

## Urban History Review

# “The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”: Faces of the Enemy in Saskatoon during the Second World War

Brendan Kelly

---

Volume 39, numéro 2, spring 2011

URI : [id.erudit.org/iderudit/1003458ar](http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1003458ar)

DOI : [10.7202/1003458ar](https://doi.org/10.7202/1003458ar)

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

---

Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN 0703-0428 (imprimé)  
1918-5138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

---

Citer cet article

Kelly, B. (2011). “The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”: Faces of the Enemy in Saskatoon during the Second World War. *Urban History Review*, 39(2), 3–16. doi:10.7202/1003458ar

---

### Résumé de l'article

Bien que loin des combats de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, de nombreux citoyens de Saskatoon ont éprouvé l'étrange sensation d'être assiégés. Durant ces années, des résidents apeurés croyaient que la ville était sous la menace d'une succession d'ennemis, y compris les Canadiens d'origine allemande, la Wehrmacht d'Hitler, les Canadiens japonais, les communistes et la section saskatchewanaise de la Fédération du commonwealth coopératif. L'ennemi qui occupait le feu des projecteurs a changé au gré du temps et des vicissitudes de la guerre. À l'été de 1944, les ennemis qui avaient semblé si réels durant les premières années de la guerre avaient presque disparu. Au lendemain du Jour J et des élections provinciales du mois de juin, les résidents de Saskatoon ont progressivement surmonté leur paranoïa de guerre et tourné avec optimisme leur attention vers les besoins plus urgents de la reconstruction nationale.

All Rights Reserved © Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine, 2011

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne. [<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>]

---

**é**rudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche. [www.erudit.org](http://www.erudit.org)

# *“The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”: Faces of the Enemy in Saskatoon during the Second World War*

Brendan Kelly

*Although at a safe remove from combat during the Second World War, many citizens of Saskatoon exhibited a strange sense of embattlement. During these years fearful residents believed the city to be under threat by a succession of enemies, including German Canadians, Hitler’s Wehrmacht, Japanese Canadians, communists, and the provincial Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. Which foe occupied the spotlight shifted with time and the changing fortunes of war. Come the summer of 1944, enemies that had seemed so real during the early years of the war had all but vanished. By D-Day and the June provincial election, Saskatonians had overcome their wartime paranoia and optimistically turned their attention towards the more pressing needs of domestic reconstruction.*

*Bien que loin des combats de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, de nombreux citoyens de Saskatoon ont éprouvé l'étrange sensation d'être assiégés. Durant ces années, des résidents apeurés croyaient que la ville était sous la menace d'une succession d'ennemis, y compris les Canadiens d'origine allemande, la Wehrmacht d'Hitler, les Canadiens japonais, les communistes et la section saskatchewanaise de la Fédération du commonwealth coopératif. L'ennemi qui occupait le feu des projecteurs a changé au gré du temps et des vicissitudes de la guerre. À l'été de 1944, les ennemis qui avaient semblé si réels durant les premières années de la guerre avaient presque disparu. Au lendemain du Jour J et des élections provinciales du mois de juin, les résidents de Saskatoon ont progressivement surmonté leur paranoïa de guerre et tourné avec optimisme leur attention vers les besoins plus urgents de la reconstruction nationale.*

In July 1942 Bernard Newman, an author touring North America for the British Ministry of Information, issued a warning to the Canadian Club of Saskatoon that could have been lifted from a John Buchan spy novel, or one of his own thrillers: “The ordinary man, so ordinary that you would not look at him twice, sitting in a lounge reading a newspaper, is the most dangerous type of spy.” He went on to say, “Undoubtedly you have a German spy in this city, or in the district, to gather information on agriculture and any other matters of interest he overhears.”<sup>1</sup> These words would have instilled fear in members of his audience who throughout the Second World War believed Saskatoon was vulnerable to the “enemy.” This enemy was protean, identified at different times as German Canadians, Hitler’s Wehrmacht, Japanese Canadians, communists, and finally the provincial Co-operative Commonwealth Federation.

Just as the enemy was constantly changing, so too were the rationales for fighting it, including exaggerated security concerns, propaganda, ethnic prejudice, and political expediency. By studying the succession of “enemy” targets in Saskatoon between 1939 and 1944, this article contributes to the fledgling study of the urban home front in Canada.<sup>2</sup>

Compared to other urban centres during the war, Saskatoon was in some ways anomalous. Thousands of kilometres from the actual conflict, this city of 43,000 was insulated from catastrophic events such as the London Blitz and the siege of Leningrad. The Saskatoon Light Infantry sailed for Britain in December 1939, but it did not see action until July 1943 in Sicily. It is true that there were military training facilities and aviation schools in and around the city. The exhibition grounds, for example, had been commandeered by the army, and a mere thirty-five kilometres to the south the Dundurn Military Camp, first used in 1928, sprang into life. Also, Harvard and Avro Anson planes roared through the skies from the two air bases located in Saskatoon as part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Nevertheless, Saskatoon’s experience of the war was more limited than that of many other Canadian urban centres. Landlocked Saskatchewan was hardly in the crosshairs of the Axis powers. Saskatoon was not Halifax, the western hub in the Battle of the Atlantic, nor Vancouver, whose citizens felt vulnerable to attack after Pearl Harbor. What’s more, with the province’s only major war contract awarded to Regina (for the production of anti-tank gun carriages in the old General Motors plant), Saskatoon seemed inconsequential to the war effort. The Canadian arsenals were located in the urban centres of Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia. Granted, the rationing of food, petrol, and clothing brought the war home, but to Saskatonians inured to privation during the Great Depression there was more continuity here than anomaly. Yet it is precisely Saskatoon’s relative detachment from the war that makes its suspicion of Germans, Japanese, communists, and socialists interesting. Mistrust of such groups was not unique in Canada, but in the absence of the major stimuli of war found in other urban centres, Saskatoon exhibited a surprisingly intense fear of the enemy “other.”

## *Saskatoon Confronts the German Enemy*

With war in Europe imminent, Saskatoon began to look warily at its 2,100 citizens of German origin.<sup>3</sup> This suspicion was fuelled largely by the local activities of the Deutscher Bund Canada, a pro-Nazi organization designed to convert German Canadians to the ideals of National Socialism. The *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, the city’s only newspaper,

## *“The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”*

excited fear by printing translations of pro-Nazi harangues found in the Bund's Winnipeg-based organ, *Deutsche Zeitung für Canada*. The response in Saskatoon was alarm. Alderman Walter Caswell, in an 8 April 1939 speech to veterans to mark the anniversary of Vimy Ridge, declared, “It is high time we should let them [pro-Nazis] know that the war veterans are still above the ground and active.” Himself a veteran who had fought at the Somme, Caswell could not resist adding, “You can't maintain democracy by any weak-kneed policy.” If three million Germans in the Sudetenland could create a minority problem for Czechoslovakia, a country of fifteen million, then surely Saskatchewan's 165,000 Germans were a threat in a province of one million.<sup>4</sup> Caswell was not the only one concerned about subversive elements in the city and its environs. In June 1939 twenty-nine different clubs in Saskatoon petitioned the federal minister of justice, Ernest Lapointe, to curb Nazi activity wherever it might appear.<sup>5</sup> In Regina, too, articles such as those provocatively entitled “Enemies Within” and “Anti Nazi Cry Continues in Prairie Canada” were common in the *Leader-Post*.<sup>6</sup> Saskatchewan had proportionately more Germans than any other province in Canada, a fact not lost on Saskatonians and their counterparts in the Queen City.<sup>7</sup>

While the fears inspired by the Deutscher Bund Canada are understandable in the charged international atmosphere of the late 1930s, its numbers and influence were greatly exaggerated. Saskatoon, an alleged Bund “stronghold,” had only forty-one registered members, fewer than 2 per cent of the city's German population.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, as historian Jonathan Wagner notes, the Bund's pro-Nazi rants had actually alienated the majority of German Canadians, most of whom had long ceased to identify with a distant *Vaterland*.<sup>9</sup> In short, German Canadians were only rarely Nazis. Yet such distinctions are more obvious today than they were in 1939, when accurate information about any Nazi threat on the prairies was scarce and sensational predictions were common. One event in particular created a stir. On 13 April 1939, five days after his speech to the veterans on the subject of Saskatchewan's German “problem,” Caswell received an envelope in the mail containing a .22 rifle cartridge and a note threatening his family if he ever spoke out again against pro-Nazi activities in the province. The message, as reprinted in the *Star-Phoenix*, was a blatant attempt to instil fear:

The German population is more united than you think and will stand together if necessary. The rest of the population of Sask. is broken up and is composed of a motley illiterate group of “Bohunks” who are not interested in British tradition. The West is, and is becoming more “Balkanised” all the time and Britains [sic] rule is coming to an end. If war comes you English pigs can be assured that there will be plenty of German activity in the West and you English will have to support Britain yourself because you will get no help from your “Bohunk” friends. If you open your mouth in the press again remember someone in your family will meet their end.

Carl

Heil Hitler!<sup>10</sup>

This letter briefly dominated the local news and even gained notoriety outside of the province, but no one was able to ascertain if it was a hoax.<sup>11</sup> Whether fabricated or real, the ominous warning from the mysterious “Carl” made it clear that once the real war began, life in Saskatoon would not be dull.

In the aftermath of Germany's invasion of Poland, talk of the Nazi threat to Saskatoon became muted. Behind the scenes, civic leaders quietly assessed which areas of the city were vulnerable. Replying to an enquiry about security made on 6 September 1939 from City Commissioner Andrew Leslie, the city engineer recommended that the pumping plant receive added protection. The superintendent of the Saskatoon Municipal Railway, for his part, said that while the Broadway Bridge was a vulnerable target, “anything short of an examination of each vehicle and pedestrian crossing” was pointless, and even this step would have to resemble “a Customs’ inspection to be effective.” City streetcars were another area of concern: with many soldiers in uniform riding the rails, a “saboteur disguised as a British soldier” could easily avoid detection. Despite these colourful scenarios, civic officials did little more than install a few more lights and hire a night watchman at the pumping station.<sup>12</sup> Saskatonians were generally unperturbed about enemy threats during the first eight months of the war, the city's somnolence mirroring that of Europe, where the absence of major military action led to the eerie “Phoney War.” One Saskatonian, however, sensed that this peace was fragile. On 11 September, Dr. W. E. Schuman, the president of the German-Canadian Club Concordia of Saskatoon, announced the suspension of the club's activities and forwarded the following declaration of loyalty to the *Star-Phoenix*:

We, the assembled members of the executive of the German-Canadian Club Concordia of Saskatoon, unanimously declare that we profoundly lament the state of war which now exists between Canada and Germany, and we, on behalf of ourselves and all other members of the club, renew solemnly our declaration of loyalty to Canada and King George the Sixth. We ask all Canadian citizens of German descent to fulfill conscientiously their duty to Canada, their adopted country, and we are satisfied that they will do this to the utmost of their ability. We also appeal to all Canadian citizens of non-German descent to co-operate with us whole-heartedly during these grave times in our endeavor to present a united front for King and country. God Save The King!<sup>13</sup>

Schuman's statement was clearly designed to deflect the hostility towards German Canadians that the war would make inevitable.

