

None is not acceptable

To the Editor,

Re: letter to the editor ?Call us concerned Canadians?

The preface of Irving Abella and Harold Troper's book entitled *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948* begins with this paragraph, ? To the condemned Jews of Auschwitz, Canada had a special meaning. It was the name given to the camp barracks where the food, clothes, gold, diamonds, jewellery and other goods taken from the prisoners were stored. It represented life, luxury and salvation; it was a Garden of Eden in Hell; it was also unreachable.?

Mr. Kirby's stipulations for welcoming refugees are simply unattainable based on historical and current realities. There has been no time in the history of Canada that every person has had a family doctor. There have always been people out of work and unemployed. There have always been people without affordable housing. There have always been people suffering from mental illness who go untreated. There will always be security risks both foreign and home grown. Some refugees, like many other Canadians, will break the law and will participate in terrorism. As long as we have international flights we will also continue to have ?foreign diseases.?

These things have always existed and if things do not change there is good reason to believe that they will always exist. As such we can either choose to close our hearts, minds, and borders when a crisis occurs and turn inward or we can continue to open our hearts, minds and borders even more.

In short, we as Canadians now have a chance to redeem ourselves for our failure to act in the '30s and '40s when we saw the Jews of Europe sharing a similar fate as the Syrians face now.

Mr. Kirby finishes his letter by stating that he just wants ?to be given the same benefits as those that come in as refugees,? but one must ask is he also willing to suffer what they have suffered to get those same ?benefits??

Although some Canadians may have to move out of their barracks and be away from their families over Christmas, this is a small price to pay compared to what the Syrians have endured and I think that most Canadians would be willing to suffer some minor inconveniences to save human lives.

We must remember that with or without refugees we have always had and will most likely always have people whose basic needs go unmet, but the historical reality is that without refugees we would have no Canada.

We must also remember that the Canada of the 1930s, the one that for European Jews represented luxury, life, safety and salvation, still very much exists for many people suffering around the world, and if we are to ensure that history is not repeated, we must also ensure that it is reachable. None is not acceptable.

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