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“Contemporary Reactions to War and the Holocaust with a Focus on The Role of the Polish- Language Press in North America from 1926-1945.”

Magdalena E. Kubow, *The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor: Dr. Jonathan Vance, *The University of Western Ontario*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in History

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“Contemporary Reactions to War and the Holocaust with a Focus on The Role of the Polish-Language Press in North America from 1926-1945.”

(Thesis format: Monograph)
by

Magdalena Kubow

Graduate Program in History

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada

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Dissertation:

“Contemporary Reactions to War and the Holocaust with a Focus on The Role of the Polish-Language Press in North America from 1926-1945.”

Abstract:

Yad Vashem Magazine argued that more work needed to be done with regard to “how media reports on the Holocaust influenced people’s positions vis-à-vis the Jews during the war.” My research examines the attitude toward Jews prior to and during the Holocaust, and how information on such attitudes was disseminated, thus helping to reveal who knew what? When? Furthermore, in examining the evolution of the Holocaust, the question of *who* was interpreted as a target for genocide is explored.

When considering an event as ‘unprecedented’ as the Holocaust, historians should be asking when information was created, made available, and just importantly how it was interpreted. The perspective of North American Poles, as expressed and interpreted by the Polish-language press, was quite different from ‘mainstream’ society. From Polish-Jewish relations,¹ which were explored quite honestly, to the cause of the Second World War, and subsequently the development of genocidal policy, the Polish press and other contemporary writings had a different perspective on the ‘cause and effects’ of what was happening. The following chapters in this dissertation engage with the origins debate and demonstrate that the Polish foreign-language press² covered seminal issues during the inter-war years, the war, and

¹Note: Polish-Jewish relations signify relations between Polish Gentiles and Polish-Jews unless otherwise noted.

²All translations from Polish to English (quotations, paraphrasing and titles) are my own. Please contact me for original articles written in Polish.

the Holocaust extensively on their front and main story pages, and were extremely responsive, professional, and vocal in their journalism.

The Polish-language press in North America presented a unique perspective on unfolding events. The press communicated an interpretation of events to a transnational community; Poles in America were uniquely placed to comment freely on events happening in their motherland. Poland, and Auschwitz in particular, is emblematic of Nazism's machinery of destruction, and Poles within Europe and America had a distinctive perspective of what was happening and advocated against Nazism and genocide. Contrary to the notion that news regarding genocide was unavailable or unreliable, news from Europe was frequently communicated through the Polish press and demonstrated that the evolution of genocide was in the public domain. American travellers confirmed that the horrific stories being reported in the United States were true and unexaggerated. Because information (in many forms) was readily available during the entire evolution of the Holocaust, the debate of *who knew what when* followed by the many rationales for American inaction are further debunked in understanding reactions to the genocide.

(Keywords: Holocaust, War, American Reactions to Genocide, Genocide, Polish-Jewish Relations, Polish-Americans, WWII, Newspapers, Press, Media.)

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A tremendous thank you to all of the very many curators and staff at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the archivists at the Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek archives, and the archivists, editors, and staff from the Polish American Journal (previously the *Republika-Górnik*) and the *Dziennik Zwiqzkowy*, especially Mr. Domaradzki. All of your helpfulness was truly the foundation for this project. I was truly fortunate to make several research trips to places including Poland, Chicago, and Washington, and without the help of all of the staff, my research would not have been as fruitful as it was.

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who were always helpful in answering all of my (many) questions. I am grateful to have been able to complete my PhD at Western University and for all of the opportunities with regards to resources, travel grants, encouragement and other opportunities that have been granted by, and facilitated by, the History Department.

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And last, although certainly not least, I would like to acknowledge my dear husband Marek Kubow. He absolutely has the right to feel like this entire process was a shared one. Being a partner to an academic who prioritizes work above anything else requires a bottomless amount of patience and selflessness. When I felt exhausted, his encouragement pulled me through the more difficult parts of the process; endless sleepless nights, several missed social events, and piles and piles of books and documents he learned to navigate around in an extraordinary fashion. He never once stopped believing in me or made me feel guilty for being consumed with work or indulging my passion for history. This my love, is for you!

As a final note, I would like to state when the *origins* of my interest in the Holocaust began. As a fortunate student who rarely felt challenged in class, the Holocaust posited the first

question which could not, and continues to not, be easily answered. Holocaust scholars continue to argue and develop interpretations regarding how one of the most tragic occurrences in history could be committed with such efficiency, in a 'civilized' Europe by 'civilized' persons. My passion and life commitment to this question was solidified when I first visited Auschwitz at the age of sixteen. As I continue thinking about the evolution of the Holocaust, I still lack absolute answers. Where I do feel my work contributes to existing literature is reevaluating who knew what? When? And in this regard, I have come to a greater understanding of how genocide operates.

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Inside Cover Page

Zmiluj sie Chryste Panie nad Polska, daj jej nalezna wolnosc, daj synom jej wytrwanie i zwyciestwo.”

Zmiluj sie i wysluchaj prosby nasze.

Zmiluj sie dla tych 5 milionow Polakow zameczonych w tej wojnie.

Zmiluj Sie dal 11,000 oficerow polskich w Katyniu zamordowanych.

Zmiluje sie dla meczennikow z Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Oswiecimia, Majdanka- oni cierpili, oni pomarli dla Imienia Twojego.

Niech z ducha ich i meki krzywd i cierpienia powstana mezowie wielcy, przewodnicy ludu, krorzy wywalcza zwyciestwo i chwale zmartwychwstania Polski.

O Polska przy tobie stac i ciebie bronic bedziemy.

Tam nam dopomoz Bog!

Christ have mercy, Lord over Poland, give it its owed freedom, give her children perseverance and victory.

Have mercy, and hear our cry.

Have mercy for those 5 million Poles murdered in the war.

Have mercy for the 11,000 Polish officers murdered at Katyn.

Have mercy for the martyrs of Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Auschwitz, Majdanek-they suffered, and they died in your name.

Let the spirit which faced torment, injustice and suffering, arise from our great men, the leaders of the people, who fought for the victory, glory, and Resurrection of Poland.

Oh Poland we will stand with you and we will defend you.

For this help us God!

Abstract:

Yad Vashem Magazine argued that more work needed to be done with regard to “how media reports on the Holocaust influenced people’s positions vis-à-vis the Jews during the war.” My research examines the attitude toward Jews prior to and during the Holocaust, and how information on such attitudes was disseminated, thus helping to reveal who knew what? When? Furthermore, in examining the evolution of the Holocaust, the question of *who* was interpreted as a target for genocide is explored.

When considering an event as ‘unprecedented’ as the Holocaust, historians should be asking when information was created, made available, and just importantly how it was interpreted. The perspective of North American Poles, as expressed and interpreted by the Polish-language press, was quite different from ‘mainstream’ society. From Polish-Jewish relations,¹ which were explored quite honestly, to the cause of the Second World War, and subsequently the development of genocidal policy, the Polish press and other contemporary writings had a different perspective on the ‘cause and effects’ of what was happening. The following chapters in this dissertation engage with the origins debate and demonstrate that the Polish foreign-language press² covered seminal issues during the inter-war years, the war, and the Holocaust extensively on their front and main story pages, and were extremely responsive, professional, and vocal in their journalism.

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The Polish-language press in North America presented a unique perspective on unfolding events. The press communicated an interpretation of events to a transnational community; Poles in America were uniquely placed to comment freely on events happening in their motherland. Poland, and Auschwitz in particular, is emblematic of Nazism's machinery of destruction, and Poles within Europe and America had a distinctive perspective of what was happening and advocated against Nazism and genocide. Contrary to the notion that news regarding genocide was unavailable or unreliable, news from Europe was frequently communicated through the Polish press and demonstrated that the evolution of genocide was in the public domain. American travellers confirmed that the horrific stories being reported in the United States were true and unexaggerated. Because information (in many forms) was readily available during the entire evolution of the Holocaust, the debate of *who knew what when* followed by the many rationales for American inaction are further debunked in understanding reactions to the genocide.

Introduction: Background to the Debate on the Origins of the Holocaust. Antisemitism, Preconditions, and Historiography

In order for a house to burn down, three things are required. The timber must be dry and combustible, there needs to be a spark that ignites it, and external conditions have to be favourable.¹

Holocaust historian, Doris Bergen

The consensus in Holocaust studies maintains that a comprehensive understanding of the “unprecedented”² event and its origins needs to incorporate an understanding of both the roots and modern manifestation of antisemitism.³ Robert Wistrich in *Hitler and the Holocaust*, Walter Laqueur in *The Changing Face of Anti-Semitism: From Ancient Times to the Present*, and most recently Doris Bergen in *War and Genocide* are among the frequently referenced historians on the topic. These works, as well as others, trace antisemitism from antiquity to the present. From religious, economic, and ultimately racial definitions of antisemitism, Wistrich notes that although the “image of the Jew shifts” in history, there is continuity in that the Jew represented everything gentiles did not want to be and encompassed “everything that threat[ened] them.”⁴

¹ Doris L Bergin. *War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 1.

² Yehuda Bauer. *Rethinking the Holocaust*. (London: Yale University College, 2002), 20.

³ This author writes antisemitism, as there no such things as Semitism. The term was coined by Wilhelm Marr who hyphenated the term to make it appear scientific. The spelling anti-Semitism will appear in direct quotes.

⁴ Robert S Wistrich. *The Longest Hatred*. (Princeton: Films for the Humanities, 1993). And see also, Robert S Wistrich. *Hitler and the Holocaust*. (New York: Modern Library, 2003), chapter 1 and Lucy S. Dawidowicz. *The War Against the Jews 1933-1945*. (New York: Seth Press, 1986), 47.

Religious antisemitism –a hatred based on the assumption that the Jews are responsible for Christ’s death, as well as animosity toward the usury trade- prevailed until the nineteenth century; however, since Jewish emancipation in Europe began in the eighteenth century, antisemitism evolved into a prejudice based on economic success. For Jews, being allowed to assimilate into the mainstream after emancipation had consequences that gentile European societies resented. Jews were becoming academics, journalists, editors, and bankers, moving out of the ghettos and forming a new elite. Their success in assimilating disproved the notion that Jews were unable to contribute to society and were burdensome. The success of the emancipated Jews spawned the stereotypes of the Jews as materialistic, greedy, and over-influential.⁵

Modern racist antisemitism was born in 1879 when Wilhelm Marr coined the term. With colonialism and the discovery of new peoples and cultures, anthropologists began classifying people into categories by race, a concept that has no basis in science. Soon hierarchies established superior and inferior classifications of race (an ideological idea) which were used to set up power distinctions. ‘Semitism’ does not exist but by giving the word a prefix, Marr gave the appearance of legitimacy to the term. His goal was to demonstrate that assimilation of Jews into German culture was impossible. Jews could not *truly* assimilate because their characteristics were not defined by religion or economic factors, but rather by heredity. Being Jewish became an innate biological characteristic that was racial in nature and, ultimately, unchangeable. Shortly after Marr’s publications on antisemitism, his ideas were fused with political agendas.⁶ In 1878, the Christian Social Workers Party led by Adolf Stoecker was formed in Berlin with

⁵ Walter Laqueur. *The Changing Face of Anti-Semitism: From Ancient Times to the Present Day*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁶ Paul R. Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, ed. *The Jew in the modern world: a documentary history*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 331-332.

antisemitism as the foundation of its platform, and in 1897, Karl Lueger – a great influence and idol of Adolf Hitler- became the first avowed antisemite to be elected Mayor of Vienna. By the nineteenth century racial thinking prevailed as the modern form of antisemitism on which Nazi ideology would capitalize.⁷ Tracing the roots of modern antisemitism demonstrates that although it was not the only cause for the Holocaust, in Bergen’s analogy it provided the necessary timber. The Polish-American press had a unique perspective on antisemitism and vocally opposed the ideology as will be explored in the next chapter.

The Spark: Preconditions continued and the Origins of the Holocaust as outlined by the Intentionalists and Functionalists

There were many ways of not burdening one's conscience, of shunning responsibility, looking away, keeping mum. When the unspeakable truth of the Holocaust then became known at the end of the war, all too many of us claimed that they had not known anything about it or even suspected anything"⁸

Richard von Weizsaecker, President of West Germany 1984-1994

Tim Mason has labelled the two most recent and controversial groups attempting to interpret the origins of the Holocaust the intentionalists and the functionalists.⁹ The key differences between these groups are expressed in two central enquiries: “the nature of the decision-making process” with specific emphasis on Hitler’s role and ideology; and the timing of

⁷ Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweiter, ed. *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008) 104-107.

⁸ Harold Marcuse. *Legacies of Dachau: the uses and abuses of a concentration camp, 1933-2001*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 365.

⁹ Michael R. Marrus, ed. *Perspectives on the Holocaust*. Vol. 1 of *The Nazi Holocaust: Historical Articles on the Destruction of European of European Jews*. (Westport: Meckler, 1989), 370-371.

the decision. These contentious disputes are useful when surveying recent debates on the origins of the Holocaust and forewarn historians that “any thesis concerning the origins of the Final Solution is a matter of probability, not certainty.”¹⁰

Intentionalist historians interpret the origins of the Holocaust as deriving from a set of coherent and predetermined plans prepared by Hitler and made possible through the acceptance of Nazi ideology and totalitarian dictatorship. Alternatively, functionalists emphasize the inconsistent nature of the Nazi Regime, internal competition between Nazi officials, and the “chaotic decision making process that resulted in continuous improvisation and radicalization.”¹¹ Although intentionalists do not refute the chaotic nature of the Nazi State, they interpret the system as a ‘conscious product’ of Hitlerian rule, attributing to Hitler the authority to manipulate any situation in order to realize his objectives. Functionalists do not reject the fact that Hitler played a central role in the Final Solution; however, they feel that role is best interpreted as a ‘mobilizing and integrating’ factor rather than portraying Hitler as the key inventor and initiator of pre-planned genocide. Instead, Hitler’s ‘limitless’ hatred of Jews and his destructive compulsions provided the unifying force of the Nazi Regime, a constantly evolving and radicalizing system that culminated in the Final Solution.¹²

The school of thought to which a historian is associated shapes his or her understanding of the connection between Nazi ideology, German Jewish policy, and the decision to implement mass murder. The theory of intentionalism was developed at the Nuremburg trials in 1945 when American prosecutors “presented Nazi war crimes as a carefully orchestrated conspiracy,

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹ Christopher R. Browning. *Fateful Months: Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution*. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), 9.

¹² Ibid.

launched together with the war itself.”¹³ The prosecutors hoped to prove that there was a ‘deliberate plan’ to commit ‘crimes against humanity,’ thus establishing premeditated ‘intent’ for mass murder.¹⁴ Extreme intentionalist Lucy Dawidowicz argues that Hitler devised his plan to massacre Jews in 1919 and would attempt to achieve his goal in the context of war. The Second World War provided the means to “carry out his premeditated, genocidal war against the Jews.”¹⁵ Until Hitler felt that the timing was opportune for his plan to be implemented successfully, he tolerated incoherent Jewish policies such as deportation measures.

Hitler’s speech to the Reichstag on January 30, 1939 is regarded as central evidence in support of the intentionalist interpretation. This view of the Reichstag speech is supported by Eberhard Jäckel, the leading expert on Hitler’s writings and speeches. In this speech, Hitler declared:

In the course of my life I have very often been a prophet, and have usually been ridiculed for it. During the time of my struggle for power it was in the first instance the Jewish race which only received my prophesies with laughter when I said I would one day take over the leadership of the State, and with it that of the whole nation, and that I would then among many other things settle the Jewish problem. Their laughter was uproarious, but I think that for some time now they have been laughing on the other side of their face. Today I will once more be a prophet: If the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will not be the bolshevization of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe!¹⁶

¹³ Michael Marrus. “The History of the Holocaust: A Survey of Recent Literature.” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Mar., 1987), 120.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁵ Browning., 9.

¹⁶ Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, et al., ed. *Documents on the Holocaust: Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland, and the Soviet Union*. (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1981), 134-135.

Although Jäckel and other intentionalists use this speech to support their thesis, it is unclear if the speech insinuated mass murder. Functionalists most often disregard it as a typical Hitlerian rant within a speech that lasted for hours. In consensus with the moderate functionalist approach, what is evident in this speech is that Hitler did state that with the coming of war, his plan to ‘annihilate’ Jews - whether through deportation or mass murder- would be realized.

Dawidowicz argues that the start of the Second World War signalled the beginning of the annihilation process: “war and annihilation of the Jews were interdependent.”¹⁷ They comprised the war’s *double purpose*: *Lebensraum* (living space) and the ‘war against the Jews.’¹⁸ For less radical intentionalist historians such as Andreas Hillgrüber, the answer lies in Operation Barbarossa, the code name for the invasion of the Soviet Union which commenced on June 22, 1941. Hillgrüber argues that the Final Solution originated from Hitler’s “ideological fixation on Bolshevism and the East being inseparable from international Judaism.”¹⁹ Mass killing resulted after the assembling of eager soldiers used for the offensive on the Soviet Union. Hillgrüber argues that the Final Solution was not invented because of Operation Barbarossa, but that it was during the Operation that Hitler saw his opportunity to initiate systematic mass murder.

In response to historians such as Dawidowicz, functionalist historians such as Karl Schleunes and Uwe Dietrich Adam challenge the notion that the Holocaust was premeditated. Because Hitler’s “interventions were in fact quite infrequent and ambiguous,” it was the SS that was responsible for composing the plan for the Final Solution.²⁰ The plan evolved as initiatives such as deportation and ghettoization failed, leaving the Nazis with fewer options to be *judenrein*

¹⁷ Michael Marrus. “The History of the Holocaust: A Survey of Recent Literature.” 122.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Browning, 10.

