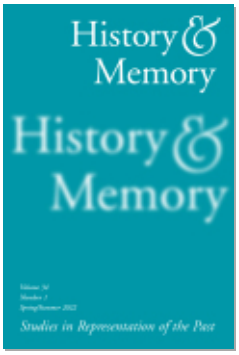
Remembering the Holocaust in a Settler Colonial City: The Case of Victoria, Canada



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The Case of Victoria, Canada

Jordan Stanger-Ross and Lynne Marks

This article tells the history of Kristallnacht commemorations in the small Jewish community of Victoria, British Columbia. From their founding in the 1980s, the ceremonies were intended to include members of the general public, in addition to the Jewish community, but the events changed over time, when organizers began to include indigenous people as active participants, and the history of colonialism became a key theme in Kristallnacht remembrance. Suggesting that this orientation positioned members of the local Jewish community as implicated in historical injustice, even on the occasion of Holocaust remembrance, the authors explore the history behind this development and consider its implications today.

Keywords: commemoration; Holocaust; colonialism; Canada

At 7 p.m. on November 7, 2019, the synagogue in Victoria, the small capital city of British Columbia, was packed. With every seat on the main floor occupied, the audience spilled into the upper balcony. Congregants scrambled to make space at the front for distinguished guests. The room buzzed. When Richard Kool, the master of ceremonies, began his opening remarks, the crowd quieted in anticipation. For the thirty-first time, Congregation Emanu-El prepared to commemorate Kristallnacht, the violence against Jews that erupted in Nazi Germany on November 9–10, 1938.[1] Kool started with an acknowledgment of the kind that has, in recent decades, become common in Canada: "This congregation recognizes that our historic synagogue is built on lands of the Lekwangen people, and we note the vibrant culture and ongoing contribution to the broader com-

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munity of the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations, whose traditional lands we are on this evening."[2]

It is difficult to convey the atmosphere of the room as Kool spoke these words. Over the half-decade prior, Kristallnacht observance in Victoria had been resurgent. Micha Menczer, who helps to lead the commemorations, recently struggled to describe them: "It's proven," he said, "to be very... there aren't adjectives... successful isn't the word." Actually, successful is the word. As Menczer explains: "the shul is packed. We probably get 150–180 people ... young, old, we have the premier come ... the chief of police always comes.... Bishops come, we have the imam come." In November 2019, such regulars were joined by members of the provincial cabinet, a member of the federal parliament, and civic leaders. Kristallnacht, Menczer notes, is "basically ... on the calendar" of important political events in the province of British Columbia. Ed Fitch, a congregant who regularly attends, also struggles to find the right phrasing: "I don't know if one can use the word enjoyable," he says. But, somehow, it is that. The most notable Holocaust commemoration in Victoria vibrates with positive energy, at least lately.[3]

Acknowledgment of local Indigenous people at the start of the ceremony is perhaps especially appropriate because of the congregation's deep colonial roots. Emanu-El was dedicated on June 3, 1863, with much public fanfare.[4] A procession spanning some 100 feet—comprising congregants, members of local German, Scottish and French cultural societies and the Victoria Masonic Lodge—wound through the city's streets on that sunny afternoon and then gathered at the site of the building for speeches and a formal cornerstone-laying by the Masons. The congregation's vice-president, Samuel Hoffman, marveled at the momentous occasion of laying "the foundation of the first Synagogue in Her Majesty's dominions on this side of the Pacific." He expressed its significance in a pointed rhetorical question: "Who would have thought," he asked, "that, in the space of five years [since the founding of the colony], we should have a temple erected where then the aborigines were the lords of the domain? Who would have dreamt," he continued, "that in this isolated part of the globe, where, ere now, the foot of white men had hardly trod, there should spring up a comparatively large city, studded with magnificent edifices, and inhabited by ... intelligent people?"[5]

The synagogue was indeed a founding colonial edifice in Victoria.[6] In 1863, Indigenous people remained a majority in the territories claimed by the British colony, and the dedication of Congregation Emanu-El was part of their displacement.[7] Jews were active participants in local and colonial governments from early days and were welcomed in white settler voluntary organizations, unlike Indigenous inhabitants and Chinese immigrants. However, Jews had an uncertain place within the racial and religious hierarchies of the colony. Overt anti-Semitism was relatively common, with Jews on occasion publicly characterized as "rootless" cosmopolitans, lacking commitment to the colony. Despite this, and perhaps in part to buttress their position in white society, Victoria's Jewish community actively contributed to the settler colonial project. Initially, Jewish merchants were the principal "Indian traders," in town, selling and trading with Indigenous peoples for a range of goods; by the 1880s, many Jewish merchants had become "Indian curio" dealers, profiting from the sale of sacred Indigenous ceremonial objects as well as everyday items. The "curios" they sold found eager customers in tourists, visiting royalty and many North American museums; they were bought at low prices or extracted from Indigenous communities in a period when authorities were actively denying Indigenous title, seizing land, and refusing to negotiate treaties.[8] The Jewish community in Victoria was thus very much implicated in Canada's dispossession and attempted structural genocide of Indigenous peoples.[9]

In the first half of the twentieth century, Victoria faded in significance relative to Vancouver and the British Columbia lower mainland, and the congregation declined. Diminished to just seven families in the 1940s, Emanu-El endured decades in which it was unable to support a full-time rabbi and struggled to maintain its historic building. The postwar province-wide boom brought reprieve, with the expansion of government employment in the capital city, the opening of a university and the emergence of Vancouver Island as an attractive retirement and tourism destination.[10] By the 1970s, Emanu-El had grown to over one hundred families; by the end of the decade the congregation was undertaking a major synagogue restoration, completed in 1982. At the turn of the twenty-first century, a wing was added to the original building as institutional expansion accommodated the ongoing growth of the local Jewish population, which reached 2,740 in 2010; the synagogue, by then, had over two

hundred member-families.[11] Still, Victoria's Jewish community in 2010 remained a fraction of that in the centers of Canadian Jewish life, such as Toronto (with a Jewish population of 188,710) and Montreal (90,780), or even nearby Vancouver (26,255).[12] Emanu-El remained the only Jewish house of worship in Victoria, and Jews comprised less than 1 percent of the city's population of 345,000.[13] Thus, Holocaust commemoration reflected the orientation of the Jewish community to the wider public of which it is only a small part and, at the same time, the infusion of new ideas and energy into local Jewish life.[14]

In the midst of the renewal of Jewish community in Victoria, dynamic commemorative practice emerged. Holocaust remembrances in Victoria were founded by Rabbi Victor Reinstein, a charismatic leader of Congregation Emanu-El in the 1980s and 1990s. He created the Kristallnacht memorial ceremony as a public-oriented event: members of the Jewish community gathered every November to remember both the specific violence of that date and the larger murder of European Jewry with an audience that, by design, included outsiders, members of the "general public." Over time, the role assigned to this public shifted. At the outset, non-Jews were invited as witnesses and allies; their role was to absorb the horrors of anti-Semitic violence and to apply its lessons. A. Dirk Moses has observed that Jewish advocates of Holocaust memorialization in Canada have positioned it as an "analogical resource." The Holocaust according to this view, serves a "redemptive function" by prompting human rights activism to combat not only anti-Semitism but racist hatred in general.[15] So it was in Victoria. Although organizers of commemorative events also had other objectives (chief among them honoring survivors), the wider public was invited so that the particulars of the Holocaust could impart universal benefit.

