratie en Nouvelle-Zélande*, had suggested that British identity could be just as enduring as that of the French, though it too would have to weather challenges. In New Zealand’s particular case, Siegfried contended, this centred around the issue of Asian immigration.³² But it was in *Les Deux Races* that he first broached the question of Americanization, a process which preoccupied him for much of his subsequent career and evoked an increasingly defensive and rigid formulation of what constituted French civilization.

30 Gérard Noiriel, *The French Melting-Pot: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity*, trans., Geoffroy de Laforcade (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 14-8; Jean-Yves Guiomar, “Vidal de la Blache’s *Geography of France*”, in Pierre Nora, ed., *Realms of Memory*, vol.2: *Traditions*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 187-209; Susan Friedman, *Marc Bloch, Sociology and Geography: Encountering Changing Disciplines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 65-8.

31 André Siegfried, *Tableau politique de la France de l’Ouest*, introduction by Pierre Milza (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1995), 446.

32 André Siegfried, *La Démocratie en Nouvelle-Zélande* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1904), 25, 39-54, 193-204.

Siegfried turned his attention away from Canada for some time following the First World War. While he served as a member of the French diplomatic mission which visited it, Australia and New Zealand in 1919, during the 1920s and early 1930s his writings focussed upon changes within other nations of the English-speaking world in particular and the international system in general. He published two books on the decline of British hegemony during this period: *L'Angleterre d'aujourd'hui* (1924) and *La Crise britannique au XX^e siècle* (1931). Here he analysed the various factors behind Britain's economic troubles at home and waning influence abroad. While these were to a considerable extent the product of domestic troubles, Siegfried also linked them to the dramatic rise of American power, suggesting that the British now risked being reduced to the status of a "brilliant second" to the United States on the world stage.³³

America was now setting the pace for the Western world, and Siegfried was not entirely comfortable with the prospect. After visiting the United States in 1925 he published *Les États-Unis d'aujourd'hui* to considerable acclaim. As one French scholar has recently noted, it was generally perceived as "the most lucid and accurate essay to appear during this period," at a time when America was attracting a good deal of attention from the French.³⁴ This was probably because Siegfried's book avoided the strident condemnatory tone of contemporaries such as George Duhamel in his *Scènes de la vie future*, less delicately translated into English as *America the Menace*. But while Siegfried clearly admired the economic vigour of the United States other features of American society troubled him and he did not consider them worthy of emulation by Europeans. Emphasis upon mass production and consumption in America led to a standardization, indeed levelling, of tastes, and thus a disdain for quality and the "certain rights of the individual" which were so important to France. What was more, the changing ethnic composition of American society meant that it was drifting away from its Anglo-Saxon roots. While he believed that the status of African-Americans would always be problematic, Siegfried was particularly interested in the ramifications of extensive immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, which he felt were largely negative. In his view, even when assimilation did take place, their "Americanism is morally shrunk in comparison with the vigour of the pioneers and is sadly lacking in tradition."³⁵

33 Siegfried, *L'Angleterre d'aujourd'hui, son évolution économique et politique* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1924), trans. by H.H. Hemming as *Post-War Britain: A French Analysis* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1924), esp. 83-7; Siegfried, *La Crise Britannique au XX^e siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1931), trans. by H.H. Hemming and Doris Hemming as *England's Crisis* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1931), 235, 247, 250.

34 Siegfried, *Les États-Unis d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1927), trans. by H.H. Hemming and Doris Hemming as *America Comes of Age: A French Analysis* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1927). For the latter comment, see Galloux-Fournier, "Un régarid sur l'Amérique," 314.

35 Siegfried, *America Comes of Age*, 30, 347.

While America was facing an identity crisis at home, it was also exporting its values at a frenetic pace. Siegfried reiterated this view in various works during the 1930s. In a 1934 study of South America, among his central themes was the contention that the Latin traditions of the continent – which ensured a continuing French influence among its elites – were now being challenged by the materialist American model.³⁶ In his widest-ranging study to date, *La Crise de l'Europe*, published the following year, Siegfried claimed that European world supremacy was now threatened by the “rising tide of colour” in the form of anti-colonial nationalism but also by the growing preponderance of the United States. It was America which had begun the emancipation of non-European nations; now Asians and Africans were broadening this trend. Furthermore, as it continued on its path of hyper-innovation and mass consumption the USA was also distancing itself from European civilization. “Lincoln, however exotic he was, rooted in the prairies, still spoke to our sensibility, but to us Ford is from another planet!”³⁷