In the spring of 1940 the uneasy peace in Western Europe was shattered. At a loss to explain the Wehrmacht's alarmingly quick defeat of Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, some analysts speculated that a “fifth column” might be to blame.<sup>14</sup> In 1956 the Dutch historian Louis De Jong showed that this fear was unfounded, despite the preternatural powers ascribed to Nazi spies and saboteurs, not only in the defeated countries, but also in England, the United States, Central and South America, the Balkans, and the Soviet Union.<sup>15</sup> More recently, Francis MacDonnell has documented how a similar dread of “Insidious Foes” pervaded the United States in this period.<sup>16</sup> As President Franklin Roosevelt warned Americans on 26 May 1940, “Today's threat to our national security is not a matter of military weapons alone. We know of new methods of attack. The Trojan Horse. The Fifth Column that betrays a nation unprepared for treachery. Spies, saboteurs and traitors are the actors in this new strategy.”<sup>17</sup> Nor was Canada immune to the fifth-column scare. Robert H. Keyserlingk has described the widespread fear of “agents within the gates” and the

## *“The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”*

letters, speeches, and mass petitions Canadians used to pressure the government into preventing fifth-column work.<sup>18</sup>

In the spring of 1940 Saskatoon experienced in microcosm the North American paranoia about Hitler's fifth column. The direst predictions were made by citizens who had already come face to face with the enemy: the veterans. The Canadian Legion's demand in late March that Saskatoon merchants stop selling "Nazi goods" and that consumers instead "Buy British" was innocuous, but by April and May urban life had become more xenophobic.<sup>19</sup> After naturalizing about fifteen aliens, District Court judge J. F. Bryant tried to assure his critics that no Germans had been granted citizenship in the last two or three months; but, as one suspicious veteran retorted, what about the other five months of the war.<sup>20</sup> Stating that "the time for pussyfooting is past," various groups of veterans by mid-May passed resolutions protesting the release of fascist sympathizers interned under the Defence of Canada Regulations, demanding the confiscation of all firearms and ammunition from citizens of enemy origin (whether naturalized or not), opposing giving war contracts to persons of foreign birth, and calling for the establishment of a home-defence unit to root out fifth columnists.<sup>21</sup> The Protestant chaplain-in-chief of Canada's armed forces, speaking in Saskatoon, even called for a ban on tourists coming to Canada. "How [else] will we keep out those who would do us harm?" he asked.<sup>22</sup> On 18 June the city commissioner reminded municipal departments that, in hiring new employees, "only those who are British subjects should be considered"—an order that anticipated the Legion's demand on 8 July to be informed whether any unnaturalized enemy aliens were on the city payroll.<sup>23</sup>

Wild stories began to circulate, one of the more ludicrous being that a local girl had been forced to stand on the chesterfield in her home and shout, "Heil Hitler!"<sup>24</sup> The veterans who warned Saskatonians of a fifth-column threat also fed the rumour-mill throughout that tense spring. Citing the destruction that befell Holland and Norway, for example, the Canadian Corps Association warned that "thousands" of pro-Nazis were in Saskatoon, disguising themselves as respectable citizens and biding their time for "*der Tag*."<sup>25</sup> For his part, the secretary of the Saskatoon branch of the Canadian Legion made the incendiary remark that a fifth-column force of "50 determined men, armed with sub-machine guns, could seize any of our Western cities. These 50 men could quickly recruit a much larger force from the subversive elements, including Communists and radicals of all kinds." Hitler's minions were awaiting his signal. "This command," F. M. Bastin added, "will be given when Great Britain is under terrific attack and when the announcement that the three Prairie Provinces have revolted to Hitler will be most demoralizing."<sup>26</sup> Even the government in Regina was jittery. Premier William Patterson warned Jimmy Gardiner, his predecessor and the federal minister of agriculture, to be on guard for Germans. One Liberal worker in Regina summed up the mood in June 1940: "Every member of the Government is going goofy right now."<sup>27</sup>

Saskatoon's fear of the "enemy within" during the spring of 1940 recalled the city's reaction twenty-five years before, during the Great War. Local historians Stan Hanson and Don Kerr recount how after the German gas attacks at Ypres on 22 and 24 April 1915 and the sinking of the *Lusitania* on 7 May, anti-German feeling ran high in the city. Alien workers at the Hoeschen-Wentzler brewery, it was said, had hosted a

supper to celebrate the torpedoing of the luxury liner; Saskatoon mayor F. E. Harrison called for all Germans and Austrians to be rounded up and put to work under guard; finally, suspicious noises emanating from the old Arctic Ice building on Nineteenth Street led some nervous people to suspect that Germans were secretly drilling there.<sup>28</sup> In short, bold attacks by Germany in both the Great War and the Second World War inspired a paranoid fear that the enemy was active in Saskatoon. Such fears were more potent in 1940. Gas attacks and the sinking of the *Lusitania* may have produced an emotional backlash in Saskatoon in that the "Hun" had rejected "civilized" warfare, but Nazi gains in Western Europe were far more unsettling in demonstrating the Wehrmacht's military prowess. Trench warfare had become an anachronism in the face of the German blitzkrieg, and Western Europe's swift capitulation was evidence of new weapons in the enemy's arsenal, one of which, it was suspected, was this nefarious "fifth column."

Another difference between 1915 and 1940 was the activities of the Deutscher Bund Canada during the 1930s, which were taken as "proof" of German-Canadian disloyalty. In late May 1940, as the Nazis continued their march across Western Europe (with alleged fifth-column aid), the Canadian Legion urged the *Star-Phoenix* to resurrect old stories of pro-Nazi activity in the city. On 25 May the newspaper obliged, reprinting a summary of a four-year-old article on the 1936 German-Day celebration, which had featured the Nazi salute, the singing of the "Horst Wessel Lied" (the song of the Nazi party), and an impassioned address by prominent Bund leader Bernhard Bott. Nevertheless, the article reveals more camaraderie than treachery on that occasion. Speakers included Alderman Carl Niderost (of German ancestry) and Chief of Police George M. Donald; there was nothing seditious about Bott's speech, which urged the audience to be good British subjects and Canadian citizens. The report also noted that only "a small number among the 1,500 persons present raised their arms in the Nazi salute and sang the song," and the ceremony ended with a chorus of "God Save the King."<sup>29</sup>

Two days later, on 27 May, again at the request of the Legion, the paper reprinted an article from 1938 describing a speech by a Saskatoon woman of Austrian descent lauding Germany's *Anschluss* with Austria. Readers were reminded that Frau Spiller's "eyes shone [and] her face gleamed as she told of witnessing the fall of democracy in Austria." The audience's tepid response to Frau Spiller's "Heil Hitler!" and the comments by the chairman, that those assembled were British citizens loyal to the Crown, were downplayed in the article. The *Star-Phoenix* account of the speech mentioned the woman's first name, Greta, only once, electing instead to draw attention to her German heritage by repeatedly calling her "Frau Spiller."<sup>30</sup>

Although there had been these isolated instances of pro-Nazi activity in Saskatoon before the war, they were "news" only in 1940 at the insistence of local veterans. Jeremiah Sylvester Woodward, the newspaper's editor, had himself served in the Great War. The publicity garnered by the fifth-column scare notwithstanding, archival records reveal that only one alleged Nazi sympathizer from the city was interned under the Defence of Canada Regulations.<sup>31</sup> Saskatoon's secure position mirrored that of the country as a whole, where no act of sabotage by enemy agents was uncovered during the war.



## *“The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”*

The challenge of catching a fifth columnist red-handed did not discourage the redoubtable G. W. Parker, the city relief officer. In addition to distributing welfare, Parker was also the divisional intelligence officer in Saskatoon for the Saskatchewan Veterans Civil Security Corps (SVCSC), a civilian security agency formed in June 1940 by veterans of the Great War to guard against fifth columnists. Even before, Parker had vigilantly monitored the activities of his foreign clients, accusing some of them in May 1940 of drunken celebration and of insolence when news of Nazi victories in Holland and Belgium broke. With the outbreak of war, Parker claimed, German and Austrian relief recipients had become Polish and Scandinavian overnight.<sup>32</sup> As an intelligence officer for the SVCSC, Parker became bolder. He reduced the relief quota of an unnaturalized Austrian whom he suspected of receiving assistance from pro-Nazi quarters, for example—an injustice that gave rise to an anonymous complaint to Mayor Niderost. Assuming the protester to be a Nazi sympathizer, Parker demanded to know that person's identity. When Niderost refused, Parker challenged the mayor: “If I demand that information as an intelligence officer of the Veterans' Security Corps are you still going to refuse?”<sup>33</sup> But Niderost was not intimidated. This exchange represents a reversal of a similar situation during the Great War: in 1915 it was the mayor, F. E. Harrison, who censured the aliens on the city's relief roll.<sup>34</sup>

Parker's recklessness eventually got him in trouble. In October 1940 he accused one quarter of his relief recipients of Central European origin of sending part of their financial assistance abroad: “There should be two scales of relief, one for Central Europeans and one for ‘white people.’”<sup>35</sup> This outrageous statement was openly attacked in the House of Commons by two western Canadian parliamentarians.<sup>36</sup> The Canadian Corps Association defended Parker, pointing out that during the Great War he had won the Military Cross, the Victory Medal, and the General Service Medal. The group also argued ingenuously that Parker's reference to “white people” denoted their “heart or mind,” not their skin or nationality.<sup>37</sup> It is difficult to know which statement is the more preposterous: Parker's initial proposal or the veterans' “clarification.” The bizarre conduct of the Saskatoon relief office during the Second World War is not surprising. In 1932 the Civic Relief Board had forced recipients to sign a form promising to repay any money received and to allow officials to enter their homes at any moment of the day, to ensure that they were truly in need and not hiding luxury items.<sup>38</sup> That Parker displayed such nativism is also unremarkable. From the day he assumed the position of Saskatoon relief officer in 1933, Parker had exhibited acute xenophobia.<sup>39</sup>

Despite rumours about fifth columns in Saskatoon in 1940, no overt anti-German acts occurred. Yet a spike during the war in the number of German Saskatonians anglicizing their names is suggestive: *Schellenberg*, for instance, became *Shelly*, *Schmidt* became *Smith*, and *Wennesheimer* became *Wenn*.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the census reveals that the number of Saskatonians declaring German ethnic origin dropped from about 3,000 in 1936 to 2,100 in 1941. The population of all other ethnic groups remained stable, except, suspiciously, for the Dutch, who more than doubled in numbers from 700 to 1,530. From these data one can conjecture that Germans were hiding their identity—a ruse that historian John Herd Thompson notes occurred during the Great War.<sup>41</sup>

Another hint of the potential for hostility toward Germans was that on two separate occasions in May 1940 Chief of Police George M. Donald tried to quell fifth-column hysteria by publicly rebuking scandal-mongers.<sup>42</sup> And in June, at least one letter writer to the *Star-Phoenix*, taking the pen name “Glory-Stricken,” expressed dismay at the climate of mistrust fostered by the veterans:

Mr. Hitler, if he reads the news of veterans' activities, must be snickering to himself. How better to dissipate Canada's effectiveness as an enemy than to stir up problems within her? . . . Whether the so-called ‘fifth column’ or the war veterans stir up that dissension does not interest Mr. Hitler. So long as we have a minority problem in Canada is all that matters to him. But perhaps I am wrong. Maybe my family should have taught me to distrust everyone whose ancestry was not English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish. Perhaps they should have taught me to hate every foreign-born man, woman and child in Canada, as some of the war veterans would suggest, and base my estimation of British idealism upon that hate.<sup>43</sup>

But not all the veterans were xenophobic. As Sam Turner, the secretary for the Army and Navy Veterans Association, wrote eleven days before the above letter appeared, “Hearsay is being carried altogether too far and is resulting in grave injustices which are cruelly hurting some of our oldest and most loyal citizens.”<sup>44</sup> Regrettably, the dearth of information on groups of ex-servicemen in the city makes it hard to locate other “Sam Turners.” The best, if flawed, source on the war in Saskatoon remains the *Star-Phoenix*, even though it was all too ready to provide a platform for panic-prone veterans.

