

# British Columbia Newspaper Responses to Jewish Persecution in Europe, 1938-1939: A Call for Refugees and a Cause for Civilization

Author **Nathan Lucky** was awarded the inaugural BC Jewish History Research Prize, presented by the **Jewish Museum and Archives of BC** on November 21, 2018 in recognition of the superb scholarship demonstrated in this paper.

## Abstract

This paper examines British Columbia press responses to Jewish persecution in Nazi Germany and Eastern Europe from 1938 to 1939. Using the Vancouver Jewish community paper, the *Jewish Western Bulletin*, as its focus, the study juxtaposes its responses with three non-Jewish papers. Vancouver Jews responded to the persecution of their coreligionists in Germany and Europe by countering neutral and skeptical reporting in the mainstream papers with explicit reporting of persecution. They lobbied for Canada to allow Jewish refugees and by 1938, they adapted to appeal to mainstream Canadian views by calling for “refugees” and “immigrants” to enter the country. They dispelled myths circulated in the non-Jewish papers about refugees and worked to change minds and gather support to convince Canada to open its doors. Finally, they emphasized that the threat of fascism was a crisis of civilization.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is taken from a chapter written for my honours thesis: Nathan Lucky, "It matters very much whether you care that they live or die": British Columbia Newspaper Responses to Jewish Persecution in Europe, 1933-1939, (honours thesis, University of British Columbia), 2018

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## DOLF HITLER'S APPOINTMENT TO THE CHANCELLORSHIP OF GERMANY

on January 30, 1933, and seizure of dictatorial powers weeks later would ultimately lead to a world war in 1939 and the attempted extermination of European Jews. In the intervening years, he established policies to match the anti-Semitic rhetoric he had preached to his adherents for many years. On April 1, 1933, the Nazi Party called for a nation-wide boycott of all Jewish businesses and began removing Jews from government positions as well as from the professions. Predictably, German Jews who could flee the country did, and those who could not or risked staying behind quickly depended on charity for survival and endured Nazi violence. In September 1935, the Nazis enacted the most infamous legislation of the pre-war years: the Nuremberg Laws. These laws made German Jews non-citizens in their own country, formalized racial hierarchies, and codified who was a Jew. Germany's preparation for the 1936 Olympic Games necessitated that the Nazis appear to treat the Jewish population with a sense of fair play, thus no new, major actions were taken against the Jews, but neither were anti-Semitic initiatives rolled back. The Jews' respite came to an end with the annexation of Austria, the *Anschluss* in March 1938. The Nazis visited upon Austrian Jews in a matter of weeks what had taken five years in Germany as mass violence, imprisonment, and Aryanization overtook the Jewish community. In November of the same year, a Greater Germany that included Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland engaged in a nation-wide pogrom against the Jews known as *Kristallnacht*.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, Canadians read in their newspapers about the increasingly severe persecution of European, and especially German, Jews. Using a sample of four British Columbia newspapers from 1938-1939, the focus of this study will be how these four newspapers responded to the tragedy that unfolded before them on a weekly and daily basis. What events did each paper cover, how did they cover them,

and in what depth? Did the coverage and positions of the papers change over time? To what audience are each of the papers speaking to, and what are their apparent motivations? Of Primary focus is the weekly *Jewish Western Bulletin*, the community newspaper of Vancouver's small Jewish community. The non-Jewish press is represented by the *Victoria Daily Colonist*; and to a smaller degree, two rural weekly papers in the *Prince George Citizen* and *Chilliwack Progress*.

From 1938 to 1939, Vancouver Jews responded to their coreligionists' plight in Germany and Europe by countering neutral, skeptical, and irregular reporting in the mainstream papers with consistent, explicit reporting of persecution. The small community of Jews distinguished themselves among the Jews in Canada and the world by trying to marshal divided Jewish communities to help European Jews through fundraising efforts, boycotting, and appealing for more open immigration policies. Sometimes, they broke with strategies set by the eastern-based Canadian Jewish Congress. When sympathy for Jews peaked in Canada, they adapted their messaging to appeal to mainstream Canadian views. They called for "refugees" and "immigrants," not only Jews, to enter the country, and frequently ran stories to dispel myths about Jews to gather enough support to convince Canada to open its doors. Finally, they began to emphasize that the threat of fascism was a crisis of civilization.

To answer these questions, an archival study of the four newspapers was undertaken. All were in digital archives. Where available, I used the Boolean search term Jew\* to find all instances of the words Jew, Jews, Jewish, Jewry, and Jewess in the papers. When this was not available, I manually searched for these terms or read the paper. This method necessarily relies on the quality of the search function to complete the search with accuracy. It is possible that the search engine did not recognize instances of the word Jew and its variations, and certainly, a search returned several false positives, most often the word "few." The *Jewish Western Bulletin* required a manual search with the human eye, going through each issue headline by headline as

well as a scan through each column in search of stories relevant to the topic. The trade-off with this type of search is human error. It is certain that some stories fell through the cracks, though likely only stories of a secondary nature. Each news story was classified for each paper into several yearly categories: the total number of stories, short stories (less than three paragraphs), secondary stories (where Jewish persecution was mentioned but was not the main topic), page one stories, editorials, and letters to the editor. Additionally, a discourse analysis of each paper was performed to determine the positions the papers held regarding the persecution of European Jews and what, if any, the Canadian response should be.

The scholarship on Canadian responses to Jewish persecution from 1938 to 1939 is quite limited. Harold Troper and Irving Abella published their groundbreaking 1983 work, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*, which largely focused on the anti-Semitic motivations of government officials in the Mackenzie-King administration to keep out Jewish refugees as well as the Canadian Jewish leadership's tireless, yet fruitless efforts to make them change immigration policy.<sup>2</sup> Naturally, this is a very eastern Canadian focus. Alan Davies and Marilyn F. Nefsky responded to a claim in Troper and Abella's study that the churches of Canada were silent on the plight of Jews in their book *How Silent Were the Churches? Canadian Protestantism and the Jewish Plight during the Nazi Era*.<sup>3</sup> Using the church journals as their primary source, they focused on the initial adoption of the Aryan Laws from 1933-1935, *Kristallnacht*, the refugee crisis in 1939, then the period 1942-1945 when most of the killing during the Holocaust happened. They found church responses were not universal but depended on many factors, such as how one defined the Church

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<sup>2</sup> Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Alan Davies and Marilyn F. Nefsky, *How Silent Were the Churches? Canadian Protestantism and the Jewish Plight during the Nazi Era* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1997).