Evidently, Siegfried felt that the American model was strongly at odds with the values of what he referred to as the “old continent,” particularly France. To be sure, Europe had to balance between facing the challenge of modernization and remaining true to its humanist values. But if Siegfried intimated what the difficulties were, his proposed solutions were opaque. American-style industry, he maintained, might be necessary to ensure prosperity but it did not suit European mores. In *Les États-Unis d'aujourd'hui* he concluded that “[a]rtisanship, now out of date, has no place in the New World, but with it have disappeared certain conceptions of mankind which we in Europe consider the very basis of civilization. To express his own personality through his creative efforts is the ambition of every Frenchman, but it is incompatible with mass production.”³⁸ Thus, not only did Siegfried deem European values those of France writ large; he was also unsure as to whether France and Europe could in fact adopt aspects of the American model without losing their identities. In a study of French political traditions – *Tableau des partis en France* – published in 1930, he had seemed more convinced than ever that essential French values would resist change. “In a way,” he argued, “France resembles China, where life does not follow any political plan but is attracted to a centre of gravity lying far deeper and [thus] more stable.”³⁹

Clearly, in the face of changing global trends Siegfried’s vision of Frenchness was becoming increasingly defensive and traditionalist in tone. It

36 Siegfried, *Amérique latine* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1934), 22, 30, 155, 169-70.

37 Siegfried, *La Crise de l'Europe* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1935), 52. Also see his “L’Occident et la direction spirituelle du monde,” *La Cause* (November 1932): 5-19.

38 Siegfried, *America Comes of Age*, 349.

39 Siegfried, *Tableau des partis en France* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1930), trans. as *France: A Study in Nationality* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 18.

would not be fair to suggest that he had become anti-modern *tout court*; during this period he developed contacts with Redressement Français, an organization devoted to promoting managed capitalist development, as well as the Centre d'Etudes des Problèmes Humaines, an interdisciplinary think-tank which called for modernization along 'humanist' lines.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, like a number of his contemporaries who had counted themselves as French liberals Siegfried was increasingly anxious about the direction in which the international system was headed, and the place of French civilization in it.⁴¹ In the 1930s Canada became for him a lens through which to explore these concerns in more depth.

Siegfried returned to Canada in 1935 as part of a wider-ranging visit to the North American continent. He first recorded his views in a series of letters, subsequently published in a single volume in 1936. The following year he presented his views on the evolution of the country in a more systematic fashion in *Le Canada, puissance internationale*.⁴² As its title suggests, Siegfried intended his new work to represent a shift in emphasis from his earlier writing on English-French relations, but in fact both the book and the letters which preceded it remained heavily concerned with matters raised in *Les Deux Races* three decades earlier. Siegfried did pay more attention to the salience of geography in shaping the Canadian identity, suggesting that the country's "narrow" zone of settlement led it "to seek a centre of gravity outside her own borders." He also concluded that because of its British heritage and American geography, Canada would become an important mediator.⁴³

But Siegfried also felt that Canadian national identity remained precarious. The French-English conflict continued to seethe; in connection with this issue he cited with approval the French nationalist writer Maurice Barrès's observation that "prayers do not mingle." Despite ongoing industrialization, Siegfried

40 Richard Kuisel, *Ernest Mercier: French Technocrat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 98-9; Andrés Horacio Reggiani, "Alexis Carrel, the Unknown: Eugenics and Population Research under Vichy," *French Historical Studies* 25:2 (2002): 342 n.40; Jackie Clarke, "Engineering a New Order in the 1930s: The Case of Jean Coutrot," *French Historical Studies* 24:1 (2001): 63-86.

41 One example of such an evolution was Joseph Barthélemy, a moderate politician who turned increasingly to the right during the 1930s and eventually accommodated himself to Vichy. For a study of this evolution, see Gilles Martinez, "Joseph Barthélemy et la crise de la démocratie libérale," *Vingtième siècle* 59 (1998): 28-47. The two men were acquaintances, see CHEVS 2SI 22, dr.1, Barthélemy to Siegfried, 14 December 1930, praising him for *Tableau des partis*.