(cleansed of Jews) while simultaneously gaining a larger Jewish population through expansion.²¹ Feeling confident after the initial success of his unlimited war in the East, Hitler entrusted Hermann Göring, a leading member of the Nazi party, with the ‘Jewish problem.’ Göring commissioned Reinhard Heydrich, one of the top leading Nazi officials responsible for many facets including the Reich Main Security Office, to develop a “total solution” (*Gesamtlosung*). On January 20, 1942, a conference was held at Wannsee where the logistics of the Final Solution were developed.²² Intentionalist historians find it interesting that the secret document resulting from the Wannsee conference claimed that emigration policies²³ for the purpose of creating *Lebensraum* were always a “provisional solution. . . but in absence of other possible solutions, they had to be accepted for the time being. . . [and that] Foreign immigration policies hampered even these efforts.”²⁴ This information leads intentionalists to conclude that deportation measures were sincere, although only provisional and never intended as the *Final* Solution.

Historian Sebastian Haffner also believes that the Final Solution was the result of events surrounding Operation Barbarossa. However, he argues that the decision to begin the Final Solution was the result of setbacks in the Russian campaign and not due to the *Wehrmacht’s*

²¹Ibid.

²² Michael Marrus. “The History of the Holocaust: A Survey of Recent Literature.” 128.

²³ Emigration and deportation attempts include the Haavara plan to deport Jews to Palestine, the plan to deport Jews to ghettos in Nisko and Lublin, and most notably, the Madagascar plan of 1939 to deport Jews into African colonies. The Nazis hoped to attain after a quick victory over France leading to concessions with Britain. Britain effectively resisted German offences and all of the deportation plans were cancelled due to improbability and logistics. The debate over these deportation plans revolves around the issue of whether deportation was Hitler’s ultimate goal in order to be *judenrein*, or whether it was a temporary solution in light of desperate need for *Lebensraum* with immense numbers of ethnic Germans entering the Reich after 1939. Nevertheless, Browning argues that even the deportations were “genocidal in its implications.” Christopher R. Browning. *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy September 1939-March 1942*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 89.

²⁴ Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, et al., ed. 251-252.

initial victories. Hitler, feeling pessimistic about a drawn-out war in the East, turned to his other goal, which now seemed the more plausible: his war ‘against the Jews.’²⁵

For functionalist historian Martin Broszat, attributing the orders of the Final Solution to Hitler is not a problem; however, he argues that the initiative was not planned but that the Final Solution was the result of murder “escalat[ing] to a genocidal level during the course of the campaign in Russia.”²⁶ Broszat emphasizes the genocidal nature of Operation Barbarossa which killed 2.2 million people at the will of the *Einsatzgruppen* in the campaign that Hitler referred to as a *Vernichtungskrieg*, a war of destruction. The stalemate of the campaign and the accumulation of more Jews under the Nazi umbrella, irritated Nazi personnel concerned with being responsible for more Jews, and mounting problems in the ghettos caused a circumstance that was unforeseen and “frustrated the Nazi war machine that led to the final solution.”²⁷

Christopher Browning provides the most coherent interpretation of the origins of the Holocaust by taking a middle-ground approach between the intentionalist and functionalist position.²⁸ He claims that his position can be considered “moderate functionalist,” in that he does not support the notion of a “fixed goal” of genocide due to the attempted expulsion plans, including the Haavara, Nisko, Lublin, and the Madagascar deportation plan.²⁹ However, he does purport that the Final Solution was the culmination of Hitler’s fervent antisemitism, the chaotic

²⁵ Michael Marrus. “The History of the Holocaust: A Survey of Recent Literature.” 128.

²⁶ Ibid., 124.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Christopher R. Browning. *The Path To Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5.

²⁹ Christopher R. Browning. *Fateful Months: Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution*, 14-15.

and competitive make-up of the Nazi Regime, the defenceless position of the European Jews, and the war that produced the Final Solution.³⁰

It is reasonable to suggest that the origins of the Holocaust have no direct ‘blue print’ rooted in Hitler’s antisemitism or ‘prophesies’ expressed in *Mein Kampf*; however, there exists a definite relationship between the events of the 1930s, including the exclusion of Jews and undesirables from society using social, legal, economic, and medical tactics (as in the euthanasia program of 1939), and the death camps of the 1940s. This relationship does not suggest an evolutionary process due to frustrated goals of failed deportation plots, but rather suggests a relationship between ideology and the methods used to realize Nazism’s goal of attaining *Lebensraum* for German citizens while being *judenrein* at any cost. The means to these ends were perhaps undecided before the war, but the goals were clear. As Claudia Koonz asserts, even in the 1930s “no bystander could deny the intention of the Nazi leadership to eradicate Jews, one way or another.”³¹ Hence, the implication of eradication is not contingent upon the means used to achieve this objective and highlights the fact that Nazi society was willing to allow the eradication to unfold regardless of the means used. What the debates between intentionalist and functionalist historians illuminate is that the precise timing and nature -deportation or mass murder- of the decision for the Final Solution remains a central focus in both frameworks.

This debate stems from the fact that no official document signed by Hitler exists that explicitly authorizes the Final Solution. Due to the absence of such a document, historians attempting to understand the origins of the Holocaust are forced to turn to the actions of Hitler, his commanders, and the public to assess when the plan to murder ‘undesirables’ became the

³⁰Ibid., 16.

³¹ Koonz, Claudia. *The Nazi Conscience*. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2003), 269.

goal of the Nazi regime. Marrus suggests “there is reason to doubt whether, in the Nazi frame of reference, explicit, written orders were really necessary at all to begin the killing process.”³² Authority in the Third Reich “flowed [predominantly]. . . from expressions of the Fuhrer’s will.”³³ Raul Hilberg, dean of Holocaust historians, believes it is probable that a written order to exterminate all Jews never existed; what mattered, however, was a ‘mandate’ from Hitler signalling his approval to proceed, which most scholars acknowledge was the common procedure for the dispersal of orders.³⁴ Therefore, lacking a signed document, intentionalists who do not immediately invoke the ‘prophases’ in *Mein Kampf* or in Hitler’s speeches turn to his programs initiating systematic removal of undesirables from the German *volk*, most notably the dehumanization of German Jews and undesirables through exclusionary laws and the euthanasia program of 1939.

³² Michael Marrus. “The History of the Holocaust: A Survey of Recent Literature.” 118.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 118-119.

The Spark: Jewish persecution as the foundation for the possibility of genocide

After school I performed the most humiliating task of my life up to now: I went to the police to get a stamp in my passport, a stamp for us Jews that makes our passports valid for domestic use only. . . A complete assault on our human dignity. . . We can't let this wear us down. But it's not easy! . . .it's become clear what they're doing to us! Everything is just an excuse that they can annihilate us.³⁵

Willy Cohn, Diary Entries for March 31 and April 1, 1933.

I do not want to assert prematurely that we have already reached the last circle of hell, for uncertainty is not the worst thing, because in uncertainty there is still hope.³⁶

Victor Klemperer New Years Eve 1938

Jewish persecution prior to the outbreak of war in 1939 laid the foundation for genocide; without “these prior developments, the Holocaust would not have been possible.”³⁷ The developments in question are those enforced to strip the Jews of their citizenship, property, and identity, illustrated in the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 and the *Kristallnacht* pogrom. The Nuremberg Laws enacted on September 15, 1935, seized Jewish citizenship, thereby demoting them to unwelcome aliens in Germany unprotected by legal rights. Furthermore, the *Nuremberg Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor* explicitly made marriage and sexual relations between German Gentiles and Jews illegal.³⁸ These measures were justified to

³⁵ Jurgen Matthaus, ed., *Jewish Responses to Persecution 1933-1938*. Vol 1. (Lanham: Altamira Press, 2010), 19.

³⁶ Victor Klemperer. Trans Martin Chalmers. *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi War Years 1933-1941*. (New York: Random House, 1998), 285.

³⁷ David Cesarani, ed. *The Final Solution: Origins and Implementation*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 42.

³⁸ Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, et al, ed. 77-78.

‘regulate by law’³⁹ the Jewish Problem. On November 12, 1938, three months after Jews with ‘Aryan’ type names were forced to change their names on their *Kennkarte* (identification card) to Israel for males and Sarah for females, with all Jewish passports stamped with a ‘J,’ Jewish rights were further restricted when their economic rights to property and business were invalidated.⁴⁰ Ultimately, the Nazi state eradicated Jews’ legal, social, and economic freedoms, leaving them virtually powerless. When the *Kristallnacht* pogrom occurred on November 9-10, 1939, it destroyed and vandalized synagogues, businesses and homes, and caused the death of nearly 100 Jews.⁴¹ The result was clear: the German people “resented lawlessness and disorderly conduct but largely approved of legal discrimination,” and did virtually nothing in the way of opposing violence against Jews.⁴² In contrast, when violence was enacted against other members of society, such as the handicapped, resentment against lawlessness took the form of opposition and the level of destruction was curbed.

Henry Friedlander, a historian associated with the intentionalist framework, convincingly argues that the euthanasia program of 1938 is expressive of two realities: it was “not just a prologue but the first chapter of Nazi genocide;”⁴³ and the public opposition to the program caused its demise.⁴⁴ For Friedlander, the Nazis’ policy of exclusion, including social, legal, and

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁴⁰ Jeremy Noakes and Geoffrey Pridham, ed. *Documents on Nazism, 1919-1945*. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974), 471-473.

⁴¹ Rita Steinhardt Botwinick. *A History of the Holocaust: From Ideology to Annihilation*. (New Jersey: Upper Saddle River, 2004), 126-127.

⁴² Dieter D Hartmann. “Anti-Semitism and the Appeal of Nazism” *Political Psychology*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Dec., 1984), 637.

⁴³ Henry Friedlander. *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution*. (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), xii.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 111-112.

economic ostracism legally imposed on the Jews, “stood at the center of the Nazi utopia. Killing operations were only the most radical, final stage of exclusion.”⁴⁵ On September 1, 1939, the first day of the Second World War, Hitler signed a document authorizing a ‘euthanasia’ program, known by its secret code name T4 (an abbreviation for 4 Tiergartenstraße, the address of the villa in which the medical facilities were located when the program first began). Many historians believe this program is connected to the origins of the Final Solution as similar methodology of dehumanizing and then gassing patients was employed. Also, many of the first labour and death camps were staffed by T4 personnel who were familiar with the routine of killing.⁴⁶ The goal of the program was to ‘cleanse’ the *volk* of undesirables as a part of the regime’s racial hygiene initiative. The T4 program shows that, with the coming of war, Hitler was prepared to legalize killing programs to rid the nation of “life unworthy of life.”⁴⁷ The two programs, euthanasia and the death camps, were “linked both in theory and practice.”⁴⁸ Increasing public knowledge of the program caused opposition to emerge, which was the principal reason for Hitler’s decision to end the program on August 24, 1941.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Friedlander argues that while the program officially ended in Germany, its methodology was put into practice in the East.⁵⁰

Opposition to the T4 program was led by relatives and citizens “who saw the victims and their relatives as valued neighbors.”⁵¹ These citizens were outraged by the suspicious death

⁴⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 189-191.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 112.

⁴⁸ George J Annas. And Michael A. Grodin, ed. *The Nazi Doctors and the Nuremberg Code: Human Rights in Human Experimentation*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 25.

⁴⁹ Friedlander, 110-111.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 188.

certificates they received from hospitals at which their relative or neighbor was residing and connected the situation to the large buses transporting patients from one facility to the next where, soon after, the smell of burning flesh was evident. Protests and public demonstrations caused Hitler to respond by ending the program. Friedlander argues that it was close “relations with potential victims, not ideology, thus determined whether a sense of moral law led to opposition.”⁵² Friedlander duly rejects the notion that due to fear, Germans were unable to express publicly mass dissent at the State’s actions.

Hitler needed the public’s support in the wake of beginning a total war and the public conceded after he ended T4. Similar opposition was not expressed when the exclusion process and eventual murder was practiced against Jews, suggesting the general public had no sense of “transgression” by the State.⁵³ Therefore, in any evaluation of the origins of the Holocaust, the role and impact of the general public should be analyzed.

Recent Literature, The Impact of the General Public and Expropriation:

*In the case of scandal, as in that of robbery, the receiver is always thought as bad as the thief.
Lord Chesterfield, 1748*

Although the debate on the origins of the Holocaust has been discussed at great length, recent literature such as Martin Dean’s *Robbing the Jews: The Confiscation of Jewish Property in the Holocaust, 1933-1945*, Philip T. Rutherford’s *Prelude to the Final Solution: The Nazi*

⁵²Ibid., 189.

⁵³Ibid.

Program for Deporting Ethnic Poles, 1939-1941, and Theodore S. Hamerlow's *Why We Watched: Europe, America, and the Holocaust* demonstrate that it is still a very contentious issue.

Another approach in tracing the preconditions of the Holocaust is applied by Martin Dean who focuses on how Jews were put into the defenceless position -to which Browning refers- by pauperization. By illustrating how robbery functioned in Nazi Germany and its allied countries, Dean asserts that confiscation was not secondary to the Holocaust, but integral to its development. He traced the evolutionary process of economic persecution against the Jews, beginning from the nineteenth century and culminating during the Nazi era. These intensifying measures of economic discrimination and persecution involved an array of legal decrees, boycotts, administrative measures, and pogroms. Such measures resulted in Jews being excluded from the economy, having their property seized, and facing eventual pauperization and impoverishment, which left them vulnerable to state policy and deportation. For this process to be successful, it required "pressure from below and state directed measures."⁵⁴ This meant that not only were high-ranking Nazi officials responsible for the economic demise of the Jewish population, but that tax officials, property evaluators, post office clerks, and bank clerks who produced the detailed inventories of Jewish property and accounts "after the so-called evacuations"⁵⁵ were equally a part of the murderous campaign.

Dean argues that if the Holocaust is to be "understood as a function of bureaucratic process, this is particularly well illustrated by the perpetrators' exhaustive efforts to register all

⁵⁴ Martin Dean. *Robbing the Jews: The Confiscation of Jewish Property in the Holocaust, 1933-1945*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008), 25.

⁵⁵Ibid 2.

Jewish property in conjunction with the deportation and murder of the Jews.”⁵⁶ It is the objective of the book to detail the numerous mechanisms used to achieve confiscation and to assess the impact of confiscation and impoverishment on those who were affected.

Dean posits that a similar connection can be made between the “supposedly legal” way by which Hitler seized power and the pseudo-legal and bureaucratic means by which confiscation of Jewish property occurred.⁵⁷ After countless cases of plunder and theft between 1933 and 1938, Jewish property was seized ‘legally’ under state supervision. It was Göring’s goal to ensure that this process would profit the Nazi State and not greedy civilians. Not surprisingly, state supervision of confiscation did not impede corruption, rivalry, or self-interest, but it did ensure that the bulk of the gains went directly to support the Reich. Within two years of the Third Reich, over “one-quarter of the Jews of Germany had become destitute and in need of welfare.”⁵⁸

The expropriation of Jewish wealth and property was achieved through “a wide array of special taxes, punitive measures, and confiscatory decrees.” This practise was meticulously documented, providing Dean with “a very sizeable archival footprint in the form of tax returns, bank accounts, land registers, and claims for unpaid bills.”⁵⁹ Subsequently, survivor testimony, documents provided by Jewish victims, and documents presented at the Nuremberg trials supplied Dean and other historians with the evidence necessary to reconstruct the process of confiscation on a qualitative level.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid., 2-3.

⁵⁸Jurgen Matthaus, ed. *Jewish Responses to Persecution 1933-1938*, 175.

⁵⁹Dean, 3.

From the perspective of the victims, Dean demonstrates how their responses to increasingly harsh measures should not be viewed as failures to act, but rather should be evaluated against the options available to them. Dean convincingly illustrates “the considerable material and practical impediments to emigration . . . amid the mountains of registration forms, tax payments, inventories, and applications.”⁶⁰ The blocking of emigrants’ bank accounts constrained the option to escape from Germany before 1938. Legal and diplomatic proceedings leading to international lawsuits and settlements in the 1990s “demonstrated clearly that the plundering of Jewish property was a European-wide phenomenon, with crippling effects spreading beyond the continent.”⁶¹

Dean argues that in the majority of Nazi-occupied territories, such as in France, Romania, or Hungary, “the Germans relied to a considerable extent on the cooperation of the local administration, institutions, and population.”⁶² This was accomplished primarily through Aryanization, the reallocation of Jewish funds and property to Aryans. The most valuable objects would be shipped to Berlin, while lesser valuables were used to reward Nazi collaborators or auctioned off to private individuals. The extensive participation in this process by the “local population as beneficiaries from Jewish property served to spread complicity and therefore also acceptance of German measures against the Jews beyond the smaller circle of immediate perpetrators.”⁶³

⁶⁰Ibid., 13.

⁶¹Ibid., 10.

⁶²Ibid., 13. Also see Gerald D. Feldman and Wolfgang Seibel. *Networks of Nazi Persecution: Bureaucracy, Business, and the Organization of the Holocaust*. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).

⁶³Ibid., 15.

This was one way the Nazis mobilized society to accept Nazism's "racial policies to a greater extent than the spread of racial antisemitism alone would have permitted."⁶⁴ Dean persuasively argues that economic antisemitism and widespread opportunism served as crucial motivating factors in the implementation of the Holocaust by both perpetrators and bystanders.

Despite the secrecy surrounding deportations, few people were unaffected by the processing of Jewish property. The "ripple effect" of processing gold, jewellery, or securities extended to neutral countries, thereby "spreading a degree of complicity throughout Europe."⁶⁵ For Georg Solmssen, spokesman for the managing board of the Deutsche Bank in 1933, the implications of economic persecution through expulsion from the civil service and property confiscation were clear: "I fear we are only at the beginning of a development that is deliberately aimed, in accordance with a well-thought out plan, at the economic and moral extermination of all members of the Jewish race."⁶⁶

Furthermore, Dean argues that the annihilation of Jews during the Holocaust was primarily due to racial-ideological goals; however, economic persecution did contribute directly to the process of destruction. The groundwork of Aryanization, which included confiscation of Jewish property and capital, was set from 1933-1938, allowing the Nazi state from 1938 onward to radicalize the assault against the Jewish population. The escalating "diminution of their means reduced the opportunities for Jews to flee, wore down their physical ability to resist, and eliminated hope of buying material support in hiding."⁶⁷

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid., 16.

⁶⁶Ibid., 26.

⁶⁷Ibid., 395.

