

**THE HOLOCAUST AND THE BRITISH REGIONAL PRESS 1939-45**

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# THE HOLOCAUST AND THE BRITISH REGIONAL PRESS 1939-45

Simon Leader

## ABSTRACT

The study examines the ways in which news of the systematic deportation and murder of European Jewry by Nazi Germany was presented and interpreted in a sample of the regional press in Britain.

- / The main inquiry examines the content of the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Yorkshire Post* and *Glasgow Herald* from January 1942 until June 1943. It does not cover the pre-war period but includes a prologue (1939-41) and epilogue (1943-45) to provide an indication of the kind of coverage available to the regional press at the time.

It also presents a quantitative overview of the range of coverage about Jews/Jewish issues in each of the sample newspapers in order to identify and illustrate the nature and extent of news concerning Jews in Britain, Palestine and Nazi-occupied Europe during the main sample period. An additional content analysis of one newspaper, the *Manchester Guardian*, is used to assess the 1939-41 and 1943-45 periods and thus provides an overview of the relevant coverage during the entire war period.

The study pays particular attention to the sources of news concerning ghettoisation, executions, deportation, and the systematic mass murder of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. It also concentrates on the views and comments of the newspapers in leader columns and readers' letters. An integral part of the discussion is the newspapers' assessment of the official and public reaction to the news of the Nazi extermination programme.

It is found that each of the newspapers were fully aware of the Nazis' intention to murder all Jews under their control by December 1942. They all reported the events that came to be understood as the Holocaust, (some in extraordinary detail) but the *Manchester Guardian* stood apart because of the consistency of its coverage.



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## **INTRODUCTION**

## Introduction

The study examines the ways in which news of the systematic deportation and murder of European Jewry by Nazi Germany was presented and interpreted in a sample of the regional press in Britain.

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The evidence presented demonstrates the chronology of knowledge, interpretation and reaction. It can be seen that the coverage was consistent, highly detailed and well considered. It illustrates beyond doubt that the papers and their readers believed the news to be true.

## Chapter I      **Prologue**

A prologue briefly outlines the context in which news of the Nazi extermination policy was received. It discusses the sources of the first “war” news from Europe following the German invasion of Poland in 1939 and the *Manchester Guardian*’s assessment of what Nazi rule would mean for Polish Jews. It notes how the term “extermination” was initially interpreted, how the paper explained mass deportations, and speculated about the welfare of Jews as German plans changed during 1940. The last part of the prologue examines the first reports of atrocities committed by German forces as Nazi rule stretched across Europe in 1941. It specifically discusses the manner in which reports of executions in Russia were interpreted.

Additional data compiled from a content analysis of the *Manchester Guardian* is also presented to provide a broad overview of the extent of coverage devoted to news concerning Jews in Britain, Palestine and Nazi occupied Europe from September 1939 until December 1941.

## Chapter II      **Early 1942**

The chapter begins in January 1942 and examines further reports from Soviet sources concerning Nazi atrocities in the three sample newspapers. It also provides examples of other news concerning Jews in Britain and Palestine during the first five months of 1942. The discussion examines the manner in which news of Nazi mass murder of Jews was initially presented and the extent to which British readers understood what was happening to Jews behind enemy lines.

## Chapter III      **June to September 1942**

This chapter covers the period when the *Manchester Guardian*, *Yorkshire Post* and *Glasgow Herald* first learned of the about the extent of the systematic killing of Jews in Poland and Russia. The information provided by the *Bund* report fundamentally changed the papers’ framework of interpretation. Readers learned that the mass murder of all Jews by gas and other methods was not a consequence of war but a separate Nazi “extermination” policy. The discussion illustrates how further reports concerning mass deportations of Jews from Western Europe to special Nazi camps in Poland confirmed the fact that the Nazis had “intensified” their anti-Semitic persecution.

## **Chapter IV     October to December 1942**

Regular news of deportations from France, Holland and Belgium during the early autumn of 1942 indicated a definite Nazi plan to concentrate the Jews of Europe in Poland to facilitate their mass massacre. This chapter outlines the sources of news, the reaction of readers, British Jews and others to increasingly detailed reports from Europe.

## **Chapter V     The Allied Declaration 1942**

This examines British official confirmation of the Nazi extermination programme. It discusses how the announcement in the House of Commons and Lords was reported by the sample newspapers.

## **Chapter VI     January – April 1943**

This section of the study examines three key questions. Did British concern for European Jews dissipate after official confirmation? What was the official reaction of the British and American Governments? How did the regional newspapers respond to calls to rescue the Jews of Europe?

## **Chapter VII     The Bermuda Conference 1943**

This chapter concerns the Anglo-American Conference on Refugees at Bermuda. It examines the period leading up to the meeting, the official presentation of the discussions and considers how each of sample newspapers responded to the decisions taken at the conference.

## **Chapter VIII     Epilogue**

The epilogue provides examples of the kind of news about Jews in Nazi which continued to reach the *Manchester Guardian* in the latter part of the war. It includes details and eye-witness reports of the Oswiecim (or Auschwitz) concentration camp and presents a brief account of the liberation of Belsen and Buchenwald.

Additional data compiled from a content analysis of the *Manchester Guardian* is also presented to provide a broad overview of the extent of coverage devoted to news concerning Jews in Britain, Palestine and Nazi occupied Europe from July 1943 until June 1945.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

## Literature Review

This study of the Holocaust and the British Regional Press has drawn on three distinctive sets of related literature.

The first, and by far the most extensive, concerns the history of what has come to be broadly termed “the Holocaust”; the term commonly used to signify the process of Nazi anti-Semitic persecution beginning in Germany in 1933 and culminating in the systematic programme of mass murder of European Jews - the Nazi “final solution” - during World War Two.<sup>1</sup> Many of these studies have included incidental examples of press reaction in Britain or America to illustrate certain aspects of contemporaneous public knowledge, for instance, press coverage concerning the arrest and deportation of Jews from France in 1942, from Hungary in 1944 and public reaction to the liberation of Nazi concentration camps in 1945.<sup>2</sup> These sources, and more general accounts of the period, inform but only indirectly contribute to this study.

The second concerns the history of what the Allies knew about this process – when and how information about the mass murder of Jews reached Allied governments and what they did in response as the extremity of the Nazi “final solution” came to be understood. It has chiefly been concerned with the first sources of this information from individuals and groups inside occupied-Europe during the War years. Equally, it has examined how such extraordinary intelligence was officially interpreted, particularly by the British and American administrations and the nature of subsequent Allied policy with regard to Jews in occupied-

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<sup>1</sup> The “Holocaust” has become the principal referent in English to the Nazi genocide of European Jewry. Jon Petrie’s article on the etymology and use of the term provides a series of recent definitions:

“the *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines “Holocaust” as “the 12 years (1933-45) of Nazi persecution of Jews and other minorities ... climax[ing] in the ‘final solution.’” *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1993) defines the term “h/Holocaust” as “The (period of the) mass murder of Jews 1939-1945.” *The Oxford Modern English Dictionary* (1996): “[T]he mass murder of the Jews by the Nazis 1941-1945.” And *The Random House Webster’s College Dictionary* (1997) gives a narrow, but not uncommon meaning: “the Holocaust, the systematic mass slaughter of European Jews in Nazi concentration camps during World War II.” This last definition places a significant portion of Jewish death at Nazi hands -- for example the Einsatzgruppen shootings - outside the term’s boundaries”

“The secular word HOLOCAUST: scholarly myths, history, and 20th century meanings” in the *Journal of Genocide Research* 2:1 (2000), 31-63

<sup>2</sup> For example: Aly, G., (1999) *Final Solution. Nazi Population Policy And The Murder of European Jews*.

Bauer, Y., (1982) *A History of the Holocaust*.

Bridgman, J., (1990) *The End Of The Holocaust : The Liberation Of The Camps*

Calder, A., (1992) *The People’s War: Britain 1939-1945*. p. 565-6

Gilbert, M., (1986) *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy*

Kee, R., (1985) *1945: The World We Fought For*. p. 223-227

Kushner, A., in Cesarani, D., (ed) (1997) *Genocide and Rescue. The Holocaust in Hungary 1944*

Marrus, M.R., (1989) *The Holocaust in History*.

Novick, P., (2000) *The Holocaust in American Life*

Reitlinger, G., (1953) *The Final Solution*

Europe. This set of sources has acknowledged the pre-war factors that contributed to the attitudes of the British and American Governments, not least refugee/immigration policy. It has paid close attention to the respective political contexts in which accounts of mass murder were received and drawn on official documents and public statements concerning Jews in Britain, America, and Palestine during the War. It has, as a result, taken notice of how some of these policies were presented, mainly in prominent national newspapers and the BBC.<sup>3</sup>

Another body of work can be included within this category: this research has examined the reaction of American and British Jews before and during the War. More specifically, it has focused on the attitudes and activities of Jewish groups in response to the news of the destruction of European Jewry. In a similar illustrative manner to the first group of studies, it has only infrequently drawn on press accounts of statements made by Jewish organisations and representatives during the 1933-45 period.<sup>4</sup>

A third set of work can be identified within Holocaust literature which specifically relates to public knowledge via the mass media, i.e. cinema newsreels, radio and the national and regional press. It asks what the media knew, examines the information available to them and points to the stages when the public learned of the Nazi murder programme. It illustrates how the British and American press in particular, made sense of the information they received. Above all, it aims to demonstrate the extent to which the content of the media reflected a wider concern for the plight of European Jews from 1933-1945 and how this was expressed in professional comment and public discussion.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Bauer, Y., (1968) *When Did They Know?*

Breitman, R., (1998) *Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned. What the British and Americans Knew.*

Gilbert, M., (1981) *Auschwitz and the Allies. How the Allies Responded to the News of Hitler's Final Solution*

Laqueur, W., (1980) *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth About Hitler's "Final Solution"*

Rubenstein, W., (1997) *The Myth of Rescue*

Wyman, D.S., (1984) *The Abandonment of the Jews. America and the Holocaust 1941-1945*

<sup>4</sup> Bolchover, R., (1993) *British Jewry and the Holocaust*

Friedman, S.S. (1973) *No Haven for the Oppressed: United States Policy Towards Jewish Refugees 1938-45.*

Kushner, T., (1990) *The Holocaust And The Liberal Imagination A Social And Cultural History*

London, L., (2000) *Whitehall and the Jews 1933-1948*

Sompolinsky, M., (1999) *The British Government and the Holocaust. The Failure of Anglo-Jewish Leadership?*

Wasserstein, B., (1979) *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*

<sup>5</sup> Abzug, R.H., (1999) *America Views The Holocaust 1933-45.*

Fine, J., (1988) *American Radio Coverage of the Holocaust*

Leff, L., (2000) *When the Facts Didn't Speak for Themselves: The Holocaust in the New York Times 1939-45.*

Lipstadt, D.E., (1986) *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933-45*

Milland, G., (1998) *Some Faint Hope and Courage: The BBC and the Final Solution 1942-45*

Scott, J., (1994) *The British Press and the Holocaust 1942-1943*

Seaton, J., (1987). *Reporting Atrocities: The BBC and the Holocaust*

Sharf, A., (1964) *The British Press and Jews Under Nazi Rule*



It is also possible to identify a more dissimilar group of secondary sources that concern the mass media. Most of this research has assessed the character, structure, and general performance of the British press after the First World War. It includes studies of atrocity reports, the political economy of the British press in the 1930s and early 1940s, international news agencies, and some of the earliest accounts of war reporting during this period. Several have specifically addressed the issue of anti-Semitism in the press during the same period.<sup>6</sup> Lastly, theoretical perspectives and approaches drawn from the field of Mass Communication research have informed the methodology used in this study: for example, news values, the production and analysis of news content and the concept of the public sphere.<sup>7</sup>

Many of the studies that form the second and third sets of research have concentrated on the reactions and policies of the British and American Governments based on Allied intelligence of the Nazi extermination programme: i.e. what did they know, when did they know, and which were the main sources of information? They have generally concluded that the official responses made in the light of the information at their disposal were at best inadequate and at worst deliberately chose to ignore the specific plight of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe.<sup>8</sup>

Some have focused on quite specific sources and groups during the war to illustrate their accusations of official failure, for instance, Breitman (1998) - the GCHQ decrypts of the *Enigma* and *Ultra* intercepted German Order Police communications released by the Public Record Office in May 1997 - and Wyman (1984) - amongst other examples of "moral failure", the practices of consular officials in issuing visas. Others like Bolchover (1993) and Sompolsky (1999) have widened the scope of accusation to include critical examinations of the political effectiveness of American and British Jewish groups, arguing that they could

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<sup>6</sup> Camrose (1947) *British Newspapers And Their Controllers*.

Crouch, A.C., (1943) *Jews Are News!*

Gannon, F.R., (1971) *The British Press and Germany, 1936-1939*

Harris, W., (1943) *The Daily Press*.

Hood, P., (1939) *Ourselves and the Press*

Hollingworth, C., (1940) *The Three Weeks' War In Poland*.

Horowitz, P., (1943) *The Jews, the War and After*.

Ponsonby, A., (1928) *Falsehood In War-Time*

Read, D., (1992) *The Power Of News: The History Of Reuters, 1849-1989*

<sup>7</sup> For example, Gans. H.J., (1980) *Deciding What's News*.

Galtung, J and Ruge, M.H., (1965) *The Structure Of Foreign News*

Hansen, A., Cottle, C., Negrine, R. and Newbold, C., (1998) *Mass Communication Research Methods*.

Outhwaite, W., (ed.) *The Habermas Reader*.

Van Dijk, T.A., (1988) *News As Discourse*.

Ward, K., (1989) *Mass Communication in the Modern World*.

<sup>8</sup> Penkower, M., (1983) *The Jews Were Expendable: Free Word Diplomacy and The Holocaust*;

Hilberg, R., (1993) *Perpetrators Victims and Bystanders. The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945*

have done more to convince their Governments to initiate rescue measures.<sup>9</sup> Other British studies, on the whole, have been more even-handed and taken more long-term factors into consideration such as the excellent assessments of the British/Jewish experience made by Wasserstein (1979), Kushner (1990), and London (2000) which highlighted British liberalism, domestic anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism as elements in British official (and popular) reaction to the reports from Nazi Germany and occupied-Europe from 1933-45.<sup>10</sup>

Two outstanding studies by Gilbert (1981) and Laqueur (1980) have presented the most rounded accounts of Allied knowledge of the “final solution” and the Nazi death camps. They acknowledged that anti-Semitism contributed to official scepticism about “exaggerated” reports from Poland, which were dismissed by some diplomats as “wild rumours inspired by Jewish fears”,<sup>11</sup> but this was certainly not seen as a disproportionate factor in Allied reception. Both sought to explain the development and interpretation of official understanding (and subsequent decisions) of the situation within the constraints of the wartime context and as result were less willing - than for example, Penkover (1983) and Morse (1967) - to comprehensively indict the British and American administrations. Rubenstein (1997) later took this view to an extreme by arguing that practical obstacles, more than any other reason, prevented the Allies from saving European Jewry.<sup>12</sup>

Gilbert’s thorough approach to the subject matter, using many illustrative examples demonstrated that the details of what was happening to Jews under Nazi rule were received and learned in small increments, from many sources, some less reliable than others, until a bigger picture of “unbelievable crimes” emerged. The first reports from inside Poland began to reach the Allies in London in May 1942 (the *Bund* Report) and further details were received consistently through the summer and autumn of that year. These early reports referred to massacres of Jews following the invasion of Russia in 1941 but later information told of events just after they had happened such as mass deportations of Jews from France and the Low Countries in August and September 1942 as part of a systematic extermination policy.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Breitman (1998), Wyman, D.S., (1984), Bolchover, R. (1993), Sompolinsky, M. (1999) *op.cit.*,

<sup>10</sup> Kushner (1997), London (2000), Wasserstein (1979) *op.cit.*,

<sup>11</sup> Comment made in a cable to Washington by US Ambassador to Switzerland Leland Harrison. Laqueur, *op.cit.*, p.80

<sup>12</sup> Gilbert (1981), Laqueur (1980), Rubenstein (1997) Penkower, M., (1983) *op.cit.*, Morse, A.D., (1967) *While Six Million Died: A Chronicle Of American Apathy*.

<sup>13</sup> Gilbert (1981) *op.cit.*, i.e. reports which were not classified as Top Secret or threatened Allied military operations.

For many officials, acceptance of this information proved to be difficult. Breitman and Laqueur (1986) illustrated the difficulties faced by those who had learned about the facts of the Nazi extermination policy (such as Gerhard Riegner of the World Jewish Congress and Richard Lichtheim of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in Switzerland) in their efforts to convince the British and Americans that the information they had received (from Poland, Russia, and elsewhere) was true.

Laqueur (1980) highlighted a number of factors which, he contended, hindered official belief: first, the legacy of atrocity stories from the First World War was seen as an obstacle to Allied acknowledgment of reports of maltreatment, mass deportation and massacre which were so horrific it was thought that they could be discounted as propaganda. Read (1972) has shown that from 1914-18 innumerable acts of war, such as aerial bombardment, submarine warfare, the desecration of burial sites, and many other (more innocuous) acts of war were described and labelled as "atrocities" in the British press. The propaganda of hate was used to help raise war loans and encourage enlistment - British advertisements for war loans featured cartoons of apparent atrocities or referred to free pamphlets that gave details of atrocities; recruitment meetings were told that terrible atrocities in Belgium were being investigated which would horrify the public when they were revealed - to stiffen the fighting spirit of soldiers, to instil hatred and bolster home morale.<sup>14</sup> Many of these atrocity stories (as Read points out, they may not have been atrocities but they were certainly "atrocity stories") were subsequently revealed to be false, and some were exposed as deliberately orchestrated propaganda. The titles of the three most prominent studies of the subject illustrate the anger felt by those who were convinced that they had been deceived, for example Lord Ponsonby's 1928 book *Falsehood In War-Time: An Assortment Of Lies Circulated Throughout The Nations During The Great War*, George Viereck's (1930) *Spreading the Germs Of Hate* (including an account of the creation of the "Corpse/Soap Factory" story which appeared in the Times on April 17, 1917) and Douglas Reed's *Disgrace Abounding* (1939).<sup>15</sup>

The overall effect of the relentless exposure of the atrocity stories was a general resentment of the public against those who had roused its passion, inflamed its indignation, exploited its patriotism, and desecrated its highest ideals by government initiated concealment, subterfuge, fraud, falsehood, and trickery.<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately many wartime reports of Nazi treatment of Jews resembled older stories such as the Turkish massacres of the Armenians in 1915 and the deportation of French and Belgian

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<sup>14</sup> Read, J.M (1972) *Atrocity Propaganda*.

<sup>15</sup> A full account is given in van Pelt J.(1999) *The Pelt Report, Part 2 Concerning Evidence III Intimations, 1941-1945*. Expert Opinion in the Case between David Irving and Penguin Books Limited and Deborah E. Lipstadt, <http://www.holocaustdenialontrial.com/evidence/van.asp>.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

men, women and children for forced labour by the Germans in 1916. Laqueur (1980) noted that in July 1941 the Ministry of Information concluded that atrocity stories were no longer believed by the public, "a certain amount of horror was needed in home propaganda, but it must be used sparingly, and must always deal with the treatment of indisputably innocent people. Not with violent political opponents and not with Jews."<sup>17</sup>

Secondly, he also introduced the concept of a "cognitive gap" between *knowledge* - of persecution, slave labour, random executions etc. - which were known to occur - and *belief* - in the extremity of Nazi racial theory/anti-Jewish actions which, some reports said, involved brutal deportations from all over Europe, human medical experiments and the systematic murder of hundreds of thousands of Jewish men, women, and children, by mass gassing in special chambers. The reports were so shocking that it was not surprising that many at the Foreign Office and U.S. State Dept. doubted the authenticity of the accounts. They seemed unbelievable.<sup>18</sup>

Thirdly, he argued that even when the facts were confirmed (by the Allied Declaration of December 17 1942), there was an official reluctance to discuss Jewish victims. To do so, it was thought, would be to encourage anti-Semitism in Britain. For example, "the Home Intelligence Weekly Report of 29 December 1942 said that as a result of the publicity surrounding the Nazi extermination policy, people became more conscious of Jews they do not like here".<sup>19</sup> Laqueur believed that this was a decisive factor in British officials actively "playing down" publicity surrounding atrocities against Jews.

Laqueur's theories concerning the reaction of British and American officials to the (secret and diplomatic) reports from Nazi Europe from June 1941 to December 1942 were extremely influential and were applied to aspects of later work on press/public understanding of the Holocaust, most notably by Lipstadt (1986) and Scott (1994). However, a much earlier piece of research on British press coverage of the Holocaust by Andrew Sharf (1964) can be seen as the main starting point for these and other studies of the press. For this reason it merits a rather extensive examination.

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<sup>17</sup> Laqueur, (1980) *op.cit.*, p.90, See also McLaine, I. (1979) *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War 2*.

<sup>18</sup> See also Koestler, A. (1944) *On Disbelieving Atrocities: New York Times Magazine* January 1944 and *Time and Tide* 5 Feb 1944 in Sharf (1964) pp.70-71

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.92 see also Fox, J. "The Jewish Factor in British War Crimes Policy in 1942" *English Historical Review* Vol. XCII, 1977, p.92.

Sharf's "The British Press and Jews Under Nazi Rule"<sup>20</sup> was the first study concerned with press coverage of the Holocaust. The survey aimed to present an overview of British press opinion from 1933 until 1945. It was based on a collection of over 10,000 press cuttings compiled by Joshua Podro covering "matters of Jewish interest" from about 800 different newspapers and periodicals (including some published outside the UK) from 1919 to 1951 which were subsequently donated to the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem. Of these, 6,500 cuttings were used by Sharf from about 150 newspapers and periodicals published in the UK.

Sharf expressed his gratitude to the Podro for "reducing his task to manageable proportions". He maintained that Podro's selection was "adequate in both quantity and variety" and that "sample checks against complete press files showed that in fact there were no serious gaps".<sup>21</sup> Though he acknowledged that "a complete picture" had to be sacrificed for reasons of space, most of the main national and regional newspapers listed in the register of newspapers and periodicals were all cited at some point in his survey. In addition, many religious periodicals were listed plus some rather distinctive and specialist publications, for example, *Architect's Journal*, *Lady*, and *Sphere* ("so far as can be judged, no section of the press has been entirely omitted").<sup>22</sup> It was made clear that two sections of the press were deliberately excluded from the survey: the "Jewish press" and the "overtly Fascist" press. The declared reason for these two significant exceptions was because the survey aimed "to gather what might properly be termed outside reactions".<sup>23</sup>

In his 1963 lecture based on the survey, Sharf maintained:

During the whole of the War news, and accurate news, of the fate of Jews in occupied Europe continued to reach the British press.

From the Spring of 1942, that is, long before the Russian advances put the matter beyond all doubt, the press was filled with stories of the slaughter of Jewish communities...All this was known, all this was printed, all this was *believed*.<sup>24</sup>

As the first overview of British press coverage of the Nazi persecution and mass murder of European Jewry it was an extremely significant contribution to our understanding of what was

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<sup>20</sup> Sharf, A. *The British Press and Jews Under Nazi Rule* (1964) p.2. Interest in the subject of press/public knowledge of the Holocaust was renewed in the aftermath of the Eichmann trial in 1961-62. Two other articles based on the same material were published in 1963. Some remarks concerning the regional papers made in "The British Press and the Holocaust" in *Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance* pp.169-191 and *Nazi Racism and the British Press 1933-1945*, (Noah Barou Memorial Lecture published by the World Jewish Congress, British Section) did not appear in the final book.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid* p.1. One of the first requirements of any study of the Holocaust and the regional press during the wartime period should be to check if there were any gaps in Sharf's selection and to indicate if those gaps were at all significant. See methodology chapter.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>24</sup> Sharf (1963) *Nazi Racism and the British Press 1933-1945*. p.5. Italics in original.

publicly known at the time. Sharf was the first to argue that British understanding of Nazi anti-Semitism from 1933-39 - rather more than the legacy of First World war reports - directly affected press interest in the fate of Jews during the war. He was the first to demonstrate that the British press not only knew what was happening to the Jews of Europe during the war (i.e. a great deal of information was available) but that it printed extremely accurate details *at every stage* of the extermination process. Moreover, he concluded that there was no doubt that the majority of the British public was willing to accept this information as true. In other words, familiarity with “the Nazi will to put an end to all Jewish life in all lands” was well established before the revelations of the concentration camps at the end of the war.<sup>25</sup> Sharf’s broad ranging analysis of the British press has been used as one of the primary reference points for those wishing to illustrate contemporaneous public awareness of the Holocaust.<sup>26</sup> However, on closer inspection it can be seen that the value of this study’s breath was considerably diminished by its lack of depth.

Four main areas of criticism can be highlighted: first, the discussion was determined by the structure of the study rather than a strictly chronological account of the 1933-45 period. - references were often made to several different years within the 12 year period to illustrate press coverage of a specific issue e.g. “belief and atrocities” or “refugees”. Brief excerpts drawn from four or five different years’ coverage did little to contribute to a clear understanding of the stages of public knowledge about Nazi persecution of German Jews and later extermination of European Jews or the nature of its coverage in the press. The evidence was presented in such an inconsistent manner that it was almost impossible for the reader to build up a clear impression of any particular month or year. As a result, it was very difficult to develop a detailed appreciation of how the news - especially of the “final solution” - developed over time.

Second, none of the newspapers listed<sup>27</sup> was cited consistently enough for the reader to be able build up a picture of the nature and extent of a particular publication's coverage. The resulting presentation was a mixed selection of partial quotes and basic citations taken from cuttings which were included as evidence of British newspapers’ coverage.

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<sup>25</sup> Sharf (1963) *The British Press and the Holocaust* p188

<sup>26</sup> Wasserstein, B. (1979), Seaton, J. (1987), Milland, G. (1998) *op.cit.*,

<sup>27</sup> The range of regional newspapers cited in the survey covered every part of Britain: references were made to the *Birmingham Post*, the *Bournemouth Daily Echo*, *Bristol Evening World*, *East Anglian Daily Times*, *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, *Glasgow Herald*, *Glasgow Daily Record*, *Irish Press*, *Leicester Mercury*, *Lincolnshire Echo*, *Liverpool Echo*, *London Evening Standard*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Manchester Evening Chronicle*, *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, *Northampton Echo*, *Nottingham Evening News*, *The Scotsman*, *Sheffield Telegraph*, *Streatham News*, and *Yorkshire Post*.

Third, the egalitarian approach to the inclusion of quotations from all kinds of publications demonstrated little discrimination between different types of print media. Opinions drawn from larger circulation newspapers were ranked alongside comments from regional newspapers and small circulation political weeklies. All were given equal status despite significant differences in the size and character of their readership. The editorial opinion of minor regional newspapers (such as the *Lincolnshire Echo* or the *Bristol Evening World*) was given the same attention as (small but influential) periodicals (like *The Spectator*, *The Economist* or *Truth*) and more prominent newspapers (for example, the *Times* or the *Daily Telegraph*) with only a scant description of their party political character included in the survey's "Register of Newspapers and Periodicals".<sup>28</sup> All were accorded the same degree of importance under the umbrella term of "the British press".

Lastly, most of the citations or quotations from newspapers in the survey were stated as "editorial opinion" mainly expressed in newspaper editorials/leader columns.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately it was never made clear whether this selection decision was made by Podro or Sharf. A possible justification for the selection of "editorial opinion" rather than other content from external sources may have been to illustrate a paper's attitude or opinion on an issue concerning Jews in occupied-Europe. Sharf explained this rather narrow focus in a brief reference to Madge and Harrison (1949) which stressed the importance of reading newspaper editorials/leader columns.<sup>30</sup> A consequence of this sampling decision was that certain highly relevant press references (e.g. news agency copy and letters) to the plight of Jews under the Nazis were not selected for analysis. In addition, on the occasions where "editorial opinion" was interpreted in a broader sense, such as in excerpts from newspaper and periodical comment on foreign news and Parliamentary reports, it was generally a publication's view of the news rather than the news itself which governed the discussion.

Thanks to Podro's vast collection, Sharf had access to many of the news articles themselves (the headlines of these articles were faithfully cited in the footnote references) but he chose not to include their content in the main discussion. Instead their details were summarised within the overall survey, for example:

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 210-217 for example if a publication was "Conservative, Labour or Liberal" in its outlook.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2. "Each quotation in this survey is editorial opinion unless otherwise stated, while all excisions and extraneous insertions have been clearly indicated."

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4, Madge, C. and Harrison, T. *Mass Observation: The Press and its Readers* London (1949) p.49

In the middle of 1942 the press began to be filled with story after story telling of the actual slaughter of Jews. At first these stories came from the Russian front, where Einsatzgruppen activities were having their results. There is no need of a long list.<sup>31</sup>

The direct quotation of many other illuminating sections of the newspapers which were clear examples of the kind of content which was being published at the time was generally avoided. One explanation for this decision may have been the fact that almost all of the content concerning Jews in occupied-Europe was derived from foreign news/news agency copy, which was itself often drawn from a variety of sources (and may have been seen as unreliable). As this content was also reproduced across many titles, it clearly did not reflect a particular publication's view and consequently it was not directly quoted in the review. The approach paid dividends if there was a corresponding leader column concerning Nazi anti-Jewish policy, but because the various news articles, letters or other items which may have prompted an editorial/leader column were not quoted directly, it was very difficult for the reader to get a detailed sense of the range of news which was being presented to the British public.

There is no doubt that Sharf was severely limited in his ability to comment on other aspects of the coverage by the fact that he was working from press cuttings rather than full archives of the newspapers. For example, he was unable to indicate the relative importance of a particular reference in the survey, i.e. if a reference to the Nazi treatment of Jews was part of a short comment or part of a prominent lengthy leader column or feature article. In addition, the relative prominence of any reference or article was impossible to estimate since no page numbers were given to indicate where the item was placed in the newspaper, such as in the main news pages or on the back page.

The same reason does not excuse the fact that some key references to British knowledge of the Nazi extermination policy against Jews under their control were not discussed in any depth. For example, press reaction to the Polish Note and the Inter-Allied Information Committee's pamphlet on Jewish Massacres (otherwise referred to as "The Allied Declaration") both published in December 1942 are only considered very briefly. In the latter case, references were made to remarks by the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* (18 December 1942) and to the *Sunday Times* (20 December 1942) but the only quotation was taken from the *News Chronicle* (18 December 1942).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p.91 "Nazis Have Murdered a Million Jews" *Evening Standard* 30 June 1942; "One Million Jews Killed" *Glasgow Bulletin* 7 August 1942

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93



These examples are typical of the rather inconsistent nature of the study. Despite the declared value of newspapers like the *Times*, and the *Daily Telegraph* to the coverage of the plight of the Jews under Nazi rule these papers were either ignored or under-used as valuable historical sources.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, though Sharf drew special attention to the contribution made by the *Manchester Guardian* during the 1933-1945 period, it appears that he was referring to the pre-war period rather than the crucial years when the news of the “final solution” became known (a more detailed analysis of Sharf’s use of this paper is included in the methodology chapter).

Despite these weaknesses it is possible to say that Sharf’s contribution was extremely valuable. It took all aspects of news concerning Jews into account, in Britain, in Palestine and in Nazi Europe and was one of the first to illustrate how domestic perceptions - of 1930’s Nazi racial theory and British anti-Semitism towards European refugees - affected British press interpretation of foreign events and issues during the period.<sup>34</sup> It certainly remains the best account of British press opinion of Nazi anti-Semitism in the pre-war years. Moreover, its influence can be seen in nearly all subsequent studies of the press and the Holocaust.

The ambition of Sharf’s study – to present the widest overview of British press understanding of Jews under Nazi rule - was embraced by Deborah Lipstadt in her study of the American press during the same 1933-45 period.<sup>35</sup> She had already developed a more refined methodological approach to the study of the press in her assessment of the *New York Times* and realised the value of a systematic analysis of newspaper content.<sup>36</sup> This (1980) study was groundbreaking as it took some basic content analysis techniques from the field of Mass Communication research and applied them to a chronological quantitative study of one newspaper from 1936 to 1943. This methodology was used successfully to assess the page placement of news concerning Jews under Nazi rule. Though this study pre-dated his work (it

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<sup>33</sup> “Three dailies gained a special reputation and, in a real sense, stood in a class apart. These were the *Times*, the *Manchester Guardian*, and the *Daily Telegraph*. Quite aside from their varying political slants and their equally varying comments and explanations, it is those three which, taking the period as a whole, produced the fullest and the most accurate stories of the persecutions and those stories which perhaps carried the most conviction. In the many controversies, public and private, which developed over this, as over other aspects of Hitler’s activities, an appeal to one of these three for the actual facts was generally accepted as valid by all the participants.” *Ibid.*, p. 10

<sup>34</sup> Gannon, F.R., (1971) *op.cit.*,

<sup>35</sup> Lipstadt, D.E., (1986) *op.cit.*,

<sup>36</sup> Lipstadt, D.E., (1980) *The New York Times and the News About the Holocaust: A Quantified Study*.

Every fourth issue of the *New York Times* was selected for the years 1936 through 1943. A team of over 50 researchers was used to gather and code relevant articles “that discussed some aspect of the situation of Jews in Europe”. The study concluded in 1943, as 1942 and 1943 were “the years when the annihilation of European Jewry was confirmed and publicised.”pp.51-52

was carried out in 1977), the basis of Lipstadt's approach corresponded closely to Laqueur's remark on press coverage of the *Bund* Report ("More than a Million Jews Killed in Europe") published on June 30 and July 6 1942 in the *Daily Telegraph* and *New York Times*:

If it was true that a million people had been killed this clearly should have been front page news; it did not, after all, happen every day. If it was not true, the story should not have been published at all. Since they were not certain they [the editors] opted for a compromise: to publish it but not in a conspicuous place. Thus it was implied that the paper had reservations about the report; quite likely the stories contained some truth, but probably it was exaggerated.<sup>37</sup>

Similarly Lipstadt argued that the importance a story was accorded by a newspaper was "reflected in its page placement, headline size and length. Important stories are repeated frequently and told in great detail".<sup>38</sup> Her conclusion was that even where news about the persecution of Jews reached the *New York Times* these stories tended to be relegated to less prominent parts of the newspaper away from the front pages because the editors were sceptical of the news itself, the details of some reports seemed exaggerated or too horrific - i.e. reminiscent of atrocity stories - and also because they were "Jewish stories". This case study also demonstrated to great effect how the character (Jewish ownership and a large Jewish readership) of a newspaper could directly or indirectly affect the content – and placement of content- on a daily basis.<sup>39</sup>

Lipstadt's (1986) comprehensive and systematic overview of the American press resembled Sharf's study in one respect only: one of the main sources of the survey was the *Press Information Bulletin* compiled by the American State Department's *Division of Press Intelligence* (established in 1933). It consisted of clippings from 500 of the largest American newspapers. The clippings were from "news reports and editorials according to their opinions on foreign and domestic matters" These compilations "digested and summarised the nation's editorial opinion" for the White House, State Department and other Government offices.<sup>40</sup> This daily press service continued until July 1942, when many of its functions were taken over by other departments including the Office of War Information.<sup>41</sup> From this date (until 1945) Lipstadt's team of researchers used full archives of 19 newspapers and 13 periodicals as the main source of the study. Sharf's data was used as the main source of British newspaper opinion.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Laqueur (1980) *op.cit.*, 75

<sup>38</sup> Lipstadt (1980) *op.cit.*, p.51

<sup>39</sup> See Leff, L. (2000) *op.cit.*, for a more critical analysis of article placement in the *New York Times*.

<sup>40</sup> Lipstadt (1986) *op.cit.*, p.5

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Coincidentally mid-1942 was exactly the point at which the news of the final solution began to reach the USA and Britain via the *Bund* report.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.189-191 and p.327

This rigorous survey treated the content of the American press far more seriously than any previous study. Although a quantitative content analysis was not applied in this case, it was the first broad study to note the frequency of each newspaper's coverage (due to its extensive use of newspaper archives) within the main discussion; it regularly quoted the headlines and the main text of many articles in order to illustrate the different ways in which each newspaper presented and interpreted the same news; it took account of the sources of foreign news, i.e. indicating which news agency supplied the basic information; crucially it drew attention to gaps in the coverage – identifying which newspapers generally ignored the plight of the Jews.

Following Laqueur's lead it also regarded the context of reception as crucial to press interpretation and highlighted the distinctive "barriers to belief". Specifically, the reluctance not to be "fooled again" by atrocity stories; a general scepticism in the absence of tangible evidence or eyewitness reports confirming that a systematic extermination of all Jews under Nazi control was taking place – which was different from the knowledge that there were many Jewish victims of Nazi persecution; a reluctance to believe in the high numbers of Jews which were alleged to have been murdered; and a tendency for the press to "universalise" Jewish victims by describing them according to nationality as Poles, refugees or simply civilians. This followed the official manner of description – e.g. it was decided by the Office of War Information that news about the particular fate of Jews should be contained or even suppressed because it would confuse or mislead the American public.<sup>43</sup>

Though Lipstadt demonstrated that the American press printed a great deal of accurate information (in lengthy articles and short news items), she concluded that the press failed to convey the scale of the "final solution" by not giving the story the attention it merited. It was argued that the above factors contributed to relevant content being relegated to inconspicuous sections of the papers ("They lamented what was happening, condemned the perpetrators and then returned to their practice burying the information."<sup>44</sup>) and most papers did not address the issue of the plight of European Jews in anything like a consistent manner. The "story" occasionally merited attention but there were significant periods where it was ignored:

The American press's treatment of this news was strangely cyclical. It had long thought of the story as unconfirmed rumor or the pleading of special interests. Therefore it reported the news but maintained a skeptical disinterest and treated the information in a circumspect fashion. One of the ways it did so was by relegating it to obscure corners of the paper. Then, once the news—all of it together—was confirmed, the press treated it as an old story, news it had, in

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.252

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.275

the words of the *Atlanta Constitution*, “gotten used to” and “merely something to be expected from Nazidom.”<sup>45</sup>

A much smaller American study later complimented Lipstadt’s overview. Robert Abzug’s (1999) compilation of original articles illustrated to great effect the nature of commentary made during three distinctive periods of time: 1933-35 (the first years of the Nazi regime), 1935-41 (Jewish exclusion, emigration and war), 1942-45 (American knowledge and comprehension of the Nazi war against European Jews). This collection of periodical, magazine and newspaper articles - which also included photographs which had been brought out of Nazi Europe by American journalists before December 1941 – demonstrated the value of including complete primary sources in order to make evident journalists’ reports and views - as they were originally intended to be read.<sup>46</sup> The extent of contemporary knowledge (and feeling) came to the fore in these extraordinary accounts.

The only other significant study of the British press and the Holocaust was by Julian Scott (1994).<sup>47</sup> He conducted an extremely thorough analysis of the “national” press<sup>48</sup> from January 1942 - June 1943. The study acknowledged the inadequate methodology used by Sharf (1964) and drew well on the approaches taken by Laqueur (1980), Gilbert (1981), and Lipstadt (1986) to develop a highly detailed account of the performance of five daily newspapers and three Sunday papers<sup>49</sup>. Although not a mass circulation newspaper, he also included every issue of the bi-weekly *Jewish Chronicle* - as a benchmark source of the availability of information about the treatment of Jews in occupied Europe – and the *Manchester Guardian* for the month of December 1942.

Unlike Sharf (1964) who relied on newspaper cuttings and Lipstadt (1986), whose analysis combined cuttings with archive sources, the Scott study reviewed *every edition* of the chosen newspapers because he was concerned with the development of the news over time – i.e. the *stages* of press/public knowledge. Like Lipstadt (1986), he presented a detailed chronological account of what was (and was not) reported in each British national newspaper but laid a greater emphasis on content by the use of extensive quotations to illustrate rather than

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.189

<sup>46</sup> Abzug, R.H., (1999) see “While the Jews Die” Freda Kirchwey. *Nation* March 13 1943, pp. 152-155 and “Murder Inc” Richard Lauterbach (the Moscow Correspondent’s visit to Majdanek). *Time* September 11 1944, pp.179-182

<sup>47</sup> Scott, J. (1994) *The British Press and the Holocaust 1942-43*

<sup>48</sup> i.e. newspapers printed in London and distributed nationally.

<sup>49</sup> Five daily newspapers: *Daily Herald*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, and *the News Chronicle*. Three Sunday papers: *The People*, *News of the World* and *The Observer*, Also *The Jewish Chronicle* and *The Manchester Guardian* (December 1942 only)

summarise the extent of the news and the views expressed at the time. He also recognised the value of Lipstadt's (1986) emphasis (in her study of the *New York Times*) on an article's page placement and length as an indication of importance but drew attention to its limited applicability in the case of British papers like *The Times* which carried no news on its front page (classified advertisements filled this space).

Scott adopted Laqueur's (1980) concentrated timeframe – which had centred on the period between the German invasion of Russia in June 1941 and the Allied Declaration in December 1942, i.e. the crucial period when the news of the “final solution” reached the Allies - but extended it to include the aftermath of the official acknowledgement of the Nazi extermination policy when British calls for rescue were most intense.<sup>50</sup> In a similar way to Wasserstein (1979) and Gilbert (1981), Scott supplemented his analysis of the press with primary source material including Foreign Office files from the British Public Record Office to contrast Government knowledge with press awareness.

Scott's conclusions paralleled Lipstadt's assessment of the American press. Generally, the British papers expressed indifference toward news of the extermination of European Jewry. He demonstrated that good deal of accurate information was published in certain papers at particular times- e.g. the exclusive *Daily Telegraph* account of the *Bund* report and *The Times* reports of the deportation of French Jews – but most of the newspapers surveyed showed little or no interest in the plight of Jews and rarely printed articles reporting their situation – which was in direct contrast to Sharf's conviction that the press performed admirably. In a similar way to the study of the American press (though the number of pages in the average British paper was far less) Scott found that many reports were not given sufficient prominence:

The news of the extermination of European Jewry was rarely presented in a manner commensurate with the gravity of the news itself. Articles were all too often 'hidden' in inconspicuous positions on the back pages of the popular papers, and on the inside pages of the class papers, while anaemic headlines underlined the general impression thereby given - that the news reported was not all that important, and could not really be relied upon for accuracy.

It is hard to resist the conclusion that the subject of atrocities against Jews had a low priority in the minds of the editors...The Press were generally apathetic to the fate of the Jews in Europe; indeed, they actually seemed bored by the whole subject.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> “A length of time spanning the Allies' reception of the first reports of Nazi massacres of Jews in Russia to the Allies' official recognition of the existence of the Final Solution, the failure of the Bermuda Conference on refugees and the final liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto”.

<sup>51</sup> Scott (1994) p.234

Another corresponding conclusion was the fact that the British press followed the Government's lead with regard to atrocities committed against Jews – including doubting that Nazi actions amounted to a concerted plan to exterminate European Jewry:

Clearly, the Press thought, the British Government (with its intelligence networks and experts in various fields) was in a better position to discern the truth of what was going on in Europe than the Jewish organisations. The result was that the Press often refrained from printing information until (if at all) the British Government gave its un/official *imprimatur*.<sup>52</sup>

Uniquely, Scott uncovered clear evidence that the British Government put pressure on certain newspapers to prevent the publication of reports of atrocities whose veracity it doubted, it also intervened to prevent the publication of articles which directly contradicted its policy with regard to rescue measures. To Scott, the absence of articles during the first few months of 1943 indicated that the press complied with the Government's request to restrict reports and comment on the situation facing Jews in Europe.

It was the first study to draw attention to the regular layout and structure of each newspaper considered i.e. which content was usually placed on which page - partly because British papers differed so much in terms of style and perceived readership. The analysis was careful to try to set each article in context by paying close attention to its length and its position vis-à-vis other news items. One technique that Scott did not adopt from Lipstadt's (1980) methodology was any statistical data on press coverage of the Holocaust. As an overview of the period, it would have been useful to be able to compare the number of articles on the subject of Jewish persecution in Europe in newspapers like *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*.

It is fair to say that without inclusion of sources like the *Jewish Chronicle* and numerous other valuable additions, the review would not have been able to illustrate the periods of "silence" when the national press apparently ignored the plight of European Jews (e.g. between January and May 1942). Similarly, in the absence of a consistent account in papers like the *News Chronicle* or *Daily Telegraph*, the wealth of detailed information published in *Jewish Chronicle* inevitably suggested that the British newspapers were indifferent to the plight of Jews. Its content (which was never used as a source by any other newspaper) may have reflected the best that was known at the time but this must be balanced by the fact that it was not a daily or even weekly newspaper and had a comparatively limited readership. It was

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p.235

not part of the mass circulation press which had to produce and distribute news for daily consumption under the most severe constraints.<sup>53</sup>

Scott's study exposed the gaps in Sharf's review. It amply demonstrated the value of an in-depth analysis of the content itself, the reports, the comments and opinions of those who learned of a new, terrible, state endorsed, systematic murder programme based on Nazi racial theory. It remains the most detailed and revealing study of British press awareness of the "final solution".

It can be seen from this review that many studies have suggested that well established attitudes (from the 1930s) towards Jews influenced responses to reports of Jewish exclusion, slave labour, execution and extermination<sup>54</sup> but few have examined whether wartime attitudes to Jews were discernibly different. In other words, what other news concerning Jews at home and abroad was published at the time?

The review also indicates that there has been very little evidence presented concerning public comment on emerging news of the "final solution" in either the British or American research. While the views of journalists and politicians have dominated the opinions gathered from press research, very few letters from members of the public to newspapers have merited inclusion. What was the public reaction to the news from Europe?

Within the literature concerned with press knowledge of the Holocaust, only one short study (Lipstadt 1980) has included quantitative analysis of press coverage. This study was one of the few to take the character of a newspaper into account as a contributory factor in reception.<sup>55</sup> Unlike the main assessments of Allied knowledge of the "final solution", unexpectedly few studies of the press have laid any emphasis on the sources of news about the persecution and mass murder of Jews.

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<sup>53</sup> Kimble, P. (1942) *Newspaper Reading in the Third Year of the War*.

Fletcher, L. (1946) *They Never Failed: The Story of the Provincial Press in Wartime*.

<sup>54</sup> Kushner, T., (1990) and Bolchover, R., (1993) *op.cit.*,

Crouch, A.C., (1943) *Jews Are News!*, Horowitz, P. (1943) *The Jews, the War and After*. Kushner, T., (1992) *The Heymishe Front: Jews in War-time Britain*

<sup>55</sup> See also Grobman, A. (1979) "What Did They Know? The American Jewish Press and the Holocaust", and Ross, R.R. (1980) *So It Was True: The American Protestant Press and the Nazi Persecution of Jews*.

## **METHODOLOGY**



## Methodology

This study of the British regional press has two main aims: the first is to demonstrate how news of the Nazi extermination programme against the Jews of Europe was reported and interpreted in three newspapers: the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Glasgow Herald* from January 1942 until June 1943.

The second aim is to present a quantitative overview of the range of coverage about Jews/Jewish issues in the newspapers in order to identify the nature and extent of news concerning Jews in Britain and in Nazi-occupied Europe.

*The Sample: The Manchester Guardian, the Yorkshire Post and the Glasgow Herald.*

The sample of regional newspapers was initially chosen according to the following basic criteria: readership, ownership and distribution, and content.

**Readership:** regional newspapers in the late 1930s and early 1940s were by definition more likely than national newspapers to report the activities and opinions of their surrounding population. Their character was based in part on their location. As newspapers, their main function was to present the most recent local, national and foreign news and discuss the main issues of the day but they also performed a variety of other functions which served the local metropolitan area and outlying districts. These manifested themselves in many different ways, for example, the regional paper was the main location for local personal and business announcements, the site where goods and services were advertised most frequently, a key source of political information via Parliamentary reports, and an arena in which the full range of opinion could be expressed, from letters concerning local controversies to editorials and feature articles covering major international issues.

It can therefore be argued, that the sample of regional newspapers from this period should seek to reflect the most relevant populations. With this in mind, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Glasgow Herald* were chosen as papers which represented the cities with the largest Jewish populations outside London. This study examines the extent to which these newspapers reflected the views and activities of their local Jewish populations – particularly concerning responses to news of the Nazi plan to murder all Jews under Axis control. The following figures for 1939 taken from the Jewish Year Book, published in 1940 by *The Jewish Chronicle* lists the number of Jews in Britain at the outbreak of war:

**Table 1.****1939 - Towns in Great Britain with Jewish population of approximately 500 or over:**

	<b>Jewish Population</b>	<b>General Population</b>
<b>England</b>		
Birmingham	6,000	1,013,700
Bournemouth	700	118,200
Bradford	490	292,200
Brighton and Hove	2,500	147,800
Hull	2,000	321,000
<b>Leeds</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>487,200</b>
Liverpool	7,500	854,500
London: Greater	233,991	8,202,800
<b>Manchester-Salford</b>	<b>37,500</b>	<b>989,800</b>
Middlesbrough	486	140,000
Newcastle-on-Tyne	2,500	291,000
Nottingham	550	230,200
Portsmouth	800	250,200
Sheffield	2,175	511,800
Southend	1,500	134,900
Southport	500	79,300
Sunderland	950	106,000
<b>Scotland</b>		
Edinburgh	1,500	439,000
<b>Glasgow</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>1,088,000</b>
<b>Wales</b>		
Cardiff	2,300	224,000
Swansea	565	164,800
<b>Northern Ireland and Eire</b>		
Belfast	1,284	438,200
Cork	250	80,000
Dublin	3,380	119,300

**Ownership and distribution:** The British Newspaper Press Directory and Advertisers Guide for 1939 provides a summary of the main characteristics of each of the sample newspapers. All were independently owned and each had a broadly similar circulation which was roughly within the 25,000—50,000 “provincial category”.<sup>1</sup>

### ***The Manchester Guardian***

*(est. 1821, Proprietors: The Scott Trust/Manchester Guardian and Evening News Ltd)*

“It circulates throughout the whole of the wealthy and populous industrial counties of the North of England. The literary quality, political power and excellent commercial intelligence of the *Manchester Guardian* place it in the front rank of English provincial journals and have obtained for it a circulation of a valuable character throughout England and abroad. The 1939 Press Directory describes its political allegiance is described as “Liberal”.

Of the three newspapers, most is known about the structure and political outlook of the *Manchester Guardian*.<sup>2</sup> In 1936, the owner J. R. Scott, divested himself of all beneficial interests and formed a Trust to which all the ordinary shares of the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Evening News Ltd.* were assigned. Dividends were paid to the Trust and were used to further the interests of the papers.

The paper’s longstanding support for Zionism began just before the First World War amongst junior and senior staff and was later enthusiastically embraced by the paper’s owner and editor C.P. Scott. Scott’s friendship with Chaim Weizmann, then “not quite a professor” at Manchester University, paved the way for Weizmann’s initial contacts with leading members of the British Government such as Lord Balfour and the Governor of Palestine, Herbert Samuel.<sup>3</sup> He introduced Weizmann to Lloyd George in December 1914 and took every opportunity to help him by talking or writing to Cabinet Ministers recommending that Weizmann’s views on the Palestine question should be given a fair hearing.<sup>4</sup> The movement for the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine was orchestrated behind the scenes by

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<sup>1</sup> *The British Newspaper Press Guide and Advertiser’s Directory 1939* (British Newspaper Library, London. No publisher indicated)

“The *Manchester Guardian*’s circulation was always within the 25,000—50,000 provincial category along with papers like the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Glasgow Herald*.” Gannon, F.R., (1971) *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, p.128

<sup>2</sup> Ayerst, D., (1971) *Guardian. Biography of a Newspaper*, (1973) *The Guardian Omnibus 1821-1971: An Anthology of 150 Years of Guardian Writing*. The *Manchester Guardian* Archive at the University of Manchester (Refugees Boxes and Editor’s correspondence). There are no similar biographical accounts of the *Yorkshire Post* or *Glasgow Herald* and other than the newspapers themselves, no archives containing additional material.

<sup>3</sup> Ayerst, D., (1971) *op.cit.*, p381

Scott and his staff between 1915 and 1917 which resulted in (what came to be known as) “the Balfour Declaration” on November 2 1917.<sup>5</sup>

The paper’s opposition to Nazi anti-Semitism began as early as April 1932 with the publication of a collection of anti-Semitic extracts from Nazi party writings.<sup>6</sup> W.P. Crozier became the new editor in May 1932 (until his sudden death in 1944) just as Hitler reached the height of his electoral power<sup>7</sup> He understood that German anti-Semitism and was a fundamental part of Nazi doctrine<sup>8</sup> and deemed it the *Manchester Guardian*’s special mission to keep the issues of the Jewish and political persecutions and the concentration camps before the public eye.<sup>9</sup> Despite difficulties in reporting from Germany during the 1930s, the *Manchester Guardian* devoted more space to “the Jewish question” than any other British paper.<sup>10</sup>

### ***The Yorkshire Post***

(est. 1754, Proprietors: *The Yorkshire Conservative Newspaper Co. Ltd* ).

“The *Yorkshire Post* is the leading morning paper of the North of England where it has great influence. It circulates in every county between the Trent and the Tweed and has a very large postal circulation among the wealthier classes. It is especially distinguished for its hold upon the business and agricultural communities.” It was described by the Press Directory as “Conservative”.

The *Yorkshire Post* was included because it was the city with the second largest Jewish community outside London and because it was the main site of comments made by two vociferous opponents of Nazi policy against Jews: Selig Brodetsky and Cyril Garbett.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p.384 Weizmann later became the first President of Israel.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p.385 “His majesty’s government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national homeland for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the meeting of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of those already settled in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”

<sup>6</sup> “The following quotations from the speeches and writings of Hitler and his followers will explain why Jews have been mobbed in Germany, why the windows of Jewish shops have been smashed, why synagogues have been fouled and Jewish cemeteries desecrated.” *Manchester Guardian* 9 April 1932 in Sharf, A. (1964) *op cit.*, p.31

<sup>7</sup> Ayerst (1971) *op cit.*, p.482

<sup>8</sup> In the early 1930’s there was a definite gap in understanding between the British and German conceptions of race, and particularly attitudes towards anti-Semitism. Newspaper editors and reporters were some of the first to truly grasp this difference, and realise that Nazi anti-Semitism was not ‘absurd’ but had very serious consequences. This gap was an important factor in British attitudes towards Jewish refugees who came to Britain or tried to enter Palestine and to the later reception of news from Europe during the war of a systematic programme of killing.

<sup>9</sup> “Crozier, indeed, was bitter against those newspapers, especially *The Times*, which he felt ignored or did not pay sufficient attention to these issues.” Ayerst (1971) *op cit.*, p76

<sup>10</sup> Sharf, A. (1964) *op cit.*, p.11

Professor Selig Brodetsky of Leeds University was the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The Archbishop of York, Dr. Cyril Garbett, was a key figure in the campaign to rescue Jews trapped inside occupied-Europe. Comments made by both men which were reported in other publications were often reproduced in full only in the *Yorkshire Post*.

### ***The Glasgow Herald***

*(est. 1783 proprietors George Outram & Co Ltd).*

The 1939 Press Guide was especially effusive about this newspaper's attributes: "The *Glasgow Herald's* circulation extends throughout Scotland, the North of England and the North of Ireland. A series of special trains enable the Herald to be on sale throughout these districts early each morning. The Herald represents the best kind of journalism and holds a very high place amongst British newspapers. It has a complete service of foreign and colonial general news, and its local news covers the whole of Scotland. It is recognised as one of the very foremost commercial newspapers, and contains daily prices from all the principle markets of the world. A private wire connects the London and Glasgow offices." The paper was described by the 1939 Directory as "Independent".

The *Glasgow Herald* was chosen as the main newspaper of a city which contained Scotland's largest Jewish community. This population was also served by the weekly *Jewish Echo*, "Scotland's only Jewish Newspaper". The Scott (1994) study illustrated that while the content of the *Jewish Chronicle* was one of the best sources of information concerning the plight of European Jews, it was never used as an attributed source, or directly quoted by the British newspapers. In similar way, the *Glasgow Herald* relied on its own sources and did not draw on the *Jewish Echo* for any of its news or comment concerning Jews at home or abroad.<sup>11</sup> Its independent character and outlook closely resembled the style of both the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Yorkshire Post*.

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<sup>11</sup> Scott (1994) *op.cit.*,

**Content:** A pilot study of the three newspapers chosen was necessary, firstly to assess whether the sample papers were likely to contain relevant content (many of the titles included in the Scott (1994) study contained virtually no relevant references to the plight of Jews under the Nazis), and secondly to gauge whether this content nominally corresponded with coverage in other regional publications. Three other regional newspapers drawn from different parts of Britain and Ireland were included in the pilot which represented cities that did not have sizeable Jewish populations. The test period was the month of December 1942 because according to Sharf (1964) and Lipstadt (1986) it was in this month that public concern for the plight of European Jews reached its height and it also included the Allies' Joint Declaration on Jewish Massacres on December 17 which confirmed the existence of the Nazi extermination policy. The results of the pilot studies are summarised in the table below. The figures refer to articles specifically about, or references in the text to Jews in Britain and Europe.

**Table 2.**

Dec 1942	The Birmingham Post References or Articles	The Glasgow Herald References or Articles	The Irish Times References or Articles	The Manchester Guardian References or Articles	The Scotsman References or Articles	The Yorkshire Post References or Articles
1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2	0	0	0	2	2	1
3	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	3	2	0
5	0	0	0	2	0	0
6	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	1	0	1	0	1
8	0	0	0	2	1	2
9	0	0	0	2	1	1
10	0	2	0	2	1	2
11	0	1	0	4	1	1
12	0	0	0	4	0	0
13	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	0	0	0	3	2	1
15	0	0	0	2	0	2
16	0	0	0	4	0	2
17	0	2	0	1	0	0
18	2	1	1	3	2	3
19	0	0	0	1	0	0
20	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	2	1	0	2	0	1
22	0	2	0	1	0	0
23	0	0	0	0	0	1
24	0	1	0	2	0	0
25	0	0	0	0	0	0
26	0	1	0	0	0	0
27	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	0	1	0	1	0	1
29	0	1	0	1	0	0
30	0	0	0	2	0	0
31	0	1	0	3	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>

The results indicated that the three newspapers chosen for the sample would be likely to contain relevant content before and after December 1942. According to this initial evidence, the *Scotsman* could also have been included in the sample - based on the number of references which were approximately similar to the *Glasgow Herald* - if the first sampling criterion was disregarded. It demonstrated that – at least in December 1942 - the *Scotsman* was similarly concerned with the news from occupied-Europe as the sample newspapers, but apart from reports on the day after the Allied Declaration it can be seen that the *Birmingham Post* and the *Irish Times* did not pay any attention to reports from Europe concerning the Nazi policy to exterminate Jews.

The decision to concentrate this study of British regional newspapers' coverage of the Holocaust on a sample of just three newspapers can therefore be justified according to each having pertinent readerships, independent ownership, broadly similar circulations, and relevant content.

### **The Period of Analysis**

Many historians including Sharf (1964) Lipstadt (1986) and Abzug (1999) have understood the Holocaust to cover the period of Nazi rule from 1933-45. They were unequivocal that the anti-Semitic conditions the Nazis put in place in Germany Austria and Czechoslovakia from 1933-38 were part of a process which culminated in organised mass killings during the war. They demonstrated how British and American interpretation of the Nazi anti-Semitic persecution in Germany contributed towards later comprehension of the “final solution”.

Others like Wasserstein (1979) Gilbert (1981) have argued that the Holocaust only began in earnest under cover of war. Nazi policy towards Jews changed markedly following the invasion of Poland in September 1939 when two million Jews immediately came under their control and “the Jewish problem” as far as the Nazis were concerned, became larger. The number of Jews under Nazi control continued to grow inexorably, especially as the Germans conquered Europe over the next four years. This timeline begins in 1939 and incorporates the establishment of the Polish ghettos, the introduction of anti-Semitic legislation in each conquered territory, the mass deportation of Jews from all over Europe to Poland under the “extermination” programme, and continues until the liberation of the concentration camps (especially Belsen, Buchenwald, and Dachau) in the Spring of 1945.

Another date, 22 June 1941, the German invasion of the Soviet Union was taken by Laqueur (1980) as another analytical starting point, when the Nazis campaign against Jews became more murderous and organised. During and after Operation Barbarossa, the *Einsatzgruppen*, or special killing squads followed behind the advancing German army and killed hundreds of thousands of Russian Jewish men, women and children by shooting (and buried their bodies in mass graves). Because these operations were time consuming and difficult to conceal from public view, the Nazis adopted a new mass killing method; mobile gas vans using carbon monoxide to kill up to 90 people at a time. This method was used to kill hundreds of thousands of Jews in the first purpose built extermination camps in Poland (e.g. Chelm and Treblinka).

If we use another term, a Nazi euphemism, “the final solution”, we can point to another phase of the Holocaust. The phrase was used by the Nazi participants at the Wannsee Conference near Berlin in January 1942 to describe the measures that would be taken to achieve what emigration, persecution, and execution had failed to achieve - “the final solution” of the “Jewish question/problem”. This meeting, originally planned for December 1941, but postponed following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and America’s entry into the war, was convened to orchestrate a pan-European policy with regard to the Jews under German rule that would involve the co-ordination of numerous agencies, to gather Jews from all over occupied-Europe, transport them by train to specially designed and equipped camps where the fit and skilled would be used as slave labour and the rest killed by gas. January 1942 was taken as the starting point of Scott’s (1994) study, as it was during this month that Soviet sources revealed the first details of the systematic mass murder of civilians in Russia during 1941. Further news received in Britain during the summer and autumn concerning deportations from Western Europe were the first indications that the “final solution” was being put into effect.

Laqueur’s (1980) concentrated study of Allied knowledge of the “final solution” ended in December 1942 following official Allied recognition (with the Declaration of December 17) that the Nazis were carrying out a policy aimed at the systematic destruction of all Jews under their control. Scott (1994) extended his analysis to include the period between the Allied Declaration and the Anglo-American Conference on Refugees at Bermuda in April, when calls for the rescue of Jews trapped in occupied-Europe were most vociferous.



1. The main discussion of this study follows Scott's (1994) timeline and concentrates on the coverage devoted to this news in three regional newspapers during the period when British knowledge of the Nazi extermination policy became known and accepted, from January 1942-June 1943.

A prologue briefly discusses the 1939-41 period to outline the context in which the news of the Nazi extermination programme was received.

A short epilogue covers the 1944-45 period and specifically discusses how news of the liberation of the concentration camps was presented.

This 1942-43 period can be divided according to the following timeline: early reports from Soviet sources in the first half of 1942; the release of the *Bund* report by the Polish Government in-exile in late June; reports of the arrest and deportation to Poland of hundreds of thousands of French, Belgian and Dutch Jews in the late summer and autumn; official confirmation by the Allies of a policy to murder all Jews under Nazi control in December; calls for rescue between January and April 1943, and following the Bermuda conference, the Allied decision concerning Jews behind enemy lines.

2. In order to present a quantitative overview of relevant coverage, a content analysis of each of the sample newspapers was carried out for the 1942-43 period. (See below)

3. In addition, one newspaper, the *Manchester Guardian* was chosen for a content analysis of the entire war period – from September 1939 to June 1945 – in order to establish the extent of news concerning Jews *before* 1942 and *after* June 1943.

The structure of the study is represented in Figure 1 below:



Figure 1.

### The Holocaust and the British Regional Press 1942-43

<b>1939</b> <b>Manchester Guardian</b> Prologue Content Analysis		
<b>1940</b> <b>Manchester Guardian</b> Prologue Content Analysis		
<b>1941</b> <b>Manchester Guardian</b> Prologue Content Analysis		
<b>1942</b> <b>Yorkshire Post</b> Main Discussion Content Analysis	<b>1942</b> <b>Manchester Guardian</b> Main Discussion Content Analysis	<b>1942</b> <b>Glasgow Herald</b> Main Discussion Content Analysis
<b>January -June 1943</b> <b>Yorkshire Post</b> Main Discussion Content Analysis	<b>1943</b> <b>Manchester Guardian</b> Main Discussion Content Analysis	<b>January -June 1943</b> <b>Glasgow Herald</b> Main Discussion Content Analysis
<b>1944</b> <b>Manchester Guardian</b> Epilogue Content Analysis		
<b>1945</b> <b>Manchester Guardian</b> Epilogue Content Analysis		

Figure 2.

### The Holocaust and the British Regional Press 1939-45

<b>1942</b> <b>Yorkshire Post</b> News of the Nazi Extermination Programme The Allied Declaration	<b>1942</b> <b>Manchester Guardian</b> News of the Nazi Extermination Programme The Allied Declaration	<b>1942</b> <b>Glasgow Herald</b> News of the Nazi Extermination Programme The Allied Declaration
<b>January -June 1943</b> <b>Yorkshire Post</b> Calls for Rescue The Bermuda Conference	<b>1943</b> <b>Manchester Guardian</b> Calls for Rescue The Bermuda Conference	<b>January -June 1943</b> <b>Glasgow Herald</b> Calls for Rescue The Bermuda Conference

## Content Analysis

The main purpose of analysing the content of the regional press is to present a quantitative overview of relevant coverage in each of the sample newspapers during the 1942-43 period:

Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.<sup>12</sup>

Content analysis is per definition a quantitative method. The purpose of the method is to identify and count the occurrence of specified characteristics or dimensions of texts, and through this, to be able to say something about the messages, images, representations of such texts and their wider social significance.<sup>13</sup>

The first aim of this analysis is to identify and compare the extent of reporting. For example, which newspaper paid the most consistent attention to the plight of European Jewry?

The content can be divided into 3 main analytical categories:

**News that involved Jews in Britain:** this coverage aims to highlight the context in which the news of the Nazi mass murder of European Jewry was received. How did British Jewish groups react to the news from Europe? It also seeks to explore evidence of British anti-Semitism.

**News concerned with Jews and Palestine:** how did the debate about a Jewish national home and the admission of Jewish refugees to Palestine illustrate the attitude of the British Government towards Jews seeking to escape Nazi Europe in wartime?

**News concerning Jews in Nazi occupied Europe:**

1. News about Nazi persecution of Jews in occupied Europe: This aims to identify the sources of the news of legal measures taken against Jews in occupied Europe, and the arrest, imprisonment and deportation of Jews from countries under Nazi control. This coverage also includes examples of Nazi anti-Semitic rhetoric reported in three newspapers.

2. News about the Nazi “extermination policy” in occupied Europe: Analysis of the coverage demonstrates how Nazi ‘atrocities’ were defined. It identifies the period during 1942 when the newspapers learned of the mass extermination of Jews in Nazi occupied Europe. What were the sources of this news? How were the victims described and characterised? How did Governments, groups and individuals respond to these reports?

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<sup>12</sup> Berelson, (1952) p.18

<sup>13</sup> Hansen, (1995) p.128

The first two categories, news about Jews in Britain and Palestine, are integral to an understanding of the ways in which the news of the Nazi “final solution” was perceived by the three papers and their readers. This analysis outlines the extent to which news reports of, for example, Jewish involvement in the black market or Jewish refugees being turned away from Palestine contributed to the context in which news of the Nazi mass murder of Jews was received. The latter categories demonstrate the chronology of knowledge, reaction and interpretation of the Nazi extermination programme during the January 1942 – June 1943 period.

**Definition of the units of analysis:** the main unit of analysis is the newspaper article.

The content analysis of the regional press systematically surveys not only the extent of the content (by the number of articles), but also the nature of the content, i.e. its main characteristics. It identifies and analyses all articles which clearly referred to Jews, or issues concerning Jews (such as the welfare of refugees, the black market, and general anti-Semitism) within the newspaper text.

The newspaper, date, headline and sub-heading of relevant articles are used as the main reference for each article cited in the main text. The location of the article within the newspaper is also indicated by including the page number and the total number of pages in each edition, for example an article containing news of the *Bund* report published in the *Manchester Guardian* on page 2 of a total of 6 pages on Tuesday June 30 is referenced as:

*MG* Tue June 30 1942 p2 (6) JEWISH WAR VICTIMS More Than a Million Dead

The coding schedule (below) firstly identifies the main characteristics of the content. The first 9 are standard analytical categories essential to any study of the press. These categories aim to identify the basic characteristics of the newspaper, such as the title of the newspaper, the date of publication, type of article, source of article, etc. The length of article category has been simplified to indicators of an approximate number of words rather than precise figures.<sup>14</sup> This

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<sup>14</sup> “It is tempting to code the area (that is, column inches) of each newspaper article analysed simply because it is easily done, if time consuming. But unless the exact sizes of newspaper articles have (or are expected to have) a direct bearing on the research questions asked, time might be far better spent analysing and counting more substantive characteristics of text, and to use simply the number of articles (irrespective of size) as an adequate and sufficient indication of the extent of coverage in different newspapers or over time.”

Hansen, A., Cottle, C., Negrine, R. and Newbold, C. *Mass Communication Research Methods*. (1998) p106

approach focuses on the whole article as the unit of analysis rather than distinguishing between the parts of the text which (may or may not) refer to or concern Jews.<sup>15</sup>

The page number of the article and the total number of pages is the only indication of an article's page placement. As the number of pages varied across the newspapers and from day to day and week to week during the period, this provides the only a basic indication of context. The layout of each paper corresponded to the example from December 1942 below. The three sample newspapers normally had a minimum of 6-8 pages from Monday-Friday and 8-12 pages on Saturdays with several additional pages of classified advertising. The placement of news, letters, editorials etc. varied according to the number of pages, e.g. the editorial/leader columns in an edition of the *Manchester Guardian* of 8 pages would normally be on page 6 instead of page 4. The only pages that carried the same content (regardless of size) were the front pages.

**Table 3. The Layout Or Structure of the Sample Newspapers  
December 1942**

<b>1942 Manchester Guardian</b>	<b>1942 Yorkshire Post</b>	<b>1942 Glasgow Herald</b>
Page 1 Classified Advertisements	Page 1 War/Foreign News National News Photograph	Page 1 Classified Ads Births Deaths Marriages Public Notices
2 Financial News Sports Results Parliamentary Reports BBC Listings	2 Editorial/Leader Columns London Notes and Comment Letters to the Editor Court and Personal Births Deaths Marriages Public Notices	2 Agricultural News Financial News Sports Results Scottish News Women's Column
3 Local News In Brief Miscellany Obituaries Crossword	3 War/Foreign News Local News Parliamentary Reports National News	3 Scottish News Crossword BBC Listings
4 Editorial/Leader Columns London Correspondence Parliamentary Reports Letters to the Editor Feature Column	4 Classified Ads Announcements Crossword BBC Listings	4 Editorial/Leader Columns Diary Letters to the Editor War News
5 War/Foreign News National News	5 Sports Results Financial News Classified Ads	5 War/Foreign News National News
6 Births Marriages Deaths Wills Entertainment Listings War News Local News	6 National News Local News Photograph Late News	6 Court and Circular Obituaries Entertainment Listings Parliamentary Reports

<sup>15</sup> Lipstadt (1980) divided her analysis of articles in the *New York Times* into "Jew" and "part-Jew" – generally to no clear advantage.

Unlike American newspapers of the period, the main news was not carried on the front page of either the *Manchester Guardian* or the *Glasgow Herald*. In these newspapers the main news pages were inside and towards the back of the paper (the editorial/leader column pages). Unlike these newspapers, the *Yorkshire Post* placed a lot of its news on the back page.

Category 10: each article is coded according to 9 exclusive categories based on content concerning Jews according to location and one which covered content which referred to press conduct during the period.<sup>16</sup> Category 11: "Identity of Subject" codes references to Jews according to nationality, with the necessary addition of "Jews – Rhetorical/Nationality Unclear" because so many articles contained speeches or comments where "Jews" are (positively and negatively) referred to rhetorically. Categories 12-14 concerns the subject of the article, coded according to *position* in the text (rather than its apparent "importance").

The coding schedule is included in Appendix 1.

The two periods which are discussed in the prologue and epilogue (September 1939 – December 1941 and July 1943 – April 1945) are analysed according to the first 10 categories of the coding schedule, i.e. *standard analysis*. Each month of the newspaper outside the period of the main discussion has been coded accordingly.

Two examples of the standard analysis - *Manchester Guardian* November 1939 and April 1945 - in Appendix 1.

The crucial period of knowledge and interpretation (January 1942 – June 1943) which forms the main discussion also includes a further analysis of the identity of the Jews mentioned and the main subjects of each article – categories 11 –14, i.e. *extended analysis*. Each month of each newspaper for the period of the main discussion has been coded accordingly.

See example of the extended analysis - *Glasgow Herald* January 1943 - in Appendix 1.

All the data was compiled in Microsoft Word tables and calculated and presented in graphs and bar charts using Microsoft Excel.

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<sup>16</sup> Category 5, "No reference to Jews but a relevant article" was added in order to code the articles where the content did not contain an explicit reference to "Jews" or an individual or groups' nationality but all other indicators suggested that the subjects were Jewish.

## **Chapter I**

***The Manchester Guardian***

**Prologue 1939-41**



## Prologue

1939 - 1941

The early reports which reached the *Manchester Guardian* from Poland drew attention to the fact that the Nazis now had a much bigger “Jewish problem” than they had ever previously had in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia.<sup>1</sup> There were about 2,000,000 Jews in the areas under German control. Slowly, a series of early plans for Polish Jews was revealed via official Nazi press statements and news agency reports. It was understood that Jews would be ejected from their homes without their possessions, forcibly transferred and confined into designated areas or “ghettoes”. They would be condemned to live in poverty, employed only in Nazi forced labour schemes and excluded from any other business. Above all, the paper believed that all Jews, regardless of their status, would be under constant threat of physical punishment or execution.