42 Siegfried, *États-Unis-Canada-México: lettres de voyage écrites au Petit Havre juin-décembre 1935* (Le Havre: Éditions du Petit Havre, 1936); *Le Canada, puissance internationale* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1937), trans. as *Canada* by H.H. Hemming and Doris Hemming (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1937). This 1937 work will subsequently be referred in the text as *Puissance Internationale*. All quotations and page references are from the English translation.

43 Siegfried, *Canada*, 27, 294-304. Also see the analysis in Bergeron, *Quand Tocqueville et Siegfried nous observaient*, chapter 7.

insisted that French Canada remained rural, Catholic, and traditional.⁴⁴ For their part English Canadians, though not a bloc in ethnic or religious terms, appeared “to resent the French Canadians with a hostility which is instinctive and congenital. Nothing can be done about it.”⁴⁵ But, as was the case in 1906, it was the influence of the United States over the long term which he believed presented the real problem. Geographically, the essential axis in North America was a north-south one; economically and socially, Canadians were “rivetted” on the USA. While politically neither English nor French Canadians wanted annexation, in the long run the attraction of America might prove irresistible. Siegfried conceded that a Canadian political and cultural identity might cohere and endure, but he felt that this would only happen under favourable circumstances. “To give [Canada] her due,” he observed, “she has achieved her independence, contrary to the dictates of geography itself.”⁴⁶

In Canada itself, Siegfried’s new work generated praise but also some controversy. John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir), the Scottish writer and politician who had become Governor General in 1935, communicated his appreciation of Siegfried’s discussion of French Canadians, concurring that they were “a force of social persistence and stability, and also a barrier of good breeding and tradition against modern vulgarisation.” And while *Le Devoir* felt that Siegfried was still too critical of the church’s role in French Canadian society, even the Archbishop of Quebec lauded Siegfried for his “concern to serve French civilization.”⁴⁷ But the book’s uncertainty about the status of a durable Canadian national identity aroused some criticism. Henri de Lageneste, France’s *chargé d’affaires* in Ottawa, reported to Siegfried that French Canadians in Ottawa felt that he had “insisted too strongly upon Americanization” and had underestimated their success in keeping a ‘French mentality’ intact. Reviewing *Le Canada* in *Queen’s Quarterly*, W.M. Conacher was more acerbic, concluding that “If M. Siegfried has had some difficulty in discerning a Canadian mind one may complain that he has made no allusion to a Canadian soul. That spirit became adult in the great war.” And while he conceded that a substantial number of French Canadians might feel differently, Conacher also criticized Siegfried for over-estimating the extent to which they remained rural and traditional: “[h]e aims at canalizing the whole race, keeping it apart in a vine and fig-tree existence – the simple child of nature.”⁴⁸

44 Siegfried, *Canada*, 256. For an account of the social and economic changes underway in Quebec at this time, see John Dickinson and Brian Young, *A Short History of Quebec* (3rd ed.) (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), chapter 6.

45 Siegfried, *Canada*, 85.

46 *Ibid.*, 275, 35.

47 CHEVS 2SI 23 dr.2, Tweedsmuir to Siegfried, 17 March 1937. On Buchan see Andrew Lowrie, *John Buchan: The Presbyterian Cavalier* (London: Constable, 1995); *Le Devoir*, 27 March 1937; CHEVS 2SI 23 dr.2, Archbishop of Quebec to Siegfried, 8 April 1937.

48 CHEVS 2SI 23 dr.2, Henri de Lageneste to Siegfried, 14 June 1937; W.M. Conacher, “Le Canada, Puissance Internationale,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 44:3 (1937); 359-370, quotations on 369, 362.