or historical connections to Germany. There was no common outcry among the many denominations, but neither was there a universal silence.<sup>4</sup>

More recent studies have looked at Canadian press responses. Max Beer's master's thesis examines the response of the Montreal Jewish community, and one aspect of this is the reporting in the Montreal Jewish press; however, it is not a systematic study of the press, but one aspect of the community response that largely focused on the early years, then from *Kristallnacht* onward.<sup>5</sup> Robin Studnigberg's master's thesis focused on the response of the Vancouver press to Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1935 and explored how British identity among non-Jewish Vancouverites shaped their anti-fascist response, and the conflicted identity Vancouver Jews experience as both loyal Canadians and Jews.<sup>6</sup> Broader Canadian press responses for this period are included in the edited volume *Nazi Germany, Canadian Responses: Confronting Antisemitism in the Shadow of War*. Richard Menkis and Harold Troper studied press responses to the prospect of an Olympic boycott of the Berlin Games in major Canadian newspapers such as Toronto's *Globe*, the *Toronto Star*, the *Montreal Gazette*, and the *Winnipeg Free Press* and found coverage was more concerned about an American boycott than a Canadian one.<sup>7</sup> In another chapter, Amanda Gryzb does a systematic review of *Globe* coverage from *Kristallnacht* to the MS *St Louis* voyage, using it as a baseline to compare and contrast with six major regional papers in Canada.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>5</sup> Max Beer, *What Else Could We Have Done?: The Montreal Jewish Community, the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Jewish Press and the Holocaust* (master's thesis, Concordia University), 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Robin Elise Studnigberg, "One shudders to think what might happen to Germany Jewry': Vancouver Newspapers and Canadian Attitudes towards Nazi Antisemitism, 1933-1935 (master's thesis, University of British Columbia), 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Menkis and Harold Troper, "Racial Laws vs. Olympic Aspirations in the Anglo-Canadian Press of Fall 1935," in *Nazi Germany, Canadian Responses: Confronting Antisemitism in the Shadow of War*, ed. L. Ruth Klein (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2012): 46-77.

She found that while the press sympathized with Jewish refugees, the coverage was event-driven and all but disappeared the summer before the war started.<sup>8</sup>

American historiography of press responses to the Holocaust has been covered in books like Robert W. Ross's *So it was True: The American Protestant Press and the Nazi Persecution of the Jews*. He studied four broad categories of liberal, mainstream Protestant, evangelical conservative, and fundamentalist papers and found that the papers' obsession with threatened religious freedom of Christians in Germany superseded coverage of Jewish persecution, and most reporting on Jews concerned those who had converted to Christianity.<sup>9</sup> Deborah Lipstadt's book, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933-1945*, relied heavily on the *Press Information Bulletin*, a creation of the Division of Press Intelligence that curated news and editorials from five-hundred of the biggest newspapers in the U.S. for the White House to gauge public opinions.<sup>10</sup> This allows an examination of a breadth of views, but sacrifices depth. There is no sense of what the overall coverage was of any one paper, and it focuses on the climate American journalists worked under in Nazi Germany as well as the Olympic boycott campaign in the pre-war years. As the title indicates, the American press was skeptical of the reports of Jewish persecution, and while sympathy and condemnation manifested themselves at times, a large majority of the press rejected the notion that America ought to accept more refugees and refused to get involved in European affairs.<sup>11</sup> Laurel Leff's book, *Buried by the Time: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper*, gives a critical account of the

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<sup>8</sup> Amanda Gryzb, "From Kristallnacht to the MS *St Louis* Tragedy: Canadian Press Coverage of Nazi Persecution of the Jews and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, September 1938 to August 1939," in *Nazi Germany, Canadian Responses: Confronting Antisemitism in the Shadow of War*, ed. L. Ruth Klein (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2012): 78-113.

<sup>9</sup> Robert W. Ross, *So it was True: The American Protestant Press and the Nazi Persecution of the Jews* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980).

<sup>10</sup> Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933-1945* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 4-5.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 106-108.

coverage of the *New York Times*, finding that the paper's Jewish owners went out of their way to not cover Jewish persecution or attach themselves or the paper to any Jewish cause for fear of being called a Jewish paper. Leff covered even less of the pre-war period, dedicating a single chapter that is mostly biographical information of the *Times'* owners, not its coverage.<sup>12</sup>

Robert Shapiro's edited volume, *Why Didn't the Press Shout? American and International Journalism During the Holocaust*, contains two entries that covered the pre-war press responses. Abraham Brumberg and Chevy Chase assessed the role of two of the leading Yiddish newspapers in New York, *The Forward* and *Morning Freedom*. Jews of Eastern European origins ran both papers, but *The Forward* supported the Social Democrats in Germany, and the *Morning Freedom* supported the German communists. These political ideologies framed their coverage. As Brumberg and Chase write, both papers were so "mired in their myths" of socialism and communism that neither "hardly realized that civilization as a whole was on the verge of extinction."<sup>13</sup> A study by Colin Shindler of *The Times* of London tells that the editors of the paper believed that the Nazi leadership were readers. Thus, they toned down any reporting on Jewish persecution to maintain whatever influence they believed the paper had on the leadership. Additionally, the editors always thought reports about Jews were exaggerated, and never believed that the Nazis hated the Jews on racial grounds.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Time: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Abraham Brumberg and Chevy Chase, "Towards the Final Solution: Perceptions of Hitler and Nazism in the US Left-of-Center Yiddish Press, 1930-1939," in Robert Moses Shapiro, ed. *Why Didn't the Press Shout? American and International Journalism During the Holocaust* (Jersey City: Yeshiva University Press, 2003), 36.

<sup>14</sup> Colin Shindler, "The 'Thunderer' and the Coming of the Shoah: *The Times* of London, 1933-1942" in Robert Moses Shapiro, ed. *Why Didn't the Press Shout? American and International Journalism During the Holocaust*, 152,157.

Within the literature, then, there appears to be a greater focus on papers with the highest circulation in major cities which neglects the responses of newspapers in smaller cities and towns and those papers with smaller circulations competing in a big city. In Canada, this has also put much of the research within eastern Canada at the expense of responses in the west. Moreover, very few studies conduct a quantitative analysis of press coverage which can reveal a paper and readerships' interest more than a qualitative analysis of a handful of editorials and stories can.