Although Saskatoon experienced no anti-German violence during the war, Regina did. For two straight evenings in May 1940 concerns over subversive activity led to riots in the East End. Roughly one hundred civilians and soldiers raided various premises, including the Austrian Kitchen restaurant, the German-Canadian Club, the Ukrainian-Labour Farmer Temple, Fiesel's Poolroom, and Fuhrman's Butcher Shop. Property damage after the first evening of rioting was estimated at \$5,000. A rumour that Nazi sympathizers were planning to celebrate Hitler's victory in Holland seems to have sparked the violence.<sup>45</sup> In explaining the absence of similar violence in Saskatoon, it is important to keep in mind Regina's larger German community: 7,400 (about 13 per cent of the population) to Saskatoon's 2,100 (about 5 per cent of the population). Moreover, Regina's Germans had their own newspaper, *Der Courier und Der Herold*, and were identified in the public mind with the city's East End (“Germantown”), both of which drew attention to them as a possible threat. Saskatoon's Germans, by contrast, were much less conspicuous.

The rural/urban dynamic in Saskatchewan offers another reason that Saskatoon's fear of fifth columnists was expressed chiefly in words, not action. While an urban setting would seem to offer saboteurs hiding places, it is clear that any Nazi threat existed—if one ever did—in rural areas. According to the 1941 census, 99,392 (about 76 per cent) of the province's German population of 130,258 lived in the countryside.<sup>46</sup> This statistic explains in part why the Saskatchewan Veterans Civil Security Corps—and its counterpart in Alberta, the Veterans Volunteer Reserve—were formed in 1940. As the SVCSC's bulletin declared, the corps “brings comfort and assurance to our people in isolated areas, especially where Anglo Saxon settlers are in the minority.”<sup>47</sup>

## *“The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”*

The concentration of German settlers outside the major urban centres also explains why many of the rumours circulating in Saskatoon focused on rural areas. In May and June 1940, for instance, there was talk of Nazis drilling in a field near Tisdale (211 km northeast), of a soldier hospitalized in Watrous (117 km to the southeast) whose legs had been broken by a Nazi assailant, of the telephone exchange in a village north of St. Walburg (263 km northwest) being run by pro-Nazis, and, closer to home, of intimidation of Canadian soldiers by the German settlers in the Dundurn area.<sup>48</sup> As late as August 1942, even the colour of barns was fodder for speculation. In a letter to the *Star-Phoenix*, one patriotic lady from Plato (190 km southwest) reported hearing painters at her house say that Germans in the province liked to paint their barns white with green roofs. Was this colour combination a coded message to the German Luftwaffe not to bomb, she asked? Or a sign to Nazi invaders of a safe haven?<sup>49</sup>

Arguably the most controversial “fifth-column” reaction in Saskatoon during the war was provoked by an incident in Drake, a community 137 km to the southeast with a large number of German-speaking Mennonites. In the winter of 1941 news reached Saskatoon that a group of men had invaded the night class of a local German-English Bible school suspected of disseminating Nazi propaganda. They unlawfully ejected the students, marched the teacher (who was from Rosthern) to the railway station and as his train pulled out, sang “O Canada” on the platform.<sup>50</sup> When Saskatonian Nelson Chappel, in a letter to the *Star-Phoenix* entitled “Where Was Justice?,” dared to suggest that such actions marked “the introduction of mob rule into Canada in a form usually associated with the Nazi movement,” he was swiftly denounced by veterans’ groups.<sup>51</sup> An excerpt from one ex-serviceman’s letter conveys how earnestly some citizens believed in the threat posed by German Canadians: “Yes, Mr. Chappel, the Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates. They thrive and prosper because of a too-tolerant tolerance on our part. It shall be the watchword of the Canadians Corps Association to turn the spotlight of public disapproval on them long enough and strong enough which will scorch them into oblivion.”<sup>52</sup>

In 1941, talk about fifth columns in Saskatoon—and in Canada generally—began to abate. Invoking the Defence of Canada Regulations, the federal government had interned 1,200 citizens (about half of whom were German) by the end of 1940, a measure that greatly allayed fears about insidious Axis agents.<sup>53</sup> In a development that would have been unthinkable in the spring of 1940, by 1942 in Saskatoon the term *fifth column* became something of a joke: the ever-present prairie scourge of grasshoppers was described as a fifth column, while an enterprising group of dentists declared “bad teeth and unhealthy mouths” to be another kind of hidden invader.<sup>54</sup> Because of the scarcity of hard evidence, the perception of the Nazi enemy *within* Saskatoon was gradually replaced by that of the Nazi enemy *without*. Disabused of their earlier fifth-column fears, Saskatonians entertained a new one between 1941 and 1942: that Hitler had designs on their city.

Fantastic as a Nazi attack on Saskatoon seems today, historian Jeffrey A. Keshen notes that tremendous advances in air power in the 1930s had lessened Canada’s sense of being at a safe distance from Europe’s wars. In 1931 G. R. Howsam, a future air vice-marshal, had evoked a chilling image of aircraft carriers launching fleets of bombers on

major Canadian cities. In Parliament, Conservative MP Tommy Church remarked excitedly that enemy planes could “be upon us before you could say ‘O Canada.’”<sup>55</sup> That said, there is no evidence that Saskatonians during the war felt especially targeted by the Luftwaffe. Nor was their federal government particularly anxious about the safety of the prairies: following the declaration of war against Japan in December 1941, Canada’s coasts were designated Category A (“most vulnerable” to an air strike), while other areas, with the notable exception of Ontario west of Toronto and the prairies, were Category B (under “definite risk” of an air strike).<sup>56</sup> What’s more, while the German military seemed invincible until its defeat at Stalingrad in February 1943, Hermann Goering’s failure to defeat the Royal Air Force in the Battle of Britain, not to mention Germany’s preparations for the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, made the idea of attacking North America highly implausible.

These military facts might prompt one to ask why, from time to time, officials in Saskatoon raised the spectre of a Nazi strike. The answer is simple: home-front morale. While the Great War became bloody for Canada as early as 1915, the Second World War led to a curious situation in which the Canadian army, aside from its ill-fated defence of Hong Kong in December 1941 and the disastrous raid on Dieppe in August 1942, stayed inactive and in England until the Sicilian campaign of July 1943. For most Canadian soldiers—the air force and navy were a different matter—the “Phoney War” arguably lasted until the summer of 1943. Unable to picture the Saskatoon Light Infantry or any other Canadian soldiers liberating Europe from Nazi oppression, Saskatonians substituted a vision of their own dear city on the receiving end of the Wehrmacht’s hammer. To citizens disturbed by the army’s inaction against the Axis, talk of enemy bombers over Saskatchewan became a useful propaganda tool. Like Franklin Roosevelt, who in May 1941, in an attempt to lead his country away from isolationism, warned Americans that the Nazis would stop at nothing “to strangle the United States and the Dominion of Canada,” so Saskatoon’s leaders, in order to keep citizens involved in the war effort, conjured up a Nazi threat to the home front.<sup>57</sup>

The most extreme device used to make the Nazi enemy seem real to the people of Saskatoon between 1941 and 1942 were mock invasions and the publication of a Nazi edition of the *Star-Phoenix*. The urban setting was ideal for these ploys not simply because 43,000 citizens were concentrated in one place—in a province where 67 per cent of the people lived in the countryside—but also because of the changed nature of warfare in 1939. As the noted military historian John Keegan argues, on both its eastern and western fronts the Great War had been a rural conflict.<sup>58</sup> By contrast, the development of air power and new combined-arms tactics by the Second World War made urban centres a primary target, as witnessed by the destruction of Europe’s cities. Between 1914 and 1918 any Saskatonians seeking an experience of trench warfare might have dug themselves into the flat countryside around their city. By 1941 and 1942, however, it was the urban environment that provided the best means of experiencing modern warfare, if only vicariously.<sup>59</sup>

Unlike the fifth-column scare in the spring of 1940, when some veterans in Saskatoon had tried to divide the city along ethnic lines, the mood in Saskatoon during the mock invasions was almost ebullient. The city at large was united in the thrill of being “attacked” by the Axis powers.

*"The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates"*



In the staged invasion of September 1941, for example, youngsters ran excitedly from door to door warning people to shut off their lights, crying that there was a war on and that enemy bombers flew overhead. In the Nutana district these zealous young officers made the shocking discovery of a man who refused to extinguish his lights. Suspicious that the recalcitrant was a fifth columnist using his house lights to guide enemy "raiders" in the air, a group of boys advanced on the man's residence. The front door swung open and the offender emerged to fire on them with his revolver—loaded with blanks.<sup>60</sup> The urban setting was a playground for adults as much as for children. During the "invasion," thousands of Saskatonians flooded the streets as soldiers blocked bridgeheads, dispatched engineers to seize the riverbank power plant, and installed machine guns with a 400-yard radius at the Cenotaph. Local radio station CFQC, broadcasting from the two-way radio of a police patrol car cruising the streets, gave listeners in their blacked out homes a blow-by-blow account of the invasion.<sup>61</sup>

During Saskatoon's other mock invasion, in October 1942, the urban environment was used to even greater effect. Perched atop the Bessborough hotel, army, navy, and air force officers watched as planes from nearby No. 4 Service Flying Training School flew overhead to signal the start of the attack. As the "enemy" marched on the city, fighting broke out in and around some of Saskatoon's most recognizable buildings: several downtown banks, the offices of the *Star-Phoenix*, the Hudson's Bay Company and T. Eaton Company stores, as well as City Hall. (The defence here was particularly fierce as civic employees took to the roof to hurl bags

packed with flour and salt on the invaders.) Twenty-eight officers and 346 soldiers from Dundurn military camp arrived across Saskatoon's bridges to launch a counterattack against the 350 Nazi invaders. After heavy fighting in the streets, some of it hand-to-hand, the enemy was disarmed. Much to the amusement of the crowds, the erstwhile invaders goose-stepped up the street with arms raised in the Nazi salute, shouting "Heil."<sup>62</sup> Rising to the occasion, the *Star-Phoenix* published a sensationalist Nazi edition of the newspaper entitled *Deutsche Zeitung fuer Saskatoon*. A photo of Hitler—"Unser Fuehrer!"—adorned the front page, along with announcements of major changes to former staples of city life. German was now the official language and the only one permitted. The Public Library was closed. Churches in the city, regardless of denomination, were forced to accept Hitler as their new spiritual leader. The Bessborough, Saskatoon's distinctive chateau-style hotel, was renamed the "Hotel Himmler." A curfew ran from 9:30 p.m. to 7 a.m. While every house in Saskatoon was to billet five German soldiers, residents west of Victoria Avenue in Nutana, the site of the city's original settlement, were ordered to vacate their homes completely by 6 a.m. the next morning. To cap this all off, the flag of "Greater Germany" was raised over City Hall as "SS Elite Guards" and the "Gestapo" took over.<sup>63</sup> In a curious mixture of the humorous and the macabre, the Nazi edition of the *Star-Phoenix* and the mock invasions were the closest most Saskatonians came to the enemy.