Daniel Goldhagen, author of *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, stresses that the foremost impetus for persecuting Jews was primarily “evil antisemitism.”⁶⁸ Others, such as Dieter Ziegler and Frank Bajor, propose that antisemitism rather than a fervent ideological belief served as an enabler for individual enrichment.⁶⁹ Not only did staff of the great German banks –as well as international banks-⁷⁰ participate in the Aryanization of business, the dismissal of thousands of Jewish employees, the freezing of banks accounts, and stealing funds, they found all of these elements acceptable in solidifying their positions or gaining promotions. Advantage in the workplace as well as residential opportunity and financial gain were arguably the main driving forces behind persecuting Jews. The appeal of opportunism, rather than intense hatred of a highly assimilated people, explains “how remarkably smoothly the cooperation among different agencies and officials functioned in plundering the Jews.”⁷¹

The financial and bureaucratic networks worked tirelessly to ensure that Jewish capital benefitted the state. This policy affected the possibility of emigration; after November 1935, the regional financial administration and Gestapo monitored all suspicious financial activities of Jews. The goal was to stop, by legal, financial, and intimidatory means, “Jews wishing to emigrate: every emigrant was a potential smuggler of capital.”⁷² Surveillance tactics included the assistance of the post office, which was to inform of people requesting forwarding addresses, the

⁶⁸ Daniel Jonah Goldhagen. *Hitler's Willing Executioners: ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1997),14.

⁶⁹ Gerald D. Feldman and Wolfgang Seibel. *Networks of Nazi Persecution: Bureaucracy, Business, and the Organization of the Holocaust*. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005). 64-65, 120.

⁷⁰ See Harold James. *The Deutsche Bank and the Nazi Economic War Against the Jews: The Expropriation of Jewish-Owned Property*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Gregg J. Rickman. *Swiss Banks and Jewish Souls*. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999).

⁷¹ Gerald D. Feldman and Wolfgang Seibel, 148.

⁷²Ibid., 156.

national railroad, which was to report on safe-deposit luggage, and shipping firms, which were ordered to report on all questionable property shipments.⁷³ In addition to such networks, Wolf Gruner demonstrates how over 400,000 German mayors and city employees assisted “directly or indirectly” (although most acted independently and aggressively to enforce these measures) in facilitating the pauperization process.⁷⁴ This process, however, “does not necessarily imply anti-Semitism as a shared belief of those involved in the persecutions.”⁷⁵ Nevertheless the “racist agenda was known to everyone and it could [and was] used opportunistically according to individual or institutional ambitions.”⁷⁶

DEPORTATIONS

*Our many Jewish friends and acquaintances are being taken away in droves. The Gestapo is treating them very roughly and transporting them in cattle cars to Westerbork, the big camp in Drenthe to which they're sending all the Jews....If it's that bad in Holland, what must it be like in those faraway and uncivilized places where the Germans are sending them? We assume that most of them are being murdered. The English radio says they're being gassed.⁷⁷
Anne Frank, Diary Entry on October 9, 1942.*

Many debates concerning the origins of the Holocaust look for a precise date between 1941 and 1942 when the Final Solution was initiated. Rather than focusing on the preconditions, Phillip Rutherford examines the development of Nazi deportation policy from September 1939 to

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid. 287.

⁷⁵Ibid., 354.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷ Anne Frank. *The Diary of Anne Frank: the critical edition*. (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 273.

March 1941 and argues that Poles, not Jews, were “the primary candidates for deportation from 1939-1941;”⁷⁸ without this experience the organized genocide against the Jews would have been less efficient. Rutherford asserts that one of the primary and immediate goals of the Nazi Regime was to acquire *Lebensraum* (living space) for Germans. This involved the acquisition of new territory, population expulsion and deportation, usually East to the Nazi *Generalgouvernement*, and the redistribution of property to Germans. In order to accomplish these goals, four expulsion and deportation initiatives were employed by the UWZ (Central Emigration Office). The goal of these deportations, besides freeing up space for ethnic Germans, was to solve the “volkdeutsch problem” by expelling individuals considered a “political, national, or racial threat to consolidation of German nationhood, [forcing] the Polish Question to the forefront of the *Volkstums-kampft* (battle for nationality) in the East.”⁷⁹

Rutherford’s argument is in part a response to an assertion made by Christopher Browning. In *The Path to Genocide*, Browning claims that in the summer of 1941, when Hitler’s senior Nazi officials were ordered to arrange the necessary logistics for annihilating the Jews of Europe, they were being asked “to accomplish [what] was at the time totally unprecedented. At this stage every step was uncharted, every policy an experiment, every action a trial run.”⁸⁰ Rutherford contends that the ultimate goal of destroying a race based on government policy was indeed unique, but to claim that “every step was uncharted, every policy an experiment, every action a trial run is far too strong a statement.”⁸¹ He argues that the Final Solution to the Jewish

⁷⁸ Phillip T. Rutherford. *Prelude to the Final Solution: The Nazi Program for Deporting Ethnic Poles, 1939-1941*. (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2007), 7.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 9.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 10.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Question was “dependent upon the creation of a streamlined system of mass murder, [and] was also predicated upon the efficiency of police dragnet and the methodical transport of masses of human beings to the killing grounds of Eastern Europe.”⁸² Furthermore, without the experience, through trial and error, of deportation and expulsion, predominantly at the expense of the Poles, “the Nazis’ war of annihilation against the Jews of Europe would not have gone as smoothly and swiftly as it did.”⁸³ Just as integral to the swift and smooth efficiency of enforcing anti-Jewish laws and carrying out expropriations and deportations was the favourable external condition to which Bergen alludes and Hamerow details: domestic and international indifference to the plight of Jews.

BYSTANDERS: ‘Favourable External Conditions’ Continued

*To be silent is to help Hitler carry out his program of killing of one people today. .
 .another people tomorrow. . .[i]f this is to be, America must speak out.⁸⁴
 The New York Times, December 5, 1942*

Theodore S. Hamerow’s insightful and well researched interpretation aims to show that the apathy in western nations during the 1930s and 1940s toward Jews had ancient, entrenched roots. Hamerow argues that without understanding these roots and their historical accelerators- the Depression and war- an understanding of the Holocaust is impossible. Hamerow’s approach is novel in this regard; the evidence remains the same, yet his synoptic approach is informative

⁸²Ibid., 10-11.

⁸³Ibid., 11.

⁸⁴ *The New York Times*, December 5, 1942, 16, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.2, *The Struggle For Rescue Action*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), foldout in between 161-163.

and convincing. He traces the metamorphosis of antisemitism from pre-medieval religious animosity to resentment of economic success and suspicion of racial qualities after Jewish emancipation in the nineteenth century. According to the author, this economic and racial prejudice, which was heightened due to economic and political disparity in the 1930s and 1940s, is the key to understanding how and why genocidal brutalities occurred. He asserts that western powers, such as Britain, France, and the United States, purposefully stalled their response to the plight of Jews because of deep-rooted antisemitism. The Allied countries were capable of assisting Jews by loosening immigration quotas, initiating diplomatic negotiation, and strategic bombing. All of these possibilities were “entirely possible”⁸⁵ in helping to reduce the mass murder of European Jews.

Hamerow proposes that unfavourable attitudes toward Jews “resembled the same attitude” in almost every western country. He accounts for each nation’s unique circumstances but argues that, ultimately, deep-rooted antisemitism combined with economic disparity resulted in indifference to the Jews’ plight. As opposed to other interpretations of the marginal impact of the Depression on Holocaust rescue policies, such as in Irving Abella and Harold Troper’s *None Is too Many*, Hamerow argues that it was ultimately the Depression, affecting all of the major western nations, that accelerated the need for a solution to the international “Jewish Question.”

Hamerow claims that the popular belief that liberalism had failed, as indicated after the First World War, caused the Depression. The failure of liberalism caused skeptics of democracy to look for political and economic security. The fear that Communism, led by Jews, was winning the battle against the right resulted in authoritarian takeovers throughout Europe. By 1938 the battle against the Depression was the primary political issue seeking resolution, a resolution that

⁸⁵ Theodore S. Hamerow. *Why We Watched: Europe, America, and the Holocaust*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 416.

could not be accomplished by accepting alien immigrants into already starving nations.

Regardless of religious practice, the Jews, as a race, were always regarded as alien by western nations and hence the “Jewish Problem” after the Depression became an international problem. Hitler himself recognized that “every state was already putting up a defence against the Jewish Question.”⁸⁶ Consequently, Hamerow asserts that by the late 1930s the central question in Europe was: “there could be no solution other than mass emigration. Or could there?”⁸⁷

Was antisemitism the cause of American and Allied-European ‘ineffectualness’ regarding diplomatic measures and rescue policies during the Holocaust? The short answer, according to Hamerow, is yes, as long as the rescue focus was on a minority and not evidently beneficial to the whole nation. The United States did not join the war because of Hitler’s war on the Jews; like other European nations, it joined for self-preservation. Therefore, was it plausible for nations such as the United States to make substantial sacrifices for the sake of a minority by making the Holocaust a top military priority? In order to maintain “public determination to fight until victory. . . saving European Jewry had to be subordinated to the requirements of self-interest and self-preservation.”⁸⁸ This is the message Hamerow strives to convey. The Jews were not considered a valued part of the whole nation, regardless of which western nation one observed.

As Bergen and Hamerlow stress, central to understanding the origins of the Holocaust are the antecedents and preconditions of the Holocaust, including the evolving process of exclusion and extermination facilitated by German and international bystanders. Although Browning connects the most plausible elements of intentionalism and functionalism, he omits incorporating the indispensable role of the average citizen, namely bystanders, into his theory. Although recent

⁸⁶Ibid. 53.

⁸⁷Ibid., 63.

⁸⁸Ibid., 130.

arguments highlight specific features of the origins such as antisemitism, the economic situation of the time, the euthanasia program, the experimentation with deportation prior to 1942, or the confiscation of property, they fail to adequately incorporate the role of purposeful passivity into their equation. Purposeful passivity is when knowledge and the opportunity to assist are present, and the choice is made to remain inactive. Many seminal works have been published on the topic, such as Victoria J. Barnett's *Bystanders: Conscience and Complicity During the Holocaust*; however, the bystanders' role in the origins of the Holocaust -rather than as a individual or subtopic- should be regarded not only as an integral, but as a primary factor in the development of the Final Solution.

The complacency of average citizens towards escalating restrictions against their Jewish neighbours was a pivotal factor in the success of such restrictions. Focusing particularly on the implementation process of exclusion and extermination through the changing nature of neighbour relationships, from civil and sociable to gentiles rejecting Jews, restrictive laws, ghettoization, deportation, and ultimately the establishment of concentration and extermination camps, it is apparent that the role of bystanders -the majority of citizens and diplomats in Nazi Germany and Allied countries- significantly assisted in the development of genocide. News of the implementation process of exclusion was highly publicized in the Polish-language press which criticized the lack of response by American officials. Hitler and his associates were acutely aware of the importance of public adherence to their policies in order for them to be successful. This is evident in Hitler's response to the protests against the T4 euthanasia program, elaborate propaganda campaigns, the secretive codes used by Nazi officials in describing the 'annihilation' process, and frequent commentary by Nazi officials on the lack of support for Jews by Allied countries. For example, an article from the SS publication *Das Schwarze Korps* from

November 24, 1938, illustrates the sense that public support and adherence to Nazi policy allowed the process of achieving the regime's goals to evolve:

The real situation and truth is that these diploma-democrats know the Jewish Question very well, in fact-one need only look at their immigration regulations and their fear of Jewish immigrants-and even derive practical conclusions from them. If we had solved the Jewish Question completely and by the most brutal methods back in 1933, the outcry would have been no worse than it has been since then. But it had to remain theoretical because at that time we lacked the *military might that we possess today*. . .the loudest of the democratic screechers will be the ones to hesitate the longest. Finally because no power in the world can stop us, we shall therefore now take the Jewish Question towards its total solution. . . total elimination.⁸⁹

In January 25, 1939, the German Foreign Ministry Memorandum on Policy Regarding Jews in 1938 read:

The American President Roosevelt, who, as is known, included a number of spokesmen of Jewry amongst his close advisors, convened an international conference to discuss the refugee question as early as the middle of 1938, which took place in Evian without producing any notable practical results . . . for Germany the Jewish Question will not be solved when the last Jew has left German soil.⁹⁰

Evidently, the passivity of Allied nations played a role in the Nazi regime's perception of being unstoppable when it came to anti-Jewish legislation. To leading Nazi officials it was clear that minimal efforts, such as those at the Evian conference of 1938, would be initiated to assist Europe's Jewry. With the support of the German and Nazi-occupied countries, alongside the lack of protest and action from by the Allies, the Final Solution faced minor opposition.

Examining and comparing the role of domestic antisemitism and change in neighbour relationships in Germany, and the international response to this behaviour in Allied countries such as the United States, it becomes obvious that purposeful passivity allowed the Holocaust to develop and the process of annihilation to succeed. From the euthanasia program of the 1930s to the death camps of the 1940s, the response of bystanders to the Nazi regime's systematic

⁸⁹Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, et al. 119.

⁹⁰Ibid., 128-129.

implementation of programs intended to ‘purify’ the German *volk* facilitated the evolving path to genocide.

More recent scholars, such as Bergen, Dean, and Robert Gellately, argue that antisemitism, economic depression, peer pressure, and above all personal opportunism were the motivating factors which encouraged ordinary citizens to turn against their Jewish neighbours, either passively or aggressively. It was ordinary citizens who voluntarily provided the Gestapo with information against Jews and other undesirables as explained in Robert Gellately’s *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy 1933-1945*. Gellately explains how Nazi ideology became reality through passive and active bystanders who were not necessarily fervent antisemites but rather Nazi sympathizers for the sake of personal gain. The author asserts that citizens who were not antisemitic could not deny antisemitism was a defining factor of the Nazi platform. Those who voted for the Nazis in 1933 chose to ‘ignore’ or ‘rationalize’ the party’s antisemitism just as they ignored other distasteful features of the NSDAP.⁹¹ The enforcement of Nazi policy through the Gestapo and other policing measures required the assistance of the public. Those who acted as informers, as well as the majority who chose not to defend the wrongly accused, made up the “informal social reinforcement of the terror system.”⁹²

After scrupulous research in Gestapo and police reports, Gellately ascertained that the secret police would have been unable to function were it not for the participation of ordinary citizens and the passivity of bystanders. As in Browning’s *Ordinary Men* or Arendt’s reference to the banality of evil in Nazi Germany, many gentiles regarded themselves as normal citizens, unattached to the terror system around them. These passive and active participants were not

⁹¹ Robert Gellately. *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy 1933-1945*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 91.

⁹²Ibid., 130.

political fanatics but people who chose to capitalize on the situation, settle old grievances with enemies, and eliminate business competitors by leaking (usually false) evidence to the Gestapo.⁹³ Some informed the secret police on the basis of peer pressure, some informed to prove they were unsympathetic to the plight of Jews, and others informed out of genuine fear that another would inform on them. In research conducted by Reinhard Mann, only 24% of allegations to the Gestapo were motivated by political loyalty.⁹⁴ The social behaviour of informers and passive observers is telling in the study of ordinary citizens and their role in Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. The functioning of the terror system had to be supported by the general population, either by active participation or purposeful passivity, to give the system legitimacy. Individuals willingly allowed themselves to be Nazified in the same manner as institutions willingly enforced Nazi policy well before compulsory measures took effect. German doctors, the German Chess League, the Teacher's Association,⁹⁵ the German Association of Pharmacists, the Association of the Blind, and the German Automobile Club are just a few institutions that, like most individuals, enthusiastically expelled Jews based on "racial enthusiasm."⁹⁶ Arendt encapsulates the sentiment of the victims in experiencing society's willing adoption of *gleichschaltung*: "Our friends Nazified themselves! The problem. . . after all, was not what our enemies did, but what our friends did."⁹⁷ Rabbi Joachim Prinz concurs with Arendt in stating,

⁹³Ibid., 139.

⁹⁴Ibid., 146.

⁹⁵ See Max Weinrich. *Hitler's Professors: The Part of scholarship in Germany's Crime Against the Jewish People*. (London: Yale University Press, 1999).

⁹⁶ Marion A. Kaplan. *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) 43.

⁹⁷Ibid.

“the Jew’s plight [was] to be neighborless.”⁹⁸ Neighbours, friends, co-workers, and ordinary citizens were just as influential as high officials in the operation of the Nazi killing machine.

To describe perpetrators or bystanders as ‘ordinary people’ does not mean one is analyzing ordinary behaviour.⁹⁹ Different factors limit, encourage, and allow certain types of behaviour. Staub contends that “bystanders often encourage perpetrators. . . [h]owever, bystanders also have great potential power to inhibit the evolution of increasing destructiveness”¹⁰⁰ as evident, for example, in the cancellation of the T4 program.¹⁰¹

What makes the Holocaust distinct from other instances of mass murder is the targeting of a people simply for existing, and the structured and organized manner in which the bureaucratic implementation of the genocide ensued.¹⁰² Many Holocaust survivors will attest that based on experience some of their most memorable and shocking memories of the changes taking place in the 1930s were the responses of their neighbors. Their gentile neighbors, ‘trusted friends’ and comrades, were quick to dismiss Jewish colleagues from their life or actively participate in socially ostracising them as unsuitable members of the nation. Their experiences are revealing and crucial to understanding how the Holocaust was made possible and by whom. As Elie Wiesel communicates, one cannot fully comprehend the Holocaust, or anything for that matter, solely on fact. Therefore, in the introduction to *Voices from the Holocaust*, Wiesel

⁹⁸Ibid., 33.

⁹⁹Victoria J. Barnett, *Bystanders: Conscience and Complicity During the Holocaust*. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999Barnett) 31.

¹⁰⁰ Ervin Staub. “Moral Exclusion, Personal Goal Theory, and Extreme Destructiveness.” *Journal of Social Issues* 46, (Vol. 1, Spring 1990, 47-64), 47.

¹⁰¹ Although euthanasia continued in Nazi Germany after the T4 program was officially put to an end, the practice was certainly curtailed due to actions taken against it by the public.