Increased Jewish persecution in Europe and the creation of hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees in need of charity and goodwill from the world came at a time when both were in short supply. In 1933, most countries were still in the thick of the Great Depression, and Canada was no different. Gross national product was nearly half of what it was in 1929, and unemployment neared 20 percent. By 1939, many aspects of the economy had nearly reached pre-depression numbers again, but unemployment still lingered at 11.4 percent compared to 2.8 percent in 1929.<sup>15</sup> These conditions were frequently cited as barriers preventing Jewish refugees from coming to Canada, and this may have been especially true in Victoria. There, Peter Stursberg, a young reporter for the *Victoria Daily Times* in the 1930s, described in his memoir relief camps close to the city, filled with young, single, unemployed men.<sup>16</sup> However, high unemployment does not wholly explain attitudes towards certain immigrants.

In 1930s Canada, antisemitism was widespread. Canada considered itself a Christian country and Jews were expected not to meddle in Christian morality or impose their religious views on society.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Louis Rosenberg argued that neither Canadians of British origin nor French Canadians viewed Jews as belonging to either

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<sup>15</sup> Margaret Conrad, Alvin Finkel, Donald Fyson, eds., *Canada: A History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Toronto: Pearson, 2013), 332.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Stursberg, *Those Were the Days: Victoria in the 1930s* (Winnipeg: Horsdal and Schubart Publishers, 1993), 15.

<sup>17</sup> Ira Robinson, *A History of Antisemitism in Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2015), 60-61.



group.<sup>18</sup> This sentiment existed regardless of the fact that nearly 44 percent of Jews in Canada had been born there.<sup>19</sup> In fact, it is expressed in a poem that appeared in the *Chilliwack Progress*:

There are so many races  
Of this earth's humanity,  
But the fact that I am British  
Is the best of luck to me.

When I read about the Spaniards,  
The Germans, Japs, and Jews,  
The aggressor and the tortured,  
To be British I would choose.

Oh we of good old British stock  
Of none are envious,  
We are proud to own the Union Jack,  
God keep it over us.<sup>20</sup>

Jews in the economic sector faced considerable discrimination. At the time, it was commonplace for application forms to require an applicant's religious affiliation, nationality, and ethnicity. Sometimes, advertisements simply said "Gentiles only" or "Christians only."<sup>21</sup> Louis Rosenberg claims that when in competition for a job with a non-Jew, a Jew needed to be "ten times as good as the average applicant" to have a

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<sup>18</sup> Louis Rosenberg, *Canada's Jews: A Social and Economic Study of Jews Canada in the 1930s* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1993), 300.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>20</sup> G.M. David, "Dei Gratia," *Chilliwack Progress*, December 30, 1938, 7.

<sup>21</sup> Rosenberg, 304.

chance.<sup>22</sup> In taxpayer-funded education, Jews were shut out completely from teaching positions, very few hospitals permitted Jewish staff, and nation-wide corporations only hired one or two token Jews for minor positions to avoid a charge of anti-Semitism.<sup>23</sup>

This anti-Semitism also informed Canadian immigration policy. From 1933 to 1938, Canada accepted just 4,422 Jewish immigrants, and 1,779 of those came from the United States while the remaining 2,643 were from overseas.<sup>24</sup> These low numbers were due to new immigration policies established in 1930 that banned all but those few immigrants with enough money to start their own farms, then the next year they extended the legislation to nearly exclusively allow British and American would-be farmers. If those were in short supply, Central and northern Europeans were acceptable, and “Jews, Blacks, and Orientals” were at the bottom of the hierarchy.<sup>25</sup> This new-found immigration policy was not only due to the Great Depression, but what Abella calls the fear of “mongrelization” within the country and the belief that Jews, supposedly “city people” and overwhelmingly communists, did not fit with a vision of Canada as a country of farmers.<sup>26</sup>

This obsession with protecting the purity of the white race was a mission that some politicians in the B.C. Legislature took seriously. Both Mary Ellen Smith, the first female MLA in BC and the Attorney General, Alexander Manson, followed the eugenicists of the period in their concern over producing “clean children” that ensured the “survival of white British Columbia.”<sup>27</sup> She was also one of the supporters of the sexual sterilization law that passed in the B.C. Legislature in 1933, only one of two

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>25</sup> Abella and Troper, 5-6.

<sup>26</sup> Irving Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1990), 186.

<sup>27</sup> Scott Kerwin, “The Janet Smith Bill of 1924 and the Language of Race and Nation in British Columbia,” *BC Studies* no. 121 (Spring: 1999): 91.

provinces in the country to pass such a law.<sup>28</sup> This obsession with racial purity was largely directed against the “Yellow Peril,” the notion that Japanese and Chinese immigrants were taking over the province. Very few Jews lived in B.C., just 2,743 in 1931, and 2,433 of them lived in Vancouver out of a population of 156,726 in Canada. Nearly all Canadian Jews lived in Quebec and Ontario.<sup>29</sup> It is likely that their low numbers in B.C. saved them from some of the worst anti-Semitism seen in Quebec, where newspapers printed *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* long after it had been proven a fraud and organized boycotts against Jewish businesses even before the Nazis came to power.<sup>30</sup>

An ideal medium through which to view responses to Jewish persecution in Europe is through the newspapers, for they are both tools to express public opinion, but also shape public opinion. As Arnold Edinborough relates in *Mass Media in Canada*, a paper, no matter how large its circulation, is concerned with local affairs, and wants to appeal to as broad an audience as possible. At a time when the newspaper still ruled the media, it was the place where all local concerns were decided upon.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, it was the medium through which people accessed international news. At this time, many newspapers had ostensibly dedicated themselves to hyper objectivity after a loss of trust following a foray into propagandizing during the First World War. However, as British Journalist Claud Cockburn noted: “All stories are written backwards – they are supposed to begin with facts and develop from there, but in reality they begin with a journalist’s point of view, a conception, and it is the point of view from which the facts are subsequently organized.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>29</sup> Rosenberg, 20, 114.

<sup>30</sup> Gerald Tulchinsky, *Canada’s Jews: A People’s Journey* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 301-2.

<sup>31</sup> Arnold Edinborough, “The Press” in *Mass Media in Canada*, John A. Irving, ed. (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1962), 18.

<sup>32</sup> Claud Cockburn, *In Time of Trouble*, quoted in Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933-1945* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 10.