The first news published in the *Manchester Guardian* specifically concerning Jews in Poland came from an *Exchange Telegram* dispatch from Brussels dated September 24:

The Gestapo is taking the cruellest reprisals on Jews in Poland, according to a message to the paper “Independence Belge” from Bucharest. At Lodz alone, says this report, thousands of Jews have been arrested and hundreds executed.<sup>2</sup>

The next day (September 26) it was reported by *Reuter*:<sup>3</sup>

The treatment of Jews in parts of Poland is much worse than in the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia according to information reaching the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in Paris. Nazi commissars, it is stated, have been placed in every Jewish enterprise which has escaped damage and food is being refused to Jews by the Nazi authorities. The Germans are taking over all shops and houses abandoned by Jews who fled before the Nazi advance. Polish peasants in the occupied territory are said to show great sympathy with the Jews and are secretly providing them with food.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to news agencies and the European press, the *Manchester Guardian* drew on the expertise and experience of its own reporters, for example, the *Manchester Guardian's* Diplomatic Correspondent in London, F.A. Voight:

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<sup>1</sup> This discussion concentrates on the news concerning Jews in occupied-Europe.

<sup>2</sup> *MG* Mon 25 September 1939, p3 (10) POLISH JEWS' HEROISM Nazis Take Revenge

<sup>3</sup> Copy supplied by the Reuter News Agency was usually labelled as “Reuter” in all newspapers but it was not uncommon to see this source indicated within reports as “Reuter’s” or in many instances, because the apostrophe was often omitted, “Reuters”.

The British regional press - the group of provincial papers which made up the Press Association or PA (the other industry body was the Newspaper Proprietors Association or NPA which represented the London based-national newspapers) - owned all shares in *Reuters*. The *Press Association*, the home news agency owned by the provincial newspapers, provided domestic news for the regional papers and *Reuters* provided the international news (or Foreign and Empire News as it was called at the time).

Read (1992) *Reuters The Power of News: The History of Reuters 1849-1989* p.238

<sup>4</sup> *MG* Tue 26 September 1939, p9 (12) JEWS IN POLAND Anti-Semitism in Area Occupied by Nazis

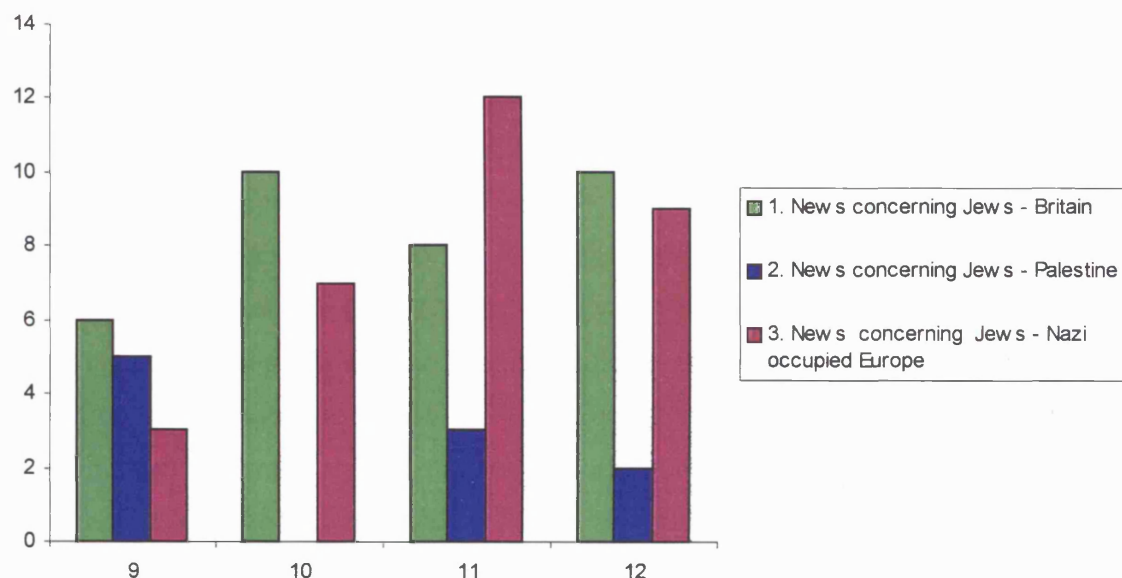


The Germans have been much more ruthless in Poland than was apparent at first. Nor has it been the Gestapo or the Storm Troops, or the Black Guards, of whom nothing else could be expected, but the German soldiery, acting under orders from their superiors who have done inhuman things.<sup>5</sup>

During this period the *Manchester Guardian* looked to the American news agencies and newspapers as they had more men in the field and were able to file directly from Berlin. *Reuters* (which was suffering a management crisis at the time) had few correspondents in Europe and as a result many of its reports were based on translations made in London of German radio news.<sup>6</sup> Anxiety and indecision by the British Ministry of Information about the appropriate level of censorship delayed British news copy (everything was censored in the newsroom) and especially pictures:

Newspapers in the United States and in all other neutral countries [would] have published relatively much more German news than would have been the case had the news channels been as open from London and Paris as they are from Berlin.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 1. Manchester Guardian September- December 1939



The first news of the deportation of Jews to Poland came as early as November 4. It was thought that a “re-settlement” area or “reserve” had been established around the Lublin area but little was known about the overall Nazi plan. At this stage only men were being deported from Germany and Austria to work as slave labourers in Poland:

<sup>5</sup> MG Thur 28 September 1939, p9 (12) RUTHLESSNESS IN POLAND Whole Towns Destroyed

<sup>6</sup> Read, D, (1992) *op.cit.*, p.215. Some foreign news copy also came from the “Times and Manchester Guardian Service”. This special news service gathered news agency material in London, from a variety of unspecified sources including the main news agencies and shared it between the *Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Glasgow Herald* – newspapers whose readerships did not generally overlap or compete with each other. It was a cheaper and more efficient way of spreading the cost of foreign news provision. A similar shared news supply system was used by the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Yorkshire Post*.

<sup>7</sup> MG Tue 26 September 1939, p6 (10) American Opinion

The Jewish population of Germany, and more especially of Austria, is being deported quite methodically to Poland. It is not at all certain that all the Jews are being sent to the so called "preserve" at Lublin; it would seem that large numbers of Jews are employed in gangs in other parts of Poland.

Since the end of the Polish campaign some 30,000 Jews have left Austria for Poland. In Vienna the Gestapo has forced the Jewish societies there to organise these deportations. As a rule a Jew under order to leave gets no more than a few hours' notice and is allowed to take very little property with him, not more, in any case, than he can carry himself. The ages of the deportees vary from 16 to 60. They get no pay for the work they do in Poland.<sup>8</sup>

The earliest allusions to massacre and "extermination" in the pages of the *Manchester Guardian* did refer not explicitly to Jews. Poles were being forcibly expelled from their homes and moved as part of the Nazi reorganisation of population along ethnic lines. Any opposition to this process was ruthlessly dealt with by violence and executions:

The situation in Poland is getting steadily worse. The Germans are turning out the Poles out of the provinces they regard as German with complete ruthlessness. Entire Polish families are being deported or merely being driven off without the slightest provision for transport or accommodation elsewhere. Summary executions are carried out on the slightest pretext. These methods are made doubly inhuman by the approach of winter and the desperate food shortage. It is no exaggeration now to say that in whole districts there is a massacre of the Polish population.<sup>9</sup>

By the end of the year it was clear to the paper's Diplomatic Correspondent that this war was going to be fought on a new level, a level unprecedented in history. The extent of Nazi "inhumanity" went far beyond the worst misdeeds of the German Imperial regime during the last war. Systematic murder by execution as well as by deprivation, exposure, and hunger inflicted by the Germans threatened to substantially reduce the population of Poland, "it would, indeed, seem that this is the German purpose". The looting of possessions concurrent with the transfer of populations had taken its toll on the families that had been forcibly expelled from their homes and forced into overcrowded, impoverished regions of Poland. He did not think that this was a short term period of crisis but that this Nazi policy was likely to continue indefinitely and become worse as the winter took hold:

The Poles are in great distress and completely isolated, dependent on the Germans for all their news, their radio sets have been confiscated and they are almost completely cut off from the outside world. The Germans were not wrong when they told them that, except for the blockade, the war was over and that Poland had been abandoned by the Western Powers, who promised to support her and never even started to keep that promise:

The fate of the Polish Jews is particularly terrible. According to reliable and detailed information received here, the Germans have executed an average of two hundred Polish Jews every day since the war began. About the German determination to "solve" the Jewish problem; partly by the ghetto system (Lublin being the ghetto) and partly by execution, there can be no doubt at all.

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<sup>8</sup> *MG* Thur 4 November 1939, p9 (14) GERMAN JEWS AS SLAVES Deported To Poland 30,000 Sent From Austria  
<sup>9</sup> *MG* Wed 29 November 1939, p9 (14) NAZI RUTHLESSNESS IN POLAND Situation Getting Worse: Executions On The Slightest Pretext

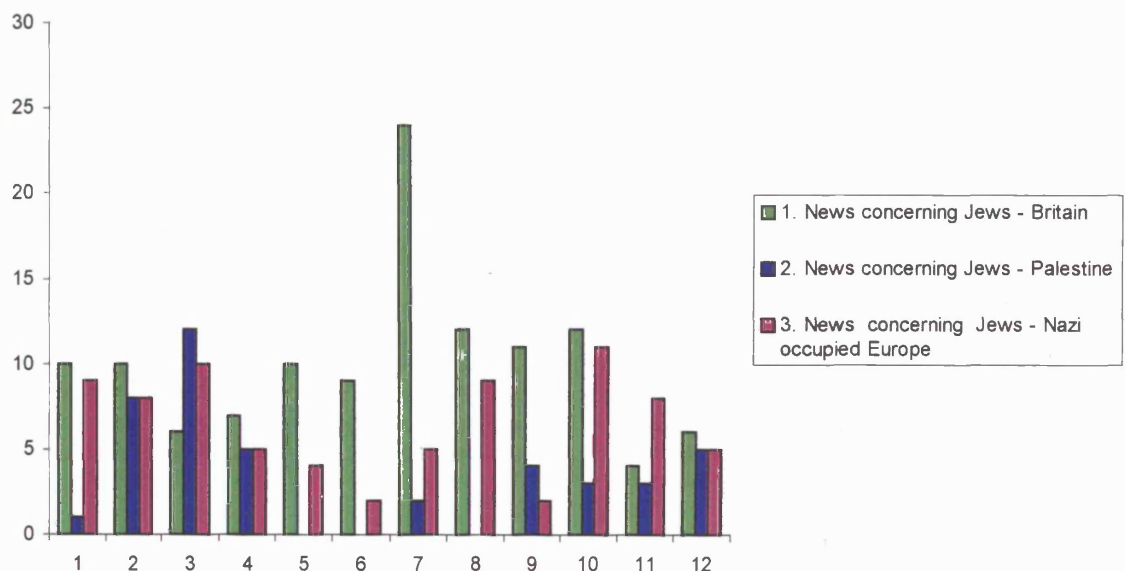


The death-rate among the Jewish labour corps which have been organised by the Germans is also a fearful one. The Germans are helping to "solve" the Jewish problem in their own country by sending Austrian Jews to perish in these corps.<sup>10</sup>

## 1940

During the year the *Manchester Guardian*, displaying its all its liberal credentials, consistently addressed the consequences of the new Churchill Government's decision to intern all "enemy aliens" in May 1940. Internment caused a nationwide reassessment of public attitudes to all foreigners in Britain, and to Jewish refugees in particular. The Government's policy was debated at length and revealed a basic dichotomy between national security and sensitivity to the experience of Jewish refugees in Britain. More importantly, this debate undoubtedly helped to refine public perception of Jews outside Britain over the following few years and contributed to the paper's active response to news of the Nazi "extermination" policy.

Figure 2. Manchester Guardian January - December 1940



At the same time the *Manchester Guardian* kept an eye on the persecution of Jews in Germany and Poland, though the sources of news on this subject were becoming fewer with each month of war. Sparse (American) news agency material was supplemented by valuable contributions from readers, some of whom had alternative sources of information about what was happening to Jews under German rule. The Nazis' initial plans for Polish Jews changed

<sup>10</sup> *MG* Wed 27 December 1939, 3 (14) NAZI INHUMANITY IN POLAND Reducing Population BY EXECUTIONS AND STARVATION

during the year. Grand schemes for Jewish settlements were postponed or cancelled completely. At the same time “administrative” anti-Semitic practices involving harsh brutality, became the norm in Poland rather than the basic enforcement of legal restrictions on Jewish life, which continued to be applied to Jews still in Germany.

“Extermination” as a euphemism was used in a variety of contexts in the *Manchester Guardian* during 1940. In essence, it indicated the death of a large group, as it was rarely used to refer to a single or a small number of killings, when “execution” was used. It frequently meant two different types of death: death by attrition, such as through deliberate starvation or slave labour, but it was also used to denote mass executions. This semantic difference presented a problem when it eventually came to understanding the change between a *familiar understanding* of Nazi persecution of Jews in Europe, where it was known that many died through privation and slave labour over time, as well as frequent executions – and the later, *unfamiliar*, systematic murder of Jews by shooting, gassing and other methods.

The establishment of a “Jewish Reserve” was considered at the end of January 1940.<sup>11</sup> An area around Lublin, possibly a few hundred square miles, possibly several thousand, would have to accommodate over 1,500,000 Jews from Poland, in addition to those from Germany and the Sudetenland (180,000), Austria (65,000), and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (75,000). In all, over 3,000,000 would have to be accommodated in one of the poorest provinces in Poland:

#### HERR HITLER’S PLANS FOR POLAND

The number of Jews so far transferred is not known, some have been sent from Austria, the Protectorate and Silesia...The Jews are given scarcely any notice to leave; they may take a suitcase, food for three days, and 300 marks. Their property is sold and placed in a central fund to help settle them. After the long and horrible journeys they arrive at the reserve and are at once set to work on building huts and houses for themselves and for their families who are to follow. Thousands are reported to have died; it seems to be the Nazi aim that thousands more should.<sup>12</sup>

Thus as early in the war as January 1940 a general description emerged of the Nazi treatment of the Jewish population under its control: as far as could be understood, Nazi policy concerning Jews was a plan of expulsion, resettlement and hard labour under the most basic, overcrowded living conditions. In contrast to the non-Jewish Poles, the Jews would also suffer Nazi punitive actions, including heavy fines and physical abuse.

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<sup>11</sup> MG Wed 31 January 1940, p3 (12) AS HERR HITLER FOUND EUROPE

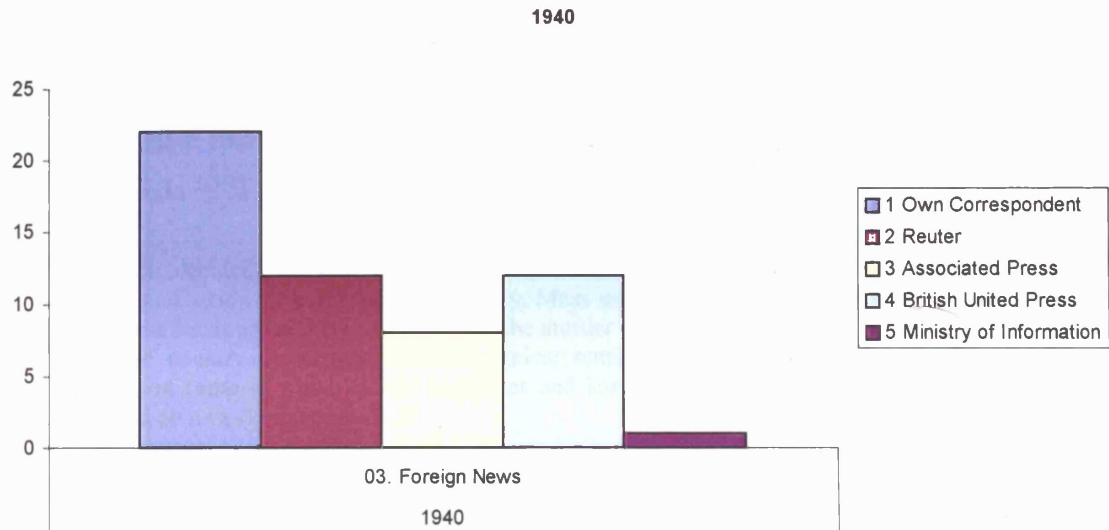
<sup>12</sup> MG Wed 31 January 1940, p (12) HERR HITLER’S PLANS FOR POLAND The Herding of Slave Peoples

c.



Figure 3. Manchester Guardian

The Sources of Foreign News Concerning Jews



News about what was happening in Poland in early 1940 came from freelance journalists based in Paris and Holland as well as in neutral countries like Sweden and Switzerland. Like a news agency report, a “stringer’s” sources were not always indicated, but they would have usually relied on local media in addition to regional German newspapers and radio. Unlike news agency articles, which usually given the credit-line, by “From Our Special Correspondent”, “stringer” reports were labelled “From A Correspondent”<sup>13</sup> and tended to include more detail and more speculation than a standard kind of agency report.

On June 18, C.A. Lambert, the new *Manchester Guardian*’s Diplomatic Correspondent (Voight had left “for what came later to be known as political warfare”<sup>14</sup>) drew attention to a plan under which “a part of the Polish nation is to be physically exterminated”. The task of “reducing the numbers of the Polish population” was already under way and was proceeding methodically and ruthlessly. This article made a broad assessment of the situation and drew the following conclusions.

Firstly it recognised that there was a definite plan or clear policy aimed at eliminating large numbers of Poles and Jews by forced resettlement, severe privation and executions. Importantly, this was seen as a political policy, based on Nazi ideology rather than a policy based on military considerations. Secondly, (and for the same reason) it believed that Hitler’s

<sup>13</sup> PEP Report on the British Press April 1938 p159

<sup>14</sup> Ayerst, D. (1971) *Guardian. Biography of a Newspaper* p.531

ostensibly extreme public pronouncements should no longer be interpreted as rhetorical, but instead should be taken more literally, especially when the situation in Poland was considered. Thirdly, because Poland was completely cut off from the outside world, the Nazis could now establish as brutal a system as they liked, in which they would be able to apply 1930's German concentration camp conditions to the entire country. In a similar way, Lambert thought it likely that the Nazis would apply methods that had been used on Jews in Germany to "reduce" a much larger population in Poland:

It has been decided that the reduction of the Polish population has become a political necessity, and action is being taken accordingly. Mass sterilisation is only one of the methods by which the Nazis are seeking to encompass the murder of a whole nation. The whole country, hermetically sealed against outside observers, has become a giant concentration camp in which all the brutalities and horrors of Dachau and Buchenwald are reproduced on a vastly larger scale.<sup>15</sup>

Of equal interest to the *Manchester Guardian* was what was *not heard* from occupied Europe. On September 24, "A Correspondent" (in other words a contribution from a freelance journalist)<sup>16</sup> said that the outstanding event of recent weeks was the incorporation of the General Government (that part of Poland under Nazi control) into the Reich. Based on letters sent to exiled Poles in Hungary which the author had seen, news of fresh persecution had come through. Mass arrests and executions continued but nothing had been heard for a long time about the scheme to force all Jews into a "reserve" at Lublin, "it has probably been dropped. The first deportations to Lublin caused such a threat of general starvation that in January the German Governor himself was driven to protest."<sup>17</sup>

But the *Manchester Guardian's* former Paris Correspondent reflecting on the year seemed less optimistic and much less certain where recent decisions taken by the Nazis left the Jews of Poland:

#### GERMAN TYRANNY IN POLAND

The oppression and ill-treatment of the Jews is as great as one can imagine. It is true that many Jews lived in the part of Poland taken over by Russia. But since the occupation of Poland, the Germans have been sending hundreds of thousands of their own Jews and of the Jews of Austria and Czechoslovakia to Poland. According to Polish sources not entirely sympathetic to the Jews, the restrictions on the Jews are not, however, as severe as feared at first. Compared with the Poles the number of Jews deported to Germany is altogether negligible. Few Jews are arrested, and although the Jews have been severely restricted in their trade, the "Ghetto" rules have not in most places been strictly enforced. The original plan for a vast "Jewish reservation" in the Lublin province has been virtually abandoned at least for the time being.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *MG* Tue 18 June 1940, p6 (10) A COUNTRY CONQUERED BY GERMANY The Terrible Persecution of the Polish People

<sup>16</sup> *PEP op.cit.*, p159

<sup>17</sup> *MG* Tue 24 September 1940, p4 (10) POLAND UNDER THE NEW PARTITION

<sup>18</sup> *MG* Thur 12 December 1940, p4 (10) GERMAN TYRANNY IN POLAND

During the same period, foreign news from within Nazi controlled Europe, particularly news concerning anti-Semitic acts, became more sporadic. In early 1941, less and less information about what was happening to Jews came from Germany and Poland. On March 3 1941 the *Manchester Guardian* printed an extraordinary leader column. It suggested that in the winter of 1940 the Nazis had intended to “exterminate” German Jews after they had been deported to the Lublin ghetto but this plan had been postponed because they did not want to antagonise American opinion. Now that the United States was likely to support the Allies, the Nazis had decided to restart the deportation programme:

The Jews of Germany were the first victims of Nazi barbarity, and the Jews of the Continent have been pursued by the relentless will to destroy as the Nazi armies have occupied country after country. When Poland was overrun in the early months of the war the Nazis declared that they would establish a Jewish ghetto on a grand scale in the Lublin province and remove to it all that remained of the communities of Germany, Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. They made a beginning last winter with this mass migration, but many of those who were removed contrived to escape over the frontiers of Soviet Russia. The Nazis, it seemed, were not then prepared for the extermination which the removal would have meant. Perhaps they were concerned at the time not to excite too violently American opinion, which had been roused by the declaration.

The Quakers in the United States had sent observers to Poland to watch events. Now, however, that the United States has made her position in the war clear, the Nazis, on their side, are throwing all restraint to the wind. They have announced that the remaining Jews shall be removed at once from Austria to the Polish enclave, which is, in fact, a vast concentration camp. The first thousands have already been deported, and within a few months Vienna will be “free from Jews.” Goring announced three years ago, when the German armies entered the city, that this should be accomplished in four years, and the Nazis live up to their promises of cruelty, if not to any others.

Can the inhumanity, even of Nazis go much farther? This, surely, is the last phase.<sup>19</sup>

In May 1941 the *Manchester Guardian*, in line with all other British newspapers, cut down its size (from 10-12 pages to 6-8) in an effort to reduce the tonnage of imported raw materials – mechanical wood pulp and sulphite which were the main ingredients of newsprint. As the Scandinavian sources were no longer available, the wood pulp had to come from the United States and Canada through the dangerous North Atlantic to the two main newsprint manufacturing centres in North Kent and Merseyside close to its principle markets in London and Manchester.<sup>20</sup> The size of newspapers would be regulated as each paper was to be allowed only a proportion of its allocated “tonnage” but the decision about which parts of a paper would be cut was left to proprietors and editors. Some, like the *Manchester Guardian* decided to cut down the number of pages on certain days each week.

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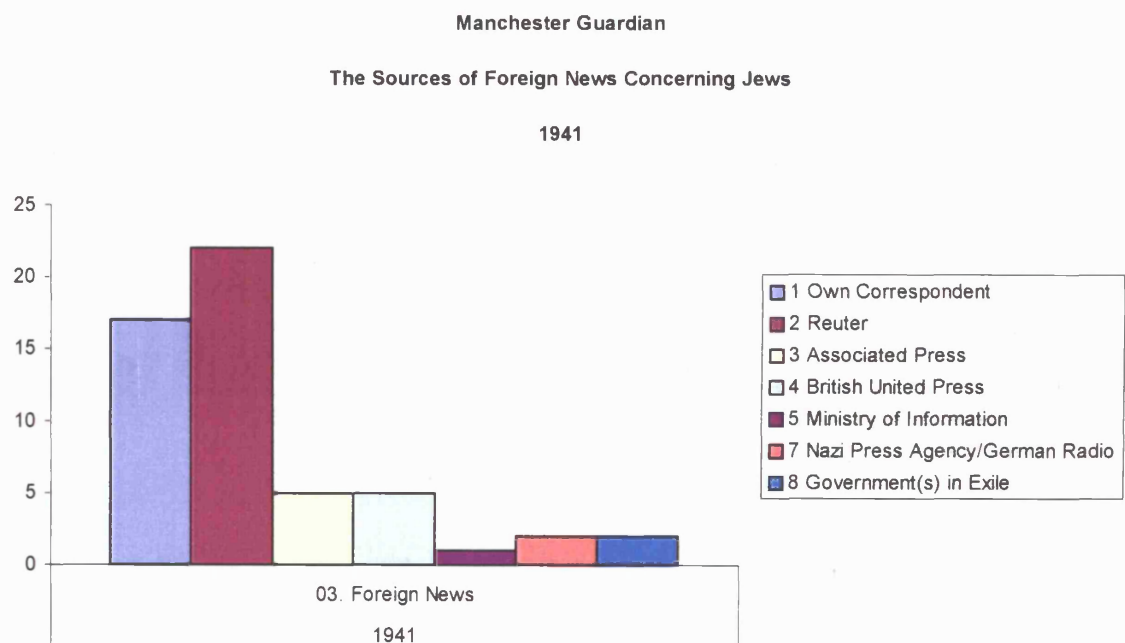
<sup>19</sup> *MG* Mon 3 March 1941, p4 (8) The Last Phase?

<sup>20</sup> *PEP op.cit.*, pp.4-5



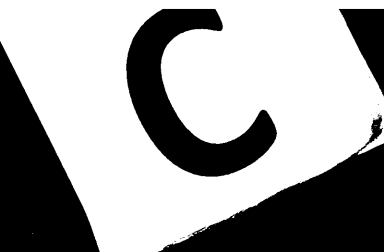
On Sunday June 22 Germany attacked the Soviet Union. In contrast to the invasion of Poland 21 months earlier, in the following days correspondence to the paper no reference was made to the fate of Jews in Russia who would soon come under Nazi control. But the frequency of news reports concerning Nazi atrocities against Jews in occupied Europe began to increase steadily in the Autumn of 1941.

On October 4 a very long article on conditions in occupied Poland devoted a section to a description of the Warsaw ghetto. The paper's Diplomatic Correspondent in London had compiled the report, which gave details of a repressive regime where Jewish Poles were viewed by the Nazis as "the scum that must be wiped off the map of Europe and accordingly either exterminated or reduced to a condition of helpless, stateless servitude...Men have been shot "for fun", thousands have been put in concentration camps or deported to Germany as slaves." It said that the names of 400,000 had been registered in the Warsaw ghetto and the weekly death toll "in this ghastly haunt of human misery" amounted to 600 persons a day.<sup>21</sup>



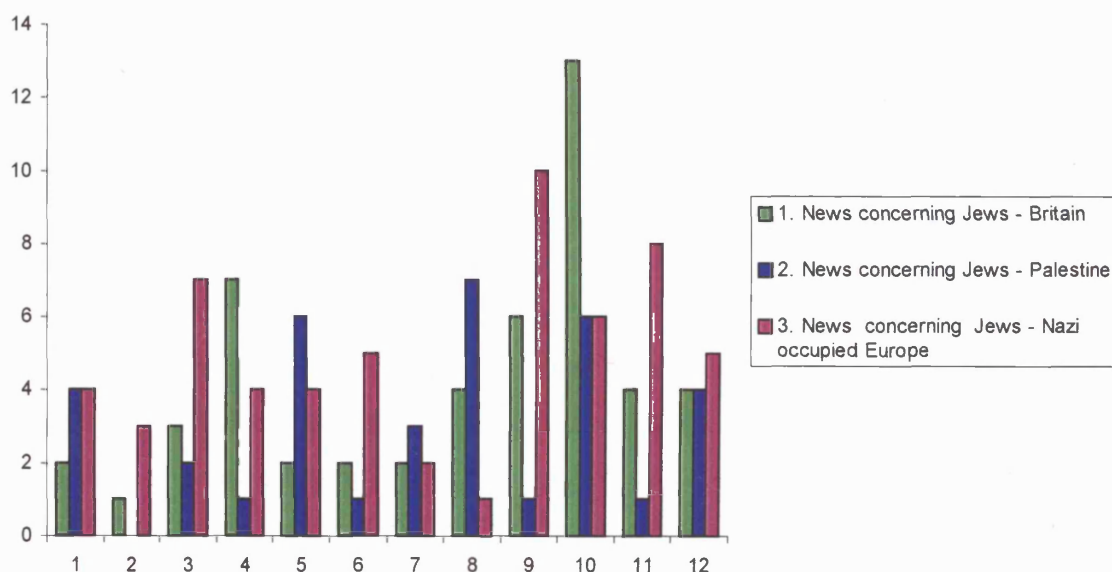
In 1941 most of the news concerning the plight of European Jewry in the *Manchester Guardian* came from a variety of news agencies, including *Reuters*: the American news agencies, BUP, AP, a few contributions from the Polish Telegraphic Agency, and the press of neutral countries, notably Sweden and Switzerland, in addition to information from

<sup>21</sup> *MG* Sat 4 October 1941, p7 (10) NAZI TERROR IN POLAND Brutalities Almost Beyond Belief But People's Spirit Unbroken KILLINGS, SLAVERY, STARVATION



Governments-in exile in London. But different kinds of foreign news sources began to manifest themselves in the Autumn of 1941. They were usually short agency items and contained relatively few details and appeared quite randomly in the pages of the *Manchester Guardian*. They referred to several different countries conquered by the Nazis, few of which, with the exception of Germany and Austria, readers (or indeed British journalists) had any long term familiarity. For example, in the House of Lords, the Archbishop of Canterbury condemned and denounced atrocities committed by German forces in Yugoslavia. The article concerned was only a few lines long and contained absolutely no information about these events – because, despite such a public announcement and the fact that it came from the Yugoslav Government, the details were “confidential”.<sup>22</sup>

Manchester Guardian January - December 1941



Viewed as a whole, up until late 1941 British knowledge of Nazi atrocities via the press lacked sufficient content, context or continuity to suggest that the atrocities that had become known were anything more than the excesses of war. But from late October the same news agencies began to regularly report incidents of mass execution in countries like France and Czechoslovakia, regions which readers of foreign news in the *Manchester Guardian* were more familiar. “Mass execution” at this time tended to describe the murder of (mainly men) in groups of fifty or a hundred. Such executions had been part of German rule in occupied territories since the war began but their frequency seemed to have increased to such an extent that it was not uncommon to read almost daily reports of hundreds being shot in response to

<sup>22</sup> MG Fri 24 October 1941, p5 (8) YUGO-SLAV ACCOUNT OF ATROCITIES

some real or imagined misdemeanour. Such killings were not in any way disguised. Descriptions of the victims were often given in German announcements, which also specified the number of Jews among each set of victims, for instance, “the Prague wireless says that 17 persons were sentenced to death. 12 of them were shot for ‘illegal possession of arms’ and the other five, including three Jews were hanged for ‘economic sabotage’”.<sup>23</sup>

News of other executions in Nazi Europe continued to appear regularly throughout November and December and in the absence of any other authenticated reports, they were the apotheosis of German atrocities. It was not uncommon for some agency reports to gather similar incidents into the same news item, for example from *Reuters*, “Nazis Shoot Six Norwegians. 100 Killed in Belgrade.” The accuracy of these stories were not really doubted since it was stated that details about the numbers of dead and their “crimes against the German Reich” had been broadcast on local radio and this information was then conveyed by the news agencies.

In the last two months of the year news of executions in mainland Europe began to become more frequent, but apart from public announcements and official press statements released by the Germans, very little was known about other Nazi activities involving captive civilians. One good source of attributable evidence was the Inter-Allied Information Committee in London, a body made up of British M.P.s and members of Governments-in-exile which issued collected accounts of Nazi atrocities committed behind enemy lines. It was known that the Nazis took hostages in order to try to make local populations hand over partisans who had escaped capture. When suspects failed to materialise, hundreds of hostages were shot in daily reprisals. The committee estimated that this method of terror had resulted in the murder of 82,000 in Poland with a further 30,000 dying in concentration camps.

Apart from two quite detailed reports concerning the Warsaw ghetto<sup>24</sup>, the range of news specifically concerning Jews in Poland was extremely limited. Once again, one of the chief sources of this information was a Swedish newspaper, the Stockholm based *Dagens Nyheter*, which said that some 200,000 thousand Jews from Germany and Czechoslovakia were being sent to ghettos in Poland and the Ukraine. Frank, the Governor General of Poland, was quoted as saying that when these new additions had been made the Warsaw ghetto would contain 600,000 Jews.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *MG* Wed 8 October 1941, p8 (8) EXECUTIONS OF FRENCH AND CZECHS Number in France Now 73: 6 More in “Protectorate” *MG* Sat 18 October 1941, p7 (8) 17 MORE CZECHS EXECUTED

<sup>24</sup> *MG* Sat 8 November 1941, p6 (10) Leader: The Ghettos of the East; *MG* Sat 29 November 1941, p4 (10) DEATH FOR LEAVING THE GHETTO

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p6 (10) Leader: The Ghettos of the East



It was extremely unusual for details from *inside* a German concentration camp to reach the pages of the British press. On November 18 1941, a short report was included on the main foreign news page which concerned the Mauthausen camp in Austria. According to “Dutch quarters in London” and under the headline, “Dutch Jews Die in German Mines. Rate of Fifty a Week” it gave specific details of the number of Jewish inmates and told of their decimation through slave labour:

Forced to slave labour in the mines, brutally treated, badly fed and living under the worst hygienic conditions, 680 Dutch Jews aged from 18 to 35, had their numbers reduced by death to about 280 from February to October, state Dutch quarters in London. By the end of July 130 had died under the strain and later the rate quickened reaching 400 by last month. No information was given by the Nazis about the cause or circumstances of these deaths. 26

In November on the occasion of the centenary of the Jewish Chronicle, Churchill (who, because of Enigma decrypts of German police messages, had been aware of the intensification of Nazi actions against Jews in Eastern Europe since August 1941<sup>27</sup>) sent a message which said:

None has suffered more cruelly than the Jews the unspeakable evil wrought on the bodies and spirits of men by Hitler and his vile regime. The Jew bore the brunt of the Nazis first onslaught on the citadels of freedom and human dignity. He has borne and continues to bear, a burden which might have seemed beyond endurance. He has not allowed it to break his spirit; he has never lost the will to resist. Assuredly in the day of victory the Jew's sufferings will not be forgotten. Once again at the appointed time he will see vindicated those principles of righteousness which it was the glory of his fathers to proclaim to the world. Once again it will be shown that though the mills of God grind slowly they grind exceedingly small. 28

On December 23 in Manchester, the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Dr. Brodetsky of Leeds University said that, “the past year has seen a deep intensification of the world tragedy and an even deeper intensification of the Jewish part of this tragedy”:<sup>29</sup>

A world which shuddered at the Nazi threat to shoot a hundred French hostages did not even begin to realise that all the Jews in Germany and occupied Europe were in fact Nazi hostages, and most of those shot were Jews. To add to the misery and despair, the avenues of escape from the terror, especially to Palestine, had been steadily closed.<sup>30</sup>

But such remarks and general allusions did not suggest that the Jewish leadership in Britain were aware of the precise nature of this “intensification” or indeed that Nazi persecution of Jews in occupied territories had entered a new, more murderous phase.

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26 MG Tue 18 November 1941, p8 (8) DUTCH JEWS DIE IN GERMAN MINES Rate of Fifty a Week

27 Churchill's BBC broadcast of August 24 which made no reference to Jews in his assessment of Nazi atrocities but included the remark, “We are in the presence of a crime without a name”. Gilbert, M. *The Holocaust* (1986) p.186

28 MG Fri 14 November p8 (8) ENDURANCE OF THE JEWS Premier's Tribute

29 MG Tue 23 December 1941, p8 (8) JEWS AND THE WAR

30 MG Mon 29 December 1941, p3 (6) THE JEWISH PROBLEM

Throughout this period there was no knowledge available to the British press about what was happening to Jews in Russia. If Jews in France, Poland, and Holland were being worked to death and randomly executed, what conditions were Russian Jews being forced to suffer? The American press still had some correspondents in Berlin and their news about Nazi activities in Russia did get out,<sup>31</sup> but unlike a lot of news agency material which was then widely distributed to a range of newspapers, there was no evidence of it in the pages of the *Manchester Guardian*.

What was known? One of the first sources was a “Note” sent to the Allies by the Russian Foreign Minister Molotov protesting against Germany’s treatment of Red Army prisoners:

The Soviet Government is in possession of many facts concerning the systematic brutalities and atrocities inflicted by the Germans on Red Army men and officers who are prisoner of war. Very many instances of atrocities have become known in recent days which expose the German military as a gang of cut throats who ignore all international rights and any laws of human morality. The Soviet military command has evidence of numerous instances of wounded Red Army prisoners being subjected to brutal torture punishments and murder.<sup>32</sup>

The Note went on to describe how prisoners had been;

tortured with red-hot irons, their eyes have been poked out, and their fingers, ears and noses cut off. Their stomachs have been ripped open. They have been tied to tanks and crushed to pieces.<sup>33</sup>

These atrocities were described in terms that seemed unrealistic, and their very graphic nature was reminiscent of atrocity tales from the First World War where the bodies of soldiers had apparently been abused by the German forces. In this case of atrocity reporting there were details of what was supposed to have happened – but the descriptions seemed fantastic and emotive rather than sober and factual. In the absence of any corroborating evidence, these stories were difficult to believe.

Another report from Moscow was published in the paper on November 29. The headline again indicated that perhaps the reliability of the figures of dead presented was questionable by the use of parenthesis, “52,000 Murdered in Kiev” and the fact that the sub-heading said “Stories of Nazi Shooting”. It said,

A total of 52,000 men, women, and children have been murdered by the Germans in Kiev, says “Red Star”, quoting reports from escaped Russians, who say that after the occupation Kiev became “one huge Nazi torture chamber”

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<sup>31</sup> Lipstadt, D. (1986) *op. cit.*, pp 152-158

<sup>32</sup> *MG* Wed 26 November 1941, p8 (8) NAZI TREATMENT OF PRISONERS Molotov Protests Against “Systematic Brutalities”

<sup>33</sup> *MG* Wed 26 November 1941, p8 (8) NAZI TREATMENT OF PRISONERS Molotov Protests Against “Systematic Brutality”

The Gestapo shot all Ukrainians and Russians loyal to the Soviet regime, and on the first day demanded the surrender of all arms and ordered all people who had supplies of food for more than twenty four hours to give them up under penalty of death.

The population's revenge was to blow up the house used as an office by the German Public Prosecutor, killing over 170 officers and Gestapo men. The brutal massacre which followed was the Nazi's reply.<sup>34</sup>

This "story" was at least three months old. The Nazis had entered Kiev in late September and the massacres took place at the end of the month after the Nazis had put up posters throughout the city on the 27th and 28th demanding that all Jews should assemble "for resettlement". The Jews were brought to a ravine outside the city, Babi Yar, and shot with machine guns by a battalion of Einsatzkommando unit of Ukrainian policemen. Over two days they killed 33,771 men, women, and children.<sup>35</sup>

*Manchester Guardian* staff may have been suspicious of this information firstly because of the extraordinarily high number of victims – the highest figure ever reported in the paper for an apparent reprisal – especially when compared to any previous news they had received concerning mass executions in Poland, Czechoslovakia or France where the victims were numbered in the hundreds not thousands. The Kiev news suggested that the victims could be numbered in tens of thousands, the majority of whom must have been civilians as the report said, because there was no evidence to suggest that any battle had taken place. Secondly, this news derived from the same official Russian source which had already displayed a willingness to exaggerate or manipulate figures for other purposes. In the absence of corroborating evidence to support this source it seemed prudent to publish the story alongside its other foreign news but retain doubts about the extent of its truth.

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<sup>34</sup> *MG* Sat 29 November p7 (8) "52,000 MURDERED IN KIEV" Stories of Nazi Shooting

<sup>35</sup> Gilbert (1986) *op. cit.*, pp.201-202

## **Chapter II**

***The Manchester Guardian The Yorkshire Post The Glasgow Herald***

**January-June 1942**

## January to June 1942

The first authoritative news published by two of the three newspapers surveyed that Jews were being killed by the Nazis in a systematic manner was on June 30 1942 - the summary of the Polish *Bund* report given by Sidney Silverman, M.P. at a World Jewish Congress meeting in London on June 29) where it was stated that over one million Jews had been killed in Europe since 1939.<sup>1</sup> But for the six months prior to that date there had been virtually no new, unambiguous evidence of Nazi persecution of Jews in the pages of the three regional newspapers. Some details of Nazi persecution from inside occupied Europe did reach the *Manchester Guardian* and *Yorkshire Post*, such as Heydrich's order to send 90,000 Jews to the fortress at Terezin<sup>2</sup> but they were few and far between.

However, there was a great deal of *indirect* evidence, particularly concerning German atrocities, to suggest that the papers and their readers were extremely aware of the danger that all civilians, but especially Jews, faced in Nazi Europe and more significantly, that it was more severe than ever before.

Two series of articles were published in January, February, and March which had wide ranging implications for the nature of reporting of the mass murder of European Jews later in the year. The first concerned official reports of Nazi atrocities in occupied Europe, few of which contained any details about Jewish victims. The second group of articles involved the British Government's attitude towards Jewish refugees trying to reach safety in Palestine.

The first series of reports displayed some new information about Nazi activities that would become more familiar to readers later in the year. In contrast to earlier accounts which characterised German executions of civilians as acts of reprisal or punishment, this news gave details of systematic, organised actions against groups of civilians in Poland, Russia and Yugoslavia. In addition, these accounts contained many of the almost cyclical features that would characterise later reporting of the mass murder of Jews as the details of the Nazi "final solution" emerged.

In the first week of January the *Yorkshire Post* reported on mass murders of men, women and children in Serbia, information which had reached the Yugoslav legation in London and was

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<sup>1</sup> *MG* Tue June 30 1942 p2 (6) JEWISH WAR VICTIMS More Than a Million Dead  
*YP* Tue June 30 1942 p4 (6) FATE OF JEWS OVER ONE MILLION KILLED

<sup>2</sup> *MG* Tue 3 March 1942, p8 (8) Heydrich sends 90,000 Jews to a Fortress  
*YP* Tue 3 March 1942, p3 (6) Heydrich sends Jews to Gaol

publicised by the Archbishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Some of the details of these reports were straightforward, (in the sense that they were not dissimilar from those contained in more general war reports which mentioned civilian victims) including the locations of the murders and the number of victims, but other more vivid, descriptive aspects must have been difficult for readers to comprehend. For example:

In the most ghastly record of bestiality and terrorism yet compiled during the present war, the Archbishop estimated that up until last August 180,000 had been slaughtered at the orders of the Quisling Pavelitch and his Ustashi gangsters. In the village of Korit, 163 peasants were tortured, tied into bundles of three and thrown into a pit. Eventually 226 bodies were consigned to the pit, into which petrol was poured and set alight. Over 600 people were killed in and around Krupa between July 25 and 30. Most of them were cut to pieces with knives axes and scythes. Among hundreds killed in Korenica, many had their faces mutilated and they were compelled to graze grass before being murdered. Of the scene at another town, the report says, "blood was shed in torrents. One can often see members of a whole family tied together, men, women, and children". A copy of the document has been sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>3</sup>

It would not have been unusual if some details of this report failed to be believed by readers in Yorkshire and beyond. Undoubtedly the factual details of the report were disturbing enough, certainly in terms of the very high number of civilians deliberately killed, but they were not as shocking as the descriptions of the murders which allegedly involved facial mutilation, the victims apparently being compelled to graze, and blood running in torrents. The inclusion of this imagery made the reports sound embellished and very reminiscent of First World War atrocity hyperbole.

Similarly dramatic headlines indicating German abuses against civilians could also be found in other, non-news sections of the paper such as book reviews: "Nazi Terror Tortured Czechs and Poles" and "The Attempted Murder of Poland" were the titles of two articles in January in the *Yorkshire Post* which discussed the Nazi treatment of local populations in the conquered territories. One example, on January 15, in reference to the publication of "The German New Order in Poland" by the Polish Ministry of Information, commented:

The darkest place in Europe, the one most deeply tinged in horror is Poland. It is well that the documentary evidence in this large grim volume should have been collected and so dispassionately set out so that those who have no direct experience should know what it means to fall under Nazi tyranny.<sup>4</sup>

In reference to the same publication, the *Manchester Guardian* commented:

It is difficult for people in western Europe to believe that any set of men living in Europe could devise and execute the diabolical measures that have been taken to give effect to this scheme of cold blooded murder. The stories of atrocities were regarded as the pardonable exaggerations of men women cruelly treated and fearful of their future. No doubt is any longer possible. The evidence accumulated in these books comes from Nazi documents, Nazi

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<sup>3</sup> YP Sat 3 January 1942, p5 (8) TORTURE IN SERBIA Slaughter of Children

<sup>4</sup> YP Thur 15 January 1942, p2 (6) THE ATTEMPTED MURDER OF POLAND

utterances, and Nazi newspapers. There is no parallel in the history of Europe to the behaviour of the Nazis. The Poles and Czechs numbering not far short of fifty million were to be destroyed. Persons of Polish or Czech blood were only to survive as serfs.<sup>5</sup>

The paper remarked that it might be difficult to believe what was going on in eastern Europe and seemed to acknowledge that there had been some exaggerated stories but assured its readers that the latest official reviews of Nazi activities were authentic. However, such headlines and comments belied the expectation that these new official publications would contain a great deal of new information about “atrocities”. In fact, most of the official accounts shed little light on exactly what had been happening in Poland or elsewhere in the late summer or autumn of 1941, but provided general summaries of living conditions which had already been published in the British press over the last two years.

News about forced deportations and expulsions as part of the reorganisation of Poland’s population had been published as early as Autumn 1939. It was also known that civilians were starving under the Nazis because of severe restrictions on basic foodstuffs. The press had acknowledged that many were subjected to forced labour and often executed on the slightest pretext, but these reports were not qualitatively different or more revelatory than what had been known about Nazi rule since the war began. Furthermore, despite the fact that it was well known that they were treated more harshly than the general population in Poland, Jews were not specifically mentioned in any of the Polish or Czech reports.

Is there evidence to suggest that this anomaly could have resulted from a broader policy directed by Government? A Ministry of Information (MOI) memorandum dated July 25 1941, commenting on “Plan to Combat the Apathetic Outlook of “What Have I Got To Lose Even If Germany Wins”,” stated that, “horror stuff... must be used very sparingly and must deal always with treatment of indisputably innocent people. Not with violent political opponents. And not with Jews.”<sup>6</sup> Even if it was the case, – and evidence of an absence of Jewish-related material would be very difficult to indicate definitively- this directive only applied to British MOI propaganda. There is certainly no evidence to suggest that press censorship under the MOI was able to ensure that Jews were not mentioned in press reports of atrocities. Wartime press censorship simply did not extend that far. Labelling individuals and groups only in terms of their nationality was simply a descriptive reporting convention rather than a politically motivated policy. Moreover, because international news agency reports – which

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<sup>5</sup> MG Fri 16 January 1942, p4 (8) Leader: MASTERS OF METHOD

<sup>6</sup> PRO INF/251 Pt 4 in Scott (1994)

were censored at source - made so few references to Jewish victims during this period, it would appear that they also followed this reporting convention.

In fact news about the treatment of *any* non-combatants in Nazi controlled Europe was difficult to come by in early 1942 – not only Jews. Knowledge of what was happening to civilians in Poland may have been rare and rather short on verifiable detail but it still overshadowed the paucity of information concerning news of life under Nazi rule in occupied Russia since the summer of 1941. Indeed, up until January 1942, the only significant story concerning Nazi atrocities in Russia in the *Manchester Guardian* had been the Kiev massacre at Babi Yar in November 1941.<sup>7</sup>

At the end of the first week in January another Allied Government report about Nazi atrocities was released to the British press. This was the second “Note” from the Russian Foreign Minister, Molotov, issued to “all non-Axis Powers” which gave details of “the looting, destruction and atrocities committed by the Germans in territory which has since been recaptured by Soviet forces”. It received extensive attention in the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Yorkshire Post*<sup>8</sup> (placed prominently on the main news pages – see footnote) but the *Glasgow Herald* did not report it at all.

On January 7, the day after the Note was released, the *Manchester Guardian* reprinted a *Reuters* article headlined “Nazis’ Systematic Crimes In Russia – Mr Molotov’s New Indictment”

The Note which was broadcast by Moscow Radio, declares: “This violence does not spring from undisciplined enemy troops, but is an organised system worked out beforehand by the German Government and High Command, which encourages officers and men to commit the most bestial acts.” The Fascist German Army and its allies are carrying out the systematic destruction of innumerable material and cultural treasures of our people, and have brought into operation conditions of forced labour, bestial and sanguinary reprisals, in the face of which the worst crimes known in human history pale into insignificance.<sup>9</sup>

The document itself, “14 pages of single-spaced foolscap”,<sup>10</sup> contained three references to Jews: the first and second were brief references in a list of groups including Armenians and Uzbeks who had suffered under the Nazis, and an attack on Lwow under the slogan “Kill the Jews and the Poles”; the third concerned the massacre at Kiev where 52,000 had been murdered. It also listed the Ukrainian cities where mass shooting of thousand “unarmed and defenceless Jewish people” had taken place, Lwow (6,000), Odessa (8,500), Mariupol

<sup>7</sup> *MG* Sat 29 November 1942, p7 (8) “52,000 MURDERED IN KIEV” Stories of Nazi Shooting

<sup>8</sup> *YP* Thur 8 January 1942, pp. 1, 2, (6), *MG* Wed 7 January 1942, p8 (8)

<sup>9</sup> *MG* Wed 7 January 1942, p8 (8) NAZIS’ SYSTEMATIC CRIMES IN RUSSIA Mr Molotov’s New Indictment. Reuter.

<sup>10</sup> *YP* Thur 8 January 1942, pp. 1 (6) ALLIES TO LIST WAR CRIMES



(3,000), and Kerch (7,000).<sup>11</sup> However none of these massacres, nor any reference to Jewish victims, was included in the lengthy coverage given to the Note in either paper. Nevertheless the Molotov Note can be seen as extremely significant because it was the first authoritative, detailed account of Nazi atrocities made by a major Allied power. Also for the first time in the war, it raised the prominence of news concerning Nazi atrocities against civilians rather than combatants, a focus which helped to bring the issue from short reports in the foreign/war news pages to the front and main news pages.

Its publication also marked the beginning of an Allied policy which proposed to compile evidence of atrocities to be used in retribution against the Nazis at the end of the war. This policy was intended as a public campaign with two functions: the first was to galvanise support among the occupied nations by pointing to Nazi treatment of their citizens, an old tactic revived and adapted from atrocity campaigns of the First World War; the second aspect of this policy was its apparent moral justice, i.e. the Allies would administer *retribution* rather than *vengeance*, punishing guilty Nazis but not innocent Germans. This policy would also have unintended benefits for the Allied powers when calls for the rescue of Jews came later in the year.

A week later articles in all three newspapers presented further details of German atrocities in occupied-Europe.<sup>12</sup> At a meeting at St James's Palace in London, representatives of nine occupied Allied countries (Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Holland, Norway, Poland and Yugoslavia) presented evidence of Nazi atrocities committed against their citizens. In the *Manchester Guardian* under the headline "Outraged Countries Pledge to Exact Punishment", the Conference Declaration placed among its chief war aims "the judicial punishment of the guilty". Recalling the 1907 The Hague Convention regarding the laws and customs of land warfare, it stated:

Germany, since the beginning of the present conflict, which arose out of her policy of aggression has instituted in the occupied countries a regime of terror characterised in particular by imprisonments, mass expulsions, the execution of hostages and massacres.<sup>13</sup>

These acts of violence were said to have been carried out not only by the German army and Gestapo but also by the "allies, associates and accomplices of the occupying power". Each country's representative gave similar accounts of Nazi cruelty to its citizens and stated that the guilty would not evade punishment under sub-headings such as "Czechs Will Exact

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<sup>11</sup> Laqueur, W. *The Terrible Secret* (1980) p.69

<sup>12</sup> *GH* 14 January 1942 p4 (8), *YP* 14 January 1942 p1,3, (6), *MG* 14 January 1942 p 2,4, 5, (8)

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, *MG* p2 (8) OUTRAGED COUNTRIES' PLEDGE TO EXACT PUNISHMENT London Conference Declaration.  
*YP* p3 (6) RETRIBUTION FOR WAR CRIMES 9 Nations Sign Solemn Pledge in London

Justice”, “Norway’s Defiance” and “Determination of the Netherlands.”<sup>14</sup> Count Raczynski, the Polish foreign minister said:

More than 80,000 [Polish] citizens have been shot, tens of thousands have died in concentration camps, hundreds of thousands have died of starvation or of misery inflicted by the aggressor. Hundreds of thousands have been sent to the Reich for forced labour and in addition there are nearly two million deportees deprived of all their property. Millions are still awaiting the fate to be meted out to them by the occupant.<sup>15</sup>

No reference was made to the characteristics or identity of the victims, nor if certain groups, like Polish Jews, had been singled out or suffered disproportionately. In a similar way to the press convention, the tendency to describe both individuals and groups only in terms of their nationality was entirely in keeping with official statements or public reports during this period, as any other characteristics of the victims were certainly seen as less relevant in an international conflict (and only became more important later). But in this case the tendency was not entirely accidental – the British Foreign Office approved of the absence of any explicit reference to Jews in the declaration. Frank Roberts, for example, wrote that he was “glad to see that General Sikorski has behaved correctly in this matter”.<sup>16</sup>

Leader columns in the *Manchester Guardian* (“Retribution”) and *Yorkshire Post* (“Punishing the Inhuman”) welcomed the Allied initiative but differed in their view of the wording of the Declaration:

It has been issued not in any crude spirit of vengeance but as a solemn assurance to the persecuted peoples that justice will be done and a warning to their oppressors that they cannot commit all manner of outrage and violence with impunity. This is the only possible answer to the terrorism which Hitler and his Gestapo bullies are seeking to impose upon civilised States.<sup>17</sup>

But the *Manchester Guardian* expressed a concern that the public hatred that would be raised by the details of the St James’s Palace meeting and the calls for retribution by the spokesmen of the occupied countries might degenerate into indiscriminate vengeance. To clarify its concern it quoted the Archbishop of York’s distinction between retribution and vengeance:

The first – the conduct of men acknowledging, vindicating, and enforcing a common law, the second the conduct of men who seek to satisfy a blind and ungoverned sense of wrong. It is the difference between civilised justice and barbarous vendetta.<sup>18</sup>

It argued that the wording of the Declaration was important, i.e. the promise of judicial proceedings followed by solemn and orderly punishment, but felt that the organisation of

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p2

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p2

<sup>16</sup> Minute by Roberts, 16 August 1942 quoted in Wasserstein, B. *Britain and the Jews of Europe* (1979) p.148

<sup>17</sup> YP Wed 14 January 1942 p2 (6) Punishing the Inhuman

<sup>18</sup> YP 14 January 1942 p2, (6) Punishing the Inhuman, MG 14 January 1942 p4 (8) RETRIBUTION

these proceedings would not be a simple matter and that every precaution had to be taken to ensure a fair trial for all accused persons so that only the guilty would be punished.

This kind of reporting of Nazi atrocities formed the context within which news of atrocities specifically aimed at Jews would be received in the coming months; Governments would confirm knowledge of Nazi crimes, solemn declarations of retribution would be made, followed by calls for punishment of the guilty and justice after victory had been won.

A second series of reports also helped to set the tone for later reporting of the news of the mass murder of European Jews. Of the three newspapers surveyed, the *Manchester Guardian* was the most consistent in its criticism of British Government policy towards Jewish immigration to Palestine in the first six months of 1942. Its chief concern was that the rules against immigration (specific entry quotas per year under the terms of the 1939 White Paper) seemed to be designed to disguise wider fears the Government may have had about alienating Arab feeling in the region by allowing Jewish refugees from Europe to be admitted. This issue illustrated the *Manchester Guardian's* awareness of the distinctive position of Jews trying to escape from Europe as well as demonstrating evidence of the paper's longstanding view towards the eventual establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

The reporting of the sinking of a steamer, the *Struma*, symbolised the plight of Jews still seeking to escape Nazi Europe during the War. The evidence presented in the *Manchester Guardian* about the circumstances surrounding this tragedy clearly illustrated to its readers the desperate nature of the situation that Jews faced in Nazi occupied Europe and also added fuel to the paper's consistent general criticism of British policy towards Jewish refugees at home and in Palestine. Its excellent coverage of this incident was not in any way matched by either the *Yorkshire Post* or *Glasgow Herald* who only mentioned the story once between them.<sup>19</sup>

The first news of the *Struma* appeared indirectly in the newspaper nine days before the sinking in a report from the *Manchester Guardian's* "Special Correspondent" (i.e. an agency report) dated February 12. Even though the story concerned Palestine, it seemed to reflect similar stories that had started to appear in the press linking Jews with the black market in Britain. Under the headline "Profiteers Rebuked in Palestine" the article referred to Mr. Keith Roach, the District Commissioner of Jerusalem, charging local merchants with "gross profiteering and responsibility for "sky-rocketing" prices through selfishness and failure to

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<sup>19</sup> YP Sat 28 February 1942, p1 (8) REFUGEE SHIP TRAGEDY Zionists' Concern

co-operate with the Government's efforts." Beneath the sub-heading "1,500 Immigrants" the article gave details of the new immigration schedule and briefly referred to the negotiations concerning the Jewish refugees on board the *Struma*.

The Government is permitting the arrival of a small number of additional immigrants. The new immigration schedule permitting the issue of 1,500 certificates for the six months ending March 31 1942, will permit of the immediate issue of the principal 1,250 certificates for Jews. War conditions mean that very few Jews are able to reach Palestine except those in Russia and a few in Egypt, Turkey and Iraq. The problem of Rumanian Jewish refugees marooned on board in Istanbul under most unheard-of conditions is extremely difficult, because if they are brought to Palestine it would only encourage the Nazis and Rumanians to push out more unfortunates and leave them for Palestine to rescue and feed.<sup>20</sup>

It is interesting to note the article's latter remarks. It is not clear if the explanation given for the "problem" of the *Struma* was the opinion of the correspondent or the view of the authorities concerned with resolving the situation. The explanation given was that if these refugees were granted admittance to Palestine "it would only encourage the Nazis to push out more unfortunates and leave them for Palestine to rescue and feed" seemed to suggest that a decision concerning this particular ship had already been made.

The first news of the ship sinking appeared as a short news story on the last page (one of the main news pages containing foreign news and late news) of the *Manchester Guardian* on February 25 1942.

#### JEWISH REFUGEES DROWNED

Seven hundred and fifty Rumanian Jews were on the steamer *Struma*, which sank to the north of the Bosphorous after leaving Istanbul, says an Istanbul despatch to Vichy quoted by Reuter. It is not known whether any were saved. An Istanbul telegram says that there were men, women and children on board. The ship, a small cargo steamer flying the Panamanian flag, sank after an explosion. It is thought that it hit a stray mine. The refugees had been living on the ship off Istanbul for two months and they were being returned to Constanza after they had been refused visas to land in Palestine. — Reuter.<sup>21</sup>

More details had emerged by the next day and an opinion had already been formed on who was indirectly to blame for the circumstances that led up to the sinking.

#### JEWISH REFUGEE TRAGEDY

##### Disastrous Voyage Palestine Entry Barred

It is announced from Istanbul that the small cargo steamer *Struma* has sunk in the Black Sea, off the coast of Turkey, with 750 men, women, and children on board, and it is feared that passengers and crew are lost. Thus ends another of the tragic stories of exile which have become all too common in these days.

The *Struma*'s passengers were refugees from Rumania and Bulgaria, would-be immigrants to Palestine, who sailed for a Turkish port in December under the Panamanian flag. The ship was allowed by the Turkish authorities to remain at anchor in Istanbul while negotiations were taking place regarding immigration facilities for her passengers.

It must be assumed that the *Struma* was ordered to leave Turkish territorial waters only when the Turks felt sure that permission for the refugees to enter Palestine would not be forthcoming. The only alternative was to return to the country of embarkation, which would

<sup>20</sup> MG Sat 14 February 1942, p8 (10) PROFITEERS REBUKED IN PALESTINE

<sup>21</sup> MG Wed 25 February 1942, p8 (8) JEWISH REFUGEES DROWNED

have meant the deliverance of the *Struma*'s human cargo into the hands of the terrorists they thought they had escaped from for ever.

What happened on the return journey is not clear. Whether the *Struma* struck a mine or whether the exiles themselves took desperate measures to forestall the consequences of their arrival at a Rumanian port will probably never be known.<sup>22</sup>

The Palestine administration feared that because the passengers came from Nazi controlled Europe, they might include some enemy agents. It was also thought that the refugees would be an economic burden on the limited resources of Palestine, even though it was understood that the Joint American Distribution Committee not only offered to pay all expenses incurred but to give a subsidy of £6,000 for training those capable of undertaking work. The Colonial Office supported this view (as it was in keeping with the policy to discourage further immigration to Palestine) but reluctantly granted the admission of the children under 16, but they were not willing to grant visas to the mothers of the children or the elderly on board. The *Manchester Guardian's* Diplomatic correspondent was extremely critical of the Palestine authorities' delay over the decision to grant the children admission and its tardiness in informing the Turkish authorities which had resulted in the unnecessary deaths of all the children and their families. It was a case of too little, too late.

What is known however, is that repeated and urgent efforts were made to get the authorities to let them land in Palestine. All representations seem to have been in vain, the authorities having refused until the eleventh hour to grant even the applications for children under 16. When this concession was finally made the information did not reach the Turkish authorities until the ship was due to sail, and it must therefore be presumed that the children went down with the rest. The Palestine authorities remained adamant and unwilling to consider claims even of those having relatives who had settled earlier in the country and are now serving with the British forces in the Middle East.<sup>23</sup>

The course of the negotiations between the British authorities and the Jewish Agency was described in a lengthy statement by the Jewish Agency issued on February 25. It dealt with each of the main British arguments in turn, and referred to the broader policy of the Mandate and the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine;

Two sets of arguments were put forward by the British authorities against granting the request of the Agency to make adult refugees on the *Struma* also eligible for certificates under the current schedule: 1. That these people had been under the Nazis and they might therefore include some enemy agents. 2. Shortage of supplies in Palestine.

As regards 1., the Agency has repeatedly urged that such refugees should be placed in internment camps and not released until or unless their characters were established to the full satisfaction of the Palestine administration. As regards 2., more than two-thirds of the *Struma* refugees were people willing to work and to fight.

To use the argument of "short supplies" against admitting some two hundred elderly people fleeing from torture and death reflects on the intelligence, as well as on the heart, of those who advance it. Moreover as these people would come under the schedule already granted, the problem of supplies did not arise.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *MG* Thur 26 February 1942, p5 (8) JEWISH REFUGEE TRAGEDY Disastrous Voyage Palestine Entry Barred

<sup>23</sup> *MG* Thur 26 February 1942, p5 (8) CONCESSIONS MADE TOO LATE

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

The tragedy of the sinking of the *Struma* was seen as needless. The actual cause of the sinking did not seem to matter as much as the loss of innocent life. The *Manchester Guardian* correspondent pointed to evidence that suggested that the circumstances that led up to the sinking of the *Struma* were a direct result of the policies of both the British Palestine administration and the Colonial Office in London.

The whole tragic episode appears to be an illustration of the authorities' determination to handle questions concerning Palestine in a manner contrary to the interests of the Jews, to whom established British policy has promised the National Home. This is all the more surprising considering that it has been evident ever since this war began that the Jewish community in Palestine is whole-heartedly supporting the Allied cause. A large contingent of Palestine Jews is on active service with our armies in the Middle East. But in some official quarters at any rate, the predominant idea with regard to our policy in the Near and Middle East still seems to be appeasement of the Arabs and the humiliation of the Jewish community in Palestine.<sup>25</sup>

The *Struma* affair had widespread repercussions. Up until this incident "the war effort was regarded as the only legitimate basis for acting to aid refugees"<sup>26</sup> The sinking evoked a good deal of moral uneasiness in Parliament and Whitehall. The Foreign Office had been embarrassed by decisions taken by the Colonial Office, particularly Lord Moyne and Sir Harold McMichael who were responsible for the two departments most directly involved in the affair.

The *Manchester Guardian* did not forget either. As "a longstanding sympathiser with Zionism and champion of Jewish refugees",<sup>27</sup> it repeatedly returned to the tragedy as a reference point for other stories concerning Jews seeking to escape or be rescued from Nazi Europe, and played close attention to official decisions about other shiploads of Jewish refugees who managed to reach the shores of Palestine.

This incident proved to be a turning point in public discussion of Jewish issues at home and abroad. It was certainly the starting point of a wider expression of critical opinion about British policy in Palestine in the wake of the tragedy but also incorporated other issues of concern felt by Jewish representatives in Britain. For instance, at a meeting at the Forum cinema in Leeds on March 23 to welcome the visiting American Zionist leader Rabbi Hillel Silver, other prominent members of the Leeds community including the Jewish Lord Mayor of Leeds, Hyman Morris, listened to speeches made by Prof Brodetsky, R.D. Denman, the M.P. for Central Leeds, and Barnett Janner, Chairman of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. Each stressed the value of the 500,000 Jews in Palestine who were

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<sup>25</sup> MG Thur 26 February 1942, p5 (8) ATTITUDE OF AUTHORITIES.

<sup>26</sup> London, L. *Whitehall and the Jews* (2000) p.187

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p139

committed to the Allied cause and willing to fight to ensure the security of such a strategic region, but the British had taken every opportunity to discourage such offers to help suspiciously believing it to be part of a Zionist effort to push for the creation a Jewish national home. Dr Silver said:

The *Struma* disaster had an appalling effect among Jewish and non-Jewish public opinion in the United States. After the war Europe will be impoverished and ruined. In such a world the life of any minority is a hard one. The fate of the Jewish minority will be desperate. Hundreds of thousands of our people will have to emigrate. Where will those people go?. There is only one place to which they can go which has been prepared by 60 years of Jewish labour, hard work and capital; where there is a community ready to receive them and where Jews have a legal right to be. That is Palestine.<sup>28</sup>

On the occasion of another speech made by Dr. Silver on the same weekend in Harrogate, Sir Montague Burton (presiding) remarked on the perceived motives of Zionists:

In spite of set-backs , difficulty, danger and discouragement we shall not be diverted from our goal; we shall never consider our task complete until Judaism is once again a great moral and spiritual force and a torch-bearer of the eternal truth as in the days of the bible. We are not out to compete for material wealth; we would not go to Palestine for that purpose. ...There seems to be a wrong impression that the Jew has acquired land in Palestine to the detriment of the Arab. This is not so. The entire land owned by the Jewish National Fund is only the size of some of the family estates in this country. It is less than a quarter of a million acres. Even if the acreage in private Jewish ownership is added, the total is still less than some of the larger estates in Britain or some of the larger ranches in Australia.<sup>29</sup>

In a long letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, Lord Davies of Llandinam voiced his disappointment that the sinking of the *Struma* elicited no reaction, protest, or appeal to the Government by the Christian churches. He believed that the issue of Jewish refugees seeking to reach Palestine presented a moral and political dilemma:

In this tragic conflict we must be for or against the Jews; there can be no neutrality. Our attitude towards them becomes the test of our professions and the sincerity of our war aims. It strikes at the root of our moral, and if we abandon the Jews we abandon everything, because Hitler has chosen to make them his special target. Whether we like it or not and however inconvenient it may be, the Jewish people has become the personification of the issues involved in this world struggle between right and wrong, between good and evil. It is for these reasons, moral reasons, that many of us regard the attitude of the Government towards the Jews as one of vital importance. If we desert the Jews it may result in us losing the war, because it is a betrayal of our war aims. Hitler understands this perfectly. That is why, in collaboration with the Mufti, he allows the refugee ships with their human cargoes to sail from Axis ports to Palestine.<sup>30</sup>

Lord Davies believed that the British Government had only two alternatives. They could either refuse admission and turn ships adrift, as in the case of the *Struma*, and invite the contempt of the outside world and the passive hostility and discouragement of Jews everywhere. Alternatively, they could admit all refugees and run the risk of providing propaganda fuel for the Mufti to enflame Arab world. In effect this meant that the

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<sup>28</sup> YP Mon 23 March 1942 p3 (6) JEWISH PROBLEM U.S. Rabbi Visits Leeds

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> MG Thur 9 April 1942, p4, (8) THE GOVERNMENT AND THE JEWS

Government had to make the choice between sacrificing principles or a policy of appeasement:

It is obvious from a moral standpoint there is only one way out of this dilemma – namely to support the Jews. Surely it is the height of folly to repudiate our principles in order to curry favour with neutrals or potential enemies.<sup>31</sup>

At the same time as the treatment of Jews in Palestine was being discussed, all three regional papers began to take notice of insidious attitudes toward Jews at home in Britain. Some contributions pointed to doubts about the anti-Nazi integrity of Jewish refugees in Britain, others discussed local arguments over the suitability of German and Austrian refugees trying to be employed as doctors, but the most consistent anti-Semitic theme concerned Jews involved in the black market.

Though Jewish individuals could only be identified by their (“Jewish”<sup>32</sup>) names in court reports, this was deemed sufficient to generate a feeling that Jews were disproportionately *represented* among press accounts of those convicted for trading offences. In this interesting example (demonstrating that reporting such offences was not confined to a paper’s own *locale*), the *Glasgow Herald* reported that at Leicester Quarter Sessions:

George Norris and Harry Sherman, both of Leicester, had their sentences of three and six months respectively reduced on appeal to fines of £50 on each of five summonses. Norris was allowed six months and Sherman nine months to pay.<sup>33</sup>

More often than not however, the reports concerned efforts by the local Jewish communities to punish any Jewish involvement in the black market and deny accusations that Jews were disproportionately involved.

#### JEWS AND THE BLACK MARKET A Reply to “Calumnies”

That Certain Fifth Column” elements were deliberately trying to assist the Nazis in their efforts to cause internal dissension in Britain by propagating the idea that Jews were associated with black market “racketeering” and evasion of commodity control regulations was asserted by Mr. Maurice Orbach chairman of the Trades Advisory Council of The Board of Deputies of British Jews at a luncheon in Manchester yesterday. The council was determined to track down step by step those who maliciously or ignorantly piled calumny on the Jewish community because of a few offences among the black sheep which every community had to suffer.<sup>34</sup>

There was some evidence for the accusation based on their own press content analysis. The council had investigated reports on food regulation offences which were given publicity in the national press in a recent month. Official figures showed that there were over 2,000

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> see Laski comment below

<sup>33</sup> *GH* Thur 9 April 1942, p6, (8) PRISON SENTENCES QUASHED

<sup>34</sup> *MG* Wed 14 January 1942, p6, (8) JEWS AND THE BLACK MARKET A Reply to “Calumnies”



prosecutions during that month. Forty such cases were given prominence in the press and nineteen were found to be connected with Jews. But as the council also pointed out, according to the Ministry of Food's own assessment, these cases were neither the most serious or the most outrageous:

JEWISH ACTION  
Traders who Break the Law

Efforts are being made by British Jewry to deal with the black markets. The Board of Deputies of British Jews - of whom Prof Selig Brodetsky, of Leeds University, is President have approved the decision of their Trades Advisory Council to give every assistance to the authorities in cases where Jewish traders are suspected of malpractice.

It is not enough, the Jewish community believe, for the Jew to do his proper duty as a citizen, but it is regarded as essential, in view of allegations as to Jewish prominence in the black market to wipe out the stain which has been given to the Jewish name<sup>35</sup>

In an interview with the *Manchester Guardian* on the subject Neville Laski referred to "the menace to the good name of the Anglo Jewish community caused by "gross and vile exaggeration of so-called black market offences by a handful of Jewish 'scum'" and declared that no matter how guiltless the community knew itself to be in the matter, the persistent emphasis on the Jewish individuals connected with these offences made it necessary for drastic action to be taken in self defence against the offenders "who brought disgrace upon all Jewry":

It is true that some Jews have been guilty of such offences, but if you analyse these cases, as some of us do, with the full information at our disposal, you will find that there has been a wholly disproportionate reporting of those involving people with Jewish names. From my own experiences in the courts I can tell you that many offences by non-Jews far outstripping in magnitude any offences by people with Jewish names are either given no publicity or very little.<sup>36</sup>

Comments made by the Chief Rabbi J. H. Hertz in his Passover Letter were re-printed in both the *Yorkshire Post* and *Glasgow Herald*:

At this moment the action of a very small proportion of Jews among 40,000 malefactors prosecuted for contravention of wartime regulations makes men forget the loyalty and devotion of the scores of thousands of Israel's sons fighting on all fronts for King and country. Once again it is seen that a little wet straw can give forth enough smoke to hide the stars. Though others are guilty of the same transgressions, they do not in the eyes of the public, compromise their religious communities, But every Jew holds the good name of his entire people in his hands.<sup>37</sup>

In Glasgow, the Rev. T. B. Stewart Thompson said on May 21 that in recent months there had been a rather unwelcome growing spirit of anti-Semitism. He said it was centred around the black market and the fact that some of those concerned had Jewish names:

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<sup>35</sup> YP Thur 26 February 1942, p3 (6) JEWISH ACTION Traders Who Break the Law

<sup>36</sup> MG Mon 16 March 1942, p2 (8) INTERVIEW: BLACK MARKETS The Jewish Offenders

<sup>37</sup> GH Wed 1 April 1942, p2 (8) JEWS AND WARTIME LAW-BREAKERS "Very Small Proportion"

MG Wed 1 April 1942, p3 (6) Jewish War-Time Offenders

GH Thur 21 May 1942, p2 (8) "Anti-Semitism in Glasgow" MG Thur 21 May 1942, p6 (8) ANTI-SEMITISM IN GLASGOW

Going into the towns in the morning in the train or bus one hears very decent church-going businessmen reading their newspapers and saying "Oh, here's the Jews again". That sort of thing is so very infectious. One remembers that anti-Semitism in Germany with all its horrors began first in the same way. I hope that we as Christian men will do all in our power to see that the Jews shall be treated as other men and judged on the same standard.<sup>38</sup>

York city council voted to "decline to confirm the appointment" of Dr Alice Haas, as a full-time educational psychologist at York Child Guidance Clinic not because she was Jewish, but because she was German. She had lived in England since 1934, and had been selected as the best candidate by the local medical authority. Despite the fact that her application had been endorsed by the Home Office, one council member suggested "that it would be unwise to appoint someone of the same nationality as our enemies". Another distrusted "German psychology". The leader column of February 3 remarked:

In other words, members of York City Council in their detestation of Nazism, are showing something dangerously akin to the racial discrimination that the Nazis show against the Jews. They should ask themselves who our enemies are. Do they include everyone of German origin? We suggest that this is a crude and misleading view. Our enemies are those of whatever race, who support Hitler. Our friends are those, of whatever race, oppose him.<sup>39</sup>

A letter from the Chairman of the Association of Jewish Refugees, A. Schoyer, used the platform of the *Manchester Guardian* to emphasise that Jewish refugees in Britain were indeed anti-Nazi. This example was the first of several public replies to anti-Semitic rumours or innuendo published in the letters pages of the newspaper:

Sir,- A number of statements have recently appeared in the press which may cast doubts upon the loyalty of "refugees from Nazi oppression" towards this country which has granted them hospitality. The Association of Jewish Refugees, which desires to represent and speak for all those Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria for whom Judaism is a determining factor in their outlook on life, regards it as one of its objects to make clear that a Jewish refugee is unconditionally opposed to Nazi Germany. We therefore consider it our duty to place on record that the Jews who, in the words recently used by the Prime Minister, "bore the brunt of the Nazis first onslaught upon the citadels of freedom and human dignity" are second to none in their relentless uncompromising enmity against the Germany with which the people of Great Britain are at war.