In three decades of practice, local Kristallnacht commemoration changed considerably. The annual events remained an important facet of Jewish communal life in Victoria until approximately 2008, when public commemorative practice seems to have faded. After 2016, Kristallnacht events regained momentum, owing partly to a new approach. Several key organizers of the local Kristallnacht commemoration came to understand the non-Jewish public as more than just an audience to witness Jewish suffering. Instead, or rather in addition, members of the general public were understood as carrying their own histories of violence into the room,

from which Jews could learn. In some of these histories, Jews were implicated. Indeed, by 2019, when Richard Kool began the ceremony with an acknowledgment of Indigenous people, colonialism in British Columbia played a central role in the commemoration. Situating this recent turn within the longer history of Kristallnacht memorialization in Victoria, we argue that this emphasis on colonialism marks a departure from earlier events, particularly with respect to the roles for "the public" and, relatedly, Jewish attendees. This shift, we suggest, was part of the revival of Kristallnacht memorialization in Victoria. In our conclusion, we express some ambivalence. It was important, we believe, for the congregation to grapple with its colonial heritage. As David S. Koffman argues, the "Jewish [North] American past, is burdened by colonialism because the history of mass migration ... *is* the history of colonialism."[16] However, in the context of the ongoing struggle of Indigenous-settler relations in British Columbia, we find ourselves (as active members of Victoria's Jewish community), equivocating about whether the invocation of colonialism in Kristallnacht commemoration constitutes a progressive change, a further misuse of the displacement and dispossession of Indigenous people, or perhaps something in between.

Widespread commemoration, widely overlooked

This case study draws overdue attention to the larger topic of Kristallnacht commemoration, which emerged soon after the war as a key remembrance of the genocide of European Jewry. Today, it is the occasion of communal events in much of the world. The European advocacy group, United for Intercultural Action, reports that "hundreds of organizations from Azerbaijan to Cyprus, from Belarus to Ireland" commemorate Kristallnacht as the International Day against Fascism and Antisemitism.[17] There are annual events across Canada and the United States, as well as commemorations in Australia, South Africa, Argentina and elsewhere. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau marked Kristallnacht in 2018 by offering an official apology for the country's failure to accept Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany, and in 2019 the Junior Senator for Connecticut in the United States, Christopher Murphy, introduced a resolution marking the date and resolving to "raise awareness and act to eradicate the continuing

scourge of anti-Semitism at home and abroad."[18] Commemoration of Kristallnacht is an important facet of public Holocaust memory.

And yet, with the exception of Germany (where, as sociologist Janet Jacobs explains, "Kristallnacht has become among the most significant forms of Holocaust remembrance"), there is little scholarship on this commemorative day.[19] We know little about Kristallnacht memorial rituals, their origins or evolution over time. Despite the global proliferation of remembrance events, scholars have yet to analyze connections across them or variations among local observances. In the rich scholarship on collective Jewish memory and memorialization—which includes significant scholarly attention to physical monuments, museums, mass media and art, as well as the field of Holocaust studies itself, including Holocaust archives—commemorative events, and Kristallnacht ceremonies in particular, are conspicuously understudied.[20] Scholarship on commemorative events in Germany cannot convey a global phenomenon; as we know from the history of monuments, place matters in public memory.[21] Michael Rothberg notes that "memory is a contemporary phenomenon, something that, while concerned with the past, happens in the present."[22] To understand the commemoration of Kristallnacht, we must examine the specific times and places within which it is remembered.

Our analysis also contributes to the history of Holocaust memory in Canada. Canadian Jews began commemorative ceremonies as early as 1943, when members of the Vancouver community gathered to remember "the Polish Jews who have been sacrificed to the hatred of Hitler."[23] The following year, various local organizations marked the first anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, initiating ceremonies that have continued ever since. By the mid-1960s, Toronto's commemorative events drew audiences of some two thousand people, and in the 1970s the Canadian Jewish Congress supported Holocaust remembrance committees across the country, spanning from St. John's Newfoundland to Victoria.[24] In the spring of 1985, nearly three thousand people gathered in Ottawa to mark the fortieth anniversary of the liberation of the camps at an event that included speeches by Elie Wiesel as well as the Canadian Minister of Finance Michael Wilson and the leaders of Canada's two major opposition parties.[25] Holocaust commemoration thus emerged into the Canadian public historical mainstream, just as it did elsewhere in the world.

However, scholars have provided little interpretive discussion of these ceremonies. The only historical monograph on Holocaust memory in Canada, Franklin Bialystok's *Delayed Impact*, relies upon the records of the Canadian Jewish Congress to argue that commemorative events emerged, along with attention to the Holocaust more generally, as a response to a perceived surge in anti-Semitism and neo-Nazism in the 1960s. The Holocaust was initially marginal to mainstream Jewish identity, Bialystok argues, its commemoration a concern mostly for survivors, a small minority. It moved into the center of communal practice in the 1970s and 1980s, he writes, as Canadian Jews, "estranged from their European roots and unable to find meaning, as Jews, in other causes" turned to the Holocaust as a "pillar of their ethnic identification."[26] However, Bialystok's account does not convey commemorative events in detail, explore ceremonial changes over time or explain how commemorative dates fit into the key political and historical dynamics of Holocaust memory.[27] Other researchers have contested some of his conclusions, finding earlier commemorative events and greater varieties of observance than Bialystok acknowledges, but the historical conversation remains anemic and, within it, Kristallnacht is scarcely mentioned.[28] There is no historical analysis of the evolution of commemorative events in the half century since the Holocaust emerged into the Canadian pubic historical mainstream.

Given the importance of commemorative dates within Jewish tradition, Kristallnacht commemoration deserves scholarly attention. As James Young writes, "neither monuments nor painting, neither fiction nor reportage are anchored as firmly in the [Jewish] tradition" as commemorative days.[29] Similarly, Hasia Diner writes, "the Jewish tradition sanctified time more profoundly than space, investing greater meaning in temporal than in physical sanctity." Thus, postwar Jews, "turned to the Jewish calendar to locate the memorial process in time ... [and] to the ritual cycle to engage with the memory of the victims of the Nazi Holocaust." [30] By adding our case study of Kristallnacht in Victoria to the limited prior scholarship on commemorative days, we hope to reaffirm the value of sustained historical attention to these ceremonies, an area, we believe, meriting scholarship akin to that focused upon museums and monuments. Commemorative practices may sometimes be harder to reconstruct than more formally institutionalized memorial activity (as they are often organized by informal groups and synagogue subcommittees, the records of commemorative

days may be less assiduously preserved, if at all), but they are nonetheless historically and communally significant. We can scarcely understand postwar Judaism without them.

Remembering Kristallnacht and Colonialism in Victoria, British Columbia

In public celebration of the sesquicentennial of the Congregation Emanu-El in 2013, congregants reenacted the original procession through Victoria's streets, culminating again at the cornerstone of the synagogue. With local, provincial, federal and Israeli representatives in attendance, congregational leaders once again delivered public remarks. This time, however, rather than celebrate the role of the synagogue in colonial displacement, Rabbi Harry Brechner presented a shofar (a ceremonial horn) to elders from the local Esquimalt First Nation, declaring that "150 years ago your ancestors were not invited to the dedication of this synagogue. They should have been."[31] He then yielded the microphone to the elders, who conveyed their community's connection, spanning thousands of years, to the territory on which the synagogue stands. A sense of implication in colonialism, along with gestures of reconciliation and repair, soon found expression in Holocaust commemoration as well.

Three years after the 150th-anniversary celebrations, the newly founded Victoria Shoah Project assumed responsibility, as a committee of the synagogue, for commemorating Kristallnacht in Victoria; the organization immediately brought colonialism to the foreground. In their first program, the organizers wrote, "our remembrance service is not solely about past events ... members of the Jewish community in Victoria are aware of our obligations to be involved in and with the larger community." The centerpiece of the program was a "symbolic rebuilding" of a stained-glass window, "with each piece being placed by representatives of the many facets of our community." Notably, Chief Ron Sam of the Songhees Nation placed the first fragment in the window frame; the second piece was placed by a Holocaust survivor.[32] Thereafter, colonialism has featured prominently in the program.