Yet while Siegfried's vision of Canada seemed distorted to some, it was in keeping with his broader anxieties about international developments. In particular, Siegfried saw Canada as a site for juxtaposing quintessentially French attributes with the tumult caused by Americanization. During his visit in 1935 he had sharply contrasted the virtues of the French Canadian farmer with the 'American' agricultural methods on the Prairies. "The French Canadian peasant has conserved the qualities of our French peasantry: he works hard and is thrifty, is above all preoccupied with living on the land and raising his family there, without giving himself over to the desire for speculation ... Americans, perhaps, ask too much of the land when they call upon it to enrich them, and to do so quickly. The [French] peasant knows that a family can hope for a livelihood from the land, but that in the long term it is possibly imprudent to expect much more."⁴⁹ In *Le Canada* he elaborated upon these observations, surmising that an excessive desire for profits and high living standards had led to an over-expansion of wheat growing which accounted for the problems encountered by American-oriented farmers in the Canadian West during the Depression:

I cannot refrain from pondering on the contrast between the Western Canadian farmer's superior technique, which commands our admiration, and the need for a wiser attitude towards life and its possibilities. This sort of lesson has been handed down to us in the fables of every age, as part of the wisdom of the nations – but America was inclined at first to turn aside from such wisdom. She liked to think that such platitudes did not apply to a young continent with a future still before it.⁵⁰

But if Siegfried believed that developments in Canadian agriculture showcased the virtues of 'Frenchness' in relation to Americanization, this did not dispel his concerns about the latter's corrosion of national identity. British institutions still generated loyalty in the Dominion but values were shifting: "[f]rom the point of culture and civilization, British influence is certainly present, but it is weak. The atmosphere definitely is American." For French Canadians, too, the ethos of the United States could potentially sap "those reserves of spiritual nourishment which formerly provided their defence."⁵¹ Population movements served to reinforce the projection of American economic and cultural power. Massive emigration to the United States obviously had a negative impact on Canada's maturation. But even immigration to Canada – particularly to the Western provinces – could have problematic results. While emigration from the British Isles served to reinforce connections

49 Siegfried, *États-Unis-Canada-Méxique*, 10-11.

50 Siegfried, *Canada*, 158.

51 *Ibid.*, 234, 77.

to the mother country, the growing number of arrivals from continental Europe had the opposite effect. Siegfried admitted that “[a]ssimilation does take place,” but “as it does in the United States and for the same reasons.” “Former” Germans, Slavs, and others would become “North American, but not inevitably British or Anglo-Saxon.”⁵² Thus polyglot immigration, along with mass production and the consumer society, were all integral facets of Americanization, and for Siegfried no other country’s experience brought these trends into sharper focus than did Canada’s. And while in his eyes Quebec highlighted the virtues of French traditions in opposition to such changes, Siegfried was not complacent that ‘Frenchness’ would survive the impact of American values sufficiently intact.

Through various studies of the wider world in which Canada held a place of importance, Siegfried had, by the late 1930s, articulated a vision of what historian Herman Lebovics refers to as the ‘True France.’ Lebovics argues that from the beginning of the 20th century to the era of the Second World War cultural conservatives fashioned a vision of the French national character which prized traditionalist, rural values and buttressed integral nationalism and hostility to outsiders. What was more, this essentialist vision of Frenchness proved influential far beyond the conservative Catholic milieu in which it was initially generated, going on to influence moderates, liberals, and even some leftists. Finally, Lebovics contends, this vision reached its apotheosis under the Vichy regime of 1940-1944, and there is reason to think that it retained some purchase into the postwar years.⁵³

Siegfried’s itinerary fits Lebovics’s schema in a number of ways. Though he was from an impeccably republican background and insisted upon his adherence to liberal values, in his reading of Canada it is clear that by the 1930s Siegfried viewed the “traditional” values of Quebec rural life as indicative of the essence and virtues of Frenchness. At the same time, the fact that he had not entirely abandoned his belief that the power of the Church in the province was excessive indicated that right-wing Catholic visions of an integral French identity could be reconciled, if somewhat uneasily, with moderate liberalism and Protestantism. Finally, the fact that Siegfried accommodated himself to the authoritarian Vichy regime on the basis of a partially shared vision of ‘True France,’ speaks to the powerful resonance of that ideological construct.

52 Ibid., 118.

53 Herman Lebovics, *True France: The Wars over Cultural Identity, 1900-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). This interpretation has been challenged, with some historians suggesting that progressive impulses remained more influential throughout this period. See Shanny Peer, “Peasants in Paris: Representations of Rural France in the 1937 International Exposition,” in Steven Ungar and Tom Conley, eds., *Identity Papers: Contested Nationhood in Twentieth-Century France* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 19-48.