The Jewish refugees have only one will – to give with all their heart and to the utmost of their ability unqualified support to Britain in the war against the common enemy. It is only a natural consequence of his being a Jew that the Jewish refugee knows no aim other than those declared by Britain and her allies.<sup>40</sup>

The "London Correspondence" of the *Manchester Guardian* revealed a curious illustration of the fact that the British press was read outside Britain when it was discovered that an article in issue of the *Manchester Guardian* could be found on the front page of the *Völkischer Beobachter* and several other German newspapers. The original article concerned a report on the annual conference of the Zionist Federation which had been addressed by the Secretary for Air, Sir Archibald Sinclair. A cutting of the report was superimposed on the title page and

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<sup>39</sup> YP Tue 16 February 1942, p2 (6) York and a German Doctor

<sup>40</sup> MG Fri 6 February 1942, p4 (8) LETTER: JEWISH REFUGEES

was made the subject of great headlines and numerous articles “of a highly indignant character”. On the basis of remarks made by Sir Archibald, who had said that the fate of the Jews depended now more than ever on the victory of peace-loving peoples, and other comments advocating Jewish resettlement in Palestine for inclusion among the peace aims of the British and Allied Governments, it was stated that Nazi journalists had claimed to have unmasked the Allied plot for the destruction of Germany. “The war is being fought by the Allies in the interests of the Jews, argue the scribes, and there is the *Manchester Guardian* to prove it!”<sup>41</sup>

What news specifically concerning Jews in Nazi occupied Europe *did* manage to reach the regional press? It was very rare for any of the three newspapers to print almost identical stories concerning European Jews on the same day, but on March 3 the *Manchester Guardian* and *Yorkshire Post* both included a press release by the Czechoslovakian Government in exile in London. According to the statement (as published in the *Manchester Guardian*) it had become known that Heydrich, “Protector” of Bohemia and Moravia had ordered all Jews to be deported to the mediaeval fortress of Terezin. 90,000 Jews were to be imprisoned in the same underground cells that had held leading Freemasons and Liberals of all non-German nationalities in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Under a slightly different headline, the *Yorkshire Post* gave the same details in a much more brief manner, omitting the history of the fortress and the exact number of Jews taken, but adding the German name for Terezin – Theresienstadt - in parenthesis. Both articles were included in a general round-up of the latest war news.<sup>42</sup>

In a brief article on February 7 the *Yorkshire Post* reported that according to a message received in London (but it did not mention its source or who had received it) Nazi soldiers were killing “Poles” in frontier villages who have become infected with typhus fever which, it said, was spreading from German-occupied Poland to the Eastern confines of Poland. Under the headline Nazi “Cure” for Typhus” it said: “No precautions other than death are being taken by the Germans”.<sup>43</sup>

Jews were mentioned in some reports of executions, but the style of these reports meant that their veracity (in terms of the identity of the victims) could be called into question. For instance, the expression, “Communists and Jews” had become known as a example of Nazi

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<sup>41</sup> MG Mon 23 February 1942, p4 (6) *Goebbels and the Jews*

<sup>42</sup> MG Tue 3 March 1942, p8 (8) Heydrich sends 90,000 Jews to a Fortress

YP Tue 3 March 1942, p3 (6) Heydrich sends Jews to Gaol

<sup>43</sup> YP Sat 7 February 1942, p1 (6) Nazi “Cure” for Typhus

terminology. It was invariably used in inverted commas suggesting that this was a Nazi classification for all subversives, resisters and partisans - even if they were neither Communists nor Jews. The British press and its readers understood that this was how enemies of the Reich were often labelled for German propaganda purposes. This collective term may have added to suggestions that the high number of civilians allegedly executed by the Nazis behind enemy lines, were not Jews, but more likely individuals grouped under this (to the Nazis, derogatory) term.

A good example of this was published in the *Glasgow Herald* in May 1942, "Nazis Shoot "Communists and Jews" in Paris". The article drew on AP and Reuters reports which in turn named their sources as Swiss radio and announcements made in the Paris press. Five "Communists and Jews" had been shot as hostages for an attack on a member of the German forces and fifty others were condemned to death. The Germans threatened to shoot 15 more hostages and deport 500 "Jews and Communists" to the East if the culprit was not discovered within a week.<sup>44</sup> Also "More hostages shot": Reuter(s) messages from Switzerland say that it was officially announced in Vichy that 1000 Communists, Jews and "sympathisers" were ordered to be deported to Eastern Europe<sup>45</sup>

It is possible therefore, to view this longstanding convention in the language of reporting as a rational contributing factor in the press' news frame and its inability to fully grasp the news from Poland when it came at the end of June. The description "Jews", in the case of the *Bund* report (see below) and other reports which followed it, *was not* used as a Nazi term for civilian enemies, but it must have been seen in the light of many other news stories which did use term "Jews" in the Nazi pejorative sense.

One of the most revealing comments about what was happening behind enemy lines came in a speech by Churchill printed at length in the *Glasgow Herald*. Churchill reviewed the progress of the war on several fronts and drew particular attention to the two fatal errors that he felt Hitler had made. He believed that the first was the invasion of Russia, in which two million German soldiers had already lost their lives, a number greater than total number of dead in the First World War. The second mistake, he thought, was to forget about the Russian winter. The ill-equipped Nazis now faced a renewed Russian army which was more experienced and stronger. In this review Churchill also made an oblique reference to his knowledge of what was going on behind enemy lines:

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<sup>44</sup> *GH* Sat 9 May 1942, p4 (8) NAZIS SHOOT "COMMUNISTS AND JEWS IN PARIS

<sup>45</sup> *GH* Tue 21 April 1942, p3 (6) MORE HOSTAGES SHOT

That is what is in front of Hitler. What is he leaving behind him? He leaves behind him a Europe starving and in chains, a Europe in which his execution squads are busy in a dozen countries every day, a Europe which has learned to hate the Nazi name as no name as ever been hated in the history of mankind, a Europe burning for revolt whenever opportunity comes.<sup>46</sup>

According to Public Record Office (PRO) files released in May 1997, Churchill had been aware of the activities of Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* (or “special battalions” whose tasks included targeting and killing Communists, partisans and Jews *en masse*) since the summer of 1941. The Bletchley Park Code and Cypher Centre (BPCCC) had been successful in decoding German Order Police radio messages on the Russian front from July to September 1941.<sup>47</sup>

Many details of mass executions had been available to Churchill from the summer of 1941. (In total, 3,785 files of messages and correspondence were passed to the Prime Minister from 1940-45 by the CCC.<sup>48</sup>) For example, in a September 12 report, Bletchley Park CCC gave statistics for Southern Sector of Russian Front with 12,361 Jews shot in week of Aug 23-31 1941 and it considered that execution of Jews by SS in Russia “provided evidence for a policy of savage intimidation if not of ultimate extermination”.<sup>49</sup> Although no more information was given in the speech, i.e. who was been killed and why, this speech, on May 10, was the first time Churchill had publicly mentioned the existence of execution squads.

By September 1941, Order Police radio messages containing top secret information were ordered to cease, because the S.S. considered details of mass executions too sensitive to be sent by radio and directed that in future they should be sent to Berlin by courier only.<sup>50</sup> But unknown to the Germans, *Enigma*-encoded messages were still being deciphered, so any more specific details in Churchill’s speech may have told the Nazis that messages sent under this were also being intercepted. But the inclusion of this reference indicates that the Government may have thought that by May 11 1942, knowledge of Nazi executions was sufficiently widely available (not least in local public announcements reported by the Swedish and Swiss press) that a brief reference in a speech by Churchill – which was sure to be monitored closely by the Nazis – would not compromise other secret intercepts.

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<sup>46</sup> GH Mon 11 May 1942, p3 (6) Bombing of Germany Still Heavier PREMIER WARNS HITLER ON USE OF GAS Preparations by Britain on a Formidable Scale. My italics.

<sup>47</sup> Breitman, R. *Official Secrets: What the Allies Planned. What the British and Americans Knew.* (1998) pp. 58-59

<sup>48</sup> PRO Files released 19 May 1997. HW 1 and HW 16 Government Code and Cypher School: Signals Intelligence Passed to the Prime Minister, Messages and Correspondence

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, PRO HW 16/6 MSGP 28. Also MSGP 29 reveals at least 3,353 Jews liquidated in first 13 days of Sept 1941.

<sup>50</sup> Breitman *op. cit.*, p. 67. Daluge order, 13 September 1941.

Neither the *Manchester Guardian* nor the *Yorkshire Post* included Churchill's remark in their reports of the speech and continued to publish little about what was happening in occupied Russia. The *Manchester Guardian* did know that unemployed men in the Baltic states had been given the option by the Nazis to join special police battalions, "organised for service on the front and immediate rear or go to Germany as slave labourers. Platoon and company commanders of the "police" are Estonians, Latvians, or Lithuanians but the higher commanders are Germans." This information was part of a general war news report from an un-named news agency, and the report did not shed any light on what activities these police battalions were ordered to carry out.<sup>51</sup>

Corroboration of Churchill's reference to the activities of execution squads came on May 23 in the *Yorkshire Post*. According to a list compiled by "travellers now passing through Lisbon" and released via British United Press on May 22, *nine* countries (Churchill had mentioned "a dozen") were named where it was said German firing squads had been active since 1939. Hitler had a total of 175,000,000 hostages in occupied Europe. The report said that half a million had already died:

for opposing the idea of a German master-race that lives on the rest of the Continent's work. Many of the half million that have died – women, children and old men – did not even oppose the New Order. They were shot because their countrymen opposed it. That is how the system works and it has turned Europe into a continent of hostages. ...The scale of this part of the New Order can be seen from the amounts appropriated from the Jews and from the occupied states. Up to June last year property and plunder from these two sources totalled £9,000,000,000 – enough for seven years of German rearmament.<sup>52</sup>

In Russia and the Baltic states, 400,000 had been killed; in Poland 87,500; in Yugoslavia, 5,000; in Czechoslovakia, 3,000; in France and Belgium 1,500 and Norway and Greece had each lost 150 by execution. The numbers given were stated to be conservative estimates.

Can it be said that such incremental evidence over the first five months of the year meant that the public was any closer to understanding what was happening to Jews under Nazi rule? It would not seem so, especially if the leadership of the main Jewish organisations was still uncertain about the details of Nazi persecution. In May 1942, just one month before the *Bund* report reached London, the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann made clear he knew that Jews were being executed or being "physically destroyed" by some other method, but his public statements did not suggest that he knew the scale, (and ultimate aim) of Nazi actions against all Jews in their territories. Addressing the opening session of the extraordinary Zionist conference in New York, Weizmann stated:

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<sup>51</sup> *MG* Tue 17 March 1942, p5 (8) FIGHTING MORE INTENSE GERMANY'S SEARCH FOR MEN

<sup>52</sup> *YP* Sat 23 May 1942, p5 (8) HITLER'S NEW ORDER 175,000,000 HOSTAGES IN EUROPE

“At least 25 per cent of all European Jews will be “physically destroyed” during the war. Those Jews who survived might be unable to regain their economic places, even in the event of an Allied victory. Such Jews as have not been geographically displaced will have been economically dislodged. They will emerge as a great unadjusted mass of millions whose past ties with their surroundings have been deliberately and systematically destroyed.” Weizmann urged the settlement of large numbers of uprooted Jews in Palestine, which he said was able to support at least double its present population of 1,500,000.<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, reports concerning two other concurrent meetings of Jewish groups in America and Britain did not suggest that they were aware that the mass murder of Jews was already underway. They continued to address the issue of the welfare of Jews living under the Nazis only in general terms – or not at all.

In Chicago, the War Emergency Convention of the American Division of the World Jewish Congress (500 delegates representing the 5,500,000 Jew of America) agreed to mobilise the resources of America Jewry for the general war effort and to deal with the construction of Jewish life after the war. It adopted a resolution “assuming American Jewish guardianship over all European Jewry numbering 8,000,000 now under the heel of Hitler.”<sup>54</sup> In contrast, the plight of European Jews was not publicly mentioned at all at the annual meeting of Manchester and Salford Jews which concentrated instead on the domestic agenda. The mood of the meeting was dominated by the death of the president, Nathan Laski and dwelt on the good work of the Trades Advisory Council in improving relations between Jews and non-Jews in all spheres of trade and industry, and the work of the Evacuation Committee’s efforts to foster friendly relations between Jewish evacuees and their non-Jewish neighbours.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *MG* Mon 11 May 1942 p5 (6) JEWS FATE IN EUROPE Dr Weizmann’s Estimate. Reuters.

<sup>54</sup> *MG* Mon 18 May 1942 p6 (6) JEWISH CONGRESS. Reuters.

<sup>55</sup> *MG* Tue 12 May 1942 p2 (6) MANCHESTER JEWS

### **Chapter III**

***The Manchester Guardian The Yorkshire Post The Glasgow Herald***

**June-September 1942**



## June to September 1942

Until it was reported in June that the wearing of yellow badges bearing the Star of David had become compulsory for all Jews in France over six years of age, there had been no substantially new evidence of Nazi anti-Semitic persecution during 1942. But from June to December 1942 more and more information of Nazi actions against Jews became available – partly for the reason that the news was related to details of Nazi actions taken against Jews in Western rather than Eastern Europe, and because Governments in-exile in London readily released details of reports it received to the British press. However, although the volume of information received steadily increased, much of the news fell into a number of recognisable categories that would not have been unfamiliar to readers of the three regional newspapers. The way this information was presented did not suggest any fundamental difference in the Nazi treatment of Jews under their control. For instance, as the following examples demonstrate, the range of sources of information may have increased, but news concerning European Jewry was still being presented according to a well established framework of interpretation and understanding.

The first, and oldest part of this framework involved anti-Semitic legislation: on June 4 the *Manchester Guardian's* Diplomatic Correspondent reported:

A drastic measure of anti-Semitism is being introduced by the German military authorities in occupied France this month. By a decree coming into force next week all Jews over the age of six years are to be compelled to wear a badge with the Star of David upon it. Jews must apply for the badge at the police headquarters or the district in which they live, where they will be given three badges. They are yellow with a black edging and must be worn prominently on the left side of the chest. Severe penalties of imprisonment and fines or both, which may be followed by Internment in a camp for Jews, will be inflicted upon those failing to wear the badge. To add a little extra vindictiveness to the humiliation the Jews are to be compelled to surrender clothing coupons in exchange for the badges.<sup>1</sup>

As one of the foremost opponents of Nazism in the 1930s, the paper was extremely familiar with this subject, and this new measure was viewed as the latest in a long history of humiliating acts that the Nazi had inflicted on Jews since the Nuremberg laws of 1935. It did not indicate any new dimension to what was already known and it was merely noted as an extension of anti-Semitic persecution to Western German territories.

This item, derived from information received by the Free French in London, represented one of the more orthodox suppliers of information – official sources. But the paper was just as receptive to other, less authoritative or apparently direct sources of news about the treatment

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<sup>1</sup> MG Thur June 4 1942 p6 (6) BADGES FOR JEWS Nazi Measure in France

of Jews. For example, a letter from Buckinghamshire informed readers of the *Manchester Guardian* about a Nazi process of which they were already quite well aware. It gave details of an organised system of ghettos, under which Jews from Nazi territories were suffering extreme privation and hardship. The purpose of the policy, it was believed, was slave labour for the men, and starvation for the women and children who were confined to overcrowded ghettos. Under these conditions the Nazis were steadily killing the Jews:

/ Sir – Reports have been received via America that in the newly established ghettos of Poland, where the Jews of all the occupied countries have been concentrated, the total weekly food ration consists of one pound of bread and half a pound of potatoes per head. The mortality figures for Warsaw show that nineteen out of twenty deaths refer to Jews, most of them women and children, since the men are taken to labour camps, where, though they receive more blows, they are better fed.

Can such conditions be ignored by responsible men and women? Can they be ignored by those world organisations whose work carries them across hostile frontiers to bring succour and relief to the needy? Cannot arrangements be made for the dispatch of parcels of food and medical supplies? The International Red Cross is concerned with the care of prisoners of war in the accepted sense of the word. Could not its sphere of action be extended to include these most unfortunate victims of war, more helpless and more pitiful than any others because wholly without protection?

I am writing this letter on behalf of Jewish women of Czecho-Slovakia who have found refuge in Britain. Our brothers and sisters and children are in the ghettos of Poland. We would undertake to raise the money required and we are convinced that we can gain the support of democratic women's organisations throughout the free world. But we must have the assistance of the authorities if our help is not to arrive too late.

Nelly Engel, President of the Marie Schmolka Group of the W.I.Z.O. Higher Denham, Bucks.<sup>2</sup>

Again, to many, the details contained in this letter may have been unusual, but it could not be said that the news was surprising or unexpected. Regular reports concerning the creation of the ghettos in Poland and the conditions therein had appeared on numerous occasions in the *Manchester Guardian* in 1939 and 1940.

A third characteristic in the frame of reference was mass deportation, almost always “to an unknown destination”:

News has been received by the Polish Government in London that the Gestapo organised a mass raid in the streets of Warsaw, An S.S. detachment drew a cordon round the Napoleon Square and all adjoining streets. Over 1.000 persons were arrested and deported to an unknown destination.

This mass raid followed another carried out in Warsaw only a few weeks ago, when 8.000 people were rounded up in the Zelazna Brama quarter and near Targowek and sent to forced labour in Germany.

In Poznan on June 8, 15 persons, including 12 women, were hanged publicly and were left for 48 hours to intimidate the Polish population. This wave of German terror is the consequence of the Germans hearing that after the assassination of Heydrich, similar acts of conspiracy against German high officials might be perpetrated in Poland.<sup>3</sup>

It was thought that of the Jews who had been sent away, most were being used as slave labour in Germany and Poland. Few explanations could be offered about what happened to

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<sup>2</sup> MG Mon June 15 1942 p4 (6) THE NEW POLISH GHETTOS

<sup>3</sup> YP Thurs 18 June 1942 p1 (6) Gestapo Arrests in Warsaw 1000 Deported to Unknown Destination Reuter

the old, young and sick who had also been deported or “re-settled” by the Nazis. It simply was not known.

The fourth and final key theme and characteristic feature of this type of reporting was a growing familiarity with news stories regarding the Nazi execution of Jews, especially in acts of reprisal. Evidence of this kind of story could be found on the front page of the *Yorkshire Post* on June 10 concerning a broadcast on BBC radio, in which General Sikorski, the Polish Premier, told of schoolchildren in Upper Silesia in Poland being herded together to watch Nazi hangmen at work. He said that new concentration camps had been set up and “filled with peasants, while from among every class hostages were being seized *en masse* and shot in hundreds. Tens of thousands of Jews had been massacred.”<sup>4</sup> Sikorski’s other comments in the broadcast, the first public reaction to information received in the *Bund* report (see below), were not picked up on by the papers:

The Jewish population in Poland is doomed to annihilation in accordance with maxim “Slaughter all the Jews regardless of how the war will end”. This year veritable massacres of tens of thousands of Jews have been carried out in Lublin, Wilno, Lwow, Stanislawow, Rzeszow and Miechow.<sup>5</sup>

A *Reuters* report on the same day said that the London-French newspaper *France* had received a dispatch from Stockholm which said that the S.S. had shot 258 Jews for “alleged complicity in a plot to blow up an anti-Soviet exhibition in Berlin”. The shootings were carried out in the barracks in Gross Litcherfeld and as part of the “punishment”. It was stated that the families of the victims were to be deported. Berlin Jews were told that if any further plots were discovered, 15,000 Jews would be shot simultaneously in Berlin, Vienna, and Prague.

This report had all the hallmarks of a reprisal story – where Jews were brutally victimised by the Nazis as the supposed cause of spurious events. A secondary characteristic of execution reports, especially in relation to Jews, was to offer at least one explanation for a particular Nazi action: in this case, it was thought that because these executions took place the day after the attack on Heydrich in Prague on May 27<sup>6</sup>, the Stockholm correspondent noticed that “neutral observers see a relationship between the two events”. Only rarely did these reports suggest that Jews were being killed simply because they were Jews.

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<sup>4</sup> YP Wed 10 June 1942, p3 (6) HANGING BY NAZIS Children Forced to Watch

<sup>5</sup> Laqueur, W. (1980) *op.cit.*,

<sup>6</sup> Gilbert, M. (1981) *op.cit.*, p. 50

It is also possible to point to an additional feature which could indicate that Jews were killed for a specific reason: the number of Jews killed in this example, 258, was high insofar as it was several hundred rather than small groups of 10 or 20 which was a more typical figure in news featuring executions of non-Jews. But such a figure could be easily imagined and it was certainly a long way from a high number of Jewish dead which would constitute a “pogrom” in the sense of mass murder – for no reason, other than to kill Jews. Reprisals may have been viewed as atrocious, but they could be rationally understood, or at least could be evaluated according to perceived Nazi motives.

But to most British readers, the apparently irrational killing of Jews by the thousand was incomprehensible. Indeed, there was plenty of evidence that other British newspapers knew that *thousands* rather than hundreds of Jews were being murdered – but the regional newspapers never explicitly drew on these sources. For instance, no reference was made to the *News Chronicle* report on April 6 which said that “the Germans killed 86,000 Jews at Minsk and tens of thousands in Lithuania and Latvia and all the Jews in Estonia.”<sup>7</sup> Moreover, (as has been stated previously) the most reliable British source of information about what was happening to Jews behind enemy lines, the *Jewish Chronicle* was never cited as a published source in the *Manchester Guardian*, *Yorkshire Post* or *Glasgow Herald*. In fact, it was extremely rare for any other British newspaper to be used as a source for a report in the regional newspapers.

Even though the numbers of dead continued to be presented in moderate terms, further reports of atrocities reported in June suggested a new phenomenon, different from reprisals and “punishment” killings which had been taking place in occupied Russia. The *Glasgow Herald* reported the Russian authorities’ belief that these killings were part of a much larger Nazi plan of mass murder:

#### GERMAN ATROCITIES

##### Third Molotov Note

“Hitler’s Government and its accomplices will not escape general responsibility and deserved punishment for all their unparalleled crimes perpetrated against the people of the U.S.S.R. and against all freedom-loving peoples.”

With these words Mr. Molotov, People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs, concludes his Third Note on German Atrocities, addressed to all Governments with which the U.S.S.R. has diplomatic relations. In this Note is collected a tremendous volume of evidence against the invader, the Soviet Government emphasises that the atrocities in this “gigantic programme of crime” do not constitute accidental excuses on the part of individual undisciplined army units, individual German officers or soldiers. Documents captured recently from the headquarters of routed German Army units prove that the crimes perpetrated by the Nazis Army “are carried

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<sup>7</sup> Scott, J. (1994) *op.cit.*, p 54;

out in accordance with plans of the German Government, carefully elaborated and worked out in detail, and in accordance with orders of the German Command".<sup>8</sup>

Again, like the previous "Notes" there was no reference to Jewish victims in Russia. The earliest news in the regional press that huge numbers of Jews had been killed by the Nazis as part of this process was printed in a very short article concerning a House of Commons motion in the "Latest News In Brief" column of the *Yorkshire Post* on Saturday June 27:

Jewish Army.—Commander Locker-Lampson (Con., Handsworth) has given notice of the following motion: "That in the opinion of this House the announcement of the murder of 1,000,000 Jews in occupied Germany, a number equivalent to the total losses of the British Empire in the last war, justifies the formation of a Jewish Army at the earliest opportunity."<sup>9</sup>

The "1,000,000 Jews" referred to by Commander Locker-Lampson, was based on the number who had already been executed plus the number who had died from starvation in ghettos in Poland, the Baltic States and Russia rather than "in occupied Germany". This figure was based on a report compiled by Polish-Jewish Socialist *Bund* which was written during the first half of May 1942, collected by a Swedish courier, Sven Norrman, in Warsaw on 21 May which reached the Polish Government in-exile London (only) ten days later.<sup>10</sup> Shmuel Zygielbojm, the *Bund* representative on the Polish National Council, concerned that the report should not appear first in a Jewish paper, secured an exclusive with the *Daily Telegraph*<sup>11</sup> which published the report on June 25. The headlines and first paragraph said:

GERMANS MURDER 700,000 JEWS IN POLAND  
TRAVELLING GAS CHAMBERS

700,000 Jews have been slaughtered by the Germans in the greatest massacre in the world's history. In addition, a system of starvation is being carried out in which the numbers of deaths on the admission of the Germans themselves, bids fair to be almost as large.<sup>12</sup>

It was an extremely comprehensive account. With the exception of anti-Semitic legislation, it displayed all the characteristic elements that previous articles concerning Jews normally featured - but indicated Nazi killing on scale that was unprecedented. The report described the extreme conditions inside the Warsaw ghetto and provided precise figures for the thousands who had starved to death based on numbers of "funerals". It also said that tens of thousands of men, women and children were deported in sealed good wagons to "unknown destinations" in Poland, and rather than being "re-settled", most were then killed in neighbouring woods.

<sup>8</sup> GH Fri 12 June 1942 p6 (6) GERMAN ATROCITIES Third Molotov Note

<sup>9</sup> YP Sat 27 June 1942 p5 (8) Latest News In Brief: Jewish Army

<sup>10</sup> Laqueur (1979) *op.cit.*, pp104-5

<sup>11</sup> Scott (1994) *op.cit.*, p 54; Cesarani, D *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo Jewry 1841-1991* (1994) p. 177. Sharf, A. (1964) *op.cit.*, p. 95

<sup>12</sup> *Daily Telegraph* Thurs June 25 p5 GERMANS MURDER 700,000 JEWS IN POLAND Travelling Gas Chambers

The revelations about the extent of systematic killing of Jews were truly remarkable. According to the *Bund*, hundreds of thousands of Jews had been shot in occupied Russia, Lithuania and Rumania in 1941 and it listed the towns where thousands had been killed and buried in specially constructed mass graves. Whereas all previous reports had pointed to shootings and hangings as typical Nazi killing methods, the *Bund* report unequivocally stated that Jews and gypsies had been murdered by gas in mobile gas chambers which could kill 1,000 people a day.

#### SLAUGHTER BY GAS

In November the slaughter of Jews by gas in the Polish territories incorporated into the Reich also began. A special van fitted as a gas chamber was used into which were crowded 90 victims at a time. The bodies were buried in special graves in the Lubardski forest.

On an average 1,000 Jews were gassed daily. In Chelmno from November last to March 5,000 from four towns, together with 35,000 from the Lodz ghetto, and a number of gypsies were murdered in this way.<sup>13</sup>

This was not the first mention of the use of (poison) gas in the British press. (The *Jewish Chronicle* had reported on gas experiments in Mauthausen on January 9, and on April 10 said that of 1,200 Jews deported to the camp, some had been killed by 'poison gas' in an experiment.) The *Daily Herald* had prominently displayed the news of the gassing of 740 Dutch Jews on April 2,<sup>14</sup> but this was certainly the first reference to gas *chambers*.

In keeping with the regional press' convention of not using other British newspapers as sources, no comment was made by the three regional papers on Thursday's *Daily Telegraph* revelations on the Friday or Saturday of that week. The details of the *Bund* report did not appear in the *Manchester Guardian* or *Yorkshire Post* until after a press conference at a meeting of the British section of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) in London on Monday, June 29, when the details of the report were announced by Sidney Silverman, acting Chairman of the WJC and one of the most prominent Jewish MPs.

Although the *Glasgow Herald* carried no report on the *Bund* report in either June or July, the two other papers gave the news sufficient (but not special) attention. The *Manchester Guardian* printed the news of the press conference on page 2 of the Tuesday June 30 edition:

#### JEWISH WAR VICTIMS More Than a Million Dead

Jewish casualties in enemy controlled countries far exceed those of any other race in any other war, said S.S. Silverman, M.P. at a World Jewish Congress meeting in London yesterday.

It is estimated that since the beginning of the war over one million Jews have been killed or have died as a result of ill-treatment in Germany and in the countries occupied by Germany. Of the million some 700,000 lost their lives in Poland and Lithuania and 125,000 in Rumania.

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>14</sup> Wasserstein, B. (1979) *op.cit.*, p. 150; Cesarani, D (1994) p. 176, Scott, J. (1994) p. 45

A statement issued by the congress says: "Seven millions, nearly one half of the whole Jewish people, are being deprived of civic and political rights, robbed of all their possessions, and hounded into slave compounds, concentration camps, and walled ghettos. Reports of mass massacres are now sufficiently established to make it clear that Eastern Europe particularly has been turned into a vast slaughter-house of Jews."

A report from central Poland stated that Jews were being shot "at the rate of 1,000 daily". The recent mass slaughter of 60,000 Jewish men, women and children in Vilna was also confirmed.

In Poland behind eight foot high walls topped with broken glass and electrified barbed wire at least a million and a half Jews were imprisoned to live "under the most appalling conditions of poverty, disease and hunger". In the Warsaw ghetto the mortality rate between April and June 1941, was 10,232. Four thousand children from twelve to fifteen were recently removed from the ghetto to undergo forced labour on farms. In Rumania it is estimated that 125,000 Jews have been murdered. All males have been pressed into slavery.<sup>15</sup>

Considering the seriousness of such a devastating foreign news report, the page placement of this article was unusual. It was placed between a story of a gas explosion in a water pit in Whitehaven and the Manchester University examination results. Page 2 was not one of the main news pages but the page usually devoted to financial and business news, sports results and short local news items. Page 1 always contained classified adverts, page 4 contained the editorial/leader columns and the main news pages were 5, 6 of a total of 8 pages. This placement, and the absence of any editorial comment on other pages suggested that the paper may have been uncertain about the veracity of the report's contents and the editor had decided to place it on a less prominent page which did not normally carry foreign news.

In addition, there was no mention of the Nazi use of gas in the *Manchester Guardian* account: it was not clear if the information that "Jews were being shot 'at the rate of 1,000 daily'" had been changed or adapted from the *Daily Telegraph's* original report which clearly stated, "on an average 1,000 Jews were gassed daily" by the WJC or by the *Manchester Guardian* editorial staff. A comparison with the *Yorkshire Post's* coverage of the same event would suggest that it was more likely to have been the former, because the use of poison gas was not mentioned in the following report either. Instead it was stated that, "mass executions by firing squads "at the rate of 1,000 daily" are taking place":

FATE OF JEWS  
OVER ONE MILLION KILLED

Over one million Jews have been killed by the Axis powers since this war began. Of these about 700,000 were murdered in Poland and Lithuania and 200,000 in White Russia and Ukraine.

Giving me these details of the persecution of the Jews by Germany and her partners, Mr. S. S. Silverman M.P., acting chairman of the British Section of the World Jewish congress said that this was the most tragic story of the war. It was an attack not upon the freedom of a country or of a people but one designed to exterminate them physically from the face of the earth. Goebbels had stated this in a recent editorial in "Das Reich" as the Nazi war aim.

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<sup>15</sup> MG Tue June 30 1942 p2 (6) JEWISH WAR VICTIMS More Than a Million Dead

Dr. I. Schwarzbart, member of the Polish National Council, told me that the Germans are transferring Jews from many Polish towns and villages to "the mass grave", the ghetto of Warsaw. Since the war its population had increased from 244,483 to 600,000 and its death rate was 16 times greater than before the war. Mass slaughters had been organised in about 70 towns and villages. For example, of the 65,000 population of Wilno, only 15,000, all artisans have been allowed to live.

#### Mass Executions

Reliable reports reaching London within the last few days state that mass executions by firing squads "at the rate of 1,000 daily" are taking place. There are specific reports of such large-scale murders in Central Poland, to which Jews have been deported from Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Holland. These reports also say that Jewish children in Poland are being seized for forced labour. Four thousand children between 12 and 15 were recently removed from the Warsaw ghetto by the Gestapo.

Rumanian Jews who have been killed are estimated at 125,000. The town of Kishinev which had a Jewish population of 100,000 has, now been "cleared" of them. Mass executions, deportations to slave labour, ghettos or concentration camps have been the fate of hundreds of thousands of Jews in Czechoslovakia, Slovakia Croatia, Occupied France, Holland, Belgium, Occupied Russia and of course Germany itself. Even Vichy has issued 70 anti-Jewish decrees.<sup>16</sup>

Again the placement of this article between classified "Situations", a short article on the council meeting of the Yorkshire Mineworkers Association and a lengthy obituary of Grimsby "trawler owner and philanthropist" Sir Alec Black, did not suggest that the editorial team regarded this story as worthy of greater prominence. In a similar placement to the *Manchester Guardian* it was printed on a page (4) which did not normally carry national or foreign news. Pages 1, 2 and 3 carried the main news of a regular total of 6 pages.

Scott (1994) stated that Laqueur's (1980) comments on the American press were "equally true of the British press". Laqueur, remarking on the *New York Times*' publication of the details of the *Bund* report "somewhere in the middle of the paper" suggested that newspaper editors did not know what to make of the *Bund* report:

If it was true that a million people had been killed this clearly should have been front page news; it did not after all, happen every day. If it was not true, the story should not have been published at all. Since they were not certain they opted for a compromise: to publish it but not in a conspicuous place. Thus it was implied that the paper had reservations about the report: quite likely the stories contained some truth, but probably it was exaggerated.<sup>17</sup>

Laqueur implies that the killing of a million people should have been given more prominent press coverage in terms of page placement, "it did not after all, happen every day", but *it* was not a single entity, *it* did not refer to an *event*. Rather, the text clearly pointed to a *process* which started in 1939 – "over one million Jews have been killed by the Axis powers *since this war began*". There is no doubt that the deliberate murder of a million Jews in 34 months of war should have been major news, but not in the way Laqueur implied. The figure marked the estimated number of Jews killed over nearly 3 years. Indeed, when viewed with the

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<sup>16</sup> YP Sat 27 June 1942 p4 (6) FATE OF JEWS Over One Million Killed

<sup>17</sup> Scott, (1994), *op. cit.*, p. 63; Laqueur, (1980) *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75



knowledge that the Nazis held “175,000,000 hostages” in occupied Europe, it can, perhaps, be understood why it was not given greater prominence.<sup>18</sup>

Laqueur also states that the story should not have been published at all if it was not true – this implies that newspapers (in war-time or peace) only printed what they know for certain to be true. If Laqueur (1980) had offered any evidence to prove that this was the day-to-day practice for most British and American newspapers during the period, then the argument might be sustained. But because that would be impossible to prove, his second line of reasoning was that editors published suspect, exaggerated or less “newsworthy” stories on “inconspicuous” pages. Lipstadt’s (1986) work on the American press took up this theory and her evidence in *Beyond Belief* suggest that this was certainly the case for some U.S. newspapers; that some stories about the “final solution” were buried in the middle of editions (of 30 pages or more).<sup>19</sup> As has been indicated above, there was some odd page placement (of the *Bund* report in particular) but when the coverage of the emerging news of the “final solution” is viewed as whole, there is little evidence to suggest - especially in editions of 6 to 8 pages - that the same could be said of the British regional press.

Why was the use of poison gas omitted? Clearly neither paper or the WJC had a problem with the scale of killing, each declaring that Jews were being executed or shot “at the rate of 1,000 daily” - it was the method of murder that had been altered rather than the its extent. The use of gas may not have been believed, and shooting - because it was already part of a well established descriptive framework of Nazi atrocity reporting – was more likely to be considered as a more credible Nazi practice. As both newspapers reported that the victims were shot, and neither mentioned gas, it is reasonable to suggest that the decision was taken by the British section of the WJC, the source of the news in this case.

Evidence to support this assertion can be found in the content of the regional newspapers by examining later remarks made by the Polish Government in-exile, the original source of the *Daily Telegraph* story. Both Jewish members of the Polish National Council, Zygielbojm and Schwartzbart continued to publicly state that the Nazis were using gas to kill Jews:

POLISH TERROR  
‘Murderers Will be tried’

Mr. S. Zygielbojm, of the Polish National Council, said: “I wore the yellow badge all Jews are forced to wear. I lived in the Warsaw ghetto when the Germans expelled tens of thousands of Jews beaten and robbed of all their possessions. I saw hundreds of acts of cruelty and murders that made ones blood curdle, and I have been more than once the victim of those cruelties.”

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<sup>18</sup> YP Sat 23 May 1942, p5 (8) HITLER’S NEW ORDER 175,000,000 HOSTAGES IN EUROPE

<sup>19</sup> Lipstadt, D. (1986) *op. cit.*,

In some towns not a single Jew had been left alive. The slaughter of Jews and Poles was being carried out by hand grenades, machine-guns, and gas. Assuming that the Germans were also using starvation the figure of 700,000 dead mentioned in one report had to be accepted as probable. In Warsaw the death-rate was now 6,000 weekly.

Dr. I. Schwartzbart, a member of the National Council of Poland, said that Jews and Christians were being poisoned in mobile gas chambers.<sup>20</sup>

This report, on page 5, one of the main news pages of the *Manchester Guardian*, was given equal prominence with the main war and national news. This was undoubtedly because the same article was led by one of the earliest responses of the British Government to the news from Poland, made by the Minister of Information, Brendan Bracken:

The fullest retribution would be taken from the Germans for the reign of terror in Poland. They will be tried as murderers, which they are. These gangsters will be punished with the utmost rigidity of the law," he said. "The Governments of the United States, Great Britain, and of all the United Nations are in complete agreement on this question, that every care should be taken to secure the names of the persons responsible for these crimes, that they should be brought speedily to justice at the conclusion of the war, and that their punishment shall fit their crimes. The punishments will be in many cases the most severe known to any law."<sup>21</sup>

From this point in the war, the official response of the allied governments to atrocity reports must be added to the press framework which formed the discourse on the persecution and murder of Jews. As more accurate news about what was happening to European Jewry began to filter through to the Allies and the British press, more official comments were drawn into the discussion of the news emerging from Europe.

Since 1939 there had not been many occasions when the British government had publicly denounced the Nazi persecution of Jews in Germany or its occupied territories, especially since there was little that it could do about discriminatory legal measures or ghettoisation imposed upon Jews in Germany, Poland or any other parts of Nazi controlled Europe. Knowledge of mass executions however, could be viewed differently, as war crimes against civilians and thus worthy of official comment or censure. Bracken's reaction defined official policy concerning *all* Nazi atrocities, not only those concerned with Jews. In this case, no additional comment was made about the fact that the victims were Jews. However, this is not to say that the Government was unwilling to specifically refer to Jews. For example:

NAZI ATROCITIES  
Mr. Churchill's Message

A message from Mr. Churchill was read to-night at a meeting of 20,000 Jews in Madison Square Garden to demonstrate against the slaughter of the Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe "You are meeting this evening to condemn Hitler's atrocities in Europe and to offer all assistance to the United Nations in the war on the Axis. The message said: "You will recall that on October 25 last year President Roosevelt and I expressed the horror felt by all civilised

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<sup>20</sup> *MG* Fri 10 July 1942 p5 (8) POLISH TERROR "Murderers Will Be Tried"

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*,

peoples at Nazi butcheries and terrorism Our resolve is to place retribution for those crimes among the major purposes of this war. The Jews were Hitler's first victims and ever since they have been in the forefront of resistance to Nazi aggression. Throughout the world the Jewish communities have made their contribution to the cause of the United Nations and behalf of his Majesty's government I welcome your determination to help as gladly as I acknowledge the eager support which the Jews in Palestine above all, are already giving."<sup>22</sup>

This news, printed only in the *Manchester Guardian*, came from *Reuters*. It seems likely that the article was re-printed as it was received and the introductory description, including the phrase, "the slaughter of the Jews" was the work of the original author. In fact, Churchill's message did not in fact refer to mass murder of Jews in any direct terms, but instead echoed the sentiments of Bracken's broad vow of retribution. The statement that "the Jews were Hitler's first victims" was an official acknowledgement that Jews were particular targets of the Nazis, but it also implied longstanding persecution rather than more recent mass murder. As the message was written for an American audience, it chose an exhortive tone and decided to concentrate on the Jewish contribution to the war effort rather than comment on the catastrophic situation in occupied Europe.

From July until September there was a substantial shift in the coverage concerning Jews in Western Europe, more specifically, the persecution and deportation of Jews in France. At the beginning of July it was learned that the yellow star or badge had been distributed to the 80,000 Jews in the Parisian region (in 1940 there had been 110,000 Jews the occupied zone; the difference could be accounted for by those who escaped from occupied France, those in concentration camps, those shot as hostages and the few "Juifs d'honneur" who did not have to wear the badge).<sup>23</sup> Ten days later the a very short item in the "Latest news in brief" on page 3 of the *Yorkshire Post* said that according to German radio, twenty thousand refugee Jews were being rounded up "for deportation to Eastern Europe" They were described as "Jews without nationality or alien Jews" <sup>24</sup> The *Glasgow Herald*, which also carried this story, but in greater depth, said that all male Jews up to 60 and all Jewish women up to 45 were liable for deportation. Most were refugees from Germany, Austria, Poland, and Czecho-Slovakia.

Again, in another "In Brief" item, The *Manchester Guardian* learned that Jews in other parts of Nazi controlled Europe territory were also subject to "special laws". Most of these short articles were unattributed, but displayed the economic style of news agency material and like

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<sup>22</sup> *MG* Wed 22 July 1942 p5 (8) NAZI ATROCITIES Mr. Churchill's Message. Reuters

<sup>23</sup> *MG* Tue 7 July 1942 p6 (6) THE YELLOW STAR

<sup>24</sup> *GH* Fri 17 July 1942 p5 (6) ROUND-UP OF JEWS IN FRANCE 20,000 Refugees to be Deported  
*YP* Fri 17 July 1942 p3 (6) Latest News in Brief: Jewish Round-Up In France

many agency articles took the German radio as its source. It accurately estimated the population of one of the oldest communities of Sephardic Jews in Europe in Salonica, in northern Greece, and said:

The introduction of special laws for Salonikan Jews are expected to follow the order from the German commandant of the town that all male Jews between 21 and 53 must register, the German radio stated There are estimated to be 70,000 Jews in Salonika out of a total population of 300,000.<sup>25</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian's* first leader column on the Nazi treatment of Jews in France on July 23 summarised the most recent anti-Semitic measures:

#### The Jews in France

The persecution of Jews in occupied France has been growing steadily worse, and it is announced that the inmates of the three largest "Jews and Communist camp" in Paris, some 7,000 in all, have been whipped off to Poland. The Paris correspondent of the Madrid paper "ABC" says that more than twenty thousand Jews of all ages have lately been arrested in Paris and that it is expected that they will be deported.

In unoccupied France too the Jews are likely to suffer harsher treatment, for a notorious anti-Semite, Darquier de Pellepoex, was appointed Commissioner for Jewish Affairs in May, and last month he drafted a law making it compulsory for Jews to wear the Star of David. There is a good deal of evidence that these measures are unpopular in France. A number of non-Jews have been sent to prison for wearing the Star of David as a protest. The "Journal des Débats" described the destruction of synagogues in Paris as "an offence against our most revered traditions" Men who have stood against measures such as those squeezing Jews out of business and finance will often resent persecution that is obviously persecution for its own sake. Anti-Semitism in this way defeats its own ends.<sup>26</sup>

On page 5 of the *Yorkshire Post* the next day, again in the "Latest News in Brief", according to the Berlin correspondent of the Stockholm paper *Tidningen* the deportation of Jews had already begun and that 80,000 were being "taken away to the east".<sup>27</sup>

But on the home front, no mention of the situation unfolding in Europe was made. The Board of Deputies of British Jews concentrated on tackling the problem of Jewish involvement in the black market. Despite lengthy contributions from Brodetsky and the Jewish Lord Mayor of Leeds Hyman Morris, no public reference was made to Jews in Europe:

#### THE BLACK MARKET Jewish Trade Council

The question of Jews and the black market was discussed at the annual meeting of the Jewish Trades Advisory Council in Leeds yesterday.

Mr. John Goodenday, Chairman of the textile section of the council, said: "Unfortunately the fact remains that among the mass of normally fair, minded British citizens Jew and the black market has become a synonymous term. It is bringing increasing and unmerited odium on the Jewish people."

He believed the black market was passing, but the mountain of prejudice created by it would not disappear. In the future they might be judged by the misdemeanours of the few. To counteract this they must urge every Jewish trader to join his trade federation and so establish valuable contact with his non-Jewish competitors.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *MG* Sat 11 July 1942 p8 (8) In Brief: Salonikan Jews; <http://www.ushmm.org/greece/eng/biblio.htm#salonika>

<sup>26</sup> *MG* Thur 23 July 1942 p4 (6) Leader: The Jews in France

<sup>27</sup> *YP* Sat 18 July 1942 p5 (6) Latest News in Brief: Deporting Paris Jews

<sup>28</sup> *MG* Thur 23 July 1942 p6 (6) THE BLACK MARKET Jewish Trade Council,

A *Yorkshire Post* reader, a C. Aronsfeld from London, also noticed the absence of any discussion of any comment or reference to the situation facing Jews in Europe amongst this gathering of some of the most prominent members of the British Jewish community. He did not believe that the problem of Jewish involvement in the black market in Britain was as serious as the speakers at Leeds maintained, and displaying an awareness of recent attacks on Jews, pointed to the Nazi system of reprisal shootings as the most evil consequence of such an attitude. In a long letter to the paper, he said:

I am not aware that "among the mass of normally fair-minded British citizens 'Jew' and 'the black market' have become synonymous terms," as Mr. Goodenday said at the Trades advisory meeting. If that were true, we should have a poor opinion of the British people, and their fairness. What would he have us think of that? No Sir, if we were to agree with Mr. Goodenday. Then we should perforce believe that British people have sunk down on a level with Nazidom, indeed with what is worst in that squalid exudation of human beastliness. For is not this the most hateful thing in Nazism - the indiscriminate condemnation of all for the shortcomings of a few, and thereupon murder of the guiltless to blot out guilt? You have seen the system in action "collective responsibility" it is called. Hundreds of hostages shot by the Germans in France, Holland, Norway have suffered it. Hundreds are suffering it, and hundreds thousands will suffer wherever this force of Nazidom is at large. Such is "the logical application of this barbarous creed of collective responsibility" as "the Times" said about the Nazi shootings. I will not believe that 'the mass of normally fair-minded British citizens' will like to proclaim a 'collective responsibility' or, in other words that they would like to turn Nazis. C. Aronsfeld. Golders Green London NW11, July 22.

Others however, chose to speak out. On July 25, the Archbishop of York, Dr. Garbett said:

The treatment of Poland by the Germans is indescribably horrible. By wholesale massacre, torture, and starvation the Nazis are deliberately exterminating this brave nation. The cruelties and atrocities reported are so ghastly that they would be incredible if it were not for overwhelming evidence as to their truth. This brutal and cold-blooded policy of murdering a nation will go down as one of the great crimes of history. These atrocities are committed not by a small handful of sadists but by thousands of Germans, and as far as we know, no protest has been raised either by those who are ordered to commit them or by the people of Germany, who must have some knowledge of what is done in their name. When the war is won, not only will it be necessary to bring to justice the criminals but to convert a whole generation from the spirit which delights, or at any rate acquiesces, in cruelty and violence<sup>29</sup>

Of the three newspapers concerned there is no doubt that during the summer of 1942 the *Glasgow Herald* did not devote as much attention to the plight of European Jewry as the *Manchester Guardian* or the *Yorkshire Post*, but what it lacked in terms of overall coverage it made up for in the detail of its more infrequent contributions. For example, on July 24, it was the first of the three (indeed the first among the British press as a whole) to mention the Nazi camp at Oswiecim, or in German, Auschwitz.

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GH Thur 23 July 1942 p2 (6) "Synonymous Term" Jews and the Black Market,

YP Thur 23 July 1942 p2 (6) JEWS AND TRADE Ways to Combat Anti-Semitism.

<sup>29</sup> YP Sat 25 July 1942 p5 (6) TREATMENT OF POLAND ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Since 1939 the Polish Ministry of Information had maintained an office in Edinburgh “to impress on the public mind some idea of the plight of Poland”, and in July 1942 decided to extend its organisation in Scotland to Glasgow. A group from the Polish Government in-exile based in London who were visiting Glasgow, gave an interview to the *Glasgow Herald* in which they discussed the reports they had received from inside Poland. These accounts indicated that the campaign of murder and atrocity which has been practiced by Nazis in Poland since the beginning of the war had been growing in intensity in recent months. Professor Stronski, the Polish Minister of information, gave some account of the “cruelties” which were being inflicted on his fellow-countrymen:

NAZI ATROCITIES IN POLAND  
Attempt to Destroy a Nation

... Within the past few weeks, he said, he had seen a report from a neutral source submitted to the British Government. In that report there occurred the following sentence:

“It would be a very big mistake to believe there is any likeness in the methods applied by the Germans in Western European countries and the persecutions in Poland. In Poland the aim is to annihilate the Polish nation, to exterminate all its leading personalities, to destroy any kind of Polish national life, and to allow the Poles to exist only as industrial and agricultural workers.”

About 200,000 Polish subjects, women and children as well as men, and 200,000 Jews had been the victims of mass executions carried out by the Germans in recent months. It was estimated that since the outbreak of war approximately 1,500,000 Poles had lost their lives through persecution in many forms, while to that figure there had to be added 700,000 Jews.

Terrible cruelties were being inflicted in prisons and concentration camps with the object of obtaining information about the secret organisations of which many were known to exist in the country.

It was stated that one of the favourite forms of torture in the camp near Oswiecim was to seize the victim by the arms and legs and swing him against a post until his back was broken. A “scientific” method of killing off prisoners was the use of injections which worked slowly upon the internal organs, especially the heart, and it was universally believed that prisoners were used for large-scale experiments in testing out new drugs which the Germans were preparing for unknown ends.<sup>30</sup>

One of the most striking features of this assessment of the situation in Poland was the distinction drawn between Nazi practices in Western Europe and Poland. By using the most extreme language (“annihilate”, “exterminate”) to describe Nazi persecution of all Polish social and ethnic groups, including Jews, Stronski sought to emphasise the difference in intensity between German rule in Poland and its western territories, stressing that murder was a basic feature of the regime in Poland.

Unlike the Molotov Notes, Jewish victims were not ignored in this review – in fact they were distinguished from “Polish” victims. Interestingly, the number of Jews executed was exactly

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<sup>30</sup> GH Fri 24 July 1942 p2 (6) NAZI ATROCITIES IN POLAND Attempt to Destroy a Nation. My emphasis.

equivalent to the number of Poles killed. But the number of Poles who were estimated to have died since the war began outnumbered the number of Jews by two to one. Not surprisingly, given it came from the same source, Stronski's estimate of 700,000 Jews who had "lost their lives" in the same period matched the Polish Government in-exile/Bund figure, but this extremely high figure was overshadowed by the assertion that over 1,500,000 Poles had died since the German invasion in 1939. Jewish suffering was acknowledged, but given the source, Polish suffering was given particular emphasis.

The latter section of the interview referred to torture at Oswiecim. The Polish Government in-exile had been aware of the existence of the camp at Oswiecim since May 1941, when it sent a Note to the Allies describing how "tens of thousands of Polish citizens had been incarcerated in concentration camps, and went on to refer to four such camps, Oswiecim, Oranienburg, Mauthausen and Dachau",<sup>31</sup> *The Times* later mentioned the "Ocwiecim" (sic) camp on August 8, "as the place that non-Jewish Poles were being sent as a result of a wave of sabotage"<sup>32</sup>, but this reference on July 24 remains one of the earliest in the British press.<sup>33</sup>

The section concerning Oswiecim is notable for a second reason: the significance of source-media relations for newspaper content. This article was apparently based on an account given by Professor Stronski "in conversation with a party of newspaper representatives in Glasgow". However, the description given in the last paragraph concerning the use of lethal injections as a "scientific" method of killing prisoners in Oswiecim, was drawn *verbatim* from the Polish Ministry of Information Press Bulletin, the *Polish Fortnightly Review* of July 1.<sup>34</sup>

Given the previous absence of this publication as a regular, attributed source for the paper, it was likely that the use of this exact quotation indicated that the "conversation" was supplemented with additional (written) material – provided by the Polish Ministry of Information - a rare illustration of source-media relations where it was possible to see *direct* evidence of the supply of news content by an official state source.

This example demonstrates some aspects of news supply theory to which Gans (1980) has drawn specific attention: the suitability of available sources and the ability to supply

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<sup>31</sup> Gilbert, M.(1981) *op. cit.*, p. 54

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45

information.<sup>35</sup> They can be seen as interrelated because the overriding aim of news supply is usually efficiency. Gans argues that newspapers routinely attempt to gain the most suitable news from the fewest number of sources as easily and quickly as possible, with the least amount of checking. They are particularly likely to accept information provided by representatives of elite bodies or organisations, especially when little is known about the story. The fact that the Oswiecim story came from the Polish Ministry of Information meant that its trustworthiness was not questioned. In this case, the *Glasgow Herald* was happy to accept a pre-prepared illustration of Nazi brutality from an authoritative source.

In addition, Gans has argued that a news item tends to be given greater prominence when the source is outside the norm or routine of news provision - in this case, the personal contact with the paper (or the “conversation”) was an exception to the more frequent dependency on (less illustrative) news agency material for foreign news items.

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<sup>35</sup> Gans, H.J. (1980) *Deciding What's News* in Tumber, H. *News: A Reader* (1999) pp.245-248



A change in the “intensity” of the campaign against the Jews in France was the most frequent way to characterise the Nazi legal measures, arrests and deportation which took place in the months of August and September 1942.

The first details of a nation-wide “round-up” reached the French Government in-exile on August 5. All 13,000 foreign Jews and in the occupied zone and 10,000 from unoccupied France were to be arrested and deported “to an unknown destination”. According to the *Manchester Guardian*’s account the Vichy Government was trying to keep all knowledge of these measures from the people but it had not succeeded. It was alleged that some mothers had killed their own children and committed suicide rather than be deported.<sup>36</sup> The paper speculated that the reasons for the “new persecution wave” included: “to levy foreign labour”; “to discover and destroy the centres of resistance throughout France” and “an excuse to send more Gestapo to work with the police in the occupied territory”.<sup>37</sup> By the end of August it was known that the persecution had also been extended to Holland and Belgium, and Jews from every part of France were desperately trying to reach the Swiss border in an effort to gain sanctuary and “escape their fate”. Even at this stage, additional press speculation about the precise nature of that fate did not yet include mass murder. The new wave of persecution was rationalised by a number of possible explanations:

It is now clear that Jews deported from France and the occupied countries are destined for forced labour in Eastern Europe, and apparently they are to be sent further east than Poland. In Germany too, another anti-Jewish drive is in progress. The remaining Jewish families, including children and women over 70 years old are being rounded up and driven from their homes. The main object of this campaign appears to be to obtain possession of houses and flats in Jewish occupation. In one town in South Germany, for example, the Jews have been herded together in the stable of a disused brewery. Many hundreds of elderly women from Germany have recently been sent to Theresienstadt, the huge ghetto in Bohemia.<sup>38</sup>

A brief BUP report in the *Yorkshire Post* added to the short list of known destinations for Jewish deportees. It quoted a *Paris Soir* statement which said that 8,000 Jews had been sent from France to Silesia (Oswiecim/Auschwitz was in Upper Silesia) but it was not known what lay in store for them there.<sup>39</sup> The *Glasgow Herald* described the process as a “pogrom as terrible as any that ever occurred in Germany”. Quoting reports compiled by *Reuters* from the *Berner Tagwacht*, the new wave of terror was described as “beyond anything humanly imaginable”. French people were hiding whole families of Jews in cellars. Women and girls had been herded into the Velodrome d’Hiver which was so overcrowded and unsanitary that

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<sup>36</sup> *MG* Thur 6 August 1942 p6 (6) JEWS ROUNDED-UP The Hunt in France, *YP* Thur 6 August 1942 p3 (6) LAVAL’S JEW HUNT

<sup>37</sup> *MG* Sat 8 August 1942 p4 (8) JEWS IN FRANCE UP New Persecution Wave

<sup>38</sup> *MG* Sat 29 August 1942 p6 (10) VICTIMISED JEWS Widespread Campaign

<sup>39</sup> *YP* Thur 20 August 1942 p2 (6) FRENCH HOSTAGES DEPORTED

disease had broken out. The men who had already been sent away were believed to be working in slave labour battalions in the east.<sup>40</sup>

Did the British public believe these accounts? There is certainly evidence that some were sufficiently suspicious of the recent upsurge in atrocity reports to write to their local paper. A letter from “Alex” to the *Glasgow Herald* said:

Sir, - I have read in the press from time to time accounts of atrocities which are apparently committed in many war areas and find extremely difficult to accept the authenticity of these horrors. Disregarding any possible propaganda value, and believing as I do in that human tendencies dominate for good, is it humanly possible, even under such pressure for an individual to torture another? The opinion of your readers, psychological or otherwise, would help to relieve my troubled mind.<sup>41</sup>

The public’s opinion of foreign news that could possibly be interpreted as “atrocity stories” was also discussed in a leader column in the *Yorkshire Post*. It drew on comments made in the *New York Times* about the use of British propaganda in the United States, and made a clear distinction between the use of atrocity stories in the First World War and the present war:

Much emphasis was laid upon German atrocities, the evidence for which was sometimes questioned. In this war the Berlin radio boast of atrocities and no further evidence is required. There are still in this country a few people who have missed that important point, and who think that because some atrocity reports in the Great War proved to be exaggerated we should now give Germany the benefit of plenty of doubt. But the circumstances are very different. Hitler has carried his doctrine of frightfulness to a new extreme. When we are presented with some new report of Nazi brutality, the doubter should remember that Hitler deliberately chose to train and steep his people in the most loathsome savagery. There is no need for us to impress upon Americans what horrible things are being done and will be done in Europe. They know as well as we know the atrocities that are going on.<sup>42</sup>

The same paper also shed some light on how atrocities were being presented in other mass media. According to a long leader column on August 10, complaints had been made by members of the public about the inclusion of German atrocities in cinema newsreels, which it was felt “were out of place in an entertainment to which citizens go to as a rest from the war”. The discussion referred to footage of Nazi atrocities in captured Russian villages, but did not say what they depicted. The leader took a pragmatic attitude:

Do the scenes of violence and death injure the delicate sensibilities of the young? We hardly think so. These immature spectators probably draw no sharp distinction between the rough and tumble of a Western and the tragedies of the battlefield. If they do differentiate, to their own hurt, parents and guardians should keep them out of harm’s way. If it is agreed that the newsreel should concern itself with the deeper realities of war, should the subjects be chosen always to comfort and inspire or sometimes to shock and horrify? We

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<sup>40</sup> GH Wed 5 1942 p6 (6) NAZIS LAUNCH POGROM AGAINST FRENCH JEWS

<sup>41</sup> GH Mon 31 August 1942 p2 (6) Letter: Atrocities

<sup>42</sup> YP Thur 13 August 1942 p2 (6) HITLER’S FAITH IN ATROCITIES

believe that useful work has been done in bringing home to people by the cinema's most graphic means, what the New Order has meant in the territories captured by the Nazis.<sup>43</sup>

The "intensity" of the "anti-Jewish drive" reached a new level on Monday August 31, when the *Manchester Guardian* printed an un-credited news agency report which said that the Nazis were deporting 4,000 Jewish children. According to information received on the French Frontier, these children were taken away from their mothers and put in three concentration camps Pithiviers, Baune-la-Rolande and Drancy. All their identification documents were taken away and they were "packed into railway trains" and sent to Germany. "Nothing could be ascertained about either the aim of the mass kidnapping or the destination of the transports".<sup>44</sup> In the main leader column in the same edition, the *Manchester Guardian* put forward two motives for these actions, neither of which suggested that they believed that Jews were being taken away to be swiftly and deliberately murdered. Despite the contributions made by the *Bund* report and other sources, slave labour, execution and death by attrition were still thought to be the methods of "elimination". Nevertheless, the paper was one of the first to point out that the Nazis had a ultimate long term policy regarding the Jews under its control:

The Nazis are desperately anxious to increase their labour power. Some of the anti-Semitic measures they are taking are designed to increase their labour strength. The victims are destined for Poland and the Russian-occupied territory. More Jewish hands and muscles are needed to help Germany win the war. There is however, a second object. Hitler makes war with an eye on post-war Europe. The "New Order" has no place for Jews. Therefore anything that can be done to eliminate them must be done. In countries where Hitler is all powerful, as in Poland, he adopts the simple method of massacre. The latest measure in France belong to his more complex methods. Families are broken up and children scattered around Europe with no hope of ever rejoining their parents. The Jew sent to Poland is to work as a slave in order that his Nazi masters may be able to crush his race.<sup>45</sup>

The momentum of arrests and deportations continued throughout September and featured in the pages of the three newspapers on an almost daily basis. *Reuters*, the French Government in-exile in London and the press in Switzerland maintained a steady flow of information to London. Almost all the details of the process were known.

All over France, tens of thousands of French and foreign Jews (including many "White Russian Jews"), were arrested and taken to holding centres, (the Velodrome d'Hiver for the men, and the women to the Parc de Princes) where their valuables were taken away. Jewish patients were taken from hospitals regardless of their condition and children over 3 years old were separated from their parents and taken away in lorries. It was known that synagogues in Paris had been plundered and that to date, 32,000 businesses had been "Aryanised". The

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<sup>43</sup> YP Mon 10 August 1942 p2 (6) News-Reel Policy

<sup>44</sup> MG Mon 31 August 1942 p6 (6) JEWISH CHILDREN IN CAMPS New Outrage In France

<sup>45</sup> MG Mon 31 August 1942 p4 (6) MORE PERSECUTIONS

*Manchester Guardian* said that the Vichy Government was trying as far as possible to keep the knowledge of what was doing from the general public: "It may be ashamed of what it is doing. It more probably fears the reaction of the French public which would be outraged if it knew all."<sup>46</sup>

There is some evidence that the deportation of children proved to be more problematic than it was first thought. Instead of children being separated from their parents, from September 10, the Vichy Government decided to deport them with their parents.<sup>47</sup>

It was apparent that the two main allied powers were aware of the situation in France and publicly registered their outrage at the actions taken against Jews. A *Reuters* report from Washington said that the U.S. State Department had protested vigorously to the Vichy. A letter from Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles described the deportations "as a new shock to the public opinion of the civilised world."<sup>48</sup> In his third annual war review, Churchill said:

The cruelties, massacre of hostages, and the brutal persecutions in which the Germans have indulged in every land into which their arms have broken have recently received an addition in the most bestial, the most squalid, and the most senseless of their offences – the mass deportations of the Jews from France, with the pitiful horrors attended upon the calculated and final scattering of families. This tragedy fills one with astonishment as well as indignation, and illustrates as nothing else can do the utter degradation of the Nazi nature and the degradation of those who lend themselves to these unnatural and perverted passions. When the hour of liberation strikes - and strike it will – it will also be the hour of retribution.<sup>49</sup>

At the end of the first week of September, according to the Dutch Nazi paper *Storm* (quoted in a dispatch from Zurich), a decision had been taken to deport all the Jews in Holland – estimated to number over 180,000. It estimated that if the deportations to the East continued at the rate they had been undertaken in France there would be no Jews left in Holland by next summer. On September 11, the *Manchester Guardian* was one of the first to explicitly refer to this process as "Mass Murder". This assessment was also one of the earliest to recognise that the recent evidence from mainland Europe suggested a much wider Nazi plan, "a campaign of calculated terrorism which the Germans are waging everywhere, from Germany itself, to the Balkans, and throughout the territories of Eastern Europe now under their occupation":

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<sup>46</sup> *MG* Wed 2 September 1942 p6 (8) VICHY AND DEPORTATION OF JEWS Free French Call For Action

*MG* Thur 3 September 1942 p6 (6) HOW THE JEWS IN FRANCE WERE ROUNDED-UP Terror Still Growing

<sup>47</sup> *YP* Sat 12 September 1942 p5 (8) Vichy To Deport Jewish Children

<sup>48</sup> *MG* Sat 5 September 1942 p6 (8) U.S. TO VICHY Treatment of Jewish Refugees

*MG* Mon 7 September 1942 p6 (6) JEWS IN PARIS Stories of The Round-Up

<sup>49</sup> *YP* Wed 9 September 1942 p5 (6) CHURCHILL'S WAR REVIEW

*MG* Wed 9 September 1942 p6 (6) CHURCHILL'S SPEECH NAZI DEGRADATION

They appear, in fact, to be setting out to secure the fulfilment of Hitler's pledge that after the war there will no longer be any Jews in Europe. Reports from the Eastern territories tell of mass murders in which the victims can be counted not in thousands, but in hundreds of thousands.<sup>50</sup>

This was the first news article to point to what it considered to be a quantitative anomaly in the way in which Nazi actions had been previously understood – particularly in relation to the number of Jews who had been killed. It said that during the last three months 50,000 Jews had been executed in Lwow alone. As far as it was known, the majority of inhabitants of the Warsaw ghetto were “on the condemned list and there are rumours that the Germans intend to close it down eventually – presumably when they have done away with the entire population”. It suspected that those who had been shot after slave labour in Poland were to be replaced by others currently being deported from Western countries.

What was the British-Jewish reaction to the news from France? In his New Year message the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Hertz was one of the few to refer to the use of “lethal chamber” as a method of murder (but not the use of poison gas). His speech took a wide, moral view, and linked the murderous treatment meted out to Jews in Nazi Europe with the disproportionate blame he felt was attached to Jews found guilty of black market offences at home in Britain:

There is one tragedy beyond compare, too deep for tears and appalling in its horror. The Nazis have murdered by machine-gun and lethal chamber, by torture and hunger – one million Jewish men, women and children. This blood-lust represents a collapse of all human decency. Echoes of that moral collapse affect Jews in lands quite beyond Hitler's reach. Thus, while little was said of the hundred times greater number of non-Jews guilty of war-time offences, the whole of Anglo-Jewry was, in some quarters condemned for the misdeeds of a few malefactors.<sup>51</sup>

Dr Altmann, the Communal Rabbi of Manchester and Salford, in his message to the community, said that the indignation of the whole world had been aroused by Nazi acts of inhuman brutality. His speech referred to the millions of Jewish men, women and children “herded into the ghettos of Poland, the hundreds of thousands in concentration camps, the train-loads daily being deported from the western countries to an unknown fate in the East, and to the horrors perpetrated by the French Government.”<sup>52</sup>

The Board of Deputies of British Jews adopted a resolution which placed on record its “deep sense of grief and horror at the unspeakable atrocities committed by the Germans, their allies, and their vassals upon the Jews of Europe”. In particular the Board expressed its “profound sorrow at the vicious cruelty of the Vichy government which has followed it

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<sup>50</sup> *MG* Tue 8 September 1942 p6 (6) VICHY'S SEIZURE OF JEWS People's Resentment

*MG* Fri 11 September 1942 p5 (8) MASS MURDER OF JEWS Nazi Methods

<sup>51</sup> *MG* Sat 12 September 1942 p4 (10) THE JEWISH NEW YEAR

<sup>52</sup> *MG* Mon 14 September 1942 p2 (6) JEWISH NEW YEAR Dr Altmann's Message

German masters in steps that have shocked all civilised men and women".<sup>53</sup> There was no suggestion of rescue at this stage. No plans of action were put forward by the Jewish community – or anyone else - to think of ways to try to alleviate Jewish suffering, or stop the Nazis carrying out their intentions. The regional press did report the efforts of French cardinals and Archbishops to try to stop the deportations, particularly of women and children. The Bishop of Montauban argued in an episcopal letter: "Painful and horrible scenes for which France is not responsible, may be seen in our country. Men and women are treated like herds of cattle and despatched to an unknown destination under threat of even greater peril. The present anti-Jewish measures are taken in contempt of human dignity."<sup>54</sup>

Slowly and incrementally, further details of the deportation process, including some of the destinations, began to reach the pages of the press. For example, A very long feature article (over 500 words) on the Bohemian prison fortress, Terezin or Theresienstadt, as it was called in German, was published in the *Manchester Guardian* on September 17. Like so many news agency articles it was attributed to "our Special Correspondent", and was based on "an authoritative account, probably the first to reach the outside world". It was officially described as "the Reich's central home for ancient Jews" although the report said that it was also used as a transit camp for Jews on their way to places further east.

Since Terezin came into full use – that is to say since the beginning of the intensified Jew hunt throughout Europe – the place has become overcrowded with deportees. On August 15, 40,000 elderly Jews between the ages of 65 and 85 were herded together into the newly constructed barracks of the old prison. In addition Terezin houses 7,000 younger people, all Jews, who are doing forced labour. All had been stripped of their personal possessions before they arrived. Each person was allowed to pack 100lbs of luggage, which it was promised, would be sent to the owner's destination. No luggage of this description has found its way to Terezin.

For the younger folk Terezin is merely a temporary abode, the last stage, perhaps, before they are consigned to ghettos in Poland, Lithuania or Russia. Sixty thousand Czechoslovak Jews alone have passed through on their way to the Lublin, where they have been billeted in have destroyed and deserted villages. Of another group of young Jews who went from Terezin to so-called Labour camps in Upper Silesia, nothing has been heard of since their departure.

Terezin provides one concrete example of the fate of the Jews under the Germans. It is both a clearing ground and dumping ground and a clearing house in a vast system of organised traffic in human beings. The fit may survive as long as they are useful: the aged and unfit may perish at will.<sup>55</sup>

This report, including a small map of where Terezin was in Czechoslovakia, contained a lot of new detail, particularly references to the amount of luggage permitted and the transport of thousands of Jews to various locations in the east. Again Silesia, or more specifically, Upper Silesia, was mentioned as a destination for large numbers of Jews. This was the third reference to the region since General Sikorski's broadcast in June and the *Paris Soir* article

<sup>53</sup> *MG* Wed 16 September 1942 p5 (8) VICIOUS CRUELTY OF VICHY Board of Deputies Protest

<sup>54</sup> *MG* Tue 15 September 1942 p4 (6) MASS ARRESTS OF JEWS Protest to Petain

<sup>55</sup> *MG* Thur 17 September 1942 p4 (6) THE PRISON FORTRESS OF THEREZIN Reich's "Clearing House" For Jews

in August. Exactly what went on in the “so-called labour camps” in the area was still unknown, but the suspicion was that Jews were being steadily worked to death (“nothing has been heard of since their departure”), rather than been killed outright upon arrival.<sup>56</sup>

On September 22 the Inter-Allied Information Committee (IAIC) released records of the total number of people executed by the Nazis: 207,373. Although this figure was said to cover only (authenticated) executions after trial or courts martial, it also included those who were estimated to have died in concentration camps (no reference was made to Jews). In fact, qualifications were added to the details given for each country, as though the authors were aware that the numbers were gross underestimates. Nevertheless, by listing the statistics for Belgium (130 executed), Czechoslovakia (1,765), France (1,750), Greece (3,000), Holland (200), Norway (206), Poland (200,000) and Yugoslavia (5,000), the report attempted to offer an overview of conditions under the Nazis.

On the same day, in the *Yorkshire Post*, IAIC confirmed the Nazi plan to deport all Jews in Holland which had been reported in the *Manchester Guardian* at the beginning of the month - “the Germans have decided to *wipe out* the remaining Jews in Holland” - from “an informant who has just reached neutral territory, after a visit there”.<sup>57</sup> Again, it was believed by the IAIC and others, that deportation meant death, and it was understood as a gradual process, (by starvation and neglect, a method in which the Nazis were more passive than active) rather than immediate murder. For example:

The classical German method is being adopted – deportation to German-occupied territories somewhere in Eastern Europe. This is, in reality, a sentence of death. They are just left to starve with thousands of their fellow sufferers.<sup>58</sup>

“Almost certain death” was the Jewish Agency for Palestine’s assessment of Jews inside Nazi Europe who were unable to escape. The Agency had had some success in helping Jewish women and children to leave Rumania (1,600), the Baltic states (1,000), Hungary (400), as well as some Polish refugees who had managed to reach Palestine via Sweden, Russia and several Balkan countries. It was reported that the Agency was continuing to negotiate with the Turkish authorities and hoped that 270 Jewish children from Rumania and Hungary would be able to pass through Turkey *en route* to Palestine. It was estimated that

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<sup>56</sup> *MG* Thur 17 September 1942 p4 (6) THE PRISON FORTRESS OF THEREZIN Reich’s “Clearing House” For Jews

<sup>57</sup> *MG* Tue 22 September 1942 p5 (6) MASS EXECUTIONS Nazi Record in Europe

*YP* Tue 22 September 1942 p1 (6) Mass Deportation (my italics)

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*,

25,000 Jewish immigrants had entered Palestine since 1939, of whom 10,000 had obtained permission to stay from the British authorities.<sup>59</sup>

While evidence of the British public's reaction to the situation in France was not exactly forthcoming (there were almost no letters from readers protesting at the deportations), anti-Semitism at home was still a sufficiently controversial subject – at a popular level, and also among the middle class – to warrant robust exchanges of views in the pages of the regional press. For example, the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Hyman Morris, felt it necessary to call for “a fair deal for Jews” in the city. He believed that British anti-Semitism was based on ignorance:

We have unfortunately in this city experienced a great deal of bad feeling towards the Jewish community. I am a Jew, but I could not have wished for more consideration or friendship than has been shown to me in my year of office. Any ill feeling towards the Jewish community in this city is due, in my opinion, to the fact that you do not know them well enough. You have a certain kind of idea of their ways and methods, and it is because you have not come into contact with them that you have these ideas. Give them the same opportunities of a fair deal as you give to others and you will find the Jewish community just as willing and anxious to serve our King, our country, and our city as any other people.