Beyond the way a story is framed, the language used, and the level of detail, there are other ways this is done. What an editor decides to include in the paper is obviously the first step. Canadian dailies had access to not only the Canadian Press. Through reciprocal agreements, they had access to the Associated Press, Reuters, the Jewish Telegraph Agency, Wolff in Germany, and the British United Press among others.<sup>33</sup> With more news than any one paper can print, an editor prioritizes what the public wants to read, but from their own point of view. How that news is arranged in the paper can both raise an issue to prominence or relegate it to obscurity. The front page is the most important as it is the first page a reader sees, while pages toward the back of a paper become increasingly specialized, focusing on sports, societal news, business, etc., and do not have relevance for everyone.<sup>34</sup> A reader will at least look at the front page of a paper 97 percent of the time, whereas the likelihood that a page from the middle of the paper to the last page will be opened drops by more than 30 percent in most cases.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, news buried in the middle or back of the paper would indicate to the reader its relative unimportance compared to front page news. The *Jewish Western Bulletin* made the purpose of its weekly paper no secret. In an April 1933 editorial marking the fourth anniversary of the newspaper's founding, it said it wanted to be the mouthpiece of the Jewish Community of Vancouver, to connect Jews living there to Jews throughout the world in a unified purpose. Moreover, it wanted to spur its readers to sympathize with and aid persecuted Jews in Europe. More than this, it wished to be a catalyst for change, to prompt its readership to "civic, philanthropic, and educational service."<sup>36</sup> This mission is one they more or less followed during the most trying period in Jewish history. This fledgling Jewish newspaper was not merely a newspaper in that its function was not merely to publish news. Operated by the

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<sup>33</sup> "World-Wide Service," *Daily Colonist*, December 10, 1933, 55.

<sup>34</sup> Leo Bogart, *Press and Public: Who Reads What, When, Where, and Why in American Newspapers* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1989), 161.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> "Editorial," *Jewish Western Bulletin*, April 13, 1933, 2.

Vancouver Jewish Community Centre, its goals were, as they saw them, the betterment of Vancouver Jews, the broader Jewish community, and society in general. Comparatively, the non-Jewish papers had been established for decades at this point and were not as overtly idealistic but did reflect the biases of their times as already discussed.

From 1938 to 1939, the Nazi regime undertook its most notorious pre-war actions against the Jews during the German annexation of Austria in March 1938, the *Anschluss* and *Kristallnacht*. During the *Anschluss*, thousands of Jewish homes and businesses were looted, and thousands of Jews were sent to concentration camps or put on the border, forced into Hungary or Czechoslovakia. To avoid the terror, hundreds committed suicide. Moreover, rapid Aryanization of Jewish property resulted in the takeover of twenty-five thousand businesses.<sup>37</sup> Violence and destruction reigned for two days during *Kristallnacht*, November 9 to 10, 1938. Approximately 7,500 Jewish businesses were ransacked and looted, 267 synagogues were burned down, 30,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps, and 91 Jews were killed. In the following days, the Nazi regime held the Jews in its borders collectively responsible for the destruction and fined them one billion Reichsmarks (400 million US dollars in 1938). New anti-Jewish legislation came quickly as well. Aryanization, already taking place in Austria, came to Germany, and opportunities for employment were restricted further. Moreover, the Nazis expelled Jews from the education system and banned them from social centres such as the theatre and cinema.<sup>38</sup>

These two events reinvigorated the interest of the public and the newspapers in British Columbia even beyond the levels reached in 1933.<sup>39</sup> The *Jewish Western Bulletin*

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<sup>37</sup> Laqueur and Baumel, eds, *The Holocaust Encyclopedia*, 46-47.

<sup>38</sup> "Kristallnacht: A Nationwide Pogrom," *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, accessed February 3, 2017, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005201>.

<sup>39</sup> Nathan Lucky, "It matters very much whether you care that they live or die": British Columbia Newspaper Responses to Jewish Persecution in Europe, 1933-1939, (honours thesis, University of British Columbia), 2018, 15.

in Vancouver published 377 articles related to Jewish persecution from the beginning of 1938 to the start of the Second World War in September of 1939. The *Victoria Daily Colonist* increased their coverage of Jewish persecution and finally captured the mainstream, sustained attention that it had not achieved beforehand. They wrote 179 articles over the same period, and 95 of those stories made page one. Sixty-six stories out of the total 179 were short in nature. Additionally, secondary stories where the paper mentioned Jewish persecution in articles that otherwise had nothing to do with it increased. There were thirty-four secondary stories over this period compared to just eight in 1933, and there were 11 letters to the editor in 1938, more than doubling the 1933 total.<sup>40</sup> These numbers speak to how much Jewish persecution became a greater concern to non-Jews more than in years past. Even the low output of the *Prince George Citizen* and the *Chilliwack Progress* grew during this time. The *Citizen* carried twenty-two stories, but only three made the front page. However, the ratio of short articles shrank compared to 1933, accounting for less than one in five, while secondary mentions made up six of the twenty-two. Their first editorials and letters to the editor on the subject also appear during this period. Likewise, the *Chilliwack Progress* had fourteen articles, four of them short and five of them secondary; however, just one made page one and no editorials or letters to the editor appeared.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, this overall growth in interest was not exclusive to these papers, but in papers across Canada. As reported by the *Colonist*, the Editors of Canada picked Jewish persecution as the fifth largest world news story of 1938.<sup>42</sup> The *Bulletin* ran twenty-eight editorials during this time, the *Colonist's* editorial output exploded as it carried eleven. The *Prince George Citizen* had two editorials, while the *Chilliwack Progress* had none.

Reporting of Jewish persecution following the *Anschluss* and *Kristallnacht* became one of the biggest stories of the year in the mainstream newspapers, and

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> "Editors of Canada Pick Threat of War as Leader in News," *Daily Colonist*, January 6, 1939, 2.

sympathy for Jews was never higher as the many letters to the editor and articles indicated. Still, anti-Semitic sentiments remained, especially towards potential Jewish refugees. In response, the *Bulletin* changed strategies from years prior and made the issue of persecution not only about Jews or Canadians, but about civilization. Again, using new tactics, they called for Canada to take “refugees” or “immigrants,” and frequently pointed out that many other religious groups were affected. The mainstream papers mirrored this new approach shortly after. Additionally, they ran many stories explaining what a success refugees had been for other countries and emphasized what an economic boon they would be for Canada, a selling point pro-refugee papers started to use which tried to counter some lingering mainstream opinions about refugees and the economy.

The initial reporting on the coming annexation of Austria mirrored the general reporting of Hitler’s rise to power in 1933: a naïve belief that the situation for Austrian Jews would not be much worse after Hitler annexed the country. The *Bulletin*’s first story on 4 March 1938 did report that Austrian Jews worried for their futures despite assurances from Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg, who invited Nazi members into the government a week before the annexation.<sup>43</sup> However, an editorial the same day insisted that the rights of the Jews in Austria were limited already, so the Nazis could not do much more to harm them. Moreover, if they brought in Nuremberg-like laws, the Jews could appeal to the League of Nations.<sup>44</sup> Likewise, the *Victoria Daily Colonist* on February 20, 1938 printed the assurances of the Austrian Chancellor, that the Jews “could face the future with full confidence.”<sup>45</sup> However, attitudes such as these did not last long.

