

**Remnants – A Fable by Jason Sherman**  
**A Pacific Theatre Emerging Artist Showcase**  
**May 17-June 9, 2007**

**A Few Things about REMNANTS**



**Remnants** was commissioned by the Canadian Stage Company and premiered at Tarragon Theatre, Ontario in September of 2003.

**Setting**

- Takes place between 1925 and 1946, moving chronologically
  - Act 1 – 1925-1932
  - (3 years between the acts – Joseph attends University)
  - Act 2 – 1935-1946
- Travels from Luzniki, Poland, to Halifax, Toronto, and Ottawa
  - Specific locations include: Dubczanski home, Pier 21, Pottinger & Sons, the Relief Camps, Kinsmere, and the Prime Minister’s Office

**Source**

- Biblical narrative of Joseph – Genesis 37-45
- *None is Too Many* by Irving Abella and Harold Troper (1<sup>st</sup> ed. published 1983)
  - *None is Too Many* outlines Canada’s immigration policies

**About the Playwright**

**Jason Sherman** was born in Montreal in 1962, and has lived in Toronto since 1969. He graduated from the Creative Writing program at York University where he worked with such Canadian literary giants as Mavor Moore and bp Nichol. An intensely political writer, all of Sherman’s plays invite the audience to reevaluate its existing views on Canadian society and culture. Sherman is the recipient of numerous awards including the Governor General’s Award for Drama and the Chalmers Canadian Play Award.



**Other Literary Works by Jason Sherman include:**

- ***The League of Nathans*** (1<sup>st</sup> produced 1992 Theatre Passe Muraille, Toronto)
- ***Three in the Back, Two in the Head*** – winner of the 1995 Governor General’s Literary Award for Drama (1<sup>st</sup> produced 1994, Toronto)
- ***Reading Hebron*** (1<sup>st</sup> produced 1996, Toronto)
- ***The Retreat*** (1<sup>st</sup> produced 1996, Toronto)
- ***Patience*** (1<sup>st</sup> produced 1998 Tarragon Theatre, Toronto)
- ***An Acre of Time*** (1<sup>st</sup> produced 2001 Tarragon Theatre, Toronto)
- ***It’s All True*** (1<sup>st</sup> produced 2001 Tarragon Theatre, Toronto)

## Anti-Semitism and Canada's Immigration Policies in the 1920s and 1930s

Summary by Laureen Moe (source: <http://christianactionforisrael.org/antiholo/non2many.html>)

Canada had a restrictionist immigration policy through the 20's and 30's

1933 -- Hitler took oath of office as Chancellor of Germany.

- This power of office shifted Anti-Semitism from speech making to policy and soon from policy to law.
- In April of that year the first of more than 400 Anti-Semitic laws was decreed.
- Jews were eliminated from all civil services, lawyers were disbarred, teachers, (University also) and quotas for Jewish children were applied in school-- Jewish doctors were restricted.

1935-- Nuremberg laws were passed.

- Racial purity was decreed, marriage of Germans to Jews was outlawed. Jews were disenfranchised, citizenship was revoked.
- No protection from the law as Jews were openly terrorized, Jewish businesses were destroyed, children barred from schools, the sick from hospitals, the hungry from state assistance.

1938 -- Germany annexed the Rhineland and Austria, and Czechoslovakia.

- Thousands of Jews fled to Poland, France, Britain, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, but even these countries began restrictions.
- No countries came forward to accept these refugees.
- They could not enter Canada in 1938.
- No one was welcome in Canada as an Immigrant in the 1930's.
- Jews, Asians, and blacks have always been at the bottom of our list. The lie was spread that Jews were city people and that Canada couldn't use the farmers or agricultural Jews because it would be impossible to keep them on the land.
- The federal government fought every effort by the European refugees to enter the country.