Another indication was a public row in the *Manchester Guardian* between Lord Wedgwood and Lord Cranbourne over the apparent extent of anti-Semitism in Britain. Wedgwood had argued in the Lords on September 11 that “the poison of anti-Semitism was spreading in Britain, particularly in the upper and governing classes”. Lord Cranbourne appealed to him:

to stop these senseless and baseless attacks. They do not do him or the Jews any good and only cause distress. I beg him in this battle for the rights and liberties of Jews and everyone else to save henceforth his broadsides for the enemy. There was no country in the world where there was less discrimination against the Jews than in Britain. There was entire equality between them and other members of the community.<sup>60</sup>

Wedgwood replied to Cranbourne in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* at the end of September:

Last week I raised in the House of Lords the question of the attitudes of people in England towards the refugees from Hitler who live among us. I said they were received with sympathy by common people but with hostility by many of the governing class, that I had been told by former appeasers, “People are saying there is something to be said for Hitler's treatment of Jews”.

Lord Cranbourne replied that anti-Semitism was disgusting, that it was not to be found among respectable people, that I had exaggerated.: he lectured me for “these repeated senseless and baseless attacks”. “They do not do him any good” he said, “they do not do the Jews any good.”

Has it done the refugee Jews no good? When I told of the robbery and the brutality on the *Dunera's* passage to Australia, at least it never happened again. Nor is it likely to happen again that we send refugees back to Hitler since I protested about the *Struma*. Publicity is the only thing that does any good.

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<sup>59</sup> MG Tue 29 September 1942 p6 (6) REFUGEES FOR PALESTINE Jewish Agency's Work

<sup>60</sup> MG Fri 11 September 1942 p5 (8) LORD WEDGEWOOD AND ANTI-SEMITISM Rebuke In The Lords



Why! Even Lord Cranbourne's mild denunciation of anti-Semitism has at-once produced results. My abuse mail has changed. Most of the letters are now signed, and explain why the writers dislike Jews, but it is scandalous to say that they are anti-Semitic! Apparently if Lord Cranbourne disapproves, anti-Semitism becomes bad form. It is not only in England that people behave as (they believe) those they respect will. The trouble is that they do so often respect the wrong people.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *MG* Fri 11 September 1942 p5 (8) LORD WEDGEWOOD AND ANTI-SEMITISM Rebuke in the Lords  
*MG* Fri 25 September 1942 p4 (8) LETTER: ANTI-SEMITISM FROM LORD WEDGEWOOD  
*YP* Fri 11 September 1942 p6 (6) Fair Deal Needed For Jews By Leeds Mayor

## **Chapter IV**

***The Manchester Guardian The Yorkshire Post The Glasgow Herald***

**October-December 1942**

## October to December 1942

A further effort in the British campaign against anti-Semitism came in the form of a new organisation, the Council of Christians and Jews, the idea for which was said to be inspired by the public stand taken by French Bishops against the Nazi persecution of Jews in France. It was set up by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Archbishop of Westminster, and the Chief Rabbi, all as joint presidents. It aimed to combat religious and racial intolerance; to promote mutual understanding and goodwill between Christians and Jews in all sections of the community, "especially in connection with problems created by the war". The *Yorkshire Post* believed that there was nothing really new in these policies, as Jews and Christians in Leeds had a long-established working relationship, but believed that its formation represented "a gesture of human solidarity the face of an evil menace". By way of illustration, the Bishop of Toulouse's pastoral letter was reprinted as part of the announcement, as an example of the object of the indignant protests made in France: "That children, women and men, fathers and mothers, should be treated like animals, that the members of the same family should be separated and deported to an unknown destination, is a melancholy spectacle that has been reserved for our age to witness."<sup>1</sup>

If there was any doubt in the mind of the public as to whether the actions taken by the Nazis in France were sanctioned or endorsed at the highest level, it was soon removed by an emphatic reiteration of racial anti-Semitism as part of the fundamental basis of Nazism by Hitler himself. In a speech reprinted at length on the front page of the *Yorkshire Post* and in the *Manchester Guardian* over pages 5 and 6 on Thursday October 1, at the Berlin *Sportsplatz*, Hitler reaffirmed his long-standing intention to "exterminate" the Jews of Europe:

### HITLER'S WAR SURVEY

...On September 1, 1939, I made two statements. First I said that once this war had been forced upon us no power of arms nor yet power of time would overcome it. Secondly, I said that as Jewry had started this war in order to overcome the Aryan people, then it would not be the Aryans, but the Jews who would be exterminated. The Jews laughed at my prophecies in Germany, I doubt whether they are laughing now. I can assure them that they will lose all desire to laugh wherever they may be, and I shall be right in this prophecy too.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *YP* Thur 1 October 1942 p3 (6) In the Name of Humanity

*YP* Thur 1 October 1942 p3 (6) CHRISTIANS AND JEWS COMBINE TO FIGHT ANTI-SEMITISM

*MG* Thur 1 October 1942 p3 (6) CHRISTIANS AND JEWS A New Organisation

*GH* Thur 1 October 1942 p2 (8) COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

<sup>2</sup> *MG* Thur 1 October 1942 p6 (6) HITLER'S WAR SURVEY; *YP* Thur 1 October 1942 p1 (6) HITLER SPEAKS ON THE SECOND FRONT

This speech was reviewed in a long feature article in the *Manchester Guardian* on the Monday of the following week. Hitler's remarks were seen as less rhetorical than they had been in earlier years, but stopped short of been seen as essentially literal, as a practical aim – to kill all the Jews under Nazi control. Rather, it was thought that Hitler had not lost faith in anti-Semitism as “a useful *political* device and [he] still thinks that it may serve a useful purpose in his attempt to break the unity of the United Nations”. This explanation sought to offer some wider motive, other than straightforward racial “extermination”. The paper also believed that “the happenings in Europe to-day show that the German doctrine of anti-Semitism has lost nothing in its force or fury” and estimated that of the 6,000,000 Jews who lived in European countries in 1939 which were now under Nazi control, 1,000,000 had “already perished”. This view still regarded actions taken against Jews as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. “Perishing” still implied a long, drawn out process, especially as:

Details of how, when and where the million victims met their fate are impossible to establish. Many deaths can be accounted for, but the exact number of those shot, hanged, buried alive, burnt or beaten to death in Russia, Poland, the Protectorate and the Balkans cannot be computed. Nor can any accurate statement be made of the number who have died of starvation or disease in the many ghettos and labour camps.<sup>3</sup>

Understandably the paper could only draw on what was already known in its assessment. For instance, the final destination of French, German, and Czech Jews was thought to be Terezin, Poland or areas further east. It speculated on what had happened in recent weeks to the inhabitants of the Lodz and Warsaw ghettos now that it was known that most had been forcibly sent away. “Some, but by no means all, have been sent for labour in the eastern territories and the remainder were very likely murdered in cold blood.” As far as it understood, the Nazi intention was to extend the “great Jew-hunt” all over Europe by trying to unify the anti-Jewish laws in all the countries under its influence in order to “eradicate the Jewish population from the continent”. At this stage however, it noted that some countries still remained resistant to Nazi pressure: Italy for example had not yet resorted to the deportation of Jews, Hungary had handed over only 18,000 foreign Jews to Germany and it was known that thousands of Slovakian Jews who sought refuge at the Hungarian border had either been turned away or summarily shot. Otherwise, it was believed that Jews in Italy and Hungary remained free and were not yet subject to further anti-Semitic restrictions.<sup>4</sup>

The unacknowledged source of this article was Richard Lichtheim of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in Geneva, who sent regular letters and reports to Joseph Linton at the Jewish Agency in London. Lewis Namier, a Manchester University historian and longstanding

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<sup>3</sup> *MG* Mon 5 October 1942 p4 (6) HITLER'S ANTI-JEWISH FURY

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

Zionist, had been seconded to the Jewish Agency in London early in the war<sup>5</sup> and regularly sent letters to the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, W.P. Crozier, informing him of news he had come across in his work at the Jewish Agency. These letters included copies of documents containing information that he thought should be publicised by the *Manchester Guardian*. Namier sent copies of one of Lichtheim's reports and two letters, to Crozier at the end of September.

Excerpts from one letter and a (six page) report written by Lichtheim formed the basis of a feature article on October 5. It contained information regarding the ghettos in Warsaw and Lodz, the 18,000 "foreign" Jews from Hungary and the discussion of the relative safety of Jews in Italy.<sup>6</sup> In his letter, Lichtheim remarked that despite longstanding knowledge among many Jewish groups that Jews were being deported and murdered in Eastern Europe, the public reaction to the deportations from France had been the key factor in exposing the Nazi murder programme:

Events in France become of course better and quicker known in England and America than events in Germany or Eastern Europe. There are more possibilities for communicating with the outside world. Furthermore the protests coming from the Vatican, the bishops and the priests in France and from the Protestant Churches have more effect on the minds of the British and American people than complaints coming from Jewish bodies. All this may explain the fact that it needed the latest persecutions in France to draw the full attention of the highest quarters to these atrocities. In fact the same things have been done all over Europe for a long time.

You know all that – it is known to all Jewish organisations from hundreds of reports. Now, I want to warn you again that all this might also be done to the last still existing Jewish communities in Europe, i.e. to the 800,000 Jews in Hungary and the 300,000 (of the former 800,000) Jews in Roumania. In these countries and also in Italy there is still a chance left that the Jews might be spared if the governments of these three countries are warned in time that they will be held responsible if they allow the Gestapo to do what it has done in the other countries of Europe.<sup>7</sup>

It can be seen from the full text of the letters and report that a good deal of Lichtheim's evidence was *not* selected for publication in the *Manchester Guardian*, but which Crozier and others at the paper must have been aware. Some remarks may have been excluded on the grounds of taste; e.g. "a number of Jewish girls from Holland and Belgium have been sent to the military brothels in the East, this would be "*Rassenschande*" but the Germans can be relied upon that there will be no offspring."<sup>8</sup> Similarly, other aspects of Lichtheim's letters were excluded because they were his opinion, and therefore could not easily be included in an

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<sup>5</sup> Rose, N. (1980) *Lewis Namier & Zionism*

<sup>6</sup> R. Lichtheim, 18 September 1942, *What is happening to the Jews of Europe* p.5 (6). Copy in *Manchester Guardian* Archive, University of Manchester. Refugees Box 223/5/16  
Also quoted in Gilbert, M. (1981) *op.cit.*, p. 73. Central Zionist Archives, L22/136.

<sup>7</sup> R. Lichtheim to Joseph Linton September 15 1942. Copy in *Manchester Guardian* Archive, Refugees Box 223/5/17 (underlining in original)

<sup>8</sup> R. Lichtheim to Joseph Linton September 29 1942. Copy in *Manchester Guardian* Archive, Refugees Box 223/5/19

anonymous article, especially when his frustration at the situation (as seen from Geneva) was directed at specific targets:

Many months ago I stated in my letters and reports to you and to others that far too little has been said and done to warn the Nazis and their associates against the consequences of these crimes. I am still under the impression that the Jewish organisations in England and the U.S.A. should have done much more on previous occasions to inform the public, the press and the leading statesmen of what is happening to the Jews of Europe.<sup>9</sup>

There were plenty of other sources from which the regional papers could draw information. Russian reports were the first to refer to “camps of death”. A *Pravda* report via *Reuter* (the agency’s correspondent, Harold King, had arrived in Moscow in the summer. He supplied the essence to London and his stories were written up there<sup>10</sup>) named one camp in particular on the Moscow-Warsaw highway near Roslavl where:

Hitler’s henchmen have deliberately organised mass deaths of Russian prisoners in their charge. Their record in barbarity is as fiendish as anything to be found in human history. Hunger, cold and torture have been used to kill off thousands of men, many of whom were not prisoners of war but helpless peasants. Dysentery is rampant and the camp is strewn with the bodies of the dead which are often not removed for weeks. Similar conditions prevail at the Dorogobuzh camp. Beatings take place at the slightest provocation and prisoners are shot daily.<sup>11</sup>

The same story appeared in both the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Yorkshire Post* but it seemed that the former had learned its lesson when it came to Russian hyperbole. Whereas the *Yorkshire Post* had included the kind of specific details which were typical of previous Russian reports, such as “the only food given is about three-quarters of a pint of soup made from a spoonful of black flour dissolved in water served twice a day”, the *Manchester Guardian* preferred to amend and abbreviate these details to “a starvation diet consisting of bread and soup made of a little flour and water”. Evidently an editorial decision had been made to limit any type of reporting that could be construed as exaggeration.

Clearly it was still difficult for many to fully conceive of such punitive conditions, when so little was known for certain. Even Churchill, who knew more than most, remarked that:

Here in the West we have seen many savage, bestial acts, but nothing that has happened in the West can compare with the wholesale massacres not only of soldiers, but of civilians and women and children which have characterised Hitler’s invasion of Russia. Thousands have been murdered in blood by the German Army and the special police battalions and brigades which accompany it everywhere, and take the leading part in the frightful butcheries perpetrated behind the front.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *op.cit.*, Lichtheim to Joseph Linton, September 15 1942.

<sup>10</sup> Read, D. (1992) *op.cit.*, p. 222

<sup>11</sup> *YP* Sat 17 October 1942 p6 (8) NAZI CAMPS OF DEATH IN RUSSIA

*MG* Sat 17 October 1942 p6 (8) CAMP HORRORS Russian Charges

<sup>12</sup> *YP* Tue 13 October 1942 p3 (6) MR. CHURCHILL’S SPEECH IN FULL

This was a clear reference to the work of the *Einsatzgruppen*, or special murder squads made up of German order police and auxiliaries recruited from the Baltic States and the Ukraine. Again, it underlined the conviction which had been expressed by various reports from inside Nazi-occupied Europe that German rule may have been brutal in the West (most recently concerning Jewish victims), but it was almost certain that conditions and treatment were much worse in its Eastern territories. There was a qualitative difference: less extreme rule in the West where fewer actions could be taken without some kind of notice being taken by the local population, and a greater likelihood that news of mass deportation or murder would eventually find its way into the international press. The East, by contrast, was a more controlled environment where the Nazis could maintain a longer term level of secrecy. Detailed reports like the Pravda Russian “death camp” revelations were still rare and unverifiable (and they concerned soldiers and civilians, not Jews, whose fate was believed to be far worse). At the same time, Churchill’s remarks, revealing some of what was known at the highest level (especially the *leading part* taken by special police battalions and brigades), betrayed a continuing uncertainty about the exact nature of the Nazi camp system which was in operation deep behind enemy lines, out of sight of the Allies.

The *Manchester Guardian*’s reticence in publishing Soviet “elaboration” illustrated a general feeling among the British press that newspapers carried a responsibility when it came to publishing content that illustrated the extremes of war. In a B.B.C. broadcast on “Truth in the News”, W.J. Haley, managing editor of the *Manchester Evening News* recalled C.P. Scott’s dictum, “Comment is free: facts are sacred”. He argued that the horrors of war should be presented to the public, that “this beastliness should be forced upon their attention. They should not have soothing syrup, they should see blood-stained bayonets”. Haley said that one of the biggest factors in keeping the truth in the news were the news agencies:

They had the responsibility of giving the papers they served and between a nation and a nation an impartial news service, and to see that – in the words of the recently formed Reuter Trust – “their integrity, independence, and freedom from bias shall at all times be fully preserved. It was wrong to believe that newspapers, news agencies or the B.B.C. did not want to give the truth. Incredible pains were daily spent on checking the accuracy of quite minor details.

If it would benefit Hitler to know something the information must be kept secret. But if it is merely a matter of not wanting to give up unpalatable facts or that a news item might be unwelcome to some interest or to some nation, then there is no case for its suppression. To that principle we must hold fast.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the main commercial news agencies (*Reuter*, AP and BUP), information reached the British press via the national news agencies of the Governments in-exile. For instance, at the end of October, the Belgian News Agency reported (via *Reuter*) that 5,250

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<sup>13</sup> MG Wed 14 October 1942 p8 (8) TRUTH IN THE NEWS A VITAL PRINCIPLE

Jews had been deported from Antwerp. Another 600 had been deported under armed guard from Liege to an “unknown destination”, and it was also known that a further 181 Jews had been sent to Malines to join a group who were leaving for Upper Silesia and the Ukraine. No date was given, but “mass deportations are still being carried out on a large scale” implied that these events had occurred in recent months.

Churchill’s observation that Nazi activities “behind the front” in Eastern Europe were given credence by an extensive report in the *Manchester Guardian* on October 30, which revealed the process by which the Germans and their auxiliaries had systematically murdered the Jews of Latvia in 1941. The news had taken a long time to reach the West “owing largely to the extraordinary precautions taken by the invaders to prevent leakage of information, reliable details about the fate of the Jewish population have only recently become available. The facts now revealed conform in every particular to the all-too-familiar pattern of German persecution.”<sup>14</sup>

The source of the information was not contained anywhere in the article “by our Special Correspondent” (possibly Harold King). It told of the months following the invasion of the Soviet Union. In July, the Nazis had immediately compelled the Jews in Riga to carry out hard labour but “there was, as yet, no anti-Semitic drive”. During August, women in Riga were also conscripted to work, while in the surrounding region “an organised pogrom caused the death of literally thousands of Jews. Jewish families in each village were wiped out, either by Germans or Latvian auxiliary police”. At the beginning of September all Jews were evicted from their homes in Riga and a ghetto was set up which was sealed with fences and barbed wire in the first weeks of October. Overcrowded conditions and limited rations were administered by the Jewish Council and enforced by a Jewish police force. Every morning, it said, 16,000 Jews were marched out of the ghetto to carry out various forms of hard labour. In late November, it was learned, an inner ghetto was set up for Jews (4,000 men between 18 and 60 years old) who were doing work for the army and S.S.. The remaining Jews were transferred over a period to separate camps or “lagers”. Jews deported from Germany replaced those in the outer ghetto. “By the end of June 1942 they too had departed, no one knows whither” As far as was understood, the 4,000 of the inner ghetto were still there.<sup>15</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian* believed that more recent evidence suggested that because Hitler realised that the war had turned against him he would look for “fresh victims to satisfy the

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<sup>14</sup> *MG* Fri 30 October 1942 p8 (8) FATE OF JEWS IN LATVIA Another Chapter in the Record of Nazi Savagery

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*,



passion for revenge. Someone, however innocent, must pay for his failures, his mistakes his vision of defeat. At the moment it is again the Jews.”<sup>16</sup> To underline his intentions, the paper quoted a section from Hitler’s most recent *Sportsplatz* speech on October 1 (see “Hitler’s War Survey” above) in a leader column titled “Extermination”:

It is easy to take such a passage when first read as just another wild and whirling threat but that would be a mistake. Hitler means what he says. He aims literally at the “extermination” of the Jews of Europe so far as his hand can reach them and for weeks past reports from country after country have shown that this policy is being carried out. It means in general that the Jews are rounded up, deprived of their belongings, packed together in cattle trucks and transported for many days and nights to Poland and occupied Russia, there to be used (if they ever get there) as slaves. When the war began there were perhaps six and a half million Jews in Europe. Half a million are so far safe in the countries free from Hitler. Between one and two millions are believed to have been destroyed. Perhaps four and a half million remain, to be, if Hitler has his way, exterminated.<sup>17</sup>

The leader (basing a great deal of its comment from Richard Lichtheim’s report of September 18) said that all Jews had been deported from France, Holland, and Belgium and the previously overcrowded ghettos in Warsaw and Lodz were now empty, all had been transported to “an unknown destination” (Lichtheim’s original quotation marks) believed to be special labour camps somewhere on the Eastern Front. It was in no doubt that there was a Europe-wide policy in progress: Jews had been taken from eastern territories such as Bohemia and Slovakia in addition to families deported from Norway and Yugoslavia, but, so far, the “full Hitler policy” had not been carried out in Italy, Hungary and Rumania. This review ended with one of the first considerations of what the Allies could do to prevent the extermination process succeeding:

The question is whether anything can be done by the Allies to prevent complete extermination. It should be plainly stated by the Allies that those responsible for this hideous destruction of the Jews will come under the same retribution as those who are proved to be guilty of other war crimes committed by the Nazis. There is only one way of stopping these abominations... that is not only to win the war, but win it quickly.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the recognition that there was a definite intention by the Nazis to kill all Jews within its territories, doubts still remained about the exact nature and extent of this process. In an special feature article in the *Yorkshire Post*, Jan Masaryk, the Czech Foreign Minister, expressed his inability to fully comprehend the situation unfolding behind enemy lines:

There comes a point at which astronomical figures cease to register any impression on the mind. We do not know how many million Russian and Germans have died on the Eastern Front. We do not know how many millions are working as forced labourers in ‘Nazified’ Europe or how many Jews have been exterminated.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *MG* Tue 27 October 1942 p4 (6) “EXTERMINATION”

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*,

R. Lichtheim, 18 September 1942, *What is happening to the Jews of Europe* p.5 (6). Copy in *Manchester Guardian Archive*, Refugees Box 223/5/16

<sup>19</sup> *YP* Wed 28 October 1942 p2 (6) CZECH AND GREEK SUFFERING

On October 30 all three newspapers published accounts of a meeting at the Albert Hall in London organised to protest at the Nazi treatment of Jews in Europe. Like Masaryk (who attended), the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Temple, said that he found what was happening in Europe was so horrible “that the imagination refused to picture it”. The meeting was attended by the Polish Prime Minister, General Sikorski and the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Hertz, and messages were sent by Churchill, Dr. Benes, the Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, the Archbishop of York and Haille Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia.

Temple’s comments dominated the lengthy coverage given to the event by the *Manchester Guardian*. As an illustration of the way in which the same news item could be presented differently in each paper, the sections of the speech excluded by both the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Glasgow Herald* are highlighted:

We were witnessing such an eruption of evil as the world has not seen for centuries. Our people as a whole remain largely unaware of it, and even when we are aware it is difficult to feel the horror which is appropriate to the facts. Events which would have aroused consternation in the first decade of this century now pass almost unnoticed. The suffering of 1914-18 and of much of the period between the two wars led to a hardening of hearts. The drain upon sympathy began to be unbearable. We are in danger of becoming morally numb. For this reason alone it would be right that we should meet to face the fact of monstrous evil and realise its meaning. The purpose is not to stir up hatred or the spirit of vengeance. The purpose is to keep our moral perception clear, to utter the judgement of civilised men upon a reversion to barbarism, and to pledge ourselves once more to the effort and the sacrifice by which deliverance must be wrought.

It is hard to resist the conclusion that there is a settled purpose to exterminate the Jewish people if it can be done. What else is the explanation of the recent occurrences in France? At first it seemed possible to explain the German demand for the surrender of Jewish refugees in unoccupied France as due for the need of additional labour. Later women were claimed with the option of leaving their children, and many, heartbroken, left their children not expecting to see them again but hoping that they might live to see a better day. Now the children are also being deported from two years old and upwards. There is every reason to fear that a large proportion of those deported are destined for the ghastly ghetto in Eastern Galicia, where thousands had already perished. I am grateful for this opportunity to share in today’s effort to express our horror at what has been and is being done. Our deep sympathy with the sufferers, our claim that our own Government should do whatever possible for their relief and our steadfast resolution to do all and bear all that may be necessary to end this affliction.<sup>20</sup>

It was possible also to see further evidence of each paper’s editorial decisions. For example, whereas the *Yorkshire Post* preferred to lead the report with Churchill’s message to the meeting, the *Manchester Guardian* placed it at the very end of the article, and the *Glasgow Herald* simply abbreviated the message to Churchill expressing his “warm sympathy with its objects” and only included the last sentence of the statement, which said:

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<sup>20</sup> MG Fri 30 October 1942 p6 (8) DR TEMPLE ON ANTI-JEWISH TERROR Nazi’s Aiming at Extermination  
YP Fri 30 October 1942 p2 (6) NAZI CRIMES AGAINST THE JEWS Premier and Primate Join In Condemnation  
GH Fri 30 October 1942 p2 (8) PROTEST MEETING IN LONDON Nazi Treatment Of Jews

The systematic cruelties to which the Jewish people, men, women, and children, have been exposed under the Nazi regime are among the most terrible events in history, and place an indelible stain on all who perpetrate and instigate them. Free men and women denounce these evil crimes: and when this world's struggle ends with the enthronement of human rights, racial persecution will be ended.<sup>21</sup>

The first suggestion of rescue in the three newspapers came in an anonymous letter to the *Manchester Guardian*. Referring to the "Extermination" leader column of October 27, it said:

It is not the first time that you have drawn the attention of your readers to the plight of those unfortunate people. Hitler has promised them complete extermination, and there is no doubt that he intends to keep his promise. There is still an opportunity to save the lives of some tens of thousands of Jews who live in unoccupied France by permitting them entry into this country or into the United States. Once there they can be put into internment camps and either be sorted out or left in the camps, which is surely to be preferred to extermination by the Nazis. As a man whose mother has been deported to Poland and probably murdered in cold blood and whose sister with husband and baby have sent SOS calls from unoccupied France, I appeal to you to urge the Government to take a most compassionate attitude towards those unfortunate people.<sup>22</sup>

Hitler reiterated his promise in the *Yorkshire Post* on November 9 in a speech marking the anniversary of the Munich beer hall *putsch* in 1923:

I said before that if Judaism thinks it can wipe us out it will be Jewry which will be extinguished. A great many Jews who laughed then are not laughing now, and those who are laughing now will not be laughing soon.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>22</sup> *MG* Fri 6 November 1942 p4 (8) Letter: JEWS IN FRANCE

<sup>23</sup> *YP* Mon 9 November 1942 p3 (6) HITLER SAYS HE WILL NEVER CAPITULATE

There was a relative lull in the news of deportations from France during November. Apart from the arrest of 2,000 Jews in Brussels, very little new information about Nazi actions in Western Europe reached the papers. This was almost certainly the result of the German occupation of unoccupied France, ending the nominal independence of Vichy. "There could now be no protest against the deportation of the Jews without that protest coming up against direct Gestapo reaction"<sup>24</sup> But France was just one region in a much larger continental-wide process, information about which continued to leak out of Europe. One *Reuter* report from Zurich said that "the German Government now seems to be using all its influence in a race with time to clear these countries of Jews before the end of the war.

The British Section of the World Jewish Congress had learned (according to the *Manchester Guardian*) that the entire Jewish population of Norway (numbering 2,300) had been arrested, including it was said, the blind and the elderly. The *Yorkshire Post's* version of the report added that the victims were robbed of all their possessions before being deported to special concentration camps before they would be transported to Poland for forced labour. The Swedish paper *Dagens Nyheter* said that the Nazis had declared all Norwegian Jews bankrupt and intended to sell all confiscated Jewish businesses at public auction.<sup>25</sup> In Hungary, said an unaccredited foreign news report in the *Manchester Guardian*, all Jews of military age had been conscripted for "auxiliary military service" which was thought to be a euphemism for slave labour. In Rumania, all Jews now had to wear the star of David and would be subject to the same anti-Semitic legal restrictions which were in place in all Nazi controlled territory.<sup>26</sup>

On November 25, in the *Manchester Guardian* under the headline "Killing the Jews", a one sentence article from the *Associated Press* at the bottom of the back page informed the reader:

Dr. Stephen Wise, Chairman of the World Jewish Congress, said in Washington yesterday that he had learned through sources confirmed by the State Department that about half the estimated 4,000,000 Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe had been slain in its "extermination campaign"<sup>27</sup>

This story, which was not carried by the *Yorkshire Post*, indicated the number of Jews who had *already* been killed, doubling the figure that had been put forward by the World Jewish Congress at the end of June, but more importantly this account of Wise's statement gave no

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<sup>24</sup> Gilbert, M.(1981) *op. cit.*, p.88

*MG* Sat 21 November 1942 p4 (10) NAZI ANTI-JEWISH DRIVE

<sup>25</sup> *MG* Fri 27 November 1942 p8 (8) NORWAY'S JEWS ARRESTED

*YP* Fri 27 November 1942 p3 (6) ALL NORWEGIAN JEWS ARRESTED

<sup>26</sup> *MG* Sat 28 November 1942 p6 (8) JEWS IN BALKANS REPRESSION INCREASES

<sup>27</sup> *MG* Wed 25 November 1942 p8 (8) KILLING THE JEWS DR STEPHEN WISE

*GH* Wed 25 November 1942 p4 (8) EXTERMINATION OF 2,000,000 JEWS HITLER'S PLAN FOR 1942

indication about the Nazis future plans for the remaining (millions of) Jews under their control.

The same story was presented quite differently in the *Glasgow Herald*. Like the *Manchester Guardian* article, it was also placed in a less than prominent position, but in contrast to the *Manchester Guardian* report which referred to past events, the *Glasgow Herald* headline “Extermination of 2,000,000 Jews Hitler’s Plan for 1942” pinpointed the number which the Nazis still intended to kill:

Dr. Stephen Wise, well known Jewish leader in America, said yesterday in Washington that the U.S. State Department had substantiated reports reaching American Jewish organisations that Hitler had ordered the extermination of all the Jews in Europe by the end of 1942. More than 2,000,000 million Jews were concerned, he said.<sup>28</sup>

Each account gave a very different impression. The *Manchester Guardian* article sought to provide verification (via credible sources) for the unprecedentedly high number of (innocent) Jews who had “been slain” by the Nazis in Europe but its use of quotation marks to describe the “extermination campaign” suggested it was less than comfortable with this description of the process, possibly because the figure represented the total number that had been killed in Europe since the war began (including executions, slave labour, or starvation), rather than a deliberately targeted murder campaign.

The *Glasgow Herald* item also emphasised the authority of the sources of information but placed its focus on the future of the remaining Jews under Nazi control. It was the first of the three papers to put forward the suggestion, from Wise, that Hitler had ordered the extermination of all the Jews of Europe. It conveyed the sense of urgency (Hitler’s plan for 1942) which had been indicated by the Zurich report (“Nazi Anti-Jewish Drive” above) which suggested that the Nazis were in a race against time to clear the Jews from Europe. As this report reached the British newspapers nearly one month before the end of the year, it seemed that the “plan for 1942” had been discovered much earlier in the year but had only recently been authenticated by the American State Department. The story that “more than 2,000,000 Jews were concerned” indicated that this process was undoubtedly still in progress and that the Nazis intended to follow through with their plans.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> GH Wed 25 November 1942 p4 (8) EXTERMINATION OF 2,000,000 JEWS HITLER’S PLAN FOR 1942

<sup>29</sup> Dr. Gerhard Riegner, the representative of the World Jewish Congress in Switzerland had received news from a German industrialist that Hitler had actually ordered the extermination of European Jewry by gassing using prussic acid. Riegner sent a telegram to the Foreign Office in London on August 10 requesting that it should be conveyed to Sidney Silverman M.P. and Rabbi Stephen Wise in New York. The Riegner cable was handed to Silverman on August 14. Silverman forwarded the Riegner information in a telegram to New York which Rabbi Wise eventually received on August 28. Wise was advised by the State Department to refrain from any public announcement until confirmation could be obtained. After additional information reached Washington,

Further confirmed knowledge of a Nazi plan was confirmed a week later by authoritative British figures in a statement communicated to journalists by Sidney Silverman M.P. at a special meeting of the British Section of the World Jewish Congress in London. According to information which had been received by the Polish underground movement, "by the middle of this year the Germans had considered and adopted a definite plan for the total physical extermination of all the Jews in the territories occupied by the Germans". It was estimated that more than one million had been killed in Poland alone. Silverman was careful to point out that this information had been examined and verified as authentic by the Government of the United States and various Allied Governments in London, "we were not prepared to act on such a story without the fullest check, counter-check and investigation by people who had any means of checking these statements." Under the headline, "Murdering Jews Over a Million Dead" the WJC issued a statement which said:

The total number of Jews murdered in Poland already exceeds a million, and this figure increases daily. Poland has become the Nazi slaughter-house for the Jews of Europe.<sup>30</sup>

Although the two headlines were very similar, this news was quite different to the information received in the summer which had stated: "Jewish War Victims More Than a Million Dead" (*Manchester Guardian* Tue, 30 June 1942 p2). The report confirmed that the extermination plan was pan-European, it did not say that one million *Polish* Jews had been killed, rather that one million Jews had been *killed in Poland* since the start of the war. Silverman's new label for Poland as "the Nazi slaughterhouse for the Jews of Europe" implied that Jews were taken there from all over Nazi-controlled Europe to be killed.

This article was one of the last on the last page of the *Manchester Guardian* on December 4. Its brevity was extremely unusual, given the paper's longstanding interest in the plight of European Jewry. Its position could indicate that it may not have received news of the press conference until shortly going to press, but this explanation appears less likely when contrasted with the *Yorkshire Post*'s extensive review on the same day.

Like the different perspectives taken on "two million already murdered/two million yet to be killed" between the *Manchester Guardian* and *Glasgow Herald* at the end of November, the *Yorkshire Post* also confirmed that two million had been murdered but estimated that up to *four* million Jews were targets for the Nazis. In the most comprehensive review of the

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Undersecretary Sumner Welles summoned Wise on November 23 and told him that the news from Europe was essentially true. On November 24, Wise publicised what he knew at press conferences in Washington and New York. The Associated Press carried the story, which appeared in the *New York Herald Tribune* under the headline: "Wise Says Hitler Has Ordered 4,000,000 Jews Slain in 1942." Laqueur, W. (1980) *op.cit.*, pp. 79-82, <sup>30</sup> *MG* Wed 2 December 1942 p8 (8) MURDERING JEWS OVER A MILLION DEAD

situation facing Jews in Nazi Europe to date, this extensive account revealed the methods the Nazis were using to carry out their extermination plan.<sup>31</sup> The paper summarised Silverman's statement at the press conference:

Mr. Silverman said that the Jews in occupied Europe were being literally slaughtered in masses in accordance with Hitler's "final solution of the Jewish problem of Europe". Two million so far was the barest minimum number of Jews murdered, tortured and starved to death in Eastern Europe. Under the Nazi plan the remaining 4,000,000 were to go before the end of the year.<sup>32</sup>

Silverman was careful to point out that he had received a "cablegram" from New York from Wise stating that confirmation had been obtained of Hitler's order to exterminate the Jews in occupied countries by December 31. This fact implied that the British Section of the WJC had also received this information at an earlier date, but had waited for confirmation from other sources before releasing any information to the public:

The Jewish Congress at first avoided any public communication of the details they had received; instead they approached the British, American and other Allied Governments and were now able to say that the Polish Government, from its own independent investigations, is able to confirm our information. The Czechoslovak Government is also in a position to verify our story. The American State Department is also satisfied. The world should consider what it has to do with these psychopathic gangsters.<sup>33</sup>

The source of this extraordinary information was described in the report as "a leading German magnate who, although not a Nazi, has been associated with the Nazi movement for some years".<sup>34</sup>

Based on the information received, the reason for the deportations was now clear: the plan had been to concentrate the Jews of Europe in Poland "to facilitate their mass massacre". Information on the methods by which Jews had been killed, and exactly who was responsible for directing this programme was less certain. But the length of the article indicated that a great deal of (previously unreleased) supplementary information had been presented to the journalists who attended to answer these questions. In fact, the WJC *had* prepared a three page document dated December 1, entitled "Annihilation of European Jewry. Hitler's Policy of Total Destruction".<sup>35</sup> A comparison between this document and the *Yorkshire Post* account

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<sup>31</sup> It was the only paper to give a full account of the WJC statement. Sharf, A. (1964) *op.cit.*, p.100

<sup>32</sup> *YP* Wed 2 December 1942 p2 (6) PLAN TO EXTERMINATE 4,000,000 JEWS M.P. Reports A Monstrous Nazi Project

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>34</sup> Laqueur, W. and Breitman, R. (1986) *op.cit.*, The name of the German industrialist was Schulte. His name and description were handed in a sealed envelope to Leland Harrison the American Consul in Bern by Richard Lichtheim on October 22 1942: "Managing director Dr. Schulte, mining industry. In close or closest contact with dominant figures in the war economy".

<sup>35</sup> *Annihilation of European Jewry. Hitler's Policy of Total Destruction*. World Jewish Congress (British Section). Copy in Manchester Guardian Archive, Refugees Box. 223/5/42

reveals some significant differences. For instance, the *Yorkshire Post* reported Silverman's opening statement rather than the first paragraph of the document which read:

The Jews of Europe are being exterminated by the Nazis. It is not merely that atrocities are being committed against the Jews. They are being quite literally slaughtered in masses, in pursuance of a systematic plan and in accordance with a deliberate policy.

This is Hitler's "final solution of the Jewish problem of Europe". He has openly proclaimed his design. He is now executing his policy with a diabolical fiendishness unknown in the whole history of human savagery.<sup>36</sup>

Another passage on page 2 of the document, describing the process as "the holocaust" was also omitted from the paper's report:

Massacres of Jews have been going on since the first day of the German occupation. The holocaust took on a formal design, under an explicit policy, in March 1942. Himmler then gave orders for the extermination of 50% of the Jewish population of the so-called Government-General. The extermination was to be completed by the end of 1942.<sup>37</sup>

According to the WJC information, it was believed that Herman Backe, the Nazi Secretary of State for Economics had designed the scheme for the total annihilation of European Jewry with Hitler's approval. As the *Manchester Guardian's* account of the press conference had stated, discussions had taken place among the Nazi leaders, some of whom advanced the extermination plan "as a means of easing the food and clothing difficulties" and others who opposed the plan because the Nazi workforce "would lose many skilled craftsmen". The Polish Government in-exile confirmed in November that about 1,500,000 Jews had been murdered "in an organised way" sometime in September. Hundreds of thousands of Jews from Germany, France, Belgium, Holland and Czechoslovakia had been deported to Poland and the occupied areas of Russia for mass slaughter. It was known that many of the victims never reached their destination. Many died of suffocation after they were pressed into locked cattle wagons whose floors were covered with a thick layer of lime and chlorine. As many as half of all deportees died *en route* to Poland and the remainder were taken to "special camps" where they were shot.

The methods of murder in these special camps were also listed by the WJC in the *Yorkshire Post*. Apart from executions, Jews were also killed in large numbers "by means of electrocution and lethal gas chambers:

At the Belzec camp deportees are stripped naked, ostensibly for bathing. They are then led through to sheds with metal plated floors, through which passes an electrical current. Death is

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<sup>36</sup> YP Wed 2 December 1942 p2 (6) PLAN TO EXTERMINATE 4,000,000 JEWS M.P. Reports A Monstrous Nazi Project

<sup>37</sup> *Annihilation of European Jewry. Hitler's Policy of Total Destruction*. World Jewish Congress (British Section). Copy in Manchester Guardian Archive, Refugees Box. 223/5/42 Underlining in original.



almost instantaneous. A huge digging machine for mass graves has also been recently installed at Treblinka. Recently 10,000 Jews were gassed at Chelm.<sup>38</sup>

Readers of the three regional newspapers may have been familiar with the existence of the German concentration camps of Buchenwald and Dachau before the war, but the names of these three camps had not been publicised before. Many may have known about the appalling conditions in the Warsaw and Lublin ghettos. Some may have become aware during 1942 that the fortress of Terezin in Bohemia was being used to hold deported Jews from these ghettos. This article informed them that of the 433,000 packed within the Warsaw ghetto walls, only 40,000 now remained. Whole families, including children and the elderly, had been forcibly deported to these “special” camps. The report ended with Dr. I Schwartzbart, of the Polish National Council, stating that all this information had been corroborated with evidence of people from neutral states who had visited several towns in Poland and he said that “the world was asked to believe in the unbelievable”.

Surprisingly, given the wealth of information which had been provided by the WJC, the *Manchester Guardian*, did not expand any further on the details of its news (it was certainly in possession of the WJC document, but like the *Yorkshire Post*, it did not include the sections highlighted above which concerned Jews being “literally slaughtered” or “a final solution of the Jewish problem”<sup>39</sup>), especially detailed information that was completely unprecedented, such as the methods of killing. Instead it reviewed the latest news concerning Hitler’s extermination programme in broader terms, and based on a wider trawl of the available evidence, presented a considered assessment of Nazi policy.

It acknowledged that the total extermination (by execution, slave labour and privation) of the Jews had long been one of Germany’s political aims but it was now certain that “a violent speeding-up of this process has been decided”. As far as it understood, Frank, the Governor General of Poland, wanted to use the Jews as slave labour. However, Backe, of the Ministry

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<sup>38</sup> YP Wed 2 December 1942 p2 (6) PLAN TO EXTERMINATE 4,000,000 JEWS M.P. Reports A Monstrous Nazi Project.

This passage was taken verbatim from the Polish Underground courier Jan Karski’s report to the Polish Government in-exile which was delivered to A.L. Easterman, Political Secretary of the British Section of the WJC on November 25. Easterman and Silverman showed the report to Richard Law, the Under-Secretary of State (Anthony Eden’s deputy) at the Foreign Office the next day November 26. Silverman made two suggestions: first an Allied Declaration announcing that the United Nations had been informed of the extermination plan and that retribution for those responsible would follow, and second that use should be made of broadcasting to Nazi Europe. Law circulated his account of the meeting within the Foreign Office “I doubt very much whether his proposals if we were able to carry them out, would do much good, and I think Mr. Silverman agrees. On the other hand, I think we should be in an appalling position if these stories should prove to be true and we have done nothing whatever about them.” At the end of this account, Law also added “unless we can make them (Silverman and Easterman) some kind of gesture they will cause a lot of trouble.”

Gilbert (1980) *op. cit.*, p.93-95.

<sup>39</sup> The (six) sections of *Annihilation of European Jewry. Hitler’s Policy of Total Destruction* which were used in the article were marked with a line drawn beside each paragraph intended for inclusion in the article.

of Agriculture (or Economics, according to the *Yorkshire Post*) maintained that the food situation in Nazi Europe would be greatly eased “by the liquidation of three or four million Jews”. Hitler had apparently chosen the latter alternative, based on ideological rather than economic considerations, which the paper believed was typical of his “extremist mentality”.<sup>40</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian* drew on other sources, specifically information available in the Swedish press, to assess the policy decisions behind the latest revelations. On Tuesday December 8, it dedicated its first leader column to an extensive examination of the Nazis long-term objectives:

“Two days deliberations,” said a Slovak paper recently, “took place at the Ministry of the Interior in Bratislava regarding the final solution of the Jewish question” What is this “final solution”? What are the things which being done, will mean that there is no longer a “Jewish question” either in Germany itself or in the countries which Germany controls?<sup>41</sup>

It reiterated its belief that Hitler meant exactly what he had said on October 1 (“...it would not be the Aryans, but the Jews who would be exterminated. The Jews laughed at my prophecies in Germany, I doubt whether they are laughing now.”); the intention was to “solve the Jewish question” by making sure that there were not enough Jews remaining to leave any “question” in the future. The leader was less interested in the specific aspects of the murder programme, because after years of receiving reports from various European countries where the Nazis had committed atrocities against the Jewish populations, it felt that it knew enough. Moreover, it felt that in war-time the reliability of the some aspects of the evidence may not have been without question (“there are terrible reports but no-one knows in detail”) but thought that the accumulated evidence from so many sources was overwhelming: Jews were being killed all over Europe and it was now time to use that knowledge to “translate horror into action”:

One need not suppose that Hitler has signed an actual order for the destruction of the Jews, which is strongly reported but unconfirmed. Nor need anyone pin themselves to precise figures from this or that country since provision must be difficult to obtain; not again is indictment dependent on the reports of the many different and horrible methods of massacre.<sup>42</sup>

It advocated using BBC radio to spread the facts<sup>43</sup>, telling what had been confirmed from many sources in order to encourage the people in the occupied countries to try to help or shelter Jews escaping the Nazis. At the same time, the paper felt that active rescue work was needed (co-ordinated by the main Allies, particularly the USA and Russia) in order to set up mechanisms which would enable Jewish refugees to escape to neutral territories:

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<sup>40</sup> *MG* Fri 4 December 1942 p8 (8) PLIGHT OF THE JEWS MASS ANNIHILATION

<sup>41</sup> *MG* Tue 8 December 1942 p4 (8) Leader: HITLER AND THE JEWS

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>43</sup> Sidney Silverman’s idea to Richard Law at the Foreign Office on November 26.

By action we can help, but it must be Government action. What directions does the Government propose to give the BBC, what instructions to our agents in European and Asiatic countries, what suggestions to our allies? <sup>44</sup>

By contrast, the *Glasgow Herald* took a less exhortive, more pragmatic view of the situation in Europe. It argued that when the war was over many of the enemy's deeds could be undone. The Allies could hope to free the countries the Nazis had conquered. They could eventually restore all that the Germans had plundered. But it was impossible to replace murdered human beings. That fact was, it believed, (and one of the most horrifying aspects of the recent news) that the Allies could do nothing about Nazi atrocities. Echoing the *Manchester Guardian's* realisation that Hitler meant exactly what he said when he talked of liquidation of the Jewish problem, it was now clear that the persecution of the Jews had developed "an almost unimaginable ferocity". There was now no doubt that "the planned (and very rapid) extermination" of the Jews was taking place.

This paper now realised that by comparison, the Nazis' previous methods of expulsion hard labour and starvation were "mild and merciful". Under the latest measures known in the West, Jews who survived deportation were "simply slaughtered, some by poison gas, some by other methods":

The crime is almost too great and wanton to be fully realised by civilised peoples. The Archbishop of York repeated the plea already made by the Polish Government that the Allies should give a solemn warning of retribution to all involved in this murderous business. Certainly no measure that is likely to have any effect on the enemy should be neglected. But it is not easy to see how we can hope to put an end to the slaughter before a great part of the Jewish race is destroyed. <sup>45</sup>

The next day the same paper reported the publication of a diplomatic Note which was handed to all the Allied Governments in London by the Polish Foreign Minister Count Raczynski. It said that it was not possible to estimate the exact number of Jews who had been killed in Poland by the Nazis but it was estimated that of the 3,130,000 Jews in Poland before the war, over one-third had perished over the last three years. <sup>46</sup>

The new methods of mass slaughter applied during the last few months confirm the fact that the German authorities aim with systematic deliberation at the extermination of the Jewish population of Poland and of the many thousands of the Jews deported.

It also believed that the Nazis planned to exterminate all Poles after they had succeeded in destroying the Jews.

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>45</sup> GH Thur 10 December 1942 p4 (8) Leader: MASSACRE IN EUROPE

<sup>46</sup> GH Fri 11 December 1942 p4 (8) POLES ASK ALLIES TO STOP MASS SLAUGHTER BY NAZIS

From this point on, many Jewish-related issues were re-framed or re-interpreted in the light of the knowledge of the Nazi extermination programme. But before this process could manifest itself, the regional press took account of the initial reaction of the British Jewish community.

Some were practical reactions, like the Chief Rabbi's announcement of a day of mourning on Sunday December 13, "in view of the situation with which Jews on the Continent are faced"<sup>47</sup>. At a special meeting on December 8, the Board of Deputies of British Jews adopted a resolution placing on record the depth of its grief at "the indescribable sufferings and martyrdom of our brethren in the lands under the Nazi yoke":

The culminating tragedy of the children who are included in this threat of wholesale murder intensifies its unbelievable horror. British Jewry in community of feeling with its tortured and fellow Jews will leave nothing undone which it can do to help, and appeals to all civilised Governments both those of the United Nations and those of all neutral countries to assure asylum to all who can by any means escape.<sup>48</sup>

Others were more long term and aspirational. For example, the U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull issued a memorandum reaffirming "the declared and traditional policy of the United States to favour the restoration of a Jewish National Home in Palestine". Referring to the Nazi extermination policy it said:

When the war is over, it must be the common purpose of civilised mankind to right this cruel wrong, and above all enable large numbers of survivors to reconstruct their lives in Palestine where once again the Jewish people will be able to assume a position of dignity and equality among the peoples of the earth.<sup>49</sup>

There were also reports of events that might not have achieved inclusion in the press, much less prominence, if it had not been for the news from Poland. For example, an article about a meeting of Jewish ex-servicemen (discussing Jewish war-aims and anti-Semitism) was included below the two stories mentioned above, *all were placed in same column* on page 6 of the *Manchester Guardian* on December 7. Articles concerning British Jews, news from Palestine, or reports from Europe were occasionally published together – simply because they broadly concerned (very different) "Jewish" issues.

The *Yorkshire Post's* second leader column on December 8 reflected on "The Mania of Racial Extermination". It was obvious to the paper that Hitler, faced with defeat, had decided to carry through his "maniacal" policy of exterminating all the Jews within his reach:

It is as though the thought occurred to his meanly vindictive mind: "One thing I can do in the time remaining to me; I can see to it that Jewry is stricken beyond all hope of recovery

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<sup>47</sup> *MG* Mon 7 December 1942 p6 (6) DAY OF MOURNING

<sup>48</sup> *MG* Wed 9 December 1942 p5 (8) BRITISH JEWRY'S PLEDGE

*YP* Thur 10 December 1942 p2 (6) BRITISH JEWRY AND NAZI OPPRESSION

<sup>49</sup> *MG* Mon 7 December 1942 p6 (6) JEWISH NATIONAL HOME American Manifesto

throughout the Continent. This at least I will accomplish, if all else fails.” And so according to information reaching Dr. Chaim Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organisation and other Jewish leaders, he issued an order for the wiping out of all Jews in Nazi-occupied countries before the end of the war.

It is so revolting to the human conscience that our own sheltered country may doubt whether it can be seriously meant. Can it be more than a blood-curdling threat? The figures given by the World Jewish Congress leave little doubt that on that point. It is estimated that two million out of the 3,500,000 in that country have been massacred by the Nazis since the beginning of the war. Hitler’s butchers have acquired vast experience in the slaughter of their fellow-man by this time. There are few tasks from which they would shrink.<sup>50</sup>

Short of a swift victory, the paper was unable to see any way the Allies could do anything to stop the slaughter in the short-term. It noticed that there had been “a despairing note in recent public comment on the subject in this country” and warned against indifference, especially when so many other events in the news were competing for the British public’s sympathy:

The danger is that we become accustomed to these monstrous happenings and begin to accept them as inevitable. The lamentable history of the past decade has blunted the finer feelings of even the more sensitive among us so that the most abominable cruelties have almost lost the power to shock or rouse us. But here is an offence against which the voice of humanity should be raised. Nothing should be neglected that can help to bring home to the Nazis, and to the German people as a whole, the deep horror and indignation felt. Protests should be organised immediately and on a world-wide scale. The broadcasting resources of all the free peoples should be mobilised to awaken the German people to the enormity of this crime.<sup>51</sup>

The leader’s tone was passionate but at the same time realised the scale of the task. It recognised that any campaign would not have any effect in the short-term but felt that its influence would be felt when, faced with defeat, the German people would eventually reject the Nazi policy of racial extermination, especially if they themselves hoped to be treated humanely by the Allies.

By December 9 the news had reached the front page of the *Yorkshire Post*. President Roosevelt told a group of prominent American Jews that he was profoundly shocked to learn of the deaths of 2,000,000 Jews caused by the Nazis in Europe but there was no further comment or condemnation.<sup>52</sup> The report itself was dwarfed by other news items concerning the conduct of the war, such as the strength of Axis troops under Rommel in Libya, the latest news of the battle outside Stalingrad and new senior appointments in the RAF. Such were the circumstances of war that a brief comment by the U.S. President about the death of 2 million people did not merit more than a few lines of copy. It was easy for the reader to miss.

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<sup>50</sup> YP Tue 8 December 1942 p2 (6) The Mania of Racial Extermination

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

<sup>52</sup> YP Wed 9 December 1942 p1 (6) TWO MILLION JEWS KILLED BY NAZIS

In a similar way, comments made by the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Hinsley, competed for attention with exactly the same subjects (as the *Yorkshire Post*) in the inside pages of the *Manchester Guardian*. Addressing his “dear friends and fellow Catholics of Poland” Hinsley placed himself alongside the Bishops of France and Italy in condemning the Nazi persecution of Jews:

Poland has witnessed acts of such savage race hatred that it appears fiendishly planned to be turned into a vast cemetery of the Jewish population of Europe. No denial, no deceitful pretext can discount the outrages committed by the invaders. They are too fully authenticated.<sup>53</sup>

The “Massacre of the Jews” formed only part of a long House of Lords report in the *Yorkshire Post* which also included debates about the bombing of Rome and the responsibilities of the Civil Defence Services. In a wider debate on future relief plans for the subjugated states of Europe, the Archbishop of York, Dr. Cyril Garbett said :

At the moment in Poland there is taking place one of the most appalling outrages in the history of the world. We are watching the deliberate and cold-blooded massacre of a nation. The extermination of all Jews in that country has been decided upon and will be carried out ruthlessly. Men, women, and children are put to death by massacre, poison gas, electrocution and been sent on long journeys to unknown destinations in bitterly cold weather without food and drink. Children are cast from trucks to the side of the railway.<sup>54</sup>

He appealed to the Government to “state repeatedly and solemnly that when the hour of deliverance comes retribution will be dealt out, not only to the cold blooded and cowardly brutes ordering these massacres, but also to the thousands of underlings who appear to be joyfully carrying out these orders.”<sup>55</sup>

A similar review of the proceedings in the Commons reflected a general feeling of uncertainty about what could be done to arrest a process about which there now seemed to be few doubts. The *Manchester Guardian*’s Political correspondent, C.A. Lambert, believed that suggested proposals like a declaration condemning the Nazis’ treatment of European Jews would be “much like presenting to a tiger a resolution condemning its tigerishness. Everyone recognises that the Governments of the British Governments and representatives of the Allied powers in London feel that they cannot omit to do anything that is in their power but it may seem futile in the practical field it cannot be futile in the moral.”<sup>56</sup> The only clearly articulated proposal was that the BBC should undertake a propaganda campaign, “exposing to the world what is

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<sup>53</sup> *MG* Wed 9 December 1942 p8 (8) POLAND’S SUFFERINGS Day of Prayer

<sup>54</sup> *YP* Thur 10 December 1942 p2 (6) Massacre of the Jews DR. GARBETT’S APPEAL

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>56</sup> *MG* Wed 10 December 1942 p5 (8) THE MASSACRE OF THE JEWS Commons Anxiety WHAT THE ALLIES CAN DO

happening, and not least to the German people, which once again is believed to be ignorant of what is being done by its masters.”<sup>57</sup>

It was proposed (by all three papers, but the *Manchester Guardian* in particular) that an Allied declaration - a statement expressing the horror of the United Nations, putting on record their knowledge and proof of the annihilation policy and formally saying that the policy against the Jews came within the scope of war crimes for which punishment for guilty would be the basis of retribution – should be the first official response of the British Government and the Allied Powers to the news of the “extermination programme”. Faced with an inability to do anything in practical terms, it was felt that the only Allied response had to be a reaction based on humanitarian and moral standards. In a leader titled “What Can Be Done?” the *Manchester Guardian* strongly disagreed with the argument that protests would not achieve anything. It felt that the “broadcast weapon” should be used persistently in every European language “just because we do not know how much or how little success it might achieve it should be used”. Instead of Allied exchanges on the subject, it advocated an Allied conference to speed up the process, to pool ideas about plans for rescue work and develop strategies to encourage neutral countries to help Jews seeking to escape the Nazis.

The leader, acknowledged that the Western powers knew most about the deportation process from Western European countries to Poland from the information released by the Polish Government in-exile<sup>58</sup>, but also drew attention to the fact that Jews were still being sent in “transports” to German held territories from the Baltic to the Black Sea about which the West knew very little:

All we have to guide us is the fate of the Jews actually in Poland, the knowledge of what has happened to similar transports before, and the word used by Hitler himself about the end designed by him for the European Jews – “extermination”.<sup>59</sup>

Above all, it argued for a more generous spirit towards refugees, “a resolve to give help in more than words, a conviction that the worse this crime this and the harder it is to stop the more we must strive to help the sufferers.”<sup>60</sup>

The full text (over 1000 words) of the “Note on Jewish Persecution in Poland” was published on December 11 in the *Manchester Guardian*, the only British newspaper to give it full

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>58</sup> The Polish Note on Nazi measures taken against Jews in Poland, Holland, Norway and France had been translated into 21 languages. *MG* Fri 11 December 1942 p4 (8) THE AGONY OF THE JEWS

<sup>59</sup> *MG* Fri 11 December 1942 p4 (8) WHAT CAN BE DONE?

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*,

attention (the *Yorkshire Post* and *Glasgow Herald* gave the note only cursory attention devoting only one short paragraph each.<sup>61</sup> The paper's keen interest in the Polish Note may have been stimulated by some forewarning of its content which had been provided by Lewis Namier (at the Jewish Agency for Palestine in London) in a letter to W.P. Crozier on December 7. It was sent to Crozier's home in Manchester rather than the paper's offices and was marked "SECRET":

I want to tell you in the strictest secrecy how the matter of the Nazi atrocities in Poland stands now. The Poles are drafting a note to H.M.G. on the subject which will then be communicated to all the allied Governments. It will also be given out to the press. The note is already drafted and I strongly urged them not to make it more than 1500 words so that friendly papers might be able to give it in full. Naturally one does not want to omit anything of importance, but I urged them on verbal economy.

The most secret point is this: the Poles urge the calling of a special inter-Allied Conference to discuss the Nazi extermination policy against the Jews; Eden for reasons best known to himself, seems unwilling to have such a conference. He has been exceptionally bad in this matter. You may have noticed that when we held the meeting at the Albert Hall, presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury...there was neither a representative nor a message from our Foreign Office. Even the message from the Prime Minister was only obtained through pressure from the Archbishop. I do not know what is behind it – does Eden's "Arab umbrella" throw so wide a shadow? ...Or is it a general fear of contaminating himself by pronouncing the word Jew? Whichever it is, the behaviour of the Foreign Office is simply incomprehensible. Naturally you cannot show knowledge of anything in this matter, which is not public property, but I wonder whether, after the Polish Note has been given out for publication, you could not spontaneously urge some form of Allied conference in the subject without being too specific, so as not to show that you know the point at issue. I shall put the same thing to "The Times" and hope that they will do something about it.

Namier also shared some details of the extermination programme that Crozier might not have known at that stage, such as the extensive use by the Nazis of Ukrainian and Latvian Fascists to massacre Jews and the reasons behind the suicide of Adam Czerniakow, the leader of the Warsaw ghetto Jewish Council on July 24 which he was not sure if it would be included in the published Note (see excerpts below). Above all, Namier was careful to stress to Crozier:

The atrocities in Poland are infinitely worse than anything which has yet appeared in the press, and the Poles themselves have truly reliable material – I know it and its sources. They themselves are deeply shaken by it and are behaving very well in the matter. I must add that they are fully aware that they themselves are next on the list.<sup>62</sup>

The Note itself was presented according to 21 points, in numbered paragraphs (dominating over half of page 6). The first sections (points 1 and 2) dealt with the Polish Government's

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<sup>61</sup> The *Yorkshire Post* devoted two sentences to the Polish Note: "As a result of the new methods of mass slaughter of the Jewish population of Poland and of the German plans to exterminate the Polish Nation, a Note has been handed by the Polish Government in London to the Allied Governments. The Note expresses confident belief that the Allies will find means of offering the hope that Germany might be effectively restrained." *YP* Fri 11 December 1942 p2 (6) NAZI EXTERMINATION PLANS, also *GH* Fri 11 December 1942 p5 (8) POLES ASK ALLIES TO STOP MASS SLAUGHTER BY NAZIS.

The Daily Telegraph did report the Polish Note but reduced the estimated figure of 3,130,000, to 1,000,000 in its account and although The Times report was much longer it omitted any mention of the camps at Chelm and Belzec. *op. cit.*, Scott p. 144

<sup>62</sup> Namier to Crozier 7 December 1942 *Manchester Guardian Archives*, 223/5/49



longstanding efforts (by diplomatic and official publications) to draw the world's attention to "the conduct of the German authorities of occupation, both military and civilian and the methods employed by them". The members of the Polish Government stated that they considered it their duty to bring this "fully authenticated information to all civilised countries". The main thrust of the Note was encapsulated in the third point:

3. Most recent reports present a horrifying picture of the position to which the Jews of Poland have been reduced. The new methods of mass slaughter applied during the last few months confirm the fact that the German authorities aim with systematic deliberation at the total extermination of Jewish population of Poland and of the many thousands of Jews deported to Poland from Western and Central European countries and from the German Reich itself.<sup>63</sup>

A substantial proportion of this very lengthy account dealt with the establishment of the Warsaw ghetto and the deportation of thousands of Jews into overcrowded conditions within its walls from 1940 onwards. It told of starvation, slave labour and the extremely high death rate in the ghetto and also took account of the mass murder of Jews carried out by the Nazis in Vilna, Lwow, and Rovno. In addition to specific descriptions (including new methods of murder) it also presented a broader review of the key events and decisions in Nazi policy towards the Jews in Poland:

#### HIMMLER'S ORDER

7. At first the executions were carried out by means of shooting. Subsequently, however, it is reported that the Germans applied new methods, such as poison gas by means of which the Jewish population was exterminated in Chelm, or by electrocution for which a camp was organised in Belzec, where in the course of March and April, 1942, the Jews from the provinces of Lublin, Lwow and Kielce to the number of tens of thousands were exterminated. Of Lublin's 30,000 Jewish inhabitants only 2,500 still survive in the city.

8. It has been reliably reported that on the occasion of his visit to the General Government of Poland in March, 1942, Himmler issued an order for the extermination of 50% of the Jews in Poland by the end of 1942. After Himmler's departure the Germans spread the rumour that the Warsaw Ghetto would be liquidated as from 1 April, 1942. This date was subsequently altered to June. Himmler's second visit to Warsaw in the middle of July 1942 became the signal for the commencement of the process of liquidation, the horror of which surprises anything known in the annals of history.<sup>64</sup>

The details of the report (drawn largely from Jan Karski's account<sup>65</sup>) were extremely precise in terms of specific dates and times of Nazi actions, descriptions of the way in which the ghetto was "liquidated", and the numbers of Jews forcibly deported to the extermination camps (7,000 daily). As had been indicated by Namier, it also included an account of the circumstances leading up to the suicide of the leader of the Warsaw ghetto *Judenrat* or Jewish Council, Adam Czerniakow (because the Nazis increased the first contingent to be deported on the first day to 10,000 to be followed by 7,000 on each subsequent day).

<sup>63</sup> MG Fri 11 December 1942 p6 (8) FULL TEXT OF POLISH NOTE TO THE ALLIES SYTEMATIC EXTERMINATION OF THE JEWS

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>65</sup> "The long report submitted by Edward Raczyński, the Polish representative to the Allied Governments on December 9, 1942 contained the fullest survey of the 'final solution'. No other Allied Government was remotely as outspoken at the time and for a long time after." Laqueur (1980) *op cit*, p.121

Points 16 to 19 dealt with the deportation of all the children from the Warsaw ghetto, including those taken from Jewish schools, orphanages and children's homes. Reiterating earlier statements, it said that it was not able to estimate the exact number of Jews killed in Poland since the Nazi invasion but all reports agreed that hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children had been killed and that of the 3,130,000 Jews in Poland before the war at least a third had perished. The Note ended with the Polish Government's belief that the Governments of the United Nations would share their opinion as to "the necessity not only of condemning the crimes committed by the Germans and punishing the criminals, but also of finding means of offering the hope that Germany might be effectively restrained from continuing to apply her methods of mass extermination".<sup>66</sup>

Not surprisingly, the public reaction to this news, as expressed in the letters pages of the papers, was swift. The next day a letter from C.J. Wright, President of Manchester and Salford Free Church Federal Council said:

The magnitude of the tragedy being perpetrated on the Jewish population in Nazi-occupied Europe stuns the imagination. The moral passion of humanity must be focused on this fiendish and unparalleled enormity. This must be expressed in undeviating resolve, in inexorable action, in enlightened and enlightening speech. What can be done? First, from every pulpit of the Allied nations let the word of relentless denunciation be as a scorching flame. Secondly, let the BBC broadcast continuously both to our people and the German people. The facts must be given with precision and with passion. Thirdly, an authoritative statement by the Governments of all the Allied nations must be made announcing their intention to hold responsible the designers and perpetrators of this crime against humanity.<sup>67</sup>

Another reader disagreed with the idea of a declaration. He did not want the Allies to make a "futile" gesture of moral horror but to "do something to save them now". Bertrand Coggle of Walkden wanted a plain offer of asylum to be made, and proposed a scheme through the Red Cross by which "unwanted" Jews could be sent to Sweden and then to Britain by air.<sup>68</sup> Similar schemes were put forward in the House of Commons. One M.P. (Sorensen) suggested that the Foreign Secretary, Eden, should approach the Vatican, and all neutral countries and invite them to make representations to the Nazis and to the Swedish Government to allow a temporary migration of Jews from Poland to Sweden "under appropriate guarantees, including the supply of human necessities by the United Nations".

The *Manchester Guardian's* Diplomatic correspondent believed that this particular scheme could be successful, if only to save the Jewish children in Poland, but thought that many other

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<sup>66</sup> *MG* Fri 11 December 1942 p6 (8) FULL TEXT OF THE POLISH NOTE

<sup>67</sup> *MG* Mon 14 December 1942 p4 (8) Letter: JEWS' EXTERMINATION

<sup>68</sup> *MG* Wed 16 December 1942 p5 (8) JEWISH PROBLEM

plans of action that had been suggested were “unfortunately quite inadequate to the size of the problem”.<sup>69</sup> The correspondent’s assessment was based on the premise that any offers of refuge or transit facilities (which had been made by Mexico and Turkey for Jewish children only) by neutral countries would be dependent on two conditions. First, any action would be dependent on neutral countries (and Britain itself) changing their policies towards war-time refugees from Nazi-occupied territories and allow Jewish refugees to find sanctuary. Second, it was more than likely that if large numbers of Jews *were* to be granted asylum then guarantees would be needed by each recipient country that the refugees would not overburden their food resources.

A good illustration of the tension between a desire to help Jews escape the Nazis and the practical impediments to any scheme came in a House of Commons report in the same issue of the *Manchester Guardian*. In an exchange between Eleanor Rathbone M.P. and the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, Rathbone called for a relaxation of Britain’s own Defence Regulations (which forbade the admission of any refugee to Britain who could not serve the war effort. This meant in practice that very few visas were issued to the refugees who applied). Morrison, without giving any reasons, replied that any alteration of the Regulations would have no substantial effect in helping Jews. Undeterred, Rathbone said that the reply was unsatisfactory and stated that the matter would be raised again at a later date.<sup>70</sup>

A report was also included (from the *Palcor* news agency, a British colonial agency covering the Middle East) of a meeting of the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Council in Jerusalem (dated December 6, before the release of the Polish Note) said that the Hebrew press noted with satisfaction the first reactions of the democratic world to the news of “Jewish martyrdom” and urged that the fullest possible accounts of the mass extermination of Jews in Nazi Europe should reach world opinion. It was decided to send a special delegation to America to explain the position of Jews in Europe and to study the possibilities of getting help.<sup>71</sup>

Two British reactions to the news were carried by the *Yorkshire Post*. The International Federation of Trades Unions in London warned German workers of “the failure to resist the Nazi campaign to exterminate the Jews”. The Federation had “refused to believe until now” that former German trade unionists had even passively tolerated the extermination programme and called for full retribution to be exacted on those who had carried out the murders. The

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<sup>69</sup> *MG* Tue 15 December 1942 p4 (8) RESCUING JEWS FROM POLAND Suggested Approach to Neutrals

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, Palestine Suggestions

same report included the reaction of the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Hertz, on the day after the Jewish day of mourning and prayer for the victims of the Nazis:

Dr. Hertz...appealed to the United Nations to open the gates of their countries and save at least the children from "mass poisoning and burial alive by Hitler and his hell-hounds. We are filled with horror at the deliberate killing of millions of defenceless men, women, and children. Poland has become a vast slaughterhouse of all Jews in Europe. Will the United nations open the gates of their countries to refugees from the Nazi inferno and help the few neutral states to receive them? Shame covers us as Jews, as Englishmen, as human beings, that even to this question we are not sure of an affirmative answer".<sup>72</sup>

Dr. Hertz then turned his attention on the press, a section of which he felt had not devoted sufficient attention to the extermination of the Jews in Poland:

The indifference which a portion of the British press and some Government circles display towards this most appalling massacre in history is amazing, especially after the protests of the Pope and the Primate, Cardinals and Archbishops. Public opinion must be roused to this satanic crime of murdering an entire nation as well as the infamy that would be ours if we were to shut our ears to its death cries. We turn to our beloved England that has for so many centuries been the conscience of Europe, that has been the leader of so many humanitarian crusades, and agonisingly we exclaim, 'England awake, awake, awake, Jerusalem thy sister calls'.<sup>73</sup>

It is interesting to compare this paper's account with the report of the speech in the *Manchester Guardian* and the full text which was published in the *Jewish Chronicle*. The full text included the phrase: "Will at least the children be saved from mass poisoning in the lethal chambers of Hitler, from being buried alive in thousands by his hell-hounds". The *Yorkshire Post* had omitted any reference to "lethal chambers" and also left out the "thousands" who had been buried alive in the *Jewish Chronicle* report. The editorial team of the *Yorkshire Post* had decided that for whatever reason – credibility, fear of accusations of exaggeration – to change the Chief Rabbi's words.

Further discrepancies were discernible in the *Manchester Guardian's* version of the speech which was longer and again, slightly different, but not because it was uneasy about terms (like "lethal chambers") the Chief Rabbi had included. It was distinctive primarily because it chose to emphasise other aspects of the speech, including the more critical and vehement tone of the speech. For example, it began:

"I am dumbfounded by the indifference in some quarters, both high and low, in this country to the tragedy of millions of defenceless people," said Dr. J. H. Hertz preaching yesterday at the synagogue of Bevis Marks on the day of fasting mourning and prayer for the victims of the mass massacres in Nazi lands.

Describing the Nazi slaughter of Jews in Europe to-day as unsurpassed in the annals of barbarism by the vastness of its extent and the diabolic methods.

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<sup>72</sup> YP Mon 14 December 1942 p2 (6) PUNISHMENT OF NAZI CULPRITS DEMANDED A TRADE UNION WARNING TO GERMAN WORKERS

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*,

Dr. Hertz, said that many people in England appeared to be unshaken by the pronouncements of Church leaders and that in some sections of the press and in some Government quarters a studied silence had been adopted which could not be but taken by the criminals of Berlin as an encouragement to perfect their technique.<sup>74</sup>

The paper had included the remark “dumbfounded” which (the *Yorkshire Post* had deliberately excluded it) conveyed the exasperation felt by the Chief Rabbi at the wider British reaction. In addition, apart from the *Jewish Chronicle*, it was the only paper to include Hertz’s particular description of the slaughter of Jews. Most importantly, it had included the section of the speech that directly accused sections of the press and the Government of adopting “a studied silence”.

Secondly, unlike the *Yorkshire Post*’s excision of the term “lethal chamber” the *Manchester Guardian*, at least in this case, appeared to be less wary of publishing detailed accounts of the Nazi treatment of Jews that may have been construed as “atrocities stories”. For instance, its article included a section of the speech that recounted an event which the Chief Rabbi said took place on July 27 near Kiev. Unusually, the apparent sensationalism of the story did not prevent its publication. According to Dr. Hertz, the Jewish inhabitants were told to assemble at a stadium, the mothers, about 500 of them, being told to hold their infants in their arms.

Shortly afterwards a number of German men appeared in football clothes. They snatched the infants out of their mothers arms and used them as footballs, kicking them round the arena. Soon the stadium was flowing with blood and everywhere was heard the cry of the mothers, rendered insane by the killing of the children before their eyes.<sup>75</sup>

But equally it should be pointed out that an apparent willingness to publish controversial content did not necessarily mean that the paper was less likely than the other papers to rework copy. For instance, it is possible to contrast the passage concerning public opinion in the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Jewish Chronicle* (“Public opinion must be roused to this satanic crime of murdering an entire nation as well as the infamy that would be ours if we were to shut our ears to its death cries”) with the abbreviated, *less* passionate version in the *Manchester Guardian*:

Will they at least open their gates to receive the survivors who have escaped and the children?  
Public opinion must be roused in this beloved England.<sup>76</sup>

Given the paper’s strong willingness to publicise and expose the Nazi extermination programme, it is difficult to see why this occurred. It certainly was not for reasons of space because the report below the speech was an equally long account of the reaction to the day of mourning. The two papers’ interpretation and presentation of this speech demonstrated how

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<sup>74</sup> MG Mon 14 December 1942 p3 (8) THE JEWISH DAY OF MOURNING Chief Rabbi’s Appeal to the United Nations

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*,

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

sensitive the reporting of subject/situation had become. Clearly, for the *Yorkshire Post*, there was still enough uncertainty about the possibilities of “lethal chambers” that it was better for the paper not to take any chances, even if quoting a respected member of the community. It seemed reluctant to publish anything that it thought of as suspicious, and had not been verified by respected sources. By contrast, the *Manchester Guardian*, in its enthusiasm for the subject, in its willingness to raise awareness of the plight of European Jews was willing to bend its own rules about evidential facts and include such a lurid account within its otherwise outstanding reporting of events and the British reaction to the news from Europe.