Saskatoon's mock invasions were not unique. Toronto and Red Deer staged similar "invasions," and Sydney, Halifax, Saint John, Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa-Hull, Kingston, Vancouver, Esquimalt-Victoria, New Westminster, and Prince Rupert all conducted mandatory blackout drills by late 1941.<sup>64</sup> Still, the exuberance with which the Nazi takeover was simulated in Saskatoon was remarkable in an urban centre that was designated neither Category A nor B at risk of enemy bombardment. In reality the play-acting was a successful propaganda ploy. It was no accident that Hitler "bombed" Saskatoon during Victory Loan campaigns. The Nazi *Star-Phoenix* underlined the message in bold letters: "Buy Victory Bonds for Victory, So This Can't Happen Here." The message was similar to a national Victory Loan advertisement in March 1942, which pictured a group of smiling children under the sign "For Sale" and claimed that Canada's youth would be "doomed to a life of slavery and moral degradation" if the Axis were victorious.<sup>65</sup> After the fractious fifth-column controversies during the early stages of the war, the focus in Saskatoon had returned to the real enemy, Hitler. Fighting *der Fuehrer* rather than each other produced a more harmonious urban home front.

***Saskatoon Confronts the Japanese Enemy***

Although Germans—whether as potential fifth columnists or the imagined Wehrmacht of the staged invasions—were the main "enemy" in wartime Saskatoon, the Japanese did not escape suspicion. Whereas over two thousand Germans resided in the city, only eleven citizens of Japanese origin did so. Indeed, by January 1942 just one hundred individuals had registered as Japanese in Saskatchewan as a whole.<sup>66</sup> But in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor (7 December 1941), and of the federal order twelve weeks later to remove all citizens of Japanese ancestry from coastal areas, Saskatonians, like British Columbians, began to exaggerate the threat posed by this new enemy. On 2 March 1942, Saskatoon City Council received a poster and letter from the Immediate Action Committee of the Victoria Canadian Legion, "News Flashes



## *“The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”*

after We Are Dead.” It pictured a menacing Japanese face overlooking British Columbia’s coastal cities. The poster, which was also distributed nationally, mentioned the possibility of a Japanese fifth column using radios to communicate with the Imperial Army, sabotaging power stations and starting forest fires to provide a smokescreen for an enemy landing. The Immediate Action Committee’s demand was simple: “Intern east of the Rocky Mountains all Japanese, men, women and children, wheresoever born, whether Japanese nationals or Canadian naturalized.” Saskatoon City Council was urged to use its “great influence” towards the realization of this goal.<sup>67</sup> Instead, Aldermen Frederick Cronkite and Seymour Bushe recommended that the letter be filed, a motion that was carried.

Saskatoon City Council’s action brought it only a three-month respite from the thorny issue of what to do with British Columbia’s Japanese population. Transported to the primitive conditions of BC’s detention camps 100 miles away from the coast, to sugar beet farms in Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario, and to road camps in BC and Ontario, some Japanese families soon asked permission to move to Saskatoon. The city confronted its first Oriental “danger” when in June 1942 Mayor Stephen N. MacEachern received a letter from Vancouver businessman Taira Yasunaka asking permission to bring his wife and daughter to the city. Yasunaka’s application file contained letters from his United Church minister (the prominent *Issei* Rev. K. Shimizu) and from his lawyer attesting to his good character and loyalty, as well as a promise that the self-supporting Yasunaka family would not be a financial burden on the city of Saskatoon.<sup>68</sup> A few days later the mayor received a letter from George Tamaki, who had attended the University of Saskatchewan in 1939–40 as an exchange student from Dalhousie, asking that his two brothers be permitted to complete their Grade 12 studies in Saskatoon.<sup>69</sup> Finally, on 8 July, Saskatoon received a request from S. Otsuki, at the time a resident of Manitoba, to continue his studies at the University of Saskatchewan. Within less than a month, six Japanese Canadians had expressed an interest in residing in Saskatoon.<sup>70</sup>

The city’s mayor and aldermen treated the requests cautiously. On 19 June they sought advice from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Vancouver, which in turn consulted the British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC), the agency charged with removing the Japanese from the coast. So long as there was no “strong objection” from city officials, the BCSC recommended, it was prepared to issue the necessary permits for the Japanese to come to Saskatoon.<sup>71</sup> The mayor next sought counsel from the federal Department of Labour. Echoing the BCSC, Minister Humphrey Mitchell replied that cities had to be consulted on a case-by-case basis, as “there is very little purpose to be gained in sending Japanese families to any place where there will be active resentment exercised against them on arrival.”<sup>72</sup> Prior to receiving this response, the still indecisive MacEachern wrote his counterparts in Calgary, Edmonton, and Winnipeg: “I would like to know if your City has received similar applications and if so how you have disposed of them.”<sup>73</sup> Mayor John Queen of Winnipeg responded that unless an application came directly from the BCSC, it would receive no consideration. Calgary forwarded an excerpt from the April 1942 report of its city commissioners: “If these people are not to be permitted to live on the Pacific coast, we fail to see why they should be allowed to come to Calgary.” The response of Mayor John W. Fry of Edmonton is the most

interesting of all: in April and May the Alberta capital had authorized roughly twenty-five Japanese to move to the city, but in June, citing a housing shortage, Edmonton refused to accept further applications.<sup>74</sup>

Having heard from the BCSC, the federal government, and three prairie cities, Saskatoon’s aldermen still took until 27 July to render their verdict on the Japanese Canadians. An excerpt from the *Star-Phoenix* suggests their motive: “Like a youngster holding a match close to a giant firecracker, City Council this week toyed with the question of admitting Pacific Coast Japanese to the city, and wondered what the explosion would be like if they said okay.”<sup>75</sup>

Given the visceral reaction the Japanese question provoked in Saskatoonians, the “giant firecracker” was indeed a threat to reckon with. On 6 July 1942 the *Star-Phoenix* published the opinions of a handful of rank-and-file citizens on the matter. Although several respondents appeared willing to accept some Japanese Canadians, most of them objected. That the Japanese were loyal British subjects mattered little to a local druggist, who suggested that they be kept out of the city and under close guard. Economic considerations influenced the decision of a Saskatoon barber who remarked that everywhere they went, the Japanese could be counted upon to lower wages. Their reluctance to intermarry with other Canadians further underlined their foreignness. The most hostile statement of all came from a café owner: “They should be put in concentration camps as the Canadian boys in Hong Kong are placed. We should treat the Japanese here the same way the Japanese treat their Canadian prisoners of war.”<sup>76</sup> The distinction between being Japanese in the Imperial Army and being Japanese in Canada was clearly lost. On 27 July, the date City Council had set to make its decision on the matter, the Fraternal and Protective Association of Saskatoon entered the fray with a petition purporting to bear 2,500 names. The petition did not mince words:

We: The undersigned Citizens and Ratepayers of the City of Saskatoon, protest against the proposal of any Japanese making their domicile within our City, for the following reasons:

- 1st. That they would naturally have a tendency to uphold the Country of their origin, which is at present an enemy country.
- 2nd. That it is well known that their standard of living is below that of the Canadian people.
- 3rd. Providing the proposal is enacted, it may mean the influx of a larger number of families of the same nationality.

W. O. Hunt, who presented the petition to City Hall, claimed that many more signatures could have been obtained since “99%” of all citizens canvassed had been “anxious to sign.” Unremarkably, especially given the acrimonious relationship between China and Japan following the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, Hunt noted, “All the local Chinese signed and they should know their Japs.”<sup>77</sup>

Nor was the Fraternal and Protective Association the only local body to take its anti-Japanese case directly to Saskatoon City Council. Wartime antipathy to the enemy abroad prompted the secretary of the Ladies’ Auxiliary to the Navy League to remind the aldermen, “So many of our boys are in close contact with the enemy that we feel the sight of them would be most repugnant to us.” The Canadian Legion called for the placing of all Japanese males in “Work Concentration Camps” and



## *“The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”*

declared its support for the deportation from Canada at the war's end of all those of Japanese origin. In a bizarre submission, the Princess Mary Lodge stressed the insanity of welcoming “Japanese (who by the way are killing our own boys in Europe & who would be enjoying the comfort of a free country) into our city for education.” The Daughters of England lent its voice to the rising chorus, noting that “as a body of true British women” they were opposed to educating any Japanese Canadians when “our own boys have had to give up their education.” Sabotage by one's Japanese neighbours seemed a real possibility, as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers pointed out in its letter to City Hall: “It is not necessary to draw your attention to the fact, that Saskatoon and vicinity encircle large training depots for both our Air Force and Army and include one of the largest railway marshalling yards west of the Great Lakes.” Letters to City Council were also submitted by the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Canadian Legion, the War Veterans' Wives Association, the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Canadian Corps Association, and local citizen A. J. Abrams. “I don't think in any of the Axis countrys [sic], they would take a vote on admitting any Canadian men or women to any city,” observed Abrams. “I can guess where they would be.”<sup>78</sup>

On 27 July 1942 City Council rejected the applications of the six Japanese Canadians. The *Star-Phoenix's* correspondent noted the defensiveness of two aldermen who stressed that questions of security, and not “intolerance, persecution, and inhumanity,” had influenced their vote. Given the strong anti-Japanese sentiment in the city, local authorities rightly feared for the safety of any Japanese residents. Yet a closer examination of statements made by certain aldermen on the evening of 27 July shows that they were also motivated partly by prejudice and a desire for revenge. For Alderman Walter Caswell, the son of one of Saskatoon's pioneer families, the Japanese contaminated the purity of Canada's national character: “We should keep it as British as possible.” Alderman Frederick Blain, whose unbroken tenure on City Council since 1921 made him its most senior member, blurred the distinction between soldier and civilian, arguing that acts committed by the Japanese military against women and Canadian soldiers in Hong Kong “proved they had no code of honor and were little better than animals.” Only Alderman Nelson Clarke defended the Japanese, noting the inconsistency of attacking them at a time when Canada was “fighting a war for [the] liberation of oppressed humanity everywhere,” including Japanese civilians under Hideki Tojo. Clarke's objection failed to sway his colleagues, all of whom supported a motion calling for the Japanese applicants to be sent this insulting response: “We have sufficient Japanese in Saskatoon for our purposes.”<sup>79</sup> If there were any lingering doubts as to the anti-Japanese prejudice of some aldermen, they were dispelled in September 1942. In rejecting an application to study at the University of Saskatchewan from Y. Takahashi, at the time working in the sugar beet fields of Petrolia for the Ontario Farm Service Force, one alderman nastily observed, “A Jap's a Jap as long as the war is on.”<sup>80</sup>