On the day of the Nazi coup, March 11, 1938, the *Jewish Western Bulletin* captured the ominous weeks ahead with a chant recited by Nazi students at the

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<sup>43</sup> “Schuschnigg Fails to Allay Alarm of Austrian Jews,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, March 4, 1938, 1.

<sup>44</sup> “Change of Events,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, March 4, 1938, editorial, 2.

<sup>45</sup> “Austrian Jews are Reassured,” *Daily Colonist*, February 20, 1938, 1.

University of Vienna: “Judah, jump the twig. Go hang yourselves. When Jewish blood drips from our knives everything will go well.”<sup>46</sup> Soon, the paper was filled with stories of horror, such as “Thousands of Jews Jobless in Austria as Nazi Axe Falls: Terror Reigns in Jewish Quarter; Wave of Suicides Reported.”<sup>47</sup> On April 1, the *Bulletin* ran a large headline on page one: “1700 Jewish Suicides Reported in Vienna,” and within the story they gave a long list of prominent doctors, lawyers, professors, and community leaders who had killed themselves, and more who had been arrested.<sup>48</sup> They also reported on events that showed the indignities Austrian Jews suffered by the Nazis, such as shop owners forced to stand by while seven to ten-year-old children with Swastika armbands looted candy and toys from their stores.<sup>49</sup>

About a month before *Kristallnacht*, the *Bulletin* printed a most interesting and unexpected story addressing the perception of the times they lived in:

The past year has been more than usually productive of news of Jewish suffering and persecution so much so in fact, that the historian of the future consulting the Jewish press...will get the distorted impression that every man’s hand was raised against the Jew, that nowhere were there any signs of humanitarianism toward him, that the entire picture of Jewish life was black and foreboding.<sup>50</sup>

Yes, they said that anti-Semitism had “made great strides,” but “good will kept pace with it.”<sup>51</sup> The writer did not mean sympathetic words about Jews now common in the papers, but “good will in action,” especially by those in Europe who risked their very

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<sup>46</sup> “Nazi Students Stage Anti-Jewish Demonstration in Vienna,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, March 11, 1938, 2; jump the twig is an idiom similar to “kick the bucket.”

<sup>47</sup> “Thousands of Jews Jobless in Austria as Nazi Axe Falls: Terror Reigns in Jewish Quarter; Wave of Suicides Reported,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, March 25, 1938, 1.

<sup>48</sup> “1700 Jewish Suicides Reported in Vienna,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, April 1, 1938, 1; Modern estimates of Austrian Jewish suicides are 220 in March 1938. See Walter Laqueur and Judith Tydor Baumel, eds, *The Holocaust Encyclopedia*, 46.

<sup>49</sup> “Swastika-Wearing Children Loot Jewish Candy Stores in Vienna,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, April 1, 1938, 4.

<sup>50</sup> Bernard Postal, “Good Will in Action,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, October 7, 1938, 3.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*



lives or livelihoods by giving succor to Jews<sup>52</sup> What followed in the story was three full-length columns recounting such good deeds as Christian neighbours of Jews in Vienna, horrified that Jews were forced to wash streets and walls, and joined them in protest; Neighbours who gave food to Jews when no one would sell to them, and to those Jews too poor to buy it; the many Germans who refused to boycott Jewish stores and helped send Jewish children to other countries; and Polish professors who refused to teach ghettoized classes and resigned in protest.<sup>53</sup>

The *Victoria Daily Colonist* started carrying stories of Jewish persecution in Austria the day after the coup and told of hundreds of Jews trying to flee the country.<sup>54</sup> However, the Jews were reported as but one group who the Nazis might target along with others, like Catholics and socialists.<sup>55</sup> On March 15, they printed two contradictory stories. One on page two about the British government saying they had assurance from Germany that Jews, Catholics and socialists would be handled with “a sense of moderation.”<sup>56</sup> The other story, a secondary one on page 17 (continued from page 1) reported thousands of Austrian Jews tried to flee, doctors and lawyers banned from practice, stores looted, and Jews assaulted and imprisoned.<sup>57</sup> Stories of persecution became frequent front page material starting in late March and continued throughout the summer. *Daily Colonist* readers read that Herman Goering wanted Austria free of Jews within four years, and that all Jews in Germany had their property and wealth stolen by the Nazis.<sup>58</sup> They read of scenes in American and British consulates in Europe, where officials turned away so many Jews, who openly wept and threatened to kill themselves; and they read quotes from *Der Stürmer*: “...extermination of the Jews [is]

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> “Threat of Invasion Gives German Nazis Control of Vienna,” *Daily Colonist*, March 12, 1938, 2.

<sup>55</sup> “Defies World to Break New Union,” *Daily Colonist*, March 13, 1938, 2.

<sup>56</sup> “British Representation,” *Daily Colonist*, March 15, 1938, 2.

<sup>57</sup> “Tumultuous Welcome in Vienna,” *Daily Colonist*, March 15, 1938, 17.

<sup>58</sup> “Tells Jews to Leave Austria,” *Daily Colonist*, March 27, 1938, 1; “Jews to Lose All Property,” *Daily Colonist*, April 28, 1938, 1.

the only solution [to] the problem” of Jews who could neither leave nor support themselves.<sup>59</sup>

Reporting in the small local papers of the *Prince George Citizen* and *Chilliwack Progress* was less thorough. In the *Citizen*, there was a full column story on the German invasion of Austria, but only a mention of the imprisonment of hundreds of Jews in the final sentence.<sup>60</sup> The *Progress*' editor wrote about the invasion but made no mention of the Jews' plight. They noted that the news was filled with propaganda of what had been happening, and lamented that it had pushed news of Spain as well as Japan and China off the front page.<sup>61</sup> The only story of Jewish persecution in the first seven months of 1938 was a report on a German spa that would no longer allow Jews to use its restaurants, tennis courts, or swimming pools.<sup>62</sup>

News of *Kristallnacht* reached the pages of the *Jewish Western Bulletin* on November 18, 1938. Surprisingly, the editor thought the massive violence was a sign of the end of Nazi Germany. They described the pogrom as “Robbery with violence, terrorism, cruel inhuman torture, murder, all these things...inflicted tenfold on our people during the past few days, on the very flimsiest pretext.”<sup>63</sup> The paper reported that many Jews had killed themselves and an estimated fifty thousand were put in concentration camps.<sup>64</sup> The editor believed that because this horrible crime had turned the stomachs of even the Nazi apologists in America and Britain, “out of all this chaos there may come a new era which will see us in brighter and happier circumstances.”<sup>65</sup> Certainly, it had renewed the interest and sympathy of

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<sup>59</sup> “Jews Suffer Daily Raids,” *Daily Colonist*, June 18, 1938, 1; “To Rid Berlin of Every Jews,” *Daily Colonist*, June 21, 1938, 1.