Despite the sizable Jewish communities in Leeds and Glasgow, neither the *Glasgow Herald* or the *Yorkshire Post* reported any of the events surrounding the official day of mourning in either city. Only the *Manchester Guardian* had reports of high attendances at services and speeches made in London, Manchester and Salford. For instance, Dr. Altmann, the Communal Rabbi who spoke at services at the Higher Broughton synagogue said:

A tragedy is unfolding compared with which all Jewry's past misfortunes seem of small dimensions. It has become unmistakably clear that there is a plan, a devilish method of extermination behind it all. Hitler has vowed to wipe out and destroy all the Jews under his sway and the more he realises that he is not going to win the war and the more he sees the writing on the wall the more fanatical becomes his insane hatred of the Jewish people. Can we remain composed and calm when this wholesale massacre of our innocent and defenceless brethren is going on day and night? The voice of humanity must be raised in a most solemn protest and warning. But it is not enough to issue a protest and warning. Practical measures should be taken to rescue as many as possible. Let them save above all the children.<sup>77</sup>

Altmann hoped that the Pope, using the Red Cross could help to organise the rescue of Jews from the ghettos and camps and transfer them to neutral countries where they would be cared for by an international body until the end of the war.

Altmann's suggestion was one of many proposals that were being discussed during that week. It was reported from New York that Sumner Welles, the American Under Secretary of State had conferred with Litvinoff, the Soviet Ambassador and other European allies had exchanged views on the details contained in the Polish Note.<sup>78</sup> It was clear to the *Manchester Guardian*'s correspondent that the main decisions about what to do in response to the knowledge of the Nazi extermination of European Jews rested with Britain, the United States and Russia. Although little was known by the press at this stage about what policy would be established, the consensus was that nothing substantial could be achieved (in terms of rescue) unless there was radical change in the methods used by the Allies to cope with war-time refugees.

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<sup>77</sup> MG Mon 14 December 1942 p3 (8) OBSERVANCE IN MANCHESTER “Protest and Warning Not Enough”

<sup>78</sup> MG Mon 14 December 1942 p5 (8) THE MURDERED JEWS LITVINOFF SEES MR WELLES

The most widely discussed suggestion, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, was that all neutral nations, in addition to belligerents, should be asked to make an active contribution by admitting a number of Jews in return for Allied assurances about the ultimate future of the refugees. Outside of Europe, and despite offers of asylum from countries like Costa Rica, Palestine was seen by many as the obvious and best solution to the “problem”. Aside from the strong historical links, it was seen as a territory with an acute labour shortage and more importantly, it had a population willing to take in European Jews and provide for them. However, it was equally obvious to the paper’s correspondent that unless the British administration radically changed its policy towards refugees from enemy territories, Palestine would remain out of reach.<sup>79</sup>

On December 17 a House of Commons report in the *Manchester Guardian* discussed the Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden’s forewarning of an announcement of an Allied Declaration on the Nazi massacres against Jews under their control. It did not disguise its frustration with Eden’s answers to MPs who enquired about the precise nature of the Government’s intentions on the matter. It was known that a solemn denunciation of the Nazi murder programme and a call for retribution would be made, but no indication was given about which, if any, practical steps would be taken to rescue Jews. When one M.P. (Sorensen) suggested to Eden that he should approach the Vatican and all neutral Governments to encourage them to make representations to the Germans, Eden replied:

It will be for the Governments directly concerned to take the initiative in making such proposals if they think it is useful to do so.<sup>80</sup>

This response, the paper believed, presented Eden “at his non-committal best”. What did he mean by “the Governments directly concerned”? Did it mean the neutral countries and the Vatican? If Eden did mean these states, did it follow that the British Government was *not* “directly concerned”? Under the sub-heading “Things Britain Could Do”, it asked if Government intended to review the defence regulations that excluded war-time refugees?

Ambiguity is not native to Mr. Eden and it is not promising to find him talking like this. How can we possibly urge Allied and Neutral countries to help the Jews if we proclaim that we cannot do anything ourselves?<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *MG* Wed 16 December 1942 p5 (8) AID FOR JEWS Suggested Call to Free Nations “Open Frontiers”

<sup>80</sup> *MG* Thur 17 December 1942 p4 (8) PLANS FOR RESCUE OF JEWS Ambiguous Answer by Mr. Eden

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*,

The report said that Eleanor Rathbone M.P. intended to raise the Defence regulations in one of the last debates before the Christmas recess. But it was also noted that her motion came last on the list of subjects to be debated on that day, after fish-zoning, civil aviation and coal.

It seems a queer inversion of values to put fish zoning before the fate of four million human beings. The House is doing itself a good deal less than justice, and it was well that Miss Rathbone should have reminded it that the Lords have debated the Polish massacres three times while the Commons have not discussed it at all.<sup>82</sup>

In keeping with the tendency to group all reports with a Jewish theme in the same article, the *Manchester Guardian* published figures provided by the Ministry of Economic Warfare which listed the numbers of Jewish deportees from Nazi-occupied territories. The *Glasgow Herald* also published these figures on the same day but also included the number of “others” (meaning “political prisoners” according to the paper) that had been deported from each occupied country:

Occupied France – Jews 30,000 Others - 17,000	Holland – 40,000 Others 45,000
Former Vichy France – Jews 20,000 Others – 10,000	Roumania – Jews 250,000
Alsace and Lorraine – Jews 73,000	Slovakia – Jews 57,000
Luxembourg – 25,000	Norway – Jews 1000 Others 5000

A spokesman for the Ministry said that it was not known what had happened to these people (about 500,000). It was thought that those who had technical skills were made to work in heavy industries.

As to the remainder of the Jews we don't know what happens; they may be subject to the policy of extermination.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, *GH* Thur 17 December 1942 p5 (6), JEWS AND POLITICAL PRISONERS' FATE Deportation Figures



## **Chapter V**

***The Manchester Guardian The Yorkshire Post The Glasgow Herald***

**The Allied Declaration**

**December 1942**

## The Allied Declaration

The three regional newspapers reported the Allied Declaration of December 17 in broadly the same terms. A 400 word statement, made by the Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, officially acknowledging and condemning the Nazi extermination programme against the Jews of Europe had been received by MPs in the House of Commons with an unprecedented level of respect and solemnity. But it was this reception, rather than the content of the Declaration itself which provided the main story in most of the following day's editions. Indeed, as a result of the extraordinary events in Parliament, each paper's report became structured according to a broadly similar framework of interpretation.

This framework had three identifiable features. The first common feature, and starting point for each report was clearly the Declaration itself. Despite the fact that it recognised the fact that the Nazis intended to murder all Jews across Europe it was not presented by any of the papers as national or international news – it was not, after all, unexpected or new information. In addition, although the subject matter involved many elements which were common to each type of reporting, the unprecedented nature and enormous scope of the problem meant that it did not fit easily into either of these conventional categories. Instead, it was presented across the three titles as an extraordinary Parliamentary report on “a memorable event”. Consequently it was this story, rather than the more complex, multi-dimensional issue of the Nazi policy and Allied response, which dominated the coverage.

The second shared characteristic of the reporting was that critical analysis of the information contained in the Declaration (including the subsequent questions put to Eden by MPs) was overshadowed by the coverage devoted to MPs extraordinary reaction to it. Detailed descriptions of MPs emotional statements and the silent protest in response to the news filled the accounts. As a result - the third common element in the three papers' coverage – editorial opinion about what the Allies should or could do next to save the Jews under Nazi rule became relegated to a much lower position in the discussion than might have been the case.

Of the three papers, the *Manchester Guardian's* coverage was the most extensive.<sup>1</sup> It devoted a lengthy leader column on page 4 of its December 18 edition, two extensive reports on page 5 from its Political and Diplomatic correspondents plus a very detailed account of

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<sup>1</sup> MG Fri 18 December 1942 p4 (8) PROTEST AND ACTION

MG Fri 18 December 1942 p5 (8) URGENCY OF PRACTICAL MEASURES

MG Fri 18 December 1942 p6 (8) UNITED DECLARATION ON JEWISH MASSACRES MR EDEN'S STATEMENT

proceedings in the House of Commons and House of Lords which dominated half of page 6. A leader column on page 2 of the *Yorkshire Post* discussed the Declaration at great length but did not reproduce the full text of the statement and instead paraphrased Eden's statement to the House within its commentary. It briefly reflected on the event in the Commons in its *London Notes and Comment* and also included a short article which emphasised the efforts Britain had already made to help European refugees. The *Glasgow Herald* was the only paper not to discuss the Declaration in a leader. Its comment was limited to two lengthy Parliamentary reports on the events in the Commons and the Lords.

The *Manchester Guardian* presented the most comprehensive account of the announcement of the Declaration and was the only paper of the three to reproduce it *verbatim*. Eden was asked by the most prominent Jewish MP, Sidney Silverman, if he had any statement to make regarding the Nazi plans to deport all Jews from the occupied countries to eastern Europe and put them to death. Eden replied:

Yes, Sir I regret to have to inform the House that reliable reports have recently reached the government regarding the barbarous and inhuman treatment to which the Jews are being subjected in German occupied Europe. They have in particular received a Note from the Polish Government which was also communicated to the other Allied Nations and which has received wide publicity in the press. The British government have as a result been in consultation with the United States and Soviet governments and with the other Allied Governments directly concerned, and I should like to communicate to the House the text of the following Declaration which is being made public to-day at this hour in London, Moscow and Washington:-

The attention of the governments of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland the United States, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, the U.S.S.R, and Yugoslavia, and of the French National Committee has been drawn to numerous reports from Europe that the German authorities, not content with denying persons of Jewish race in all territories over which their barbarous rule has been extended the elementary human rights, are now carrying into effect Hitler's oft-repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe.

From all occupied countries Jews are being transported in conditions of appalling horror and brutality to Eastern Europe. In Poland which has been the made the principle Nazi slaughterhouse, the ghettos established by the German invaders are being systematically emptied of all Jews except a few highly skilled workers required for war industries. None of those taken away are ever heard from again. Those able-bodied are slowly worked to death in labour camps, the infirm are left to die of exposure and starvation or are deliberately massacred in mass executions. The number of victims of these cold blooded cruelties is reckoned in many hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent men, women, and children.

The above mentioned Governments and the French National Committee condemn in the strongest possible terms this bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination. They declare that such events can only strengthen the resolve of all freedom-loving peoples to overthrow the barbarous Hitlerite tyranny. They re-affirm their solemn resolution to ensure that those responsible for these crimes shall not escape retribution and to press on with the necessary practical measures to ensure this end. 2

Silverman, while thanking Eden for his statement "giving eloquent expression to the conscience of humanity, asked him to clear up two points: first, whether by the phrase "those

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<sup>2</sup> MG Fri 18 December 1942 p6 (8) UNITED DECLARATION ON JEWISH MASSACRES MR EDEN'S STATEMENT

responsible” was to be understood as only those who gave orders or was it to include anyone actively associated in carrying out the orders? His second question asked whether Eden was consulting with the United Nations Governments and with his own colleagues as to what constructive measures of relief were immediately practicable. Eden responded:

Both Mr. Silverman and the House will understand that the declaration I have just read is an international declaration agreed to by the different governments I have mentioned. So far as responsibility is concerned, I will certainly say that it is the intention that all persons who can properly be held responsible for these crimes whether ringleaders or actual perpetrators, should be treated alike. As regards the second part of the question, it is a matter of immense difficulty. We shall do what we can to alleviate these horrors although I fear that what we can do might be slight.<sup>3</sup>

The paper’s political correspondent, C. A. Lambert said that the House’s demeanour while Eden was reading the Declaration was “worlds removed from the day-to-day bearing of the House. A stranger might have thought he was intruding on a religious service. The House was hushed. Every syllable of the Foreign Secretary dropped clear and distinct into the silence”<sup>4</sup>

It was the convention that only *questions* could be asked by other MPs following a Ministerial statement, so an unexpected intervention by another Jewish member of the House, the Liberal MP James de Rothschild went completely against parliamentary procedure. He thanked Mr. Eden for "the eloquent and just denunciation" of the German crimes and in a voice shaking with emotion said:

May I express with feelings of great emotion the really grateful feeling that I am certain permeates the Jewish subjects of the King in this country and throughout the Empire for the eloquent and just denunciation that has just been made. Among the subjects of the King there are many who have been in this country only for a generation or so, and but for the grace of God they themselves might be among the victims of Nazi tyranny at the present time. They might have been in those ghettos, concentration camps, and slaughterhouses. They still have many relations whom they mourn. They I feel sure will be grateful to Mr. Eden and the United Nations.

I trust that news of this proclamation will through the means of the B.B.C. percolate through the German infested countries and that it might give some faint hope and courage to the unfortunate victims of torment, of insult and degradation. They have shown in their misery and unhappiness great fortitude and courage.

I hope that when this news goes to them they will feel that they are supported by the British government and the United Nations, and they will be able to continue to show that they are able to signify that they still hold up the dignity of man.<sup>5</sup>

Rothschild’s speech was, according to the rules of the House of Commons, completely out of order. “It shows how far the House had got from its moorings that this speech – it was nothing else – was made without check or challenge”. When the debate was about to pass to "the orders of the day" a Labour member, William Cluse, rose from a back bench seat and

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>4</sup> *MG* Fri 18 December 1942 p5 (8) THE JEWISH ATROCITIES A Memorable Scene in the House of Commons

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, *YP* Fri 18 December 1942 p2 (6) JEWS HITLER’S REASON

*GH* Fri 18 December 1942 p6 (8) M.P.S’ SYMPATHY FOR JEWS IMPRESSIVE TRIBUTE

proposed to the Speaker that members should stand in witness of their detestation of Germany's barbarism:

In a moment all members were on their feet, and the Lord Chancellor, in the peers gallery, with them. Nothing comparable with this has happened before. The House stood and sang "God save the King" when war was declared in 1914, and it rather went off its head when Mr. Chamberlain announced his journey to Munich, but these were occasions when national feelings were racing the flood. Yesterday the Commons rose in calm to perform something like a judicial action to brand Germany for these infamies. this was the House of Commons in one of its great moments. It has a genius for the appropriate on these unrehearsed occasions.<sup>6</sup>

The demonstration was all the more impressive because it was not planned in advance but was made on the spontaneous suggestion of a private member. Members could have gone on all day heaping reproaches upset the German Government and still have said less than was conveyed by this unanimous act of rebuke to the Nazis and sympathy with their victims. The silence of the British House of Commons will resound throughout Europe.<sup>7</sup>

Under a headline, "Vaster than the Armenian Massacres" the *Glasgow Herald* report on the reaction in the House of Lords quoted comments made by one of the few Jewish peers, Lord Samuel, on what he termed "one of the greatest calamities that have ever befallen mankind". He argued that the Nazi atrocities against the Jews were on a far vaster scale than the Armenian massacres of fifty years before:

These dreadful things are the result outcome of cold, deliberate, planned conscious cruelty of human beings. The Armenian massacres were only remotely parallel. The Declaration's promise of full retribution is just and necessary, but in the mind of Jews throughout the world and in the minds of others of all creeds in all countries arises the question whether some positive action can still be taken for the rescue of these unhappy victims, particularly the children. Will the British government, will the United Nations, listening to the cries of a people in agony bring them some succour?<sup>8</sup>

The Bishop of London, who also spoke on behalf of the absent Archbishop of Canterbury stated:

These deeds are so repugnant to the laws of God and to every human instinct of decency that whoever takes his share must receive due retribution for it. I hope it may be clear that we and our allies will offer free asylum gladly for all who can escape and remove themselves from the clutches of this Nazi terror. This is an occasion when any difficulties and arguments must give way to a plain call, deep and moving of common humanity.

Neutral countries should be encouraged in every possible way to offer an asylum to the refugees and sanctuary. It would be an encouragement to them and to the world if the Allied nations were able to say "For everyone of the Jewish race whom you receive from this tyranny we will take our share in the cost of their maintenance now and when the war is over we will replace them elsewhere in a permanent and abiding home."<sup>9</sup>

Lord Addison, leader of the Labour Peers said:

One can only hope that the practical measures indicated will be pressed on, as I feel sure they will, with the utmost vigour. If ever there was a crime in the history of the world which deserved the obliteration of those responsible, it is this series of crimes.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *MG* Fri 18 December 1942 p5 (8) THE JEWISH ATROCITIES

<sup>7</sup> *YP* Fri 18 December 1942 p2 (6) A WORLDWIDE PROTEST

<sup>8</sup> *GH* Fri 18 December 1942 p6 (8) "VASTER THAN ARMENIAN MASSACRES"

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*,

Despite the intense interest in the reaction of MPs and peers, the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Yorkshire Post* were able to look beyond what took place in Parliament. The *Yorkshire Post* believed that the timing of the Declaration was apposite because of “the muted way that the news of the systematic slaughter of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe had been received by the general public”<sup>11</sup>. Its leader column suggested that because news of Nazi ill-treatment of Jews was a long established news story, it had ceased to capture or excite the public’s attention. It was also aware that some of the accounts had been so horrendous that many felt they must have been exaggerated but it was keen to stress that the Foreign Secretary’s statement reflected the reality of the situation:

Ten years of Nazi rule have accustomed the world to stories of hideous persecution: but even a world grown used to Nazi brutality must find it hard to believe that men can pursue against their fellow human beings the “bestial policy of cold blooded extermination” described by Mr. Eden in Parliament yesterday. Yet Mr. Eden did not exaggerate. Hitler has sworn to wipe out every Jew in occupied Europe and, as we wrote here recently, he is hastening to carry out his maniacal plan before his power is overthrown. He has accomplished much already. It has been reported from trustworthy sources that extermination camps have been set up in Poland to which Jews have been dragged in hundreds and thousands for mass execution. Every day between three and ten thousand of these helpless unfortunates have been packed into goods trucks and carried off from the Polish ghettos. Neither children nor, old people escape this torment. Human misery may have been seen on this scale before; but it seems doubtful whether it has ever been caused by man’s deliberate inhumanity to man. Mechanisation has ensured that the massacres carried out by modern barbarians shall be more thorough and wholesale than those their forerunners achieved.<sup>12</sup>

It was clear to the paper that the Declaration marked a turning point in the British reaction to the plight of European Jewry. It was no longer a familiar, old story of Nazi victimisation and persecution. It represented a new awareness of an active programme of state-organised mass murder. Both the British establishment and the public now recognised that a war crime was being committed against innocent men, women and children – simply because they were Jews.

Everyone in Britain is asking: “Is there nothing else we can do to stop this savagery?”<sup>13</sup>

After six months of consistent coverage of this “savagery”, the *Manchester Guardian* saw the Declaration as a good (if belated) starting point, an opportunity to galvanise support for relief efforts and to seriously discuss rescue methods. It recognised that the problem represented an enormous challenge but felt that Britain had a duty to do as much as it could to help as many as possible:

It is for Parliament and the people who have welcomed it to see that this is taken seriously, that the necessary machinery to carry out the decision is now discussed and soon set up, that the indignation of the moment is not allowed, having expressed itself in brave words, to die

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<sup>11</sup> YP Fri 18 December 1942 p2 (6) A WORLDWIDE PROTEST

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*,

ineffectually away. Nor must we merely soothe our own feelings with the Declaration, the warning, and the Commons demonstration. The British wireless must be used, to bring the knowledge of all three to every country, but especially to the neutrals, the Axis vassals, the Axis peoples, and in particular Germany. Having done this we reach only the beginning of our task. We have the duty plain and inescapable, of helping the victims both to escape, and if they have been so fortunate, to live.

The problem of rescue is baffling: but nothing should be neglected that might offer safety to even to a small portion of Hitler's intended victims. The present position in Poland is a challenge to every civilised nation. There can be no dallying, no growing weary with such monstrous evils to be ended.<sup>14</sup>

As well as providing the most enthusiastic response of the three papers, the *Manchester Guardian* was also the most critical of the wording of the Allied Declaration and the British Government's (as represented by Eden's answers to questions) attitude towards what could or could not be done:

At this point what took place in the Commons becomes less satisfactory. It is untrue that nothing can be done in rescue work. It is only true that nothing can be done easily. It is also true that if little or nothing is done it will be because we are put off by difficulties which we ought to assume, as a first principle, can be overcome if we will it.<sup>15</sup>

Referring to Eden's comment that there were "tremendous geographical and other difficulties in the matter" both the Commons report and the leader column felt that he was oppressed by the obstacles hindering any attempts at rescue:

Mr. Eden was weak when it came to the possibilities of positive relief. He sees the difficulties large, and no doubt they are great, but they do not become less by calling them "immense" or "tremendous". Limited in their scope though each may be, practical suggestions have been made for assisting those Jews who can escape, but Mr. Eden did not touch upon them.<sup>16</sup>

...they should be cited not as a sign that we are going to fail but as a proof of our determination not to let even such obstacles stand in the way of success. Besides there is no "inevitability" about it. There are definite, known means of helping the Jews in this calamity.

In the occupied countries of Europe there is much sympathy for the Jews. That can be stimulated. Around Germany there are countries which political refugees have always reached and which Jewish refugees will now reach in larger numbers. Such countries can be encouraged and helped in various ways. It is possible, again, that some Jews might be exchanged against some Germans now held in Allied countries (if willing to return).

These are questions which the Allied Governments should now be concerning themselves. Are they doing so? Are they making the plans? We want to hear more about things done and less about the difficulties of doing them.<sup>17</sup>

As editor and main leader writer, Crozier was one of the few to draw attention to the fact that Eden's stress on "the desire of the United Nations to do everything they can to provide an asylum for these people" deflected attention (and a degree of responsibility) away from any immediate measures the British Government could take. In the leader, he asked: "What shall we do, then about admitting refugees to this country?" It called the Home Secretary's reply to

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<sup>14</sup> MG Fri 18 December 1942 p4 (8) PROTEST AND ACTION

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>16</sup> MG Fri 18 December 1942 p5 (8) THE JEWISH ATROCITIES A Memorable Scene in the House of Commons

<sup>17</sup> MG Fri 18 December 1942 p4 (8) PROTEST AND ACTION

Eleanor Rathbone's call to relax the regulations regarding visas and transit visas - because it could have no "substantial" effect on the sum total of victims - "a frivolous objection".

This opinion was also based on the Government's official attitude towards immigration to Palestine which it described as "a grudging, niggling policy", and which it regarded as "monstrous at this climax of misery"<sup>18</sup>. To the *Manchester Guardian*, Palestine represented an obvious solution. It had room for large numbers of people (the three months quota up until the end of 1942 was three thousand principal immigrants, of whom one thousand could be children) and it was one of the few countries which (theoretically) refugees could actually reach from Eastern Europe.

The policy should be revised, these miserable barriers thrown down and Jewish refugees, both adult and child, largely admitted. Timorously we will not let any who come from Nazi countries enter Palestine, lest they should be Nazi agents, a principle which as applied to the Jews is as stupid as it is unjust, because of all the people flying from "extermination" will not offend, and also there is no difficulty and there has never been any difficulty in guarding against whatever remote danger, if any, might exist.<sup>19</sup>

The paper concluded its assessment by arguing that the Declaration was necessary but by no means sufficient – words needed to be backed up with actions:

There is much disappointment that, apart from the promise of eventual punishment for those who are perpetrating these inhuman cruelties, it was not found possible for the Foreign Secretary to announce any measures or even any prospects for saving the Jews. The threat of future punishment may prove to be a deterrent, but it is not very likely, and it is unfortunately improbable that many Jews will owe the preservation of their lives to it.<sup>20</sup>

It is not enough to declare, to warn, to demonstrate. It is not enough to encourage other peoples - the small peoples. It is not enough to say that we ourselves "will provide an asylum" to the refugees while we do not give it where we can, while we do not give it in Palestine, which both needs and has room for many immigrants.<sup>21</sup>

Admittedly providing for those who have already escaped from the immediate clutches of the Axis is not the whole problem or the final problem. But first things should be dealt with first. The inter-Governmental consultations can be extended beyond the scope of the Allied Governments if that has not been done already. There are many people who have ideas about steps for saving the Jews. It is widely felt that the matter should not be allowed to rest where it is.

The oppressed nations want deeds. They have had to live on hope so long that Declarations and speeches have necessarily lost some of their force. Among them there are people who are hiding the hunted, rescuing Jewish children and taking them to safety, often at peril to themselves. It is understandable that such people who are closer to the real thing are not satisfied with Declarations.<sup>22</sup>

The frustration felt by Crozier at the lack of any overall plan to aid European Jews was not helped by two telegrams from Lambert on December 17 and 18, underlining the British

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*,

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

<sup>20</sup> MG Fri 18 December 1942 p5 (8) URGENCY OF PRACTICAL MEASURES

<sup>21</sup> MG Fri 18 December 1942 p4 (8) PROTEST AND ACTION

<sup>22</sup> MG Fri 18 December 1942 p5 (8) URGENCY OF PRACTICAL MEASURES



Government's intransigence on the matter, and suggesting that there was little point in discussing any rescue plans as these plans would only encourage false hopes:

I DO NOT KNOW OF ANY "PRACTICAL PROPOSALS" WHICH ARE CONTEMPLATED BY THE GOVERNMENT. ON THE CONTRARY THE OFFICIAL PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS SAID THAT FALSE HOPES CONTAINED IN THE VARIOUS SUGGESTIONS SHOULD NOT BE ENCOURAGED.

IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE GOVT INTEND NOTHING BEYOND MORAL CONDEMNATION OF THE JEWISH PERSECUTION. WOLF AND I FROM OUR INQUIRIES SHARE THE PESSIMISM EXPRESSED IN BOARDMAN'S SPEECH AND FEEL WE CAN ADD NOTHING TO IT TONIGHT<sup>23</sup>

On the same day, December 17, Crozier also received a letter from Eleanor Rathbone giving her impressions of the Declaration in which she drew particular attention to the *Manchester Guardian's* coverage of the subject:

First I must thank you for your magnificent efforts over the Jewish massacre question. You have done more than all the rest of the British press put together and I have pointed that out in some of my many approaches to other Editors, personal or through people who knew them. These efforts have seemed worth while as, whether by coincidence or not, the paper approached has usually published a leader and a few reports within a few days. But it too often stops there. Nobody but you seems to have realised that this is so great a tragedy that it deserves as much publicity as, say, the Beveridge Report though I cannot be supposed indifferent to that<sup>24</sup>

She went on to say that she was uncertain about the value of the Declaration, if the immediate reactions in the Commons was any indicator. She seemed exasperated and amazed by the response in the House, with the Speaker saying that the "zoning of fish" excited very general interest and so had precedence over any discussion about visas for Jewish refugees. She was similarly dismayed by the response of her fellow MPs, some of whom were more than willing to "say nasty things about our having admitted enough Jews already":

...the whole atmosphere following the Declaration and the ignoring by most of the press of all mention of rescue measures fills me with deep uneasiness. I feel that the result might be that politicians and the public may feel that something substantial has been done by the Declaration and that they can relieve their consciences of the whole unpleasant business. There is nothing more dangerous than a relieved conscience, The danger of it not only affects the general public but the chief Ministers. Mr. Eden charged me with ingratitude for his efforts... he said: "wasn't it better to do something for the whole of Jewry than for fifty or so escaped victims who might conceivably be got to safety?" As though the two were alternatives!<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile in London Lambert kept Crozier in touch with the latest developments. He said that no further steps were being taken for the rescue of the Jews that he could discover. Russian representatives in London knew of nothing beyond the joint moral condemnation and neither did the Polish Government in-exile. "The Poles", according to Lambert, did suggest that the Allies should "take reprisals by bombarding German cities apart from military objectives" which he thought was impractical and undesirable. But the Polish representatives also said that the Germans simply did not believe that the British intended to punish war

<sup>23</sup> Lambert to Crozier: December 17. Copy in the *Manchester Guardian* Archive Refugees Box 223/5/72, Lambert to Crozier: December 18. Copy in the *Manchester Guardian* Archive Refugees Box 223/5/67

<sup>24</sup> Rathbone to Crozier: December 18. Copy in the *Manchester Guardian* Archive Refugees Box 223/5/78

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*,

criminals. They were certain that the Russians would, but they did not believe that the British were serious about it. Lambert's Polish contacts thought that if the British made the Germans really believe that they were going to punish them, then the deterrent effect might be considerable.

Lambert went on to inform his editor of Eden's own reaction to the Declaration:

As to ourselves, I am told that Eden is in great distress about the reactions to the declaration. As I was told to-day "he is nearly in tears about it." General Malcolm's letter in the "Times" to-day particularly upset him. I told my F.O. man, who listens pretty carefully to what I say that the Government simply cannot convince the people that the Regulation that the foreigner to be admitted must contribute to the war effort must be upheld in the face of such a position as the refugee Jews are now in.<sup>26</sup>

Lambert concluded this section of the letter by indicating that regardless of the work going on behind the scenes "It was pointed out to me that the things we were doing to help could not be talked about."<sup>27</sup>

For the Government, or more specifically the Foreign Office and Eden (to whom all responsibility for the plight of European Jews was directed by Churchill), the Declaration had achieved two specific goals but had failed to achieve a third. The Government had delivered what many British Jews and respected religious figures and bodies had asked of them; a sharp public condemnation of the Nazis murder campaign against the Jews. A second, more tacit goal, was to relieve some of the pressure on the *British* Government to do something for the Jews of Europe by widening the burden of decision making:

The obligation assumed for the Jews' suffering would no longer be Britain's responsibility alone. Now any national or local British initiative could be rejected in favour of international initiatives. There were certain distinct advantages for Whitehall in international "initiatives": Time could be gained and failures be papered over. After all, public control over such initiatives was virtually nil. The wool could be pulled over the public's eyes in the name of wartime security and confidentiality.<sup>28</sup>

At this stage in the war, it preferable for Eden to state publicly that Britain could not take unilateral action on this issue. He was able to deflect attention away from the Foreign Office and say: "In spite of the many complexities of the situation, we are making an attempt to deal with it as far as possible on an international basis."<sup>29</sup>

The third goal concerned the "public sphere": how the news of the extermination programme was discussed in the news media via comments by "the great and the good" of British

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<sup>26</sup> Lambert to Crozier: December 21 Copy in the *Manchester Guardian* Archive Refugees Box 223/5/81

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>28</sup> Sompolinsky, M. T. (1999) *op.cit.*, p.88

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.89

society<sup>30</sup> such as the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Eleanor Rathbone and Victor Gollancz or by contributions from ordinary members of the public in the letters pages of the press. The Foreign Office may have hoped that the Declaration would alleviate some of the demands being made of it to 'do something' about what the Nazis were doing to the Jews, rather than mark the beginning of a public discussion and campaign about what should be done to save the Jews. In other words, from a British Government point of view, the successful outcome of the first two objectives of the Declaration would be cancelled out if public discussion in the press resulted in even more pressure being put on the Foreign Office by demands for rescue. This however, was not a problem in the short-term, as the suspension of Parliament for the Christmas recess meant that there was no opportunity for MPs to voice wider public concerns and confront Eden and other ministers about what they intended to do next.

Eden himself, as Lambert had indicated, was particularly upset by a letter General Malcolm had written to the *Times*. Malcolm, who had been a former High Commissioner for German Refugees, said that the Government would "make itself a hypocrite, if after issuing the Declaration, they did nothing to save Jewish lives."<sup>31</sup> He argued that it was right that the public should be shocked and horrified by recent revelations, but that British reactions had been very slow – especially as Hitler had repeatedly announced that Jews would be exterminated. Malcolm was similarly unsatisfied by the evasive nature of Eden's answer to Silverman, i.e. "there are immense geographical and other difficulties in the matter":

So unlike Hitler we cannot convert words into deeds and must be content with promises which will not save one single life.<sup>32</sup>

There is good evidence that the Foreign Office did put pressure on the press to prevent further discussion of rescue measures in the national press. In fact it instructed its News Department to "persuade" newspapers such as the *Times* not publish any similar, "embarrassing" letters:

The Foreign Office responded to Malcolm's letter by instructing its News Department to intervene with the *Times*, and other newspapers in order to 'persuade' them not to publish such pro-rescue material. As A.W.G. Randall minuted the next day: 'It is a pity Sir N. Malcolm wasn't persuaded not to send this letter... I understand the News Dept. is persuading "The *Times*" not to follow up this letter with others; in present circumstances demands put forward in public are not only an embarrassment, but provide enemy propaganda with material.'<sup>33</sup>

The "persuasion", at least in the case of the *Times* "and other newspapers" proved to be successful but significantly, it was not thought that similar pressure could be brought to bear

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<sup>30</sup> Kushner, A. The Impact of the Holocaust on British Society. Contemporary Record, Vol. 5, No. 2, Autumn 1991, p. 356

<sup>31</sup> Scott, (1994) *op. cit.*, p196

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p.197. PRO. F.O. 371/32682 piece 188.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*,

on the *Manchester Guardian*. The Foreign Office believed that they might be able to arrest any discussion of rescue in its pages for a time, but thought that a paper with such strong Jewish links could not be prevented from discussing rescue plans indefinitely:

Two days later, another Foreign Office official minuted: 'For the present the Times do not propose to open their correspondence columns for further discussion of this subject. The points taken by Sir Neill Malcolm have not been followed up actively by the press generally. The Manchester Guardian is an exception. The points made by Mr. Randall have been put to the Manchester Guardian which has not since pursued the matter. But I think they will return to it under prodding from the Jews.'<sup>34</sup>

Not content with attempting to alter the content of newspapers, especially the publication of critical letters, the Foreign Office also tried to prevent certain prominent figures from writing letters in the first place:

Indeed, the Foreign Office felt the matter to be so sensitive that they even tried to 'persuade' individuals not to make public demands for rescue measures. On 31 December, for example, A. Walker minuted: 'Sir W. Deedes proposed on behalf of some association of charitable societies to follow up Sir N. Malcolm's letter with another prodding epistle, but we have written a letter to discourage him on the grounds that the whole business is under consideration.'<sup>35</sup>

Did such pressure on newspapers alter content? According to Scott, at least three national newspapers did not address the subject in any great depth over the following weeks:

The Foreign Office's observation that "the points taken by Sir Neill Malcolm have not been followed up actively by the press generally", was accurate. After 22 December the Press fell conspicuously silent. The Daily Telegraph, for example, did not print another article on the situation of the Jews until 6 January 1943; the Daily Mail, moreover, waited until 29 January 1943. The Times' coverage of the crisis became negligible; its articles were incredibly short and usually inconspicuously positioned on the page.'<sup>36</sup>

In contrast to the national papers, it can be seen that the regional press did not suffer from the same kind of "persuasion" towards the end of December 1942. Letters from the public concerning the plight of Jews and the Declaration continued to be published in Manchester and Glasgow - indeed the Declaration was the starting point in the latter for a lengthy public exchange in the *Glasgow Herald* on Jews at home and abroad which persisted well into January - see below). Though the *Yorkshire Post* did not print any of its readers' views on the matter during aftermath of Eden's statement, it continued to address the Nazi extermination campaign and Allied retribution in a manner which did not suggest that its freedom to report had been curtailed by any Foreign Office directives. Although its coverage it did not specifically address or discuss *rescue measures*, this fact that cannot be taken as an indication that it was put under any external pressure.

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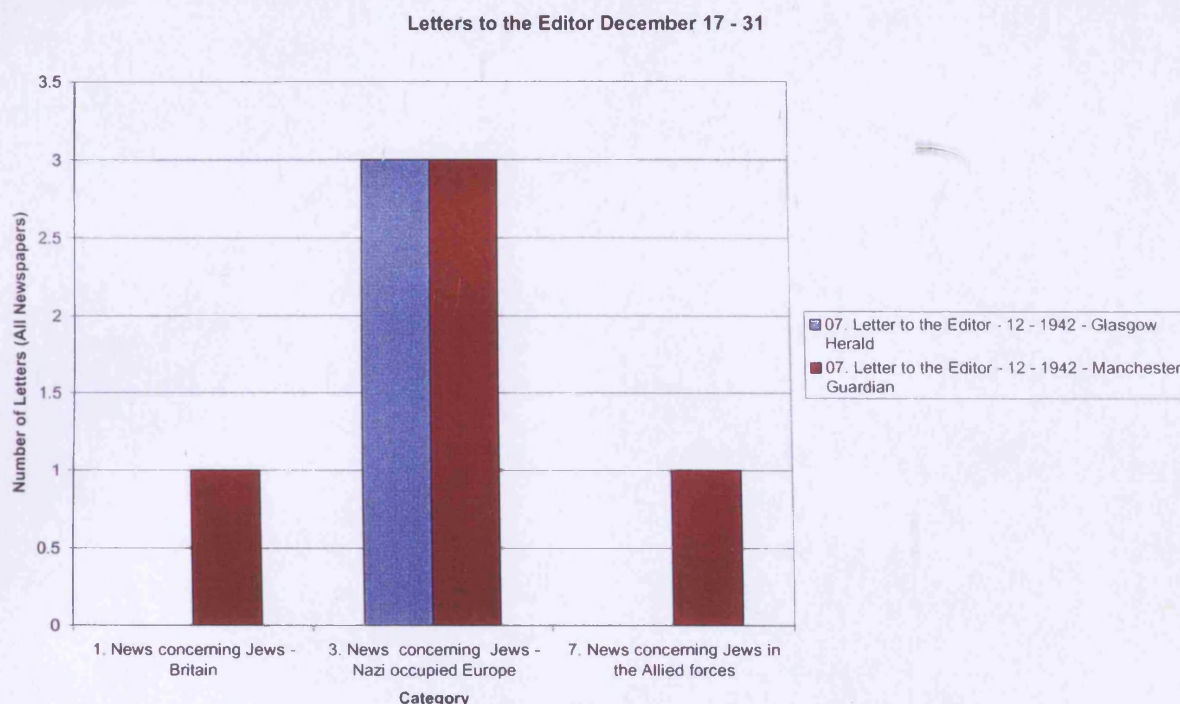
<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, PRO. F.O. 371/32682 piece 189. p. p197

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, PRO. F.O. 371/32682 piece 190. p. 198

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*,

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That said, though there was no evidence of restraint among the papers in the immediate aftermath of the Declaration, it could not be said that the public contribution was overwhelming. Only eight letters concerning Jews were published in the *Manchester Guardian* and *Glasgow Herald* from December 17-31 (see below) where the usual number of letters per edition was six in the former and four in the latter.



Six addressed the plight of Jews in Europe, most preferring to refer to those under threat of extermination as “refugees” rather than Jews:

Nobody who has read the recent reports of what is happening in Europe can fail to realise that only a tiny minority of the persecuted can hope to escape from Nazi-controlled territory; but to any imaginative reader it must seem equally clear that everything possible must be done to assist the escape of those few who are able to reach a friendly frontier.<sup>37</sup>

The Secretary of the Fabian International Bureau, Mildred Banford wrote to clarify some bodies which Eden had referred to in his speech:

What in fact do the phrases “co-ordination by the United Nations” and “control by the United Nations” mean? As far as we have been able to ascertain, the United Nations are not yet formed into a constitutional body capable of controlling the supply, allocation and priority of food, medical relief and first aid equipment. Any attempts to deal with the enormous problem of relief which are not based on some recognition of the international principle count for nothing. We urge the immediate formation of a United Nations Commission for Relief and Rehabilitation.<sup>38</sup>

A poignant letter to the *Manchester Guardian* in the same edition, drew readers’ attention to the fact that many of the Jewish “refugees” under threat had relations who had escaped to

<sup>37</sup> MG Fri 18 December 1942 p4 (8) Letter: “Refugees” K. M. Peace, Cambridge December 13.

<sup>38</sup> MG Sat 19 December 1942 p4 (8) Letter: Relief in Europe

Britain before the war and were desperate for any news of their loved ones. As well as addressing the fate of his own family this reader also returned to a problem still facing Jews in Britain:

Sir,- My wife is in Holland and I have had no news from her in many months. My sister with her husband have been deported from Prague to an unknown destination. An uncle of mine died in Theresienstadt, where his sister still is, so far as I know. Other relatives were deported more than a year ago and nobody has ever heard from them. In a recent leading article you suggested that everything possible should be done for those of us who have escaped the butchers. One thing could be done. We relatives of those suffering under Hitler's tyranny are still listed in this country as "enemy aliens". Is it not time that the Home Office should liberate us from this inappropriate designation? A REFUGEE FROM NAZI OPPRESSION.<sup>39</sup>

Under a headline titled "The Jewish Massacres", the *Glasgow Herald* published a letter by the MP for East Renfrewshire, Major Guy Lloyd. He was the first contributor to remark on public doubts which may have been expressed about the authenticity of accounts concerning Nazi treatment of Jews and asked (even after the verification provided by the Declaration) if the public really understood what was happening:

Sir,- It is questionable whether, even now, our people as a whole fully realise the horror and magnitude of the unspeakable and wholesale massacres which the Germans are deliberately inflicting on the Jews in occupied-Europe. Never in the long and tragic history of the human race has there been such an exhibition of gross and calculated barbarity. Already not less than 1,500,000 people, men, women, and children have been transported under the most horrific conditions to Poland, there to be put to death wholesale, with every ounce of sadistic and inhuman cruelty.

At first these terrible reports seemed incredible, but now all the Allied Governments have fully accepted their veracity and have publicly protested against these dastardly outrages against the law of humanity. Extermination of the Jewish race in Europe is the declared and deliberate policy of the German Government nor is there any evidence of any sort of protest from any section of the German people. The people of this country too easily forget, but this time they must not be allowed to forget these dreadful crimes for which the German nation as a whole must be held responsible with their leaders.

Is not the time long overdue when we should have done with the silly farce that we are fighting an ideological war against the Nazis, when in fact we have from the very beginning been fighting a total war against the aggressive designs and sadistic instincts inherent in the German nation, which this time have broken out with unparalleled ferocity and bestiality?<sup>40</sup>

This view was also the first among the pages of the three newspapers to direct blame for the Nazi treatment of European Jews against the German people as a whole. Others, including leader-writers, Archbishops and MPs, had been careful to call for the punishment only of the guilty perpetrators and those who had directed them to commit mass murder. Lloyd's belief that there was something instinctively sadistic, "inherent in the German nation" - which had manifested itself in the extermination programme - was used as the justification for a re-definition of Allied war aims, away from an ideological conflict and towards "total war". Such a view was exceptional. It could be introduced into the public arena via the letters page. It could be discussed within that space, but it did not reach much further in terms of an

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<sup>39</sup> MG Sat 19 December 1942 p4 (8) Letter: "Enemy Aliens"

<sup>40</sup> GH Mon 21 December 1942 p4 (8) Letter: The Jewish Massacres. Guy Lloyd.

accepted analysis within the press. The prevailing discourse on the subject remained retribution against the guilty for the crimes they had committed rather than indiscriminate vengeance against an evil nation. However, this viewpoint and policy, (as exemplified by the protest and warning of the Declaration) became difficult to sustain in the light of new evidence contained in a report by the Inter-Allied Information Committee on the Nazi treatment of Jews in Europe.

On Monday, December 21, the *Manchester Guardian* published an extensive article outlining the “reasons” for the protest and warning issued on December 17.<sup>41</sup> The article, spread across two columns, dominated half of page 6. It was structured in a manner in which stressed the pan-European scope of the Nazis’ extermination programme. Beginning with Belgium, each section of the report dealt with a different country – Czechoslovakia, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Yugoslavia and Greece – with respective sub-headings highlighted in bold capital letters. The introduction to the report set the context for this new information by informing readers that public knowledge (in Britain and in all Allied nations) of Nazi actions against European Jewry the previous summer had only told part of the story:

In the middle of the year 1942, when many people thought that the anti-Jewish horrors had reached a climax, says the report, there came news of a general intensification of these measures. Evidence was forthcoming of a plan of extermination which transcends anything in history, a plan which was formulated by Ley and Rosenberg at a meeting of the Reich Chamber of Labour in November. Both Nazi leaders have stated unequivocally that the German object is nothing less than the utter destruction of Jewish life. That destruction is proceeding, among other methods, by shootings and by lethal gas. And it is not isolated in one country but is continent-wide.<sup>42</sup>

A summary of the evidence compiled by the Committee, the article argued, required a “contemplation of statistics [which] must add to the revulsion the civilised world feels”.<sup>43</sup> It said that the figures given for each country were based on information gathered by the American State Department which were first released in early December. According to the U.S. Government, it was estimated that the number of Jewish victims in Axis-controlled Europe who had been deported or “perished” since 1939 had reached “the appalling figure of two million” and that five million were in danger of extermination.<sup>44</sup>

In most, but not all of the cases presented, the evidence given for each country succeeded in balancing figures on the numbers of Jews killed by the Nazis with more specific examples of

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<sup>41</sup> A shorter summary of the report was published in the *Yorkshire Post* the same day: *YP* Mon 21 December 1942 p3 (6) SLAUGHTER OF THE JEWS Only 1,000 Left in Yugoslavia (Yugoslavia spelled with a “J” in the *Yorkshire Post*)

<sup>42</sup> *MG* Mon 21 December 1942 p6 (8) HITLER’S SLAUGHTER OF JEWS Inter-Allied Information Committee’s Report

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*,



other anti-Semitic measures which had been taken in each region. Where it was known, the total number of Jews in each country either before or at the beginning of the War was used as the starting point of each analysis. This basic figure - which it noted was a German statistic "since no census of religious beliefs was ever made before the war"<sup>45</sup> - could be contrasted with the numbers estimated to have been arrested, sent for forced labour, or deported to concentration camps. Again, where additional evidence was available, detailed examples were included to illustrate the orchestrated nature of Nazi anti-Semitic measures, from the confiscation of Jewish businesses and forced ghettoisation in France and Poland, to the kind of maltreatment of Dutch Jews had been subjected to in the mines at Mauthausen.

In each case, the time-span of the Nazi programme against the indigenous Jewish populations was described with an authority which suggested that there was no doubt about the veracity of the information. In order to present as full a picture as possible of the sequence of events the dates of the public issue of Nazi anti-Jewish decrees in Holland (February 1941) and Belgium (May 15 1942) were combined with the specific periods when it was known that Nazi persecution had intensified and mass deportations had taken place (June 1942 in Bohemia and Moravia and July 15 in France). It was understood that the decision to remove all Jews from Belgium, France, and Holland had been taken by the Nazi leadership sometime in the Spring of 1942 and soon afterwards Jews began to be arrested *en masse*. Deportations of men women and children had followed in the summer months and had continued into September and October.

It was clear that other countries under Nazi rule had followed the same pattern but over different periods in 1942. For instance, it was known that up to the end of October, 72,000 Czech Jews had been deported to Poland from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia - including the 10,000 from the 40,000 in "the central Jewish home for old people (aged between 65 and 80 years) at Terezin" - following decisions thought to have been made in June. During the same period 65,000 of the 85,000 Jews in Slovakia had also been deported "to the Polish ghettos". The Nazis were apparently not satisfied with these efforts and urged the Slovak Government to clear the country of Jews. With that aim, the Inter-Allied report said:

a special commission was set up at the Slovak Ministry of the Interior on November 10, 1942, to consider the final solution of the Jewish problem: the deportation of the remaining 20,000.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, BELGIUM

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

Perhaps because so much had already been published in the British press (in late August and early September) about the conditions under which Jews were deported from France and the more recently released details contained in the Polish Government's Note, the sections devoted to the treatment of Jews in these countries were less than thorough. The distinguishing features of the experience in France were again noted; the first Nazi hunt for foreign Jews in and around Paris and then the concentration of French Jewish families in the Parc des Princes and the Velodrome d'Hiver before deportation to Poland. Added to this two-phase process was the eventual extension of anti-Semitic laws, arrests and deportation of Jews in unoccupied (as it was then) France in late 1942.

Similarly, the Inter-Allied Committee's report added a little to what was already known about Jews in Poland ("the means employed deporting from of the Warsaw ghetto those who survive the murders and shootings in the streets exceeds all imagination. In particular, children, old people and those too weak to work are murdered."<sup>47</sup>) except for one important contribution; an unequivocal confirmation – based on hard evidence – of the existence of specific Nazi killing centres:

Actual data concerning the fate of deportees is not to hand, but news is available - irrefutable news - that places of execution have been organised at Chelm and Belzec where those who survive the shootings are murdered en masse by means of electrocution and lethal gas. The Germans have in fact transformed Poland in to one vast centre for murdering Jews, not only those of Polish nationality but those of other European nationalities also. The Christian population of Poland is quite cut off from and sort of contact with the Jewish population, nevertheless they try to give every possible help.<sup>48</sup>

As has already been stated, most of this was not new evidence – a great deal had already been published in the three papers over the previous six months – but it affirmed that most of the previous news from Europe had been factually correct and removed any claims that such stories were simply unsubstantiated rumours. But in addition to providing confirmation about what had been reported in the press, the Inter-Allied Report also included news concerning anti-Jewish activities in two countries about which the press had received virtually no information - Yugoslavia and Greece. This evidence suggested that the Nazi programme was much more established than had been previously thought and that its aim was indeed to systematically murder all Jews, wherever it found them.

Whereas in western Europe the anti-Jewish actions had been administered by the Gestapo and SS in 1942, the coverage of the Report in the *Manchester Guardian* said that the

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, POLAND

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, POLAND, op. cit., *YP* Mon 21 December 1942 p3 (6) Under the sub-heading: CENTRE FOR MURDER "...a vast centre for the murder of Jews, irrespective of nationality".

“extermination” of Jews in Croatia had been carried out by a special section of the Croatian *Ustashi* or Fascist Guards during the previous year. According to the Committee, this special section had been closed down in June 1941 after its “task” had been completed. Even earlier, Jews in Serbia had been “dealt with” by a special section of the Gestapo which had completed its operation by March 1941:

...exterminating with lethal gas the remaining Jewish women and children kept in the Sajamiste camp. The majority – 99 per cent – of Yugoslav Jews and those that had taken refuge in Yugoslavia are now dead. The details of bestial cruelty and sadism by which the 85,000 others were slaughtered concludes the report, achieves a degree of horror which numbs the mind.<sup>49</sup>

Most of the remaining 1,000 are interned, not knowing from day to day whether they will see another dawn.<sup>50</sup>

In other words, the process currently underway in the west had been tested on a smaller scale in Yugoslavia. The only difference was that Jewish families were not deported to Poland to be killed but were gassed (it claimed) *in situ*. By contrast, the paper’s account of the Inter-Allied evidence concerning Nazi action against Greek Jews was less certain. As far as was known (according to reports reaching London from the underground newspaper *Fighting Greece* and other unspecified sources), other than the 8,000 men who had been arrested because of their links with guerrillas, most captured Jews had been sent to a concentration camp in the Macedonian mountains and were forced to labour building roads.<sup>51</sup> Based on this limited information, it appeared that the extermination programme in Greece was the least advanced in all of the Axis-controlled countries. It had certainly not yet reached the stage most recently experienced in Western Europe because exceptionally, it was the only country included in the Report that did not mention executions, deportations or perhaps more significantly, Nazi actions taken against Jewish women and children.

In its own article on the Report, the *Yorkshire Post* included comments made by the Archbishop of York, Dr. Cyril Garbett in his diocesan message for January:

Recent revelations have brought home to us more plainly than ever before the horror of Nazi rule. The greatest crime in history is now being perpetrated, the murder of a nation and the deliberate extermination of the Jews in Europe. The agony of Poland continues unabated, while the persecution of the Jews is rising to a climax. When we are confronted with Satanism of this type it is hard to know what to do.<sup>52</sup>

Below Garbett’s comments in the *Manchester Guardian* on December 22 was a statement giving notice of a protest meeting to be held the following morning at Manchester Town Hall.

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, YUGOSLAVIA

<sup>50</sup> *YP* Mon 21 December 1942 p4 (6) SLAUGHTER OF THE JEWS Only 1,000 Left in Jugoslavia

<sup>51</sup> *op. cit.*, GREECE

<sup>52</sup> *op.cit.*, *YP* Mon 21 December 1942 p4 (6) also *MG* Mon 21 December 1942 p6 (8) ALLIED CRUSADE Dr Garbett and the Jews

The subject of the protest was; “the cruel and ruthless persecution of the Jewish people in all countries of Europe under Nazi domination”. A joint statement was issued under the invitation to attend by amongst others, many local MPs, the Vice Chancellor of Manchester University, and the Bishops of Manchester and Salford:

We, as representative citizens, feel that we should place on record in no uncertain manner our abhorrence of this German policy which is drawing upon itself the contempt and detestation of the whole civilised world, and at the same time call upon his Majesty’s Government and other Governments to initiate forthwith steps to ensure asylum to all those who may succeed in escaping from the holocaust.<sup>53</sup>

The use of the word “holocaust” to describe “this German policy” was extremely unusual. The mass murder of Jews was more often described in the three papers as the “Nazi extermination programme or policy” or the “Nazi anti-Jewish terror”. As a shared address, it was not possible to discern who was responsible for choosing this particular description over the other familiar phrases that had been used more widely.<sup>54</sup> Given the likelihood that a similar public statement following the advertised meeting would be written by the same author (on behalf of the group), it was possible that this term might be used again. But, as can be seen below (the paper’s Christmas Eve report of the meeting), this description of the action(s) taken by the German State against European Jews as “the holocaust” was exceptional and did not become part of regular popular or press discourse.

Unlike the other two newspapers, the *Glasgow Herald* carried no report on the findings of the Inter-Allied Committee on December 21. However the next day it published the reactions of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and comments made by General Smuts, the Prime Minister of South Africa. Smuts said that Germany’s campaign to exterminate Jews was a definite sign of weakness and as events turned against the Nazis “the enemy will more and more resort to desperate steps and remedies.”<sup>55</sup> Moshe Shertok, the head of Agency’s Political Department, was in London to have talks with British Government representatives about plans to save Jews who could still escape. He suggested that the Allied Governments might guarantee to neutral Governments the cost of maintenance of Jewish fugitives until they could otherwise be accommodated.

Following on from these comments, the article also took note of an article in a Norwegian Quisling newspaper, *Aftenposten*, which the *Glasgow Herald* said confirmed Nazi aims to

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<sup>53</sup> *MG* Tue 22 December 1942 p3 (8) NAZIS AND THE JEWS Manchester Protest

<sup>54</sup> Some even more unusual terms were used. For example, the *Birmingham Post* described Poland as a “sort of Nazi charnel-house” – a repository for corpses or bones – *Birmingham Post* Fri December 18 1942 p2

<sup>55</sup> *GH* Tue 22 December 1942 p3 (8) Plans to Save Jews from Nazi Terror, also *MG* Tue 22 December 1942 p3 (8) “DESPERATE STEPS” Smuts on the Massacre

exterminate the Jews. In addition, this short example gave British readers a brief insight into the kind of official information (about current policy towards Jews) which was being disseminated within Axis Europe. It claimed that actions taken against Jews<sup>56</sup> had so far been limited to internment and the confiscation of property, but that if the War turned against the Nazis then the Jews would certainly suffer - regardless of the outcome of the war:

If there is a chance of the dream of Bolshevik victory being realised, then quite different measures must be employed against the Jews while there is still time.<sup>57</sup>

On the same day, Tuesday, December 22, Eleanor Rathbone wrote to Crozier at the *Manchester Guardian* informing him about the latest developments in the rescue campaign. This exchange illustrated part of the progressive relationship between the editor and his sources on this subject. Clearly there were some periods of time where news about the plight of European Jewry was not dictated by significant "events" like the Polish Note or the Allied Declaration. It was therefore possible for those who were closer to these events in London, like Namier and Rathbone, to take the opportunity to be more reflective (and expansive) in their letters to Manchester. Some of the information contained in these private letters (like the remarks from the letter to the *New Statesman* below), was not confidential and was distributed widely. Other exchanges were more personal, bringing Crozier up to speed on behind the scenes gossip and sharing speculations on future developments. It can be seen from Rathbone's note below that there was usually information that could be shared, even if not all of it was suitable for publication – at least not until "events" again dictated the appropriate time for aspects of confidential exchanges to appear in editorial comment:

Mr. Boardman rang me up just now to ask whether there was anything fresh about the Jewish position. I don't think there is, at least not for publication. The Jewish societies are meeting with Eden tomorrow, I believe (Wednesday), but that is in private. I suppose they will put forward the plan I sent you on Saturday. Enclosed copy of letter I have written to "The New Statesman" shows my own recent lines of thought.<sup>58</sup>

The copy of the plan which Crozier received contained a range of proposals stretching over two pages of A4 paper. Most of these had already appeared in the paper, including suggestions about the granting of visas to refugees, the exchange of Jews for enemy nationals and the lifting of immigration restrictions to Palestine. As a result, it had few of the pencil marks in the margin used by the editor to indicate that particular content it might be used as copy. Only one section was underlined – the suggestion that Jews could be evacuated from Europe via Spain and Portugal, where shipping could take them to Palestine, South Africa and

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<sup>56</sup> It was unclear if this meant Norway or Nazi controlled Europe in general.

<sup>57</sup> *op.cit.*, GH Tue 22 December 1942 p3 (8)

<sup>58</sup> Rathbone to Crozier: including letter to The New Statesman, "THE HORROR IN POLAND" 22 December 1942. Copy in the *Manchester Guardian* Archive Refugees Box 223/5/86

North or South America.<sup>59</sup> Two sections of Rathbone's letter were highlighted. The first echoed Shertok's suggestions and concerned temporary asylum measures:

So many have perished already. Are the resources of Christendom, including the American States, Allied and neutral, inadequate for the remainder?

The second was marked beside a passage which read:

Whatever the scale of rescue there should be a concerted plan. Every country of possible reception should be asked to say how many it would receive. Has the War Cabinet considered all this or asked the United Nations to do so. Have our own out of date rigidly restrictive regulations concerning visas been revised?<sup>60</sup>

But Crozier was not short of comment about the Nazi extermination programme and Rathbone's thoughts were saved for future reference. Indeed, he was able to draw on comment from much closer to home.

The report of the aforementioned protest meeting of "the citizens of Manchester" dominated the left half of page 3 in the Christmas Eve edition of *Manchester Guardian*. Representatives of the "religious, political, social and civic life of the city"<sup>61</sup> condemned "the brutal massacres of the Jewish people" and "the policy of cold-blooded extermination of the Jewish people". Welcoming the Allied Declaration, the meeting of "the citizens of Manchester" unanimously passed a resolution, which was broadly similar to the statement issued on December 22 (above) except that "steps to ensure asylum" had been changed to "rescue" and "sanctuary" and the term "holocaust" had been omitted in favour of a different phrase:

This meeting...calls upon his Majesty's Government and the Governments of the United Nations to take immediate steps to rescue those who can still be saved and to provide sanctuary for any who may be able to escape from this terrible calamity.<sup>62</sup>

The Lord Mayor of Manchester said:

It was hard to believe that what we read was actually taking place and was not some dreadful nightmare. But the reports, authenticated from Government sources, brought news before which we stood aghast. "What can we do?" was the question everyone was asking. The need to bring relief was urgent...We in Manchester express to our Jewish fellow-citizens our deep feelings of sympathy.<sup>63</sup>

He was not the only speaker who had difficulty absorbing the news. Others found it difficult to come to terms with what seemed an irrational and unlimited hatred. It was clear that for most, the recent official verification – as read in the regional press - had been the main catalyst to action. In his address to the meeting, the Bishop of Manchester, Dr. Guy Warman,

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<sup>59</sup> SUGGESTIONS FOR PROVIDING ASYLUM FOR JEWISH REFUGEES FROM NAZI OCCUPIED TERRITORY Undated copy attached to Rathbone's letter : 22 December 1942. *Manchester Guardian* Archive Refugees Box 223/5/86

<sup>60</sup> *op.cit.*, Rathbone letter to The New Statesman.

<sup>61</sup> *MG* Thur 24 December 1942 p3 (8) JEWS AND NAZI BRUTALITY Manchester's Call For Sanctuary And Rescue

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*,

said that the justification for the protest was that silence might be misunderstood; that it allowed those present to express their sympathy to “those citizens of Manchester who were members of the Jewish nation and faith”. He said that “there was no doubt about the facts”. There was not only the Polish Note, which he called “one of the most tragical documents in history”, but also the report from the Inter-Allied Information Committee. Warman drew particular attention to the source of his awareness:

For those of us who read the ‘Manchester Guardian’, and I presume that means most of us, the report in the Monday issue of that Inter-Allied Committee report is amply sufficient to justify this meeting.<sup>64</sup>

Dr. Altmann, the Communal Rabbi, expressed his gratitude on behalf of the Jewish community for the sympathy which had been displayed in response to “the terrible suffering of his people”. He said that the meeting represented a ray of hope for the post-war world. Three other comments from lesser known local dignitaries were included in the latter sections of the report. They reflected the broad representation at the meeting and the strength of local feeling on the issue:

Councillor W.H. Oldfield M.P. said we had got “to push still further open that door to Palestine” – (“Hear, hear” and applause) - ...Alderman Wright Robinson said the real tragedy was that it was an attack on mankind...Councillor Quinney said that it would be most unfortunate if the idea got abroad that it was a case of Gentiles coming to the rescue of Jews. “The problem with which we are confronted affects every man jack of us, Jew or Gentile”.<sup>65</sup>

Up until this point and despite regular, but not extensive coverage of the Nazi extermination policy in the *Glasgow Herald*, there had not been an equivalent Scottish response to the condemnation voiced by many of the leaders of the Churches in England. Ten days after the Allied Declaration, the representatives of the Scottish Churches issued a joint statement in support of a resolution condemning “Jewish persecution by the Germans”. The statement followed a demonstration at the Coliseum Theatre arranged by the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council. The Rev. T.B. Stewart Thomson representing the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland condemned anti-Semitism and pointing out the links between Scots and Jews, noted that with Saint Andrew, Scotland was the only one of the four nations of Great Britain with a Jew as a patron saint. He said that the only way “this inhumanity can cease” was by winning the war as quickly as possible. The Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, expressed his sympathy for the plight of Jews under Nazi rule and said: “Jews were not being persecuted for the crimes they had committed, but simply because they were Jews”. Also present at the demonstration was Dr. D.H. Barou, Secretary of the British section of the WJC, who remarked that “Dante’s inferno was child’s play” by

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*,

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

comparison to what was happening to the Jews in Poland. He informed the meeting that only 30,000 Jews were left out of the 425,000 formerly in Warsaw and that about two million European Jews had died by murder or starvation:

Thousands of Jews can be saved if the world really wants to save them. Seven hundred thousand Jews were saved from Europe but who took them? Three small countries – Palestine, Britain and the Netherlands. The great open spaces of the world such as Canada, Australia and South Africa still regard the Jews as poison.<sup>66</sup>

As well as advocating all these countries to open their doors to refugees he advocated intense diplomatic pressure to be put on Germany by a specially organised international body and leaflets containing details of atrocities to be dropped on unconquered countries in order to discourage them from delivering Jews to the Nazis for extermination.

Again, the letters section of each of the regional papers proved to be the arena in which other, less conventional proposals of rescue and relief could be offered. For example, from Salford, Jack White wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* on December 28 to suggest that in addition to the 500,000 Jews already serving in the Allied armed forces, stateless Jews, many of which were refugees from Axis-Europe should be allowed to organise themselves into a specific fighting force to fight the Nazis:

Hitler has singled out but one race, creed or nation to the special target of the blood-lust of which he and the Nazis are capable. The challenge should now be taken up by the United Nations. Should not their reply include a pledge of immediate lend-lease to those survivors (I refer to those that are outside Nazi Europe) to enable them to hit back effectively wherever and whenever they can. They are ready to make the last sacrifice and demand to be allowed to strike back at their persecutors as Jews under their own banner and insignia. Is this too much to ask?<sup>67</sup>

The last days of December also marked the beginning of a consistent exchange of correspondence between readers of the *Glasgow Herald* that continued (on almost every day) well into January. In his letter on December 29, Tom Taylor of Glasgow argued that two points should be kept in mind regarding the “recent atrocities against the Jews in Poland”. First, he pointed out that as far as was known, the German Government had given no publicity to the “incidents” in Germany and had denounced the Allied Governments’ report as lies. This, he suggested, indicated that “the German people as a whole do not support these brutal actions”. He suggested that Allied propaganda should make use of these atrocities to appeal to decent citizens within Germany and so “drive a wedge between them and the Nazi leadership. Second, he noted that anti-Jewish pogroms were not unique in Polish history and that brutal treatment had taken place before the Nazi invasion. He cited information put forward by “Mr. H.N. Brailsford” (but did not say who he was, or how he

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<sup>66</sup> GH Mon 28 December 1942 p4 (6) PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS Condemned By Church Representatives

<sup>67</sup> MG Mon 28 December 1942 p4 (6) Jewish Forces



came by this knowledge) that the actions carried out against Jews in Poland were not committed by Germans but by “Latvians and White Russians”.<sup>68</sup>

His evidence was immediately challenged in a letter two days later from the House of Commons by the MP for East Renfrewshire, Major Guy Lloyd:

It is to be hoped that the opinion of Mr. Tom Taylor on the conclusions to be derived from the German wholesale massacre of Jews in Europe represent the views of a minority of our people. ...The idea that these unspeakable Jewish massacres have been committed not by Germans but by Latvians and White Russians shows a pathetic ignorance of the facts. Mr. Taylor's emphatic assertion that “Hitlerism is not the product of a peculiar aggressive characteristic of the German people” is refuted by every fact of German history in the last hundred years and would indeed be laughable if it were not such a dangerous fallacy.<sup>69</sup>

In London the private meeting between Jewish representatives and the Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, alluded to by Eleanor Rathbone in her letter to Crozier on December 22, took place on December 23. Crozier received a copy of the minutes of the meeting, (marked “Secret”) dated December 29, probably from Lewis Namier who had attended the meeting. It is not clear if any official minutes were taken, as the copy sent to Crozier refers to a meeting at the offices of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in Great Russell Street on the same day and not the meeting at the Foreign Office. Those present at the meeting at the Jewish Agency were listed as “Professor Brodetsky, Mr. Shertok, Mrs. Dugdale, Mr. Locker, Professor Namier, Mr. Marks, Mr. Linton”.

As has been pointed out earlier, Churchill had given responsibility for all matters relating to European Jewish refugees to the Foreign Office and so it fell to Anthony Eden to receive a deputation which included (as far as can be ascertained from the minutes which did not contain a similar list of who attended the FO meeting) James de Rothschild, who introduced the group, Professor Brodetsky of Leeds University, the main spokesman, Lord Samuel, and Simon Marks.

The first item which was discussed was the refusal by the Iraqi Government to grant transit visas to a group of refugee Jewish children currently in Teheran. The Foreign Secretary had apparently not heard of this situation but after one of the Foreign Office Officials confirmed it, “Mr Eden made a note of it.” Lord Samuel then raised the possibility of “using Palestine on a large scale”. He said that based on his recent visit there it was possible that Palestine could absorb about two million Jews and that some alteration should be made in the current

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<sup>68</sup> GH Tue 29 December 1942 p2 (8) GERMANY AND THE JEWS

<sup>69</sup> GH Thur 31 December 1942 p2 (8) Germany and the Jews

arrangements for granting immigration visas. The minutes note that Eden was sympathetic and helpful and gave the impression that he was actively dealing with the matter.

Brodetsky then raised the possibility of helping Jews in Bulgaria. Eden mentioned what the Government had already done with regard to Bulgaria (not stated in the minutes) but Brodetsky said that there were still some 60,000 or 70,000 Jews in Bulgaria that still might be saved. Eden replied that what they had done should be regarded as a first step.

Brodetsky then suggested a possible approach to the Pope, that he might mention "the matter" in his Christmas broadcast and perhaps say a few words of encouragement to those countries which had not taken part in the extermination policy. Eden told them that he had set in motion the "Foreign Office machinery regarding an approach to the Vatican. Action had been taken in both Lisbon and this country".

As regards the relaxation of the regulations in this country, Mr. Eden had said that on the difficulties was that America had not done anything in this connection. Mr. Eden had mentioned that if Britain were to make some change it would give her a better standing with other Governments. Mr. Eden had agreed that money and food should be provided for refugees reaching neutral countries. .. He had added that the United Nations should make a declaration that refugees would not be left in the hands of neutral countries.<sup>70</sup>

Eden ended the meeting with the apparent reassurance that the "three Ministers whose departments were interested in this matter would meet. Brodetsky had suggested that representatives of the Jewish deputation should keep in touch with them "but Mr. Eden made no definite reply".<sup>71</sup>

Without alluding to Crozier's awareness of these discussions, the *Manchester Guardian's* leader said at the end of the month:

Ways and means of alleviating the position of Jews in Europe are still being considered. Unfortunately, however, there are few signs that the question is really being tackled on a scale anything like proportionate to the magnitude of the problem.

One idea is that food and medical supplies should be sent to the ghettos where according to reliable evidence they are desperately needed . Some believe it would be possible to arrange their distribution by members of the International Red Cross but others are less optimistic pointing out that up to the present the Germans have refused permission to visit the ghettos to any representative of the organisation.

The rescue schemes now being examined by the various authorities, though they may certainly be of some practical value, are on the whole too narrow in their scope to effect any substantial results.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> SECRET. SHORT MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1942, at 77 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON, W.C.1. Copy in Manchester Guardian Archives Refugees Box 233/5/92

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

<sup>72</sup> MG Wed 30 December 1942 p5 (8) SANCTUARY FOR THE JEWS Rescue Plans NARROW SCOPE OF DISCUSSIONS

## **Chapter VI**

***The Manchester Guardian The Yorkshire Post The Glasgow Herald***

**January-April 1943**

British awareness of the Nazi extermination programme against the Jews of Europe was well established by the end of 1942. Official Allied statements had verified and elaborated on what had already been reported in the regional press. Swift public reaction to this confirmation had come from every level of society, from members of Parliament, Church leaders, Jewish groups, local councillors and ordinary members of the public. There was no doubt expressed in the three papers about the essential facts of what had happened to Jews in Poland, France, Holland and Belgium during 1942. It was also firmly understood that the German policy of deportation and mass murder was still underway and that hundreds of thousands of Jewish families in other countries under Nazi rule were likely to suffer the same fate. The *Manchester Guardian*, the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Glasgow Herald* knew that these “unspeakable Jewish massacres”, “the greatest crime in history”, and the “the murder of a nation” was taking place, that Hitler was carrying into effect his “oft-repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe”. The news, as it appeared in the pages of these newspapers was considered to be “irrefutable”.<sup>1</sup>

The sincerity and breath of this response suggested that British society had modified its attitude towards the plight of Jews under Nazis since the 1930's. It seemed that “recent reports” and “revelations” had changed what Andrew Sharf has described as “an inveterate British inability to grasp imaginatively what could happen on the continent of Europe”<sup>2</sup>

The psychological commonplace that, with the best will in the world, it is hard to grasp the meaning of suffering wholly outside one's immediate experience and for which, moreover, there is very little historical precedent.<sup>3</sup>

He argued that it was this, rather than any widespread anti-Semitic feeling (though he noted that this sentiment was not hard to find in the pages of the British press at the time) which was the cause of “less than unanimous” denunciations of Hitler's treatment of Jews before the war.<sup>4</sup>

At first glance, the British reaction – as presented in the pages of the regional press - could be seen as universal: there were no doubting voices in the broad range of opinion that was

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<sup>1</sup> MG Mon 21 December 1942 p6 (8) ALLIED CRUSADE Dr Garbett and the Jews  
YP Mon 21 December 1942 p3 (6) POLAND: CENTRE FOR MURDER  
GH Fri 18 December 1942 p6 (8) M.P.S' SYMPATHY FOR JEWS IMPRESSIVE TRIBUTE

<sup>2</sup> Sharf, (1964) *op.cit.*, p. 209

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194

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

published in the papers.<sup>5</sup> This finding seems to go against an argument put forward by Walter Laqueur. He has argued that though public opinion in Britain was kept informed through the press about the progress of the 'final solution', the impact of this news was small or "at most" short-lived:

The fact that millions were killed was more or less meaningless. People could identify with perhaps the fate of a single individual or a family but not with the fate of millions. The statistics of murder were either disbelieved or dismissed from consciousness... Thus the news about the murder of many millions of Jews was not accepted for a long time and even when it had been accepted the full implications were not understood.<sup>6</sup>

Most notably, he has suggested that there was a cognitive difference between "knowing" and "believing" the information contained in press reports of the Nazi extermination policy. Specifically, he pointed to a psychological rejection of information which for one reason or another was not acceptable:

The fact that some information has been mentioned once or a hundred times in secret reports or in mass circulation newspapers does not mean that it has been accepted and understood. Big figures become statistics, and statistics have no psychological impact. Some thought the news about the Jewish tragedy was exaggerated, others did not doubt that the information but had different priorities and preoccupations.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to know how widely the information was distributed and whether it was read and accepted, and this of course is more difficult to document.<sup>8</sup>

Did British concern dissipate? Did the regional newspapers believe that the details of mass murder had been exaggerated? Had the press and wider public "different priorities and preoccupations" even after the authenticated revelations of the Allied Declaration? In examining these questions it should be borne in mind that press coverage can be taken as only one indication of a range of public opinion and its presence or absence can be interpreted in many ways. For example, Julian Scott's study of the British national press pointed to a "conspicuous silence" between December 22 and the first weeks of January 1943:<sup>9</sup>

If the British press ever stood a chance of contributing effectively to the campaign which sought to wring practical proposals for rescue from the British Government it had been in the first two weeks after the Joint Allied Declaration. However its general silence at this critical point in time literally crippled the campaign for rescue. All momentum in the press coverage of the crisis of European Jewry was lost and public concern was permitted to ebb away. The

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<sup>5</sup> The peak of "the wave of public sympathy" Wasserstein, (1979) *op. cit.*, p. 164

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p204

<sup>7</sup> Laqueur, W. (1980) *op. cit.* p99

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p66

<sup>9</sup> The *Daily Telegraph* did not print another article on the situation of the Jews until January 6; The *Daily Mail* waited until January 29; other than a letter by the Bishop of Chichester on December 28, The *Times* coverage became "negligible". Scott argues that the brevity of articles that were printed in *The Observer*, the *News Chronicle* and the *Daily Herald* indicated these papers indifference to the plight of European Jews. Scott, *op. cit.* pp. 173-176

press was simply not sufficiently concerned with the plight of the Jews, even after the 17 December Declaration, to provide consistently significant coverage of their situation.<sup>10</sup>

Scott's assessment of the coverage was emphatic. He did not suggest that the Christmas/New Year holidays or the suspension of Parliament may have been possible reasons for this silence, but that "the press was simply not sufficiently concerned with the plight of the Jews". The lack of related discussion in the national papers can be seen as striking when compared with the range of headlines from relevant articles published in the three regional newspapers from December 22 until the end of the month.