Saskatoon's reluctance to admit the coastal Japanese as residents was not unique. As historian Patricia E. Roy details, the citizens of Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, and Winnipeg responded to similar requests much like Saskatonians, blending wartime hatred with a fear of, among other things, sabotage and economic competition.<sup>81</sup> Saskatchewan largely avoided the controversial issue of granting residency to the Japanese because, unlike southern Alberta and southern Manitoba, no

rural and labour-intensive sugar beet industry needed them. Because of the predominance of grain farming in Saskatchewan, the total Japanese population went from 100 in January 1942 to a high of only 177 in July 1943. In contrast, Alberta's Japanese-Canadian population ballooned from 534 to 3,420 over the same period, and Manitoba's leapt from 30 to 1,110.<sup>82</sup>

Yet Saskatoon was not unremittingly hostile to the Japanese throughout the war. Just as the fear of German fifth columnists lessened, so too the mistrust of the Japanese that was so intense in July 1942 cooled with time. In January 1944 Yoshiaki Koniski, whose services as a chick-sexer were required by Anstey Electric Hatchery, was allowed to come to Saskatoon during the hatching season; and in March 1944 Yoshitaro Yunedo, a medical graduate from Edmonton General Hospital, was permitted to serve an eight-month internship at St. Paul's Hospital.<sup>83</sup> That there was no significant official opposition to their arrival in the city suggests that anti-Japanese feeling was in decline. In a fitting end to the saga, Thomas Shigetsugu Tamaki, one of the two brothers rejected by Saskatoon in July 1942, attended the College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan after the war, graduating in 1947. Tamaki went on to a distinguished thirty-year career in the Saskatchewan civil service, retiring in 1983 as an associate deputy minister.<sup>84</sup>

### *Saskatoon Confronts the Enemy on the Left*

While the “enemy” in Saskatoon was primarily ethnic, with German and Japanese Canadians as targets, it could also be ideological. By virtue of their “revolutionary” doctrines, local communists (real or suspected) and members of the provincial Co-operative Commonwealth Federation were sometimes viewed as insidious agents. As one speaker in the city declared, the left advocated “a policy of defeatism and despair, an European product, a disease of the mind and the imagination alien to every instinct of the true Britisher and Canadian.”<sup>85</sup> Negative attitudes towards communism during the Great Depression lingered on. During the 1930s both federal and provincial officials feared that a disillusioned population might look to communism as a panacea. Citizens had been repeatedly warned of the threat this revolutionary ideology posed to church, state, and family. After a relief camp riot at the city's Exhibition Grounds in 1933, Premier J. T. M. Anderson labelled Saskatoon the headquarters of communism in Saskatchewan and vowed “to drive those disciples of the Red Flag out of Saskatoon and out of the province.”<sup>86</sup> The premier's reactionary attitude was typical of many during the Great Depression. Yet Saskatoon—unlike, for instance, Winnipeg, Calgary, and Regina—did not elect any communists to City Council during the 1930s.<sup>87</sup>

By the start of the Second World War, Saskatonians had been well schooled against the evils of communism, a predisposition confirmed on 23 August 1939, when the Soviet Union signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact with Germany. And the actions of Canada's own communists did not enjoy public sympathy either. Having initially supported the war against Hitler in September 1939, the Communist Party of Canada, acting on orders from the Comintern, performed an about-face and condemned any participation in this “imperialist” conflict. Saskatoon's communists also had their own local problems: their weakness was obliquely noted in an RCMP security bulletin issued early in the war, which commented upon the “apparent disinterestedness” of the city's

## *“The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”*

party secretary, allegedly an “inveterate drunkard” whose “exact whereabouts are unknown,” in other words, a person who posed no serious threat to anyone.<sup>88</sup> Yet anti-communism was so intense in Saskatoon that sometimes the Soviet Union, not the Third Reich, seemed the real enemy. Peace might be reached with Germany, stated a speaker in the city on 8 December 1939, but no agreement could ever be made with the “depraved beasts and bloodthirsty ruffians who have their headquarters in Moscow.” Stalin, it was said, was waiting “with Asiatic patience . . . for the civilized nations to destroy each other, so that he can substitute Communist slavery and Asiatic paganism for Christian civilization.”<sup>89</sup>

Given these sentiments, “Red-baiting” in Saskatoon was not unusual. The most egregious case occurred during a federal by-election in December 1939. Attacking communism had proven politically expedient in Regina, where the recent municipal election campaign had been dominated by charges that the left-wing Civic Labour Association was “plugged with communists.”<sup>90</sup> In December international events conspired to offer by-election voters in Saskatoon a colourful backdrop: tiny Finland had been invaded by the Soviet Union. With the “Phoney War” now overshadowed by the “Winter War,” Michael Hayes, the candidate for the Liberal party, repeatedly tried to link Walter George Brown, his United Reform Movement (URM) opponent, to communism.<sup>91</sup> Mocking the URM’s claim to be progressive, Hayes stated, “The murderous attack that the Reds are making in Europe upon that small but peaceful and civilized country, Finland, shows just how much right they have to call themselves progressive.”<sup>92</sup> On another occasion Hayes implied that Brown might be an honest man, but that he was the “dupe of men—Reds who had led him astray . . . men who would use him as a tool . . . men who were calling upon Canada to stop this war and allow the bloody hand of Stalin and the bloody hand of Hitler to control this country.”<sup>93</sup> Early in the campaign, Hayes’s organizers accused a supposed Brown supporter of disloyalty for pointing to a picture of the King and Queen and sarcastically observing, “You suckers. What did they ever do for you.”<sup>94</sup> Unfortunately for Hayes, it could not be proven that this anti-monarchist really was connected to Brown’s campaign. Prominent backers of the URM may well have been communists, but Brown himself was a well-known and well-liked Presbyterian clergyman in the city, making any claim that he was secretly in the pay of the godless Soviet Union seem absurd.<sup>95</sup> As one of his supporters stated in a letter to the newspaper, Hayes ought to “visit Mr. Brown’s church and sit beneath our flag, the glorious old Union Jack, not the hammer and sickle Mr. Hayes referred to in his speech.”<sup>96</sup> Ultimately, no one believed Brown was a communist. Despite Hayes’s unsubstantiated accusations, Saskatoon voters elected him by a margin of almost two to one. Although the attempt failed, it is striking how anti-communist fears could be used during the early stages of the Second World War.

With Hitler’s invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, attitudes shifted. Local communists, for so long pariahs, could suddenly point to Russia as a key member of the Allies fighting to defeat Hitler. They petitioned the government to open a second front in Europe and to lift the ban on their party as a patriotic duty.<sup>97</sup> A Saskatoon Canadian–Soviet Friendship League was even founded in October 1943 to combat “mischievous propaganda” against Russia, a goal that would have been unimaginable during the Depression years.<sup>98</sup> Finally, Tim Buck, the leader of

the Communist Party of Canada and a recent inmate of Kingston Penitentiary, visited Saskatoon several times. For Saskatonians repeatedly told during the 1930s that communists were divisive revolutionaries, it must have seemed almost surreal to hear Buck tell an assembly at the Third Avenue United Church, “We must have complete national unity if we are going to put everything Canada has into the war, and it will take everything Canada has to defeat the Axis.”<sup>99</sup> The RCMP remained skeptical. Its intelligence bulletin quoted one communist at the assembly claiming that, in some parts of Alberta, people believed British airmen harmlessly dropped their bombs into the North Sea to inflate munitions industry profits, and that soldiers in the Dieppe raid had received only twelve rounds of ammunition each. Surely, speculated the RCMP, this was “a very subtle way” for the communists to start “vicious rumours” and then claim credit for being “instrumental in bringing enlightenment to those alleged to have been making the statements.”<sup>100</sup>

Police doubts aside, Saskatoon’s leftists were stout defenders of the war effort, although their assertions, especially those concerning the Soviet Union, occasionally strained credulity. Local clergyman C. P. Bradley, for instance, declared that people were dupes to believe that Stalin was a “bad man” simply because there was no evidence to support the claim.<sup>101</sup> His sermons addressed such questions as “Is there more democracy in Russia than in British Empire?” and promoted the illusion that “Russia lives by peace. Old capitalism lives by war.”<sup>102</sup>

Any misguided praise of the Soviet system notwithstanding, Saskatoon’s left was clearly behind the war effort. Yet like the RCMP, which continued to fret about the “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” nature of Canadian communism, some prominent Saskatonians refused to accept local communists as allies.<sup>103</sup> In June 1942, for example, labour alderman Alexander Eddy criticized a request to lift the ban on the Communist Party of Canada. “These are the same people who sneered at those of us who bought War Savings Certificates or loaned money to the Government without interest, and stated our boys who enlisted should have their heads examined,” he argued.<sup>104</sup> City Council reacted with similar annoyance when the Communist Labor Total War Committee, a front organization for the banned CPC, urged the aldermen to pressure the federal government to open a second front “without delay.” Alderman William Stewart declared that the request showed “the utmost gall,” while Mayor MacEachern said that it was the “sheerest nonsense” that such a small group would dictate policy whose viability only the highest government officials could assess.<sup>105</sup> Agitation by local communists for an Allied offensive in Europe also proved too much for Lorne O’Donnell. The Great War veteran denounced “these arm chair generals prophets of Communism” and warned that following them was akin to casting a vote for “voluntary enslavement.”<sup>106</sup> In another letter O’Donnell targeted Alderman Nelson Clarke for supporting the left’s demand for a second front. Depicting Clarke as unpatriotic, he wrote, “Surely, Mr. Nelson Clarke knows that an invasion with force and to follow through requires many, many men, and more men, and that Canada today is calling men and more men. I wonder whether Mr. Nelson Clarke has heard that call? I am told he is but 27 years of age, married, but has no children.”<sup>107</sup> O’Donnell’s personal attacks may have stung Clarke. That fall he resigned his seat and enlisted in the army.<sup>108</sup>

Yet many who saw Russia as a new and important ally in the war against fascism remained unperturbed by the threat of a “Red

## *“The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”*

revolution” at home. For example, roughly a thousand Saskatonians crowded into Third Avenue United Church in October 1941 to hear “l’Internationale,” the Soviet national anthem, played alongside the American and British anthems.<sup>109</sup> It is worth noting that invoking the USSR’s role in the war was seldom paired with any mention of its system of government. While promoting a Red Cross drive to aid Russia, for example, Saskatoon MLA Robert Pinder insisted that the Russian people were fighting to defend what everyone held dear: their homes and their way of life.<sup>110</sup> Another citizen pointed out the great debt that the democracies owed the Soviet Union, arguing that Russia’s two million casualties on the eastern front had prevented a comparable loss in Western Europe.<sup>111</sup> University of Saskatchewan President James Sutherland Thomson claimed there was no disloyalty in supporting the Soviet Union, a country similar in many respects to Saskatchewan: “Our best method is to think of our own country, with its wide open spaces, under the all-encompassing chill of 30 below weather—but with this tremendous difference: that over the vast steppes and forests of Russia, in addition to the rigor of winter, there has come the grim and paralyzing mastery of war. Let us try to imagine the condition on our own Prairie lands if a great mechanized army had come sweeping across these plains and coulees, driving the population in front of it.”<sup>112</sup> Thomson tellingly avoided any reference to Soviet communism, emphasizing instead the horrors of war felt by civilians.