In fairness, Siegfried had fully supported France's war effort and its allies in 1939-40, praising the British Empire as being "founded upon liberalism" and crucial to the future health of the "white race."⁵⁴ But after France's collapse and the onset of the National Revolution, like many of his colleagues he adopted a position characterized by ambivalence and adjustment to changing circumstances. In some respects, he kept his distance from the new regime, possibly a result of his liberal convictions. He refused a position on Vichy's Conseil National and, according to Pastor Marc Boegner, leader of the Conseil de la fédération protestante, privately expressed reservations about some of the government's policies. In 1942 he reportedly joined a group of businessmen and professionals who were collecting intelligence and transmitting it to the Free French.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, like many of his colleagues, Siegfried had initially adapted to Vichy. He continued to teach and publish, contributed to pro-regime periodicals like *Le Temps* and apparently showed little sympathy for Jewish colleagues who were banned from the classroom. It also appears that he attended some breakfasts hosted by Karl Epting, head of the Institut allemand established in Paris.⁵⁶ Moreover, while Siegfried paid little attention to Canada during the war years he continued to expound the rigid conception of French identity which he had articulated partially in relation to it, one which dovetailed with Vichy's priorities in disturbing ways. In particular, he expressed his views on the need to avoid mass immigration from 'unsuitable' cultures, which the Canadian experience had helped to convince him would lead to the creation of an Americanized society. Writing for *Le Temps* in December 1941, he argued that France should avoid mass immigration, as it "threatened surreptitiously to make of the people something other than it believes itself to be and wants itself to be."⁵⁷ In other wartime publications, such as his *Vue générale sur la Méditerranée* (1943), he went even further in adopting an explicitly racist viewpoint, citing authors such as de Gobineau and stressing the need to preserve Western civilization and the white race.⁵⁸

Such positions did Siegfried's career little harm after the Liberation. Presumably his efforts to keep Vichy at arm's length and his Resistance contacts explain this. His prestige continuously mounted, as evidenced by his election to the Académie française in November 1944 and his participation in

54 Siegfried, *What the British Empire means to Western Civilization*, trans. by George M. Wrong (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1940), 3-4, 16, 26-7.

55 Philippe Boegner, ed., *Carnets du Pasteur Boegner 1940-1945* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 178-179, entry for 7 May 1942; Kuisel, *Ernest Mercier*, 150.

56 See Birnbaum, "France aux Français," 163-176, and Philippe Burrin, *La France à l'heure allemande, 1940-1944* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1995), 313.

57 *Le Temps*, 6/7 December 1941.

58 Birnbaum, "France aux Français," 173.

the French delegation to the San Francisco United Nations conference in 1945. During this return to North America Siegfried visited Canada yet again. He recorded his impressions for *Le Figaro* and subsequently updated his 1937 study.⁵⁹ What these works reveal is that although Siegfried recognized that the country had undergone some major changes, on the whole his views were characterized by continuity. His perception of Canada continued to reinforce a vision of French civilization which, while not articulated as sharply as it had been under Vichy, remained essentialist.

In his postwar writing Siegfried was quick to point out that the Canada he had visited in 1945 was a more powerful and internationally-oriented country than it had been ten years earlier. He lauded its substantial contribution to the war effort both in material and moral terms, noting that the country chose to do so freely and in defence of the highest principles: "I cannot hide my admiration for these Anglo-Saxon peoples, with their attachment to institutions of free discussion, the defence of the rights of the individual, and respect for minorities and dissident opinions."⁶⁰ Canada's economy was booming, and it cut an increasingly impressive figure on the international stage. Siegfried paid particular attention to the development of the Far North, which he predicted would be "a splendid asset in the future." The region provided critical advantages with respect to air routes and civil aviation, and made Canada the "keystone of North American defence." The Dominion had "become one of the nerve-centres of the globe." In a 1946 lecture at the Centre d'études d'affaires étrangères in Paris Siegfried reiterated the latter point, asserting that Canada "belongs to the modern world."⁶¹

That said, Siegfried still maintained that the nation was a fragile construct. He noted that the debate over conscription during the Second World War had greatly strained English-French relations: "[just as] the 1914 war brought similar resentment to a head, the country is making no progress whatever with regard to its racial unity." And while the conflict had demonstrated ongoing loyalty to the Empire on the part of English Canadians, it had also further encouraged a continental orientation. Canadian-American defence cooperation had led to a substantial American presence in Canada. Relations "could not possibly have been more intimate, for they all felt that they were working at a common task, in defence of a common patrimony. From this point of view –

59 Siegfried's articles dealing with Canada were collected and published with his observations of France, Great Britain, and the United States during this time in *France-Angleterre-États-Unis-Canada* (Paris: Éditions Émile-Paul FrPres, 1946); the updated edition of *Canada, puissance internationale* appeared in French in 1947, and was translated by Doris Hemming as *Canada: An International Power* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1949).