¹⁰²Barnett, 71 and see also Rosenbaum, Alan S. Rosenbaum, ed. *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*. Third Edition. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2009).

reminds readers that witness testimonies, although often historically inaccurate, are indispensable evidence of experience, memory, interpretation, and social history.¹⁰³ Usually the inaccuracies in chronology and detail are due to numerous factors such as time lapse, selective memory, and omissions rather than ‘wilful distortions.’¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, survivor testimonies form legitimate pieces of evidence that act as a lens through which to view the origins of the Holocaust.¹⁰⁵

SURVIVORS & TESTIMONY

For evil to flourish, it only requires good men to do nothing.
Simon Wiesenthal

A new wave of scholarship in the Holocaust field is taking the approach that survivor testimonies no longer belong to a sub-category of Holocaust study. Rather, the testimonies make up an integral and legitimate area of history where experience and memory can shed light on historical truths. Although each witness testimony embodies a set of personal experiences shaped largely by special interests, preoccupations, gender, location, and class among other factors, they also communicate general trends in experience and understanding.¹⁰⁶ The testimonies generally communicate the experience of victimhood, the process of annihilation in its different stages, and

¹⁰³ Sylvia Rothchild ed., with a forward by Elie Wiesel, *Voices from the Holocaust*. (New York: New American Library, 1981), 3. See also, Jurgen Matthaus, ed. *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor: Holocaust Testimony and Its Transformations*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁰⁴ Robert Moses, Shapiro, ed., Introduction by Ruth R. Wisse, *Holocaust Chronicles: Individualizing the Holocaust through Diaries and Other Contemporaneous Personal Accounts*. (Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1999), 274.

¹⁰⁵ See also Jurgen Matthaus, ed. *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor: Holocaust Testimony and Its Transformations*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 268.

interpretations of how genocide was made possible. Survivors, namely those persons who survived the Second World War, reveal important insight into how victims interpreted their situation both during and after the war. Much information and eye witness testimony by victims was related via the foreign-language press (Polish and other) during and after the war, offer a contemporary view of how persecution was understood, and responded to, by victims of Nazism.

Historian Wendy Lower, former Director of the Visiting Fellows Program at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, argues that in “recent decades, increasing value has been placed on witnessing and the use of survivors or taped testimony as the most emotionally moving and ‘authentic’ of primary sources.” This assertion is examined by Lower and five other prominent Holocaust historians in *Approaching an Auschwitz Survivor: Holocaust Testimony and Its Transformations*. With its multi-faceted approach, this book is truly innovative in presenting six interpretations of one survivor testimony, that of Helen “Zippi” Tichauer née Spitzer.

Helen Spitzer spent nearly two and a half years at Auschwitz and was a participant in the death march until liberated in May 3, 1945. Her telling account not only communicates her experience, “ but also of the particular way she has made sense of her experience and has chosen to live with her memory.”¹⁰⁷ In 1946, she was interviewed and voice-recorded by psychologist David Boder while at a displaced persons camp in Feldafing. All of the contributors to this volume are astounded at the consistency, even to the present, of Helen’s rendition of her experience before and after the Second World War. Although the book admits this study is not meant to shed light on Holocaust testimony in general, it contributes to the dialogue relating “the crucial yet uneasy correlation between personal memory, scholarly or public appropriation, and

¹⁰⁷Ibid., vi.

historical representation.” The manner in which the interviewer poses the question, and the manner in which the interviewee chooses to answer, emerge from personal experience, one’s views of reality, personal agendas, and expectations.

Memory is also a key issue in this volume. Deeply scarred by the humiliating process of undressing and having her hair shaved upon arrival at Auschwitz, Helen related this experience in a very generic and detached way. When asked about this experience, she answered, “Once I was shaved and in uniform, they took us for work.” The focus of this statement is placed on the work. Her recent description documented in the early 2000s contrasts with her emotional 1946 testimony, “[w]e could not cope with the pain. . . we were not conscious of it. . . we lost the ability to feel. . . we turned into stones.” Helen’s alternate versions are not necessarily a symptom of selective memory but rather selective telling, a component that historians and psychologists must be aware of and sensitive to when analyzing oral history.

Ultimately, Helen recognizes the limits of memory and testimony asserting “I never heard a real story” while simultaneously encouraging the historians of this volume to be “vigilant about facts,” and “insisting the [authors] always check and countercheck.” She is independent and strongly opinionated in defending her testimony as valuable witness evidence, evidence that should be evaluated with the realization that those questioning ultimately were not those who experienced the event they study. She considers her testimony valuable in understanding the experience of her day-to-day life in Auschwitz not only as an individual but as someone who was in constant contact with hundreds of inmates. Despite her confidence in the value of her testimony, she does “not treat her story as a sacred inviolable memory; it is a source that can and should be verified.”

In numerous unpublished survivor accounts by Jewish victims in Nazi-occupied countries, generously provided by the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, most survivors spoke of their experience in a pattern of neighbour relations prior to and during war, followed by reflections on what changes, if any, took place. The survivors communicated a sense of astonishment at the behaviour of their closest friends, co-workers, and neighbors after the Nazi party gained power: “the majority kept quiet. . .their silence was a shock for us.”¹⁰⁸ The most striking pattern in these interviews is the shock and pain experienced by the Jewish survivors at being abandoned by those closest to them and even being ‘sold out to the authorities,’ which was not uncommon.¹⁰⁹

A powerful and revealing feature of the survivors’ testimonies was the recollection of silence that prevailed over scattered memories of random cruelty. Many survivors spoke of the 1930s as a time when gentile communities quickly and willingly adapted to ostracising Jews as if they were lepers.¹¹⁰ Neighbours began taking on the role of Nazi adherents, ranging from their complacency to changing laws, informing authorities, and working for the Nazi bureaucracy, to working as civilian administrators and supervisors in the forced labour and death camps.¹¹¹ Constant references to ‘supposed friends’ and the fact that guards were ‘civilian’ express the shock, confusion, and dismay of Nazism’s victims. Each and every surveyed published and

¹⁰⁸ Number 278 Survivor Testimony, interviewed by D. Harris, (The Holocaust Centre of Toronto, Transcript of a six hour interview, 1993). Note: Many of these testimonies are unpublished and as a result, the names of the survivors are not to be reproduced. These testimonies, categorized by number, are available at the Holocaust Centre of Toronto.

¹⁰⁹ Number 18 Survivor Testimony, interviewed by Mary Richmond, (The Holocaust Centre of Toronto, 1977).

¹¹⁰ Number 373 Survivor Testimony, interviewed by Paula Draper, (The Holocaust Centre of Toronto, 1993).

¹¹¹ Number 18 Survivor Testimony.

unpublished testimony attests to the notion that without the support of the general population, both in a passive and active sense, the terror and destruction of the Holocaust would have not been possible. When questioned why they believed their neighbours would abandon them in silence or openly act against them, another pattern is discernible. The survivors claim the main impetus for silence was profiteering: “many did not care to help, but cared to enrich themselves.”¹¹² They “would rather let the Jews suffer whatever comes along as long as [the Nazis] [left] them alone.”¹¹³ If a particular gentile would not raid a home, someone else would; if a particular gentile would not enforce the citizenship laws and benefit economically, someone else would; if someone was not willing to terrorize the Jews and participate in their ‘annihilation,’ there would be many others who would be willing and would reap the benefits. By 1937, the survivors claimed it was impossible for bystanders to be unaware of the extent of the escalating brutality the Jews were experiencing. The survivors did, however, distinguish between knowing and believing, which was also a conscious choice.

People who did not believe the news they heard concerning the Jews did so because it was “comfortable not to believe in it.”¹¹⁴ According to survivor testimony, those who knew and did not act did so because they regarded the Jews as ‘nobodies.’ In short, regardless of the bond an individual felt with a Jew prior to 1933, it was not strong enough to assist them as it had assisted relatives and neighbors who were victimized by the T4 program. The euthanasia program exemplifies that the possibility to protest within a totalitarian state existed, and that

¹¹² Number 373 Survivor Testimony.

¹¹³ Number 278 Survivor Testimony.

¹¹⁴ Number 204 Survivor Testimony, interviewed by Rochelle Rosenblum, (The Holocaust Centre of Toronto, 1987).

people on an individual, institutional, and international level chose to remain silent completely, or at least for as long as possible.

Nazism was able to destroy the solidarity between Jews and gentiles by tapping into personal prejudices and applying those prejudices to form a collective national policy. When personal prejudice -whether racial, religious, or class-based is inconsequential- becomes government policy, the foundation for genocide is firmly set.¹¹⁵ As Kershaw states, Nazi propaganda was most effective when “it was building upon, not countering, already existing mentalities.”¹¹⁶

Genocide is made possible by two levels of intolerance: the first level is active participation against others based on intolerance and prejudice; the second level is purposeful passivity to the plight of others. Nazism’s success rested on utilizing the deep-rooted prejudice in individuals toward *the other*. The prejudice that ordinary citizens and neighbours perpetuated against Jews was the same prejudice perpetuated against their own people: Germans against Germans, Poles against Poles, and Hungarians against Hungarians. The *other* was mythologized as a different sub-human race, but in reality, in most cases prior to 1933 the *other* was a fellow citizen, neighbour, colleague, or friend. Basic human instinct encourages people to accept their ‘own kind’ and shun those who are different in the pursuit of self-preservation. Ultimately, indifference to the plight of the Jews was a result of self-preservation, opportunism, and a lack of

¹¹⁵ Elly Gotz. Survivor Testimony interviewed by Magdalena Lopatowska. (The Holocaust Centre of Toronto, June 1 2009), from approximately 9:30am-4:30pm.

¹¹⁶ Ian Kershaw. *The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 4.

genuine personal connection required for “bystanders to see the Jews’ fate as linked to their own.”¹¹⁷

What is missing in the existing literature on survivor testimony is a comprehensive study of survivor experience concerning international responses to their plight. After the publication of the 1935 Nuremberg laws, a multitude of Jews tried to emigrate. Jews who were both financially secure and had sponsors in a host country were most likely to be successful in leaving the Third Reich; however, only a small percentage was able to leave. My dissertation speaks to the question of how Poles and Jews felt about the international response to their worsening situation and what their experience can tell us about the context in which they lived. The following chapters examine the influence of the foreign-language press, specifically in the United States, in order to evaluate if purposeful passivity did indeed exist when it came to the plight of European Jewry and if so, why? Foundational works on this topic include Laurel Leff’s *Buried By the Times* and Deborah Lipstadt’s *Beyond Belief*. Both authors conclude that influential newspapers, such as the *New York Times*, failed to treat the Holocaust as newsworthy. Where there are gaps in these works is in their narrow focus on one or two newspapers, the lack of foreign-language press analysis, and a timeline that begins in 1933.

The chapters utilize original research on the Polish-American press and its coverage of the pre-war, war, and Holocaust periods. The Polish-American press, which has not yet been explored, sheds a unique light on how Poles and Polish-Americans, of whom there were 4,000,000 by 1920,¹¹⁸ viewed and understood what was developing in their native country, the

¹¹⁷ Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: the Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945*. (New York: Aaron Asher Books, 1992), 204.

¹¹⁸ John J. Bukowczyk, *And My Children Did Not Know Me: A History of the Polish-Americans*. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), 65. Note: This statistic includes first and second generation Poles.

land in which Auschwitz would become manifest. The closest work available on this topic is Lucjan Dobroszycki's *Reptile Journalism: The Official Polish-Language Press under the Nazis, 1939-1945*. However, Dobroszycki deals with the period 1939-1945 and researches the Polish-language press in the *Generalgouvernement*.¹¹⁹ Similarly, articles can be found in Robert Moses Shapiro's collection entitled *Why Didn't the Press Shout? American and International Journalism During the Holocaust*. There are six articles in this collection that deal with Polish journalism, including "The Warsaw Ghetto Underground Press," "The Jews in the Polish Clandestine Press, 1939-1945," and "Dziennik Polski, the Official Daily Organ of the Polish Government-in-Exile, and the Holocaust, 1940-1945,"¹²⁰ but none deal with the Polish press in the United States. My dissertation focuses on the years between 1926 and 1945¹²¹ and deals with the Polish-language press primarily in the United States, including reports and experiences of Polish-American journalists, as well as the experience of diplomats and tourists in Poland and Germany. I propose a transnational approach: what was the experience of Jews and Polish-American journalists and tourists in Poland and Germany as it was communicated to a wide public through the press, letters, and monographs? How do their experiences inform our understanding of international perceptions of the events in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s as expressed by these individuals and the Polish-language press in the U.S? *Yad Vashem Magazine* stated that more work needed to be done with regard to "how media reports on the Holocaust

¹¹⁹ See Lucjan Dobroszycki. Trans.Barbara Harshav. *Reptile Journalism: The Official Polish-Language Press under the Nazis, 1939-1945*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

¹²⁰ Robert Moses Shapiro, ed., introduction by Marvin Kalb, *Why Didn't The Press Shout? American & International Journalism During the Holocaust*. (Newark: KTAV Publishing House, 2003).

¹²¹ My timeline begins shortly after the publication of Volume 1 of *Mein Kampf*, and before the first Nuremberg rally in 1927, to the end of the Second World War. After Hitler was released from prison (after the Beer Hall Putsch), *The New York Times* reported on December 21, 1924, that "Hitler was Tamed by Prison." The mainstream press largely lost interest in the German "demi-god" until the late 1920s, early 1930s, whereas the Polish-language press followed his actions and the actions of the Nazi party closely throughout the mid-late 1920s.

influenced people's positions vis-à-vis the Jews during the war." This dissertation examines the attitude toward both Poles and Jews prior to and during the Holocaust and thus helps to reveal who knew what? When?

All translations in this dissertation are by the author. Wording is extremely important when researching the evolution of the Holocaust. In contemporary society, the word 'holocaust,' is commonly associated with the genocide of the Jewish race under Nazi Germany. Even in the 1950s this was not the case –let alone the 1940s- as there was no specific term to provide unity to the discourse of what happened to the Jews during the war. In his article "The secular word HOLOCAUST" Jon Petrie demonstrates how the word had a long standing tradition when describing Jewish tragedies as well as having a "broad secular use before the Nazi killings."¹²²

For example, from 1945-1959 there were over sixty articles in Toronto's *Globe and Mail* referring to a holocaust (a sacrifice consumed by fire), that were completely unrelated to the genocide of the Jews. These articles range in topics from describing the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima, financial disasters, multiple articles regarding forest or house fires, the Second World War in general, and even burnt Chinese food. The Polish-language press also used the word to describe the First World War.¹²³ The first article which referenced the Jewish Holocaust appeared on May 30, 1959 and was written on behalf of the Jewish association B'nai B'rith. The Jewish press used the word for similar meanings. For example, the first time the *Canadian Jewish Review* published an article which referred to the Jewish Holocaust was also in October

¹²² Jon Petrie, "The Secular Word 'HOLOCAUST': Scholarly Myths, History, and Twentieth Century Meanings," *Journal of Genocide Research* 2, no. 1 (2000): 33. See Entire Article, 31-63. Also, explains the emergence of the word Shoah in correlation to the Jewish Holocaust.

¹²³ *Republika-Górnik*, "A tribute to Paderewski." December 29, 1939. Pg. 8. ("Yes, Mr. Paderewski is 79 years old, but he still is one of the finest gentlemen in Europe today...He is old Europe, a symbol of the finest traditions of Warsaw, Vienna, Berlin, Heidelberg, before the holocaust.")

1959.¹²⁴ The term Holocaust, in describing the Jewish genocide of World War Two, became mainstream in the 1960s and 1970s congruently with the rise of scholarly publications (especially by Yad Vashem) on the topic, the Eichmann Trial, and specifically after the miniseries *Holocaust* in 1978.¹²⁵ Prior to this development, the word was as indefinite as it was versatile. As scholars and educators, we focus even now on the euphemisms employed by the Nazi regime and fail to acknowledge the documents which do clearly state Nazi policy on the ‘eradication’ not only of Jews, but also gentile Poles, and the Roma. The Polish-language press was conscious of its word choice when writing about the situation of Poles and Jews during the Second World War; annihilation, extermination, and mass murder were used to describe genocide before it was known as such. From the beginning of the war, Poles gauged quite clearly that Hitler’s war would be anything but conventional and that his goals of *lebensraum* and ‘cleansing the race’ were never two completely separate initiatives.

¹²⁴ *The Globe and Mail*, Saturday October 27, 1945, News 15; *The Globe and Mail*, Saturday October 26, 1946, Business 24; *The Globe and Mail*, Saturday October 27, 1945, News 15; *The Globe and Mail*, Friday October 4, 1946, News 8; *Canadian Jewish Review*, Friday October 9, News 4.

¹²⁵ Petrie, 49.

Chapter One: Review of the Polish Press and Polish-Jewish Relations 1926-1929

*In no other country is the knowledge of
the Past so essential to the understanding of
the Present.
Sarolea letters on Poland*

On December 14, 1930, the *Republika-Górnik*, one of America's largest Polish weeklies, stated that Hitler was provoking his followers for war and reassuring them that death would be the fair price to pay for regaining Germany's "place under the sun."¹ Several years before this article appeared, Poles, both in Poland and abroad, sensed that among such trying issues as unemployment, civil war, and torn relations with Jews, Hitler posed a real threat -to their security and the world's- and needed to be taken seriously. This is a different approach from the American mainstream press which did not regard Hitler as a threat (prior to the late 1920s and early 1930s) after his failed Beer Hall Putsch.² The press has always served as an historical document of tremendous value, reflecting the concerns, opinions, and interpretations of the times. In some current University lectures on the Holocaust, students are taught that there are few reliable ways to gauge the German public's opinion on what was happening within their country.³ The main source, outside of private materials, is Gestapo reports, which in and of themselves are biased, purposefully tampered with, and unreliable. The same cannot be said when attempting to understand how the Polish population both inside and outside of Poland felt regarding what was happening inside Nazi Germany, and eventually in occupied Poland. Unlike

¹ *Republika-Górnik*, "Hitler provokes Fascists to War." December 14, 1930. Pg. 1.