As Saskatoon’s communists gradually shed their disloyal image, supporters of the provincial CCF in Saskatoon were the next group to be painted as the enemy. The chief culprit here was not Red-baiting citizens but, as historian Lewis H. Thomas notes, the Liberal party and the Liberal-dominated press, which had turned fear-mongering about the CCF as a threat to democracy into an art form.<sup>113</sup> The *Star-Phoenix*, which from its earliest days in 1906 as the *Phoenix* newspaper had been staunchly Liberal, was no exception.<sup>114</sup> Beginning in 1943 and becoming more strident as the 1944 provincial election neared, the newspaper in effect portrayed the CCF as a fifth-column force in its own right. Yet the politicians under party leader Tommy Douglas were even bolder than the imagined German or Japanese saboteur because their attempt to seize power, far from being carried out in secrecy, was made openly through the electoral process.

From its inception as the Farmer-Labor Party in 1932, the CCF had been dogged by the charge that it was a revolutionary party bent on destroying democracy in Saskatchewan.<sup>115</sup> With the war, these attacks grew in frequency. The CCF’s opponents pointed out that increased government control and dictatorship had corrupted countries like Germany, Italy, and Japan. In a letter to the *Star-Phoenix*, for example, W. L. Ramsay argued that the question was between “Dictatorship or Democracy, the authority [sic] of force or the rule of reason, the will of the despot or the consent of the people.”<sup>116</sup> For over a year and a half, Saskatoon’s newspaper essentially made Ramsay an unofficial correspondent, regularly publishing his missives in its letter box. It was a rare Saturday that the *Star-Phoenix* did not feature the loquacious Ramsay warning Saskatonians that “something for nothing has always been a bait for fools,” or that “socialism is an abrogation of private rights, an arrogation of state control,” or that the whole ideology of the CCF was “a beautiful dream if you don’t wake up.”<sup>117</sup> Total regimentation was the ultimate objective of the CCF, according to this prolific letter-writer,

making it no better than the fascist powers the Allies were fighting. One citizen objected to Ramsay’s virtual monopoly of the *Star-Phoenix*’s letter section: “It is the first time you have ever allowed your letter box to be used for a sustained effort of propaganda against any party.”<sup>118</sup>

The offensive against the CCF in the *Star-Phoenix* depended on claims that Canadian soldiers did not want revolutionary changes in Saskatchewan. Inverting the usual cliché that the Allies were fighting for a better world, ex-premier J. T. M. Anderson quoted from a letter home written by a soldier in Africa: “We are not fighting for a new government, but to keep the one we have.”<sup>119</sup> Citing the letters of servicemen overseas was an interesting ploy of CCF opponents. They may well have hoped that civilians at home would be more likely to heed the concerns of soldiers risking their lives abroad. The most strongly worded letter on the political “crisis” a CCF victory would unleash was forwarded to the newspaper by the father of two soldiers stationed overseas:

If you fellows at home vote for a Socialist Government you are putting Canada down to a third rate nation in the eyes of the world and especially our neighbor to the south. . . . Over here, we feel you have lost the battle on the home front, while we fight to keep our Canadian homes safe. We are fighting for the Canada we left, whether it be Bracken or Mackenzie King, but when we get back, we are going to make a few changes. . . . Don’t be foolish enough to vote Canada into a category where we will be ashamed of it. . . . You hold the line till we get to Berlin then we can all straighten this thing out, without Socialism. We know you have dreamers who have made themselves believe they are ordained to lead you to an Utopia, but most of them just know about enough to lead you to Chaos. India has a dreamer, too, so has Germany.<sup>120</sup>

Here was fear-mongering at its most obvious. Moreover, the letter was possibly a fake. That it was published on 14 June 1944, the eve of the provincial election, is especially suspicious. That the soldiers’ father identified himself merely as “Independent Voter” makes it impossible to determine whether or not his sons had actually written the letter, or even existed for that matter. Finally, the use throughout the letter of arguments commonly advanced by the Liberal party in this period—that chaos would ensue from a CCF victory—gives it a distinctive election-eering tone.

Not content merely to express the views of soldiers (real or invented) on active service, some opponents of the CCF tried to link it with the fascist powers Canadian servicemen were fighting. As the indefatigable W. L. Ramsay noted darkly in yet another letter to the *Star-Phoenix*, “The Grain Growers, the Progressives, the CCF, is the evolution of class government just as the same thread runs through Communism, Nazism and Fascism.”<sup>121</sup> Yet Ramsay’s was a rare reference to communism in an attack on the CCF, at least in Saskatoon. With the Soviet Union a crucial ally in the war, denigrating Russia seemed somehow unpatriotic. Not easily deterred, opponents of the CCF began comparing Tommy Douglas’s party to Hitler’s Nazis. Hubert Staines, the Liberal minister of education, set the tone when during the budget debate in March 1944 he referred to the CCF as a “proper cesspool and a political sewer,” a party “which fails to conform to its Hitlerite prototype only in its lack of the swastika and the goosestep.”<sup>122</sup> As Douglas wryly noted, “We had now ceased to be Communists, which we had been called in previous elections, because the Communists had become respectable. . . .

## *“The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”*

People were toasting Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin, and overnight we were classified as National Socialists and Nazis.<sup>123</sup>

The charge that socialism and Nazism were one and the same thing echoed a wider international debate. Published first in Britain in March 1944, economist F. A. Hayek's influential *The Road to Serfdom* explored the affinities between socialism and fascism and concluded that both systems enslaved the individual. It is doubtful that the CCF's critics read Hayek's book, which was not published in North America until September 1944, but their attacks crudely echoed its thesis. That the National Socialist German Workers' Party had the word *Socialist* in its name was frequently noted by anti-CCF speakers (Tory leader George Drew also used this ploy in the 1943 Ontario provincial election).<sup>124</sup> Robert Pinder, the incumbent Liberal MLA for one of Saskatoon's two seats, warned that under a CCF government, Victory Bonds and all the earnings of the people would be endangered, ushering in “regimentation and National Socialism in its true form.”<sup>125</sup> James W. Estey, Saskatchewan's attorney general who was vying for Saskatoon's other seat in the provincial legislature, was equally forthright. Suggesting that “the tragedy for Germany was that the German people were not politically matured enough to know what National Socialism meant,” this future justice of the Supreme Court of Canada hoped that the people of Canada would never likewise be ignorant of what socialism meant.<sup>126</sup>

Advertisements for Pinder and Estey urged Saskatoon voters to choose “freedom” not “slavery,” to elect a party that would not jeopardize their “democratic rights,” and to “vote to keep Socialism out of Saskatchewan.”<sup>127</sup> Fearing defeat, Premier William Patterson penned an open letter “to the people” that included a thinly veiled warning: “I cannot conceive of any right-thinking citizen . . . placing in power followers of the same beliefs and doctrines which have enslaved Europe and created the greatest conflict this world has ever known.”<sup>128</sup> On the eve of the election the *Star-Phoenix*, ever eager to tarnish the CCF's image, published a letter urging the electorate not to put its faith in a “council of planners” because “National socialism (Nazism), or State socialism (Fascism), or any other kind of socialism, means totalitarianism and bureaucracy and regimentation in the long run instead of that liberty for which our boys are fighting abroad.” The letter, which urged readers to “make good use of the franchise while we yet have it,” ended with a less-than-subtle hint that the CCF was composed of enemy agents bent on destroying Saskatchewan democracy.<sup>129</sup> Such fear-mongering was just as pronounced in the south of the province where the *Regina Leader-Post*, another Liberal organ, warned that a CCF victory “may start Canada on the road to strife and devastation.”<sup>130</sup> The CCF, as far as its critics were concerned, had become the gravest threat to the home front.

In any event, the Saskatchewan electorate refused to see a Nazi connection to the CCF. Voters handed Tommy Douglas's party forty-seven of the province's fifty-two seats. A revolutionary feature of that victory was the CCF's newfound support in urban areas. In the four main cities of Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert, its vote share increased from almost zero in 1938 (when it had fielded only one urban candidate) to 52 per cent.<sup>131</sup> CCF candidates J. H. Sturdy and Arthur Stone decisively defeated the Liberal incumbents in Saskatoon's two-member riding. At various stages of the war the German, Japanese, and even communist “enemy” loomed large in Saskatoon's

collective urban consciousness, but ultimately fear-mongering about the CCF had little effect on the outcome of the 1944 election.

### *Conclusion*

Saskatoon's relative detachment from the war—both in its geographical isolation from the conflict and in its fairly minor role in the national war effort—gave rise to certain compensations by its citizens in civic defence. The creative surplus of energy and imagination not drained off by actual combat was channelled into conjuring up shadowy threats within and without the city. This is not to say that the idea of the enemy in Saskatoon appeared *ex nihilo*; on the contrary, it fed on exogenous events such as Hitler's bellicose foreign policy in the late 1930s, the invasion of Finland by the Soviet Union, the international fifth-column scare in 1940, national Victory Loan drives, the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the evacuation of the Japanese from the British Columbia coast, wider debates about a second front in Europe, and Nazism's ominous example of total regimentation (“socialism” for Liberal fear-mongers). Put another way, the faces of the enemy in wartime Saskatoon mirrored the faces of the enemy both nationally and internationally.

A second explanation for the enemy's hold on Saskatoon's urban consciousness lies in the harrowing experience of the Great Depression. During the 1930s no province in Canada suffered as much as Saskatchewan, and few cities faced more hardships than Saskatoon. Above all, during the Great Depression the “enemy”—though its handiwork was plain—was unseen and unstoppable: drought and the international economic system. As the Depression gave way to war in 1939, Saskatoon experienced a kind of cathartic release: not only had the invisible foe been given a face, but the city felt in control of its destiny once more. This newfound sense of agency produced an exaggerated view of the wartime enemy. Veterans spoke darkly about a German fifth column loyal to Hitler, xenophobic citizens warned of a “Japanese influx” from British Columbia, and some high-placed figures continued to cast aspersions on the loyalty of local communists. That said, the “enemy” could also be a unifying concept, as it was in 1941 and 1942 when the urban population revelled in the thrill of being bombed, invaded, and occupied by the Wehrmacht.

