Tait's meticulous drawings. Particularly welcome are the maps illustrating the movements of the story's protagonists.

Hancock's formal, not to say didactic writing style, keeps her a certain distance from her characters. Jane Howse remains a shadowy figure, perhaps because her memories have been recorded at second hand. Inevitably, one wonders how her story would have emerged if it had come directly to us. She would not have called ninety pounds "as much as voyageurs could carry during a portage"; voyageurs vying with each other as to the loads they could handle could. . . and did. . . carry four times that amount on short portages. She would not have included Big Bear among the chiefs who fought in the 1885 uprising; the Cree leader resisted Ottawa but never resorted to violence.

Today, Jane Howse's life seems exotic, but when she was living it, coping with the unexpected was simply part of daily routine.

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WORLD WAR TWO ON THE PRAIRIES

Hockeybat Harris, Geoffrey Bilson. Kids Can Press, 1984. 158 pp. $5.95 paper. ISBN 0-919964-57-5.

Geoffrey Bilson has written two other children's books, *Death over Montreal* and *Goodbye Sarah. Hockeybat Harris,* a historical story intended for ten-to-twelve-year-olds, deals with the evacuation of British children to Canada. Bob Williams eagerly awaits the arrival of his family's "guest child." When David Harris finally arrives, he is boastful and quarrelsome. The main plot deals with Bob and David's ultimately successful attempts to be friends. The first chapter of the book deals not with David, however, but with Bob's Jewish friend, Danny. Danny resents Bob's excitement about the evacuees' arrival, because Jewish refugee children are being refused entry to Canada by the Mackenzie King government. Bob promptly writes a letter to King, asking that the Jewish children be let in, because "they are being bombed and put into concentration camps" (p. 18).

Here, I feel, historical accuracy and historical plausibility part company. I don't dispute the facts presented by Bilson, a respected History professor at the University of Saskatchewan. It presumably is possible that a Saskatchewan ten-year-old might, in 1941, have shared the knowledge and attitudes of a liberal historian of the 1980s, but it is not likely. Laudable though it may be to show children a virtuous reaction to the anti-Semitism described in Irving Abella's

and Harold Troper's *None is too many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1982), the result is a distortion. Abella's point is that few Canadians knew about the horrible plight of European Jewry, and most of those who did know didn't care.

Unfortunately, Bob's somewhat contrived reaction fits with the lop-sided moral world displayed by the rest of the book. He and his family are almost nauseatingly understanding, sensible and kind. David Harris is only bad because he misses his family. All the "evil" in the child characters is concentrated in a stereotypical school bully. And all the evil in the adult characters is concentrated in the Germans, who not only bomb Jewish children, but also sink the *City of Benares,* a ship filled with child evacuees. Then only does Mr. Williams "shout. . . about butchery. 'They did the same in the last war,' he said" (p. 41). Yet King's bland and non-committal reply to Bob's letter is never discussed.

We hope that the Holocaust has taught us that evil cannot be pushed away: it is part of us as well as "them." After all, the shock of recent publications about Canadian war-time treatment of Japanese-Canadians and European Jews is that we — the "good" guys — were racist too. That Bilson fails to convey any sense of moral ambiguity is a serious flaw.

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MYSTÈRE ET DIGNITÉ DU ROMAN

Les envoûtements, Daniel Sernine. Montréal, Paulines, 1985. 107 pp. 5,95$ broché. ISBN 2-89039-976-1.

La trame de ce récit est calquée sur l'Histoire, et l'histoire se déroule en moins d'un mois, fin printemps 1758 en la Nouvelle France juste avant sa conquête, à une génération près de la Révolution qui couve — les deux Frances, patrie en proie aux tisons des insatisfactions, et la nouvelle, assiégée dans son immense étendue. Les noms de Deerfield, de Détroit, voire de la Louisane, les courtes trèves qui emportent officiers et jeunes conscrits, seigneurs et valets de ferme, tous résonnent à St. Imnestre, village attenant à Neubourg avec sa haute et sa basse ville sur les rivages du Paskediac, tributaire du grand fleuve.

Le climat sévère et les long hivers s'entrelacent avec ces guerres intermittentes, mais déjà intercontinentales; la famine, physique et morale, menace toujours. Sinon très loin de Québec avec son gouverneur et ses prétentions, nous sommes dans une mini-société, soeur de celles de provinces françaises, également séparées du faste de Versailles.