After quieting the sanctuary in 2019, Kool conjured ghosts. He remembered his mother, who had been eleven years old in Amsterdam

in 1938, on the eve of Kristallnacht. He spoke of his grandparents, murdered four years later. His cousins who remained in Europe, "live in a world of ghosts, the ghosts of the Nazis, and the ghosts of the Jews of Amsterdam and the Netherlands." Anti-Semitism, he said, "still haunts Jews everywhere." But Canada too, Kool said, is a haunted place. "The ghosts of past trauma are always around us," he intoned:

> even as the ghosts of the murdered Jews of Europe call to us across space and time, ghosts call out to us from the residential schools, from the smallpox-infected villages, from skid rows, from missing and murdered women and girls, and they call to us for reconciliation, healing and friendship and shalom [peace].[33]

These powerful lines draw connections across both place and time. Kool brought the Holocaust into conversation with colonialism while also drawing the past (smallpox-infected villages) into the present (missing and murdered women and girls).[34] Next, Kool explained that Jewish members of the congregation had responsibilities to past atrocities:

> Even though the post-war generations and descendants of Nazis and their collaborators do not carry guilt because of the actions of their ancestors, they are responsible for remembering and acting. And in the same way, while none of us here are guilty of the crimes committed by those working in residential schools, of the crimes of clergy and staff, government agents, scientists and doctors, of the crimes against the Indigenous people of this land, we also have a responsibility for remembering, and for acting.[35]

To understand Kool's injunction, and the history of Kristallnacht in Victoria more broadly, we benefit from the notion of "implication" recently elaborated by Rothberg. Rothberg's ideas align closely with Kool's discussion of responsibility: "I do not believe," writes Rothberg, "that, say, contemporary Germans are best understood as 'beneficiaries' of the Shoah." Instead, they are "implicated subjects" whose responsibility is to "reflect on and act against" both histories and ongoing manifestations of injustice. Among implicated subjects are "latecomer[s] to histories of perpetration," who may feel distanced from the harms caused in a history that is not their own, but whose systemic legacies they nonetheless inherit.[36]

More subtly, and perhaps ambivalently, Kool's address and recent Victoria Kristallnacht ceremonies in general convey the message that, in addition to inheriting a history of colonialism, Jews in Victoria presently inhabit it. By referencing recent and ongoing violence against Indigenous women, foregrounding Indigenous participants in the ceremonies and emphasizing that Kristallnacht is "not solely about past events," Victoria Shoah Project commemorations draw attention to a reality emphasized by scholars of settler colonialism: that the displacement of Indigenous societies continues to this day. As Patrick Wolfe puts it, "settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event."[37] Lorenzo Veracini explains that settler colonialism "is an ongoing phenomenon; writing its history is charged with presentist preoccupation."[38] Kool and his fellow congregants voiced similar consciousness of ongoing injustice.[39] For Kool, the purpose of Holocaust commemoration is to convey that "we're all in this together," a realization that, for Jews, emerges partly from recognition that "we too can be persecutors."[40] From such insights, suggests Rothberg, we can move together toward justice, rather than separately in grievance.[41]

The origins of kristallnacht memorialization in victoria

The recent approach to Kristallnacht commemoration in Victoria is, in some respects, a significant departure from its origins. The Jewish community in Victoria began to publicly remember the Holocaust in the 1980s, due to the initiative of Rabbi Victor Reinstein who led the congregation from 1982 to 1998. He drafted the first programs for two commemorative dates. Yom Hashoah ceremonies were convened each spring at the congregation's cemetery; these were small events for the Jewish community. Kristallnacht, in November, was typically held at the synagogue, and Reinstein envisioned a mixed audience of Jews and a wider public. He invited guest speakers and chose readings. He personally led the events. The history of Kristallnacht commemoration in Victoria starts with Rabbi Reinstein.

Reinstein was influenced and inspired by others, in particular by Holocaust survivors, some two dozen of whom lived in Victoria when he arrived. He remembers himself as "drawn to the horror" of their experiences: "I really was drawn deeply into the stories of the survivors. Sometimes I

almost felt like they were my own." One survivor, Willy Jacobs, "wanted to talk." Born in Belchatow, Poland, in 1919, Jacobs spent his early twenties as a slave laborer in Auschwitz and Buchenwald; he described the immolation of his rabbi, the murder of an infant at the Auschwitz train depot, his brother's collapse and death while the two labored on the Autobahn, and other horrors. Jack Gardner, another local Holocaust survivor, recalled the people and places of his own Polish hometown of Stary Sambor in vivid detail: "he would talk about what was on the bakery shelves ... he knew all of the [townspeople's] names ... I felt like they became people in my own life." Rysia Kraskin was a "gentle, joyful" person, forever grateful to a childhood friend who, she felt, had saved her life during a selection at the Ravensbruck concentration camp by rubbing lipstick into her cheeks, concealing her sickly pallor (remarkably, the two childhood friends reunited in Victoria in the last years of their lives). "I really loved these people," Reinstein remembers, "I buried many of them, and really felt a deep, deep commitment that their stories not be buried with them."[42]

These deep connections motivated Reinstein, as did the educational and memorial work of survivors themselves. Jacobs and Kraskin told their stories to local students, Jewish and non-Jewish. Jacobs, Reinstein remembers, told raw and often bitter stories. Kraskin told her story softly, "because she was so compassionate and so concerned for the kids and what they were hearing." In the early 1980s, Jacobs and other survivors built a Holocaust monument in the Emanu-El cemetery where Reinstein led Yom Hashoah ceremonies. The origins of commemorative events in Victoria, then, are entwined with education and monumental initiatives. All three had roots among local survivors.

Holocaust commemoration in Victoria was also an organized response to Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism. The 1980s saw the high-profile trials of two deniers in Canada, Ernest Zundel and Jim Keegstra.[43] In Victoria, Reinstein followed Keegstra's case in particular, collecting press clippings on the 1984 trial of the Eckville, Alberta teacher who told his students that Jews had exaggerated the crimes against them and were disloyal to Canada. The rabbi was also concerned about anti-Semitism in Victoria. Incredulous, he underlined passages in an article by Chris Harker in a local paper on March 4, 1984. Harker, a teacher in Victoria, warned "descendants of victims" about the hazards of "drawing the public's eye to time-worn misfortunes." Jews in particular, he felt, risked much in doing

Fig. 1. Rabbi Victor Reinstein (center, with beard) with congregants at the 1988 Yom Hashoah ceremony in the Congregation Emanu-El cemetery. The Holocaust memorial stands behind the group. Also in the photograph is Richard Kool (center-right, in fedora and glasses), Willie Jacobs (center-right, back to the camera, with yarmulke) and Rysia Kraskin (in white hat, left of center). Photo by Ron Grover Photography, file 7, Victor Reinstein Collection, Defying Hatred Project Digital Archives, University of Victoria. Courtesy of Victor Reinstein.

so. "By and large," Harker wrote, "the world has forgiven the Jews for executing Christ." Better, he advised, to leave the grievances of history in the past than to dig up old skeletons.[44] Kristallnacht commemoration was, in those years, a response to such sentiments. Local commemoration was also part of a larger movement in North America, and globally, to remember the Holocaust in public. The Victoria Jewish community first formally commemorated Kristallnacht in 1988, on the fiftieth anniversary of the attacks, an occasion of major commemorations throughout the world (figure 1).[45] That year, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Los Angeles published a volume calling upon local communities to commemorate the day and providing them a program for the event. Kristallnacht, the editors said "must be [publicly] observed both as a memorial and as a warning."[46]

Reinstein used the publication extensively in developing the local commemoration: six memorial candles (one for each million Jewish victims), Rabbi Leo Baeck's 1935 Yom Kippur Prayer, a historical description of the events of November 9, 1938, the singing of *Ani Ma'amin*, a civic proclamation, and a survivor's story (ideally a witness to the events of

Kristallnacht).[47] All of these conventions were adopted in Victoria as the Wiesenthal Centre (which itself had drawn them from prior commemorative practices across North America) successfully encouraged local Jewish communities to commemorate the event.[48]

In keeping with the vision of the Wiesenthal Centre, Kristallnacht in Victoria was directed toward non-Jews as well as Jews.[49] In the first commemoration in 1988, Reinstein addressed the assembled as "people of many faiths." At the close of that first ceremony he proclaimed,

> May the only fires that burn in autumn's air be fires by which to gather and feel warmed by each other's presence. May the only fire in Synagogue, Church, and Mosque and every other place of God's abode be the fires of faith and love and yearning that all people might join with each other in all of our varied particularity, yet all as one.[50]

After the event, Reinstein scribbled notes to himself, contemplating ways to further diversify the gathering: "Should the local government, local churches be called upon to participate as well? Have lights in churches left on that night as well as in shul?" In 1995, the commemoration included remarks by Syrt Wolters, a Victorian of Dutch origin who had hidden a Jewish family during World War II, and by Hubert Beyer, a non-Jewish Victoria-based journalist who had witnessed Kristallnacht in Düsseldorf in 1938 and continued to denounce Holocaust deniers in a local paper.[51] That year, the rabbi reflected, "it is a comfort to share intimate pain and hopes and the ways and language of our faith in the presence of so many from the wider Victoria community."[52] As psychologist Erika R. Apfelbaum has observed, the public telling of past wrongs can provide affected groups with "a form of healing" since, as a history of harm emerges into public view and discussion, it is less likely to be experienced as a "shameful group stigma."[53] At these Kristallnacht events, "the public" was asked to listen.

