
- Collection of Anna Yanovsky
The text below is from a petition that was addressed to Prime Minister Richard Bennett by S. W. Jacobs, the President of the Canadian Jewish Congress, and published in the Jewish Western Bulletin, a Vancouver-based Jewish newspaper, on August 22, 1935. The petition was accompanied by a memorandum listing 69 cases of discrimination and violence under the Nazi regime.

“Our country [Canada] has traditionally recognized its moral and legal rights, as well as its duty to speak on the behalf of those persecuted for their religious beliefs and for minority groups or races derived of their just rights.”

“In light of the humanitarian traditions by which our Government has been guided; in light of the danger to world peace, and to democratic institutions of government in this unleashing of barbarism and race hatred, and of the threat to Canadian citizens who are Jews, that is explicit in the policy of the German Government of organizing attacks upon, and denying the rights of all Jews in Germany, we respectfully call upon the Government of Canada to protest against the racial and religious persecution that now prevail in Germany, and to take every step consistent with international practice to inform the German Government of the outraged sentiments of the Canadian people.”

“We are confident that in expressing these views, our Government will speak not only for the thousands of our brethren in this country, but for all Canadians, of all races and creeds, who have given, repeatedly, evidence of their horror of oppression and of their concern for the preservation of the fundamental rights of civilized humanity.”
“It may be that [...] Jews may be given the worst of it at the Berlin Olympic Games, although we do not think such will be the case. [...] To be an Olympic winner or contender, a man must have great ability, he must almost live for the sport at which he excels, he must have ambition to become the best at his athletic specialty and the courage of a real competitor.

[...]

“It is very well to say that the real spirit of sportsmanship is not in the narrow-minded hopped-up Germany of today. But what is real sportsmanship? Our notion of a sportsman is a bloke who does his best every time he pulls on his sweater and who can give or take his bumps without crying too much. Maybe other people have other definitions, but we think that any good athlete believing he has a chance to win an Olympic title and having the ambition to do so, who lets the threats of a little trouble in Berlin keep him away from the Olympic Games, well, he doesn’t rate as champion no matter how fast he can run or how high he can jump.”