### Headlines in the Regional Press December 22 – 31.

	<i>Manchester Guardian</i>	<i>Yorkshire Post</i>	<i>Glasgow Herald</i>
1941	SUGGESTIONS FOR THE RESCUE OF JEWS PALESTINE VISITOR'S MISSION TO BRITAIN DR GARBETT AND THE JEWS NAZIS AND THE JEWS MANCHESTER PROTEST SMUTS ON THE MASSACRE ONLY 10,000 NOW IN WARSAW	HELPING THE VICTIMS JEWISH PERSECUTION SLAUGHTER OF THE JEWS	PLANS TO SAVE THE JEWS FROM NAZI TERROR SIGNS OF DESPERATION SMUTS
1941	NR	NAZIS DESPERATE SAYS SMUTS NAZIS TRANSPLANT DUTCH JEWISH WAR EFFORT SAVING THE JEWS	NR
1941	JEWS AND NAZI BRUTALITY MANCHESTER'S CALL FOR SANCTUARY AND RESCUE TRAGEDY OF THE JEWISH CHILDREN	LAVAL 'SATISFIED' WITH HITLER TALKS A MORE SEVERE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS MAY BE EXPECTED COST OF "REMOVING" JEWS FROM SLOVAKIA	NR
1941	NR	HOPES FOR 1943 ARCHBISHOP OF YORK	
1941			NR
1941	JEWISH FORCES	NR	PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS CONDEMNED BY CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES
1941	JEWISH TRAGEDY SOUTH AFRICA'S DAY OF MOURNING	NR	GERMANY AND THE JEWS
1941	SANCTUARY FOR THE JEWS RESCUE PLANS TERROR IN POLAND POLICY OF EXTERMINATION	GEN SMUTS WARNS NAZIS DAY OF MOURNING IN THE UNION AND RHODESIA FOR JEWISH VICTIMS OF GERMAN ATROCITIES	NR
1941	PRAYER FOR JEWS SPECIAL INTERCESSIONS RESCUE OF JEWS PALESTINE'S OFFER TO SHELTER JEWS	NR	GERMANY AND THE JEWS

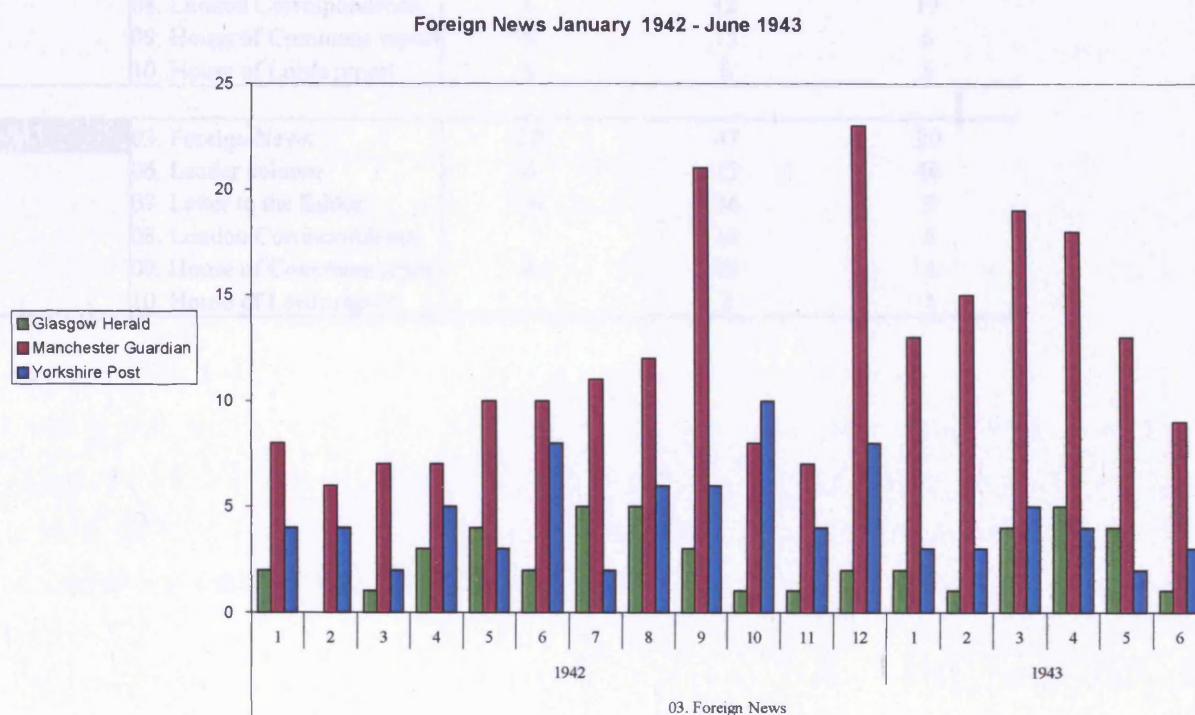
This collection of local, national, and foreign reaction demonstrates that silence did not prevail in the regional papers during this "critical" period. The momentum was not lost, indeed the level of interest in the plight of European Jews continued well into the new year. Based on this evidence, it seems that any assessment of Laqueur's first argument with regard

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179

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to the short term impact must necessarily rely on a survey of a longer period, for instance the three months immediately following the Allied Declaration.

Gatlung and Ruge, outlining their criteria for “the Structure of Foreign News” have argued that “once something has hit the headlines and has been defined as “news”, then it will *continue* to be defined as news for some time, even if the amplitude (meaning the bigger, more violent, or extreme the news story, *ceteris paribus*, the greater the likelihood that it will make the headlines) is greatly reduced”.<sup>11</sup> It can be seen (from the quantitative analysis) that a momentum beginning in the Summer of 1942 (reaching a peak in December with the verified details contained in the Allied Declaration and Inter-Allied report) was sustained, albeit at a lower level of intensity. Indeed its force was felt well into the first three months of 1943, especially in the *Manchester Guardian*.



Though there were fewer foreign news stories concerning Jews in the first three months of 1943 than in December 1942 there was a significant rise in the number of letters published with a Jewish theme (see below). As a result, the *format* of relevant content changed from 1942, moving away from foreign news (especially news agency material), and in the case of the Allied Declaration, parliamentary news sections, to other, opinion-based areas of the

<sup>11</sup> Gatlung and Ruge, (1965) *The Structure Of Foreign News* in Tumber, H. (1999) *News A Reader* p.24 Their italics.



papers. The composition, that is to say, the coverage devoted to the subject of Jews in Nazi-Europe within each newspaper, shifted slightly - towards readers' letters and selected leader columns which addressed the extermination programme, anti-Semitism and Allied rescue initiatives.

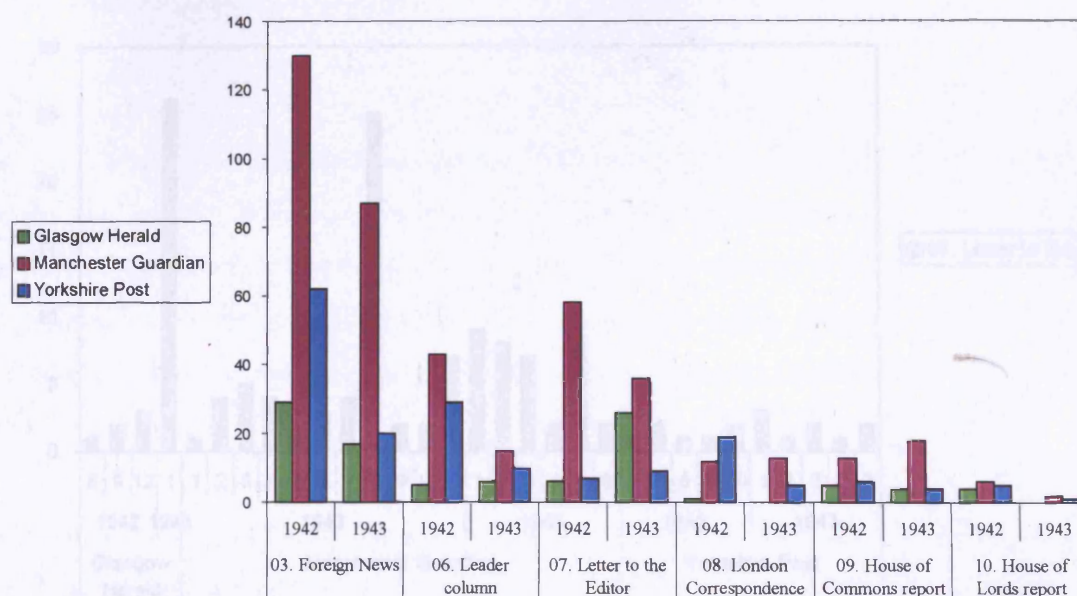
This shift was largely dictated by internal decisions of the newspapers, by including comment on what *had* happened and what *should* happen, rather than responding to external foreign or domestic *events*.<sup>12</sup> Each paper's concern – based on editorial choice - was reflected in different arenas of the papers. The table and graph below demonstrate this shift:

Year	Type of Article (desc)	Newspaper		
		Glasgow Herald	Manchester Guardian	Yorkshire Post
1942	03. Foreign News	29	130	62
	06. Leader column	5	43	29
	07. Letter to the Editor	6	58	7
	08. London Correspondence	1	12	19
	09. House of Commons report	5	13	6
	10. House of Lords report	4	6	5
1943	03. Foreign News	17	87	20
	06. Leader column	6	15	10
	07. Letter to the Editor	26	36	9
	08. London Correspondence		13	5
	09. House of Commons report	4	18	4
	10. House of Lords report		2	1

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, also Palmer (2000)

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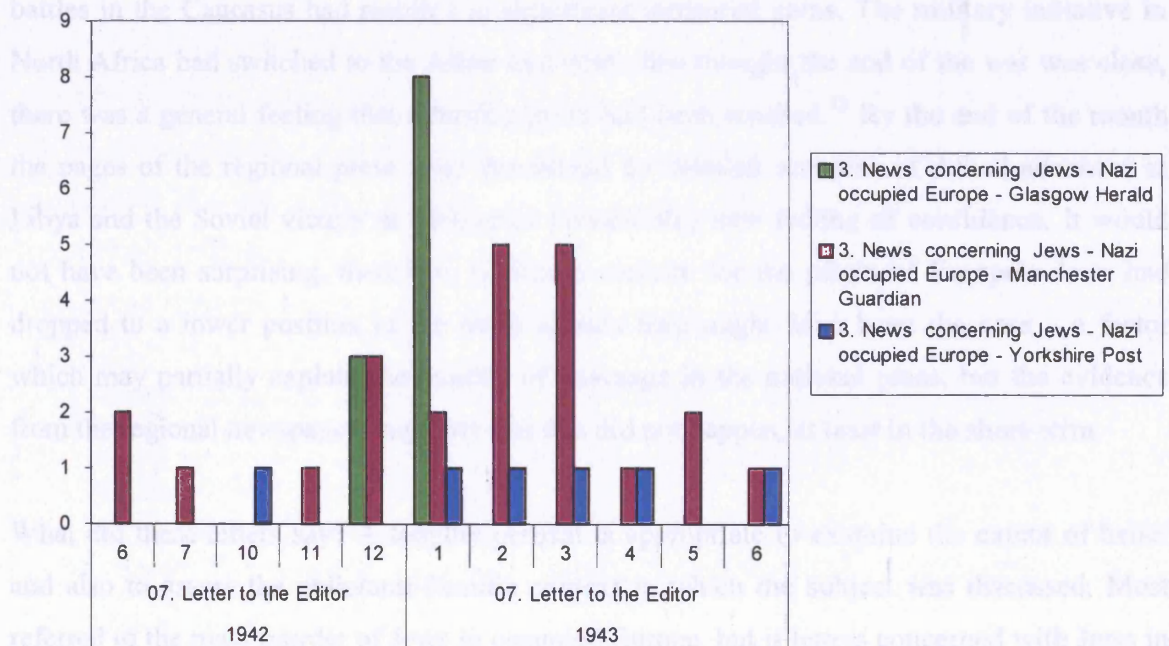
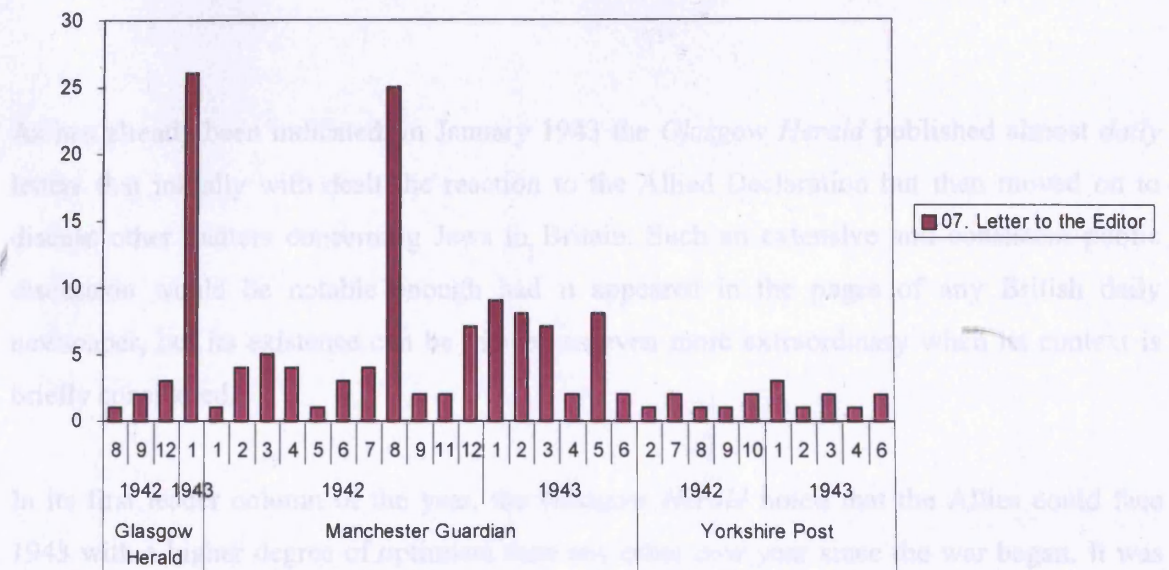
The Regional Press January 1942 - June 1943



Moreover, proportionally (the 12 months of 1942 compared with the first six months of 1943), most letters with a Jewish theme or subject (i.e., letters that concerned Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe, Britain, Palestine or concerning subjects such as Jews in the armed forces) were written to the regional press *after* the Allied Declaration. It can be seen from the graph below that the peaks of the *Manchester Guardian's* consistent correspondence were in August 1942 and the first three months of 1943 (94 in total across 72 weeks), while the *Yorkshire Post* published a steady, if small number of letters throughout the period (16 in total). By contrast, the *Glasgow Herald's* correspondence was exceptional because it was so concentrated or "short lived". Only 6 letters concerning Jews were printed during the whole of 1942, with 3 in December alone. 26 were published in January 1943, but between the end of January and June 1943 *no other letter concerning Jews* at home or abroad was printed in the paper.



# Letters to the Regional Press 1942-43



Based on these findings, Laqueur's second assertion, concerning public opinion and acceptance or "belief" in the facts of the extermination policy, can best be examined by an analysis of contributions put forward in letters to the three papers during this period. Well informed editors and correspondents may have believed the news to be true, but the extent to which wider "public opinion" had accepted the facts of the extermination policy remained to be seen. Did the public still think in terms of Nazi anti-Jewish actions in terms of persecution

and pogroms? Was there any evidence of British anti-Semitism (shaping the reception of the news) within this correspondence?

As has already been indicated, in January 1943 the *Glasgow Herald* published almost *daily* letters that initially dealt the reaction to the Allied Declaration but then moved on to discuss other matters concerning Jews in Britain. Such an extensive and consistent public discussion would be notable enough had it appeared in the pages of any British daily newspaper, but its existence can be viewed as even more extraordinary when its context is briefly considered.

In its first leader column of the year, the *Glasgow Herald* noted that the Allies could face 1943 with a higher degree of optimism than any other new year since the war began. It was possible to see weaknesses in German strategy on the Eastern front. Russian endurance had been beyond all expectation (exemplified by the siege of Leningrad) and the most recent battles in the Caucasus had resulted in significant territorial gains. The military initiative in North Africa had switched to the Allies and while few thought the end of the war was close, there was a general feeling that a turning point had been reached.<sup>13</sup> By the end of the month the pages of the regional press were dominated by detailed accounts of Allied advances in Libya and the Soviet victory at Stalingrad boosted this new feeling of confidence. It would not have been surprising, therefore, if British concern for the plight of Europe's Jews had dropped to a lower position in the news agenda than might have been the case – a factor which may partially explain the paucity of coverage in the national press, but the evidence from the regional newspapers suggests that this did not happen, at least in the short-term.

What did these letters say? A lengthy perusal is appropriate to examine the extent of belief and also to assess the philo/anti-Semitic context in which the subject was discussed. Most referred to the mass murder of Jews in occupied Europe, but if letters concerned with Jews in Britain are added to the total for 1943 the concentration of letters in January is even more pronounced.

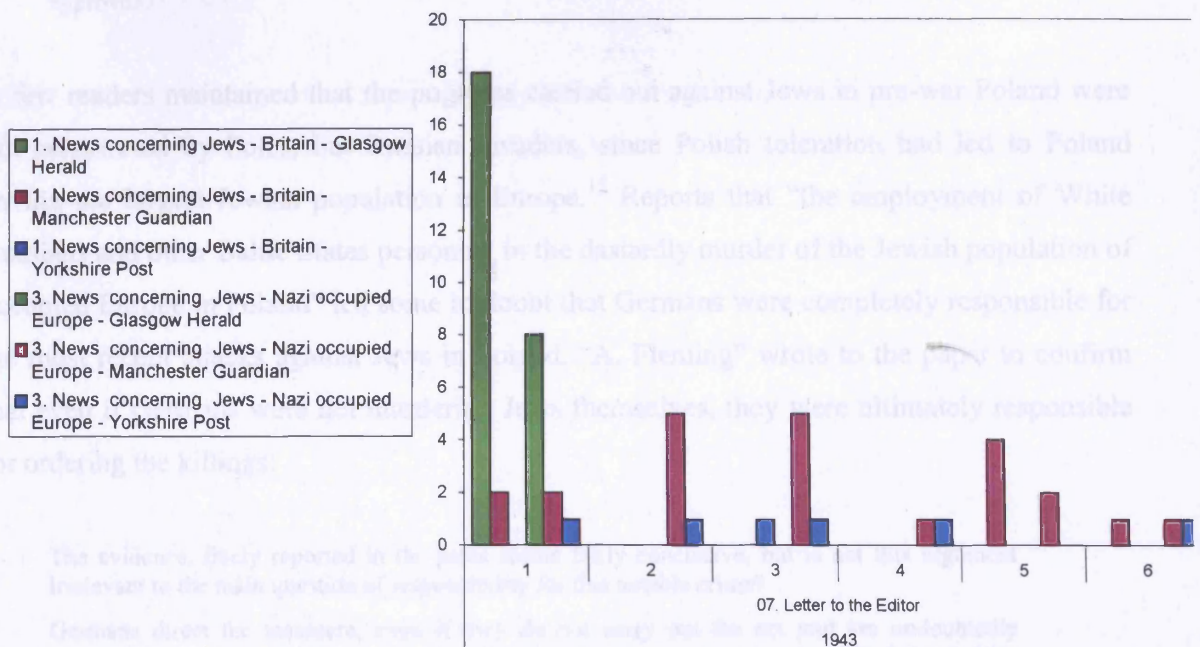
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<sup>13</sup> *GH* Fri 1 January 1943 p4 (6) A HAPPIER NEW YEAR; Gilbert (1999), *op. cit.* pp. 390-391

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Letters to the Regional Press 1942-43



Some of the first contributions did not express shock at the news that the Nazis had taken their longstanding anti-Jewish obsession to this extremity and sought to rationalise it in terms of the violent character inherent in Nazi ideology. The Jews of Europe were seen as another in a long list of enemies that the Nazis needed to eliminate. At the same time, readers also recognised the difference between the scale and organised character of the Nazi extermination policy and other pre-war attacks against Jews which had taken place in Germany and Poland:

We need not be surprised at the wholesale massacre of the Jews by the Germans when we know what the latter have done under the Nazi leadership against members of democratic movements in their own country in the years before and after they gained power. Murder is an essential part of Nazi creed and policy.<sup>14</sup>

The sporadic anti-Jewish pogroms rehearsals of before the war have given way to a well organised, State-run massacre covering a continent and being carried out with all the power and decree of law. To compare this horror with the occasional, isolated local mob brawls in pre-war Poland is plainly ridiculous.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless some could not believe that this policy was being carried out with the consent of the German people, who - as a result of apparent public denials by the Nazi leadership (according to German radio - though there was no evidence of official denial in the regional press) and at a time when they were being urged to direct all resources to the war effort - were being kept in the dark about the real purpose of the deportations to Poland:

<sup>14</sup> GH Fri 1 January 1943 p4 (6) Letter: Germany and the Jews: Sir P.J. Dollan, Glasgow

<sup>15</sup> GH Sat 2 January 1943 p2 (6) Letter: Germany and the Jews: K.W. Robson



The Jews now being massacred are being sent outwith Germany for that purpose at a time when the German transport system is stretched to the limit. Why so, if the German people approve?<sup>16</sup>

A few readers maintained that the pogroms carried out against Jews in pre-war Poland were not perpetrated by Poles, but Russian invaders, since Polish toleration had led to Poland having the largest Jewish population in Europe.<sup>17</sup> Reports that “the employment of White Russians and other Baltic States personnel in the dastardly murder of the Jewish population of occupied Europe in Poland” led some to doubt that Germans were completely responsible for the most recent attacks against Jews in Poland. “A. Fleming” wrote to the paper to confirm that even if Germans were not murdering Jews themselves, they were ultimately responsible for ordering the killings:

The evidence, freely reported in the press seems fairly conclusive, but is not this argument irrelevant to the main question of responsibility for this terrible crime?

Germans direct the massacre, even if they do not carry out the act and are undoubtedly responsible. So too, with the somewhat belated topic of pogroms in pre-1939 Poland. This modern horror is of a different category from the spasmodic outbreaks of violence against the Jews of Poland. We now face a State organised attempt to exterminate the whole of European Jewry, concentrated largely, before the slaughter, into the Warsaw ghetto. Anti-Semitism has ceased to be a convenient channel for the diversion of public anger at economic ills, it has ceased to act thus in Germany, as witness the denials of the German wireless that any such crimes have been committed.<sup>18</sup>

On January 14 a reader signing a letter with the initials “W.H.S.W.” changed the direction of the correspondence and was the first to link events in Nazi-Europe with British perceptions of Jews at home. He (all anonymous letter writers were commonly assumed to be male) presented his arguments in the form of “a dilemma”:

In all the correspondence appearing in your columns concerning the persecution of Jews in German-occupied territories and the very proper all-party expression of indignation in this country, there has for some reason or another, been no mention of a dilemma existing in the minds of multitudes in this country.

The dilemma is occasioned on the one side by our native hatred of cruelty and injustice, aroused in this case by German cruelty to the Jews, and on the other by the fact, repeatedly represented in your news columns, that a very great many of the cases of conviction of acts prejudicial to the prosecution of the war – black marketing, exceeding quotas, avoidance of national service, etc. – are of persons of Jewish name.

We all know members of the Jewish community deserving of the highest respect. Equally we seem to see in others a total disregard of British community well-being. It does not meet the case to point out that many gentiles are equally selfish and materialistic. Unfortunately either there are more indifferent Jews than there are of the sort we respect, or the indifferent ones are more blatant. In the public mind they are all regarded as being alike – ruthlessly selfish.

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<sup>16</sup> GH Tue 5 January 1943 p2 (6) Letter: Germany and the Jews: J.H. Rule

<sup>17</sup> GH Wed 13 January 1943 p4 (6) Letter: Poland and the Jews: K.K.

<sup>18</sup> GH Fri 8 January 1943 p4 (6) Letter: Germany and the Jews: A. Fleming

It is a problem primarily for Jewry. Nothing can stop the increase of anti-Semitism short of genuine loyalty to the community within which Jewry finds a home. It will help no-one to ignore this situation.<sup>19</sup>

His comments were supported by another reader who while expressing his own condemnation of Nazi actions against Jews on the continent felt that it was also reasonable to point out what he saw as the misdeeds of Jews in Scotland. Like "W.H.S.W.", he also preferred to hide behind his initials, "A.G.M.":

It is unfortunately too true that far too many [Jews] are unscrupulous in their methods and generally arrogant in their manner and behaviour.

No right thinking person but abhors the brutality meted out to the Jews in Germany and elsewhere, but it should be recognised that as it is in the interest of the Jews perhaps more than others that the United Nations should be victorious in this war, that they should be straining every effort to assist in securing that end and not seeking to enrich themselves through the practice of questionable tactics.<sup>20</sup>

On Saturday January 16, Maurice Bloch of Glasgow replied:

"W.H.S.W." expects more from Jews than others. We deny him that right: we claim to be regarded a human beings, with faults and virtues, just like others.

His statement that "a very great many" of these offences were committed by Jews can only have been made with little or no thought.

Hitler is no fool. He knows he has lost the war. He knows that Jews in whatever country they are, are lovers of peace, which explains his efforts to exterminate them wherever he can lay his hands on them, and exert prejudice against them elsewhere.<sup>21</sup>

The following Monday "W.H.S.W." met Bloch's arguments and reiterated his position:

We deplore the German racial persecution of the Jews and pray never to see it imitated but we see a growth in anti-Semitism here and we can see much provocation of it in the behaviour of Jews themselves. Therefore we do not condemn a whole people; we are not concerned with Hitler's game. I do not expect more from Jews than from others.

The point is that we expect the same from them as is expected of ourselves. ... We want to see Jews with no more petrol, chauffeurs, etc. than other people. Instead of resenting criticism, Jewry will learn from it to the disappearance of the feature of Jewish behaviour which are at the root of anti-Semitism, the condemnation of German Jewish atrocities will be forthright and wholehearted, which, I fear, at the moment it is not.<sup>22</sup>

"E.L." wrote the next day to inform "W.H.S.W." that in Glasgow there were 500 Jewish personnel attached to the civil defence service and made a point of asking "who ever said that Jews had more petrol and chauffeurs?" He said that "the Jewish people of this country did not need "W.H.S.W.'s" assurances of British justice and fair play, because as the majority of

<sup>19</sup> GH Thur 14 January 1943 p4 (6) Letter: The Jews and Anti-Semitism: W. H. S. W.

<sup>20</sup> GH Tue 19 January 1943 p2 (6) Letter: The Jews And Anti-Semitism: A.G. M.

<sup>21</sup> GH Sat 16 January 1943 p2 (6) Letter: The Jews And Anti-Semitism: Maurice Bloch

<sup>22</sup> GH Mon 18 January 1943 p2 (6) Letter: The Jews And Anti-Semitism: W. H. S. W.

Jews in the country were either British-born or naturalised British subjects, they depended on "British justice and fair play, not as a favour but as a cherished right."<sup>23</sup>

Another reader signing themselves, "A Scot", thought that "W.H.S.W." was "a little prejudiced in his attitude towards the Jewish people":

I do not see very much evidence of Jewish law breaking in the press. The Jewish people of my own district are playing a large part in the civil defence and Home Guard and many Jews whom I know personally are in the armed forces. At present the Jewish people are suffering a great deal on the continent and I would feel very sad if we Scots were to do them any further injury.<sup>24</sup>

Albert E. Harnett believed that "W.H.S.W". and "A.G.M." were deliberately assisting the enemy and prejudicing the very effort which, "under a cloak of benign toleration, they professed to espouse". He argued that their arguments could be refuted easily by simply stigmatising all Gentiles for the crimes of violence and murder that appeared with "un-Jewish sounding names".<sup>25</sup>

A few Sundays ago there was a broadcast on the one o'clock news telling of some of the horrors perpetrated by the Germans. One instance given was of little children being herded into cattle trucks on which quicklime had been spread and then taken "somewhere". Will our condemnation of such an act be less wholehearted and forthright because these children may have had bad fathers or grandfathers of the type of Jew condemned by "W.H.S.W"?

A great many of the victims of German brutality are innocent women and children whose only crime is that they are Jews. Surely as Christians we should condemn the German Jewish atrocities in spite of the fact that there are Jews who are not all that they should be. It must be very disheartening for Jews of whom your correspondent speaks as "beyond reproach" to know that there are people who would qualify their condemnation of the German Jewish atrocities.<sup>26</sup>

In his second letter of the month on January 23, A. Fleming thought that it had to be recognised that there exists "an instinctive aversion to Jews" in Britain, but that it was no greater than the "usual aversion to foreigners, at least in the beginning":

Some [Jews] are good, some are bad, and in times of stress, i.e. during unemployment – they gather an amount of dislike from various sources. The unemployed man thinks the employed Jew has usurped a job. The employed man thinks that his Jewish boss is underpaying him. The poor woman in a Jewish shop is sure she is being overcharged. In some cases the resentment has truth in it, in others none, but there lies the problem. All Jewry is accused because a sprinkling of their number is guilty. I suggest that the strength of anti-Semitic feeling in this country is a direct result of pre-war and post-war Fascist propaganda.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> GH Wed 20 January 1943 p2 (6) Letter: The Jews And Anti-Semitism: E.L.

<sup>24</sup> GH Thur 21 January 1943 p4 (6) Letter: The Jews And Anti-Semitism: A SCOT

<sup>25</sup> GH Thur 21 January 1943 p2 (6) Letter: The Jews And Anti-Semitism: ALBERT. E. HARNETT

<sup>26</sup> GH Fri 22 January 1943 p2 (6) Letter: The Jews And Anti-Semitism: Elizabeth R. Hewitt

<sup>27</sup> GH Sat 23 January 1943 p2 (6) Letter: The Jews And Anti-Semitism: A. Fleming

C.A. Campbell cited an article by Norman Bentwich in the *New Statesman* to underline the fact that the selection of black market cases reported by the newspapers gave a distorted view of the Jewish part in prosecutions. Campbell suggested that "the news value (in which one must including the gossip value) of offences by Jews has resulted in the man in the street receiving an outrageously false impression of the Jewish participation in the black market".<sup>28</sup>

In the week ending May 5 1942 according to figures compiled by the Ministry of Food, there were 50 cases in 3 of which Jews were wholly or partly concerned. The trade paper "Grocer" reported 48 cases in the same period. Three concerned Jewish firms. Those three were reported in the national press and very few of the remaining 45 were reported.

W.G. Hyslop, joining "W.H.S.W". and "A.G.M.", seemed to suggest that anti-Semitism was a attribute to be admired if not a virtue, especially in wartime, and he offered his own particular news content analysis for other readers who doubted the extent of Jewish involvement in the black market:

Some of your correspondents seem to infer that anyone who dislikes Jews and their ways is anti-British or not patriotic. The very reverse is the more reasoned inference, and there is a growing number who deplore the many convictions of Jews for offences against the war effort.

I have collected newspaper cuttings of as many of these cases as have come under my notice, and if your correspondent, "A Scot" is interested I shall be pleased to submit this rather illuminating collection for his inspection.

I wonder what the reaction of our young sons and daughters in the forces will be when, coming back to civil life, they realise the extent of Jewish infiltration into our commercial and social life.<sup>29</sup>

By coincidence, on the same day - a coincidence noticed by most of the anti-Semitic correspondents to the paper ("...what disturbs the public is not the number of Jews who are convicted on the black market but the magnitude of their transactions and hence publicity"<sup>30</sup>) - the *Glasgow Herald* also published a court report of exactly the kind that had been the subject of so much debate. It concerned three cases of illegal trading in cloth. The second and third individuals indicted had what some readers had referred to as "Jewish names":

Samuel Cohen pleaded guilty to having, in a shop occupied by him at 171 Claythorn Street, Glasgow purchased the cloth and the costs without delivering the coupons, and without receiving invoices or intimating to the Price Regulating Committee that invoices had not been sent to him. He was fined £60.

Barnet Friedlander, trading as J.B. Fraser, 52 Virginia St. Glasgow, pleaded guilty to having purchased from Cohen 676 yards of cloth valued at £220 without surrendering coupons and without receiving invoices. He also pleaded guilty to having sold cloth to dealers. He was fined a total of £100.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> GH Tue 26 January 1943 p2 (6) Letter: The Jews And Anti-Semitism: C. A. Campbell

<sup>29</sup> GH Wed 27 January 1943 p4 (6) Letter: The Jews And Anti-Semitism: W.G. Hyslop

<sup>30</sup> GH Fri 29 January 1943 p4 (6) Letter: Jews And War Effort: Thomas Robertson

<sup>31</sup> GH Wed 27 January 1943 p4 (6) CLOTHING WITHOUT COUPONS Heavy Fines in Glasgow

Other readers, Jewish and non-Jewish Scots alike, were quick to point out the erroneous, prejudicial method of Hyslop's analysis into the extent of "Jewish infiltration into our commercial and social life". The month long correspondence ended with these three exchanges:

Luckily for your anti-Jewish correspondents, in the issue of the "Herald" that contained Mr. Burton's letter [stating that of 300,000 Jews in Britain, 50,000 were in the armed forces] there also appeared a report about a Jewish firm which was fined for buying and selling cloth without coupons. Thursday's issue reported the cases of two Gentiles who were convicted of bigamy and driving under the influence of drink. As a Jew, I condemn the action of the Jews involved in the coupon case. I refuse, however anyone's right to hold me or any other Jew responsible for the misdeeds of certain individuals who happen to be Jews. I submit that prejudice or racial hatred is no less a crime than black market dealing.<sup>32</sup>

It is amazing that in times like these when everyone in his own way is fighting for a better world that anyone could write such bigoted, one sided letter as "W.G. Hyslop". Surely even he must see that the only fair way to make such a collection of newspaper cuttings (which in any case seems to be a peculiar hobby) would be to cut out also all the Gentile convictions on the same day and so be able to draw up something like a fair analysis. With reference to his last paragraph, what will Jewish sons and daughters in the armed forces fighting for his liberty think of his letter and his views?<sup>33</sup>

One of your correspondents dislikes "Jews and their ways". Though I am a Scot by birth, I could just as truly and reasonably say Scots and their ways. I dislike their filthy personal habits. They spit whenever they can get away with it, they are drunk and are sick on our pavements; they come into our close and do worse. The wanton destruction on the railways and in the air-raid shelters is well known. I am well aware of the logical flaws in this letter. They seem a fair parallel to the arguments of the anti-Semites.<sup>34</sup>

It can be seen from this extensive exchange of opinion that though the plight of Jews suffering under the Germans was universally deplored and condemned (indicating that knowledge of the Nazi "final solution" had largely been accepted and believed even by Scottish anti-Semites) it was still possible for ordinary members of the public to express their dislike of Jews at home. Whether knowledge of the former exacerbated the latter is difficult to estimate. It could be argued that for others, knowledge of what was going on in Europe clearly demonstrated the fallacy of local anti-Semitism. The opinions expressed in these letters demonstrate that contrary to some readers' suggestions, condemnation of Nazi actions was in no way less heartfelt, or generally diminished by the existence of domestic prejudice.

These exchanges also illustrated the role of the mass media in the lives of these individuals. Radio news, from both the BBC and German sources, was cited as a key source of information about Nazi treatment of Jews in these letters. Newspapers, in this case, the

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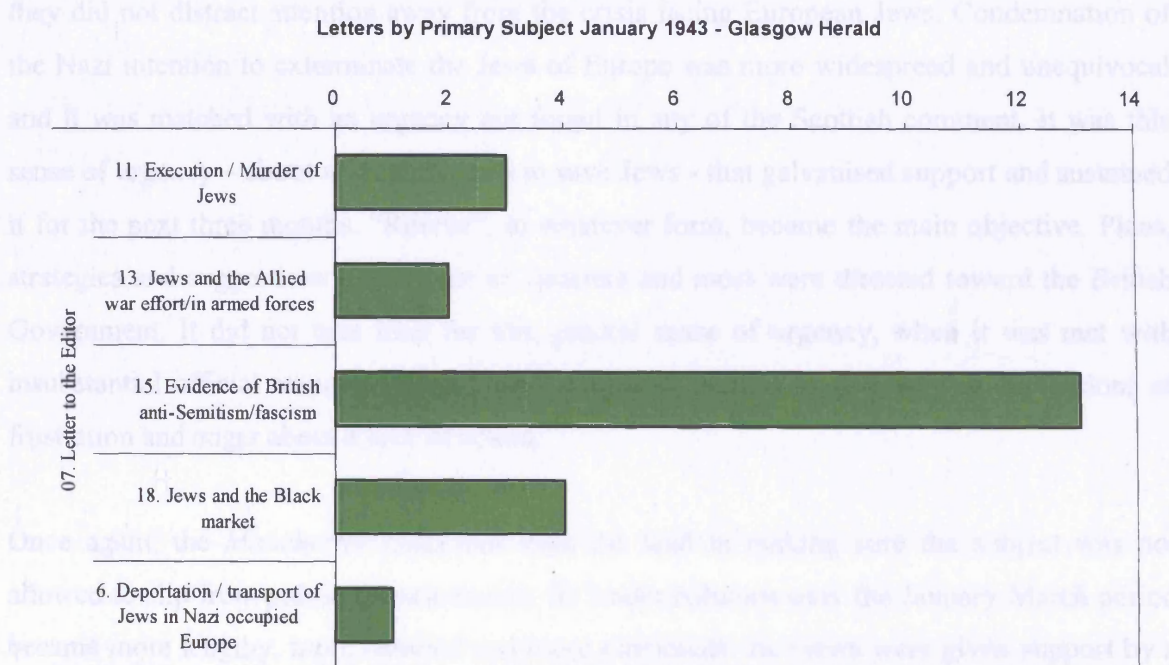
<sup>32</sup> GH Sat 30 January 1943 p4 (6) Letter: The Jews' War Record: Zevi Golombok

<sup>33</sup> GH Fri 29 January 1943 p4 (6) Letter: Jews And War Effort: L. Bernard.

<sup>34</sup> GH Sat 30 January 1943 p4 (6) Letter: The Jews' War Record: Another Scot

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*Glasgow Herald*, provided the public with both the ammunition for their arguments and an arena in which to express them. As the letters show, public perception of everyday reporting (especially court reports) concerning Jews was seen as evidence of both Jewish unscrupulous malpractice and the apparently anti-Semitic news values of British journalism. It must be said that the *Glasgow Herald* was balanced in its selection, allowing both sides equal space, however an overview of the 26 letters published in January by primary subject shows that despite (or perhaps because of) the enormity of the issue of the Nazi policy to exterminate the Jews of Europe, discussion of the topic that began the correspondence became lost.



To some extent, the editor of the letters page *allowed* discussion of the deportation and mass murder of Jews in Nazi-Europe to become lost in favour of a discussion of more local issues and attitudes. One possible reason for this focus was put forward in a more general analysis of British anti-Semitism by A.C. Crouch in a 1943 book entitled “Jews Are News!”:

It is a very justifiable complaint of Jews that the delinquencies of their black sheep receive much greater proportionate publicity than the delinquencies of anyone else. To those who are prepared to check the number of cases tried in the Courts, it can be clearly proven that it is not the Jews who are the chief offenders. There is, however, no doubt who gets the publicity. Why is this?

The answer is not because the press is particularly anti-Semitic. The answer is I think, what the title of this little booklet suggests, namely, that “Jews are News”. Years of anti-Semitic propaganda makes its presence felt and the newspaper reporter without consciously being hostile to the Jewish race, “smells a story” when Izzy Cohen is convicted of a black market

offence and John Smith, who may have been convicted of a black market offence at the same court, just does not have the same "story" in it.<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps because the editorship thought that the issue of domestic anti-Semitism had lost its news value, or that this correspondence had run its course, no more letters were published after January and therefore there was no further public comment concerning Jews at home or abroad for the next five months.

In contrast, public reaction in Yorkshire and Lancashire was much more focused and consistent than in Scotland. While concerns about British anti-Semitism were not ignored, they did not distract attention away from the crisis facing European Jews. Condemnation of the Nazi intention to exterminate the Jews of Europe was more widespread and unequivocal and it was matched with an urgency not found in any of the Scottish comment. It was this sense of urgency – about what to do next to save Jews - that galvanised support and sustained it for the next three months. "Rescue", in whatever form, became the main objective. Plans, strategies and suggestions came from all quarters and most were directed toward the British Government. It did not take long for this general sense of urgency, when it was met with insubstantial official responses (and poorly disguised inertia) to give way to expressions of frustration and anger about a lack of action.

Once again, the *Manchester Guardian* took the lead in making sure the subject was not allowed to slip from public consciousness. Its leader columns over the January-March period became more lengthy, more detailed and more passionate. Its views were given support by a constant monitoring of Government (or Allied) action or inaction on any initiatives that could help Jews to survive, from the subject of the provision of visas to Jews reaching neutral states, and the relaxation of British immigration regulations at home or in Palestine, to a range of diplomatic efforts with other Allied nations. Echoing Scott's discussion of a "silence" after the revelations of December, its first leader of the year on the subject said:

Parliament is up and the public's watchdogs cannot at present ask those searching questions which are our best hope of finding out what Government departments are, or are not doing. But just because parliament is up and silence prevails about the exterminating of the European Jews it is the more necessary to make sure that this is not the silence of the grave.<sup>36</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian* saw the suspension of Parliament as an opportunity for "definite plans of succour" to be publicly discussed and hoped that the main ministers concerned, Eden,

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<sup>35</sup> Crouch, A.C. (1943) *Jews are News!* p.6

<sup>36</sup> *MG* Sat 2 January 1943 p4 (8) Planning For Rescue



Stanley, the Colonial Secretary, and Morrison, the Home Secretary, would do the same. It suggested that condemnatory broadcasts should be repeated so as to encourage those who were willing to help Jewish victims, and to discourage countries like Italy and Hungary from giving up Jews to the Nazis. It believed that rescue on a large scale required an Allied plan in which everyone would take their share of refugees, but considered Palestine to be the obvious and best solution because it could quickly absorb a large number of Jews and that a “different spirit” was needed with regard to its present immigration policy. At the very least, it thought that the Allies should ask Hitler to let the children go. Above all, it hoped that when Parliament returned they would have “gone beyond saying and are already doing. Nothing less than this should or will satisfy the conscience of the country”<sup>37</sup>

Other strategies about what to do next were more direct, such as this contribution to the *Yorkshire Post*:

It is insufficient to threaten retribution to the ringleaders and actual perpetrators of these terrible anti-Jewish atrocities after the war is concluded; something should be done *now*.

It should be broadcast direct to the German people that with any further extension of their hideous atrocities or any further attempt to carry out the threat of exterminating the Jews, the United Nations will immediately, ruthlessly and completely wipe out with aerial bombing certain important German cities. This is the only way to teach the Hun and the only treatment understood by the German people.<sup>38</sup>

Reginald Sorensen MP, wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* and said that the Government’s December condemnation was impressive but “that action will determine the depth of our sincerity” Sorensen believed that “we”, meaning Britain and the Allies, shared a responsibility for the fate of European Jews: “Had the emotional content and present indignation and horror expressed itself in the pre-war days, or even since then, in unstinted activity many more persecuted Jews would to-day be in relative safety”.<sup>39</sup>

In remarks similar to the discussion in the letters to the *Glasgow Herald* about who was to blame for the atrocities, Prof. Brodetsky of Leeds University said: “...let every German realise that his son is doing these things, that his son will be hanged for doing them and that he himself will suffer for not interfering with his son”. Speaking at the Yorkshire Regional Conference of the English Zionist Federation in Leeds, he said that he did not think that any Government could carry out this policy if the population did not wish it. “This is being done not by Hitler, Goering or Goebbels but by tens of thousands of German officers and men and

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>38</sup> *YP* Sat 9 January 1943 p3 (6) Letter: How To Deter The Germans: A.G. Hepplethwaite

<sup>39</sup> *MG* Sat 2 January 1943 p4 (8) Letter: European Jews. Reginald Sorensen MP

all the evidence we have shows that there is no indication of repugnance by the men who carry out the policy.” Brodetsky argued that neutral countries should be told by the United Nations, “take these Jews until we can make arrangements for them to go elsewhere. If 100,000 Americans or Britons were being exterminated in Poland, it would be easier to get results than the results that are being obtained at the present moment.”<sup>40</sup>

One of the first joint letters (concerning the plight of European Jews) written to the *Yorkshire Post* was headed by the Vice Chancellor of Leeds University and the local MP representing the English Universities. It was written in support of a statement made by the Archbishops of England and Wales in their campaign for a refuge to be established in the British Empire for all persons threatened with massacre: “the sufferings of these millions of Jews and their condemnation, failing immediate rescue, to a cruel and certain death, constitute an appeal to humanity which it is impossible to resist”.<sup>41</sup> At Pastor Niemoller’s birthday service, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Temple, said that he realised how hard it must have been for German Christians to protest against the massacre of the Jews but that this failure would result in the German people “facing years of pain, humiliation and anguish”.<sup>42</sup>

As it was clear from the foreign news reports that reached the papers that the extermination process was still in progress,<sup>43</sup> the *Manchester Guardian*’s Political correspondent thought that the most immediate task for the Government was to consider the possibility of relaxing the immigration restrictions on wartime refugees. It argued that the British Government could not easily ask neutral countries to admit Jewish refugees who managed to reach their borders if it was not willing to admit them itself:

The step may seem belated but the Government can atone for that by coming to a quick decision to open the door at once to any escaping Jews. Since Hitler began his mass murder of Jews in Poland a few members of Parliament, like Miss Eleanor Rathbone, have pressed the Government to open our ports to all Jews who can reach them. Mr Morrison refused to relax the regulations adding rather strangely in such a matter of life and death, that any relaxation could not make “a substantial difference”.<sup>44</sup>

A relaxation in British immigration regulations was also one of the “practical proposals” put forward in a pamphlet by Victor Gollancz titled “Let My People Go”. Highlighted in a

<sup>40</sup> *YP* Mon 4 January 1943 p6 (6) German People to Blame. Prof Brodetsky on Jewish Terror.

<sup>41</sup> *YP* Mon 25 January 1943 p3 (6) Archbishops’ Appeal for the Jews, *YP* Thur 28 January 1943 p2 (6) Letter: Refugees from Axis Lands. T. Edmund Harvey, B. Mouat Jones, M.J. Stewart et al, Leeds.

<sup>42</sup> *GH* Fri 15 January 1943 p8 (8) Massacre of the Jews Primate on Silence of German Christians  
*MG* Fri 15 January 1943 p6 (8) DR TEMPLE AND NIEMOLLER

<sup>43</sup> On January 2 it was reported (by the Belgian News agency, *Inbel* via *Reuter*) that all Jewish children in Liege had been forcibly separated from their parents and taken away in lorries. *MG* Sat 2 January 1943 p5 (8) A Liege Report

<sup>44</sup> *MG* Sat 9 January 1943 p5 (8) Britain and the Jews Rescue Work. Opening the Doors to Refugees?

*Manchester Guardian* review, was Gollancz's suggestion of an exchange of Jews for enemy nationals in Allied countries, some of whom could be temporarily sheltered either in neutral countries or by Jewish communities in South America.<sup>45</sup> Others took a longer term view of the situation facing European Jewry. Surprisingly, a conference of representatives of British Jewish communities on January 13 in Manchester (which included speeches by Shertok of the Jewish Agency and Schwartzbart of the Polish National Council) did not put forward any immediate rescue plans, but looked further ahead to a post-war situation where Palestine was seen as the only viable territory which could quickly accommodate a large scale settlement of Jews.<sup>46</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian* was more impatient. Simply and forcefully, its lengthy leader of January 16 asked "What Is Being Done?":

On December 17 the House of Commons stood in silence to demonstrate its horror at Hitler's policy of "exterminating" the Jews. Mr. Eden spoke for the Allies, condemning what was being done and promising retribution on those who were proved guilty. It was everywhere felt, both in Parliament and in the country, that condemnation and the threat of retribution, though necessary, would neither save many lives nor satisfy the general feeling that what is needed is something "practical".<sup>47</sup>

It was, the paper believed a matter of Government policy, a question for the War Cabinet. As it had before, it identified the three Ministers (Eden, Stanley and Morrison) and their respective Ministries (Foreign, Colonial and Home Offices), which it believed had the power and responsibility to construct and implement a plan of action. It reiterated that it was they, if anything substantial was to be achieved, who ought to be taking the lead in doing "what should be done". The paper noted its own Political correspondent's information that it was the Government's intention only to relax its immigration restrictions (to permit the admission of refugee Jews who could manage to escape from Europe) on the condition that other Allied and neutral countries did the same:

That would be bad. We should make entry to this country easier because it is the right thing to do, because unless we do it, the rescue work is certain to fail, because we desire to furnish a good example but in any case whether anyone follows our example or not, to discharge our own responsibility.<sup>48</sup>

The leader's sense of urgency was palpable. It seemed that the paper was aware that it too had a role to play in keeping the public aware of the seriousness of the situation. As if to remind

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<sup>45</sup> *MG* Tue 12 January 1943 p3 (6) RESCUE OF THE JEWS

<sup>46</sup> *MG* Wed 13 January 1943 p6 (8) JEWISH SETTLEMENT "PALESTINE THE ONLY SOLUTION"

<sup>47</sup> *MG* Sat 16 January 1943 p4 (10) WHAT IS BEING DONE?

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*,

readers that the Nazi campaign against all Jews showed no sign of relenting, it published an extract from Hitler's New Year message to the German people, because "it was only given a passing reference in agency reports":

I gave the assurance [on September 1, 1939] that the hope of International Jewry to destroy the German and other European nations by means of a new world war would be the gravest error committed by Jewry for thousands of years, that it will in any case not destroy the German nation but exterminate itself – and there can no longer be any doubt about this matter even to-day.<sup>49</sup>

The *Glasgow Herald* waited until January 25 before its own frustration with Government inaction was expressed in its only leader on the subject of the month. Like the *Manchester Guardian*, it took the Commons protest after the Allied Declaration as its starting point and similarly thought that however sincere and dramatic the expression of sympathy for persecuted Jews had been and the Allies the vow of punishment, neither were likely to "halt or hinder Nazi policy designed to exterminate the Jewish race in Europe":

In these circumstances it is not surprising that there should be anxiety to know whether Britain in association with the Allied Governments is able to give more hope to the Jews than they are likely to obtain from the assurances that their persecutors will not escape retribution. No doubt it is the case that Britain cannot achieve very much without the co-operation of other Powers, but it would be very regrettable if plans for the withdrawal of Jews to safety failed to achieve the best results that can be expected.

There is no danger of difficulties being overlooked of first getting the Jews out of German hands and then finding them refuge and safety. It may be, indeed, that the rescue of any considerable number, even of children, will prove to be quite impossible. But if there actually is any hope of success in this work humanitarianism demands that action should be as swift as possible, for every day adds more to the total of the massacred.<sup>50</sup>

In order to quickly assuage this growing sense of frustration, Clement Atlee, the Deputy Prime Minister made a statement in the House of Commons which said that any "relief measures for refugees as succeeded in escaping" could not be exclusively British. He informed the House that the Government was in confidential consultations with other countries "to assist refugees who could make their way to countries beyond German control. As if to deflect any further questions on the matter, he said "it would not be in the interest of refugees themselves" to enter into any discussion of these consultations.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *MG* Sat 16 January 1943 p8 (10) HITLER AND JEWRY "EXTERMINATING ITSELF". The paper had taken this extract from a longer report on the speech in the *Zionist Review* dated January 9, 1943. Copy in the *Manchester Guardian* Archive Refugees Box 223/5/126

<sup>50</sup> *GH* Mon 25 January 1943 p2 (6) EUROPE'S CONDEMNED

<sup>51</sup> *MG* Wed 20 January 1943 p8 (8) RELIEF OF JEWISH REFUGEES The Consultations A STATEMENT BY MR. ATLEE. Shortly afterwards (January 21), Crozier had received a letter regarding these consultations. The letter, written on *Manchester Guardian* (London office) notepaper was signed "M. Way" but the status or position of this person was not indicated. It was marked with initials A.P.W. indicating that A.P. Wadsworth the assistant editor's had seen the letter after it arrived in Manchester. It said "From what the F.O. people tell me, I gather that Washington is being rather difficult about the Jewish question at the moment. In what way I do not know

The effort did not work. Two days later the leader in the *Manchester Guardian* was titled "Plans for Rescue Work?". It immediately picked up on Atlee's opening comment that the Government was conscious that "the only real remedy" was an Allied victory by remarking:

...since most Jews in occupied Europe will be dead by the time we have won the war this "remedy" must for them have a certain unreality.

It is, or should be, remarkable that the Government's cautious generalities about our intentions include nothing about Palestine, which has the accommodation, the 37,000 entrance visas available, needs the labour of the adults and will support the women and children without any burden on the administration.<sup>52</sup>

A week later, on January 27, the paper published a very long letter by Sydney Silverman MP which dominated the letters section of that edition. Titled "A Proposal to Save the Jews", it carefully reviewed the pertinent events which had led up to this point. Though the language he used was restrained it was not difficult to detect the depth of feeling contained in the letter. It skilfully conveyed the sense of frustration of knowing the seriousness of what was happening to Jews in Nazi Europe while waiting for some commensurate response from the Allies:

On December 17, 1942, the Governments of the three principle Allied nations issued a declaration about a new fact. The news of this new fact had reached them some four months before, but being the civilised governments of civilised peoples, they were rightly reluctant to accept it while any hope remained that it might not be true. How many thousands of lives that creditable reluctance has cost history will probably never record. Let it pass as part of the price which humanity inevitably pays in the face of inhuman horrors which mankind will perpetrate upon itself to preserve confidence in its sanity.<sup>53</sup>

What was the *new fact*? Silverman concisely explained: "it was that the Nazis had taken the definite decision that the "Jewish problem" in Europe should be solved forthwith and for ever by killing every Jew under German control". He pointed out that by the time the United Nations were convinced of this "fact" the plan had been in active operation for nearly six months and a substantial part of European Jewry had already been executed. Referring to discussions in the Commons about the number of refugees already in Britain, he argued that now, in late January 1943, in the face of "the immediate mass murder of millions of utterly defenceless people", the question of whether Britain or any other country had done less or more to rescue Jews before the war ("in quite other conditions") was irrelevant. He noticed

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exactly, but it sounds to me as if the Americans are showing some reluctance to take on larger numbers of refugees, and that there is a tendency to go slow about plans of action". Copy in the *Manchester Guardian* Archive Refugees Box 223/5/143

<sup>52</sup> *MG* Wed 27 January 1943 p4 (8) Letter: A PROPOSAL TO SAVE THE JEWS. Sydney Silverman MP

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*,

that most of the proposals he was aware of concerned relief for Jews who had already escaped the Nazis, which he was sure could only be a very small number:

Can we make no attempt at mass rescue? Are we to limit our efforts to those who have already managed to save themselves? If so, we shall shirk our major responsibility.

People say helplessly "What can we do?" and indeed the mind reels under the vastness of the deed and the poverty of means in our hands. But the difficulties should be a challenge not an excuse. There are many things we can do.<sup>54</sup>

Silverman's own plan was straightforward: he wanted the British Government to talk directly to the German Government, to formally offer sanctuary to every Jew the Nazis would let go:

Let them say: If your hatred of the Jews is such that in the mid-twentieth century to commit the bloodiest bloodbath in history we will save you from that crime. The world is wide. We will find room for them somewhere. Will you let them go. ...If you will let them go on conditions, then name your conditions and we will consider them. But rather than that the common civilisation of Europe should suffer so indelible a stain of blood we will relieve you of you burden. Let the Jews go.<sup>55</sup>

He said that he was not unaware of the objections to such a proposal but he rejected it them all because he took it as axiomatic that the mass murder should stop. Above all, Silverman felt that moral indignation and threats of punishment without the offer of sanctuary were "a mockery of the victims and civilisation alike, provoking from the oppressor no pause his bloody work but only a cynical sneer".

Like Silverman, Major General Sir Neil Malcolm, (the former High Commissioner for German Refugees) also chose the *Manchester Guardian* as the platform from which to publicise his thoughts about Jewish refugees. In a special feature article which began on page 4 and continued on to page 6 of the January 29 issue, he said that he was pleased to see a revival of interest in Hitler's victims:

I use the word "revival" for there is no doubt that for a time we allowed our consciences to slumber. We must admit so much; yet it is to our credit that we have done a great deal to relieve the lot of these unfortunate people at a time when we are passing through the direst crisis in our history.<sup>56</sup>

He said that there was a general attitude that Britain had already spent a lot of time and money in support of the 90,000, "mostly Jewish" refugees, in the country. He believed that people

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>56</sup> MG Fri 29 January 1943 p4 (8) THE REFUGEE PROBLEM Ways of Practical Alleviation

were “more or less content” with the pre-war efforts until the Polish Note roused them and instilled a new spirit among those who were willing to ask “what more can we do?”

On the same day, an all-party deputation of both Houses of Parliament, including Rathbone and Silverman, met for an hour with Atlee, Eden, Morrison and Stanley. It seemed that the War Cabinet was at last taking the call for positive rescue work seriously, (the *Manchester Guardian* noted that the presence of *four* Ministers was extremely unusual) even though their response to the (by now familiar) proposals put forward by the deputation was officially described as “cautious”. Despite this, it was a sign of progress, which was encouraged further by the announcement that motions on the subject of “providing help and temporary asylum to people who were in danger of massacre who are able to leave enemy occupied countries”<sup>57</sup> would be tabled for debates in both Houses.<sup>58</sup>

News from Poland still reached the regional press – but of the three papers, the *Manchester Guardian* was the only paper to report incidents on anything like a regular basis. For example, on February 4, an unspecified news agency report said:

By the middle of January the Germans were clearing the Warsaw Ghetto of its last remaining Jewish inmates, but what has been done with them is not known. Reports from Poland suggest that there are still 350,000 Jews living in other Ghettos and roughly 300,000 confined in labour camps. These figures only apply to the territory in Poland proper.<sup>59</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian* was also more likely than either of the other papers to publish a story without waiting to revealing the full extent of its sources. For example, on February 12 it received a copy of a report from the British Section of the WJC concerning the most recent Nazi actions against Jews in Central Europe.<sup>60</sup> The next day’s edition contained the news that the Nazis were speeding up deportations from Bohemia and Moravia. It said that “reports have reached London” – that the Nazis were making the Protectorate (using the exact term used in the German statement) “Judenrein” (which it translated as “free of Jews”) and said the original source of this intelligence was the Ecumenical Church Council in Geneva.<sup>61</sup> The fact that the article did not mention the WJC as the British recipient of the information suggests that the paper may not have received permission from the WJC to publicly attribute the story to it. It is likely that the *Yorkshire Post* had also seen or received a copy of the WJC report at

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<sup>57</sup> MG Thur 4 February 1943 p5 (6) RESCUE OF JEWS MPS TABLE MOTION

<sup>58</sup> MG Fri 29 January 1943 p5 (8) RESCUE OF JEWS Appeal to Ministers

<sup>59</sup> MG Thur 4 February 1943 p5 (6) POLISH JEWS The Warsaw Ghetto

<sup>60</sup> *The Nazi Massacre of Jews and Poles*. WJC British Section. February 12, 1943. Copy in the *Manchester Guardian* Archive Refugees Box 223/5/161

<sup>61</sup> MG Sat 13 February 1943 p6 (8) JEWS IN BOHEMIA Speeding Up Deportations

the same time as the *Manchester Guardian*, but it was more cautious and waited until it could name the WJC as its source before it went ahead with the same story (two days later on February 15):

The Nazis have decided that by March 31 next, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia is to be cleared of Jews. By the same date no Jew will be left in Berlin. An order virtually sentencing the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia to death by starvation was published in the official Gazette of the Protectorate. Local authorities are ordered to withdraw from Jews cards for rationed foodstuffs. The mass extermination of Jews in Poland is being continued without respite and 6,000 are being killed daily in one area alone.<sup>62</sup>

As permission must have been granted by the WJC to reveal it as the source, the *Manchester Guardian* - having already published the story about the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia - was now able to legitimately publish further details from the report, specifically concerning the international scope of the deportation process:

According to direct reports which have been received by the British Section of the World Jewish Congress the Nazis have issued new orders to intensify the deportation of the Jews remaining in occupied Europe.

While the Jews in Bohemia and Moravia are being starved, the Jews in Germany are being deported at a rapid rate. Special Gestapo agents from Vienna (where deportations have been almost completed) have been sent to Berlin and also to Holland to speed up the expulsions.

Twenty one members of the German-Jewish Representative Council and the Berlin Jewish Community Council have disappeared. Not a single Jew is left in the ghetto of Warsaw, where there used to be 430,000. The remnants in Poland are now confined to 53 ghettos.<sup>63</sup>

It is possible to detect other differences between the papers. For instance, it would not be unfair to say that the *Yorkshire Post* did not share the *Manchester Guardian*'s sense of urgency. It was not as impatient with Government efforts and was certainly less critical of the tone of Ministerial responses. It was more inclined to take a more pragmatic view of rescue efforts, placing any plans and government initiatives within the stresses and difficulties of the wartime context. For example, welcoming the Colonial Secretary, Oliver Stanley's announcement at the beginning of February - that 4000 Jewish children and 500 adults from Bulgaria would be admitted into Palestine - its London Correspondent also recognised the difficulties of organising transport, food and accommodation for these and any other refugees. Like the Government, it thought that the problem of refugees was an international one and that Britain had already done much to help ("since the present problem became acute Britain has taken 93,000 and the dominions another 53,000"). Unlike the *Manchester Guardian*, which was generally dismissive of the Colonial Office's restrictive attitude to Palestine as a

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<sup>62</sup> YP Mon 15 February 1943 p3 (6) Massacre of Jews Intensified

<sup>63</sup> MG Mon 15 February 1943 p6 (6) MURDERING JEWS Nazis Intensify Efforts



suitable refuge for European Jews, the *Yorkshire Post* was more sympathetic to the Government's sensitivity to Arab objections to any further Jewish immigration.

This is not to say that the *Yorkshire Post* was less willing to publicise the calls for rescue made by the many local and national groups who felt that too little was being done. Throughout the first three months of the year, the *Yorkshire Post* printed regular accounts of protest meetings in Leeds, Bradford and Huddersfield as well as giving space to statements made by local clergy and politicians.<sup>64</sup> Apart from coverage more directly concerned with Jews, the paper published other stories that shed light on conditions within occupied Poland. For example, on February 3, its London correspondent reported that Count Raczynski, the Polish Foreign Minister, had handed another Note to the other Allied Government giving details of a new wave of German terror. Though no mention was made of Jews, the Note said that large numbers of Poles were confined in the 80 concentration camps now in Poland. The Polish Government knew a good deal about one of these camps, Oswiecim/Aushwitz:

Oswiecim, near Cracow, is the most notorious. According to the camp register, 63,340 had passed through this camp by June 1 of last year. In addition 22,500 were imprisoned without being registered. Of this total 85,840 men and 23,000 women were still alive recently. Five thousand had been released or transferred to other camps. It is presumed that about 58,000 perished.<sup>65</sup>

This story is a good example of the limits to a lot of the information which was coming out of occupied Europe. A great deal was known about the location of ghettos and camps, the timing of round-ups of Jews, and even methods of deportation but details concerning what happened afterwards, inside the camps, still remained beyond reach.

Throughout February and March the *Manchester Guardian* continued to concentrate on the problem of rescue. As the following examples demonstrate, it encroached on every area of the paper. A wide range of suggested courses of action were given space. The first annual general meeting of the Council of Christians and Jews passed a resolution calling on the Government to allow temporary asylum to be granted to refugees "in view of the massacres taking place in Europe". Manchester University Students advocated exchanging enemy nationals for Jews and opening the doors of Palestine. The Vice-Chancellor, Sir John Stopford, said that protest

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<sup>64</sup> *YP* Tue 19 January 1943 p6 (6) HUDDERSFIELD AND JEWISH MASSACRES; *YP* Mon 25 January 1943 p3 (6) ADDRESS FOR BRADFORD JEWS; *YP* Tue 9 February 1943 p3 (6) HELP FOR NAZI VICTIMS Leeds Students Call for Action; *YP* Thur 11 March 1943 p6 (6) MASSACRE OF JEWS LEEDS PROTEST MEETING; *YP* Mon 15 March 1943 p3 (6) PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS PROTEST MEETING IN LEEDS; *YP* Wed 24 March 1943 p2 (6) PRIMATE'S PLEA FOR REFUGEES; *YP* Thur 25 March 1943 p2 (6) TEN YEARS AGO NAZI PERSECUTION OF JEWRY

<sup>65</sup> *YP* Wed 3 February 1943 p3 (6) NEW WAVE OF GERMAN TERROR IN POLAND

was not sufficient and that the Government should not allow difficulties to be an excuse for doing nothing. The paper's *London Correspondence* said that the Chief Rabbi of Palestine, Dr. Isaac Hertzog had received a reply from his appeal to the Vatican. The Pope said that he was doing his utmost for the persecuted Jews and though the full text was not known, the letter apparently referred to "some concrete suggestions for the salvation of the Jews".<sup>66</sup>

Highly critical leader columns in the *Manchester Guardian* marked the passage of time. One on February 9, examined Ministerial remarks since the Allied Declaration which it noted with disappointment was "now almost eight weeks ago. Even the slow process of diplomacy should have reached some goal since December 17."<sup>67</sup> Another on March 2 asked:

After ten weeks, what international measures have been taken? None. What "practical proposals" of our own? None except a limited immigration into Palestine which was promised to the Jews regardless of this or any other persecution. We are therefore in the position of those who, after loud protestations and indignation are neither doing anything substantial themselves nor producing international action. At present we are like men intermittently spitting at a volcano in the pretence that they are putting out the fires. Meanwhile the extermination goes on..<sup>68</sup>

Some readers wrote to the paper suggesting that Libya or Ceylon could be alternative territories to Palestine in which to establish Jewish settlements after the war. Others simply re-emphasised the sense of urgency; John Morrison wrote from Stourbridge:

We have waited with heartburning and increasing impatience for some concrete evidence that the Government realises the pressing urgency of its obligation to redeem this country's responsibility for the fate of many of these tortured people...Every day, every moment, counts, for it is nowhere disputed that every moment costs human lives, untold suffering and despair that almost beggars description.<sup>69</sup>

A little over a week after "reliable reports" reached London on February 17 that the Nazis were systematically emptying "liquidating" the 53 remaining ghettos in Poland, MPs asked Eden for a debate on rescue measures. Eden replying to "a suggestion that "growing public uneasiness" had been caused by the "comparative inaction" of the Allies said that "the only effective means of succouring tortured Jewish and other suffering people of Europe lay in an

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<sup>66</sup> *MG* Fri 5 February 1943 p6 (8) RESCUE OF THE JEWS Urgent Call To Government; *MG* Sat 13 February 1943 p3 (8) RESCUING THE JEWS A University Call For Action; *MG* Tue 9 February 1943 p4 (6); THE POPE AND THE JEWS

<sup>67</sup> Eden has said: "We shall do what we can to alleviate these horrors although I fear that what we can do will inevitably be slight". When Morrison was asked if Palestine would admit refugees who could get there regardless of the White Paper's limit of 29,000 up until March 31 1944, he replied "No, from the point of view of stability in the Middle East". Sir Richard Acland commented: "Do not the claims of humanity come before your quota restrictions?" *MG* Tue 9 February 1943 p4 (6) PLANS AND ACTION.

<sup>68</sup> *MG* Tue 2 March 1943 p4 (6) WORDS AND ACTIONS.

<sup>69</sup> *MG* Thur 4 February 1943 p4 (6) JEWS AND CEYLON; *MG* Mon 15 February 1943 p4 (6) SANCTUARY FOR THE JEWS - LIBYA; *MG* Tue 9 February 1943 p6 (8) SANCTUARY FOR THE JEWS;

Allied victory.” He said that he could not say when he would be in a position to make a statement about international action and while the Government “was doing all it could do” the question was “pretty baffling in some aspects”.<sup>70</sup>

The range of the *Manchester Guardian*’s coverage of the subject during this period even included two cartoons (“Wailing Wall 1943” and “Drifting”) by David Low of the London *Evening Standard* which seemed to capture the sense of impotence and inertia that many felt (see appendix 2).

The headline of one Parliamentary report at the end of February suggested that all the rescue campaigners’ (including MPs like Silverman and Rathbone) efforts had been in vain. It simply stated that there was “Little Aid for the Jews. M.P.s Disappointed. Immigration Bar Unrelaxed”. It said that the Government had “thrown up the sponge or something very much like it”. The British decision to only relax its own Defence Regulation (restricting wartime immigration) if other Allied and neutral countries did the same was seen as the crux of the matter. The report said that one MP’s (Mr. Seymour Cocks) remark was “a true reflection of the growing impatience with the Government’s conduct”:

Does the Home Secretary realise that when the House stood up in silence a short time ago that it was not meant as a signal to the Government to stand still and do nothing?<sup>71</sup>

The paper’s Political correspondent thought that the failure to get the United States in particular to join in an Allied plan of action was the decisive factor in the lack of progress: “The United States hangs back. And so the British Government decides that nothing can be done”.

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<sup>70</sup> *MG* Wed 17 February 1943 p8 (8) THE JEWS IN POLAND – EMPTYING THE GHETTOES; *MG* Thur 25 February 1943 p3 (6) RESCUING JEWS M.P. ASKS FOR A DEBATE; *GH* Thur 25 February 1943 p6 (6) RESCUING JEWS FROM EUROPE “Baffling Aspects”

<sup>71</sup> *MG* Fri 26 February 1943 p5 (8) LITTLE AID FOR THE JEWS – M.P.S DISAPPOINTED Immigration Bar Unrelaxed

The impasse ended in March. America responded. According to a special report in the *Manchester Guardian*, (which was the only paper to report the event) a mass demonstration urging immediate help for Jews in Europe was held in Madison Square Garden, New York on March 1. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chief Rabbi sent messages, and a speech recorded by Sir William Beveridge was heard by the audience. The main parts of each of these statements were quoted by the paper:

From the most recent reports it is clear that the terrible situation facing the Jews in Europe shows no sign of improvement but is actually more terrible than ever. Words are weak and cold, deeds and speedy deeds are needed to put a stop to this brutal campaign for the extermination of a whole race. (Hinsley)

Those who proclaim the Four Freedoms have so far done very little to secure even the freedom to live for six million of their Jewish fellow-men by readiness to rescue those who might still escape Nazi terror and butchery. (Hertz)

The latest explosion of Nazi bestiality against the Jews threatens hundreds of thousands or millions of men, women, and children with death and torture. That's fact not rhetoric. (Beveridge)<sup>72</sup>

Two days later all three papers carried the news (from Washington via *Reuter*) that the U.S. Government had sent a Note to Britain indicating its "wholehearted concurrence and co-operation in any steps towards immediate aid for Jews in Europe". The Assistant Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, also proposed that an Anglo-American conference should be held in Ottawa to discuss plans to "alleviate the plight of political refugees and persecuted peoples". When asked to comment on the New York mass meeting he recalled the work of the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees established by President Roosevelt and said that future plans would be based on the experience of that committee.<sup>73</sup>

The news of the Note (and the background to it) came a surprise to the regional papers. It emerged that the American Note was in fact a reply to a British *aide-memoire* which had been sent to Washington on January 20. It became known that the British Note contained several conditions, the main one being that the work of relief should be on an international basis. Each paper speculated on what the implications of the Notes and meeting might be: the *Manchester Guardian* (which was the only paper to publish the full text of both Notes, neither of which referred to Jews, only "refugees") thought that the suggestions did not go very far:

There is no indication that any change in the existing immigration laws is seriously contemplated in Washington. The Notes interpret international commitments rather in the light

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<sup>72</sup> *MG* Tue 2 March 1943 p2 (6) CARDINAL'S APPEAL FROM SICK-BED "IMMEDIATE ACTION TO RESCUE THE JEWS"

<sup>73</sup> *GH* Thur 4 March 1943 p6 (8) AID FOR JEWS IN EUROPE AMERICA READY TO CO-OPERATE; *YP* Thur 4 March 1943 p2 (6) U.S. WILL CO-OPERATE IN AID FOR JEWS; *MG* Thur 4 March 1943 p5 (6) RESCUING THE JEWS ANGLO-U.S. TALKS OTTOWA MEETING

of assurances to other countries regarding the maintenance of refugees while in transit. ...However the documents now made public show that the two great powers are agreed on the principle of collective action and this in itself augurs favourably.<sup>74</sup>

In its leader of March 5 the *Yorkshire Post* reminded its readers that “little or nothing” had been done since the Allied Declaration and that many feared that the “admitted difficulties of problem were seeming insuperable to the Government”, therefore it was welcome news to learn that the Government had taken steps as long ago as January 20.

The difficulties of escape from Nazi-occupied countries must be greatly aggravated by the reluctance of neutral countries to take people whose sufferings will have dazed and wrecked them. If this could be overcome there might be some expectation that the escape from the region of death would be come less desperate. What can be done to help these helpless victims must be done.<sup>75</sup>

The *Glasgow Herald* agreed with the Government that the removal of Jewish refugees was an issue that could not be dealt with unilaterally and piecemeal but demanded international co-operation. It saw formidable obstacles in the way of rescue, not least the problem of available shipping to transport refugees and finding more ships to “bring the extra food these poor people will need”:

The painful truth is that a determined effort is being made too late, when international resources are at a low ebb. It is regrettable that more was not done in the past when ships and food might have been more easily provided and before the worst of the horrors had fallen on the Jews of Europe. But vigour and persistence may still accomplish something useful, and the informal conference which the U.S. Government has suggested will meet with a real sense of urgency.<sup>76</sup>

This meeting – when it would happen, where it would take place and what it would discuss – became the main focus of attention for the next two months.