The ceremonies also called upon non-Jews to act. In 1993, for example, Reinstein wrote Victoria Mayor David Turner requesting a formal civic proclamation marking the fifty-fifth anniversary of Kristallnacht. The proclamation was drawn directly from a text circulated by the Wiesenthal Centre. "Kristallnacht," it explained,

> led to the death of 36 Jews; the arrest and deportation of 30,000 Jews to concentration camps; the setting afire of 267 synagogues,

> the looting of 7,000 Jewish shops and businesses and a fine of 1 billion marks levied upon the victims ... foreshadowing the coming Holocaust and the liquidation of 6,000,000 Jews—1½ million of whom were children.[54]

The proclamation, passed annually by City Council in the years that followed and read by a representative of the city at Kristallnacht commemorations, was typical of outreach at the time. It called upon outsiders to acknowledge the murder of European Jews and to defend against future instances of racism. "Kristallnacht," it declared, "conveys with unique urgency the responsibility of good people to speak out and act before racism begins its cancerous spread." The proclamation implored a vigilant public to combat the "rise of racism and Holocaust denial in many places." That year, Reinstein also published an op ed in the Victoria *Times Colonist*, in part to announce the keynote speaker that year, Canadian scholar Irving Abella, whose co-authored book *None Is Too Many* revealed Canadian inaction during the Holocaust.[55] "Silence in the face of evil is participation," wrote Reinstein. He observed that Germans stood idle as synagogues burned in 1938:

> this is a compelling reason for looking closely at Kristallnacht and for remembering together, as Jews and non-Jews. It is a question of moral responsibility, the challenge to love one's neighbor and not to stand idly by their blood. In failing to respond, we desecrate our own humanity and deface the image of god.[56]

This message, and its premises about the role of the general public in Kristallnacht commemoration—as witnesses of the past called upon to act in the present and future—characterized the annual event. The memory of the Holocaust was intended to serve as an antiracist resource.

The ceremonies in Victoria were far from alone in seeking to draw universal human rights lessons from the particulars of the Holocaust. In the United States, Deborah Lipstadt claims that the US Holocaust Memorial Museum has become "an important voice in calling attention to other genocides worldwide."[57] Holocaust analogies, some scholars have argued, spurred international intervention into the genocide in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.[58] More recently, Kristallnacht commemorations across Europe have been paired with activism in support of refugees.[59]

Many have seen the Holocaust as a history that can be marshaled against other injustices.

While Reinstein saw the general public as an important audience for Holocaust commemoration, he also invoked its memory to raise consciousness within the Jewish community. In 1985, for example, he used a High Holiday sermon to describe a "halacha of tikkun olam" (that is, a formal, religious imperative to repair the world): "Can we be concerned with kashrut [the religious rules governing diet]," he asked, "and not be punctilious in our concern for suffering human beings, near and far?" The sermon ranged across a familiar landscape of Jewish concerns in the 1980s (Soviet and Ethiopian Jewry, Israel), but also included reflections on the parallels between the Holocaust and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "The thirty-ninth anniversary of the atomic bombing," said Reinstein, "coincided with Tishe B'Av this year."[60] As a result, Reinstein contemplated Auschwitz alongside Hiroshima, lamenting in each instance the death of children: "I think of my own child. But all children are also mine." These thoughts brought him eventually to the struggles of Central American refugees then living in Victoria, and to the responsibility of members of the Jewish community to act in their support.[61]

There is little evidence that such explicit connections were brought into Kristallnacht commemoration in this period (instead, the commemorative night was still largely focused on Jewish suffering). In 1993, Sigmund Sabolewski, a well-known Polish Catholic from Alberta who survived four years as an inmate at Auschwitz, was brought to Victoria to deliver a "keynote" at the ceremony.[62] While Sabolewski could testify to Nazi violence against other victims, he was prominent in significant part as an eyewitness to the mass murder of Jews. In the years that followed, Reinstein contemplated further expansions of the local commemorative template: he wondered, for example, whether it might be possible to find "someone today to speak of a current need—aboriginal, Latin American?"[63] Reinstein's records do not reveal whether he succeeded, but his impulse to expand memorial practice to include the stories and needs of other people was consistent with his wider theological perspective at the time.

In the same period, Reinstein brought an acknowledgment of colonialism into the weekly religious ceremony at the synagogue. He wrote a "Prayer for Our Country" and inserted it into the weekly Sabbath services, immediately following the ceremonial reading of the Torah, the first five

books of the Jewish Bible. In this early institutionalized land acknowledgment, congregants intoned, "may we honour with humility those who first dwelled on this land, and learn from them the sacredness of earth and sky and water."[64] Thus, the ingredients of a Holocaust ceremony that paired the ghosts of the Holocaust with the ghosts of colonial genocide existed from early days of public commemoration in Victoria.

Richard Kool was in the congregation at the time, grappling with the demons of his own family's past, raising young children, and taking note. His vision for commemoration was still decades from full fruition. Despite gestures toward recognizing the oppression of other groups as having some parallels to Jewish suffering, Victoria's Kristallnacht ceremonies in those years incorporated the wider public as allies, invited to remember the mass murder of Jews. There was, however, still no discussion of the congregation's potential implication in colonialism. As was the case within Canadian society more generally in the 1980s and into the 1990s, recognition of the complicity of Canadians in the brutalities of colonialism remained largely on the intellectual and political margins of Jewish communal practice.[65]

The decline and revival of Kristallnacht commemorations in Victoria

Eventually, Kristallnacht commemoration in Victoria went into decline. Reinstein left Victoria in 1998, returning home to Boston where he founded another congregation.[66] After some years of activity, participation in the commemorative organization began to flag, remembers Phyllis Senese, a long-time member. On some issues the leadership was divided, and more generally its energy waned. Few people volunteered to undertake outreach or organize events.[67] Meanwhile, many of the survivors in the community died. The ceremonies could no longer rely on their presence to draw or inspire an audience. The congregation in Victoria, like Jewish communities elsewhere, needed to consider the prospect of commemoration without testimony.

By the 2010s, leading members of the Jewish community felt that Holocaust commemoration in the city had lost its way. Micha Menczer, the child of survivors, arrived in Victoria in 2010. As he had when he

had lived in Ottawa and Vancouver, Menczer attended commemorative events in Victoria: "After going a couple of times it was the same. Kristallnacht, there were images of skeletons and crematoria. Yom Hashoah was heavy," he recalls, "it was us against the world ... like we're under siege and ... we have to build walls."[68] Elisheva Gray, a member of Congregation Emanu-El, felt similarly. As she recalled, Kristallnacht involved, "a slide presentation ... images showing the corpses from the concentration camps." Kool remembers images of "piles of bodies." Although both have studied the history intensively and recognize the horrific realities that such photographs depict, they both worried that, absent appropriate context, these "terrible and horrible images," as Gray put it, alienated attendees rather than inviting engaged commemoration.[69] There were, in these years, also disagreements within the group about the place of other victims, including homosexuals, in Holocaust memory, and questions about the appropriateness of the Israeli national anthem in the ceremony, a fraught issue because the Israeli-Palestinian conflict divided the community on political lines. "So, it basically deteriorated," remembers Menczer: "it was a very unpleasant experience and really counterproductive."[70]

These issues were reflected in declining attendance. Gray recalls "noticing that the numbers of people coming to these events were getting quite minimal and it was really making us sad." Menczer paints a similar picture: sparsely attended events, depressing affairs. "We're losing it," he remembers telling another child of survivors, "people are not going. It's a *shanda* [disgrace], it's a shame for what our families experienced." Ed Fitch had similar observations at the time, remembering that "maybe it got ... into a rut." These concerns coalesced within a group that "didn't feel that was how people would connect."[71]

In the same period, questions surrounding the history and current realities of colonialism became increasingly central to Canadian public discussion, perhaps especially in British Columbia. The Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was created in 2008 and issued its final report in 2015, significantly raised public awareness of the genocidal treatment of Indigenous children in state and church-run residential schools for over a century.[72] In 2016, after years of activism by Indigenous women and their communities, the Trudeau government created the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, as a result of which the racism and misogyny related to the murder

and disappearance of many Indigenous women each year gained serious public and political notice.[73] Koffman observes that Jewish institutions in Canada responded to these events by claiming solidarity with Indigenous people "across [a range of] modes of articulation, spanning the artistic, the religious, the educational, and the political."[74] Congregation Emanu-El, for example, created a committee dedicated to tracing the location of Indigenous ceremonial artifacts sold by Jewish merchants in nineteenth-century Victoria to various museums, which it hoped to include in dialogue between Indigenous leaders and the congregation.