If Saskatoon's vivid imagining of its adversaries was in fact in part a reaction to the stifling years of the Great Depression, the 1930s may be the key to why the idea of the CCF “enemy” was powerless to galvanize opposition of any significance in 1944. It was one thing to imagine the Axis forces threatening Saskatoon in the dark years of the war, but on 15 June 1944, with Allied troops breaking out of the beachhead at Normandy, the thoughts of Saskatchewan voters turned to the future: they elected a party whose professed aim had long been to reform the capitalist system to mitigate the devastation of a future Great Depression. In this hope, Saskatchewan voters were not unlike their British counterparts, who for the better part of the war were swept up by the oratorical brilliance of Winston Churchill and his pledge that the “Island Race” would never submit to the Axis foe. But in the election of July 1945—despite Churchill's warning that if elected the Labour Party of Clement Attlee would “have to fall back on some form of Gestapo”—British voters chose the future, not the past.<sup>132</sup> Saskatoon was no different. For much of the war it might have been thrilling to believe that “the Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates,”



## *“The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”*

but by June 1944 the enemy in Saskatoon had vanished as if with the gust of a prairie wind, replaced by concerns of the utmost practicality.

### *Acknowledgements*

I wish to thank Dr. Bill Waiser of the University of Saskatchewan for his expert advice on earlier drafts of this paper, City of Saskatoon Archivist Jeff O'Brien for his invaluable assistance, and the three anonymous reviewers for their good suggestions.

### *Notes*

1. “Can’t Tell by Looks,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* (hereafter *SSP*), 27 July 1942.
2. The in-depth study of Canadian life during the Second World War is a recent phenomenon that owes much of its impetus to Jeffrey A. Keshen. See Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004). Complementing this national perspective, historians like Serge Marc Durlfänger have begun to examine the wartime experience of specific urban centres. See Durlfänger, *Fighting from Home: The Second World War in Verdun, Quebec* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006). The war years in Saskatoon have been overlooked by historians so far. The city’s official history ends in 1932, while a special issue of the *Saskatoon History Review* commemorating the two world wars contains only brief articles on war brides, war memorials, local naval barracks, and the University of Saskatchewan. See Don Kerr and Stan Hanson, *Saskatoon: The First Half-Century* (Edmonton: NeWest, 1982); *Saskatoon History Review* 10 (1994).
3. *Eighth Census of Canada*, 1941 (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1946), 4:257. Saskatoon’s Germans were the third-largest ethnic group in the city, behind those of British and Ukrainian origin.
4. “Action Required to Curb Growing German Problem,” *SSP*, 10 April 1939.
5. Jonathan Wagner, “The Deutscher Bund Canada in Saskatchewan,” *Saskatchewan History* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1978): 48.
6. *Ibid.*, 50n47.
7. *Eighth Census of Canada*, 1941, 2:272–273.
8. Wagner, “The Deutscher Bund Canada in Saskatchewan,” 44.
9. Jonathan Wagner, “The Deutscher Bund Canada, 1934–9,” *Canadian Historical Review* 58, no. 2 (June 1977): 199.
10. “Death Threat Mailed to Alderman Caswell,” *SSP*, 14 April 1939.
11. See “Uncovering of Pro-Nazi Activities in West Brings Wrathful Reprisals,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, 14 April 1939; “‘Nazi’ Threat, Bullet Mailed to Alderman in Saskatoon,” *Edmonton Journal*, 14 April 1939.
12. City engineer to city commissioner, 15 September 1939, 1200-0394-001 [City Commissioner’s files], City of Saskatoon Archives (hereafter *CSA*); superintendent of the Saskatoon Municipal Railway to city commissioner, 12 September 1939, 1200-0394-001, *CSA*.
13. “Loyalty Declared by Concordia Club,” *SSP*, 11 September 1939.
14. The term *fifth column* originated during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939). As the Nationalist forces approached Madrid in 1936, General Emilio Mola broadcast a speech declaring that, in addition to his four columns outside the city, a fifth column existed within the capital secretly undermining the Republican government.
15. See Louis De Jong, *The German Fifth Column in the Second World War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).
16. Francis MacDonnell, *Insidious Foes: The Axis Fifth Column and the American Home Front* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
17. “Fireside Chat on National Defence,” in *Roosevelt’s Foreign Policy 1933–1941: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Unedited Speeches and Messages* (New York: Wilfred Funk, 1942), 246.
18. Robert H. Keyserlingk, “Agents within the Gates’: The Search for Nazi Subversives in Canada during World War II,” *Canadian Historical Review* 66, no. 2 (1985): 211–239.
19. See “Nazi Goods Sold Here,” *SSP*, 27 March 1940; “Legion Members Suggest Boycott of German Goods,” *SSP*, 28 March 1940; “Campaign Endorsed,” *SSP*, 9 April 1940.
20. See “Many Approved for Citizenship,” *SSP*, 24 April 1940; “No Germans Naturalized,” *SSP*, 26 April 1940; “Aliens Given Citizenship,” *SSP*, 27 April 1940.
21. See “Bastin Believes Many German Spies in Canada,” *SSP*, 15 May 1940; “‘Fifth Column’ Activity Feared in Saskatchewan,” *SSP*, 15 May 1940; “Contracts Discussed,” *SSP*, 18 May 1940; “Canadian Legion to Organize Unit for Home Defence,” *SSP*, 18 May 1940; “Canadian Corps Asks Government to Disarm Aliens,” *SSP*, 20 May 1940.
22. “Would Ban All Tourists Seeking Entry to Canada,” *SSP*, 18 May 1940.
23. City commissioner to Department Heads, 18 June 1940, 1200–0198–001, *CSA*; F.M. Bastin to city commissioner, 8 July 1940, 1200–0198–001, *CSA*.
24. “Gossip Too Rife Here,” *SSP*, 28 May 1940.
25. “‘Fifth Column’ Activity Feared in Saskatchewan,” *SSP*, 15 May 1940. The Canadian Corps Association placed the number of fifth columnists in Saskatchewan as high as 160,000—a telling comment on the irrationality of fear. Surely it was no coincidence that this figure was just shy of the total number of ethnic Germans enumerated in the 1936 census: 165,549.
26. “Fifty Armed Men Could Seize Any Western Centres,” *SSP*, 4 June 1940.
27. Bill Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History* (Calgary: Fifth House, 2005), 332–333.
28. Kerr and Hanson, *Saskatoon*, 154–155.
29. “The 1936 German Day Celebration Here,” *SSP*, 25 May 1940.
30. “Frau Spiller’s Speech to the Concordia Club,” *SSP*, 27 May 1940.
31. File 4-1-5, pt. 1, vol. 6585, RG24, Library and Archives Canada.
32. “Relief Recipient Marks Nazi Successes in Holland,” *SSP*, 17 May 1940.
33. “Pro-Enemy Activities Are Hinted,” *SSP*, 3 December 1940.
34. Kerr and Hanson, *Saskatoon*, 155.
35. “Two Scales of Aid Parker’s Proposal,” *SSP*, 8 October 1940.
36. House of Commons, *Official Report of Debates House of Commons*, Second Session, Nineteenth Parliament, 4–5 George VI, 1941 (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1941), 1: 380, 382.
37. “Canadian Corps Comes to Defence of Parker,” *SSP*, 11 December 1940.
38. Kerr and Hanson, *Saskatoon*, 300.
39. Alma Newman, “Relief Administration in Saskatoon during the Depression,” in *Pages from the Past: Essays on Saskatchewan History*, ed. D. H. Bocking (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1979), 244–247.
40. Saskatchewan Genealogical Society, *Changes of Names: The Saskatchewan Gazette, 1917 to 1950* (Regina: Saskatchewan Genealogical Society, 1993).
41. *Census of the Prairie Provinces*, 1936 (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1938), 1:508–509; *Eighth Census of Canada*, 1941, 4:256–257; John Herd Thompson, *The Harvests of War: The Prairie West, 1914–1918* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), 76–77.
42. See “Cautions against Rumor and Scandal Mongering,” *SSP*, 18 May 1940; “Donald Urges Citizens to Maintain Calmness,” *SSP*, 21 May 1940.
43. “Paths of Glory,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 8 June 1940.
44. “Gossip Too Rife Here,” *SSP*, 28 May 1940.
45. Kathryn Vera Buriannyk, “The ‘Home Front’ in Regina during World War II”

