

At the dawn of a Conservative majority, it isn't only our Charter rights that are threatened. A hollowing out of health care and other social programs may well be expected, with devastating consequences for vulnerable families. And can anyone hope that our abysmal record on the environment is likely to improve? The point is that the Canadian left and its liberal allies have limited energies and resources. The author of this volume does well in recounting the hallmark struggles of the past and in likewise issuing a timely warning for today. But we need to know more about the social underpinnings of the "holy war" that confronts us, if we are to respond effectively to the stark choices we face.

Kinsman, Gary and Patrizia Gentile. 2010. *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation*. Vancouver: UBC Press. ISBN 978-0-7748-1628-1. Paperback: 34.95 CAD. Pages: 554.

Reviewed by Mathieu Brûlé
York University

In *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation*, Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile set out to "change Canadian history" and challenge "current Canadian historiography" by basing their analysis on "previously excluded and denied social experiences, making visible what was invisible and giving voice to what was silenced" (6). This is an ambitious goal, but one which they have managed to achieve, at least to an extent. Whether this book has altered the course of Canadian historiography remains to be seen, but where Kinsman and Gentile succeed is by bringing to light the voices that have until recently been absent from the historical record. The revelation that queers faced repression at the hands of the Canadian state is not an entirely original finding. While issues of surveillance in the post-war period have been previously raised (not least by Kinsman and Gentile themselves in previous works), *The Canadian War on Queers* adds a new perspective by focusing on the voices of individuals targeted by national security campaigns that sought to uncover and remove queers from the public service and armed forces. This study provides glimpses into the post-war queer communities and networks that the Canadian state sought to infiltrate, as well as the ways in which these communities developed strategies of resistance to expose and neutralize the RCMP and local police efforts to expose them.

The more than fifty interviews, combined with diverse national security documents obtained through access to information requests, provide the foundation for

this work. Through these documents, Kinsman and Gentile are able to demonstrate that the regulation of sexuality and the subsequent “war on queers” was an integral, systemic and ideological feature of the Cold War national security campaigns. It was the construction, in public discourse, of gender and sexual non-conformity as threats to social stability that allowed the state to subsequently construct queers as threats to national security. The belief that same-gender attraction was a character weakness provided the basis for the argument that this weakness could be exploited by foreign agents seeking to blackmail queer public servants. While the campaigns to remove queers from the civil service abated by the late 1970s, Kinsman and Gentile demonstrate how these efforts continued in the military well into the 1990s, as well as the lengths to which the state went to identify them. From infiltrating and photographing civil servants in downtown Ottawa’s gay bars, to developing the infamous “Fruit Machine,” the effort and energy the state invested in detecting and dismantling queer networks demonstrates the extent to which they felt people who engaged in same-gender relationships posed a threat to the security of the nation.

Kinsman and Gentile’s extensive discussion of the lesbian and gay liberation movements of the 1970s is also a welcome contribution to the growing number of studies on these movements in Canada. One of the principal contributions of this chapter, aside from shedding light on the surveillance these movements underwent, is on their relationship with the leftist movements of that era and the extent to which the lesbian and gay movements emerged from these groups. Although the excerpts from national security documents provided in the book suggest that lesbian and gay liberation activists were targeted for their leftist affiliations rather than their sexualities, scholars and community historians interested in this era of queer activism will benefit from Kinsman and Gentile’s decision to include a discussion of these movements in their work.

In addition to its contributions to the scholarship on post-war Canada, *The Canadian War on Queers* also has a political agenda, which the authors make clear from the dedication through to the closing chapter of the book. Kinsman and Gentile hope that their research will serve as a wake-up call to mainstream lesbian and gay communities who are openly supportive of current national security campaigns against marginalized groups, including sex workers, Arabs, Muslims and even other queers. They hope that their research will serve as a reminder that the national security campaigns that defend the “heterosexist character of Canadian state formation” and once constructed queers as threats to national security continues to do the same today (434). While the use of discipline-specific language might turn some of their intended audience away, their efforts to use their research to affect public discourse surrounding issues such as national security will be appreciated.

The use of the research to shape public discourse is not the only way in which Kinsman and Gentile push the boundaries of professional historical writing. The decision to include short paragraphs, printed in a distinct font, in which Kinsman relates his

personal experiences with some of the events described in their work, also stands out as a novel technique in historical scholarship. While this may be a common technique in some disciplines, historians of the recent past tend to be much more wary of blurring the line between scholar and subject. Although some of these paragraphs seemed distant from the topic at hand and give the reader the impression that they were included for their own sake, the authors' decision to do so adds an interesting anecdotal element to the narrative. It could also stand as a challenge to historians of the recent past to not shy away from telling their own stories. Scholars have their own life experiences that can inform the topics we study. To let these stories go untold would contradict the very purpose that pieces of scholarship like *The Canadian War on Queers* set out to accomplish: that is, to tell the story from the bottom-up.

Thompson, Jon. 2011. *No Debate: The Israel Lobby and Free Speech at Canadian Universities*. Toronto: Lorimer. ISBN 978-1-55277-656-8. Paperback: 22.95 CAD. Pages: 334.

Reviewed by Alan Sears
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The central strategy of Israel advocacy organizations on Canadian campuses has been to make Palestine unspeakable and to silence criticism of Israeli policies outside of narrow limits. One important moment in this silencing campaign was the attempt to shut down the conference entitled "Israel/Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace" at York University (co-sponsored by Queen's University) in 2009.

This book is the report of an Inquiry commissioned by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) into the attempts to shut down the conference and the responses by York University administrators, the Harper government and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) which had awarded the conference a grant. The Inquiry was conducted by Jon Thompson, an academic freedom expert who is a professor emeritus in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of New Brunswick.

This Inquiry was thorough, methodically documenting the events surrounding the conference, particularly in intense lead-up period from April to June 2009. The role of individual York administrators is thoughtfully evaluated. The York administration is generally given credit for consistent application of the principles of academic freedom, in that the conference actually went ahead with official, if at times equivocal, support.