Mackenzie King as Liberal Prime Minister

- **1921-1926, 1926-1930 and 1935-1948**
- He was responsible for keeping Jews out of Canada.
- They lost a tremendous chance to influence other nations to help the Jews when the League of Nations wanted to appoint a Canadian to replace the high commissioner for Refugees in the League of Nations. Canada didn't want this.
- Three Jewish M.P.'s won seats in the Liberal sweep of 1935 but they had little power and no success in talking with Blair or Mackenzie King over the years. They had no power to change Liberal policy. Crerar of the Immigration branch said that no exception would be made for Jewish German immigrants over others.

1935--Frederick Charles Blair was director of the Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources in Canada.

- He was entrusted with the task of upholding the restrictions on immigration. Blair made policy and implemented it.
- He believed "that people should be kept out of Canada instead of being allowed in." This actually was in keeping with Government policy.

- 1938--The Jewish Congress said possibilities were nil of Jews entering Canada.
- When Germany invaded Austria Roosevelt called 30 Nations to discuss the refugee problem--THE EVIAN CONFERENCE
  - Mackenzie King recorded in his diary that any action permitting an appreciable number of Jews to settle in Canada would undermine the unity of the Nation.
  - He said "This is no time for Canada to act on humanitarian grounds...Canada must be guided by realities and political considerations."

CANADA did not respond to the suggestion of the Evian conference

- Blair feared its success. He thought Poland, Hungary, and Romania might start deporting Jews.
- He issued instruction that no Jews could be admitted without passports that endorsed their re-entry into Germany. In other words no one-way only passports.
- Canada was finally forced to go to Evian simply on the basis of the fact that they didn't want to be the only one except Fascist Italy out of the 30 not attending.
- Prior to Evian 3 Jewish M.P.'s and 4 Pro-refugee members of Parliament were to meet with a committee of the House but Blair appointed 2 of the anti-Semitic M.P.'s from Quebec to the committee --effectively blocking any positive results of the meeting.

1938—a call was made to admit Jewish refugees

- Blair fought this, but despite this, the government responded to the refugee crisis and restated its general policy: refugees who met the categories for admissible immigrants (according to the current legislation) could come to Canada.

1941—Canada's population: 11,506,655.

- 17.5% were immigrants; 170,241 were Jews

**William Lyon Mackenzie King 1874-1950**

- born in Berlin (later renamed Kitchener)
- his maternal grandfather was William Lyon Mackenzie, leader of the 1837 Rebellion in Upper Canada.
- studied economics & law at U of T; graduated with M.A. 1897
- In 1900 became Deputy Minister of the new Department of Labour.
- King joined the Liberal party and won a seat in the 1908 election. The following year he was appointed Minister of Labour in Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Cabinet. Lost his seat in 1911 election and 1917 elections.
- In 1919, King was elected leader of the Liberal party in the first leadership convention held in Canada. The Liberals won the 1921 election.
- King led the nation through the Second World War, during which Canada contributed food supplies, financial aid, the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, ships, aircraft, tanks and over a million Canadian troops to the Allied cause.
- As part of his ideals on social reform, King introduced unemployment insurance in 1940 and family allowance in 1944.
- He died in 1950, less than two years after retiring.

## ***Vocabulary***

**shtetl** – a small Jewish town or village, formerly found throughout Eastern Europe

**yeshiva** -

1. An institute of learning where students study sacred texts, primarily the Talmud.
2. An elementary or secondary school with a curriculum that includes religion and culture as well as general education.

**mitzvah** -

1.
  - a) A commandment of the Jewish law.
  - b) The fulfillment of such a commandment.
2. A worthy deed. (**best meaning in Remnants**)

**vid** - Used as a disparaging term for a Jew. (offensive slang)

**shul** - A synagogue.

**shabbes goy** - "Goy" refers to anyone who is not Jewish.

- "Shabbes Goy", a Yiddish term, refers to a non-Jewish person who is employed by an observant Jewish family to perform activities forbidden to Jews on the Sabbath, such as cooking and turning lights on and off.
- In the past, the Shabbes Goy made it possible for a family to strictly observe the Sabbath day prohibitions.

**zloty** - the basic unit of money in Poland

**bundist** -

1. An association, especially a political association.
2. often **Bund** A pro-Nazi German-American organization of the 1930s.
3. often **Bund** A European Jewish socialist movement founded in Russia in 1897. (**probably the best meaning in this case**)

**Yom Kippur** - A holy day observed on the tenth day of Tishri and marked by fasting and prayer for the atonement of sins.