² *The New York Times*, "Hitler Tamed by Prison." December 21, 1924. Pg. 16. See also: *Republika-Górnik*, "Congress not Concerned with Nazis." September 24, 1937. Pg. 2.

³ Hist 3427E Western University Lectures: 2011-2013.

major English-language newspapers in North America, such as *The New York Times*, the Polish-language press did not bury or ignore news from Europe concerning the rise of Nazism and subsequent persecutions, but focused directly on them demonstrating that the news being communicated -and reactions to that news- was very real and not incomprehensible or implausible. Constant distrust in growing German militarism was also made evident in several political cartoons. In one cartoon the caption reads, “You cut off one head, and it grows back, you cut off this head (militaristic Germany) and ten heads grow back.” A soldier, evidently not bewildered by this spectacle, asks “your head grew back already?” Poland had a long history of battling German militarism and took German politics, including Nazism, seriously.



⁴ *Dziennik Związkowy*. Caption Reads: You cut off one head, and it grows back, you cut off this head (militaristic Germany) and ten heads grow back.” (Soldier asks, your head grew back already?) May 28, 1930. Pg 1.

Note: The Polish cartoons in the *Dziennik Związkowy* (unless otherwise noted) were drawn by artists employed by the newspaper, although the artists’ names are unknown. This was confirmed by past editor Mr. Piotr Domaradzki on August 18, 2014. Email Correspondence, reply to “Inquiry.”

Although Polish roots in America can be traced back to 1608,⁵ the majority of Poles came to the United States in three waves, from 1870-1914, 1939-1945, and 1981 onward.⁶ The first wave was composed of what is known “za chlebem” (“for bread”) immigrants so called because the majority of them came to America from the southeastern part of Poland due to poverty and political oppression by its partitioners: Germany, Austria, and Russia. There were two distinct groups in the first wave: intellectuals with strong political hopes for Poland, and labourers, mostly male miners and construction employees who worked primarily for sustenance in America while sending their remaining funds back to family in Poland. It is estimated that before 1914, 2.5 million Poles immigrated to America, a migration that “contributed significantly to the rise of their national consciousness”⁷ which was greatly facilitated by the ethnic press.⁸ The following graph demonstrates the distribution of American Poles between 1900-1960.⁹

⁵ Primarily to work in the glass industry. For more on the first settlers, see: <http://www.polishamericancenter.org/FirstSettlers.html>

⁶ There was little immigration after the First World War and before the Second World War due to the legal immigration restrictions of 1921. The second wave was composed of people fleeing Europe during and after the war, including survivors and displaced persons, and the third wave was composed of people escaping martial law and hoping for a more prosperous future abroad during communism and after the fall of communism in 1989. For more information see *Special Sorrows* by Matthew Frye Jacobson and David Roediger.

⁷ Adam Walaszek, *Polish Immigrants in the USA and Their Homeland 1914-1923*. Krakow: Jagiellonian University. UDK: 325.25(73=84):323(438” 1914/1923” Izvorni znanstveni rad Primljeno: 9.7. 1977. Pg 90.

⁸Ibid., 91.

⁹ Andrzej Brożek. Trans. Wojciech Worsztynowicz. *Polish Americans: 1854-1939*.(Warsaw: Interpress, 1985) 41. (The majority of Polish settlement was located in Pennsylvania, New York, and Illinois.)

Distribution of the American Polonia in the years 1900-60

Divisions	Distribution of Polish population according to Census		
	1900	1930	1960
THE UNITED STATES	100.00	100.00	100.0
New England	9.3	10.9	10.2
Including: Massachusetts	5.6	5.6	4.9
Connecticut	2.8	4.0	4.2
Middle Atlantic	42.0	46.6	44.0
Including New York	18.2	23.3	24.6
New Jersey	3.8	7.9	8.6
Pennsylvania	20.0	15.4	10.8
East North Central	39.5	34.6	32.2
Including: Ohio	4.4	5.3	5.1
Indiana	1.6	1.5	1.6
Illinois	17.8	14.1	12.9
Michigan	7.4	9.6	9.2
Wisconsin	8.3	4.1	3.4
West North Central	5.5	3.2	2.8
South Atlantic	1.7	2.2	4.1
East South Central	0.3	0.2	0.3
West South Central	1.1	0.6	1.0
Mountain	0.3	0.4	0.8
Pacific	0.3	1.3	4.6

Polish emigrants, including those who immigrated to Canada,¹⁰ were not people disowning their country; they were people fleeing foreign oppression and poverty with extremely high hopes and strong bonds to their motherland. Most Polish immigrants left out of necessity and always identified themselves as Poles, even after assimilating as Polish Americans. Poles in America consciously fostered a connection with their roots maintaining their mother-tongue while adopting English, devoutly celebrating their customs and traditions during the holidays,

¹⁰ For information on Polish waves of immigration to Canada, see: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, *Archival Sources for the Study of Polish Canadians*, 2002, <http://www.biblioteka.info/archive.htm> And, Anna Reczynska, *For bread and a better future: emigration from Poland to Canada, 1918-1939*. Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1996.

and remained educated on what was happening back home. The Polish press was pivotal in fostering Poles' connection to their homeland and facilitated national consciousness,¹¹ assimilation, and unabashedly voiced its opinion on contemporary issues.

As Lewis Levendel observes, “events, opinions, the temper of the times—all these are reflected more completely in the pages of news-papers than any single source of information. . . . To any social scientist interested in writing a historical or sociological analysis of . . . ethnic groups in particular, ethnic newspapers represent an invaluable primary source of material.”¹² The *Republika-Górnik*, was one of America's largest Polish-language weeklies,¹³ and one that reported extensively on the European situation regarding fascism and Hitler well before 1933. Established by Ignatius Haduch in October 1911, in Pittston, Pennsylvania, under the name *Zorza* (The Dawn), the paper was relocated to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, in 1913 and renamed *Republika* (The Republic). In 1918, Haduch, editor of *Republika*, moved to Scranton, Pennsylvania, which was home to another Polish press, the *Górnik Pennsylvanski* (The Pennsylvania Miner). Both papers suffered financially and in 1920, John Dende, a Polish immigrant, decided to purchase them both and renamed the publication *Republika-Górnik*

¹¹ For example, not only was being knowledgeable about Polish events important, but maintaining one's Polishness was encouraged even while assimilating. An article titled “10 Commandments for Immigrant Parents” asserted that Polish parents are obligated to teach their children how to speak and pray in Polish, and encourage them to uphold Polish traditions ect. See: *Republika-Górnik*, “10 Commandments for an Immigrant Parent.” May 27, 1928. Pg. 3.

¹²Lewis Levendel. *A Century of the Canadian Jewish Press: 1880s-1980s*. (Ottawa: Borealis Press Limited, 1989), xix.

¹³ According to the current editor of the Polish American Journal, Mark Kohan, circulation was approximately 1623 copies per week by 1944.

Pennsylwanski (The Republic Pennsylvania Miner), later shortened to simply *Republika-Górnik*.¹⁴

John Dende was born on January 23, 1885, in Serock, Poland. Little is known about his past except that he graduated from teacher's college in Pultusk, Poland, and served in the Russian army as an officer. In 1911, Dende immigrated to the United States (and was naturalized in 1916) and ran a bakery in Scranton where he realized the potential in the faltering Polish press that existed in the area. After forming the *Republika-Górnik*, he worked as an editor and publisher until his death in 1944.¹⁵ As a recent Polish immigrant and patriot, Dende used his publication as a vehicle to discuss news of importance for the Polish community while maintaining a national and international scope. An early example of Dende's dedication to Poland came during the First World War, when he used the paper to recruit Poles into the army.

John Dende was a member of several national Polish fraternal organizations, serving as acting president of District 5 of the Polish Falcons (a non-profit fraternal benefit society owned by its insured members) and president of District 12 of the Polish National Association. Locally, he founded the American Political Federation of Lackawanna County which acted as a lobbying organization for Polish American interests. In 1937 he created and was an active member in the Polish Catholic Parish Committee Association, formed to voice opinions of parishioners over local church policy.

The *Republika-Górnik* makes for an excellent major press sample for several reasons. It is a weekly of which all of the copies are available, which is a rarity. Furthermore, Scranton and

¹⁴ Polish American Journal. 2014.< www.polamjournal.com/Editors_Desk/PAJ_History/paj_history.html> (January 7, 2011).

¹⁵ *Republika-Górnik*, "John Dende Dead." December 22, 1944. Pg. 1. The article outlined his great commitment to the paper and causes of Polish importance, such as fighting against Poland's oppressor's during both world wars.

its surrounding areas represented the third largest Polish enclave in the United States.¹⁶ Also, it closely followed other Polish newspapers, including the *Dziennik Związkowy* -the largest Polish weekly which started in 1908 and relayed news from all of the official Polish consuls.¹⁷ It continues to be published in Chicago, but unfortunately only part of the run survives due to an archival flood in the 1970s. Furthermore, the Polish Union of the United States of America was relocated from Buffalo (also home to the Polish-American Congress) to Wilkes-Barre in the early 1900s,¹⁸ making the area a hub of Polish activity and news. In addition to remaining current on what the English-language mainstream press had to say about Polish and European issues, the *Republika-Górnik* also followed other Polish press and media including, *Czas* which was based in Krakow, *Poland-America*, an English-language magazine of Polish interests printed in the United States, Toronto's *Związkowiec*, the German press, including *Der Tag* and *Frankfurter-Oder Zeitung*, and the Jewish press including the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* and in Poland, *Nasz*

¹⁶ “During the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, a mini-port of entry, similar to Ellis Island in New York, was located at Delaware and Washington Avenues in South Philadelphia. This port of entry welcomed immigrants from Poland, Italy, Germany, Lithuania, Ireland and other countries. Large numbers of European immigrants settled along Philadelphia’s waterfront. The first Polish American settlement was in what is known as the Fishtown section of Philadelphia. Soon afterward a Polish Catholic church was founded, St. Laurentius, at Berks and Memphis Streets in 1882, to address the needs of the growing Polish community. It was followed by the founding of St. Stanislaus Church in 1891 at 3rd and Fitzwater Streets in South Philadelphia, close to the immigrant port of entry and waterfront employment opportunities. As time passed, the new Polish American communities spanned the waterfront from South Philadelphia to the Northeast section of Philadelphia. They established themselves as a reliable and industrious workforce, especially in waterfront, railroad and manufacturing enterprises. Polish communities continued to grow throughout the City of Philadelphia and the surrounding suburbs and migrated across the State of Pennsylvania, where almost two million Pennsylvanians share full or partial Polish heritage.” See: http://www.polishamericancenter.org/PolishPeople_Phila.html

¹⁷ Location of main Polish Consuls: Washington, New York, Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Buffalo. The *Republika-Górnik* printed the addresses and messages of the Polish Consuls in America, See March 14, 1926 p 8.

¹⁸ See Biography page: http://www2.hsp.org/collections/Balch%20manuscript_guide/html/dende.html as well as <http://www.ihrc.umn.edu/research/vitrage/all/po/ihrc2151.html> From the University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center.

Przeгляд,¹⁹ Warsaw's largest Jewish newspaper written in Polish. By reading through newspapers in detail using a critical perspective, patterns were evident with regard to what the Polish press regarded as most newsworthy by their placement of stories on the front page or main news story page(s) (page 2 and 4 for the *Republika-Górnik* for example) as well as their purposeful use of attention grabbing headlines and language to appeal to their readership, and the frequency of addressing topics of interest.²⁰ And although it is difficult to gauge the quantitative impact of the press on actual government policy, the vocal stance of the Polish-language press on issues they considered to be important, certainly demonstrates they were unwilling to be a passive bystander.

Examples of the *Republika-Górnik*'s far-reaching audience are abundant, with editorials and comments ranging from all over North America.²¹ Polish-Americans respected the press and wrote to the paper inquiring about information ranging from economic matters to commentaries on why they felt a connection to their motherland. On June 20, 1926, a piece by Stefan Zeromski titled "Why I Love Poland" expressed emotional ties to Poland because his and his sibling's "mother was Polish, the blood that ran through their veins was Polish, because Poland was the

¹⁹ *Nasz Przeгляд* (which I read from 1926-1939) was located in Warsaw, Poland, and published a total of 8,962 issues between March 1923 and September 1939, with circulation estimates varying from 20,000 to 50,000. See: http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Nasz_Przeгляд

²⁰ Most press samples were examined in their full edition. However, the prominence of articles was based on page placement, language used, bolded headlines, and frequency of topic(s). The newspapers varied in length depending on the press. During the war period for example, the *Dziennik Związkowy* ran approximately 10-16 pages in length depending on weekday/weekend copies (a Saturday copy was generally longer). However, it should be noted that the size of the newspaper was supersized. The *Republika-Górnik* ran at approximately 6 pages of news with additional supplements and illustrations depending on the copy. Furthermore, "its editorial views were often quoted in Polish publications in other parts of the country." (See: http://www.polamjournal.com/Editors_Desk/Who_We_Are/who_we_are.html) It was under my discretion to determine what news the press found most important based on the quantity and frequency of articles which dealt with a particular topic for which I made an index. For example, how often Henry Ford or other domestic issues were mentioned, the struggle over the Corridor, Polish-Jewish relations, international relations, war, and 'racial extermination' were among some of the topics dealt with most frequently during the timeline examined and demonstrated that these issues were a key focus of interest for the editors as well as the readership.

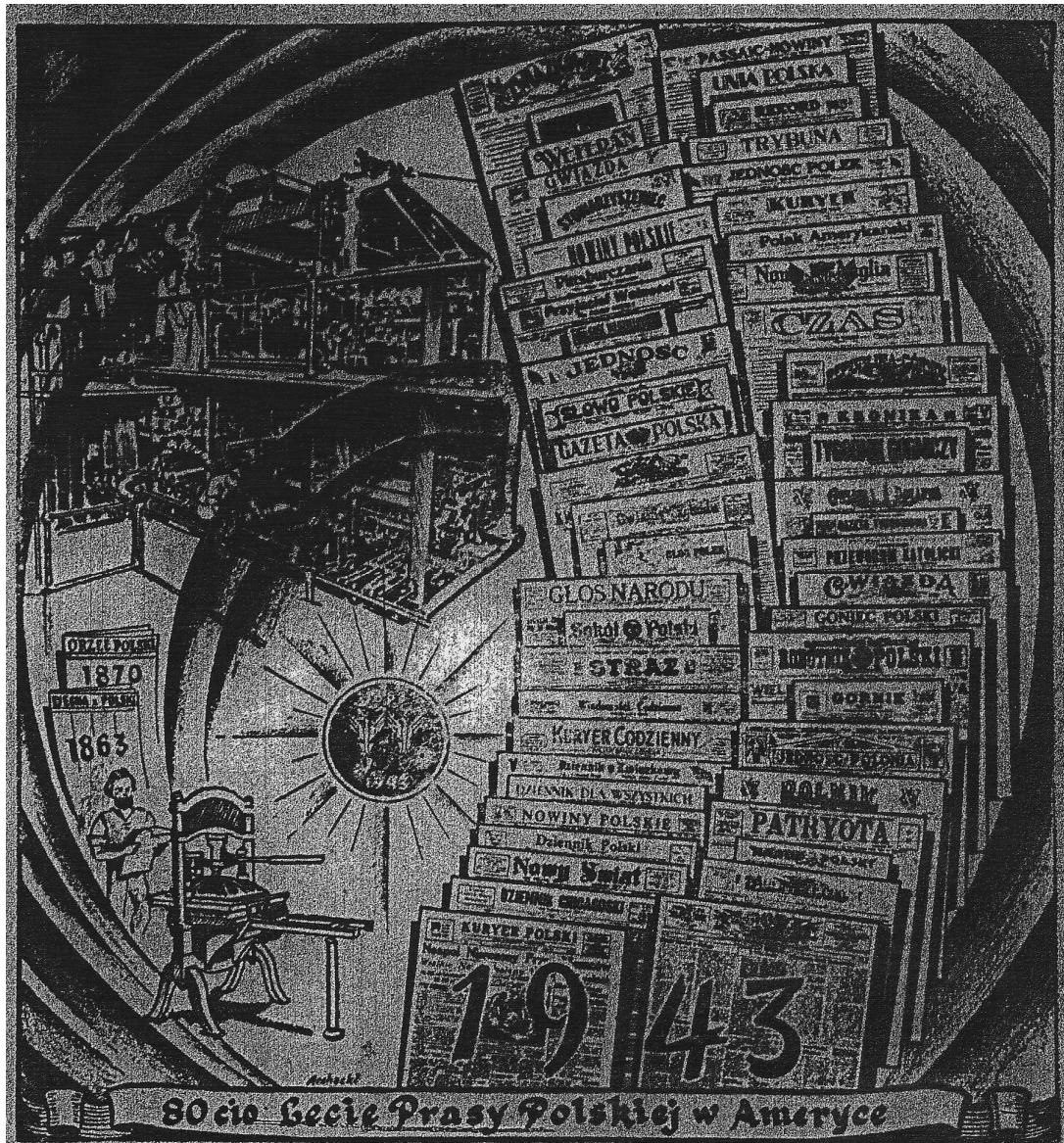
²¹ For example, Adolf Toczynski writes to the *Republika-Górnik* from Gurney, Ontario, and his comments are published on February 14, 1926, p.6.

land where loved ones were buried . . . it carried the culture [they] knew; the language, the literature.”²² The following cartoons from the Polish press display these sentiments perfectly.²³

²² *Republika-Górnik*, “Why I Love Poland.” June 20, 1926. Pg. 1.

²³ *Dziennik Związkowy*. Caption Reads: “Trips to Poland and departing the Motherland.” (American Poles are granted Poland’s heart which calls for one’s love and loyalty to the country, the Motherland asks the American-Pole to guard this treasure.” August 14, 1929. Pg 1.





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²⁴ *Republika-Górnik*, “80 Years of the Polish Press in America.” December 31, 1943. Pg. 2. The *Republika-Górnik* valued the place of the Polish press in Polish-American consciousness and followed all publications closely.