It was in this context that a new vision for Holocaust commemoration emerged in Victoria. Menczer, Gray, Kool and others founded the Victoria Shoah Project and assumed control of the Kristallnacht and Yom Hashoah events in 2016.[75] They eliminated the slide show and resumed the former practice of actively soliciting outsiders to participate. Rabbi Harry Brechner, Reinstein's successor at Emanu-El, gathered local faith and Indigenous leaders at Kristallnacht commemorations in a joint pledge against hatred. Notably, the premises of outreach shifted subtly with the new group. By inviting Chief Ron Sam to lay the first shard of glass into the shattered window that headlined its inaugural commemorative event, by raising the ghosts of colonial genocide, the organizers of Kristallnacht communicated that outsiders were not merely present to bear witness to Jewish tragedy. Rather, these outsiders (and Indigenous people in particular) had histories that deserved a place in the ceremony as well. As a result, the Jews in attendance were also repositioned. They were still present to remember the Holocaust in the company of a wider public, but also to serve as an audience to, and take some responsibility for, the harms of colonialism in Canada. In this new vision for the event, Jews too were enjoined to speak out against histories and ongoing harms in which the Jewish community in Victoria is complicit.

This approach, exemplified by Kool's 2019 Kristallnacht speech, has been controversial within the local Jewish community. Tensions remain high between members of the Shoah Project and the former organizers of the Kristallnacht commemorations. And even among members of the Shoah Project, the foregrounding of colonialism, and, with it, Jewish implication in historical violence, is not without detractors. Among them is John Sitwell, a child of survivors who was involved in Holocaust remembrance during Reinstein's tenure and participated for a time in the Shoah

Project. Sitwell expresses discomfort with the new emphasis in Holocaust commemoration. "I've got mixed feelings about that," he says, "it worries me that it'll become too diluted." Sitwell believes that distinct histories of harm should be held apart. "I would be the first to go and support anything to do with raising public awareness of residential schools," he insists, but not during Holocaust commemoration. Otherwise, he worries "it'll become a part of history, like 'man is cruel.'"[76] Sitwell fears that without specificity, commemoration loses meaning. Fitch, who continues to attend the commemorations, and appreciates their approach, is also cautious about commemorative practices that might compromise the uniqueness of the Holocaust. "I understand at this gut level," says Fitch, "that [Jewish] uniqueness cannot be an accident and therefore there must be a purpose.... If I'm right, if the uniqueness does come from a higher source, it's going to survive despite my efforts to either save it or diminish it. But somehow, I feel as a part of it, I have a role in maintaining it."[77]

For Fitch, the uniqueness of Jewish suffering flows from the special place of Jews in the world, as declared in scripture. The Holocaust, from his perspective, is therefore also unique. While Fitch (who was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal for his leadership as a colonel in Canada's peacekeeping campaign in the former Yugoslavia) deeply appreciates the extent of the atrocities perpetrated in other settings, he believes that Holocaust commemorative practice should avoid its elision with other historical injustices.[78] Fitch, Sitwell, and other like-minded members of the community, tend to believe that the lessons of the Shoah should be carried into antiracist work today. In this sense, the long-standing approach of Rabbi Reinstein did not trouble them. But the inclusion of other histories of violence, colonialism and racism as parallels to the Holocaust and the suggestion of some level of Jewish responsibility within these histories, at least in the context of Holocaust commemoration, is for some a step too far.[79] Helga Thorson, a member of the Victoria Shoah Project, rejects this concern about recent ceremonies. The Victoria Shoah Project, she says, has been "very aware that every genocide and human rights abuse is unique in itself." Connection, Thorson emphasizes, is not equivalence.[80]

Despite these debates, the recent commemorative events have been compelling. Kristallnacht commemorations have seen an upsurge in participation. Commemorations in Victoria feel alive, relevant and activist. Often in the absence of survivors, their children have implored audiences

of Jews and non-Jews in Victoria to see themselves as responsible for ongoing injustices that can and should be addressed now. The premier and other dignitaries attend in part because the event feels relevant today. Jewish youth groups participate and take inspiration. A broader vision, that both acknowledges Jews as victims of violent racism and also asks them to recognize the victimization of others, as well as their potential implication in such harms, has breathed new life into Kristallnacht commemoration in Victoria.

Conclusion

The recent approach of the Victoria Shoah Project aligns with the direction of influential scholarship on Holocaust memory. In addition to Rothberg, James Young, in discussion of Yom Hashoah in Israel, conveys a similar vision: "Unlike monuments in the landscape, in whose rigid forms memory is too often ossified," he writes, "the remembrance day can reinvigorate itself and the forms it takes every year ... if we encourage the day to encompass multiple memories and meanings, we ensure that [commemoration] remains more the perennial guardian of memory, less its constant tyrant."[81] This powerful vision provides an intellectual foundation for the recent efforts of Kool, Menczer and their colleagues to connect Kristallnacht commemoration with pressing political questions in British Columbia.

In addition, their approach may help to resolve, at least in part, an impasse observed with respect to monuments and museum treatments of the Holocaust in settler colonial societies. In Canada and Australia, scholars have suggested that emphasis on the Holocaust can occlude other histories of violence, and particularly the displacement and attempted destruction of Indigenous people.[82] Jason Chalmers argues that Canada's National Holocaust Monument "perpetuates the marginalization of Indigenous peoples, legitimizes the theft of Indigenous land, and suppresses Indigenous land claims."[83] Examining debates about the place of the Holocaust at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, A. Dirk Moses has suggested that "genocide's popular association with the Holocaust concealed rather than revealed the Indigenous experience."[84] Further, in these contexts, discussions have been acrimonious, as groups make competing claims to

state resources and public attention: "memory wars," writes Moses, are "unleashed by the imperative for *government* recognition of victim status."[85] If they have any prospect of resolution, these challenges will likely require considerable and politically difficult institutional change.[86]

In the meantime, local commemorative events may have particular capacity for progressive adaptation. Their impermanence—no final determinations are necessary as to wall space or design—allows them to act as ongoing experiments in commemoration. Their position as community-based events lends legitimacy to both their focus on the Holocaust and their efforts to expand the discussion of genocide; as the children of survivors and leaders within the local Jewish community, Kool, Menczer and other members of the Victoria Shoah Project can both emphasize the Holocaust and conjure Jewish complicity in colonialism in British Columbia without fear of the reproach that state officials might face on both counts. The Victoria commemorations also suggest that such grassroots events—perhaps especially when they draw together multiple histories of injustice—have the capacity to "stimulate processes of historical renegotiation oriented towards forging relations of equality and consent," which Matt James, among others, finds absent from higher-profile state-funded memorial projects.[87]

Given the dearth of local historical accounts of similar commemorations, it is difficult at present to know whether other Jewish communities are similarly mobilizing Kristallnacht to engage questions of Jewish implication in historical injustice or settler colonialism in particular. Recent Kristallnacht programs in Montreal and Vancouver, for example, convey no concentrated engagement with the topic; they have not, unlike those in Victoria, begun with acknowledgments of Indigenous peoples or lands.[88] The ceremonies have not included Indigenous participants, and keynote speeches have cleaved to the topic of the Holocaust itself as an emblem of injustice and an analogical resource. In the absence of critical study of other local ceremonies, it is difficult to explain variations across locales, but it seems likely that institutional histories (in the case of Emanu-El, a legacy of direct implication in Indigenous dispossession), the political cultures of local organizations (the progressivism of key children of survivors in Victoria whose committee organized commemorative events) and structural factors (the size of the Jewish community and its place within the city) may help to explain the direction of commemorative practice.