- Also called **Day of Atonement**.

**challah** - A loaf of yeast-leavened egg bread, usually braided, traditionally eaten by Jews on the Sabbath, holidays, and other ceremonial occasions.

**nu** - a word used to express expectation.

- At the doctor's office, for example, you can say, "Nu, so how does my heart sound?"
- At a restaurant, you can say, "Nu, when is our food coming already?"

**tallis** - A shawl with ritually knotted fringe at each of four corners traditionally worn by Jewish males, especially at morning prayer. Also called **prayer shawl**.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** March 28, 2007

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Please include in APRIL, MAY, & JUNE  
calendar listings and announcements

**Media Contact:** Julie Sutherland  
604.731.5483 [julie@pacifictheatre.org](mailto:julie@pacifictheatre.org)

**A Canadian Version of the Epic Tale of Joseph and His Brothers is Retold in  
Remnants (A Fable) at Pacific Theatre**

**IN SHORT: This brilliant adaptation of the epic tale of Joseph and his brothers traces a young man's journey from a Polish *shtetl* to the work camps of depression-era Canada. Rising to become an advisor to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, Joseph is sent to turn back a boatload of European Jews – only to discover his brothers among the refugees. A boldly theatrical vision from Jason Sherman, one of Canada's most outstanding playwrights.**

**Playing May 17-June 9. For tickets (\$16-\$32, GST incl.) call 604.731.5518 or [pacifictheatre.org](http://pacifictheatre.org).**

Vancouver, BC – May 17-June 9 (opens May 18)

Pacific Theatre and Trinity Western University Theatre Department are proud to announce an epic co-production of ***Remnants, A Fable***, a brilliant **Canadian adaptation** of the Old Testament story of Joseph and his brothers. ***Remnants, A Fable*** is by **Jason Sherman**, one of **Canada's leading playwrights**, who received the Governor General's Award for Drama (and was nominated three other times) and the Chalmers Canadian Play Award (twice, along with three other nominations).

Boasting a cast of twelve, under the direction of **Ron Reed** (A BRIGHT PARTICULAR STAR, A WRINKLE IN TIME), this **refreshingly direct variation** of an ancient tale traces a young man's journey from a Polish *shtetl* to the work camps of **depression-era Canada**. Rising to become an advisor to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, Joseph is sent to turn back a boatload of European Jews – only to discover his brothers among the refugees.

The transposition to a modern era and to different countries (Poland for Israel, Canada for Egypt) lays bare the perpetual problems of **anti-Semitism** and **xenophobia**, destructive in multiple nations across history, and from which Canada is not exempt. These themes are presented by an ensemble cast of emerging artists, including Pacific Theatre's apprentices, Tina Teeninga, Elizabeth Pennington, and Kirsty Provan, and visually interpreted in scenery and lighting design by **Stancil Campbell**, who is arriving from the American University in Cairo to be part of the design team. Stancil Campbell has designed major theatre productions in the **U.S., Canada, Scotland, Ghana, and Egypt**. Costume design is by **Jessie Award** winning **Nicole Bach** (FARNDALE...CHRISTMAS CAROL, CARIBOO MAGI), sound design by Clinton Lindsay, and stage management by Lois Dawson.

<b>Details:</b>	<b>REMNANTS (A FABLE)</b> by Jason Sherman
<b>When:</b>	<b>May 17-June 9</b> (Opens May 18), Wed-Sat at 8pm, Sat at 2pm
<b>Where:</b>	<b>Pacific Theatre</b> , 1420 West 12th Ave (at Hemlock St), Vancouver, BC
<b>Tickets:</b>	\$16-\$32 (GST incl.) – To reserve call <b>604.731.5518</b> , visit <b><a href="http://pacifictheatre.org">pacifictheatre.org</a></b> , or purchase in person at the Box Office. Pay-What-You-Can Preview May 17 – purchased at door evening of May 17 (or \$10 in advance)