***“The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”***

- (MA thesis, University of Regina, 2003), 18–19.
46. *Eighth Census of Canada*, 1941, 2:272–73.
  47. Robert J. MacDonald, “The Silent Column: Civil Security in Saskatchewan during World War II,” *Saskatchewan History* 39, no. 2 (1985): 41. For the Veterans Volunteer Reserve, see Ken Tingley, ed., “The Veterans Volunteer Reserve: Alberta Nativism in Two World Wars,” in *For King and Country: Albertans in the Second World War*, 345–358 (Edmonton: Reidmore Books, 1995).
  48. See “False Rumors,” *SSP*, 20 May 1940; “Gossip Too Rife Here,” *SSP*, 28 May 1940; “Telephone Office Run by Pro-Nazis Is Legion Charge,” *SSP*, 23 May 1940; “Mighty Tough, Them Nazis of Dundurn District!,” *SSP*, 7 June 1940.
  49. “The Color of Barns,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 8 August 1942.
  50. “Terminate Lectures in German,” *SSP*, 19 February 1941. See also file No. 24, R-604, Saskatchewan Department of the Attorney General, Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB).
  51. “Where Was Justice?,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 8 March 1941.
  52. “Whose Liberties Are We Defending?,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 15 March 1941.
  53. Keyserlingk, “Agents within the Gates,” 235.
  54. “‘Hoppers Threaten,’” *SSP*, 20 March 1942; “Healthy Mouths Are Important to Soldiers’ Morale,” *SSP*, 16 January 1942.
  55. Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 35.
  56. *Ibid.*, 36.
  57. “The President’s World-wide Radio Address on Unlimited National Emergency,” in *Roosevelt’s Foreign Policy 1933–1941*, 397.
  58. John Keegan, *The First World War* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2000), 7–8.
  59. For a more detailed study of Saskatoon’s vicarious experience of the Second World War, see Brendan Kelly, “Bringing the War Home: The Patriotic Imagination in Saskatoon, 1939–1942,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 183–202.
  60. “Sidelights on ‘Invasion,’” *SSP*, 25 September 1941.
  61. “Saskatoon Taken in Mock Battle Wednesday Night,” *SSP*, 25 September 1941; “Sidelights on ‘Invasion,’” *SSP*, 25 September 1941.
  62. “‘Nazis’ Driven from City by Hard-Hitting Defenders after Making Brief Gains,” *SSP*, 20 October 1942; “City Hall Defended,” *SSP*, 20 October 1942.
  63. “Deutsche Zeitung fuer Saskatoon,” special edition, *SSP*, 19 October 1942. The Nazi edition of the *Star-Phoenix* was so popular with Saskatonians that additional copies had to be printed to meet demand. See “Can Get Copy of Deutsche Zeitung,” *SSP*, 20 October 1942.
  64. Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, 34–36.
  65. “For Sale: Canada’s Children,” advertisement, *SSP*, 4 March 1942.
  66. Department of Labour, *Report of the Department of Labour on the Re-establishment of Japanese in Canada, 1944–1946* (Ottawa: Department of Labour, 1947), 25.
  67. Immediate Action Committee to Saskatoon City Council, 24 February 1942, vol. 3 [City Clerk’s General Correspondence], 1069–1578, CSA.
  68. Taira Yasunaka to mayor, 12 June 1942, 1200-0282 [Japanese application to move to Saskatoon–1942], CSA. The term *Issei* is used to describe first-generation Japanese immigrants.
  69. George Tamaki to mayor, 18 June 1942, 1200-0282, CSA.
  70. S. Otsuki to city clerk, 7 July 1942, vol. 1, 1069-0732 [Japanese Coming to City–1942–44], CSA.
  71. British Columbia Security Commission to Mr. M. C. Tomlinson, 24 June 1942, vol. 2, 1069–0738, CSA.
  72. Minister of labour to Mr. MacEachern, 13 July 1942, vol. 1, 1069-0738, CSA.
  73. Mayor to John Fry, Andrew Davison, and John Queen, 9 July 1942, vol. 2, 1069–0738, CSA.
  74. John Queen to Mayor MacEachern, 10 July 1942, vol. 2, 1069-0738, CSA; Calgary city clerk to Mayor MacEachern, 13 July 1942, vol. 2, 1069-0738, CSA; John W. Fry to Mayor MacEachern, 14 July 1942, vol. 2, 1069-0738, CSA.
  75. “This Week’s City News for Men in Services,” *SSP*, 11 July 1942.
  76. “Council Decides Today on Letting Japs Reside Here,” *SSP*, 6 July 1942.
  77. W. O. Hunt to city clerk, 27 July 1942, vol. 1, 1069–0738, CSA.
  78. Navy League of Canada Northern Saskatchewan Division to mayor, 12 July 1942, vol. 2, 1069-0738, CSA; Canadian Legion Saskatoon Branch to city clerk, 11 July 1942, vol. 2, 1069-0738, CSA; Princess Mary Lodge No. 439 to mayor, 10 July 1942, vol. 2, 1069-0738, CSA; Daughters of England Benevolent Society to mayor, 9 July 1942, vol. 2, 1069-0738, CSA; Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers to mayor, 13 July 1942, vol. 2, 1069-0738, CSA; Ladies’ Auxiliary of the Canadian Legion to mayor, 7 July 1942, vol. 2, 1069-0738, CSA; War Veterans’ Wives Association to City Council, 10 July 1942, vol. 2, 1069-0738, CSA; A. J. Abrams to City Council, 8 July 1942, vol. 2, 1069–0738, CSA.
  79. “Council Rejects Japanese Appeal to Locate Here,” *SSP*, 28 July 1942.
  80. “Council Decrees Japanese Influx Must Not Begin,” *SSP*, 15 September 1942; Y. Takahashi to City Council, 8 August 1942, vol. 1, 1069-0738, CSA. For a study of the employment of Japanese Canadians in the Ontario Farm Service Force, see Stephanie Bangarth, “The Long, Wet Summer of 1942: The Ontario Farm Service Force, Small-Town Ontario and the Nisei,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 37, no. 1 (2005): 40–62.
  81. Patricia E. Roy, *The Triumph of Citizenship: The Japanese and Chinese in Canada, 1941–67* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 78–88.
  82. Department of Labour, *Report . . . 1944–1946*, 25. Archival documents show that the Saskatchewan government received some requests from farmers and the Canadian Pacific Railway for Japanese workers. See file no. 17, R-262, Farm Labour Division, “Japanese Farm Labour, 1942–1943,” Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture, SAB.
  83. City clerk to Mr. P. Anstey, 18 January 1944, vol. 3, 1069-0738, CSA; city clerk to Mr. Y. Yuneda, 30 March 1944, vol. 3, 1069–0738, CSA.
  84. The Law Society of Saskatchewan, *Benchers’ Digest* 15, no. 5 (November 2002): 3.
  85. “Says ‘Threats and Prophecies’ of Harold Winch Cannot Be Ignored,” *SSP*, 9 December 1943.
  86. Waiser, *Saskatchewan*, 310.
  87. Jen Pederson, *A Seat on Council: The Aldermen, Councillors, and Mayors of Saskatoon 1903–2006*, ed. Jeff O’Brien (Saskatoon: City of Saskatoon Archives, 2006).
  88. Gregory S. Kealey and Reg Whitaker, eds., *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins: The War Series, 1939–1941* (St. John’s: Committee on Canadian Labour History, 1989), 82.
  89. “Can Be No Peace with Communists, Speaker Declares,” *SSP*, 9 December 1939. The speaker was George Drew, future premier of Ontario from 1943 to 1948.
  90. Burianyk, “The ‘Home Front,’” 16.
  91. On G. W. Brown and his association with the URM, see J. M. Pitsula, “‘Righteousness Exalteth the Nation,’” *Saskatchewan History* 33, no. 2 (Spring 1980): 56–70.
  92. “Liberals and United Reformers Deplore Each Other’s Methods,” *SSP*, 12 December 1939.
  93. “The Candidature of Mr. Hayes,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 9 December 1939.
  94. “Hayes Hits Back Hard at Warren,” *SSP*, 6 December 1939.

*“The Huns and Vandals are thundering at our gates and within our gates”*

95. Pitsula, “W. G. Brown,” 65.
96. “Mr. Brown’s Support,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 9 December 1939.
97. “Raise Ban, Meeting in City Asks,” *SSP*, 27 June 1942.
98. “Form Friendship League to Combat Mischievous Propaganda on Russia,” *SSP*, 4 October 1943.
99. “Victory Requires Complete Unity, States Tim Buck,” *SSP*, 9 December 1942.
100. Gregory S. Kealey and Reg Whitaker, eds., *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins: The War Series, Part II, 1942–1945* (St. John’s: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 1993), 55–56.
101. “Form Friendship League to Combat Mischievous Propaganda on Russia,” *SSP*, 4 October 1943. As Bradley declared, “It is said that ‘Stalin is a bad man’ but no evidence is given to support it. Russia is misrepresented regarding Finland and Poland. The press does not give the facts. We must answer the mischief makers.”
102. “Come to Church,” advertisement, *SSP*, 17 April 1943, 15 May 1943.
103. The “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” quotation is from a secret RCMP report during the war. See Reg Whitaker, “Official Repression of Communism during World War II,” *Labour* 17 (Spring 1986): 151.
104. “Labor Alderman against Legalizing Communist Party,” *SSP*, 11 June 1942.
105. “Communist Letter Filed by Council; Stewart Annoyed,” *SSP*, 4 August 1942.
106. “False Banners,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 4 July 1942.
107. “‘General Clarke’ and Second Front,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 22 August 1942.
108. After what was clearly a brief stint in the military, Clarke returned to Saskatoon in 1944 to run as a candidate for the Labour Progressive Party in the provincial election. The LPP had been founded in 1943 by Canadian communists still chafing under the ban of the Communist Party of Canada. For a short biography of Clarke, see Pederson, *Seat on Council*, 25.
109. “Audience Stands as Soviet Anthem Played at Church,” *SSP*, 7 October 1941. Similarly, when the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra served notice in April 1944 that it would give the first performance in western Canada of the new Hymn of the Soviet Union (which replaced *l’Internationale* on 1 January 1944), Conductor Arthur Collingwood and his musical ensemble were simply paying tribute to Russia as an equal ally. “Symphony to Play New National Hymn of Soviet Union,” *SSP*, 12 April 1944.
110. “The Red Cross Drive to Aid Russia,” *SSP*, 22 January 1942.
111. “Bewildered by Col. Mess,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 16 May 1942.
112. “The Red Cross Drive to Aid Russia,” *SSP*, 19 January 1942.
113. Lewis H. Thomas, “The CCF Victory in Saskatchewan,” *Saskatchewan History* 34, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 10.
114. For more on newspaper ownership in Saskatchewan, see J. W. Brennan, “Press and Party in Saskatchewan, 1914–1929,” *Saskatchewan History* 27, no. 3 (Autumn 1974): 81–94; Christine MacDonald, *Historical Directory of Saskatchewan Newspapers, 1878–1983* (Regina: Saskatchewan Archives Board, 1984).
115. Such attacks on the CCF conveniently ignored the ways in which that party, in an effort to become more moderate, had gradually abandoned its more extreme positions during the 1930s. See S. M. Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan*, rev. and exp. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 134–59; John W. Bennett and Cynthia Krueger, “Agrarian Pragmatism and Radical Politics,” in *Agrarian Socialism*, 347–363; Peter R. Sinclair, “The Saskatchewan CCF: Ascent to Power and the Decline of Socialism,” *Canadian Historical Review* 54, no. 4 (December 1973): 419–433. At least one observer argues that even at its founding in 1932 the Farmer Labor Party was not as radical as is commonly assumed. See George Hoffman, “The Saskatchewan Farmer-Labor Party, 1932–1934: How Radical was it at its Origin?,” *Saskatchewan History* 28, no. 2 (Spring 1975): 52–64.
116. “Socialism vs. Liberty,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 14 August 1943.
117. Socialist Dangers,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 29 May 1943; “C.C.F. T.N.T.,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 29 January 1944; “C.C.F. and War,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 19 February 1944.
118. “Socialism,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 27 May 1944.
119. “Ex-Premier Says We Shall Never Have Real Socialism in Province,” *SSP*, 10 February 1943.
120. “How to Start Trouble,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 14 June 1944.
121. “Unjust Principles,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 28 August 1943.
122. “Staines Says C.C.F. Is Proper Cesspool and Political Sewer,” *SSP*, 11 March 1944.
123. Lewis H. Thomas, ed. *The Making of a Socialist: The Recollections of T. C. Douglas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1982), 151.
124. Gerald L. Caplan, “The Failure of Canadian Socialism: The Ontario Experience, 1932–1945,” *Canadian Historical Review* 44, no. 2 (June 1963): 102. Attempts to paint Canadian socialists as Nazis were also made nationally. In March 1944, for instance, *Saturday Night* censured Liberal minister of national war services Léo Richer Laflèche for this very reason. See “National Socialists,” *Saturday Night*, 11 March 1944.
125. “Pinder Raps Socialism,” *SSP*, 3 March 1944.
126. “Estey Raps Socialists,” *SSP*, 12 January 1944.
127. See “Estey and Pinder,” advertisement, *SSP*, 3 June 1944; “Vote Liberal,” advertisement *SSP*, 14 June; “Think Act Vote,” advertisement, *SSP*, 13 June 1944.
128. “To the People of the Province of Saskatchewan,” advertisement, *SSP*, 12 June 1944.
129. “State Socialism,” letter to the editor, *SSP*, 14 June 1944.
130. Waiser, *Saskatchewan*, 342.
131. David E. Smith, *Prairie Liberalism: The Liberal Party in Saskatchewan 1905–1971* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 251.
132. Geoffrey Best, *Churchill: A Study in Greatness* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2001), 268.