By way of a final reflection, we shift to a somewhat more personal tone and sound a note of caution. We are both members of Victoria's Jewish community and regular attendees of the Kristallnacht commemoration. Marks has been part of the community since the early 1990s and Stanger-Ross has been a member of the Victoria Shoah Project since 2018. We thus approach this topic from the inside, and our concerns emerge from a perspective of both admiration for and participation in recent commemorative events.[89]

Nonetheless, there may be important questions to raise. In a recent discussion of Jewish commemorative events in Victoria, and of connections among injustices more broadly, our University of Victoria colleague, Christine Sy, an Ojibway Anishinaabe poet, seemed puzzled. After a pause, she reflected that she was trying to figure out what these connections—such as the invocation of Indigenous ghosts at a Holocaust commemoration—could mean for her work or the people she works with and for. What does this connection do for me, for us?, she asked.[90]

Sy's question has left us uneasy. It points to a certain asymmetry. Arguably, the connection between Kristallnacht commemoration and colonialism has breathed life into these commemorative events in Victoria. It has made Jewish commemorative practices feel meaningful and currently relevant. Rather than a grim catalogue of a terrible period of our own history, the commemoration feels full of possibility—of new ways of seeing Jewish history in relation to Canada's past. It comes to feel that way in part by drawing other stories of terror—of residential schools, smallpox and missing and murdered Indigenous women—into the room. Those stories do work for Jewish commemorative practice. The Jewish community is putting that history to use. Many in the Jewish community, the two of us included, would not attend a slide show of corpses. But we do show up to hear how relevant our history is to the current, ongoing challenge of colonialism.

After talking with our colleague Christine, we came to wonder: what if this form of remembrance is a further use of Indigenous people, rather than part of an answer to colonialism? While anti-Semitism continues to find disturbing expression in Victoria (and elsewhere), the Jewish community is relatively privileged, particularly by comparison with the ongoing anticolonial struggles faced by Indigenous communities across Canada.[91] Does the integration of the history of colonialism into Holocaust com-

memoration at Emanu-El risk becoming an instance (to borrow from Wolfe) of the "contradictory reappropriation" of indigenous dispossession on Vancouver Island, or can the practice actually advance justice?[92] This question is not likely to be limited to Victoria. Rather, in the wake of sustained antiracism protests in North America, many Jewish communities may struggle with related questions. If Kristallnacht commemoration is to be part of an answer to systemic racism in a place like Victoria, we join our colleague Christine in asking: how?

Notes

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1. For a description of those events, see Alan E. Steinweis, *Kristallnacht, 1938* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), chap. 4. Despite the ongoing debate among scholars over the term "Kristallnacht" (night of broken glass), which is widely believed to have been coined by the Nazis to deflect attention from the violence of the pogrom, the term, as Steinweis notes, "remains the most common appellation for the event by far in the English-speaking world" (2). Since almost all participants in the commemorative events discussed in this article would know it as Kristallnacht, we adopt the same approach. For a contrasting perspective, see Rabbi Benjamin Blech, "Kristallnacht: Murder by Euphemism," November 8, 2008, aish.com, https://www.aish.com/ho/i/Kristallnacht-Murder-by-Euphemism.html.

2. Richard Kool, Kristallnacht Introduction Speech, November 7, 2019, script shared with the authors. There is relatively little scholarship on territorial acknowledgments in Canada. A sense of the practice can be gleaned from Stephen Marche, "Canada's Impossible Acknowledgment," *New Yorker,* September 7, 2017. Scholarly discussion includes Dylan Robinson, Kanonhsyonne Janice C. Hill, Armand Garnet Ruffo, Selena Couture, and Lisa Cooke Ravensbergen, "Rethinking the Practice and Performance of Indigenous Land Acknowledgement," *Canadian Theatre Review* 117 (2019): 20–30.

3. Micha Menczer, interview by Stanger-Ross, July 3, 2019, Victoria, British Columbia; Ed Fitch, interview by Stanger-Ross, May 16, 2019, Victoria, British Columbia. Oral histories and local archival collections cited in this article can be accessed at the Defying Hatred Project Digital Archives, University of Victoria, https://oac.uvic.ca/holocaust/ (hereafter DHP).

4. On early Jewish life in British Columbia, see Cyril Leonoff, "The Rise of Jewish Life and Religion in British Columbia, 1858–1948," *The Scribe: Journal of the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia* 28, no. 1 (2008): 1–204. On settler colonialism in British Columbia, see Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 1997); Renisa Mawani, *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridicial Truths in British Columbia, 1871–1921* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009); John Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009); and Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

5. "Imposing Ceremony," *British Colonist*, June 3, 1863, 3. See also Cyril E. Leonoff, "The Emanu-El of Victoria, Vancouver Island," *Scribe* 32 (2012): 51–80. On the place of the Jewish community in Victoria's colonial history, and its ambivalent relation to "whiteness," see Lynne Marks and Jordan Stanger-Ross, "The 'White Jews' of Victoria: Whiteness, Inclusion and Exclusion in Victoria, British Columbia, 1858–1914," in Ellen Eisenberg ed., *Jews in the Multicultural West* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, forthcoming). In focusing on urban institutions, Hoffman's remarks conveyed the specific expression of settler colonialism in cities. See Penelope Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers: Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in 19th-Century Pacific Rim Cities* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2010); and Jordan Stanger-Ross, "Municipal Colonialism in Vancouver: City Planning and the Conflict over Indian Reserves, 1928–1950s," *Canadian Historical Review* 89, no. 4 (2008): 541–80.

6. For a more detailed discussion of the issues summarized in this paragraph, see Marks and Stanger-Ross, "The 'White Jews' of Victoria." See also David S. Koffman, *The Jew's Indian: Colonialism, Pluralism, and Belonging in America* (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2019), chap. 3.

7. John Belshaw, *Becoming British Columbia: A Population History* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009). British Columbia joined the confederation of Canada in 1871.

8. Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002); Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal People and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990).

9. Patrick Wolfe suggests the use of "structural genocide" in place of "cultural genocide" (or, simply, "genocide") to convey the specificity of elimination of Indigenous societies in the context of settler colonialism while avoiding the hierarchies implied by such qualifications as "cultural." Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 398–99, 402–3.

10. Belshaw, *Becoming British Columbia*, 54–61; Brett McGillivray, *Geography of British Columbia: People and Landscapes in Transition* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2000), 11.

11. Historical Summary (Congregation Emanu-El, 2011), available online at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cffMbCvnV5TmsSPmb_oBiygOnjJ9pw_Z/view; Charles Shahar, *2011 National Household Survey: The Jewish Population of Canada*, *Part 1* (Toronto: Jewish Federation of Canada, 2014), 25, 77, 84.

12. Shahar, *2011 National Household Survey*, 52, 46, 72.

13. Smaller Reform and Humanist congregations worshiped in the local Jewish Community Center, and Chabad built a synagogue in 2016. For the total population see the Statistics Canada Profile of the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area, https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMA&Code1=935&Geo2=PR&Code2=01&Data=Count&SearchText=Victoria&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1 (accessed March 2021).

14. Sander Gilman has proposed the "New Western History" of the United States, including the influential work of Richard White, as a model for understanding Jewish history as taking place within liminal spaces in which "all parties are forced to understand and define themselves in the light of their experience of the other." Sander Gilman, *Jewish Frontiers: Essays on Bodies, Histories, and Identities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 21; Jewish experience in Victoria might be thought of as exemplary of this model of Jewish experience. Thanks to the editors of the journal for suggesting this connection.

