

Trudeau didn't just defend the niqab. He defended the niqab by trivializing the Holocaust

David Frum writes in the [attention-grabbing speech](#) in Toronto last week. The speech was built to deliver a message astutely aimed at exactly the kind of “key audience” that Trudeau insisted he never, ever, ever thinks about: “We should all shudder to hear the same rhetoric that led to a ‘none is too many’ immigration policy toward Jews in the '30s and '40s, being used to raise fears against Muslims today.”

In case any TV crew missed the soundbite, Trudeau reprised it later in his speech: “This is not the spirit of Canadian liberty, my friends. It is the spirit of the Komagata Maru. Of the St. Louis. Of ‘none is too many.’”

Trudeau's analogy turned history upside-down. The European Jews who sought refuge in Canada in the 1930s and 1940s were fleeing an ideology that defined them as inferior and demanded they wear special identifying badges of inferiority. Trudeau now urges Canada to enable and assist those who define women as inferior – and who require women to wear special identifying badges of their inferiority.

In his Toronto speech, Trudeau said: “one of the highest aims of Canadian political leadership is to protect and expand freedom for Canadians.” He is so determined to expand freedom, in fact, that he now proposes to expand it to include the freedom to treat women like chattels. This is not the freedom that Trudeau's hero Wilfrid Laurier had in mind when he called freedom “Canada's nationality.” The

freedom Justin Trudeau defended in Toronto is the freedom Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee fought for: the freedom to dominate and subordinate.

Justin Trudeau takes pride in his support for women's rights and aspirations. To uphold women's right to choose abortion, he proudly told his audience, he had set new limits on Liberal MPs' freedom to vote with their consciences. He even tentatively acknowledged that some might see the niqab as a "symbol of oppression": the garment's purpose, after all, is to deprive women of their individuality; to render them invisible in public space. Yet this outspoken feminist argued that the government of Canada should accommodate such oppression in its citizenship ceremonies.

To understand Trudeau's purpose, you should consider together both what the Liberal leader said and the way he said it. He didn't just defend the niqab. He defended the niqab by trivializing the Nazi Holocaust. Out of all the whole vast archive of human experience, Justin Trudeau reached for that one particular volume. Why?

The short answer is that the "key audience" Justin Trudeau wished to reach in his Toronto speech is an audience that seeks to appropriate Jewish history for their own political purposes. To champion the niqab as a symbol of liberty may collect some votes. To champion the niqab in a way that edits Jews out of history and substitutes others into their place – that is intended to collect many, many more.

We hear a lot these days about "the new Jews": people who supposedly have replaced the Jews as the victims of persecution. But when you review the data on which religious groups are targeted for hate crimes, it turns out – to borrow a line from an old rock anthem – that when you meet the new Jews, they're the same as the old Jews. And when you listen to the debate about *Charlie Hebdo*, about

the massacre at the Parisian kosher market, about the attempted massacre at a free-speech gathering in Copenhagen, and the actual murder at the synagogue there – you realize that some of the people most eager to pose as victims are in reality the most merciless victimizers.

Justin Trudeau himself is no kind of victimizer, of course. He's a mild Canadian Liberal practicing a very familiar kind of Liberal politics: trying to win immigrant votes with a salute to the most radical elements of an immigrant community, a cheap gesture for a big payoff. The Toronto speech was promptly followed by