Granted, because the newspapers were written in Polish they were only accessible to Poles literate in their native language. However, a plethora of pertinent documents coming into North America from Europe were translated into English and printed in the Polish press or other media: the issue at hand is when and how information was made available from Europe to North America, and how that information was received. Furthermore, beginning in the late 1930s, English sections were added and relayed important news of developments in Europe. If the Polish-language press accepted news on the Holocaust as ‘fact’ and not as mere exaggerations, it can no longer be said that information was not available to the public primarily based on obstruction of the news by the government. Furthermore, it cannot be argued that news coming into North America was so unbelievable as to be considered unreliable by the public, thereby limiting further publication of Holocaust news.

To understand how Poles viewed their situation in an international context, which affected how they interpreted the war years, it is necessary to have an understanding of the Polish and Polish-American context prior to Hitler’s growing popularity.²⁵ From the 1920s to the present, the *Republika-Górník* (now *The Polish American Journal*) has stayed true to its goal of remaining “devoted to National, Social, and Political Interests of Polish People in the United States of America.”²⁶ In 1926, as was common in most Polish newspapers, the *Republika-Górník’s* focus was on issues that American Poles considered to be important such as alcohol and prohibition, unemployment issues in Europe, religion, the League of Nations, and (although

²⁵ For a more detailed history of Poles in America, see “A History of Polish Americans” by John J. Bukowczyk (2007) or “Immigration to the United States: Polish Immigrants” by Scott Ingram (1994).

²⁶ This was the official motto of the newspaper. Although the *Republika-Górník* and *Dziennik Związkowy* as well as other Polish papers, were supporters of assimilation, one of their primary objectives was assisting emigrant Poles by advertising Polish (and well as Jewish) businesses (as is common in the present), initiatives, charities, and concerns. See for example, the advertisements on January 3rd, 1926, pg 4 in the *Republika-Górník* October 24, 1926, pg 3 re: Silverberg’s Clothing Advertisements.

English was exclusively used in headings and cartoons) assimilation.²⁷ Polish-Americans had a genuine interest in European politics, social policy and religious issues. Immigrant Poles had a keen sense of globalization. They did not feel isolated (or isolationist) from international issues and their reactions to what was happening in the world were at the forefront of shaping how North-American Poles viewed their place in their country and shaped how they would respond to later issues.

Debate surrounding prohibition, legally known as the Volstead Act, touched North-American Poles deeply, not only because it was a domestic issue, but also because alcoholism plagued Poland. Many Poles were torn on the issue, generally siding with the majority of Americans, partly as a display of loyalty, who were against prohibition.²⁸ Yet at times they seemed empathetic towards the law as news reports of death rates due to alcoholism in Poland were common. According to statistics compiled in 1924 by the spirits monopoly in Warsaw, Poland's capital consumed the most hard liquor, selling 8,329, 677 litres of vodka, roughly nine litres per person per annum.²⁹ Not only was this problematic from a health standpoint, but the high rate of drunkenness in Warsaw drained the resources of local police and health care professionals.

²⁷For example, many issues of the paper promoted assimilation by printing tests in English, such as: Chapter 1, American Democracy, with questions like when was America discovered? In 1492 (answers provided) *Republika-Górnik*. February 26, 1928. Pg. 4. (Harder questions such as how did this country receive the name America? A: From the name Americus Vespuccius, an Italian who sailed to the New World shortly after its discovery by Columbus. (Also written in Polish in the column beside) (On-going- for example see October 7, 1928. Pg. 4.)

²⁸ *Republika-Górnik*, "Change in Prohibition laws certain." January 3, 1926. Pg. 1 Article expressing that public opinion regarding prohibition was shifting. The article cites experts on the issue such as Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, the president of Columbia University. Also, see William Galush, "The Unremembered Movement: Abstinence among Polish Americans," *Polish American Studies*. Vol. 63 No. 2. (Autumn 2006): 13-22.

²⁹ *Republika-Górnik*, "Where are they drinking the most Vodka?" January 3, 1926. Pg. 5.

With regard to alcohol consumption in the United States, a balanced perspective was shown, partly due to the notion that while alcoholism in Poland was a serious matter, North Americans were regarded as casual and social drinkers without an addiction problem. For example, on January 31, 1926, an article quoted Senator Edwards, a democrat from New Jersey, stating that “Prohibition is a joke and everyone knows it.” Edwards claimed that prohibition was the most “tyrannical and authoritarian law ever decreed in America,”³⁰ and called for the issue to be highlighted in the upcoming 1928 Presidential election.³¹

Not only was alcohol a societal and political issue, but prohibition itself was accused of costing more lives than it saved.³² The Anti-Prohibition society reported that the Volstead Act was the cause of 65,000 deaths as people turned to high-proof moonshine after being denied access to “good vodka.”³³ Furthermore, it was reported that if prohibition were abolished, two million unemployed men would have work in the alcohol production and manufacturing sector.³⁴ As represented in the political cartoon below, for the Polish community in America, an anti-Volstead act stance represented a concern for the greater good; prohibition encouraged the drinking of unregulated alcohol and was hurting employment prospects.

³⁰ *Republika-Górník*, “Prohibition is a joke says Edwards.” January 31, 1926. Pg. 3.

³¹ *Republika-Górník*, “Public voting on Prohibition in 1928.” July 4, 1926. Pg. 1.

³² See statistics at http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/library/studies/nc/nc2a_6.htm
And <http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/prohibition/unintended-consequences/>

³³ *Republika-Górník*, “Prohibition brings death of 65, 000 people.” January 8, 1928. Pg. 1.

³⁴ *Republika-Górník*, “If Prohibition was Abolished, 2 Million Would Have Work.” September 28, 1928. Pg. 1. Not only this, but on February 2, 1936 the *Republika-Górník* reported that less vodka was being sold than before prohibition. This could be attributed to the Depression, but it was also speculated that once it was openly available there was no need to over-indulge (drinking too much at once for fear of having the alcohol confiscated if found) when given the opportunity.



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³⁵ *Dziennik Związkowy*. Caption Reads: "This is not about (the) individual (interest), what matters are principles." (Flag is asking for changes regarding anti-Volstead issues and rights of immigrants). October 1, 1926. Pg 1.

Alcoholism in Poland and elsewhere in Europe was tied to another issue that received wide attention in the 1920s: unemployment.³⁶ It was estimated in January 1926, that a quarter of a million Poles were out of work –roughly every third worker-³⁷ with a vast amount of employment in Łódź.³⁸ By the end of November 1927, 752,000 Germans were out of work, spiking an unemployment rate of 14.3%.³⁹ This percentage was much lower, 8.8%, in the rest of 1927. When compared to other western European countries such as Norway (25.4%), Denmark (22.5%), or Sweden (12.0%), Germany’s struggles were average yet still a major platform point for the young Nazi party.⁴⁰

Outside of domestic affairs prior to the Polish Revolution of 1926, a major issue that resonated with the Polish community, was the Cristero War in Mexico. The war, also referred to as *La Cristiada*, began in 1926 as a revolt against the anti-Catholicism exercised by the ruling Mexican government. The rebellion was a response to the Mexican Constitution of 1917 whereby Plutarco Elias Calles, Mexico’s President and an avowed atheist, ordered the persecution of the Roman Catholic Church. The Mexican Revolution, the largest upheaval in Mexican history, was the result of the peasants’ claim for social justice and land. Although the Catholic Church purposely avoided open support of the revolution as it endangered the property rights of many Mexican citizens, the Calles’ government nevertheless felt that the Church was threatening its extreme reforms regarding private property, social reform and education. To

³⁶ Ibid., Focus on not only on Poland. Survey of German unemployment as well. See *Republika-Górnik* on January 8, 1926. Pg 5 (untitled) and “German unemployment rises to frightful heights.” January 8, 1928. Pg 1.

³⁷ *Republika-Górnik*, “Every Third Worker in Poland without a Job.” February 14, 1926. Pg.6.

³⁸ *Republika-Górnik*, “250,000 People without work in Poland.” January 10, 1926. Pg.5.

³⁹ *Republika-Górnik*, “Rise of unemployed in Germany.” January 8, 1928. Pg. 1.

⁴⁰ The Measurement and Behavior of Unemployment, Universities-National Bureau (1957) pg. 455.
<http://www.nber.org/chapters/c2649.pdf>

combat the Church's immense influence over the Mexican population, anti-clerical statutes were established in the Constitution, initiating a decade of Catholic persecution and thousands of deaths.

The rebellion was famous for its brutal torture and public executions of priests and for the active involvement of women who smuggled weapons for Catholic dissenters. Many Papal encyclicals were issued between 1925 and 1937. On November 18, 1926, Pope Pius XI released *Iniquis Afflictisque* (On the Persecution of the Church in Mexico) condemning violence against clerics and Catholics, but it had little effect. Three years later, in 1929, the rebellion was tamed thanks to Dwight Whitney Morrow, United States Ambassador to Mexico, who used diplomatic means (mostly funding and armaments) to help temporarily end the war. Morrow helped the anti-Church government of Calles to reach a peace agreement but his motives were purely political: regional security, and more importantly, a solution to America's oil problem. However, peace was short-lived as the Mexican government broke its diplomatic assurances and reinstated Catholic discrimination and slaughter. A few years and encyclicals later, the Pope granted his full backing of the 'Catholic Action' in Mexico and on March 28, 1937, he granted the rebels plenary indulgence.⁴¹

⁴¹ Side Note: Pope Pius XII was criticized by many, including the Polish press, for not speaking out more during the Holocaust. *Republika-Górník*, "Poles Frustrated with Pope." November 17, 1939. Pg. 2 *Republika-Górník*, "Narod Polski Against Pope (he should be working for peace)." August 9, 1940. Pg. 2.

However, the Pope did speak out against Nazism although he did not name Jews as a primary target. *Republika-Górník*, "Pope on Fascism." July 12, 1931. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górník*, "Pope Speaks Out Against Sterilization." June 2, 1935. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górník*, "Pope Speaks Out Against War." September 8, 1928. Pg. 4. *Republika-Górník*, "Pope Breaks Ties With Hitler." June 11, 1937. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górník*, "Pope gathers Cardinals to appeal to Catholics (against Hitler)." March 18, 1923. Pg. 1.

Although he did not name the Jews as a primary target, it was reported that he was assisting them: *Republika-Górník*, "Pope helps Jews Financially in Rome." October 22, 1943. Pg. 1.

Nevertheless, it is questionable how much influence naming Jews directly would have garnered towards an international response. Churchill for example, did name the Jews as a primary target, and England still failed to directly respond to the Holocaust.

On November 14 1941, Churchill stated: "None has suffered more cruelly than the Jew the unspeakable evils wrought upon the bodies and spirits of men by Hitler and his vile regime. The Jew bore the brunt of the Nazi's first onslaught upon the citadels of freedom and human dignity."

American Poles closely followed the story of the Mexican Revolution and felt empathy toward the persecuted Catholics.⁴² Many stories detailed how churches were converted to anti-Catholic headquarters in which crucifixes were covered with the party's red and black flags;⁴³ shootings of Catholic men and children were conducted over the defence of church statues,⁴⁴ and pleas for financial aid for the United States were made.⁴⁵ The official policy of the United States, after Morrow's limited intervention, was very similar to the response Poles would receive during the Polish-Soviet War and Poles and Jews would receive during the Second World War: hushed diplomatic support but no tangible action. On November 24, 1935, it was reported that despite the request of the Knights of Columbus, President Roosevelt refused to assist directly those being persecuted for religious and political reasons in Mexico. The President made clear that he "would not interject in the domestic affairs of foreign countries,"⁴⁶ and maintained, to the disappointment of Catholic Poles, that whatever was happening regarding the rights of Mexicans within Mexico, it was not the business of the United States.⁴⁷

The United States officially and whole-heartedly embraced isolationism, but Polish-Americans were very intrigued by international happenings, including political developments in Germany. An article from January 1926, originating in Berlin and titled "Germany on the eve of

For more on Pius XII see: Robert Ventresca. *Soldier of Christ: the life of Pope Pius XII*. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013).

⁴² *Republika-Górnik*, "Grave Issues in Mexico." August 15, 1926. Pg.1. And *Republika-Górnik*, New mutiny for Catholics in Mexico. November 4, 1934. Pg. 1.

⁴³ *Republika-Górnik*, "Church in Mexico converted to club." November 11, 1934. Pg. 5.

⁴⁴ *Republika-Górnik*, "Shootings at Catholics in Mexico." December 9, 1934. Pg. 1.

⁴⁵ *Dziennik Związkowy*, "Mexican's seek financial aid from the United States." October 19, 1926. Pg. 3.

⁴⁶ *Republika-Górnik*, "Religious Matters in Mexico." November 24, 1935. Pg. 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*. Also see: *Dziennik Związkowy*. "Religious Issues in Mexico." (U.S. not Meddling in Religious Issues in other Countries." November 24, 1935. Pg 1.

Dictatorship or Empire,” expressed concern over the current state of affairs in Germany, political and economic, and warned that if changes were not made, Germany would seek radical measures to reduce unemployment. Statistics were printed stating that in November 1925, unemployment in Germany had risen to 50% with 700,000 seeking government welfare. There were rumours of Otto Gessler, a German politician during the Weimar Republic, instituting martial law to deal with the disgruntled unemployed, but the article stated the situation was not bad enough to justify the measure.⁴⁸

Poland, trying hard to emphasize its desire for peace in the 1920s, was extremely uncomfortable with Germany’s aggressive policies towards its corridor (a strip of land, granted in the Versailles Treaty located near the Vistula River that gave Poland access to the Baltic Sea).⁴⁹ Rumours from Czechoslovakia of Germany’s nationalistic advances towards the corridor were interpreted as a direct insult to the Locarno pact –signed on December 1, 1925 and meant to ensure a ‘mutually guaranteed’ peace in Europe- and ammunition for war with not only Poland but also France.⁵⁰ The rumours were based on letters from German Reichstag officials who were awaiting the order to attack. This plan was initiated behind the back of Gustav Stresemann, who briefly acted as Chancellor in the ‘year of crises’ (1923) and was the current foreign minister. Stresemann is best known for his diplomatic achievement of including Germany in the League of Nation in September 1926, eventually winning him and co-laureate Aristide Brand, the Nobel peace prize. It was assumed in 1926 that Stresemann would be infuriated by Germany’s aggressive plan, but would eventually come on board. However, the French government had

⁴⁸ *Republika-Górník*, “Germany on the eve of Dictatorship or Empire.” January 3, 1926. Pg. 5.

⁴⁹ *Republika-Górník*, “Poland not joining Entente: in favour of Locarno Pact.” January 3, 1926. Pg. 5.

⁵⁰ *Republika-Górník*, “Germans don’t want to acknowledge borders, they are against the spirit of Locarno” February 20, 1926. Pg.1.

discovered the letters and warned Stresemann to end any course of action which would incite violence, making it clear that both France and England wanted to maintain peaceful relations.⁵¹

The Polish press was hopeful, claiming that Poland had seen worse than the rise of Mussolini⁵² and antagonism from both Germany and Russia, and would persevere.⁵³ The desire for peaceful relations was particularly felt when talks began in January 1926 towards non-aggression pacts between Poland and Russia and Poland and Germany.⁵⁴ A bilateral agreement between the nations was seen as a step in the right direction after the Great War and Polish-Soviet War for ensuring peace. Although these pacts did not come to fruition until 1932, most European nations expected that everything would be done to avoid another war. However, although there was hope in 1926 that strained relations would be relieved, Poles were not naïve, and openly expressed misgivings of both Russia's and Germany's intentions. Much of the hostility against Germany was due to its increasing encroachment on Danzig⁵⁵ and the corridor.⁵⁶ U.S. journalist, E.A. Mowrer, wrote from Danzig that the free city once belonged to Germany in 1227 and supported the German notion that access to the sea did not belong to the Poles, who had 'historically' failed as mariners.⁵⁷ Mowrer claimed the situation was serious yet also

⁵¹ *Republika-Górnik*, "Germans wanted to attack the Corridor." January 10, 1926. Pg.1.

⁵² The fascist dictator of Italy from 1922- 1943. The Polish press followed Mussolini's initiatives, particularly when they involved Germany. See for example: *Dziennik Związkowy*. "Mussolini tempts Hitler towards War." August 25, 1935. Pg 1. Or *Republika-Górnik*, "Mussolini Attacks Jews." January 8, 1937. Pg. 1.

⁵³ *Republika-Górnik*, "Commentary" January 10, 1926. Pg. 4.

⁵⁴ *Republika-Górnik*, "Polish-Russian Treaty of Neutrality." January 17, 1926. Pg. 5.

⁵⁵ I use Danzig for Gdańsk, unless Gdańsk is used directly in a quote or title.

⁵⁶ It was generally perceived that Germany was pretending to want peace, but every day, new stories were released to prove the contrary. Main agitation is the question of Danzig. See *Republika-Górnik*, "Gdańsk." Jan 9, 1927 p 4.

⁵⁷ *Republika-Górnik*, "Unsafe Point in Poland." January 24, 1926. Pg. 2.

“amusing...and quite sad.” The *Republika-Górnik* felt an explanation to the issue was obvious: Poland had rights to Danzig and the sea, but also that peaceful “Polish-German relations [were] necessary for world peace.”⁵⁸ The Poles were cognisant that issues which seemed domestic had global implications and that genuine peaceful relations were far from becoming a reality.

Frequent reports were published detailing agitation in Danzig by Nazis and German nationalists. These agitators were seen as a serious problem by the foreign-language press already in 1926 and were not dismissed as unworthy of newspaper space as in most mainstream English-language newspapers in North America. Poles, both Jewish and Gentile, felt the country was being genuinely threatened by Germany. On January 24, 1926, it was reported that Nazis in Danzig were advocating that the free city should not remain independent because Poland could not maintain it economically; therefore, it should be ‘handled’ exclusively by Germany,⁵⁹ no matter what the international backlash. The issue of the corridor remained significant for Poles and Germans for the remainder of the 1920s; the majority of Poles both in Poland and abroad felt the best way to deal with territorial threats was through the League of Nations.