<sup>60</sup> “Germans Invade Austria – Take Over Country,” *Prince George Citizen*, March 17, 1938, 1.

<sup>61</sup> “Left Speechless,” *Chilliwack Progress*, March 16, 1938, editorial, 4.

<sup>62</sup> “Tough on Jew Guests,” *Chilliwack Progress*, July 13, 1938, 4.

<sup>63</sup> “Is It the Beginning of the End?” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, November 18, 1938, editorial, 2.

<sup>64</sup> “Anglo-Americans Plans for Settling of Jewish Refugees in Africa and American Being Discussed,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, November 25, 1938, 4.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

Vancouverites, who came out in force to a mass meeting that included community leaders like the Mayor of Vancouver, Archbishop Duke of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Vancouver, and President of the Trades and Labour Council.<sup>66</sup>

The reporting in the *Daily Colonist* on *Kristallnacht* was as good and perhaps more detailed than even the *Bulletin*. The page one story said the German Jews had been the “victims of a nation-wide day of vengeance” that caused Jewish property damages in the millions, twenty-one synagogues in Vienna burned, Jews sent to concentration camps, and many suicides, and noted similar scenes of violence happened in many cities.<sup>67</sup> In a follow up two days later, they reported the fine of four hundred million USD, amounting to one-quarter of all Jewish wealth in Germany, the total devastation of Jewish business, and at least twenty thousand Jews in Vienna sent to concentration camps.<sup>68</sup> An editorial the same day noted that almost all countries in the world were deeply disturbed by the actions of the German people, and would likely make official protests.<sup>69</sup> The *Prince George Citizen* and *Chilliwack Progress* did not report on *Kristallnacht*, but the population was obviously aware of it from other sources as it was referenced days later in a story about Chilliwack Boy Scouts, who reportedly prayed for the German Jews “in their plight.”<sup>70</sup>

With sympathy rising for the suffering Jews in Austria and Germany, the *Jewish Western Bulletin* reframed the refugee crisis. The *Bulletin* had always championed the Canadian government admitting *Jewish* refugees, but now *Bulletin* frequently called for the admittance of refugees or simply immigrants in general. This was an attempt to rebrand the immigration debate. While many Canadians were against admitting Jews,

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<sup>66</sup> “Strong Protest Made By Vancouver Citizens Against Germany’s Inhuman Treatment of Jews: Prominent Citizens, Heads of Churches Take Part in Mass Meeting” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, November 25, 1938, 1.

<sup>67</sup> “Jews in Germany Victims of Nation-Wide Day of Vengeance,” *Daily Colonist*, November 11, 1938, 1.

<sup>68</sup> “Nazis Wipe Out Jewish Business in Their Country,” *Daily Colonist*, November 13, 1938, 1.

<sup>69</sup> “Persecuting the Jews,” *Daily Colonist*, November 13, 1938, editorial, 4.

<sup>70</sup> “Boy Scout News,” *Chilliwack Progress*, November 16, 1938, 8.

they would be less likely to refuse refugees, who included any number of people or different ethnicities and faiths. Further still, an immigrant shed any stigma associated with refugees, who conjured up images of poor people in need of charity. Immigrants were, potentially, people who wanted to come to a country to work hard, just like so many Canadians had once done.

They also continued to debunk myths about Jews that appeared in other papers. In January 1939, the paper was hopeful that the Canadian government would change their refugee policy and allow “refugee children,” and told its readers that the Jewish community would conduct a survey of families, especially relatives, who would take them.<sup>71</sup> They countered misleading statements that suggested Jews would take over cities and congregate in Eastern Canada by printing statistics that showed the highest proportion of Jews in any Canadian city was a mere 6 percent, and that while 80 percent of Jews did live in Eastern Canada, so too did 70 percent of all Canadians.<sup>72</sup> Over the next few months and no movement from the Canadian government on the refugee file, they printed criticism from MP J.S. Woodsworth against Prime Minister Mackenzie King, who believed Canada needed to take its share of refugees.<sup>73</sup> On June 23, 1939, the editors reminded everyone that all Canadians were immigrants at one time, and refusing to take in more immigrants left Canada’s wide open spaces and resources undeveloped.<sup>74</sup> On July 21, 1939, the *Bulletin* reported a breakthrough. In a rare page one editorial, right down the centre, the paper recapped its long efforts to show how beneficial more immigrants would be to Canada. With pride and joy coming through the printed page, the editor informed its readers that the *Vancouver Daily Province*, a major newspaper, had written an editorial that they were joining the fight to

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<sup>71</sup> “Important Notice Regarding Refugees,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, January 20, 1939, 1.

<sup>72</sup> “Present Trends and Future Possibilities in Jewish Economic Life in Canada,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, February 17, 1939, 1.

<sup>73</sup> “J.S. Woodsworth Urges Govt. Share Refugee Burden,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, March 31, 1939, 5.

<sup>74</sup> “Canadians All – Immigrants All,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, June 23, 1939, editorial, 2.

admit “European Refugees” into Canada.<sup>75</sup> They reprinted the *Province*’s editorial in full, which praised a planned rayon silk plant worth three million dollars and would employ one thousand, started by refugees who fled Nazi persecution.<sup>76</sup>

The Victoria *Daily Colonist* increased their reporting on the issue of allowing refugees into Canada, with their last story being the Canadian government line that they had no plans to change policy in October 1933.<sup>77</sup> While reporting increased, the paper released no editorial calling for Canada to take in Jews, refugees, or immigrants like the *Province* had. Indeed, the thought does not seem to have even occurred to the editor, who instead wrote an editorial praising Great Britain for taking the lead in refugee resettlement.<sup>78</sup> They continued to give both sides of the debate a voice like they had done in the past. They relied on government messaging again, printing the excuses of Immigration Minister Thomas Crerar, who said Canada was “very sympathetic” to Jewish refugees, but there existed difficulties with visas and “other things” that prevented government action.<sup>79</sup>

However, what set off public sympathy in Victoria was *Kristallnacht*. The public meetings and resolutions that happened in Vancouver five years previously were now happening in Victoria for the first time. At the Victoria Chamber of Commerce, recently host to General Blackeney, former President of the British Fascists, was a public meeting to protest German treatment of the Jews.<sup>80</sup> However, the article advertising the meeting was on page eleven. Four days later, the report of the meeting said they had resolved to petition Prime Minister Mackenzie-King to follow Britain’s example and

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<sup>75</sup> “Editorial,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, July 21, 1939, 1.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> “Canada Not Prepared to Accept German Jewish Refugees,” *Daily Colonist*, October 7, 1933, 1.