15. A. Dirk Moses, "Does the Holocaust Reveal or Conceal Other Genocides? The Canadian Museum for Human Rights and Grievable Suffering," in Alexander Laban Hinton et al. eds., *Hidden Genocides: Power, Knowledge, Memory* (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 29.

16. Koffman, "The Jews' Indian," 217.

17. Campaign Report, "'Kristallnacht Commemoration," 2009, http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/rep09nov9.pdf.

18. See Statement of Apology on Behalf of the Government of Canada to the Passengers of the MS St. Louis, November 7, 2018, https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2018/11/07/statement-apology-behalf-government-canada-passengers-ms-st-louis; A Resolution Commemorating the 81st Anniversary of

Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass, US Senate, S.Res. 417, 116th Cong. (2019), https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/sres417.

19. Janet Jacobs, "Memorializing the Sacred: Kristallnacht in German National Memory," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47, no. 3 (2008): 486. See also Y. Michael Bodemann, "Reconstructions of History: From Jewish Memory to Nationalized Commemoration of Kristallnacht in Germany," in Y. Michael Bodemann, ed., *Jews, Germans, Memory: Reconstructions of Jewish Life in Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 179–225.

20. James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Edward Linethal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); David Engel, *Historians of the Jews and the Holocaust* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Jason Chalmers, "The Canadianisation of the Holocaust: Debating Canada's National Holocaust Monument" (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 2013); Moses, "Does the Holocaust Reveal or Conceal Other Genocides?"; Noah Shenker, *Reframing Holocaust Testimony* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015); and Lilach Naishtat-Bornstein, "'I Am Their Jew': Karla Raveh's Testimony in Germany and in Israel," *History & Memory* 32, no. 2 (2020): 110–45. In addition to scholarship on Kristallnacht in Germany, there is also some interesting scholarship on Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yom Hashoah, which in some North American communities (and certainly in Victoria), has tended to be less inclusive of a wider public. See Barbara Schober, "Holocaust Commemoration in Vancouver, BC, 1943–1975" (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 2001), Judith E. Berman, *Holocaust Remembrance in Australian Jewish Communities, 1945–2000* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2001); and James E. Young, "When a Day Remembers: A Performative History of 'Yom ha-Shoah,'" *History & Memory* 2, no. 2 (1990): 54–75.

21. Young, *The Texture of Memory.*

22. Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 3–4.

23. *Jewish Western Bulletin* quoted in Schober, "Holocaust Commemoration in Vancouver," 29.

24. Franklin Bialystok, *Delayed Impact: The Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community* (Montreal: McGill-Queens Press, 2000), 169, 170, 180–81.

25. Ibid., 241.

26. Ibid., chaps. 4–8. Quotes on 191, 220.

27. According to Bialystok, the primary intracommunity political division within Holocaust memory pitted survivors against the more "established" Jewish Canadian

community, with the former advocating more militant and direct confrontations with anti-Semitism. Ibid., especially chaps. 5 and 7.

28. For an informative master's thesis that challenges Bialystok's arguments through local study, see Schober, "Holocaust Commemoration in Vancouver." Within the scholarship on the United States, Hasia Diner challenges a similar periodization of Jewish Holocaust commemoration in *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945–1962* (New York: New York University Press, 2009). There is a more robust recent scholarly discussion of representation of the Holocaust in Canadian museums, and particularly its treatment in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Some of that scholarship informs our discussion below. See, for example, Rita Kaur Dhamoon, "Re-presenting Genocide: The Canadian Museum of Human Rights and Settler Colonial Power," *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics* 1 (2016): 5–30; Moses, "Does the Holocaust Reveal or Conceal Other Genocides?"; and A. Dirk Moses, "The Canadian Museum for Human Rights: The 'Uniqueness of the Holocaust' and the Question of Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* 14, no. 2 (2012): 215–38. On Ottawa's Holocaust monument, see Jason Chalmers, "Settled Memories on Stolen Land: Settler Mythology at Canada's National Holocaust Monument," *American Indian Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (2019): 379–407.

29. Young, "When a Day Remembers," 54. Young refers specifically here to "fast days." While neither Yom Hashoah, which he discusses, nor Kristallnacht is a fast day, Young believes (as do we) that they can be understood within this tradition. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), offers a similar analysis and describes ritual engagement with human history as fundamental to Judaism (8–9).

30. Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love,* 66.

31. Rabbi Harry Brechner, unpublished speech from the ceremony in 2013.

32. Kristallnacht Commemoration Program, November 9, 2016, Victoria Shoah Project Digital Archive, https://www.victoriashoahproject.ca/kristallnacht-2016.

33. Kool, Kristallnacht Introduction Speech.

34. Activism in response to violence against Indigenous women in Canada eventually generated a National Inquiry, which reported in the year of Kool's address. See *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* (Ottawa, ON: National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019), https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/.

35. Kool, Kristallnacht Introduction Speech.

36. Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019) 10, 17, 14.

37. Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination," 388; see also Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999), 2.

38. Lorenzo Veracini, "Introduction: Settler Colonialism as a Distinct Mode of Domination," in Edward Cavanagh and Veracini, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2016), 2. See also Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker, *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* (Black Point, NS: Fernwood, 2015).

39. A certain ambivalence in this commitment to the present realities of settler colonialism is perhaps conveyed in Kool's use of the antiquated term "skid rows" in his address: Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, a site of concentrated urban Indigenous poverty and displacement, is one of the more widely recognizable symbols of settler colonialism in British Columbia, yet "skid row" suggests a past, rather than a present, colonial reality.

40. Richard Kool, interview by Stanger-Ross, May 9, 2019, Victoria, British Columbia. Kool's close linkage of the "ghosts" of the Shoah and the Indigenous victims of colonialism also recalls Wolfe's comparative analysis of the "logic of elimination" operative in both genocide and settler colonialism; Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination," 387.

41. Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject*, 11.

42. Victor Reinstein, interview by Stanger-Ross, August 8, 2019, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. On Jacobs and Gardner, see also Rhoda Kaellis ed., *Keeping the Memory: Fifteen Eyewitness Accounts of Victoria Holocaust Survivors* (Vancouver: Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society [ca. 1991]).

43. Bialystok, *Delayed Impact*, chap. 8.

44. Chris Harker, "Don't Forget—but Forgive," *Times Colonist,* March 4, 1984, file 7, Victor Reinstein Collection, DHP.

45. See, for example, Wyman, *The World Reacts*, 462, 686, 724.

46. Reinstein also vaguely recalls being influenced by the commemorative practices in Vancouver at this time (see Schober, "Holocaust Commemoration"); however, we have, to date, found no archival or oral historical evidence of this influence.

47. *Ani Ma'amin* (I believe) is the twelfth article of faith in Maimonides' creedal expression of Jewish belief known as the "Thirteen Principles," found at the end of the morning service in most traditional prayer books. Affirming belief in the coming of the Messiah, *Ani Ma'amin* has become associated with the defiance and hope of Jews, even during the Shoah.

48. For precedents for the ritual practices suggested in the booklet, see Diner, *We Remember with Reverence and Love.*

49. See, for example, Congregation Emanu-El, Board Meeting Minutes, November 10, 1988, file 13, box 6-B-2, Congregation Emanu-El Fonds, Jewish Museum and Archives of BC.

50. These quotes are taken from the handwritten 1990 program, which seems to have been written on the same document as the original 1988 notes. Kristallnacht Memorial Observance, November 8, 1990, file 5, "Kristallnacht Memorial Program," DHP.

51. See, for example, Hubert Beyer, "Deny Our Citizenship to Denier," *Goldstream News Gazette*, August 10, 1994, clipping in file 2: "Kristallnacht Notes and Service, 1995," DHP.

52. Kristallnacht Memorial Observance, November 9, 1995, file 2: "Kristallnacht Notes and Service, 1995," DHP.

53. Erika R. Apfelbaum, "And Now What, after Such Tribulations? Memory and Dislocation in the Era of Uprooting," *American Psychologist*, 55, no. 9 (2000): 1008–13.

54. See records contained in file 4, "Info Re: Civic Proclamation," DHP. See also file 5, "Kristallnacht Memorial Program," and file 2, "Kristallnacht Notes and Service, 1995," DHP.

55. Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933–1948* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1982).