News from Berlin followed Polish endeavours to join and maintain a place in the League, citing Poland’s minister of foreign affairs August Zaleski (later to become the second president of the Polish government-in-exile) that “Poland- like all of Europe, from the time of the world war- longs for peace, which is necessary for the rebuilding of Poland” and other nations. There was no doubt that the press agreed with Zaleski that the League was “absolutely

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹ *Republika-Górnik*, “To Germany or Poland?” January 24, 1926. Pg. 4.

necessary.”⁶⁰ Germany’s intentions for peace, however, as well as its willingness to cooperate with the United States, were rightly questioned.

German nationalist papers were criticized as heavily anti-American, anti-Soviet, and anti-Communist, and the opinion of these groups would ultimately not influence Germany’s plans for Poland one way or another. The one hope of the German government was that Poland would go to war with the Soviets, giving Germany the perfect opportunity to attack. Disinterest in Locarno and opposition to Poland in the League of Nations ⁶¹ were not the only signs that Germany was not interested in peace.⁶² Peace talks were reported, but the mood towards them was always hostile and it was also recognized that due to the current tensions in Europe, war with Poland meant another world war.⁶³

German anti-Americanism at the time was not necessarily a reaction to America’s stance on peace, but rather due to growing German nationalism. With unemployment issues in Germany, and American immigration quotas for German citizens not being filled, it was surprising that most Germans chose to stay in Germany. Explanations for this varied, but the most convincing reason, as far as the press was concerned was that Germans were so deeply patriotic that, despite domestic unrest, they would rather suffer in their homeland than to try to build a new –perhaps more prosperous- life in America. German patriotism rejected a failing democracy embodied in the Weimar republic and believed in a Germany which had fallen off an

⁶⁰ *Republika-Górník*, “Poland must have a permanent place in the League” July 4, 1926. Pg. 1.

⁶¹ *Republika-Górník*, “Students Protest against Germans” (Because Germany opposed Poland being accepted into the League of Nations) March 21, 1926. Pg. 7.

⁶² *Republika-Górník*, “Meeting in Gdańsk under the auspice of Peace between Poland and Germany” January 31, 1926. Pg. 5.

⁶³ *Republika-Górník*, “Plans for Invasion of Poland Ready.” January 31, 1926. Pg. 2.

enlightened path but strived for “better times to come.”⁶⁴ Despite the rationale, what was certain was that emigration was on the decline, and that Germans had a specific viewpoint on what citizenship meant to them, a viewpoint that did not marry well with American ideals. The standard German expectation of citizenship rights in the mid to late 1920s stressed the appropriateness of showing dissatisfaction with the current ruler. On Kaiser Wilhelm’s 67th birthday, 40,000 Germans gathered in Berlin chanting “Long Live the Kaiser, on the gallows.”⁶⁵ Germany had a longstanding tradition of celebrating the Kaiser’s birthday; many employers and schools would allow people to gather in the streets so that they could catch a glimpse of their ruler. In 1926, the tone had changed from jubilation to frustration and contempt (although no such anti-ruler demonstrations would resurface during the Third Reich).

Poland too felt frustrated with its current state of government and in 1926 was very close to a civil war. Jozef Piłsudski, Poland’s Chief of State from 1918-1922 and military leader of the Second Republic from 1926-1935, became disillusioned with the workings of the parliamentary system. On May 12, 1926, during a time of political crisis and economic depression, he marched on Warsaw, causing President Wojciechowski to resign on May 14. Piłsudski was elected President of the republic by the government on May 31, but he rejected the position. Instead, upon his recommendation, one of his old acquaintances, Ignacy Mościcki, was elected as Poland’s new President by the National Assembly.⁶⁶ In the new government Piłsudski assumed the Ministry of Defense, which he held until his death. During that period he was the major influence behind the scenes in Poland, especially in the field of foreign policy. The Polish press

⁶⁴ *Republika-Górnik*, “Germans do not want to immigrate to America.” January 31, 1926. Pg. 2.

⁶⁵ *Republika-Górnik*, “Long Live the Kaiser, on the gallows.” February 7, 1926. Pg 2.

⁶⁶ *Republika-Górnik*, “REVOLUTION IN POLAND” May 16, 1926. Pg 4.

viewed the chaotic domestic situation in Poland, including an unstable government and communist threats,⁶⁷ that almost led to revolution, as having been single-handedly averted due to Piłsudski's effort as evidenced by telling headlines such as "Piłsudski Saves Poland from Revolution, says his adjutant."⁶⁸ Criticized by some for his aggressive *coup d' état* –to the point of calling him a dictator- it was clear his intentions were not motivated by self-indulgence but by genuine concern for the state of Poland.⁶⁹ Especially after the revolution scare, American Poles were asked to be open-minded and remain acutely aware of domestic issues back in Poland. The *Republika-Górnik* recognized Polish-American efforts during the First World War,⁷⁰ and warned in an article entitled "To The Entire Group of Polish Emigrants in the United States" that Poland was still not safe and needed an ally in American Poles.⁷¹

With Piłsudski taming the possibility of a civil war, other internal tensions were not calmed. In order to evaluate how and why the press related news of the Holocaust, it is imperative to understand both Polish-Jewish relations and Polish-German relations prior to the war.⁷² Polish-Jewish relations have a long and complex history dating back hundreds if not thousands of years, with several seminal works published on this issue such as the *Polin* series

⁶⁷ *Republika-Górnik*, "Strikes and Disturbances by Communists in Poland." July 4, 1926. Pg.1

⁶⁸ *Republika-Górnik*, "Pilsudski Saves Poland from Revolution, says his adjutant." May 23, 1926. Pg. 4.

⁶⁹ *Chicago Daily News re-print of an article in Republika-Górnik*, "There is no dictatorship in Poland." May 30, 1926. Pg. 4. Article states that Pilsudski clearly wants to be head of the military and not a dictator.

⁷⁰ *Republika-Górnik*, "26,000 Americans were in the Polish-American Army." February 13, 1927. Pg. 4.

⁷¹ *Republika-Górnik*, "To The Entire Group of Polish Emigrants in the United States." June 6, 1926. Pg. 4.

⁷² A comprehensive understanding should also be undertaken regarding Polish-Soviet relations; however, for the scope of this dissertation, the focus will be on Polish-Jewish and Polish-German relations. For an excellent resource on the history of the partitions see Scott Hamish, *The emergence of the Eastern powers, 1756-1775*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. And for inter-war Polish-Soviet relations see: Bohdan, B. Budurowycz, *Polish-Soviet relations, 1932-1939*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1963.

composed of thirty volumes dealing with Polish-Jewish history.⁷³ For centuries Poland was home to the largest Jewish population in the world. Due to religious tolerance and social autonomy, Poland provided a haven to Jews, allowing the Jewish community and culture to flourish. From the eleventh to sixteenth century, Poland's tolerance of Jews earned the country the appellation *paradisus ludaeorum*, 'Paradise for the Jews.'⁷⁴ Paradise ended in the late eighteenth century with the partitions of Poland and Russian domination, which led to the persecution of Jews.⁷⁵

Additionally, due to the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, Poland's religious tolerance began to diminish. With further partitions in 1795 and the abolition of Poland as a sovereign state, antisemitic influences from the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Prussian Empires grew. After the First World War, Poland was once again independent and remained the center of the largest Jewish population in Europe, at approximately three million. Despite attempts at peaceful coexistence, political and economic instability, fears of loyalty, and rising antisemitism, caused Polish-Jewish relations to suffer in the 1920s.

The issues that dominated the interest of Polish North Americans in the late 1920s, besides the growing threat of war, conflict over the corridor, and domestic economic issues, were international opinions of Poland and contemporary Polish-Jewish relations. It is absolutely necessary to have a sound understanding of Polish-Jewish relations in the 1920s and the 1930s as these relations helped to determine the response to the origins of the Holocaust.

⁷³ The *Polin* series is indispensable to the study of Polish-Jewish relations. For more see Volumes 1-30 edited primarily by Antony Polonsky.

⁷⁴ Two thirds of the world's Jews lived in Poland at this time due to tolerance – See George Sanford, *Historical Dictionary of Poland*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2003), p79.

⁷⁵ For more see M. Rosman . *The Lords' Jews: Magnate-Jewish Relations in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

Poles and the Polish press took Jewish relations and international observations seriously. One interpretation and commentary on the root of tensions between the two groups came from Professor Charles Sarolea. Born in Belgium, Sarolea was an academic and publicist who wrote extensively on foreign affairs. In 1922, he wrote “Letters on Polish Affairs” which details an outsider’s view of Poland’s contemporary issues. The *Republika-Górnik*, advertised the book in the late 1920s as a resource for an opinion by an outsider. “Letters on Polish Affairs” provides insight into Polish affairs as viewed by an ‘outsider.’⁷⁶ Sarolea summed up contemporary Polish-Jewish issues, that the press took at face value, by stating:

But Poland has an even more formidable internal enemy. She has to face the opposition of those three millions of Jews whom Russian persecution has dumped on Polish soil. I am making no accusation against the Jews. For the almost insuperable difficulties of the Jewish problem, neither the Jews nor the Poles are to blame. And to state those difficulties is not to proclaim oneself an Anti-Semite. Both the Poles and the Jews are the victims of Tsarist oppression. The very German papers who are accusing the Poles of Anti-Semitism declare that Germany will have to shut her gates to any Jewish immigration from Poland. The Jews are the "salt of the earth," but as I am trying to show elsewhere there is too much Jewish salt in the Polish dish. There is no room in the new Poland for such a vast population and that population can only be assimilated by a slow and painful process. In the meantime, if a prosperous middle class is to arise under normal and peaceful conditions, a considerable pro-portion of the Polish Jews will be threatened in their means of existence. On the other hand, as the Polish Jews speak a German dialect, and as the majority do not consider themselves as Polish citizens, they are the natural vanguard of German penetration in Eastern Europe.⁷⁷

Sarolea further claimed:

The country had been ruined by the ravages of six years of war. Poland is threatened on both sides by powerful neighbours. She has to solve an internal problem more difficult than any internal problem which any other Power has to solve, namely, that of assimilating- four millions of Jews speaking- a German dialect.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ *Republika-Górnik*, “Letters on Poland with an Introduction by Cardinal Mercier.” February 7, 1926. Pg. 3.

⁷⁷ Charles Sarolea. *Letters on Polish Affairs*. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, Tweeddale Court, 1922), 37.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

Sarolea addresses several key issues bearing upon strained Polish-Jewish relations which were dealt with by the Polish press and other contemporary sources: assimilation of ethnic minorities who do not possess Polish citizenship or heritage; accusations of antisemitism when internal issues (such as unemployment) might be worsened with an influx of foreigners; accusations of antisemitism from countries, such as Germany, which themselves did not wish to accept Jews; and the fact that Poles and others believed that Jews, both Polish and those on Polish soil, did not consider themselves (or want to be considered) as Poles.

Assimilating new populations was not exclusively a European issue. It was reported on July 18, 1926 that over a new million arrivals were in the United States without citizenship of any country.⁷⁹ However, Poland's problems were more complex. Poland's main priority was trying to establish itself as a stable nation. The country had acquired a large group of people, both Jewish and gentile, who did not possess Polish citizenship. According to the 1921 census, 30% of Polish citizens were ethnic minorities, mostly Ukrainians (15%) and Jews (8%).⁸⁰ Not only was the issue of official citizenship a problem, but many Jews in Poland with legal status did not regard themselves as "Poles" and made this sentiment abundantly clear. Polish Jews demanded citizenship rights, which Poland granted. After the May *coup d'état* in 1926, efforts by Jewish left-wing groups resulted in a proposal, supported by the government, to end discriminatory laws in Poland against minorities. Prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, Poland dismissed the "establishment of any openly discriminatory laws."⁸¹ As sociologist and

⁷⁹ *Republika-Górniki*, "Million People without Citizenship in the United States." July 18, 1926. Pg.1.

⁸⁰ Janusz Bugajski, *Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe: A Guide to Nationality Policies, Organizations, and Parties* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 360.

⁸¹ Antony Polonsky et al., ed. *Polin, Studies in Polish Jewry (Volume 8): Jews in Independent Poland*. (London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1994) 127.

author of *Poland's Holocaust*, Tadeuz Piotrowski, states, “[a]lmost half a century before the landmark 1964 civil rights act in America, Poland not only had agreed to the League of Nations on June 28, 1919, a supplement to the Treaty of Versailles on the treatment of minorities, but also had passed its own rather progressive constitution in 1921, in which it voluntarily incorporated many of these same civil rights.”⁸²

Furthermore, when investigating minority rights, the Morgenthau Report, spearheaded by Henry Morgenthau Sr. (United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire) and issued by the United States and Britain, for the purpose of investigating antisemitic excess in Poland,⁸³ stated that there were indeed forms of discrimination against Jews, but the impetus for such discrimination was based on politics, not religious antisemitism. Morgenthau believed it would be unfair and inaccurate to state that Poland (in general) was responsible for the ill-treatment of Jews; anti-Jewish incidents were limited to individuals and mobs, and not indicative of preconceived national plans. He believed these incidents were inspired by ‘political antisemitism,’ as many Poles thought Jews were ‘politically hostile to the Polish state.’ The following passage from the report reveal his attitude:

Article 8: 8. “Just as the Jews would resent being condemned as a race for the action of a few of their undesirable co-religionists, so it would be correspondingly unfair to condemn the Polish nation as a whole for the violence committed by uncontrolled troops or local mobs. These excesses were apparently not premeditated, for if they had been part of a preconceived plan, the number of killed would have run into the thousands instead of amounting to about 280. It is believed that these excesses were the result of a widespread anti-Semitic prejudice aggravated by the belief that the Jewish inhabitants were politically hostile to the Polish State. When the boundaries of Poland are once fixed and the internal organization of the country is perfected the

⁸² Tadeusz Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust: Ethnic Strife, Collaboration with Occupying Forces and Genocide in the Second Republic, 1918-1947* (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers 2004), 3.

⁸³ President Woodrow Wilson sent the commission in response to news reports regarding anti-Jewish violence in Poland. Furthermore, Herbert Hoover, then the head of the American Relief Association, encouraged Wilson to do so after meeting with Polish Prime Minister Ignacy Jan Paderewski- if the news reports were untrue, the Polish government was being unjustly represented. The commission was sent to investigate these claims.

Polish Government will be increasingly able to protect all classes of Polish citizenry. Since the Polish Republic has subscribed to the treaty which provides for the protection of racial, religious and linguistic minorities, it is confidently anticipated that the Government will whole-heartedly accept the responsibility, not only of guarding all classes of its citizens from aggression but also of educating the masses beyond the state of mind that makes such aggression impossible.⁸⁴

It was after the publication of this report that the minority treaty was enacted. Poland, not without conflict and problems, was attempting to be inclusive, not only to Jews but to other minorities as well. For example, despite ethnic tensions in Lwów,⁸⁵ language laws were changing allowing for the use of Hebrew as well as Ukrainian even though Polish was the official language.

Also in 1920s, Poland reported on the loosening of the *numerus clausus* (quotas which limited the number of students allowed to enroll, in this case, the quotas based on nationality and religious background were loosened) law in Poland, with four Polish universities averaging 34-38% enrollment of Jewish students with little backlash.⁸⁶ These changes led many Poles to believe that “it was not bad” for Jews in Poland and that Jews felt the same way, as fewer were leaving the country.⁸⁷ The press reported, and sided with, the popular sentiment that if Jews wanted full equality, they needed to change their antagonistic attitude, especially when the economy was a factor. Not only did Poles feel this way, but so did American economic specialists such as Leighton Rogers. At a conference in Cleveland, he claimed that when it came to the United States providing money for relief for Jews in Europe, Poland should not be a focal

⁸⁴ Morgenthau Report, Full Text (Online): http://www.archive.org/stream/cu31924028644783/cu31924028644783_djvu.txt. Can also be found at the US National Archives in College Park, Maryland, NARA Film #820-224, Record Group 184.0191/3

⁸⁵ *Republika-Górník*, “Loosening of Language Laws in Poland.” March 7, 1926. Pg 6. This was during a time when tensions with Ukrainians were also on the rise. See *Republika-Górník*, “Stealing of crosses” March 7, 1926. Pg 6.

⁸⁶ *Republika-Górník*, “Large percentage of Jews in University.” March 14, 1926. Pg.7.

⁸⁷ *Republika-Górník*, “Less Jews Leaving Poland.” January 24, 1926. Pg. 4.

point. In Poland, Jews were primarily employers, not producers, and therefore were often autonomous and self-sufficient. This was true in areas such as Łódź, also known as the “Polish Manchester,” where textile industrialists were predominantly Jewish.⁸⁸ Furthermore, as W. D. Rubinstein states, “Jews received about 40 per cent of all income earned by Poland's Group I earners [i.e., the wealthiest people in Poland], *including* incomes earned in the agricultural sector.”⁸⁹

Outsiders also had similar opinions. A reprinted article entitled “What did an Englishman see in Poland” covered the story of a correspondent for the London *Times* traveling in Poland from Zakopane to Kraków who relayed his experience while on vacation. His original article, titled “Splendid Poverty,” spoke of how just across the border, Czechs were in charge of their own shops, whereas in Poland they were mostly operated by Jews (implying that both he and Polish citizens viewed Jews as a separate entity). On Saturdays if the Poles needed to shop, they had to cross the border and patronize Czech merchants instead of Polish. The article concluded with the observation “this is how we are viewed in the eyes of a British traveller.”⁹⁰

This commentary is interesting for several reasons. First, there is a great deal of condescension not only towards Poland’s lack of funds to restore the country after the devastation inflicted after the First World War, but also towards the fact that Jews have greater influence over selling goods near the Czech border. Poles are made to seem incompetent, allowing hostile minorities to dictate who controlled what in Poland. Indeed, there were many clashes in the 1920s and 1930s regarding control over the economy in particular. For example,

⁸⁸ Polin, *Studies in Polish Jewry (Volume 8)*, 188.

⁸⁹ W.D. Rubinstein, Pg 8.