One subtle but noticeable change took place within this coverage. None of the headlines in any of the papers referred to “(the) Jews” (see footnotes) as the focus of Allied efforts. Instead a broader term, “refugees” began to be used by the British and American Governments and consequently “refugees” started to be used interchangeably with “Jews” in the three newspapers as they faithfully reported Allied statements on the subject of relief and rescue. As the *Manchester Guardian*’s Diplomatic Correspondent had been reminded:

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<sup>74</sup> *MG* Fri 5 March 1943 p5 (8) RESCUING AXIS VICTIMS JOINT ACTION

<sup>75</sup> *GH* Fri 5 March 1943 p4 (8) EUROPEAN REFUGEES

<sup>76</sup> *YP* Fri 5 March 1943 p5 (8) HELPING HITLER’S VICTIMS

It is to be pointed out that the problem to be handled is that of the refugees as a whole and not solely that of the Jews, although their position is most desperate.<sup>77</sup>

This change was not accidental. Versions of it began to appear within many of the Government's policy statements in March and April, after the exchange of Notes had taken place – as if to deliberately widen the scope and terms of any international efforts away from simply rescuing “the Jews”. For example, Eden, in a Commons reply to Eleanor Rathbone / who had asked him if the proposed meeting could be held in London rather than Ottawa, said:

Available information pointed to the conclusion that the massacre of Jews in Poland was continuing and that considerable numbers of Polish and Yugoslav nationals other than Jews – in addition to the other oppressed peoples of Europe – were also being massacred.

Eden also preferred to refer to the Anglo-American conference as “an exploratory meeting” and said that “someone would have to cross the Atlantic to attend it”. The headline to the article was: “The Refugees. Anglo-U.S. Discussions”.<sup>78</sup>

However it was the plight of Jews which remained foremost in the minds of those who gathered to condemn the Nazi extermination policy and voice their protest at the lack of Allied action. On March 14, the Lord Mayor of Leeds organised a meeting at the Town Hall where the Archbishop of York, Cyril Garbett and three MPs representing Leeds constituencies were the main speakers. The MP for South-East Leeds, Major J. Milner said that the crimes against committed by the Germans were “not merely against the Jewish race but against mankind”. He said it was difficult for people in Britain to realise the barbarities that were taking place in Europe. He understood that there were “quite sincere people who thought statements about them were propaganda but the evidence was conclusive and it was the duty of everyone to study it”. A resolution was carried which stated:

This meeting records its abhorrence of the inhuman treatment of the Jews of Europe, and extends to the victims and to the Jewish community throughout the world, profound sympathy. It assures the Government of the full support of the citizens of Leeds for any action the United nations are able to undertake and to provide help and refuge for the Jews threatened with extermination.<sup>79</sup>

British Methodists, at the quarterly meeting of the Buxton Methodist Circuit welcomed the news of the Ottawa conference but said that three months had elapsed since the Allied Declaration and every day lost meant the slaughter of thousands of innocent men, women, and children. On the same day (March 15) two other contributions were published in the

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<sup>77</sup> MG Mon 8 March 1943 p5 (6) HOMES FOR REFUGEES ANGLO-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

<sup>78</sup> MG Thur 11 March 1943 p6 (6) THE REFUGEES ANGLO-U.S. DISCUSSIONS

<sup>79</sup> YP Thur 15 March 1943 p2 (6) PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS PROTEST MEETING IN LEEDS

*Manchester Guardian*. The Archbishop of York denounced Nazi oppression and brutality at a speech in Leeds and said that the persecution of the Jews was unique in its horror:

It has the characteristics that make it stand by itself in the long history of cruelty and tyranny. It is a deliberate policy of extermination directed against, not a nation, but a whole race. They are doomed without trial, without crime, without the possibility of defence. They are condemned to death to satisfy the blood lust of a megalomaniac who holds the greater part of Europe in his grasp. The sentence was being executed with speed by starvation, exportation in "trains of death", wholesale massacre by shooting and poison gas. Poland has been made the slaughterhouse of Europe, and women and children were included in the massacre.<sup>80</sup>

The second was a letter to the paper: H.A. Goodman, Chairman of Agudas Israel Organisation, said that Jews were not ungrateful for the sympathy expressed by the United Nations and many eminent British Church and lay leaders but still felt that there was a lack of understanding of the urgency of the situation. He quoted a German document that had reached London: "*Ministerialblatt fur die Innere Verwaltung*" dated 1943, which included an order issued by Himmler entitled "Regulation for the punishment camps in the incorporated territories of the East". Poles, it said, would be taken to labour camps for "retraining". All Jews arrested would be "handed over to the State police to be dealt with". Goodman commented that the silence observed by Himmler as to the manner in which these Jews would be "dealt with" was eloquent. He added that there were no Jewish witnesses available who could tell what the expression implied. Goodman thought that Hitler's promise to destroy European Jewry would be the only promise that he would keep.<sup>81</sup>

Three days later the testimony of a witness appeared in the *Glasgow Herald*. Sir Patrick Dollan had received a cable from Jerusalem from Dr. Joseph Kruk, who was described as "Socialist leader in Poland". It said:

Have escaped from Nazi Poland, which I left at the end of January. I pray that the numerous religious and humanitarian workers' organisations in Britain will help to save the remainder of Jews left alive in terrible conditions.

I personally have interviewed witnesses and have obtained absolute confirmation of the horrible murders of Jewish women and children by the Hitlerites. They are murdering thousands daily. Practical measures are: to exchange German prisoners for Jews, while Allied countries should open their gates to Jewish refugees. Please act immediately or it will be too late and interest all your organisations in the cause of the Polish victims of Hitler's hate.<sup>82</sup>

Another piece of urgent news from Poland was published in the *Manchester Guardian* on March 20. The Jewish representative on the Polish National Council in London (Zygielbojm,

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<sup>80</sup> MG Mon 15 March 1943 p3 (6) METHODISTS AND AID FOR JEWS; MG Mon 15 March 1943 p3 (6) HORRORS OF NAZI PERSECUTION ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

<sup>81</sup> MG Mon 15 March 1943 p4 (6) CASE OF URGENCY Letter: H.A. Goodman

<sup>82</sup> GH Thur 18 March 1943 p6 (8) "EXCHANGE GERMANS FOR JEWS" POLE'S APPEAL TO BRITAIN

though he was not mentioned by name in the report) had received an S.O.S. message from the Warsaw Ghetto informing him that the “liquidation” of the ghetto was being speeded up and that the Germans intended to close it “before the Spring”. This message was the first news that any of the papers had received about Jewish resistance:

Here and there the Jews have been trying to oppose the German intruders. A few days ago, when the German police proceeded to the forcible evacuation of a large block of densely populated houses, a struggle developed. Fifty Germans were killed while carrying out their task. In reply the German police brought up machine guns and a few hundred Jews were murdered on the spot, among them our friends Mermelstein, Cholodenko and Giterman. A similar extermination is going on all over Poland. You must rouse the whole world to action. Petition the Pope to intervene officially, and ask the Allies to treat German prisoners of war as hostages for our safety. Only 200,000 of us remain.<sup>83</sup>

Neither of the other two papers took note of this S.O.S. message. Similarly (on the same day) only the *Manchester Guardian* reported the deportation of 8,000 Bulgarian Jews to Eastern Poland - “the Bulgarian authorities have submitted to German pressure and agreed to exile their Jewish subjects” – or the fact, according to the Polish Government, that 200 Jews died every day in Majdanek.<sup>84</sup>

It was also the only paper (in its first leader column of March 23) to draw attention to the increasing use of the term “extermination” in speeches made by “Hitler’s lieutenants”, particularly Goebbels: “Jews are and international disease which must be exterminated”. It said that it understood that in the midst of war it was possible for people to forget that this “policy” was still being implemented:

The rush of great events such that the ordinary man may be forgiven if the programme of extermination passes out of his mind unless there is startling news day by day. But the process continues. There has been news lately that the massacres have been renewed in Poland. There was a telegram saying Jews are now being sent from Bulgaria to Poland which is the clearing-house to death. It is no wonder, therefore, that public opinion is disturbed by the failure of both the British Government and the United States to do anything substantial to rescue Hitler’s victims. Opinion both in the country and in Parliament is far ahead of the Government.<sup>85</sup>

To underline the fact that people in Britain had not forgotten about the Jews, the *Manchester Guardian* published the names of all the signatories of a cable sent to Eden in Washington drawn up by representatives of the three political parties in the House of Commons:

With reference to the forthcoming Anglo-American conference on massacres of Jews and others by the Nazis we assure you of the fullest support of public opinion in this country for treating the problem as one of extreme urgency, calling for the immediate and boldest

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<sup>83</sup> MG Sat 20 March 1943 p3 (10) S.O.S. FROM WARSAW

<sup>84</sup> MG Sat 20 March 1943 p4 (10) BULGARIA AND THE JEWS; MG Tue 23 March 1943 p5 (6) MURDER OF JEWS 200 A DAY AT ONE CAMP

<sup>85</sup> MG Tue 23 March 1943 p4 (6) “EXTREME URGENCY”



measures of rescue. The British conscience is so deeply stirred that the country is prepared for any sacrifice consistent with not delaying victory. We hope that the great opportunity offered by your visit may be used for the speedy achievement of definite results.<sup>86</sup>

Despite the fact that the Mayor of Leeds, the Lord Provost of Glasgow, the Principal of both Leeds and Glasgow Universities and a handful of local MPs and religious leaders signed the message, neither the *Yorkshire Post* or *Glasgow Herald* took any notice of the cable. The *Manchester Guardian*, by contrast, chose to print the names of all 200 prominent members of British society - it was the only paper, national or regional which did so - they were divided into the following categories:

Religious Leaders; House of Lords House of Commons; Lord Mayors; Members of the Council of the Royal Society and other Scientific Leaders; Heads of Oxford Colleges; Heads of Cambridge Colleges; Heads of other University Bodies; Trade Union Leaders; Organisations and "the following leading men and women".

The latter category included, amongst others, Dame Elizabeth Cadbury, Lady Violet Bonham-Carter, Sir Wyndham Deedes, E.M. Forster, Daphne du Maurier, David Low, Professor Gilbert Murray, J.B. Priestley, and the headmasters of Rugby and Harrow.<sup>87</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian's* first leader column on March 23 did not disguise the disappointment it saw in the gap between Allied (specifically British) words and actions over the three months since December 17. It believed that unlike the Nazis, whose deeds seemed to literally match their public pronouncements, British actions did not live up to Eden's statements about "practical measures" and "doing everything we can to provide an asylum for these people". The lack of international action, it felt, did not demonstrate that the Government was serious about saving Jewish refugees. In particular, the paper believed that it was simply not good enough for the Allies to describe the proposed Ottawa conference as a "preliminary exploration". The tone of its comment demonstrated its frustration:

The dimensions of the problem, which depend on the number of Jews surviving, seems likely to diminish nicely if procrastination is only pursued with real determination. So much for "urgency", so much for "doing everything we can to provide asylum" ... Let us remember that there is no such thing as "preliminary extermination".<sup>88</sup>

The paper's consistent coverage of matters relating to the plight of European Jews had not gone unnoticed. On March 17, Manchester and Salford Jewish community paid tribute to the

<sup>86</sup> MG Tue 23 March 1943 p5 (6) A MESSAGE TO MR EDEN JEWISH MASSACRES

<sup>87</sup> National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror. Copy in the *Manchester Guardian* Archive Refugees Box 223/5/126

<sup>88</sup> MG Tue 23 March 1943 p4 (6) "EXTREME URGENCY"

*Manchester Guardian* and the memory of former owner and editor, C.P. Scott, by the consecration of a “Manchester Guardian Bed” in the Home for Aged, Needy and Incurable Jews in Cheetham. The ceremony was attended by the paper’s managing director, J.R. Scott, and the editor W.P. Crozier. Dr. Altmann, the Communal Rabbi, in an address given in the synagogue of the home said that it was not often that a group of people were moved by almost personal affection for an impersonal institution such as a newspaper:

In the case of the *Manchester Guardian*, we, the Jewish community, feel an unbounded personal admiration, gratitude and love for this great paper. To us, the *Manchester Guardian* is what the Statue of Liberty is to the American citizen, a symbol of a better and nobler world, the messenger and spokesman of that new spirit among the nations which is at the core of prophetic Judaism and for which we have been suffering throughout the ages. In a world in which narrow prejudice and egotism, both on an individual and national scale, so often threaten to extinguish the light of true civilisation the “Guardian” has persisted in acting as the torch bearer of humanity, an unfailing source of comfort and hope.<sup>89</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian* continued to refer to the rescue of Jews even when the main protagonists of many of its reports deliberately chose to avoid particularising Jewish victims of the Nazis, preferring to call the subjects of concern “refugees”. For example, a report of Lord Cranbourne’s speech in the House of Lords on March 24 was headlined “Rescuing the Jews” even though Cranbourne did not mention Jews once, preferring “the plight of oppressed and persecuted persons” – even when others, like the Archbishop of Canterbury, drew his attention to their specific situation. Similarly, the *Yorkshire Post* headline said “Plan to Save the Jews” even though Jews were not referred to in the main points of this plan – only “refugees”.

Both the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Yorkshire Post* tried to present a balanced accounts of this debate but it was Dr. Temple’s lengthy contribution which received most attention in the former, and Lord Cranbourne’s carefully worded reply which directed the view taken by the latter.

It was the first time the *Yorkshire Post* had placed a story concerning European Jews on its front page since December. The main points of the Government’s reply was summarised first, in very short paragraphs, followed by the points made by the Archbishop in a similarly heavily abbreviated list. The paper expanded a little on this basic information in the second leader column on page 2. The title, “To the Rescue” reflected its optimism at the news. It said that the country had been waiting for a statement like Lord Cranbourne’s for a long time:

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<sup>89</sup> *MG* Tue 18 March 1943 p3 (6) C.P. SCOTT AND HIS PAPER A JEWISH TRIBUTE

Everyone will welcome this further evidence that the Government is aware of the need for prompt action. Not long ago Goebbels announced that Germany was convinced that the Jews are an international disease which must be exterminated in Europe. This programme is being pursued without respite, and with that mixture of fanaticism and method which is the outcome of the Nazi creed. Nor are the Jews the only victims; for the Poles too a policy of slaughter is being practised. Swift action is literally a matter of life and death for thousands of innocent people.

Little good will be done by unregulated enthusiasm; but still less will be effected unless the malignance of the persecutors is more than outweighed by the rescuers' will to leave nothing undone that can be done.<sup>90</sup>

Rather than being frustrated by the lack of "practical proposals", the paper respected the fact that Lord Cranbourne could not disclose details of any rescue steps. While it fully supported the urgent sentiments expressed by the Archbishop that all channels of escape should be kept open, it agreed with the Government that the question of transport was a real problem and that its availability must necessarily be kept secret. But it argued, "much depended on the spirit in which the new [rescue] machinery was administered than the machinery itself... in defence of innocent creatures threatened by Hitler's foul barbarities"<sup>91</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian* account painted a very different picture - in three distinctive ways. First, as the Archbishop had moved the resolution, Temple's views were published first, and then the Government's (official) reply from Lord Cranbourne - directly opposite to the *Yorkshire Post's* order of preference. Second, the *Manchester Guardian's* headlines, "Rescue and Sanctuary for Jews. Dr. Temple's Appeal for Immediate and Generous Efforts" and the subheadings "Very Meagre Action" and "Refusal of Visas", gave a very different impression than "Plan to Save the Jews" and "To the Rescue" had done in the *Yorkshire Post*. The third and most significant difference was the space devoted to the report. Whereas the *Yorkshire Post* had presented a brief, summarised report of the exchange, the *Manchester Guardian* devoted almost all of page 6 of the March 24 edition to an almost *verbatim* report of the House of Lord's debate.

The full text made it possible for any reader to appreciate the passion in Temple's appeal and equally, the difficult position that the Government found itself in regarding practical rescue measures. Such a complete account allowed the issues - which each side felt to be the most important - to be explained and justified. For Temple, they were the "inevitable" contrast between the solemnity of the Allied Declaration on December 17 and the "very meagre action which had actually followed"; the "undue" refusal of visas for individual Jewish refugees and

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<sup>90</sup> *YP* Wed 24 March 1943 p1 (6) PLAN TO SAVE JEWS JOINT ACTION BY BRITAIN AND U.S.; *YP* Wed 24 March 1943 p2 (6) TO THE RESCUE

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*,

the Government's refusal to grant blocks of visas to allow larger numbers to escape. He said that some of the arguments for "comparative inaction seemed quite disproportionate to the scale of the evil" and called on the Government to "speed things up a little".<sup>92</sup>

In reply, Cranbourne was at pains to point out what had already been done for "the 78,000" who had come to Britain before the war and "the 60,000 refugees (including 20,000 seamen) who had been taken in since 1940, all of whom had to be fed and cared for". He indicated the difficulties of arranging transport from Axis Europe, the shortage of food and suitable accommodation in Britain and neutral countries and despite the fact that 800 refugees were escaping each month, "there was a certain point beyond which we cannot go without danger to this country, and beyond that point we will not go". The problem was to find somewhere where the refugees could be taken "without incurring these dangers which faced us here". Above all he maintained that Britain could not do anything alone and that international action consistent with the military situation remained the only way forward.<sup>93</sup>

Within these statements it was possible to detect other, underlying aspects of the debate, especially in remarks made by Temple. The most prominent of these was a tacit disagreement about exactly who were to be regarded as the main subjects of concern. For example, Temple took exception to the Government's preference for a broad definition (i.e. "refugees"):

Temple: *Although we are advised wisely not to limit our attention in this connection with the sufferers of any one race, there has been a concentration of fury against the Jews and it was inevitable that we should give special attention to what was being carried through and what was still being plotted further against them. Hitler was now carrying out the threat he made at the beginning of the war – that the war would lead to either the extermination of either the Germans or the Jews "and it would not be the Germans".*<sup>94</sup>

He also dismissed another reason that (he said) had been given to discourage a specific concentration only on the plight of Jews: "It was said that there was a danger of the rousing of anti-Semitic feeling in our own country. No doubt that feeling existed in some quarters and could very easily be turned into a flame but I am sure that it only exists in small patches. It was very local and received a degree of attention beyond what it deserved".

A leader column in the *Glasgow Herald* titled "The Shadow of Death" said:

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<sup>92</sup> *MG* Wed 24 March 1943 p6 (8) RESCUE AND SANCTUARY FOR JEWS. Dr. Temple's Appeal for Immediate and Generous Efforts

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, My italics.

If the debate yesterday in the House of Lords stirs public consciousness to a realisation of the horrors of Hitler's anti-Jewish policy, which is not merely one of cruelty and persecution, but of extermination, the results may be more fruitful than many of the attempts that have been made in the past to succour those European refugees who are able to escape the Gestapo. We have lived for ten years in the shadow of death created by the Hitler regime for the Jews and the opponents of the Nazis, and familiarity with horror has dulled perception. But we ought surely, having regard to the urgency of the matter and the time that has already elapsed to have achieved something more than preparing for discussions at which plans will be made.

It was apparent that the *Glasgow Herald* was not alone in its frustration. The *Manchester Guardian* thought that the Archbishop's statement was so significant that it took the unusual decision to print a review of other newspapers' comments on the speech the next day. Newspaper reviews were not a regular feature of the paper and only tended to appear following major battles or national events in order to gauge wider press opinion on a subject. The fact that the subject was a speech in the House of Lords indicated the level of interest in issue of Allied rescue plans.

The review said that the *Daily Telegraph* had said that "though conversations had been in progress little effective has been achieved and the disappointment voiced in the House of Lords is not confined to that quarter alone". The *Daily Express* agreed with Lord Cecil that the problem needed to be tackled by "a vigorous personality" while the *Scotsman* said that "unless public opinion could stir up official action, nothing may be done until the war was over". It took note of the *Yorkshire Post*'s exhortive remark (above) "to leave nothing undone that can be done" and concluded with the *Liverpool Daily Post*'s call that the Anglo-American conference should meet without delay and that the British Government should take the lead in suggesting practical rescue measures.<sup>95</sup>

The urgent need for an Allied meeting was underlined by further news of deportations. It was reported that the remaining Jews in Berlin, including the 15,000 used as slave labour had been rounded-up and "taken to an unknown destination in the East". The *Manchester Guardian* said that this move was directly connected with German intentions to eliminate Jews from the entire country by mid-March. It believed that some few Jewish communities might still exist in the occupied territories, though it was thought these too would soon succumb to the Nazi extermination policy.<sup>96</sup>

On March 29, it was finally announced in the *Yorkshire Post* and *Manchester Guardian* that the Anglo-American Conference on Refugees would take place on the island of Bermuda. As

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<sup>95</sup> MG Thur 25 March 1943 p6 (8) RESCUING THE JEWS PRESS COMMENT: TEMPLE'S APPEAL

<sup>96</sup> MG Thur 25 March 1943 p3 (8) GERMAN DEPORTATIONS EXTERMINATION OF THE JEWS

had been indicated, the proposed talks were described as being “only of a preliminary character” and the actual date and the names of representatives would be made known “shortly”. It was stated that other (neutral) nations who were interested in the problem would not attend because they were “not in a position to do anything to solve the problem”. Russia and China in particular, who each had their own “gigantic” refugee and repatriation problems would also not take part in the conference in view of the fact that their own territories had been invaded or had been completely overrun by the Axis.<sup>97</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian*’s Diplomatic Correspondent said that a joint effort to carry out a concerted international policy was expected. He said that such a policy must take into account not only the existing situation but also the transition period immediately after the war and the longer period to follow that, when homes will have to be found for the “not inconsiderable number of people who will be unable to return to the countries whence they emigrated”.

During the last few months many suggestions have been put forward. They deal with national and international action. It is quite understandable therefore that many are anxious to obtain some idea of the attitude of Britain and the United States towards long term refugees. How far such matters have already been agreed by Mr. Hull and Mr. Eden, or how far they have been left over to a later stage, is not known.<sup>98</sup>

In contrast to earlier reports, each took their lead from the text of the announcement. As a result, many of the more usual terms like “rescue” or “asylum” did not feature in the headlines (see footnotes) and “Jews” were not mentioned once in either report.

It can be seen that all three newspapers believed in the facts of the Nazi extermination policy, as far as they were known. They and their readers recognised that this (anti-Semitic) process was very different (in intensity and scale) to anything that had previously been encountered. The impact of this news was not small and in at least two of the papers it was not short-lived. It was expressed in their pages in heartfelt letters, regular protest meetings, passionate speeches and national petitions. To a lesser or greater extent, all kept an eye on the (consistently distressing) news from Europe and realised that pressure on the Allied Governments had to be maintained as long as this mass murder programme continued. Each paper made its own valuable contribution, but the *Manchester Guardian* stood out. It remained the most consistent monitor of events in Nazi-occupied Europe, the most critical of Allied inaction and was the most successful in conveying a sense of urgency – that something had to be done to save the Jews of Europe.

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<sup>97</sup> YP Mon 29 March 1943 p2 (6) REFUGEE CONFERENCE; MG Mon 29 March 1943 p5 (6) BERMUDA CONFERENCE DISCUSSION ON REFUGEES

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*,

## **Chapter VII**

***The Manchester Guardian The Yorkshire Post The Glasgow Herald***

**The Bermuda Conference**

**April 1943**

## The Bermuda Conference. April – June 1943

We shall have something before Easter about the Bermuda business. I can't understand why people should travel over the Atlantic in order to announce that the only way of saving the refugees is to win the war, and that international action is needed if anything is to be achieved. One would say that having wasted four months they have devised the conference as a way of wasting some more. However, let us hope that that is unjust and they will eventually get down to some practical proposals.<sup>1</sup>

Two conflicting agendas had filled the pages of the three regional papers since December 1942. On one side was a popular, consistent, urgent call by the “great and the good” of British society and a wide cross-section of members of the public for the Allies to do something to rescue the remaining Jews trapped in Nazi Europe before they were murdered *en masse*. In the first three months of 1943 another parallel agenda began to be promoted by the British Government, in the shape of the Foreign, Home, and Colonial Offices which ostensibly agreed with the humanitarian sentiments of the other side but put forward (in an equally consistent manner) a series of arguments which, though they did not directly contradict this call, laid out the logistical reasons why rescue could not be effected quickly or easily. It (repeatedly) maintained that relief, for most of those under threat, would only come through final victory. There was an additional tension between the two sides: while rescue campaigners concentrated on the urgent threat facing *Jews*, the British and American Governments were keen to adapt the terms of the debate in order to present their efforts regarding all *refugees* (including Jews) from Axis-Europe in as favourable a light as possible. This strategy had two secondary aims: first, to make sure the debate was not perceived only as a “Jewish problem”, i.e. simply the Allies “saving (the) Jews” and second, to deflect accusations of official procrastination, indecision and inaction with regard to rescue.

By deliberately broadening the definition of the subjects of concern (from only European Jews to all refugees – including in some references, those in Russia, China, and India) the Allies, most specifically Britain and the USA, attempted to shift the focus away from areas where they could do very little to areas over which they could demonstrate levels of achievement. In this way they attempted to retain some control over the debate. Instead of answering questions about what practical measures were being taken to alleviate the situation facing Jewish victims of the Nazis, (Jews, they argued, had no greater claim to Allied attention than any other persecuted group) British Ministers began to offer evidence about what they *had already done* for European refugees. The aim of this strategy seemed to be show the Government as active and to redirect attention (and criticism) away from consistent demands for rescue which were being made in the regional papers.

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<sup>1</sup>Letter: W.P. Crozier to L.B. Namier April 20 1943. Copy in the *Manchester Guardian* Archive. Editor's Correspondence B/N8A/212



Lord Cranbourne had been the first to use this tactic in reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Lords debate on March 24. Just over a week later, a Parliamentary report in the *Manchester Guardian* reported (on April 1) a statement by the Foreign Office Under-Secretary, Richard Law, in a Commons reply to Reginald Sorensen MP. Sorensen had asked how many Polish Jews had been murdered in Poland since the war began. Law said that it was impossible to state certainly, but "the figure had been put at above a million". He then told the House (in his next sentence) that since October 1939, the Government expenditure in assisting refugees was £1,210,000 and that did not include "expenditure by the Ministry of Health in respect of accommodation and support". He added that the number of refugees that had entered Palestine between April 1, 1939 and February 18, 1943 was 39,227 and "the number of refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia in this country at the outbreak of war was approximately 78,000." He concluded by stating that 66,000 refugees from enemy and occupied countries had come to the United Kingdom since September 1, 1939.<sup>2</sup>

Further evidence that this tactic was part of an agreed policy came on April 8, when the *Glasgow Herald* published a written reply by the Prime Minister to another Commons question about refugees under the headline "Saving the World's Refugees. Premier on Britain's Great Part". Churchill's statement reiterated and elaborated on Cranbourne and Law's earlier statistics. He drew attention to the numbers who had reached Britain before September 1939 (55,000 from Germany and Austria, 10,000 from Czechoslovakia and 13,000 children without their parents) and the thousands who had escaped Nazi Europe during the war (35,000 in 1940, 13,000 in 1941 and 15,000 in 1942). Under the sub-heading "Millions Spent" he also quoted the figure of £1,210,00 which the Government had spent on grants for refugees and like Law, also made the point that this did not include "the expenditure incurred by the Ministry of Health in respect of the accommodation and support of aliens". As if to emphasise that aid had not been restricted to State help, he noted that the contribution in money and kind from private sources *since 1933* amounted to £9,500,000.<sup>3</sup> Unlike Cranbourne's statement or many other Ministers' replies which ignored the specific plight of Jews, Churchill listed the numbers as follows:

With regard to Palestine 18,000 "legal immigrants" were admitted to Palestine between April 1, 1939 and September 30, 1942 plus 38,000 Jewish refugees from Central and Eastern Europe. The quota for the period ended September 30, 1942 provided for the grant of 1000 certificates, 800 being allocated to Polish Jewish refugee children in Persia. Actually 858 children accompanied by 369 adults reached Palestine from Persia in February 18 last. Arrangements have been made to admit Jewish children from Roumania and Hungary up to a

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<sup>2</sup> *MG Thur 1 April 1943 p2 (6) POLISH REFUGEES COMMONS STATEMENT*

<sup>3</sup> My italics

total of 5000. The Government were prepared, provided the necessary transport was available, to continue admit into Palestine Jewish children with a proportion of accompanying adults up to the limits of immigration permission for the five year period ending March 31, 1944.<sup>4</sup>

The strategy did not succeed in deflecting popular calls for rescue for two reasons: firstly, since it was obvious from the evidence put forward by the Government that most of the refugees who had managed to escape occupied-Europe had done so *before* the (official) revelations of the Nazi extermination programme in the autumn and winter of 1942 and the fact that it was well known that the policy was still in progress (in press reports of new deportations) made these statistics almost irrelevant. Secondly, it was fairly clear that those who had reached safety had done so largely independently of any specific, organised, Allied initiatives - yet the Home and Colonial Offices sought to portray their *admittance* to Britain and Palestine as part of Government efforts to "save refugees" from Nazi oppression.

As the date of the Anglo-American Conference on Refugees approached, rescue campaigners only needed to refer to the regular news reports of the latest Nazi anti-Jewish actions during the first weeks of April 1943 to re-emphasise the importance of the forthcoming Bermuda meeting. They expected (and some demanded) real results from the conference. At the same time, Government officials, no doubt aware of this expectation, began to publicly counter and reinterpret the rescue campaigners' ambitions by making statements and giving speeches which sought to deflect criticism and deflate heightened feelings of hope.

The table below illustrates the extent to which the *Manchester Guardian* contributed to public knowledge of Nazi Jewish persecution, official Allied refugee policy, and the views of individuals and groups concerned with the plight of Jews in Nazi Europe. It can be seen that during the period under discussion it published more than the other two papers put together. The *Yorkshire Post* and *Glasgow Herald* printed some valuable articles and assessed the situation before, during and after the Bermuda conference more than adequately, but by comparison to the comprehensive approach of the *Manchester Guardian* their coverage appeared rather basic.

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<sup>4</sup> GH Thur 8 April 1943 p6 (8) SAVING THE WORLD'S REFUGEES Premier on Britain's Great Part

January - June 1943		
Newspaper	Sub1 (desc)	Total
<b>Glasgow Herald</b>	42. Allied knowledge of/discussion of/statement about atrocities	15
	45. Refugees: general, welfare, numbers	1
	46. Rescue: plans / Asylum / Sanctuary	7
<b>Glasgow Herald Total</b>		<b>23</b>
<b>Manchester Guardian</b>	42. Allied knowledge of/discussion of/statement about atrocities	56
	43. Retribution /Justice/ Punishment of the guilty/ Condemnation	9
	44. Refugees in Britain, general, welfare, numbers	3
	45. Refugees: general, welfare, numbers	16
	46. Rescue: plans / Asylum / Sanctuary	36
<b>Manchester Guardian Total</b>		<b>120</b>
<b>Yorkshire Post</b>	42. Allied knowledge of/discussion of/statement about atrocities	19
	43. Retribution /Justice/ Punishment of the guilty/ Condemnation	12
	44. Refugees in Britain, general, welfare, numbers	2
	45. Refugees: general, welfare, numbers	8
	46. Rescue: plans / Asylum / Sanctuary	6
<b>Yorkshire Post Total</b>		<b>47</b>

January - June 1943		
Newspaper	Sub1 (desc)	Total
<b>Glasgow Herald</b>	23. Public speech/statement about Jews by Jewish leaders/representatives/organisations in Britain	1
	24. Public speech/statement about Jews by British politicians	3
	25. Public speech/statement about Jews by British other	6
<b>Glasgow Herald Total</b>		<b>10</b>
<b>Manchester Guardian</b>	23. Public speech/statement about Jews by Jewish leaders/representatives/organisations in Britain	4
	24. Public speech/statement about Jews by British politicians	12
	25. Public speech/statement about Jews by British other	7
	26. Public speech/statement about Jews by others	22
<b>Manchester Guardian Total</b>		<b>45</b>
<b>Yorkshire Post</b>	23. Public speech/statement about Jews by Jewish leaders/representatives/organisations in Britain	4
	24. Public speech/statement about Jews by British politicians	3
	25. Public speech/statement about Jews by British other	4
	26. Public speech/statement about Jews by others	5
<b>Yorkshire Post Total</b>		<b>16</b>

At the beginning of April, the British Section of the WJC and the Board of Deputies of British Jews helped to keep the plight of European Jews in the newspapers – and kept up the pressure on the Government to do something about it - by releasing a report on a new German hunt for Jewish children in occupied-France, especially those who had been sheltered by sympathetic non-Jewish families. The report said that the situation in the Italian-occupied zone was relatively better; anti-Jewish laws were also in force but they were apparently not applied with

the same brutality as the rest of France. It was estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 Jews had escaped into this zone.

Publication of this report was followed up with a twelve point plan drawn up by the Joint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies for "the speedy and effective rescue of Jews threatened with massacre by the Nazis". The suggestions were submitted to a conference of Anglo-Religious congregations and lay institutions in London on April 5. They called for "suitable channels" to be used to approach German and Axis Governments to allow Jews, particularly children, to leave enemy-occupied areas and appealed to the Government "to expedite and extend all measures which could be undertaken by Britain". In a message to the meeting the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Hertz, said that the conference should express "the bewilderment and dismay of all good men that the agony of European Jewry had not yet called forth practical measures of rescue, and that nothing had, so far succeeded in removing the inertia of those who alone had the power to save". The President of the Board, Prof. Brodetsky of Leeds University, lamented the fact that so little had been done since the Allied Declaration: "while notes may be sent and diplomatic discussions held the murder policy is still being carried out". He hoped that the proposed "conversations at Bermuda" would not be "an imitation of the Evian conference when the governments said how little they could do". He hoped that Britain and the United States "would say this time how much they could do and how soon they could do it".<sup>5</sup>

On the same day, Osbert Peake, the Under-Secretary for Home Affairs and MP for North Leeds, addressed his constituency's Conservative Association. In a lengthy account on page 6 (the back page) of the *Yorkshire Post*, Peake explained the Home Office attitude to the refugee problem. He said that before the war the problem was a limited one, in which Britain had a share, taking in between 70,000 and 80,000 people. He went on to say that Britain could also be proud of the fact that it had also admitted 63,000 since 1939 and added that "no one has been sent back to be oppressed by the Nazis". In reference to accusations of Government inaction regarding refugee still in Nazi Europe, he stated:

It is continually being said by those who should know better that Great Britain is not doing enough for these refugees. There is only one solution to the refugee problem and that is victory. If we can advance victory by a week or a few months we are doing more for the refugees than we can ever do by admitting those who escape in small numbers from Germany or German-occupied countries.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> MG Thur 1 April 1943 p6 (6) HUNTED JEWS NAZI METHODS IN FRANCE WJC

YP Mon 5 April 1943 p3 (6) PLAN FOR SPEEDY RESCUE OF JEWS; MG Mon 5 April 1943 p6 (6) SPEEDY RESCUE OF JEWS A Renewed Appeal;

<sup>6</sup> YP Mon 5 April 1943 p6 (6) BRITAIN AND REFUGEE PROBLEM Only One Solution - Victory

Addressing the question of visas he said that it was commonly thought that the Home Secretary could issue thousands of visas and to every threatened person in Europe and this would secure them safe admission into Britain. He said this was “the greatest possible mistake” because throughout Europe, Britain had no Consular representation, and even in Switzerland where they had, the granting of visas could not secure admission to Britain as there was no way refugees could reach safety without passing through enemy-occupied territory:

It is not the hard-heartedness of the Home Secretary and his Under-Secretary that is preventing tens of thousands of refugees coming to this country. No one has more sympathy for these unfortunate people who are slowly being exterminated that we have, but we can only grant visas to people who have already reached neutral countries.<sup>7</sup>

But it seemed that such sympathy had some limits. Peake indicated that those who did manage to reach neutral countries faced another hurdle. In selecting refugees currently in Spain and Portugal, he said that “we are bound to give priority to those who can and will render a useful contribution to our war effort. It would not be right and fair to bring to this country, tens of thousands of people who would have to be fed and housed and provided for at the expense of Britain’s war effort”. (Readers of the *Yorkshire Post* who had been calling for the rescue of Jewish children must have greeted this remark with dismay.) Alluding to the Bermuda discussions, he concluded his speech by saying that what they had to do was to find some place where refugees, “like those who were struggling over the Spanish frontier, could go and be safe from Nazi oppression”. Jews were not mentioned once in the entire address.

Even if discussion of the specific plight of Jewish refugees was being avoided by Government officials, it was clear from the pages of the regional papers that it was their welfare which was uppermost in the minds of the public. For example, it was reported in the *Manchester Guardian* that the children of Standard IV of St. Cuthbert’s school in Stockton-on-Tees had raised £1 for Jewish children and sent it to the Manchester Women’s Appeal Committee for the Jewish Child Victims of Persecution. Two of the children, Kathleen Peacock and Gerald Firman, wrote on behalf of their class:

We were sorry when we heard what the Germans were doing to them. So we decided to save up every month and send it away to help to feed and clothe any who could escape. We are sending this pound hoping that it will help some of your children to have a little happiness, because we know that they must feel sad sometimes being away from their homes and parents.<sup>8</sup>

The *Yorkshire Post* took notice of a conference of voluntary refugee organisations in Leeds on April 12, which was jointly chaired by Anthony de Rothschild of the Central Council for

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>8</sup> *MG* Sat 3 April 1943 p8 (8) CHILDREN’S AID FOR JEWISH REUGEES

Refugees and the Rev. H. Carter of the Christian Council for Refugees. It issued a resolution which contained information about another immigration condition concerning children that Osbert Peake had not included in his policy review:

While recognising the necessity for doing nothing to impede the war effort, in view of the extreme urgency of the matter this conference calls for a speeding-up of all possible rescue measures and the revision of regulations now governing the admission of refugees to the United Kingdom so as to permit the entry of larger numbers, both of adults and children, and especially the abandonment of the present conditions which require that child refugees *must have near relatives in this country*.<sup>9</sup>

In a very brief article on Tuesday, April 13, the *Manchester Guardian* reported a United States State Department announcement (via *Associated Press*) that the Bermuda conference would begin on the following Monday. The British Delegation, it was stated, would consist of the Foreign Office Under-Secretary, Richard Law, the Home Office Under-Secretary, Osbert Peake, (the two Ministers who had been so active in putting forward the Government's refugee policy to the British public) and George Hall, Financial Secretary to the Admiralty.<sup>10</sup>

The next day, the British Council of Churches met under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The *Manchester Guardian* reported that the Council had unanimously passed a resolution welcoming statements made by many leaders of the Christian churches expressing "fellow-feeling with the Jewish people and a desire to aid them in any practicable way". It agreed on the following resolution (which was sent to the Home and Foreign Secretaries):

The Council considers that every possible step should be taken to rescue from massacre the Jews in enemy territories. It is convinced that both Christian and Jewish people in this country would give strong support to a lead from his Majesty's Government in offering sanctuary in Great Britain for a considerable number of children and adults in addition to those received before September 1939 and would be ready to make sacrifices so as to provide hospitality for them during the war. The council asks further that the Bermuda conference will suggest measures for rendering the requisite material assistance the maintenance of refugees who reach neutral countries and will give assurances to those countries of readiness to co-operate in plans for post-war settlement of the refugees in other parts of the world.<sup>11</sup>

On the same day, April 14, the *Manchester Guardian* published the latest information about the Nazi murder programme. At a meeting of the Polish National Council in London, the Jewish Labour representative, Shmuel Zygielbojm made a new appeal for immediate and constructive help to save the remaining Jews in Europe. He said that the deportation of French Jews to Poland had been going on throughout February and March. Large transports had left the various concentration camps in France, especially the camp at Drancy near Paris "for a destination in Eastern Europe". Zygielbojm's impassioned speech to the Council stressed the

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<sup>9</sup> My italics. *YP* Wed 14 April 1943 p6 (6) Plea for Quicker Rescue of Refugees

<sup>10</sup> *MG* Tue 13 April 1943 p6 (8) OPENING ON MONDAY Bermuda Refugee Talks

<sup>11</sup> *MG* Wed 14 April 1943 p5 (8) ANTI-SEMITISM Churches' Condemnation

sense of urgency. He was in no doubt that unless the Allies did something soon, hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, would die:

In view of the present situation in Poland, and the lack of response by the world, the absence of definite action, I am afraid my friends who are appealing to us on behalf of the survivors are right in saying that even the last remnants are doomed to merciless and unavoidable extermination unless concrete steps are taken to save them are undertaken immediately.

I do not know how history will judge us, but I feel certain that millions of human beings in Poland cannot persuade themselves to believe that we are quite unable to stir world opinion or to bring some succour to them – that we cannot do something to put an end to these bestial murders.

I feel that the men and women in Poland hold us to blame for what is going on, because they cannot think that we have really done our utmost. My own sense of helplessness brings me to make a solemn protest from the Tribune of the Polish Parliament in exile and on behalf of the millions already slaughtered and of those hundreds of thousands still awaiting death, to let the world hear the cry which comes from the abyss of the ghetto – “Only you can save us. The responsibility before history falls on you”.<sup>12</sup>

In a prophetic concluding remark, Zygielbojm argued that Allied inertia would have serious long-term ethical effects, and took the opportunity to pour scorn on any likely explanation or “excuse” for inaction - that the Allies and others did not believe the news of the German mass murder of Jews all over Europe and thought that such reports had been an elaborate series of manipulative lies:

I am convinced that this responsibility will be a burden on the human conscience for generations to come. It will weigh heavily on all who could have helped and did not do so. It will weigh too on those who stood aloof before the martyrdom of millions, comforting themselves with the excuse that such things could not be true but were only propaganda stories and wildly exaggerated.<sup>13</sup>

Shortly after receiving confirmation that the Warsaw ghetto uprising had been crushed, (see below) Zygielbojm committed suicide.<sup>14</sup>

It can be seen from the examples above (from schoolchildren to Church leaders) that by April 1943 few in Britain doubted the accounts they had read in the press. Though they were not certain about the details of Nazi actions, most had a fair idea about what was happening to Jews in occupied-Europe and did not think what they read in the papers were propaganda stories. That is not to say that an understanding of the Nazi extermination policy had been accepted easily. For some, it had been difficult to comprehend the scale of the actions taken against Jews and it had taken time to come to terms with their extremity – even for those who might have been more receptive to the news from within Poland than most. For example, the

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<sup>12</sup> *MG* Wed 14 April 1943 p8 (8) MURDERED JEWS Another Appeal From Poland

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>14</sup> He committed suicide on May 12 1943. In a note he (indirectly) blamed the destruction of Polish Jewry on the Allies “who so far have taken no firm steps to put a stop to these crimes. By their indifference to the killing of hapless men, to the massacre of women and children, these countries have become accomplices of the assassins”. Gilbert, M. (1981) *op.cit.* p.135-136

publisher Victor Gollancz remarked at an austerity luncheon in Bloomsbury in London on April 15, (to raise funds for the settlement of the 29,000 children whose admission to Palestine the British Government had approved) that he had never been prominently associated with Jewish affairs because he was an “internationalist”, but in the autumn of 1942 “the full meaning” of the persecution was brought home to him “with overwhelming horror”. Using an unusual descriptive expression for the destruction of the Jews, he said:

Here was a call on one as a human being, because the holocaust was of a kind quite unlike that being perpetrated against any other part of the human community.<sup>15</sup>

It was evident that this distinction was at least understood by the *Manchester Guardian* which published comments made by Rabbi Irving Miller (secretary general of the WJC on a visit from New York) who, like others, expected action to result from the Bermuda conference:

Only bold and decisive measures will stay the slaughter of defenceless and innocent civilians and save for the day of liberation and freedom millions of human beings. History will judge the measures adopted at Bermuda not by their conformity to ordinary diplomatic traditions but by their efficacy in performing the task for which the conference is summoned.<sup>16</sup>

Just before the Conference began, the *Yorkshire Post* reported that a row had broken out between the United States Government and the American Press. Its leader column on April 19 related the fact that because the location of the meeting on refugees had been changed to Bermuda (it had originally been scheduled to take place in Ottawa), many of the regular Washington correspondents would be unable to attend “owing to difficulties of transport and regulation of the island as a war zone”. As a result, they would now need special accreditation as war correspondents if they wanted access to the island. When the same reporters discovered that the Press would also be effectively barred from another scheduled conference at Hot Springs, Virginia, this caused “great resentment” and protests in “all kinds of newspapers”. According to the report, they were only placated when Elmer Davis, the Director of the Office of War Information stated that all conference meetings would be “open to the Press”.<sup>17</sup>

The paper believed that the restrictions on press attendance at Bermuda and Hot Springs were reasonable given that some aspects of the discussions were not for immediate public consumption. It suggested that the British press, with greater wartime experience, was used to living with such restraints on reporting:

It is difficult for us in this country to feel hotly about the restrictions. At both conferences there are bound to be technical discussions in which information of potential value to the

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<sup>15</sup> *MG* Thur 15 April 1943 p2 (8) CHILD REFUGEES Cost of Maintenance in Palestine

<sup>16</sup> *MG* Sat 17 April 1943 p8 (10) SAVING THE JEWS Call For Bold Steps

<sup>17</sup> *YP* Mon 19 April 1943 p2 (6) Conferences in Committee



enemy will be exchanged. The American public has a prodigious hunger for news but cannot expect to be given, day by day, important military secrets...The governing principle must be Security First.<sup>18</sup>

The wording of the first press release from Bermuda via *Reuter* announcing the opening of the Anglo-American Conference on Refugees was in keeping with all other official statements with regard to refugees, did not refer to Jews in any way. It stated:

Plans for the care of hundreds of thousands of refugees from racial, political and religious persecution in Europe and elsewhere will be drawn up. Mr. Harold Dodds, head of the American delegation said the talks will embrace not only refugees outside the Axis countries but those who have "not yet escaped". The question of sending supplies into occupied countries to relieve those who could not be got out did not come within the scope of the conference.<sup>19</sup>

Both the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Yorkshire Post* carried this statement but took different directions in their following paragraphs. The *Yorkshire Post* printed the rest of the *Reuter* message:

American delegates left newspaper correspondents with a strong impression that the United States sees the question of relief as a strictly military problem.  
Mr Sol Bloom, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, recalled that in at least one occupied country individuals receiving relief had had their ration cards taken away by the Axis powers.

These two sentences were omitted from the *Manchester Guardian* account and instead the main part of the statement was followed by a very short report with the sub-heading "British Jews' Memorandum":

A memorandum from the Board of Deputies of British Jews to the Anglo American Conference on refugees, which opens at Bermuda to-day, has been sent to Mr. Eden, the Foreign Secretary. Prof Brodetsky announced this at the board's meeting yesterday. Mr. Eden, it is understood, immediately transmitted the memorandum to the conference.

The *Yorkshire Post*'s "London Notes and Comment" included two other items relating to the conference. The first was a regional connection; it noted that the Head of the British Delegation, Richard Law, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was the MP for South-West Hull. It said that though this was the first time he had acted in such a capacity, this was not his first official trip abroad. He had been to the USA a few months earlier "to prepare the way for Mr. Eden's recent visit". In words remarkably similar to all previous official Government statements on the subject, its correspondent said that it was hoped that the conference would provide the opportunity for preliminary exploration of a question later to be discussed at a conference of all the United Nations:

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>19</sup> *YP* Mon 19 April 1943 p2 (6) ANGLO-US CONFERENCE; *MG* Mon 19 April 1943 p5 (6) WORLD'S REFUGEES BERMUDA CONFERENCE TODAY BRITISH JEWS' MEMORANDUM;

The best contribution to the refugee problem would be an early Allied victory, bringing to an end the oppression which results in refugees. Meanwhile the problem is one of great difficulty. Even when the refugees can be got out of Europe, and when homes are available for them, transport is hard to obtain.<sup>20</sup>

The second item related to the timetable of future events. Like the Allied Declaration, an opportunity for MPs to debate the subject would have to wait until Parliament returned after the Easter recess. Its exact date would be decided by the Foreign Secretary:

Evidently the Bermuda conversations are not expected to be lengthy. Mr. Eden has indicated that a Commons debate, to be held after they have finished, might take place on the day the House returns from the short Easter break.<sup>21</sup>

The three regional papers paid close attention to the first reports from Bermuda which were cabled from the island via New York by *Reuter*. The key word in the press release published in all the papers on April 20 was "limited".<sup>22</sup> The *Glasgow Herald* and the *Yorkshire Post* published identical introductions to their reports (taken from the *Reuter*. report, whose correspondent was identified by the former but not the latter):

Only a limited solution of the world refugee problem is expected from the Anglo-American conference which opened yesterday in Bermuda. This was stressed, says E.T. Sayer, *Reuter's* special correspondent, in the public speeches of the leaders of both delegations – Mr. Richard Law, British Foreign Under-Secretary, and Dr. Harold Dodds of Princeton University.<sup>23</sup>

Law and Dodds each expanded on the task facing the delegates:

This is a world problem, of which the solution must be a world solution...The only real solution to this terrible problem is to be found in the victory of our arms. Nevertheless there is a growing conviction in the United Kingdom that all really practical means consistent with the effective prosecution of the war must be explored for saving what can be saved and for helping those who can be reached with our help.

Dr Dodds said that the problem was too great for solution by the Governments here represented. Our task will be to point the way and to offer such definite proposals as may be possible under war conditions.<sup>24</sup>

The *Yorkshire Post* article followed the opening remarks of the speeches by taking notice of what was described as "a scathing comment" on the refugee situation in the *New York Times* which had reached the paper via the *British United Press* news agency (its first remarks, but not the entire comment (quoted below), were also reproduced in the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Manchester Guardian* via *Reuter*). It said that it thought the conference was important both as a symbol of future co-operation between the United Nations and of the first attempt at

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<sup>20</sup> *YP* Mon 19 April 1943 p2 (6) REFUGEE TALKS

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>22</sup> "Only Limited Solution of Problem Expected" (*GH*) "Only a Limited solution of the world refugee problem expected" (*YP*) "Limited Scope" (*MG*)

<sup>23</sup> *GH* Tue 20 April p3 (6) REFUGEE TALKS BEGIN IN BERMUDA Only Limited Solution of Problem Expected; *YP* Tue 20 April p1 (6) AIMS OF REFUGEE CONFERENCE AT BERMUDA; *MG* Tue 20 April p5 (8) PLANS TO HELP REFUGEES LIMITED SCOPE

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

collaboration “to mitigate the appalling horror of Hitler’s war of extermination since the outbreak of war”. But in both aspects, the *New York Times* felt, Allied efforts appeared to be “pitifully inadequate”:

It was perhaps inevitable that the conference be confined to Great Britain and America but after witnessing the Nazi mass murder for years these two leading exponents of the humanitarian ideals are still wholly in the dark about what to do.

It goes without saying that the war comes first, but it would seem that even within the war effort, and perhaps even in the aid of it, measures could be devised that go beyond palliatives which appear to be designed to assuage the conscience of the reluctant rescuers rather than to aid the victims.

The blood of the victims falls on Hitler’s head, but those who could help if they would cannot escape responsibility if they act like the Levite rather than the good Samaritan.<sup>25</sup>

Both the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Manchester Guardian* reported that “observers at the conference” (i.e. according to the *Reuter* correspondent) said that the delegates regarded the problem as one of working through the benevolence of neutrals rather than a direct approach to the Axis powers. Together, Richard Law and Osbert Peak explained why they intended to follow this policy. Using a new variation in the presentation of refugee statistics, Peak clarified the two main reasons:

The U.S. has rigid immigration laws and Britain in her position as a fortress has her food supplies stretched to an extent limiting her uses as a refugee haven. She is already receiving refugees at a rate of 10,000 a year.<sup>26</sup>

Law said that “in the present circumstances” any solution was bound to be limited. In language that was careful and highly provisional, his comments were plainly directed towards those rescue campaigners who had been calling for urgent action. He made clear that winning the war remained the priority and implying that emotional responses to what “the world was witnessing” were not only unhelpful but irresponsible, stated that the Allies would not be forced into decisions based on anything other than military considerations:

Where joint action may be possible we hope to lay the foundation for such action. Where other countries may be involved we may be able to work out tentatively some basis for wider international organisation and action. The only solution to this terrible problem is to be found in the victory of our arms.

We must take great care to see that we are not betrayed by our feelings of humanity and compassion into courses of action which at best would postpone the day of liberation, and at worst make liberation for ever impossible. There are no doubt a number of things by which we might attempt to alleviate the condition of the persecuted peoples, but if any one of those things were to postpone by a month the achievement of victory we should be doing an ill-service to those very people whom we wish to help.

It is an appalling spectacle which the world which the world is witnessing, and neither the American people nor the British people would be true to their own characters if they watched

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, *New York Times* via *BUP* no date indicated.

<sup>26</sup> *MG* Tue 20 April p5 (8) PRIVATE TALKS BEGUN; *GH* Tue 20 April p3 (6) REFUGEE TALKS BEGIN IN BERMUDA Only Limited Solution of Problem Expected

it unmoved, if they did not make every effort that was humanly possible to alleviate the situation.<sup>27</sup>

Each newspaper had access to the same news agency material (from *Reuter*) but the *Manchester Guardian* was the only paper of the three to choose to include the full text of the speeches. Thus only its readers had the opportunity to appreciate the strength of the American Government's conviction regarding the matter of rescue. According to Harold Dodds, the head of the American delegation:

The primary fact which must be borne in mind throughout these deliberations is that we are now in the middle of a bitterly contested war. We know that we will win this war, but we also know that we cannot relax for one instant our determination to concentrate our maximum effort upon its vigorous prosecution. Any other thought would not only be foolish it would be criminal. It would constitute a betrayal, not of our countries, nor of the efforts of the United Nations but of civilisation.<sup>28</sup>

Jews were not mentioned in any of the remarks made by either delegation. But, as though to remind readers that one of the main reasons for the conference was the Nazi extermination policy directed at all Jews in Europe, the *Manchester Guardian* included another news item (directly below its main report on April 20) which it felt had some relevance to the events about to be discussed in Bermuda.

Under the headline "2,000,000 Dead", it gave details of a pamphlet issued by the British Stationary Office which described some of the measures taken against Jews in occupied Europe. This intelligence, compiled by the Inter-Allied Information Committee, said the number of Jewish victims who had been deported or who had "perished" since 1939 in Axis-controlled Europe was estimated at "two millions, while five millions more are in danger of extermination".<sup>29</sup> In a foreword to the pamphlet, the chairman of the committee, Georges Schommer, acknowledged the limits of Allied knowledge about what was happening to Jews under Nazi rule:

No attempt has been made to present a complete historical record, but sufficient is shown to reveal the Continent-wide consistency of the persecution that is now taking place. The statement thus presents but a summary of the evidence. It is also a terrible indictment.<sup>30</sup>

If there was any suspicion about the sincerity of Allied rescue intentions, the decision to hold the meeting on an island 1500 miles out in the Atlantic did not help matters. The *Glasgow Herald* and the *Manchester Guardian* had noticed that the U.S. Jewish Joint Emergency Committee for European Affairs had sought permission to attend the conference arguing (in a

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>28</sup> *MG* Tue 20 April p6 (8) TASKS OF THE BERMUDA CONFERENCE Speeches by Heads of British and American Delegations

<sup>29</sup> *MG* Tue 20 April p5 (8) 2,000,000 JEWS DEAD STATIONARY OFFICE PAMPHLET

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*,

letter to Sumner Wells, the Under-Secretary of State) that “doubts have arisen because of the isolation of the conference in a place completely inaccessible to influences of public opinion”<sup>31</sup>

In a leader, the *Glasgow Herald* argued that the meeting at Bermuda had “peculiar political importance” because it was the first of what would be many meetings that the United Nations would hold in order to deal with various aspects of international affairs. It argued that many people would regard its effectiveness as an augury for the future. As a result it was “desirable” that it “should bear positive fruit and [the Allies should] not content themselves with producing pious resolutions”. It took a pragmatic view:

Most of the people threatened with extermination – of whom the Jews, of course, are in the most acute danger – cannot be got away at all. It would be a pity, indeed, if too much emphasis were to be laid at Bermuda at long term problems of this kind. But when ordinary citizens in Britain and America look at this conference, and subsequent ones, they will be apt to judge them by their success in the difficulties not of three, five, or ten years hence but of the moment.

What they will wish to see is an immediate policy for helping the escape of refugees and giving them temporary homes – something that will translate into action the concern shown by British M.P.s when they stood in silence to protest against the massacre of the Jews. If modest and precise proposals for such action are not forthcoming it is to be feared that no good resolutions for a more distant future will be enough to overcome a general sense of frustration.<sup>32</sup>

That sense of frustration was certainly evident in the *Manchester Guardian*’s lengthy leader (“At Bermuda”) on the same day. Ever conscious of the urgency of the situation, it first drew attention to the fact that it had taken four months (since the Allied Declaration) to bring about a meeting to discuss the “world problem of bringing relief to refugees”. It said that it understood that measures of relief for Jews escaping from “Hitler’s extermination” would apply equally to those who were refugees from “Axis tyranny” for any other reason:

But the Bermuda conference has sprung from the horrors of the extermination of the Jews. It is a response to the demand that relief measures should be taken to abate these horrors. Why then, does the Foreign Office and why do the opening speeches at the conference ignore (so far as the published versions show) the Jewish side of the persecution? The facts remain, the extermination goes on.<sup>33</sup>

The paper then turned its attention to the current Allied policy with regard to rescue. It did not disguise its irritation with what it regarded as the patronising tone of official explanations for what it clearly felt was still further procrastination:

Mr. Richard Law and Mr. Dodds repeated the Governmental warnings with which we are all too familiar. There is, they say, only one “solution” – the complete and final victory of the

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<sup>31</sup> *MG* Tue 20 April p5 (8) PRIVATE TALKS BEGUN; *GH* Tue 20 April p3 (6) REFUGEE TALKS BEGIN IN BERMUDA Only Limited Solution of Problem Expected

<sup>32</sup> *GH* Wed 21 April p4 (6) FIRST CONFERENCE

<sup>33</sup> *MG* Thur 22 April p4 (8) AT BERMUDA

United Nations (as though any intelligent person ever thought anything else); the “persecuted peoples” said Mr. Law, must not think that aid is coming to them (and do they?) when in fact we cannot give them immediate succour; we must not be “betrayed by our feelings of humanity and compassion into courses of action” which might postpone the day of liberation. It does not seem likely that any of the Governments will incur the reproach of recklessness.<sup>34</sup>

The leader believed that it had seen through the Government’s public statements with regard to rescue in the first three months of 1943. It was aware of a calculated agenda, designed to avoid addressing “the real issue”:

How many can be saved in spite of the difficulties? No one supposes that all the Jews in danger of being exterminated can be rescued any more than all the Poles, Czechs, Socialists or Communists now being persecuted. An argument of that kind is only put up in order to evade the real issue, and for that purpose has been constantly used in this country since December 17.

The question is simple. Many Jews and others are still escaping, and will escape from their tormentors. What can be done to save these, to increase the number, to encourage all those who can lend a hand? It is a practical question and no answer is to be found in defeatism and procrastination backed by platitudes.<sup>35</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian* reminded its readers that many organisations, newspapers, MPs, and others had made rescue proposals, but after four months nothing had come from them. It found it impossible to believe that many of them, like those put forward by the Archbishop of Canterbury, were not practicable:

Such proposals as these have long been urged. All that has resulted is the offer of a limited entry into Palestine, which under the White Paper of 1939 would have had to be offered anyhow. Beyond that, the generalities (so far) of the Bermuda conference and nothing more.

The situation – since the Jews are still being murdered and they and other refugees are still waiting to be saved – demands no less but also more so than it did last year. That is, that we should decide practical measures with the sense of urgency, the determination to overcome the difficulties, the resolve to encourage others and the readiness to do something ourselves, which have so far been lacking.<sup>36</sup>

Given the both papers’ scepticism about the Allied potential to initiate substantial changes to a policy which each believed amounted to “procrastination backed by platitudes” they must have greeted the next *Reuter* message from Bermuda with disappointment. Under the headline “Real Progress”<sup>37</sup> it was stated that heads of the delegation had announced at a press conference that “real progress” had been made in the discussions. Dodds said that a pattern was beginning to emerge “out of the more or less jigsaw puzzle presented by the problems involved”.<sup>38</sup> Though they said they would be able to apply some partial solution, the delegates said they were not thinking in terms of the movement of millions of refugees “as this was outside the bounds of practicability under war conditions. Even 100,000 would be considered

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*,

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

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>37</sup> Quotation marks in original headline

<sup>38</sup> *GH* Fri 23 April p3 (8) REFUGEE TALKS MAKE “REAL PROGRESS” SORTING OUT THE PROBLEMS

a very large number". Law said that they had begun to isolate various factors to put them in perspective "to begin to get hold of some positive solution". Disappointingly, for those eager to hear news of practical rescue measures, he added a caveat:

Unfortunately, from the very nature of the case, one cannot shout from the housetops what this analysis amounts to and what are its details. But I think that both delegations are satisfied that some progress is being made.<sup>39</sup>

On April 27, another leader in the *Manchester Guardian* recalled the controversy (which the *Yorkshire Post* had first reported on April 19) that had arisen in the American press concerning restrictions placed on the attendance of reporters at Inter-Allied "meetings in more or less inaccessible places". American newspapers, columnists and radio commentators had joined together in an outcry which they kept up until they were assured that "the press would not be denied its rights and really they need not have made so much fuss as the conferences would 'not have much news value anyhow'". The paper believed that while the reaction might have been disproportionate it was entirely legitimate to claim that if "United Nations" conferences were to take place, there should be proper publicity for them:

Something more than the spoon-fed publicity to which Governments are altogether prone. The Bermuda conference has shown that there, at least, there was not much "news" to be got. That is perhaps the measure of the conference's ineffectiveness: it was never intended to have any. But we are entitled to hope for more from the other conferences.<sup>40</sup>

The Bermuda conference ended on April 29. The *Glasgow Herald* said that there was nothing to indicate that the discussions had stepped outside the fairly close limits laid down by the leaders of both delegations and thought that it would be unlikely that there would be any specific information regarding its recommendations.<sup>41</sup> The Diplomatic Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* said that there was a feeling in many quarters that the results achieved by the conference would not go far towards meeting the "great emergency" or helping to further the various rescue schemes which had been under consideration for evacuating refugees, especially children.

In spite of the efforts made to bring these schemes into operation it is doubtful whether any real substantial progress has been achieved.<sup>42</sup>

A final joint press statement (via *Reuter*) from the delegations said that they had examined the refugee problem in all its aspects and had submitted joint recommendations to their governments:

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<sup>39</sup> MG Sat 24 April p7 (8) "REAL PROGRESS" THE BERMUDA CONFERENCE

<sup>40</sup> MG Tue 27 April p4 (6) PRELUDE

<sup>41</sup> GH Wed 28 April p5 (6) REFUGEE CONFERENCE MAY END TODAY

<sup>42</sup> MG Thur 29 April p6 (6) REFUGEES CONFERENCE

...which it is felt will pass the tests and lead to the relief of many refugees of all races and nationalities. Questions of shipping, food and supply were fully investigated. Delegates recommended a form of inter-governmental organisation best fitted to handle the problem in future and flexible enough to consider without prejudice any new factors.<sup>43</sup>

While the *Yorkshire Post* published only the abbreviated *Reuter* message, the *Manchester Guardian* printed the full communiqué which included details of “the tests” (referred to above and listed below) plus the additional proviso that since the recommendations concerned Governments “other than those represented and involved military considerations, they must remain confidential”:

1. Would any recommendations submitted interfere with or delay the war efforts of the United Nations?
2. Was the recommendation capable of accomplishment under war conditions?<sup>44</sup>

Once again, by choosing to print the entire text of official statements, the *Manchester Guardian* revealed the fundamental basis of Allied intentions – which carefully-worded summaries managed to neglect. Therefore it would have been understandable if readers of the *Yorkshire Post* were not as suspicious or as pessimistic as readers of the *Manchester Guardian* about what the Allies had achieved at Bermuda and what they intended to do in the future.

Some were already making their long-term intentions clear. On May 4, A.A. Berle, the United States Assistant Secretary of State declared that the German people were to blame for actions carried out in their name. He maintained that their failure to “stop this wickedness” and their “refuge in whining excuses of fear” should be one the basic considerations in “dealing with the German people in the hour of defeat”. Referring to the Nazi massacres, he said:

The time is passed when we can pretend that this series of horrors constitutes sole guilt of any small group of rulers. No party could have conceived, organised and carried out a programme of general civilian slaughter without at least the tacit acquiescence of a large part of the German people.

The German Reich has deliberately undertaken to exterminate the Jewish religion and the Jewish people of Europe. She has set aside certain localities as human abattoirs. She has detailed specific groups of men as slaughterers.

German guilt – now generalised throughout the German people – must constitute one of the basic considerations in dealing with them in the hour of defeat. No nameless child in the lime pits near Riga or Lublin will be forgotten. We must be able not only to fix responsibility but to make sure that the responsibility is carried out.<sup>45</sup>

Two days later, the *Manchester Guardian* reported a *Reuter* account of a speech given by Ley, leader of the German Labour on German radio. He said all Germans looked forward to

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<sup>43</sup> YP Fri 30 April p1 (6) Bermuda Scheme to Aid Refugees

<sup>44</sup> MG Fri 30 April p5 (6) AID FOR REFUGEES Agreement at Bermuda

<sup>45</sup> YP Mon 3 May p1 (6) GERMAN PEOPLE HELD RESPONSIBLE; MG Tue 4 May p6 (6) MURDER OF NATIONS RESPONSIBILITY GERMAN PEOPLE



the end of the war but stressed that “we shall not rest until the last Jew had vanished from the face of Europe”:

We did not want this war. We wanted to devote ourselves to constructive work, to build ships and roads. Only Jews wanted this war to make profits. The Jews were responsible for all German misery, unemployment and inflation. The fight we are now waging is a question of race.<sup>46</sup>

*Reuter* also took note of Goebbels latest contribution to German newspaper *Das Reich*.

/ Writing on the “Jewish problem” he said:

There is no doubt that should we show the slightest weakness in its solution we might bring about the greatest danger for the Reich and the rest of Europe. It is our duty to inform the world as to the fateful part played by the Jews in the origins of the war. This will take a long time but it will pay. Thus we shall destroy the most dangerous enemy of mankind. In this there can be no mercy.<sup>47</sup>

According to “information received in London” at the end of the first week of May, the Germans were carrying out this “solution” in the Warsaw ghetto. The *Manchester Guardian* said that the “general liquidation” of the ghetto had been completed at the beginning of 1943. The “final liquidation” of the remaining Jews began on April 19 but the Germans had encountered fierce opposition from Jews who had been supplied with arms by the Polish underground movement. In what was described as “the first instance of organised guerrilla resistance by Jews to the Germans on any considerable scale” Jews had been fighting against hopeless odds:

Since then battle has been raging, the Germans using armoured cars, hand grenades, machine guns and dropping incendiaries on blocks of houses defended by the Jew. Fighting was still going on but it is not clear how many of the Jewish combatants were still in a position to carry on their resistance. It may well be they have now been overcome. When the full story of the fight in the ghetto of Warsaw can be revealed the daring and the heroism of all concerned in its preparation and execution will receive their due meed of praise.<sup>48</sup>

In Britain, MPs were eager for news about rescue initiatives. In a *Glasgow Herald* Parliamentary report on May 6, Eden, as Leader of the House, (in reply to a question by Sidney Silverman) said a debate on the Bermuda conference would be held soon. He said an intervening period was needed because “it is necessary to agree how much can be said without risk to the work that is being done and that must be agreed with the United States”. The *Manchester Guardian's* report noted two other questions. The first (from Hammersley, the MP for Willesden East) asked if the recommendations of Bermuda conference included arrangements for dealing with the 20,000 available permits for entry into Palestine? Eden

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<sup>46</sup> *MG* Tue 4 May p6 (6) “THE LAST JEW” NAZI VENDETTA

<sup>47</sup> *MG* Fri 7 May p5 (8) “NO MERCY FOR JEWS” GOEBBELS ON GERMAN “DUTY”

<sup>48</sup> *MG* Fri 7 May p7 (8) WARSAW GHETTO JEWS FIGHT TO THE DEATH

said. "I cannot speak on that. Quite apart from the Bermuda conference, we have been doing all we can to facilitate that movement". Eleanor Rathbone then asked:

Seeing as these deliberations have dragged on and the report held back for so long, can you not give us some assurance that the gates of this country will be opened to at least a moderate extent to allow some refugees to get in?

Mr. Eden: These recommendations have only been in our hands since Mr. Peak came back two or three days ago. I don't think there has been any great delay. As regards entry into this country I have nothing to add to the Home Secretary's statement.<sup>49</sup>

A week later the "London Correspondence" of the *Manchester Guardian* announced that the debate would take place on May 19. It said that it understood that there was a justification for secrecy concerning the decisions made at Bermuda but it hoped that such secrecy hid real rescue measures and not the absence of them:

The Government only has itself to blame, if people are suspicious, because it has contrived to give the impression no less at Bermuda than in the House of Commons that it considers the problem too big and too baffling for government action.<sup>50</sup>

Its Political Correspondent informed readers on May 14 that Osbert Peake and George Hall would be presenting the report on Bermuda (Richard Law had stayed on to attend the conference at Hot Springs, Virginia) rather than a more senior member of the War Cabinet. It warned that if the Government only announced limited rescue measures it would add insult to the disappointment "to leave it to be done by a couple of Under-Secretaries":

If Bermuda proves to be worse than that, if it proves to be altogether barren, even a member of the War Cabinet might find the House "difficult". It would not be difficult from anger. It cannot wipe out of its own memory (never mind the public's) the silent homage it paid standing to Hitler's victims. The House will be conscience-stricken just so long as inaction mocks that demonstration. Who the War Cabinet spokesman is going to be is not indicated, but surely it cannot be anybody but Mr. Eden himself. It is his problem. It was he who read the Government's declaration that brought the House to its feet.<sup>51</sup>

The level of exasperation, irritation and anger at Allied policy concerning refugees expressed by the *Manchester Guardian* on April 22 was surpassed in another lengthy leader column simply titled "Bermuda Conference" in the May 15 edition. It poured scorn on the statements made by the delegations "which was, briefly, that they admired each other for their great service to refugees in the past and that the only "solution" was for the Allies to win the war"<sup>52</sup>. It said that the speeches represented the "defeatist" mind which the Government had exhibited for the past five months:

It is the way of the practically minded people of this country to regard a life saved as better than virtuous lamentations about lives lost or even threats of the terrible things that we will

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<sup>49</sup> *GH* Thur 6 May p6 (8) BERMUDA TALKS ON REFUGEES DEBATE TO BE HELD; *MG* Thur 6 May p2 (6) MPS AND REFUGEES MR EDEN QUESTIONED; *MG* Fri 7 May p5 (8) REFUGEES PROBLEM AN EARLY DEBATE

<sup>50</sup> *MG* Thur 13 May p4 (6) Bermuda and Secrecy

<sup>51</sup> *MG* Fri 14 May p8 (8) RESCUE WORK The Coming Debate

<sup>52</sup> *MG* Sat 15 May p4 (8) BERMUDA CONFERENCE

some day do to somebody somewhere. For words without deeds no one has much respect. If there are to be no deeds, better go easy on the words.<sup>53</sup>

It listed the areas of underachievement: no relaxation of British immigration restrictions; no attempt to get neutrals to accept large numbers of refugees; no throwing open the doors of Palestine or allowing the full quota of 29,000 to enter; no appointment (as Eleanor Rathbone had suggested in her recent pamphlet – see below) of a “Minister for Refugees” or at least a person who could devote his full attention to the problem until substantial results were produced. Its contempt for the official phrasing of the Bermuda conference as an “exploratory consultation” was expressed by pointing out that “while the consultants explore, the practitioners act: the extermination goes on all the time and Goebbels has now announced that Germany aims at “the extinction of the Jewish race””.<sup>54</sup> It was time the paper said, “to abandon procrastination and descend from generalities to the practical questions which the public well understand”:

How much, to repeat the tedious question, has been done? In actual relief measures, next to nothing. It is for the House of Commons, when the results of the Bermuda conference are put before it, to compare it with what should and could be done and, if necessary, to force the Government to do more.<sup>55</sup>

The paper’s criticism of Government policy was given further ammunition by Eleanor Rathbone’s pamphlet “Rescue the Perishing” which it had been sent in the second week of May (its introduction to “The Facts of the Massacres” said; “These are not ‘atrocities stories’ exaggerated for propaganda. They come from too many sources and they all tally.”)<sup>56</sup> It quoted extensively from the pamphlet in its leader of May 19:

This country has long been proud of itself as an asylum for political refugees. Fortunate enough not to know tyranny, we have often congratulated ourselves on sheltering those who knew it all too well. The coming conference on the Bermuda will show whether we can still claim or deserve, the old reputation. Unless those who are about to speak about the Bermuda recommendations have large proposals to make...we ought to stop the issue to ourselves of undeserved certificates. It would be better to consider a passage from Sir John Hope-Simpson’s report in Miss Eleanor Rathbone’s booklet “Rescue the Perishing”:

Great Britain’s record in the admission of refugees is not distinguished if it be compared with that of France, Czechoslovakia, or the United States. ...Owing to the excessively cautious post-war immigration policy, Great Britain has ceased to be a country of asylum. Her initiative and role in international work would be

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>56</sup> Paragraph highlighted in paper’s own copy. “*Rescue the Perishing*” *A summary of the position regarding the Nazi Massacres of Jewish and other victims and of proposals for their rescue. AN APPEAL, A PROGRAMME AND A CHALLENGE.* By Eleanor Rathbone M.P. Published by “the National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror”, a group founded in March 1943. Copy in *Manchester Guardian* Archive, University of Manchester, Refugees Box 223/5/235.

greatly strengthened if she could show a braver record in practical work as a country of sanctuary.<sup>57</sup>

It took particular notice of Rathbone's criticism of the Parliamentary statements (made by Peake and Churchill) that from 1940-42 Britain had accepted about 63,000 refugees (including 20,000 seamen) which pointed out that "all but a few of the 63,000 refugees who had reached Britain were of Allied Nationalities. We have now to think of all those Jews and other victims who are being herded for slaughter in the enemy countries."