56. Rabbi Victor Hillel Reinstein, "Kristallnacht: What Would You Have Done?" *Victoria Times Colonist*, November 9, 1994, 1.

57. Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Holocaust: An American Understanding* (Rutgers NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 145. More recently, controversy erupted with respect to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum's stance on the suitability of using the Holocaust in analogy to other historical injustices and human rights abuses. See Omer Bartov, et al. "An Open Letter to the Director of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum," *New York Review of Books*, July 1, 2019.

58. Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 274–300; Lipstadt, *Holocaust*, 148–50. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, trans. Assenka Oksiloff (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

59. Campaign Report: "Kristallnacht Commemoration," 2009, http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/rep09nov9.pdf.

60. The ninth day of the month of Av in the Hebrew calendar is a fast day that marks the destruction of the ancient Temple and has often also been used to commemorate Jewish suffering more broadly, including the Holocaust. The sermon is archived in file 3, box 5-D-2, Congregation Emanu-El Fonds, Jewish Museum and Archives of BC.

61. "Inserts," file 2, "Kristallnacht Notes and Service, 1995," DHP.

62. Board Minutes, October 21, 1993, file 4, Box 6-B-4, Congregation Emanu-El Fonds, Jewish Museum and Archives of BC. See Tu Thanh Ha, "Alberta activist Sigmund Sobolewski Was among the First Auschwitz Inmates" (obituary), *Globe and Mail,* August 8, 2017.

63. Kristallnacht Observance at Cathedral, file 5, "Kristallnacht Memorial Program," DHP.

64. Prayer pasted into Congregation Emanu-El's prayer book, *Sidur Lev Shalom*, author's personal collection.

65. *Canada's Residential Schools: Reconciliation. The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 6:3–5, 193–94.

66. Sid Tafler, "Why the Island Is Losing Its Rabbi," *The Globe and Mail,* June 4, 1998, A2.

67. Phyllis Senese, interview by Stanger-Ross, April 11, 2019, Victoria, British Columbia.

68. Menczer interview. Among others, Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston, MA: Mariner Books, 2000), has offered a similar critique of Holocaust memory in the United States.

69. Elisheva Gray, interview by Stanger-Ross, December 10, 2019, Victoria, British Columbia. Although these members of the local community reacted against their use, such images are not uncommon in commemorative practice. Diner notes that that since the very early postwar, commemorative representations of the Holocaust have included a commitment to conveying the brutality of the history (*We Remember with Reverence and Love*, 64–65). Unfortunately, the records of the Victoria organization that ran the events during this period are not available for research into the motives or discussions underlying them.

70. Menczer interview.

71. Gray interview, Menczer interview, Fitch interview.

72. See National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, https://nctr.ca/map.php.

73. *Reclaiming Power and Place.*

74. David S. Koffman, "Suffering & Sovereignty: Recent Canadian Jewish Interest in Indigenous Peoples and Issues," *Canadian Jewish Studies* 25 (2017): 33.

75. This process involved an acrimonious split from the historical society that previously organized the events. Due to constraints of the ethics clearance for this project, that division cannot be discussed in detail at this time.

76. John Sitwell, interview by Stanger-Ross, November 13, 2019, Victoria, British Columbia.

77. Fitch interview.

78. Fitch reached the rank of major-general before his retirement from the Canadian military (see https://cmea-agmc.ca/sites/default/files/retirements/06.06.01.fitch_es_may_17.pdf).

79. Conflict about the uniqueness or universality of the Holocaust has of course been addressed extensively. See, for example, Emil L. Fackenheim, "Concerning Authentic and Unauthentic Responses to the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 1 (1986): 101–20. See also Moses, "The Canadian Museum for Human Rights"; and A. Dirk Moses, "Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the 'Racial Century': Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust," *Patterns of Prejudice* 36, no. 4 (2002): 7–36. In the context of commemorative events, this issue also surfaced in Vancouver, when the socialist United Jewish People's Order included in its 1968 exhibit to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising images of mushroom clouds, Napalm bombings and American soldiers in Vietnam. See Schober, "Holocaust Commemoration," 127–28.

80. Helga Thorson, personal communication, June 2020. These debates reflect larger discussion within the field of public Holocaust memory, as noted above. Bartov et al., "An Open Letter."

81. Young, "When a Day Remembers," 72.

82. For the Australian context, see Rowan Savage, "The Political Uses of Death-as-Finality in Genocide Denial: The Stolen Generations and the Holocaust," *Borderlands* 12, no. 1 (2013): 1–22.

83. Chalmers, "Settled Memories," 380.

84. Moses, "Does the Holocaust Reveal or Conceal Other Genocides?" 40.

85. Ibid., 23.

86. Olena Hankivsky and Rita Kaur Dhamoon, "Which Genocide Matters the Most? An Intersectionality Analysis of the Canadian Museum of Human Rights," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 46, no. 4 (2013): 899–920; Dhamoon, "Re-presenting Genocide," 5–30. Recent allegations of racism at the museum (as at other major Canadian heritage institutions) may indeed be spurring such change. See for example, Pearl Eliadis, "New Report Finding Racism at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights was Shocking but Predictable," *Conversation*, August 10, 2020, https://theconversation.com/new-report-finding-racism-at-the-canadian-museum-for-human-rights-was-shocking-but-predictable-141253.

87. See Matt James "Degrees of Freedom in Canada's Culture of Redress," *Citizenship Studies* 19, no. 1 (2015): 48. See also Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham, *Reconciling Canada: Critical Perspectives on the Culture of Redress* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

88. Kristallnacht commemoration booklets, 2010–2020, courtesy of the Montreal Holocaust Museum; Kristallnacht Programs, 2010–2019, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre fonds, Series 3, Sub-series 1, file 1. RA000-03-01-01. See also

https://www.vhec.org/events-gallery/. By contrast the school education programs of the Centre have begun with an acknowledgment of Indigenous peoples and lands and have engaged colonialism as a topic. A comparison between school educational programs and commemorative events on these dimensions, while outside the scope of the present study, would make an interesting contribution in its own right.

89. In 1979, David M. Hayano described "auto-ethnographers" as researchers who "possess the qualities of often permanent self-identification with a group [that they are studying] and full internal membership, as recognized both by themselves and the people of whom they are a part." See David M. Hayano, "Auto-Ethnography: Paradigms, Problems, and Prospects," *Human Organization* 38, no. 1 (1979): 100. Controversy surrounding this kind of research (which according to Hayano has raged since the 1930s [99–100]) continues to this day, as reflected in the response of one of the anonymous reviewers of this article, who criticized the explicit inclusion of our subjective perspectives as "inappropriate." However, oral historians, among others, have long asserted the validity of this research perspective. See, for example, Pamela Sugiman, "I Can Hear Lois Now: Corrections to My Story of the Internment of Japanese Canadians—'For the Record,'" in Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki eds., *Oral History off the Record: Toward an Ethnography of Practice* (New York: Palgrave, 2013), 149–67. In our experience, "auto-ethnography" has been beneficial, but not without drawbacks. Close connection with the topic of research spurred this project from the outset, afforded access to interviewees, provided a foundation of common understanding, and may enable this research to have an impact within the future practice of Kristallnacht commemoration in Victoria. However, being an "insider" may also have limited Stanger-Ross's access to interviews with individuals who oppose the approach of the Victoria Shoah Project or have conflict with its founding members. For both its benefits and its drawbacks, we believe it is preferable to engage rather than to obscure our connections with this research topic.

90. Discussions of the Historical Injustices and Current Realities working group at the University of Victoria, fall 2018. Quoted by permission of Christine Sy.

91. On recent anti-Semitism in Victoria, as well as its relation to ongoing anti-colonial struggle in British Columbia, see Alissa Cartwright and Kaitlin Findlay, *Sacred Sites: Dishonour and Healing*, Digital Exhibition, Jewish Museum and Archives of BC.

92. Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination," 389. While much of the scholarship on the "culture of redress" has focused on political mobilization in relation to the state, grassroots initiatives like the Kristallnacht commemoration in Victoria might be subject to parallel critiques for their embrace of symbolic rather than material reconciliation. See Henderson and Wakeham, *Reconciling*

Canada; Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

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