<sup>78</sup> “Home for the Jews,” *Daily Colonist*, November 22, 1939, editorial, 4.

<sup>79</sup> “Asking Haven for Refugees: Canadian Government Sympathetic with Problem Advanced by Jews,” *Daily Colonist*, June 16, 1938, 1.

<sup>80</sup> “Police Guard Lecture Hall,” *Daily Colonist*, May 29, 1934, 2; “Protest Meeting on Sunday Night,” *Daily Colonist*, November 25, 1938, 11.

allow Jews to settle in Canada. This news was on the last page, page eighteen.<sup>81</sup> If placement within the newspaper is any indication, the editor did not believe this story was very important. On December 7, 1938, the paper ran a front-page story from the Canadian National Committee on Refugees and Victims of Political Persecution that praised the government for allowing economically beneficial refugees into the country but asked the government to lower the bar.<sup>82</sup> In a way, this fit with the argument the *Bulletin* had been making for years, but it also whitewashed the Canadian government policy and implied it had been doing its fair share. As Abella and Troper write, by December 1938 the Canadian government regularly rejected European Jews worth \$20,000, and in 1939, they rejected someone worth \$170,000 on the basis that they would compete with Canadian businesses. Frederick Charles Blair, director of the Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources, and all immigration policy in practice, believed that any Jews with such sums of money were frauds, given money by wealthy Jews who would repossess the money after these Jewish immigrants entered the country.<sup>83</sup> One letter to the editor shamed the Refugee Committee and the government for only taking wealthy Jews: “We have Jews in our midst. Do you say to them ‘we pity your brethren and want to help them as long as it is to our material advantage?’”<sup>84</sup> Indeed, they said that Victoria ought to take in ten of the “poorest, most pitiable” Jewish families from Europe as an example.<sup>85</sup> Sadly, appealing to a common humanity had not helped Canadian Jews reach their goal.

The *Prince George Citizen* was by far the most pro-refugee paper among the non-Jewish journals. However, like many others it emphasized that a refugee need not mean Jew, and it was not only a humanitarian mission but also good for the economy. Apart from a short story on June 9, 1938, which mentioned a resident back from

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<sup>81</sup> “Against Nazi Persecution,” *Daily Colonist*, November 29, 1938, 18.

<sup>82</sup> “Urges Bars Be Lowered,” *Daily Colonist*, December 7, 1938, 1.

<sup>83</sup> Abella and Irving, *None is too Many*, 56.

<sup>84</sup> Julius W. Hewitt, “Jewish Refugees,” *Daily Colonist*, December 11, 1938, letter to the editor, 4.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

London who reported Jews in London had made “serious inroads” in business, the paper was pro-refugee.<sup>86</sup> In January 1939, the paper summarized a report submitted to the government by Senator Cairine Wilson, which reported that not mass immigration, but a handpicked selection of the best refugees, even Jewish ones, touted for their intellectual ability, could benefit the economy by bringing in experts in industry that were needed for Canada’s future.<sup>87</sup> Three weeks later, the editor wrote an impassioned plea to permit Jewish refugees and other persecuted groups into Canada: “It should be printed in bold type in every paper, broadcast over the air, and discussed at every meeting until this country is aroused by the spirit of the Good Samaritan.”<sup>88</sup> The repeated refrain of the editorial, **“What is Canada doing?”** was used to great effect to show that many countries have accepted tens of thousands of refugees while Canada accepted a “trifling number,” parliament talked about gun contracts, and Quebec submitted petitions demanding no refugees, embodying who, the editor said, Jesus called those “who saw but passed by on the other side.”<sup>89</sup> They called for Canada to accept thousands who, history showed, would benefit the country.<sup>90</sup>

The *Chilliwack Progress* wrote few stories on refugees coming to Canada during 1938-1939, but it is clear the idea was unpopular in Chilliwack due to economic concerns. One article printed days after *Kristallnacht* recounted the returning Rev. Roddan’s account of his time in Vienna. There, he said Jews were forced to scrub streets, and he saw “hideous” posters of Jews everywhere.<sup>91</sup> He said it was too bad only Australia was currently taking in these people but did not suggest Canada ought to follow suit.<sup>92</sup> A month later, the paper printed the opinions of locals who seemed to believe that Canada had accepted large numbers of Jewish refugees, and feared they

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<sup>86</sup> “Prince Georgian Back From London,” *Prince George Citizen*, June 9, 1938, 2.

<sup>87</sup> “Believe Refugees Create Industry, Work in Canada,” *Prince George Citizen*, January 26, 1939, 5.

<sup>88</sup> “IS IT NOTHING TO YOU?” *Prince George Citizen*, February 16, 1939, editorial, 2.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> “Rev. Roddan Fears For Future of Europe’s Youth,” *Chilliwack Progress*, November 16, 1938, 11.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

would take jobs from Canadians.<sup>93</sup> The *Jewish Western Bulletin* discussed this phenomenon under the headline “Is Publicity Good for Jews?”<sup>94</sup> While it seemed counter-intuitive to dislike mass public awareness of the Jews’ plight, some Jews feared the public becoming “Jew-conscious,” seeing Jews where there were none or had before been overlooked.<sup>95</sup> They believed this awareness of Jews led to such perceptions as those held by the Chilliwack locals and an English MP quoted in the *Bulletin* who said he sympathized with Jews, but fifty thousand of them were taking up jobs. In reality, just five thousand refugees, Jews and non-Jews, had entered England by that time.<sup>96</sup> Becoming “Jew-conscious” led people to see Jews where there were none and blame them for problems for which they were not responsible.