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<sup>57</sup> MG Wed 19 May p4 (8) THE REFUGEES

The much anticipated Bermuda debate was covered extensively (but not equally) in all three the regional papers on May 20. Each included a House of Commons report and a leader column commenting on the proceedings. As expected, the Home Office Under-Secretary and conference delegate Osbert Peake delivered the main report on the meeting. Eden attended the debate to the relief of some MPs who feared that the importance of the debate would be diminished if the Government had decided not to field a senior War Cabinet member.

The *Glasgow Herald's* Commons report, like the *Yorkshire Post's* account presented summaries of the debate in reverse order. Eden's comments were given first, followed by Peake's report. The *Manchester Guardian* reproduced a full verbatim account beginning with Peak's report, MPs' questions to the Under-Secretary and Eden's reply "winding up" the debate. The headlines in the first two papers carried the Government's message (see footnotes) while the *Manchester Guardian's* complete account also included MPs calls and suggestions:

Machinery for international consultation, collaboration and action on the refugee problem is to be set up as a result of the Bermuda Conference. Mr. Eden assured the House that the machinery the Inter-Governmental Committee was the right basis for the work in solving the problem of refugees, not only now but also after the war. He said the only real solution was complete Allied victory.

It was not fair, he said, to suggest that the Government was too preoccupied to do anything about it. There had been a Cabinet committee dealing with it for some time past. He had at the Foreign Office, an expert staff of devoted people who tried to assist through diplomatic and consular representatives abroad.

There were 30,000 vacancies in Palestine and the Government wanted to get children there despite the transport difficulties, but they could not get them out of the enemy or occupied countries without the permission of Sofia or Berlin. That was the blunt fact.<sup>58</sup>

Eden's statement contained a few remarks for those who had accused the Government of not treating the problem with the urgency which they believed it merited. He also tried to explain the reality of the present situation to rescue campaigners who had criticised Ministers for not apparently not caring enough for victims of the Nazis. This section of the statement was more heavily abbreviated in the *Glasgow Herald* (in plain text) than in the *Yorkshire Post's* summary (plain text plus areas in bold type) below. When both are presented together, it is possible to see the remarks that the *Glasgow Herald* chose to exclude:

The British Government were ready to take their part in sharing that burden, and wanted that assurance given to be given to the neutral countries by the United Nations as a whole. I would like to be told where it is that if we had acted with more rapidity we could have got better results. We were prepared to make very considerable financial contributions and had in fact already done so. It was contemplated under the Bermuda scheme that we should continue to do so. Until Hitler's power is broken you cannot deal with anything but the fringe of this problem. That was the real tragedy.

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<sup>58</sup> *GH* Thur 20 May p6 (8) NEW ACTION ON REFUGEES BRITAIN'S DESIRE TO HELP; *YP* Thur 20 May p2 (6) INTERNATIONAL PLAN TO HELP SAVE REFUGEES

**I do not think that Ministers can contribute a great deal to a solution of these problems by wearing their hearts on their sleeves for daws for peck at.**

I hope that Bermuda will give us the machinery we need, and I think it will. Some of the steps being taken as a result of Bermuda will ease the burden for neutrals and enable the flow of refugees to continue. I should be false to my trust if I were to raise great hopes. I don't believe that the rescue of more than a few here and there is possible until final victory is won, **but we shall do as much as we can within the limits of our war effort and the limitation of our strength.**<sup>59</sup>

Osbert Peake dealt with a number of issues relating to the conference. As expected, he first informed MPs that the complete conference report that the delegates had agreed on involved "military questions and other aspects which made it necessary that it should remain confidential". Before he revealed details of some of the decisions taken at Bermuda, he again took the opportunity to repeat "Britain's" record with regard to refugees (including the 63,000 apparently admitted between 1940 and 1942) and for the first time in any of his recent speeches, specifically included Jews in the list of those who had been "received and supported":

No other country's record could be compared with Britain's. India had received and supported over 400,000 refugees; in Palestine 300,000 persons, Jewish immigrants, had been received *since 1919*; the East African colony had also given accommodation to large numbers of war refugees. 40,000 Polish refugees in Persia had come directly under our wing. In the last five months alone – the period in which it was alleged that nothing had happened – 4,000 had arrived here. Many thousands had escaped without visas and no refugee who had reached this country without one had been turned back.<sup>60</sup>

With regard to Poland, (the place where, many readers understood, hundreds of thousands of Jews had been taken from all over occupied Europe to be "exterminated" in accordance with Hitler's recognised policy) Peake once again ignored the well known issue of Jews who had been gathered there by the Nazis by speaking in the broadest of terms:

Eight million people in Poland had, since the outbreak of war suffered barbarous punishment or death. The avenues of escape from this reservoir of suffering humanity were few and dangerous. The United Nations can do little or nothing in the immediate present for the vast numbers under Hitler's control. He is determined not to let these people go.<sup>61</sup>

The delegates, he said, had rejected any proposals for general negotiation with the German Government to release "potential refugees" and rejected suggestions that "military persons in Allied hands" should be exchanged for civilians in enemy hands, or that food should be sent in to "selected groups of potential refugees". Transport remained the overriding difficulty. The conference had concluded that "it would be a grave disadvantage not only to the Allies but to the refugee cause to divert shipping essential to war needs for the carriage of refugees". He informed the House that the Home Secretary had made extensions to the categories of persons currently eligible for special consideration: parents of persons serving in the Allied

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, My italics.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*,

forces; persons of other than Allied nationality willing to serve in the armed forces and parents of children under 16 who were already in Britain. Other than the brief reference above, Jews were not mentioned in his report.

Peake reported that the delegations believed that “while it would create a cruel illusion to hold out any hope of a solution commensurate with the terrible seriousness and complexity of the problem, far more has been done for refugees by both countries than was generally appreciated”. He hoped that what he had said would do something to convince the House and the country that the Government was sincere about the matter. He concluded by saying:

The Bermuda conference was not an expedient for delay but a real step forward on the road that led to liberation... We have our programme of rescue and that programme is victory.<sup>62</sup>

The *Glasgow Herald* published Eleanor Rathbone’s comments below Peake’s statement but unlike the *Yorkshire Post* decided not to include Peake’s reply to her which included an attack on some of the evidence which had been presented in “Rescue the Perishing”. The full report of the exchange in the *Manchester Guardian* (which also included comments from other MPs) demonstrated Peake’s attempt to humiliate Rathbone and discredit the contents of her pamphlet.

Rathbone said that Peake’s speech “seemed to be more of a plea for gratitude for what the Government has done and what it was going to do under the shadow of the Bermuda conference. That was gratitude for very small mercies”:

It was maddening that the Government had shown so little sense of the urgency of the problem and the need for speed. The speeches at the Bermuda conference breathed of defeatism and despair. Of course shipping was difficult to get, but it might be easier now that the Mediterranean was open. Once a campaign was started in any part of Europe it would be different. What chance would there be of getting shipping then?

She argued that there should be “a first-class man” in the Government who would make “a whole-time job of this problem”:

When we approach the Home Secretary we are sometimes made to feel that he wants to show that he is a strong man by refusing to make even the smallest concessions. Need he always make us feel that the whole question of refugees has become a bore and has begun to irritate him? We feel that he has transferred to refugees that dislike he openly feels for us.

How many more are going to perish in these twentieth-century massacres who might be saved if the problem is approached not in the spirit of the Bermuda conference but in the spirit of determination to do everything possible?<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *MG* Thur 20 May p3 (6) BOLDER REFUGEE POLICY URGED M.P.s Suggest Settlements in North Africa

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*,

In his reply, Peake turned to the pamphlet “Rescue the Perishing” in which he said that Rathbone had mentioned a case of refugees still in enemy territory. The case (one of seven examples given - on pages 20-21 of the 25 page pamphlet – to illustrate what was seen as Home Office intransigence) involved an aged Jewish couple in Berlin who had a son in Istanbul, a naturalised Turk. The son cabled to his sister in London said that he could get a Turkish visa for his parents if London gave them a British visa. The Home Office said it was impossible to issue a British visa while his parents were in enemy territory. Later the son heard that his parents had been deported to Poland:

I shall be very sorry but I shall also be very surprised if this aged couple are deported to Poland. Many a person reading this paragraph must have thought that the Home Secretary was devoid of all decent humanitarian feeling. What I am not surprised at is that this gentleman had secret means of communicating with Berlin because he occupies an important position in an Istanbul firm which is an agency of the leading German armaments manufacturers Krupps of Essen (Cries of “Oh!”)

He asks us to promise a visa to this country to two persons we have never seen. This is a case Miss Rathbone is continually throwing at our heads. Granting a visa in that case would be to have the moral certainty that the people who reach our shores would not be German Secret Service agents.<sup>64</sup>

Rathbone said that she was not aware of the position of this man. She did not think that Turkey, as an ally non-belligerent, would have passed on a spy to Britain:

Miss Rathbone: The Home Secretary was always telling the House how generous this country had been to refugees. But there were the facts in the pamphlet. Mr. Peake has not pointed out a single inaccuracy.

Mr. Peake intervened to say that if he had begun to speak of all the inaccuracies he would have to speak all afternoon.<sup>65</sup>

As the MP for North Leeds, Peake’s performance received particular praise the *Yorkshire Post’s* “London Notes and Comment”. It said that he dealt fairly and squarely with critics of the Government’s handling of the problem and put up a very good defence of the Government’s policy. It noticed that when he reported the results of the Bermuda conference “he kept closely to his manuscript. That, no doubt was because he was keeping within a form of words agreed with the U.S. Government. He was cordially cheered when he sat down”.<sup>66</sup>

The paper’s leader column thought it unfair that the conference had been criticised for being held under “conditions of considerable secrecy” and it was unreasonable to assume that, because little was said publicly at the conference, little was done. It supported Eden’s conclusion that until only the fringe of the problem could be touched until Hitler’s power was broken and believed that because of the Allies’ “valuable work on the fringe” they could not justly be accused of complacency or ignoring the problem. The paper also agreed that until

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*,

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

<sup>66</sup> *YP* Thur 20 May p2 (6) MR. PEAKE ON REFUGEES



victory, it would remain an intractable problem which would need to be “constantly infused with generosity, patience and resourceful enterprise”.<sup>67</sup>

In contrast, the *Glasgow Herald* leader said that many MPs were disappointed with Peake’s report on the Bermuda conference, a feeling which it felt would be widely shared throughout the country. It thought that the discussions “bore an unhappy resemblance to many past conferences that were called for great purposes and to little profit”. It said that the debate had produced one excellent suggestion – Rathbone’s idea for a Minister for refugees – which it felt was necessary as “the moral responsibility of the United Nations in this matter demands immediate practical action”:

In the sight of such misery, hunger and degradation as now exist in Europe, our best efforts would scarcely suffice.<sup>68</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian* was the only paper which reported the views of other MPs during the debate. Their comments illustrated the gulf in the language used to describe the victims of the Nazis, i.e. between official statements regarding “potential refugees” and a more popular terminology which explicitly referred to Jews as the main subjects under discussion:

George Ridley: Mr. Peake’s statement justified the fear that the Bermuda conference was the occasion for discovering difficulties and not providing solutions. We should fling wide the doors of Palestine, which the Jews had transformed from a desert into a fertile country.

Sir Lambert Ward expressed disappointment that Peake had not said something more definite about the Bermuda discussions. The difficulty about receiving Jewish refugees was that a large part of the population did not want them, and their admission might easily fan the smouldering fires of anti-Semitism into a flame.

Col Cazalet said that anti-Semitism existed and was growing made him ashamed. It was a measure of Goebbels victory. “I know Jews have been implicated in the black market. So have Christians. When Jews are implicated that is news. When Christians are implicated that is not news.

Mr. Mander: The immigration policy established before the war should be scrapped and a national home for Jews properly established. The best hope for refugees and other people was more Tunis victories, more Stalingrads and more R.A.F. raids.

Sir Richard Acland said that the Government should give sanctuary to every Jew who could reach British territory. The Government is disappointing over the forces of moral decency over this business.

Sir Arthur Hudson: The problem was gigantic. I do not think we can solve it by admitting large numbers of refugees into this country. We must set up settlements in foreign countries or perhaps North Africa, where the conditions were favourable for refugee camps.

Mr. D.R. Grenfell, after reading a telegram he received two days ago from Palestine alleging evidence of new horrors against Jews in Poland and urging a scheme of exchanging Jews for Germans, said we were witnessing the degradation of Europe under the stress of a propaganda movement directed against the Jews. We should take the responsibility for moving those people from the dangers in which they stood and transfer them to a safe place.

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<sup>67</sup> YP Thur 20 May p2 (6) REFUGEES

<sup>68</sup> GH Thur 20 May p4 (8) REFUGEES AND RELIEF

Mr. Lipson said that many of his constituents, although they knew he was a Jew, had written to him urging him to press on the Government the need for action. That showed that their conscience and sense of common humanity had been aroused.

Mr. Silverman, after referring to the Allied victory in North Africa, said that it would have been a nice gesture if the Government had said that the land first freed from Nazi tyranny should become the first land to offer temporary succour to the refugees from that tyranny.<sup>69</sup>

The paper's disappointment was palpable. The first sentences of the *Manchester Guardian's* leader simply said:

There was a debate yesterday but not much about Bermuda. For military and other reasons little was said about what the conference has recommended. Mr. Peake might have spared us the attack on a single "case" among those cited by Miss Rathbone; whether or not it was effective as debating point it makes a sorry contrast with the greatness of the problem to be solved.<sup>70</sup>

Considering the venom of earlier attacks on the Government's policy, it was surprising that the *Manchester Guardian's* comments on the proceedings were so restrained. It only made one critical point; highlighting the fact that as a result of recent victories, the Allies now had 200,000 new prisoners in Tunisia "and no one talks of there being no ships and food available". Exasperated, it lamented that "there is no sign that we are bringing that sort of spirit to the question of refugees.

Perhaps one reason that the reception of the Bermuda report - emphasising that final victory was the only way to help Hitler's victims in occupied Europe - was accepted with resignation by a paper like the *Manchester Guardian* was Churchill's speech to the U.S. congress on the same day. Each of the leader columns on the debate were second after longer (first) leader comments about Churchill's statement under headlines which included, "The War in Perspective and "Shortening the War".

Despite recent successes in North Africa, he warned that the major tasks of the war had yet to be undertaken. He indicated that the war would be developed in air operations day and night over Germany and Italy, occupied Europe and Japan. The U-boat danger was "still the greatest we have to face". More effort, he said, was needed to ease Russia's burden of fighting in 1943, especially as the Nazis might still try a third attempt to break their "magnificent resistance". He stated that the intention of the United Nations was to beat Germany first, to ensure that Japan's defeat, when it came, would be complete. Churchill thought that the war in Europe would not be won easily and that there were dangers in its not being won quickly.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *MG* Thur 20 May p3 (6) BOLDER REFUGEE POLICY URGED M.P.s Suggest Settlements in North Africa

<sup>70</sup> *MG* Thur 20 May p4 (6) BERMUDA DEBATE

<sup>71</sup> *MG* Thur 20 May p4 (6) TO CONGRESS; *YP* Thur 20 May p2 (6) SHORTENING THE WAR; *GH* Thur 20 May p4 (6) THE WAR IN PERSPECTIVE;

The general view that the Allies had the combined strength to win the war fuelled the optimism that many of the rescue campaigners felt. It galvanised their belief that it was possible to more to save Jews from occupied Europe – if only the will was there. The manner in which the Allies had sought to first avoid public discussion of the issue (particularly concerning Jews) and subsequently ignore reasonable relief suggestions had caused an unnecessary enmity to develop between Ministers and MPs, the press, and the public. At the same time (in the same editions) those who read Churchill's realistic warning of dangers still ahead and much work to be done before Europe could be liberated must have found Peake's report and Eden's explanation - that there was little that could be done before victory was won – equally convincing. News of murder of those still well out of reach would continue to reach readers of the regional papers and compound their frustration and heartbreak but the decision had been made - to concentrate all resources on winning the war and where possible, to help those within reach – and that decision was difficult to challenge.

The campaign for rescue may have suffered a severe blow but the regional papers continued to publish extraordinarily detailed accounts of events concerning Jews under Nazi rule. For example, according to the *Manchester Guardian* on June 11, the Germans had become nervous about the possibility of an Allied invasion on the continent and were taking precautions by “increasing the severity of their rule” in Nazi-occupied territories. Apart from military preparations, they were apparently taking a series of measures which were intended to tighten their hold on the occupied countries (including a complete revision of police and security controls). The paper’s “Special Correspondent” said that they had decided to “press ahead with the systematic extermination of the Jews. This is being done partly in fulfilment of a predetermined policy and partly, perhaps, because Berlin imagines it will act as a warning and a threat to the whole world”:

The drive against what is left of European Jewry has grown in ferocity since February. At that time Himmler summoned a meeting of S.S. leaders in Berlin at which it was settled that no external reasons whatsoever should be allowed to interfere with the pursuance of the campaign against the Jews. This decision has been carried into effect.

More and more Jews from the countries of Eastern Europe, including the remnants of those in Germany, have now been deported. In addition it is regarded as certain that Germany’s Balkan satellites have received fresh demands for the surrender of their Jewish populations, but to what extent these demands have been acceded to is not known.<sup>72</sup>

The same edition of the paper carried a *Reuter* message from Stockholm on June 10 that the Germans had begun sterilising Jews in Holland. The first victims were the husbands of childless “mixed” marriages. Dutch Church leaders had sent a “indignant protest” to the German authorities (which was published in the following day’s edition) and doctors had reportedly refused to collaborate in this “new infamy”.<sup>73</sup>

Another report “from Poland” (published in the *Manchester Guardian* on June 12) brought confirmation that Jewish resistance in the Warsaw ghetto had finally ended. It said that there could only be one result to the struggle, given the Germans superiority in numbers and arms but called the resistance “one of the greatest examples of corporate bravery and resolution shown by the oppressed against their persecutors.” More detailed information concerning the methods used by the Nazis to “liquidate” the ghetto was included with this report. Three documents showing the orders issued by Nazis through the Jewish Council of the Warsaw ghetto were published in full to illustrate the stages of evacuation (or “steps to liquidation”), which had begun in July 1942 and continued in August and September with further mass

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<sup>72</sup> *MG* Fri 11 June p5 (8) NAZI FEARS MORE REPRESSIVE MEASURES INVASION NERVES

<sup>73</sup> *MG* Fri 11 June p8 (8) DUTCH JEWS STERILISED; *MG* Sat 12 June p7 (8) STERILISATION OF DUTCH JEWS JOINT CHURCH PROTEST

deportations. Although the paper did not identify the source of the documents, they were described as authentic:

By command of the German authorities, all Jews irrespective of age or sex are to be deported. Every Jew to be deported may take with him personal property weighing up to 13 kilograms. Packages over this weight will be confiscated. Valuables such as money, jewellery etc. may be taken. Vacated flats must not be locked. Food for three days should be taken.

The deportation begins on July 22, 1942 at 11 am.

Penalties:

- a) Any Jew not included among those specified who goes out the Jewish quarter without authority after the beginning of the deportation will be shot.
- b) Any Jew instigating an attempt to prevent or hinder the operation of the deportation order will be shot.
- c) Any Jew aiding or abetting an attempt to hinder the operation of the deportation will be shot
- d) Any Jew discovered in Warsaw after the fulfilment of the deportation order and who is not included those exempted will be shot.

July 7 1942 The Jewish Council<sup>74</sup>

The Nazis had emptied the ghetto by the end of the year except for 40,000 Jews “engaged in work for German firms” concentrated in the inner ghetto. The decision to deport this final group led to the first outbreak of resistance in January 1943 which was renewed in April and “continued to the bitter end”<sup>75</sup>

On June 16, the *Yorkshire Post* reported “A Polish Allegation” (from the Polish Telegraph Agency), which said that prisoners in concentration camps in Poland were being used by the Germans for experimental purposes. The information concerned activities at a particular camp Oswiecim (Auschwitz):

In the Oswiecim Camp, there is a special experimental station of the Berlin Institute of Hygiene, in which (besides experiments in artificial fecundation, sterilisation and castration) German scientists make injections with poisons and record the effects. Very often this causes decay in the bodies of the victims while they are still alive. The names of these scientists are known, and the Polish Directorate of Civilian Resistance is to publish them soon.<sup>76</sup>

These examples and others reached the homes of readers in Leeds, Glasgow, Manchester and their surrounding districts. Some may not have been believed but most were thought to be reliable. Viewed with hindsight, they can be seen as remarkably accurate. The fact that the main victims of the Nazis were Jews had a knock-on effect in terms of content: anti-Semitism in Britain, immigration regulations in Britain and Palestine, arguments for and against a Jewish National Home in Palestine; the welfare of Jewish refugees in British cities, Jews in the armed forces – all were discussed on a regular basis. Their publication in the *Yorkshire Post*, *Glasgow Herald* and *Manchester Guardian* stimulated debate, inspired impassioned articles, motivated readers to write letters and sustained groups all over Britain who met to protest against “crimes against humanity”.

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<sup>74</sup> *MG* Sat 12 June p7 (8) END OF THE GHETTO IN WARSAW AN HEROIC STAND TEXT OF NAZI ORDERS

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>76</sup> *YP* Wed 16 June p3 (6) A POLISH ALLEGATION

## **Chapter VIII**

***The Manchester Guardian***

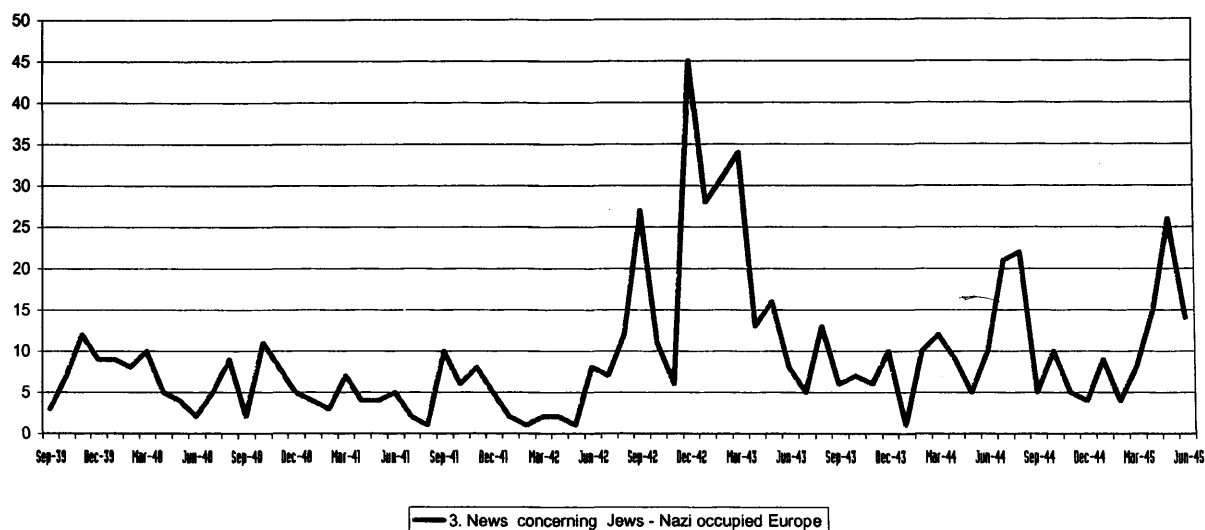
**Epilogue 1943-45**

## Epilogue

The Manchester Guardian

News concerning Jews - Nazi occupied Europe

September 1939 - June 1945



In his New Year message in the *Manchester Guardian* in September 1943 the Chief Rabbi, Dr. J.H.Hertz noted that Russian advances in the East and Anglo-American victories in North Africa and Southern Europe “announced the doom of the foul satanism that had threatened the very life of civilised humanity”:

Alas, for Jews in enemy lands the dreadful night of annihilation remains unbroken. At least two millions of our brethren have already been slaughtered by the Nazis and now they are exterminating the third million.<sup>1</sup>

By November Ignacy Schwartzbart of the Polish National Council declared that only a few hundred thousand Jews were believed to be still alive in Poland. He believed that only reprisals could stop the Nazis finishing the work of annihilation.<sup>2</sup>

During December, Harold King, *Reuter's* correspondent in Moscow, reported that the first war crimes trial at Kharkov, Russia, sentenced three Germans to death for taking part in the “mass brutal extermination of peaceful Soviet citizens by means of gas vans and other methods”. The court heard evidence that Hitler and Himmler, at a meeting in the spring of 1942, decided on the extermination of “that part of the population of occupied Russia which was useless to the Germans. From that moment the use of ‘murder vans’ came into mass use as a simple and convenient ‘instrument for the murder of large numbers’.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *MG* Fri 24 September 1943 p8 (8) JUSTICE FOR THE JEW Hertz New Year Message

<sup>2</sup> *MG* Tue 23 November 1943 p6 (6) EXTERMINATION OF THE JEWS IN POLAND

<sup>3</sup> *MG* Mon 20 December 1943 p6 (6) MASS USE OF “MURDER VANS” Kharkov Evidence: Death Sentences in War Criminals Trial

The establishment of the American War Refugee Board in February 1944 was seen by the *Manchester Guardian* as the best hope for those who were still concerned about the fate of Jews in occupied-Europe. It was thought that the Americans would threaten satellite countries like Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary with dire consequences if they failed to permit Jewish and other refugees to escape. The paper believed that there was “still time” to save Jews trapped behind enemy lines.<sup>4</sup>

German forces occupied Hungary towards the end of March 1944. It was feared that one of the first consequences of the occupation would be the persecution of nearly 1,000,000 foreign and Hungarian Jews to which the Hungarian Government “had acted very leniently”.<sup>5</sup> Roosevelt immediately issued a warning to Axis states not to share in “Hitler’s crimes against humanity”. He said:

One of the blackest crimes in all history, begun by the Nazis in the days of peace and multiplied by them a hundred times in time of war, the wholesale and systematic murder of the Jews in Europe, goes on unabated. As the result of the events of the last few days hundreds of thousands of Jews, who living under persecution had at least found a haven from death in Hungary and the Balkans are now threatened with annihilation. That these innocent people should perish on the very eve of a triumph over barbarism which their persecution symbolises would a major tragedy. Hitler is committing these crimes against humanity in the name of the German people. I ask every German not to share in these insane criminal desires. Let him hide these pursued victims. I ask him to keep watch and record evidence that will one day be used to convict the guilty.<sup>6</sup>

Despite this warning, hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews were deported to Poland for extermination. Jews were also deported from Greece. The *Reuter* correspondent in Istanbul reported the arrest in Athens of 500 Sephardic Jews with Spanish passports. They were sent to “destinations” in Poland in sealed trains.<sup>7</sup> At the annual meeting of Christians and Jews in London in June, the Chief Rabbi noted that another 3000 had recently been deported from Athens and 1,500 from Rome.<sup>8</sup> In the same month, the paper learned some details about one camp near Cracow in Poland from a message received in London from the Polish Underground Labour Movement. It said:

In the Oswiecim concentration camp the Germans are now gassing and slaughtering the remnants of Polish Jews. Prisoners of war and Poles too are being slaughtered in masses.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *MG* Sat 26 February 1944 p6 (8) RESCUING HITLER’S VICTIMS Vigorous American Action; *MG* Mon 28 February 1944 p4 (6) STILL TIME

<sup>5</sup> *MG* Wed 22 March 1944 p4 (8) HUNGARY; *MG* Thur 23 March 1944 p6 (8) HITLER’S DEMANDS

<sup>6</sup> *MG* Sat 25 March 1944 p5 (8) PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT’S CALL HIDE AND HELP REFUGEES “All Who Share Guilt Shall Share Punishment

*MG* Sat 25 March 1944 p5 (8) THE JEWISH REFUGEES IN THE BALKANS

<sup>7</sup> *MG* Wed 12 April 1944 p8 (8) SPANISH JEWS DEPORTED

<sup>8</sup> *MG* Thur 15 June 1944 p6 (6) EUROPE’S JEWRY Archbishop’s Appeal

<sup>9</sup> *MG* Wed 27 June 1944 p4 (6) THE MASSACRES OF JEWS



Another message from the Polish Government in exile also mentioned the camp: it said that one hundred thousand Hungarian Jews had been brought to Oswiecim (or in German, Auschwitz) and slaughtered there in the course of May.<sup>10</sup> The next day, the WJC issued a statement which said that the Germans had transported 62 railway trucks with Hungarian children to the camp where they were “slaughtered by mass gassing in the lethal chambers of the notorious German death-camp”:

Unless the German criminals fall into Allied hands are punished now, there is no hope of saving the remnants of European Jewry from the biggest crime in all history. The Jewish victims of Nazi mass murder in Europe now number 4,000,000.<sup>11</sup>

Swiss reports – from the Ecumenical Refugee Commission in Geneva – estimated in July that the number of Hungarian Jews killed at Oswiecim and “Birkenau” was about 400,000, while another 300,000 were awaiting deportation from Budapest and surrounding regions.<sup>12</sup> It was also known that Jews were being sent to Oswiecim from other Nazi camps such as Terezin (or Theresienstadt) for extermination in gas chambers. “Those who were put to death had had to first write letters to their relatives in Terezin telling them of the good conditions in the camp”.<sup>13</sup> The three members of the Polish Underground who reached London in August confirmed that “all reports of the fearful extermination of Polish Jews were true”. In addition, one said: “I left Poland eight days ago, and Jews were still being deported from Hungary and killed at the Oswiecim concentration camp”.<sup>14</sup>

In late August, the first British eye-witness account of a Nazi camp came from Harold King. He visited the camp at Lublin with Russian forces and described how he “stumbled over heaps of human ashes” from the crematoria. He saw “mountains of footwear,” peered into the gas chambers and gazed “into excavated pits filled with decayed corpses, all evidence of murder in fantastic magnitude”:

The German mania for efficiency extended here not only to killing the victims but also disposing ‘rationally’ of their remains. The ashes were mixed with manure and used as fertiliser for the model S.S farming estates. The Germans stored all the belongings of the inmates. I saw an assortment that included everything worn or used by human beings of all ages. Huge consignments were sent weekly to Germany. At any one time this warehouse contained 400,000 items. One room was full of empty suitcases neatly lettered by their owners.<sup>15</sup>

The paper’s Diplomatic Correspondent learned at the end of September that all camp commanders in Poland had been ordered to kill the prisoners and destroy the camps as soon as

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<sup>10</sup> *MG* Wed 27 June 1944 p4 (6) FATE OF JEWS IN HUNGARY

<sup>11</sup> *MG* Thur 28 June 1944 p8 (8) MASS MURDER OF JEWS WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS REPORT

<sup>12</sup> *MG* Tue 4 July 1944 p6 (6) HUNGARIAN JEWS ESTIMATE OF NUMBERS KILLED

<sup>13</sup> *MG* Tue 4 July 1944 p6 (6) MASS SLAUGHTER OF HUNGARIAN JEWS A Notorious Camp

<sup>14</sup> *MG* Wed 2 August 1944 p8 (8) OPINION IN WARSAW; *MG* Fri 4 August 1944 p8 (8) UNDERGROUND ARMY IN WARSAW

<sup>15</sup> *MG* Wed 30 August 1944 p8 (8) THE LUBLIN CAMP A British Correspondent’s Investigation

there was any reasonable danger that they would be liberated by Russian forces. "The commander of Oswiecim, the great death camp in Eastern Poland, has already received special orders." But it was reported that he had not yet carried out the final extermination. He was apparently waiting until he had received an explicit written order from the highest German military authority. It was thought that he had delayed "the final atrocity" because he wished to be covered by such an order "to avoid retribution after the defeat of Germany".<sup>16</sup>

'The Polish Government in-exile notified the British Government in October that the Germans were planning the mass execution of all inmates of Oswiecim and "Brzezinky" (or Birkenau) where "thousands of people from many European countries" were imprisoned. The British Government issued a warning that if this plan was carried out, it would "hold responsible all who were in any way involved, from the highest to the lowest, and would spare no effort to bring them to justice".<sup>17</sup>

Lord Vansittart, in a BBC interview reported in the paper, suggested that a more hot blooded reaction would have stopped a great deal of the German massacres of Jews in Poland. He was asked "have we, as a nation, lost our capacity for indignation?" He replied that members of the Polish Underground had told him that the massacres were carried out in two stages. After the first the Germans waited to see how great was the indignation of the outside world. There was a definite and credible reaction, but he said that it was not strong enough. According to the Poles the Germans thought: "Well it's not going to go farther than that and we'll do in the lot." Vansittart thought that if there had been more seething indignation the Allies could have stopped a lot of the horrors.<sup>18</sup>

The American Ambassador to Russia, Averell Harriman, via *Associated Press*, said that German atrocities in Poland had not been nor could be exaggerated. He thought that the American people generally had not understood the unbelievable nature of these atrocities and that there was no way of exaggerating the ways in which Germans killed or tortured their Polish and Russian captives.<sup>19</sup>

Readers of the *Manchester Guardian* may have doubted the scale and some of the details of two reports published in December. The first, an account of the trial of six Germans found guilty of mass murder at the "extermination camp at Maidanek in Poland", said that on one

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<sup>16</sup> *MG* Tue 26 September 1944 p5 (6) FINAL ATROCITY IN POLAND Nazi Orders PRISONERS TO BE EXTERMINATED

<sup>17</sup> *MG* Wed 11 October 1944 p5 (8) NAZI THREAT OF MASSACRE A BRITISH WARNING

<sup>18</sup> *MG* Wed 4 October 1944 p8 (8) NAZI MASSACRES World's Reaction Not Strong Enough

<sup>19</sup> *MG* Wed 11 October 1944 p5 (8) NAZI ATROCITIES "Cannot Be Exaggerated"

occasion 18,000 were shot to death with machine guns, while in three weeks 40,000 Jews from Warsaw were killed in gas chambers. The report (from *Reuters* and BUP) also said that a million and a half bodies were dug up by the Soviet-Polish commission which investigated the camp. They stated that the stock of poisonous substances found at Maidanek could have poisoned another four million people.<sup>20</sup>

The second report was an (unknown) agency report from Paris which gave details of a small camp at Struthof Natzweiler which was run as an annex to the medical faculty at the German University at Strasbourg. According to evidence “laid before” the French press, prisoners were used for the practice of vivisection. Experiments with blinding gases were made on women prisoners. They were then treated with various injections of possible cures and killed afterwards whether the cures had worked or not.<sup>21</sup>

There was a relative lull in reports concerning the Nazi camps from January to March 1945. For example, the liberation of Oswiecim (Auschwitz) by Soviet forces at the end of January was not mentioned in the *Manchester Guardian*. But there were some more eyewitness accounts concerning the camp. On March 20, the paper carried a *Reuters* interview from Athens in which it was reported that the first of 70,000 Jews who were deported during the German occupation returned home after a 45 day journey by train, car and on foot. Leon Vatis, aged 36 from Athens, had been deported in March 1944 with 2000 other Jews of whom about 300 had survived. He had a concentration camp number on his arm which he had received at the “Burgenhaus” (Birkenau) camp at Oswiecim. On January 14, the Germans had evacuated the camp taking 5000 hostages of whom 4000 were Jews escorted by 100 S.S. men.

Prior to the evacuation they had taken everyone no longer capable of work to the crematorium on the pretext of “disinfection”. Naked men, women, and children were put into an overheated room into which was thrown a special powder producing suffocating gas.

Through the spyhole the Germans watched the death struggle of these unfortunates, which lasted some fifteen minutes. Then the bodies were moved to the ovens for burning. Mr. Vatis estimates that over two-thirds of the Greek Jews disappeared without a trace.

The hostages were marched to a forest at Goleyar, near Pavniatrivnik where more than 3000 were killed by machine guns. The report did not say how Mr. Vatis had managed to escape.<sup>22</sup>

In some ways, the war ended as it began. The first reports of Nazi mass murder the *Manchester Guardian* received came from Yugoslavia in 1941 but they lacked any additional

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<sup>20</sup> MG Mon 4 December 1944 p6 (6) DEATH SENTENCE IN LUBLIN TRIAL

<sup>21</sup> MG Thur 28 December 1944 p3 (6) ANOTHER GERMAN TORTURE CAMP

<sup>22</sup> MG Tue 20 December 1945 p6 (6) NAZIS' MASSACRE OF GREEK JEWS Survivor's Account

details about what was happening.<sup>23</sup> On April 6, the paper's second leader column on "Crimes in Yugoslavia" said:

In this country we have been slow to accept atrocity stories: our troops especially, we hear, are quick to ascribe them to war propaganda. The Yugoslav Government publishes today an illustrated summary of six reports made by its commission on German war crimes. The wholesale shooting of hostages, mass internments, the destruction of hundreds of villages reveal more than the peculiar brutality of sadistic individuals, who by a long training in nihilism have learnt to despise all Western values. It allows one to see what men can become.<sup>24</sup>

But just as early Nazi activities in Yugoslavia had been overshadowed by later, more detailed news from Western Europe in 1942, the revelations in this report were soon surpassed when the first accounts (some by the paper's only war correspondent, David Woodward) of the Belsen and Buchenwald concentration camps were published. On April 14, it was reported that, as a result of extraordinary negotiations between British and German officers, British troops would take over the task of guarding the camp at Belsen in which there were 60,000 prisoners, "both criminals and anti-Nazis". This step was taken because typhus was rampant in the camp and the inmates could not be released until the disease had been eradicated. Directly below this article was a very short *Reuter* report which said that 20,000 Russian and Polish inmates of Buchenwald had overpowered their German guards and killed them as the American army drew near. Over the next two weeks the gruesome details of these two camps dominated the news (see table below).<sup>25</sup>

American news reports said that according to records found at Buchenwald up to 80,000 inmates from scores of nations were forced to work long hours in the production of bombs. There was only 21,000 "pitiful wrecks" left. The rest had starved or been tortured to death:

Here over these acres of suffering and misery enclosed by a 10ft high electrified fence of barbed wire is the stark, brutal reality of Fascism, with cells, a crematorium, in the ovens of which still lay charred skeletons and piles of ashes and bones, a gallows, and an experimental laboratory in which serums were tried on the prisoners. The usual method of execution was slow killing by hanging.<sup>26</sup>

Tens of thousand had died or been killed there, but it was not thought to be one of the main Nazi centres of mass murder:

According to the prisoners the outstanding place of extermination was Auschwitz, near Cracow, where they said 4,000,000 Jewish, Polish and Russian men, women, and children

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<sup>23</sup> *MG* Fri 24 October 1941, p5 (8) YUGO-SLAV ACCOUNT OF ATROCITIES

<sup>24</sup> *MG* Fri 6 April 1945, p4 (8) CRIMES IN YUGOSLAVIA

<sup>25</sup> *MG* Sat 14 April 1945, p5 (6) PRISON CAMP'S FATE Truce To Decide BRITISH TO TAKE CHARGE; *MG* Sat 14 April 1945, p5 (6) PRISONERS WIPE OUT S.S. MEN

<sup>26</sup> *MG* Fri 6 April 1945, p6 (8) NOTORIOUS CONCENTRATION CAMP RECORDS DISCOVERED What Americans Found At Buchenwald

have been liquidated. Buchenwald evidence repeatedly writes off hundreds as transported to Auschwitz.<sup>27</sup>

Other than their emaciated appearance and illness, the nationality or other characteristics of the inmates was not discussed in many of the reports. In Belsen, 28,000 men, 11,000 women, and 500 children were left. 30,000 had died in the weeks before liberation. It was known that many Jews were imprisoned in these two camps (especially 900 orphaned Jewish children) but they were a group among many different groups. The welfare of the Jews was certainly not a feature of the reporting.

On April 21, the paper noted that because one of the MPs who were due to visit the camps became ill, Sidney Silverman would be going in his place:

Mr. Silverman is a Jew and has done much to keep the cause of his martyred people before Parliament. It is fitting that the delegation should stand, with other representatives of the British Parliament in the newly liberated camps, over the tombs of so many Jews. Soon the Jews will be standing over some other graves, the graves of the most devilish of their persecutors.<sup>28</sup>

Dr. Emanuel Scherer, of the Polish Council for the Rescue of Jews, stated on April 25 that between five and six million European Jews had been exterminated by the Germans “in and out of Poland”.<sup>29</sup>

The *Manchester Guardian* leader on the next day, titled “The Jews”, said that the Nazis could boast one victory. It recalled Hitler’s speech on January 30 1939 in which he prophesised that if there was another world war the result would be “the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe!”. In a radio speech early in the war, Goebbels had said: “It is our aim to exterminate the Jews. Whether we win or are defeated, we must and will reach this aim. Should the German armies be forced to retreat they shall on their way wipe the last Jew off the face of the earth”. The leader commented that the Allies were finding that Hitler and Goebbels meant what they had said. It recalled that when Hitler conquered Europe six million Jews came under his control. When he invaded Russia another two million were caught. It asked, “what has happened to these people to-day?”:

It will be a long time before final figures are known but an estimate by Mr. Adler Ruel in “The Future of the Jews” puts the number killed or dead at the end of 1943 at 3,030,000. Since then the massacre has gone on without stopping and it is now considered that over four million have died – possibly over five million. And these men, women, and children have died not in battle but in the camps and slaughter-houses of Poland.

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>28</sup> *MG* Sat 21 April 1945 p6 (8) London Correspondence: A Change In The Delegation

<sup>29</sup> *MG* Wed 25 April 1945 p8 (8) EUROPE’S JEWRY Over 5,000,000 Put To Death

...It is to be hoped that one day racial hatred and blind nationalism will be extinct and the Jews will return to Europe unnoticed among their fellow men who owe so much to their gifts. But if they have little faith in the immediate coming of age of reason and tolerance who, after their martyrdom, will blame them?

...But when all is said and done Palestine remains the chief hope of the Jewish people. The only country they can claim as their own. No one who has studied the problem will pretend that it is easy. The rights of the Arabs must be protected but we cannot abandon the Jewish home which has been built there with our encouragement. In the long run the future of Jews in Palestine, and to a certain extent the future of Jews in Europe, can be safeguarded only by the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> MG Thur 26 April 1945 p4 (8) THE JEWS

# Manchester Guardian

April 14-30 1945

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	HUNDREDS STILL DYING AT BELSEN	5		3	2	5	1
	THE MURDER CAMPS NJR	6		9	4	5	1
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	NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS NJR	4		7	2	3	12
	NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS	5		3	4	5	16
	MPS VISIT TO BUCHENWALD TOO SHORT NJR	6		3	4	5	1
	150 NAKED MEN IN CATTLE TRUCK NJR	6		3	2	3	3
	ANTI-SEMITISM IN HOLLAND						
24.8.44	FROM CAPTIVITY TO U.S. HOSPITALITY NJR	3	6	3	5	5	13
	MPS BUCHENWALD CAMP REPORT NJR	3		3	2	5	1
	ABOVE ALL NATIONS - ARTIFEX	3		17	4	3	13
	GIRLS USED FOR VIVISECTION NJR	6		3	4	5	2
28.8.44	NO EXCUSES ACCEPTED NJR	4	8	6	3	5	1
	NAZI CAMPS NEUTRAL OBSERVERS NJR	4		7	2	5	12
	REPORT FROM BELSEN - WOODWARD	5		3	3	5	1
	WAR CRIMES COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE	5		3	2	5	00
	EUROPE'S JEWRY OVER 5,000,000 PUT TO DEATH	8		3	3	3	1
29.8.44	THE JEWS	4	6	6	5	3	1
	BIG POWERS AND THE JEWS	4		14	5	3	1
	JEWISH CHILDREN AT BUCHENWALD	5		3	2	3	1
29.8.44	THE PUBLIC AND GERMAN ATROCITIES	4	6	8	3	5	1
	NAZI CAMPS NJR	4		7	3	5	12
	NAZI CAMPS NJR	4		7	1	5	12
	ANOTHER ATROCITY CAMP - "AUSCHWITZ"	5		3	1	3	2
30.8.44	MPS REPORT ON HORRORS OF BUCHENWALD	3	6	9	5	3	1
	BUCHENWALD	4		6	4	3	1
	BRNO COUNCILLORS MET IN BUCHENWALD	6		8	2	5	1
30.8.44							
30.8.44	LORDS AND BUCHENWALD NJR	4	6	8	2	5	1
	FRENCH CIVILIAN DEPORTEES 108,000 JEWS	5		3	3	3	1
	ONE MILE FROM DACHAU NJR	5		3	1	5	99

\*NJR - No Jewish Reference

## **CONCLUSION**



## CONCLUSION

Of the three newspapers in the sample, the *Glasgow Herald* did not devote as much attention to the plight of European Jews as the others. Its coverage of the news Nazi extermination programme was accurate and sympathetic but its interest was never consistently sustained. But what it lacked in terms of overall coverage it made up for in the detail of its more infrequent contributions. In particular, its correspondence in early 1943 provided some of the best insights into contemporary attitudes concerning Jews at home and abroad. The letters illustrated demonstrated the full range of contemporary opinion: that for many, Nazi persecution of Jews may have been an old story but most realised that the wartime extermination policy was different in character and scale to anything that had been encountered before. It demonstrated that knowledge of previous Nazi abuses was not a barrier to belief with regard to the more horrific reports.

It also seemed that awareness of a Nazi policy designed to murder men, women, and children along “racial” lines was not incompatible with local prejudice against Jews. Some readers were able to separate news of events occurring in Europe from their own day to day concerns, which resulted in the extraordinary situation where indignation and horror at the mass murder of millions of Jews could be expressed and then followed by accusations of (British) Jewish disloyalty, selfishness and arrogance. Nazi racial theory was seen as irrational whereas for some, domestic anti-Semitism was seen as a legitimate response to bad behaviour.

The *Yorkshire Post*’s coverage of the news of the Nazi plan to murder all Jews under German control was the medium between the detailed consistency of the *Manchester Guardian* and the selected focus of the *Glasgow Herald*. Like the former, it made full use of the news agency sources at its disposal to report the extent of the arrest and deportation of Jews from all over Europe. Similarly, it made good use of its local connections and faithfully reported the views of its readers and the more prominent members of its community.

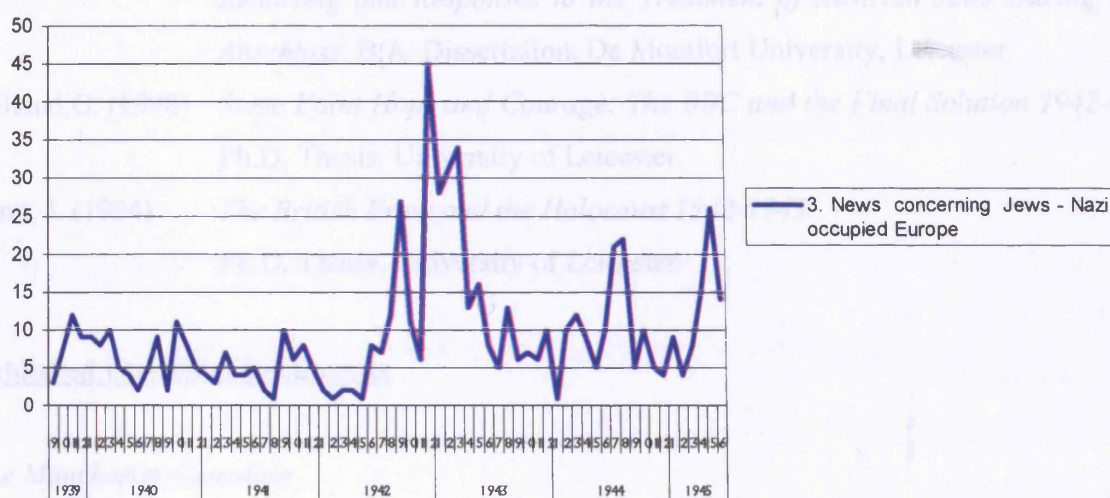
It was the most willing of the three papers to follow the Government’s view when it came to calls for rescue. While it consistently published the passionate views of its readers and others, like Brodetsky and Garbett, who called for immediate rescue, its own view was more restrained – it could not see the value in “unregulated enthusiasm”. The paper recognised the practical difficulties which faced the Allies and could not see any alternatives at that stage in the war. At the same time, its leader columns conveyed a sense of confusion about what to do in the face of so great a tragedy. One consequence of this was an uncritical acceptance of the

cl

Government's view with regard to the conduct and parameters of the Bermuda conference. It generally agreed with the arguments against rescue put forward by one of its local MPs, Osbert Peake and did not query the change of focus from "Jews" to "refugees". If the British and American administrations believed that winning the war was the most useful way to save Jews from extermination then the *Yorkshire Post* was willing to follow their lead.

### News Concerning Jews - Nazi Occupied Europe

Manchester Guardian Sep 1939 - June 1945



The table above illustrates the *Manchester Guardian's* view of the Holocaust. It can be seen from the evidence presented that the paper was the most consistent observer of events involving Jews in Nazi Europe. It was more willing than the other papers to devote space to lengthy reports and discussion concerning the plight of Jews and what could be done to save them from mass murder. All the newspapers had access to the same news agency material but the *Manchester Guardian* tended to include many more of the foreign news items that featured the Nazi abuse of Jews. More importantly, the editorial team consciously chose to publish the full text of these reports and others from the House of Commons to Bermuda. The detail in these accounts made the difference. It positively encouraged readers' correspondence and allowed discussions to develop. Above all, the paper's leader columns returned again and again to the plight of European Jews. It was fully behind those campaigners who called for rescue and was the most vociferous critic of Government policy during the 1942-43 period. Despite the disheartening decisions taken at Bermuda, the *Manchester Guardian* never forgot that the process of extermination continued. It remained committed to its reporting of the Nazi persecution and murder of Jews until the end of the war. It undoubtedly remains one of the best records of contemporary British views of the Holocaust.

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# The Holocaust and the British Regional Press

## Newspaper Content Analysis Coding Schedule

1. **Case Number** ☐☐☐☐ 4
2. **Title of Newspaper**
1. Manchester Guardian 2. Yorkshire Post 3. Glasgow Herald ☐ 5
3. **Date** ☐☐☐☐☐☐ 11
4. **Day**
1. Mon 2. Tue 3. Wed 4. Thurs 5. Fri 6. Sat ☐ 12
5. **Page Number** ☐☐ 14
6. **Total Number of Pages** ☐☐ 16
7. **Type of Article**
- |                           |                             |  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 01. Local News            | 09. House of Commons report | 17. Opinion column                                   |
| 02. UK / National News    | 10. House of Lords report   | 18. Advertisement                                    |
| 03. Foreign News          | 11. News in Brief           | 19. Obituary   |
| 04. War News              | 12. Photo                   | 20. Stop-Press News                                  |
| 05. Feature article       | 13. Cartoon                 | 21. Map  |
| 06. Leader column         | 14. Interview               |  |
| 07. Letter to the Editor  | 15. Book review             |  |
| 08. London Correspondence | 16. Miscellany              |  |
| 99. Other _____           | 00. Unclear                 | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 18 |
8. **Article Length**
1. Very brief article – less than 50 words
2. Short article – less than 100 words ☐ 20
3. Average article – 100 - 250 words
4. Long article – over 250 words
5. Very long article – over 500 words
9. **Source of the Article**
- |                            |                                   |  |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Own Correspondent       | 7. Nazi Press Agency/German Radio | 13. Personal Account /Author                         |
| 2. Reuter                  | 8. Government(s) in Exile         | 14. Allied Press                                     |
| 3. Associated Press        | 9. Jewish Organisations           | 15. Neutral Press                                    |
| 4. British United Press    | 10. Exchange Telegram             | 16. Times and MG Service                             |
| 5. Ministry of Information | 11. Press Association             | 17. Times and GH Service                             |
| 6. Foreign Office          | 12. Letter                        | 18. Telegraph and YP Service                         |
| 99. Other _____            | 00. Unclear                       | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 22 |

10. Which category does the news article fit into?

1. News concerning Jews - Britain
2. News concerning Jews - Palestine
3. News concerning Jews - Nazi occupied Europe
4. News concerning individuals not explicitly referred to as Jews but according to nationality
5. No reference to Jews but a relevant article
6. News concerning Jews – Unoccupied countries in Europe
7. News concerning Jews in the Allied forces
8. The Press/Propaganda
9. News concerning Jews - America
99. Other \_\_\_\_\_
00. Unclear

☐☐ 24

11. Identity of subject: Who does the article concern?

- |                    |                       |                     |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. British Jews    | 11. Italian Jews      | 21. Norwegian Jews  |
| 2. Manchester Jews | 12. Greek Jews        | 22. Lithuanian Jews |
| 3. Leeds Jews      | 13. Romanian Jews     | 23. Yugoslav Jews   |
| 4. Glasgow Jews    | 14. Belgian Jews      | 24. Bulgarian Jews  |
| 5. German Jews     | 15. Jews in Palestine |                     |
| 6. Polish Jews     | 16. "Stateless" Jews  |                     |
| 7. Austrian Jews   | 17. Dutch Jews        |                     |
| 8. Russian Jews    | 18. Danish Jews       |                     |
| 9. French Jews     | 19. Czech/Slovak Jews |                     |
| 10. Hungarian Jews | 20. American Jews     |                     |

97. Jews – Rhetorical/Nationality Unclear
98. Non-Jews
99. Other \_\_\_\_\_
00. Unclear

☐☐ 26

12. **Primary Subject of the article** ☐ ☐ 28
13. **Secondary Subject of the article** ☐ ☐ 30
14. **Third Subject of the article** ☐ ☐ 32

- Nazi Controlled Europe**
1. Nazi anti-Semitism/racial theory
  2. Nazi anti-Semitic speech/statement/rhetoric
  3. Legal restrictions placed on Jews in Nazi occupied Europe
  4. Arrest / imprisonment of Jews in Nazi occupied Europe
  5. Attacks/destruction of Jewish property in Nazi occupied Europe
  6. Deportation / transport of Jews in Nazi occupied Europe
  7. Jewish ghetto(es); establishment; conditions
  8. Nazi concentration camps; conditions, regime, etc
  9. Slave/forced labour by Jews
  10. Execution / Mass Murder of Jews in Nazi concentration camps
  11. Execution / Murder of Jews
- Jews in Britain**
12. Welfare of Jews/Jewish refugees - Britain; general
  13. Jews and the Allied war effort/in armed forces
  14. Achievements of Jews in Britain
  15. Evidence of British anti-Semitism/fascism
  16. Offences against/attacks on British Jews/property
  17. Internment of "alien" Jews in Britain
  18. Jews and the Black market
  19. Offences committed by Jews in Britain: other
  20. Jewish conscientious objection (tribunals)
  21. Jewish religious event(s)
  22. Events/activities of Jewish leaders/organisations
  23. Public speech/statement about Jews by Jewish leaders/ reps/orgs in Britain
  24. Public speech/statement about Jews by British politicians
  25. Public speech/statement about Jews by British other
  26. Public speech/statement about Jews by others
- Jews in Palestine**
27. Jews in Palestine; general
  28. Achievements of Jews in Palestine
  29. Jewish refugees escaping from Nazi occupied Europe
  30. Establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine: arguments for
  31. Establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine: arguments against
  32. Public speech/statement about Jews by Jewish leaders/ reps/orgs in Palestine
- The British Press and the War**
33. General conduct/performance/function
  34. Censorship of
  35. Ownership/Control
- War crimes and Atrocity Reports**
36. Atrocities: general, unspecified, Terror
  37. Maltreatment/Torture of captives/hostages
  38. Execution/ Murder of non-Jews
  39. Mass Execution/ Murder/Slaughter of non-Jews
  40. Details of numbers killed in report
  41. Details of burial/disposal of bodies
  42. Allied knowledge of/discussion of/statement about atrocities
  43. Retribution /Justice/ Punishment of the guilty/ Condemnation
- Refugees**
44. Refugees in Britain, general, welfare, numbers
  45. Refugees: general, welfare, numbers
  46. Rescue: plans / Asylum / Sanctuary
00. Unclear
99. Other \_\_\_\_\_



**Glasgow Herald January 1943**

Date	References	Page Number	Total Number of Pages	Type of Article	Size of Article	Cat	Source	Identity of Subject	Primary Subject	Secondary Subject	Third Subject
1 F	GERMANY AND THE JEWS	4	8	7	3	3	12	6	11	42	1
2 SA	GERMANY AND THE JEWS	2	6	7	3	3	12	97	11	42	43
3 SU											
4 M	GERMANY AND THE JEWS	2	6	7	3	3	12	6	11	42	
5 TU	GERMANY AND THE JEWS	2	6	7	2	3	12	5	6		
6 W	NR		8								
7 TH	GERMANY AND THE JEWS ANTI-SEMITISM IN BRITAIN PRESENCE COVERED UP	4 6	8	7 2	3 2	3 1	12 1	00 1	99 15	30	
8 F	POLISH TREATMENT OF JEWS GERMANY AND THE JEWS	3 4	8	1 7	2 3	3 3	1 12	66	99 99	11	46
9 SA	NR		6								
10 SU											
11 M	NR		6								
12 TU	NR		6								
13 W	POLAND AND THE JEWS	4	6	7	3	3	12	6	99		
14 TH	THE JEWS AND ANTI-SEMITISM	4	8	7	3	1	12	1	15	18	19
15 F	MASSACRE OF JEWS PRIMATE ON SILENCE OF GERMAN CHRISTIANS	3	8	2	2	3	1	97	99		
16 SA	THE JEWS AND ANTI-SEMITISM	2	6	7	3	1	12	1	15	18	13
17 SU											
18 M	THE JEWS AND ANTI-SEMITISM	2	6	7	3	1	12	1	15	19	99
19 TU	THE JEWS AND ANTI-SEMITISM	2	6	7	2	1	12	1	15	43	
20 W	THE JEWS AND ANTI-SEMITISM	4	8	7	2	1	12	1	15	13	
21 TH	THE JEWS AND ANTI-SEMITISM THE JEWS AND ANTI-SEMITISM NAZIS ADMIT 1,600,000 JEWS MISSING JEWISH PERSECUTIONS	4 4 4 6	8	7 7 3 9	2 2 2 2	1 1 3 3	12 12 1 1	1 1 97 97	15 15 42 42	13 99 99 43	40 46
22 F	THE JEWS AND ANTI-SEMITISM THE JEWS AND ANTI-SEMITISM	4 4	8	7 7	2 2	1 3	12 12	1 1	18 15	19 6	13 11
23 SA	THE JEWS AND ANTI-SEMITISM	2	6	7	3	1	12	1	15		
24 SU											
25 M	EUROPE'S CONDEMNED EMPIRE REFUGE FOR JEWS	2 4	6	6 2	3 3	3 3	1 1	97 97	42 25	43 43	46 46
26 TU	JEWS AND THE BLACK MARKET	2	6	7	3	1	12	1	18	19	15
27 W	CLOTHING WITHOUT COUPONS THE JEWS' WAR EFFORT THE JEWS' WAR EFFORT	3 4 4	8	1 7 7	3 3 2	1 1 1	1 12 12	4 1 1	18 13 15	15 18	99

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Date	References	Page Number	Total Number of Pages	Type of Article	Size of Article	Cat	Source
1 W	THE CAMPS AND THE SYSTEM NJR NAZI BRUTALITY AMERICAN INTEREST IN WHITE PAPER	6 9	14	6 2	5 1	5 8	1 1
2 TH	JEWS ATTACKED IN VILNA THE JEWS IN POLAND THE GERMAN NATION MORE IN SYMPATHY WITH ITS RULERS THAN WE THINK NJR BRITISH UNION OF FASCISTS NJR	9 12 12 12	14	3 7 7 7	2 3 3 3	3 3 5 5	2 12 12 1
3 F	NR		14				
4 SA	SALFORD JEWS PUBLIC ASSISTANCE NAZI COMMENTS ON WHITE PAPER VIOLENT CRITICISM YOUNG REFUGEES IN MANCHESTER NJR	4 5 6 6	16	1 3 7 7	3 2 3 3	1 8 4 4	1 1 12 12
5 SU							
6 M	WORSE SINCE WAR GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMP HORRORS NJR NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS THE WHITE PAPER SCARCITY AND UNREST IN GERMANY NJR	3 10 10	12	3 3 3	3 3 2	5 3 5	2 12 12
7 TU	JEWS AND RELIEF NEWS FROM GERMANY NJR SWASTIKAS CUT INTO SHOP WINDOWS (IN GLASGOW)	4 7 8	14	1 3 2	4 5 2	1 3 1	1 1 1
8 W	OBITUARY DR HEINRICH NEUMANN GERMAN EXODUS CENSORSHIP OF NEWS METHOD COMPARED NJR SALFORD GRANT FOR JEWISH RELIEF LASKI'S REPLY WHY BRITAIN WENT TO WAR	3 6 6 12 12	14	19 6 2 1 7	3 5 4 3 3	3 3 8 1 5	1 1 1 1 12
9 TH	CONFERENCE ON REFUGEES WASHINGTON'S DECISIONS MR SPANCZYK'S VISIT THE NAZI CAMPS HUMANITY OF THE REAL CRIMINALS	4 6 12	14	3 8 7	3 3 3	2 3 3	1 1 12
10 F	YIDDISH POETRY GROUNDS FOR CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION SUFFERINGS OF JEWS THE MUNICH EXPLOSION MYSTERY NEW PERSUIT OF THE JEWS FAVOURITE NAZI EXPLANATION THE BERLIN POGROM	3 4 7 7 12	14	15 1 3 3 7	3 5 3 4 3	99 1 3 3 3	13 1 1 2, 3 12
11 SA	NR		16				
12 SU							
13 M	EVACUATED JEWISH CHILDREN	8	14	1	3	1	1
14 TU	NR		14				
15 W	LONG VOYAGE TO PALESTINE	9	14	3	1	2	10
16 TH	ALIEN'S TRIBUNALS	12	14	7	2	1	12
17 F	POLISH REFUGEES IN RUMANIA NJR	6	14	3	5	5	13
18 SA	HUNGARY'S AID TO THE POLES NJR	8	16	3	5	5	13
19 SU							
20 M	WARSAW GHETTO GERMANY'S PLAN FOR JEWS A POLISH GHETTO BOARD OF DEPUTIES MR N.LASKI RESIGNS	3 6 10	12	3 3 1	1 5 3	2 3 1	1 1 1
21 TU	NR		14				
22 W	NR		14				
23 TH	NR		14				
24 F	NR		14				
25 SA	PALESTINE'S JEWISH VOLUNTEERS	6	16	8	3	2	1
26 SU							
27 M	NR		12				

28 TU	ANTI-SEMITISM THE YORKSHIRE POST NJR	3 6	12	15 6	3 3	3 8	13 1
29 W	NAZI RUTHLESSNESS IN POLAND GERMAN JEWS AS SLAVES DEPORTED TO POLAND	9 9	14	3 3	4 3	3 3	1 1
30 TH	WHEN GERMANY WOOED THE JEWS RELIEF OF JEWS IN SALFORD	6 8	12	8 1	2 3	3 1	1 1

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Date	References	Page Number	Total Number of Pages	Type of Article	Size of Article	Cat	Source
1 SU	NR		8				
2 M	NR		6				
3 TU	NR		6				
4 W	NR		8				
5 TH	GHETTOS FOR POLISH JEWISH PRISONERS	8	8	3	3	3	99
6 F	CRIMES IN YUGOSLAVIA NJR	4	8	6	4	5	1
7 SA	JEWS AND GERMANS IN SAME SHIP	5	8	3	2	99	4
8 SU							
9 M	DUTCHMEN MUTILATED AND MURDERED NJR JEWISH GUARDIANS RAISE A SPECIAL FUND	5 6	6	4 1	2 2	5 1	00 1
10 TU	HELP FOR EUROPE'S CHILDREN GERMAN ATROCITIES IN LATVIA NJR	6 6	6	2 3	3 2	99 5	1 2
11 W	NR		8				
12 TH	ARABS AND PALESTINE	4	6	7	4	2	12
13 F	DR CHAIM WEIZMANN - EYE OPERATION	4	6	8	2	2	1
14 SA	THE GERMAN CATASTROPHE BY THOMAS MANN NJR PRISON CAMP'S FATE - BELSEN BUCHENWALD NJR MANCHSTER (JEWISH) TRIBUTES	4 5 6	6	5 3 1	5 5 4	5 5 1	13 1 1
15 SU							
16 M	NOTORIOUS CAMP DISCOVERED BUCHENWALD FRENCH WOMEN PRISONERS BACK FROM NAZI CAMP NJR	6 6	6	3 3	5 4	5 5	16 1
17 TU	BELSEN TYPHOID EPIDEMICS REPORT NJR THE FANATICS - GAS CHAMBERS AT OSWIECIM	3 4	6	4 6	4 5	5 3	99 1
18 W	THE HORRORS OF BUCHENWALD GERMANS SHOCKED NJR WOODWARD REPORT FROM HANOVER NJR SLAVE WORKERS BURNED TO DEATH NJR	5 6 8	8	3 5 3	5 5 3	5 5 5	16 1 4
19 TH	DEFINITION OF WAR CRIMINALS NJR BUCHENWALD NJR CANNIBALISM IN PRISON CAMP NJR BUCHENWALD CAMP - PHOTO OF CREMATORIA	2 4 5 6	6	9 7 3 12	4 2 4 3	8 5 5 99	1 12 2 00
20 F	IN A GERMAN LABOUR CAMP - OHRDRUF THE CAMP HORRORS NJR LAST BIRTHDAY "IT IS NOT NOW 'ATROCITY STORIES'" MPS TO VISIT NAZI CAMPS - INSPECTING ATROCITIES NJR PRISONERS BACK FROM BUCHENWALD NJR 5,400 DIED IN ONE MONTH LOW CARTOON NJR MPS TO SEE NAZI HORROR CAMPS NJR	2 4 4 5 5 6 8 8	8	12 8 6 9 3 3 13 9	3 2 5 4 2 2 3 5	99 5 3 5 5 5 99 5	00 1 1 1 1 2 1 1



21 SA	PHOTO OF BELSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP	2	6	12	3	99	00
	POLAND'S WAR EFFORT - MANCHESTER	2		1	3	5	1
	EXHIBITION NJR	4		8	2	1	1
	A CHANGE IN THE DELEGATION	4		6	4	99	1
	A GLIMPSE OF HISTORY NAMIER NJR	5		3	3	3	16
	CLEANING UP AT BUCHENWALD	5		3	2	5	1
	HUNDREDS STILL DYING AT BELSEN	6		9	4	5	1
	THE MURDER CAMPS NJR	6		1	2	1	1
JEWISH P.O.W. FREED							
22 SU							
23 M	MPS - BUCHENWALD "UNBELIEVABLY	3	6	3	4	5	1
	TERRIBLE" NJR	4		7	3	8	12
	NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS NJR	4		7	3	5	12
	NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS NJR	4		7	3	5	12
	NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS "WHY NOT	4		7	2	3	12
	EARLIER?" NJR	5		3	4	5	16
	NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS	6		3	4	5	1
	MPS VISIT TO BUCHENWALD TOO SHORT NJR	6		3	2	3	3
24 TU	150 NAKED MEN IN CATTLE TRUCK NJR						
	ANTI-SEMITISM IN HOLLAND EFFECT OF NAZI						
	PROPAGANDA						
	FROM CAPTIVITY TO AMERICAN ARMY	3	6	3	5	5	13
	HOSPITALITY NJR	3		3	2	5	1
25 W	MPS BUCHENWALD CAMP REPORT NJR	3		17	4	3	13
	ABOVE ALL NATIONS - ARTIFEX	6		3	4	5	2
	GIRLS USED FOR VIVISECTION WENT TO GAS						
26 TH	CHAMBER NJR						
	NO EXCUSES ACCEPTED NJR	4	8	6	3	5	1
	NAZI CAMPS NEUTRAL OBSERVERS NJR	4		7	2	5	12
	REPORT FROM BELSEN - WOODWARD	5		3	3	5	1
	WAR CRIMES COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE	5		3	2	5	00
27 F	EUROPE'S JEWRY - OVER 5,000,000 PUT TO	8		3	3	3	1
	DEATH						
	THE JEWS	4	6	6	5	3	1
	BIG POWERS AND THE JEWS	4		14	5	3	1
28 SA	JEWISH CHILDREN AT BUCHENWALD	5		3	2	3	1
	THE PUBLIC AND GERMAN ATROCITIES	4	6	8	3	5	1
	NAZI CAMPS NJR	4		7	3	5	12
	NAZI CAMPS NJR	4		7	1	5	12
	ANOTHER ATROCITY CAMP - "AUSCHWITZ"	5		3	1	3	2
29 SU	MPS REPORT ON HORRORS OF BUCHENWALD	3	6	9	5	3	1
	BUCHENWALD	4		6	4	3	1
	BRNO COUNCILLORS MET IN BUCHENWALD	6		8	2	5	1
30 M							
31 M	LORDS AND BUCHENWALD NJR	4	6	8	2	5	1
	FRENCH CIVILIAN DEPORTEES 108,000 JEWS	5		3	3	3	1
	ONE MILE FROM DACHAU NJR	5		3	1	5	99

# **SPECIAL NOTE**

**ITEM SCANNED AS SUPPLIED  
PAGINATION IS AS SEEN**

28 TU	ANTI-SEMITISM THE YORKSHIRE POST NJR	3 6	12	15 6	3 3	3 8	13 1
29 W	NAZI RUTHLESSNESS IN POLAND GERMAN JEWS AS SLAVES DEPORTED TO POLAND	9 9	14	3 3	4 3	3 3	1 1
30 TH	WHEN GERMANY WOODED THE JEWS RELIEF OF JEWS IN SALFORD	6 8	12	8 1	2 3	3 1	1 1

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3 TU	NR		6				
4 W	NR		8				
5 TH	GHETTOES FOR POLISH JEWISH PRISONERS	8	8	3	3	3	99
6 F	CRIMES IN YUGOSLAVIA NJR	4	8	6	4	5	1
7 SA	JEWS AND GERMANS IN SAME SHIP	5	8	3	2	99	4
8 SU							
9 M	DUTCHMEN MUTILATED AND MURDERED NJR JEWISH GUARDIANS RAISE A SPECIAL FUND	5 6	6	4 1	2 2	5 1	00 1
10 TU	HELP FOR EUROPE'S CHILDREN GERMAN ATROCITIES IN LATVIA NJR	6 6	6	2 3	3 2	99 5	1 2
11 W	NR		8				
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15 SU							
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19 TH	DEFINITION OF WAR CRIMINALS NJR BUCHENWALD NJR CANNIBALISM IN PRISON CAMP NJR BUCHENWALD CAMP - PHOTO OF CREMATORIA	2 4 5 6	6	9 7 3 12	4 2 4 3	8 5 5 99	1 12 2 00
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21 SA	PHOTO OF BELSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP	2	6	12	3	99	00
	POLAND'S WAR EFFORT - MANCHESTER	2		1	3	5	1
	EXHIBITION NJR	4		8	2	1	1
	A CHANGE IN THE DELEGATION	4		6	4	99	1
	A GLIMPSE OF HISTORY NAMIER NJR	5		3	3	3	16
	CLEANING UP AT BUCHENWALD	5		3	2	5	1
	HUNDREDS STILL DYING AT BELSEN	6		9	4	5	1
	THE MURDER CAMPS NJR	6		1	2	1	1
JEWISH P.O.W. FREED							
22 SU							
23 M	MPS - BUCHENWALD "UNBELIEVABLY	3	6	3	4	5	1
	TERRIBLE" NJR	4		7	3	8	12
	NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS NJR	4		7	3	5	12
	NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS NJR	4		7	3	5	12
	NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS "WHY NOT	4		7	2	3	12
	EARLIER?" NJR	5		3	4	5	16
	NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMPS	6		3	4	5	1
	MPS VISIT TO BUCHENWALD TOO SHORT NJR	6		3	2	3	3
24 TU	150 NAKED MEN IN CATTLE TRUCK NJR						
	ANTI-SEMITISM IN HOLLAND EFFECT OF NAZI						
	PROPAGANDA						
	FROM CAPTIVITY TO AMERICAN ARMY	3	6	3	5	5	13
	HOSPITALITY NJR	3		3	2	5	1
25 W	MPS BUCHENWALD CAMP REPORT NJR	3		17	4	3	13
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	GIRLS USED FOR VIVISECTION WENT TO GAS						
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	WAR CRIMES COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE	5		3	2	5	00
27 F	EUROPE'S JEWRY - OVER 5,000,000 PUT TO	8		3	3	3	1
	DEATH						
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	BIG POWERS AND THE JEWS	4		14	5	3	1
	JEWISH CHILDREN AT BUCHENWALD	5		3	2	3	1
28 SA	THE PUBLIC AND GERMAN ATROCITIES	4	6	8	3	5	1
	NAZI CAMPS NJR	4		7	3	5	12
	NAZI CAMPS NJR	4		7	1	5	12
	ANOTHER ATROCITY CAMP - "AUSCHWITZ"	5		3	1	3	2
29 SU	MPS REPORT ON HORRORS OF BUCHENWALD	3	6	9	5	3	1
	BUCHENWALD	4		6	4	3	1
	BRNO COUNCILLORS MET IN BUCHENWALD	6		8	2	5	1
30 M							
30 M	LORDS AND BUCHENWALD NJR	4	6	8	2	5	1
	FRENCH CIVILIAN DEPORTEES 108,000 JEWS	5		3	3	3	1
	ONE MILE FROM DACHAU NJR	5		3	1	5	99