60 Siegfried, *France-Angleterre-États-Unis-Canada*, 203.

61 Siegfried, *Canada* (1949 translation), 165-182; CHEVS 5SI 4 dr.1, "Le Canada, hier et aujourd'hui," Centre d'études d'affaires étrangères, 8 March 1946.

materially and morally – England seemed to be much further away than the United States.” More broadly, the potential for Americanization in a cultural as opposed to a strictly political sense, was as great as ever, and the “peril ... for the French Canadians is far more serious than Anglicization.” This was because the latter were still characterized by a collective outlook “which believes in hard work, commends thrift and self-discipline, accepts the notion of large families as a Christian duty, and restricts ambition to sensible proportions. Such thoughtful asceticism is the very negation of Americanism ... [French Canadians] will survive only in so far as they refuse to be Americanized.” In connection with this concern, Siegfried now partly retreated from his long-standing criticisms of Catholic influence: “The church can be criticized for trying to shield the faithful from all external contact, but there can be no doubt that this is one of the essential factors accounting for the survival of their traditions.”⁶²

Notwithstanding the upheavals of the Second World War, then, Siegfried persisted in casting integral French values in opposition to those of America. But while he was anxious about the long-term prospects for French Canada, he also took some comfort in the links which it had with France itself. For in the immediate postwar years, Siegfried expressed grave concern as far as his own country’s situation was concerned. He believed that current trends in France, most notably those favouring greater state intervention for the sake of reconstruction, ran country to the inherent “individualism” of the French. The country was also demographically exhausted and faced the prospect of losing some of its most talented citizens to emigration in search of greater opportunities. Thus France would need immigrants, a prospect which Siegfried accepted more readily than he had in 1941, but not without insisting that people from suitable backgrounds be found and that France’s national identity remain intact.⁶³ It therefore seemed to reassure him that a French-speaking civilization had endured in the midst of an English-speaking continent, and remained spiritually connected to “eternal France.” This boded well for his country’s efforts to re-assert an international presence. Siegfried held to this vision for the remainder of his career, apparently with little modification⁶⁴

The parallels that have sometimes been drawn between André Siegfried and Alexis de Tocqueville can be easily overstated. Siegfried was no Tocqueville in the sense that he articulated an influential political theory derived from

62 Siegfried, *Canada* (1949 translation), 254, 258, 222, 70; *France-Angleterre-États-Unis-Canada*, 239.

63 Ibid., 101-105; Siegfried, “La France et les problèmes de l’immigration et de l’émigration,” *Cahiers du Musée social* 2:3 (1946): 59-75.

64 Siegfried, *France-Angleterre-États-Unis-Canada*, 212, 17-21; CHEVS 5SI 4, dr. 1, “Le Canada il ya cinquante ans et aujourd’hui,” lecture delivered at Harvard University, 14 December 1955.

his observations of the New World. In fairness to Siegfried, he never intended to do so. What he did try to do was situate French civilization in the dramatically changing global system of the 20th century, a project in which his understanding of Canada figured importantly. His early writings on the country crystallized his belief that French civilization enshrined certain fundamental characteristics which could and should resist the disruptions which came in modernity's wake, a modernity incarnated most fully in the United States. For Siegfried, Canada became a proving ground for what he regarded as some of the most salient features of his era: the gradual erosion of British power, the expansion of American influence, and the crisis of French cultural identity. To be sure, Siegfried also wrote simply to inform his readers, whether French or foreign; and judging from the respect – though not universal acclaim – his writings garnered in Canada, his efforts were a success. But his work on Canada is best understood if we relate it to his wider vision of what constituted the 'True France' of the 20th century, and that was a vision increasingly at odds with liberal notions of citizenship, and one which could be reconciled with a repressive, exclusionary nationalism.