In the past, The *Jewish Western Bulletin* had appealed to the Nazi persecution of Jews as a civilizational issue, one with which all of humanity had to contend. However, they framed it as a question of how the civilized world, meaning the Western democracies, could stand idly by while European Jews were persecuted in the “heart of Europe,” in a civilized country like Germany.<sup>97</sup> This civilizational issue came up again days before *Kristallnacht* when the paper recounted a speech at the B’nai B’rith Samuel Lodge given by Rev. Roddan, the same reverend recently returned from Vienna featured in the *Progress*. During the speech, which the paper featured in bold print in the body of the article, he said that it was not Jews alone, but Protestants and Christians who the Nazis targeted, too. To defend against them, it was necessary for these three religions to form a “united front.”<sup>98</sup> After *Kristallnacht*, a *Bulletin* editorial wrote that “It has at last been recognized that Hitler’s relentless war on the Jews is

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<sup>93</sup> “European Refugees,” *Chilliwack Progress*, December 14, 1938, 4.

<sup>94</sup> “Is Publicity Good for Jews? The Reaction to Newspaper Reports of Pogroms,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, August 19, 1938, 2.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> “International Peace League Appeals to All Non-Jews,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, January 2, 1936, 2.

<sup>98</sup> “Jews and Christians Must Unite, says Rev. Andrew Roddan in Address to Samuel Lodge,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, November 4, 1938, 1.



not a Jewish problem but a question of humanity that is of deep and abiding concern to the entire civilized world.”<sup>99</sup> In the same issue, the paper reprinted an article by Albert Einstein titled “Humanity on Trial” which said that “the aim is to exterminate not only ourselves, but to destroy together with us, that spirit expressed in the Bible and Christianity which made possible the rise of civilization in Central and Northern Europe.”<sup>100</sup> This common threat was expressed again in another editorial that believed the Jews of Europe would soon find “common ground” with the countries of Europe because those who have persecuted the Jews will themselves soon be persecuted by Germany.<sup>101</sup>

The *Victoria Daily Colonist* seems to have understood this appeal to a common threat against civilization in both above-mentioned senses. In an editorial titled “Modern Savagery,” they quoted the Bishop of Chelmsford who cited one of the signs of a crumbling civilization was the “shameful persecution of the Jews.”<sup>102</sup> The paper summarized a local speech by a visiting Mrs. Lenore Underwood, San Francisco grand president of the Ladies’ Auxiliary of the International Order of the B’nai B’rith or Daughters of the Covenant, who was heading a fundraiser for Jewish refugees.<sup>103</sup> In her speech, she emphasized the point that Germany threatened all civilization.<sup>104</sup> Ten days later, in what the paper called an “inspiring address,” Rev. J.L.W. McLean told the Victoria Rotary Club that Gentiles and Jews needed to come together in solidarity because “they are one in the eyes of the German dictator.” While this was a fundamental misunderstanding of the Nazi’s hatred of the Jews on racial grounds, it

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<sup>99</sup> “Significance of the Protest,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, November 25, 1938, editorial, 2.

<sup>100</sup> Albert Einstein, “Humanity on Trial,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, November 25, 1938, 2.

<sup>101</sup> “Common Ground?” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, April 14, 1939, editorial, 2.

<sup>102</sup> “Modern Savagery,” *Daily Colonist*, April 8, 1938, editorial, 4.

<sup>103</sup> “Need Funds to Help Refugees From Europe,” *Daily Colonist*, January 28, 1939, 8.

<sup>104</sup> “Makes Plea for Boycott,” *Daily Colonist*, February 7, 1939, 6.

appears that many non-Jews were finally prepared to “stand shoulder to shoulder” with them to protect religious freedom as the *Bulletin* had believed in 1933.<sup>105</sup>

How this would manifest itself in actions beyond anything more significant than fundraisers and resolutions, the non-Jewish papers never said. Shortly after Canada seemed primed to finally take some significant action to help the Jews, Hitler invaded Poland and the Second World War became the priority.

“Help” seemed to come from the least likely place: Nazi Germany. After the *Anschluss* and *Kristallnacht*, all trace of any opinion that tried to find an excuse for Hitler’s actions or downplayed them had vanished and was replaced by disgust and condemnation. The Nazi pogrom against the Jews had made persecution newsworthy again and had united non-Jews behind Jewish Canadians in a way that had not happened in 1933. At least for the non-Jewish papers in this study, this sentiment did not universally translate into calls for Canada to open up the country to Jews. So, the *Bulletin* largely stopped calling for Jewish immigration or Jewish refugees, and simply started to champion the cause of “refugees” who were essentially immigrants like so many Canadians had once been. Who was to say refugees needed to be Jews? The Nazis persecuted everyone who blocked their path and threatened civilization itself. In fact, this was allowing the non-Jewish press to have their way as they had long insisted that Jews were but one of many groups the Nazis had targeted, and therefore were not deserving of special treatment. They likely hoped that with this new strategy many Jews could be saved along with other groups who had become refugees. Moreover, they argued that, contrary to popular belief, immigrants were good for the economy. They did not take jobs *from* Canadians, they made jobs *for* them. Arguments like these persuaded most of the non-Jewish Canadian press according to other studies, and even several letters to the editor of the *Daily Colonist* believed Canada needed to take in the

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<sup>105</sup> “Jewish Opportunity,” *Jewish Western Bulletin*, April 13, 1933, 4.

Jews, but only the editor of the *Prince George Citizen* made a forceful call to admit refugees.

In the end, the call turned out to be too late. With the war starting less than a year after *Kristallnacht*, six million Jews in need of rescue perished in the ghettos, by bullets, by gas, and many other methods. Or perhaps no amount of time to save the Jews would have been enough for Canada. Even with public opinion seemingly in favour of rescue, on moral and economic grounds, the government remained unmoved in its position and arguably tightened immigration against Jews further after the pogrom. Perhaps they were aware that outrage would soon subside, that the stories would become less frequent and move their way to the back of the paper, to be overtaken by other news. Nonetheless, an examination of these four B.C. newspapers has revealed a nuanced view of Canadian responses to Jewish persecution that does not come through in a study of large regional papers. This is especially true on the issue of the refugee crisis, the story that affected Canadians more than any other. Whereas other Canadian studies reveal a practically universal acceptance of refugees at the macro level of large papers, two out of the four papers in this study showed their opposition. Moreover, it shows the degree to which small, weekly community newspapers like the *Jewish Western Bulletin* can be a catalyst for change in the broader community, but also reveals the limits of that change. Undoubtedly, they changed the discourse over Jewish refugees within Vancouver to the point where the *Vancouver Province* began to echo the rhetoric from the *Bulletin*. However, it was no match for an anti-Semitic, intransigent Canadian immigration policy.

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