⁹⁰ *Republika-Górnik*, “What an Englishman saw in Poland.” November 27, 1927. Pg. 3.

tensions arose over Jews' request to have Sunday as a business day; Poles resented this minority initiative.⁹¹

Despite the progressive intent of the Polish government in the 1920s and 1930s, assimilation policies take time to develop, and Poland, after the First World War, and subsequent economic difficulties, was attempting to solidify its newly reacquired independent status. However, independence and unity were not synonymous, and for Poles this was a challenge. Poles desperately wanted a unified nation that was loyal to Poland and as result, latent and overt threats, both real and imagined, were of major importance to how Poles viewed others, and in turn, viewed themselves. Other nations and cultures aggravated Polish nationalism by claiming that famous Polish heroes were in not in fact Poles. For example, Lithuanians claimed Andrzej Tadeusz Kościuszko –a military hero who fought against Prussia and Russia, and on the side of the United States in the American War of Independence- as their native hero, and not Poland's.⁹² Fostering a proud collective memory was integral for solidifying Poland as a nation, and claiming that its heroes were not her own was deeply insulting. The Polish-American press emphasized the social contributions of her heroes to the United States including Marie Skłodowska-Curie's discovery of radium,⁹³ Ignacy Jan Paderewski's music,⁹⁴ and most prominently Kościuszko's fight for American independence.⁹⁵ Jews also questioned the heredity

⁹¹ *Republika-Górnik*, "Religious clash- Poles protesting because Jews want Sunday to be a business day." August 7, 1927. Pg 1.

⁹² *Republika-Górnik*, "They want to turn Kosciuszko into a Lithuanian" March 28, 1926. Pg 4.

⁹³ *Republika-Górnik*, "From the Homeland: Radium" May 9 28, 1926. Pg 6.

⁹⁴ *Republika-Górnik*, Several articles following Paderewski's career in 1926 (and after), for example: "Paderewski" May 9, 1926. Pg 4 and "American Legion Decorates Paderewski with Medal of Merit." May 16, 1926. Pg. 1.

⁹⁵ *Republika-Górnik*, "Kosciuszko and American Independence" By Rev. A. Lewandowski. June 20, 1926. Pg 1.

of national heroes,⁹⁶ which furthered Poles' suspicion of Jews' trustworthiness and loyalty.⁹⁷ Not only was the celebration of Polish heroes important for providing a sense of national pride and unity, but in the case of Polish emigrants, celebrating heroes also acted as a response against anti-Polish prejudice. Since many of the "za chlebem" emigrants were poor (and Catholic), they wanted to better their reputation by presenting a more valiant side of their shared history. In America, Poles were very active in displaying national pride, highlighting those heroes who helped found America, such Tadeusz Kościuszko,⁹⁸ and who fought against Russia and Prussia during the uprisings in the early 1790s. In this sense, claiming that Polish heroes were not Polish, was as distasteful to many emigrant patriots as overt racial jokes and slurs targeting 'Slavs.'

Even more distasteful was the continued assertion of some Polish Jews that they did not wish to be Polish, but wanted Polish citizenship rights. This sentiment sparked much unease politically, and also inspired violence. Poles felt that Jews wanted a "State within a State" (an observation made as early as 1919 by British Prime Minister David Lloyd George)⁹⁹ and were accused of being antisemitic with respect to issues that were much more about pragmatism. The issue of Jews wanting equal rights in Poland without showing loyalty to the country predates Lloyd George's observation. For example, as Theodore Weeks noted, in 1905:

the former landowning elites of noble background were in many cases

⁹⁶The Jewish press printed many such stories in the 1920s and 1930s. See for example: *Nasz Przegląd*. "Polish Christians who actually have Jewish Ancestry." July 3, 1937. Pg 6. (*Nasz Przegląd* was Warsaw's largest Jewish newspaper written in Polish).

⁹⁷ For example, see: *Republika-Górnik*, "Jews take over Madame Curie." March 2, 1930. Pg 2.

⁹⁸ *Republika-Górnik*, "100,000 attend unveiling of Kościuszko statue" (in Boston) October 2, 1927. Pg 1. Also, see article that deals with the pride in receiving a message from President Coolidge to Poles, congratulating them during their celebrations: *Republika-Górnik*, "Coolidge to Poles." October 2, 1927. Pg 1

⁹⁹ Peter Hoffman. *Carl Goerdeler and the Jewish Question, 1933-1942*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) Pg. 36.

overshadowed or even eclipsed by 'new men,' many of whom were Jewish or of Jewish origin ... Poles could, and did, argue that Jews had profited from equal rights to enrich themselves with no thought to the general good of the Polish land. Furthermore, following this argument, nationalist Poles accused Jews of continuing their own selfish, anti-Polish interests, of forming Jewish nationalist groups which specifically demanded nationalist rights for non-Polish languages and culture, and, worst of all, acting (actively or passively) as agents of russification in the Polish provinces."¹⁰⁰

Among these tensions, Poles were accused, at times unjustly, for the mistreatment of Jews, which was a major factor in anti-Polish propaganda orchestrated primarily by Germany. For example, many of the pogroms Poles were accused of occurred during the context of the Polish-Soviet War. According to renowned historian Norman Davies, "the scale of Jewish casualties was minimal considering the conditions in which they occurred ... That fewer than one thousand Jewish civilians perished, when the Polish army during the same period suffered over 250,000 casualties, is a fair indication of the scale of the [Polish] disaster."¹⁰¹ In *Poland's Holocaust: Ethnic Strife, Collaboration with Occupying Forces and Genocide in Second Republic, 1918-1947*, Tadeusz Piotrowski also notes that violence against Jews in the 1920s and 1930s was not primarily an issue of a blind racial prejudice in the form of antisemitism, but a response to Jews demonstrating anti-Polish and pro-communist sentiment. For example, concerning violence in Kielce and Częstochowa in 1936, "the first was sparked by a massive demonstration involving 300 young Jews who marched up and down the town streets chanting: 'Long live Lenin! Long live Trotsky! To hell with Poland!' The second was precipitated by the shooting of a Polish soldier by a Jew."¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Theodore Weeks, *Eastern European Affairs*, Pg 66.

¹⁰¹ Norman Davies, "Great Britain and the Polish Jews, 1918-1920," *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 8, no. 2 (April 1973): 140-141.

Anti-Jewishness was a reality for other reasons also. In examining the tensions between Poles and Jews it is useful to consider Norman Salsitz's childhood in Kolbuszowa:

We stole fruit off the trees and out of the orchards of the townspeople and peasants. Why we did it no one seemed to know. The Poles, of course, knew of this practice and tried their best to protect their property. Dogs were set upon us, and if Poles caught up with us we could expect a beating. But year after year it was the same all over again. Instead of actually taking fruit, too often we just managed to break off the tree limbs and ruin what was on them... In the summer peasants also stood [in the town market area] selling wild strawberries, blackberries, and raspberries that they brought along in heavy, thick baskets ... My friends and I missed few chances to sneak up to the baskets and run off with a handful of berries. Why did we do it? The berries we enjoyed, of course, but there can be no denying the thrill that stealing the berries brought us, especially when peasants gave chase for a short distance in a vain effort to retrieve what was rightfully theirs ... Snatching berries didn't bother me as much as the large number we crushed when we made our grab.¹⁰³

This was particularly troublesome as Salsitz later states:

Peasants rarely had it well off. The overwhelmingly majority barely scraped by. Either they worked the fields for others and received a portion of the harvest, or they cultivated their own plots (a large majority owned their land), few of which were large enough for subsistence, let alone surplus. Most led a hand-to-mouth existence, and worse than that in the early summer months, when reserve provisions were nearly exhausted and the desperately needed new crop was still not ripe ... They survived in part because they made do with so little and because of Kolbuszowa, where they might find an occasional job.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Piotrowski. 43.

¹⁰³ Norman Salsitz, as told to Richard Skolnik. *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland: Remembering Kolbuszowa*. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999) 64-65, 126.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

Clearly, antisemitism was a tangible reality in Poland, as was anti-Polish sentiment.

The press too relayed numerous stories of antagonism sparked by both sides. Articles such as “Away with Christ” were published detailing how Jews attacked Christians participating in a burial procession for a child who died in Rzeszów because they felt Poles were trespassing on their properties to get the church, and even worse, were carrying crosses as they did so. The article commented that “for Christian Poles not to be able to peacefully pass with a cross to church in a Polish town is astonishing...Jews are forgetting more and more, that Poles are attempting to be tolerant, while Jews treat Poles as intruders.”¹⁰⁵

An article printed on March 25, 1928, detailing a Jewish legend, originally published in *Hacefira* (a Hebrew Daily), is very telling of the mixed attitudes at the time.¹⁰⁶ The legend was offered by the Jewish community as an explanation for a fire in Poland and sparked antagonism from Poles. The legend states that in the 1880s, three eighteen-year-old Jewish boys sailed the Vistula river to attend a Jewish celebration of the circumcision of a fellow Jew. In the boat was another passenger, a Christian. As they ventured on, a storm hit, but luckily the passengers were saved. The circumcised child was named Moses, in honour of the miracle. A few days later, the same Christian who travelled with the young Jews went missing, and the town accused the three of murder for the purpose of obtaining blood to make matzah. The three young Jews were thrown into jail and were at the mercy of the local count. They were given the choice of freedom upon conversion to Christianity, or being burnt alive. The three did not disown their faith and

¹⁰⁵ *Republika-Górnik*, “Away with Christ.” September 23, 1928. Pg 1. See also: *Republika-Górnik*, “Jews Attack Christians.” April 23, 1937. Pg 1. *Republika-Górnik*, “Jews Kill Poles Again.” June 25, 1937. Pg 1.

¹⁰⁶ It was not uncommon for the Polish press, both within Poland and North-America, to follow the Jewish Press. The *Republika-Górnik* frequently followed *Nasz Przegląd* (Warsaw’s largest Jewish newspaper written in Polish) and printed stories of Jewish interest. For example, *Republika-Górnik*, “Lithuanians strike at Jews.” Aug 5, 1928. Pg. 2.

were burned. The Jewish townspeople gathered the ashes and buried them on a hill. After several months, the allegedly murdered Christian returned to town, proving the Jews' innocence. The legend continues that when the count went out on the Vistula, he was heard screaming "Help! Save me! One of the burnt men is pulling me into the water, the other is gauging my eyes out because I spread their ashes all over town!" With great difficulty, he reached the shore, but was blinded. To remedy the situation and avoid future conflict, the count visited the families of the three men and promised that they would be taken care of for the rest of their lives. To add to the apology, every year before Passover, the local count would provide 10 metres of land to farm wheat so that matzah could be made for the poor. The following year, the count went back on his word and offered only two metres, which the Jews of the borough did not accept. One the third day of Channukah, the anniversary of the burning of the Jews, a fire exploded in the count's palace and nine people were burned alive.¹⁰⁷

This legend, re-printed in the *Republika-Górnik*, was cited in the context of a fire which occurred in December of 1927 at Dzików Castle, killing nine people and injuring six.¹⁰⁸ In contrast to the notion of divine retribution, *The Barrier Miner* -a daily English-language newspaper published in Broken Hill, New South Wales from 1888 to 1974- reported that the "flames spread speedily to the whole building. The intense cold prevented the use of water. The occupants, including servants and children, organised to rescue the mother of the count, who is 90 years of age."¹⁰⁹ An art collection was also salvaged. Since the eighteenth century, Dzików had acquired a large Jewish population and by the nineteenth century the community

¹⁰⁷ *Republika-Górnik*, "Jews on the Fire in Dzików" March 25, 1928. Pg 7.

¹⁰⁸ Some sources claim that fifteen were injured.

¹⁰⁹ *The Barrier Miner*, "Fire Destroys Castle-Nine Persons Killed." December 24, 1927. Pg 1.

monopolized the grain trade and most shops in town. The Austrian government attempted to impose anti-Jewish regulations, but the townspeople and the Tarnowski nobility did not impose them. The cooperation was not necessarily a gesture of camaraderie, but rather convenience for both the Poles and Jews who lived in relative harmony. More recently in the 1920s, the Jews of Dzików resented the count and his family (it is not known why, for the family did not impose measures against the Jews) and although the actual cause of the fire was unknown, Poles did not appreciate it being blamed as retribution through a myth and viewed such stories as purposefully antagonistic.

Other outbursts were inspired by the expression of communist sentiment. For example, violence in Warsaw was reported after Jews hung communist flags all over the city during Yom Kippur.¹¹⁰ Sarolea also notes in his ‘Seventh Letter’ that this was a major issue for both Poles and Jews:

This is one more political and social cause for antagonism between the Polish peasant and the Jew. There have been Bolshevik riots in which a large number of Poles and a smaller of Jews have been killed. But, as I already pointed out, let it be quite clear that those riots have been Bolshevik riots and not Anti-Semitic riots, as they have often been described. The Jews that have been killed have been killed because they were revolutionists and not because they were Jews. To call the resistance to Jewish Bolshevism an attack on Jewry would be as absurd as to call the resistance to Sinn Fein an attack on the Roman Catholic religion. From what has been said in the preceding- pages, the reader may realise how much explosive material has accumulated in Poland. Between the Pole and the Jew there are a hundred differences : differences of language, of religion, of race and of manners, of economic interests and of political sympathies. Every cause which makes for hostility has been operative in Poland on a large scale, and for hundreds of years. And when we calmly and impartially examine the situation, the wonder is not that there should have been sporadic outbursts of violence, the miracle is that there should have been

¹¹⁰ *Republika-Górnik*, “Scuffles in Warsaw.” October 7, 1928. Pg 2. See also: *Republika-Górnik*, “Lodz in the hands of Socialists and Jews.” January 8, 1928. Pg 3. (After voting Jews hung “Red Standards” in the city). It should be noted that Poles were not only worried about the spread of communism in Poland, the press extensively followed international politics. For example, see: *Republika-Górnik*, “590 arrested in Berlin- fighting between communists and nationalists” May 15, 1927. Pg 1.

so little, and that any outbursts which did occur should have been stopped so quickly and with so little effusion of blood. In any other country civil war would have been almost unavoidable. That there should have been no pogroms in Poland as there have been in Hungary or in Ukraine, that there should be no civil war as in Ireland, is one more proof of the pacific and tolerant spirit of the Polish people. There is a superficial way of looking- upon every racial or national struggle as a melo-drama, where perfect heroes are at war with consummate villains. But truly the struggle between the Pole and the Jew is not a cinematographic melodrama. It is a human tragedy, where both sides have been victims of historical, geographical, and economic forces over which they had no control.¹¹¹

Several tensions in Poland existed. This is not to say in any way that antisemitism did not exist in Poland; it absolutely did (particularly after Piłsudski's death) and in innumerable ways put Jews, as a minority within Poland, at a very serious and deplorable disadvantage. Furthermore, antisemitism was very much tied to the idea that Catholicism was a signifier of true nationalism.¹¹² Much material has been written on the real existence of antisemitism in Poland;¹¹³ however, as the aforementioned scholars as well the Polish press reveals, tensions were more complex than are generally presented and while both parties participated in exacerbating these tensions both sides, to an extent, also tried to repair relations.

¹¹¹Sarolea, 103-104.

¹¹² For more on Polish-Catholic identity see: Brian Porter-Szücs. *Faith and Fatherland: Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Of particular interest are chapters 8 (The Jew) and 9 (Polak-Katolik).

¹¹³ As previously mentioned, the Polish-language press covered domestic and international antisemitism frequently, including in Poland. See for example: *Republika-Górnik*, "Antisemitism in the Soviet Union." Dec 23, 1928. Pg 1. *Republika-Górnik*, "Antisemitism in Lwow." June 16, 1929. Pg 3. *Republika-Górnik*, "Agitation by antisemitic nationalists in Poland." May 28, 1933. Pg 1. *Republika-Górnik*, "Rise of antisemitism (in the United States)." September 23, 1934. Pg 2. *Republika-Górnik*, "Antisemitic outbreaks in Romania (police do not intervene)." Dec 15, 1935. Pg 1. *Republika-Górnik*, "Pogrom in London England." October 16, 1936. Pg 1. *Republika-Górnik*, "Antisemitism grows in Poland." Oct 1, 1937. Pg 1. *Republika-Górnik*, "American School in Berlin is anti-Jewish." July 15, 1938. Pg 5. *Republika-Górnik*, "Antisemitism on rise in US." May 26, 1939. Pg 1. *Republika-Górnik*, "Antisemitism in US (worse than Germany before Hitler)." June 9, 1939. Pg 2. *Republika-Górnik*, "Antisemitism is a crime (in Poland)." Oct 26, 1945. Pg 1.

Outside of granting full civil rights, there were other means by which relations were attempted at being repaired. Treating Jewish issues of interest with respect and consideration was not uncommon. For example, the Polish press printed many stories of Jewish interest. With the Polish press claiming to have Polish interests at its core, it included and considered Jewish-related news as relevant, and treated the stories sincerely. For example, when Oscar S. Straus, the first American Jewish Minister, died, the *Republika-Górník* published his biography in honour of his service.¹¹⁴ Despite tensions, the press reported on July 1, 1928, that 11,263 Jews served in the Polish army and should be recognized for their efforts.¹¹⁵ The press also praised the fact that the Jewish museum in Krakow received a great sum of money after a wealthy citizen, Amelia Krygier, passed away.¹¹⁶ The Polish press posted light-hearted stories as well. For example, in Krakow, a Rabbi's daughter was getting married. She wanted to break the record for "kissing" and to accomplish this she would kiss every wedding guest. News of the bride's goal (and beauty) spread throughout the city, and she ended up spending four hours on her wedding day, granting a kiss to 7,001 persons who obliged. The article reporting this story ended jokingly, pondering what the groom was doing during that time.¹¹⁷

On April 3, 1927, an article was printed with the telling title "Tragedy from a joke," which detailed a husband's prank that went terribly wrong. In Warsaw, a lathe operator by the name of Szmul Silberberg told his wife, Nachuma, that while he was drinking his morning coffee he found a hair, not belonging to him, and teased before leaving for work, that because of this

¹¹⁴ *Republika-Górník*, "O. Strauss, First Jewish Minister Dies." May 9, 1926. Pg 1.

¹¹⁵ *Republika-Górník*, "Jews in the Polish Army" July 1, 1928. Pg. 3. Also reports on honourable citizens who have passed. For example, *Republika-Górník*, "A veteran from the civil war dies" (Moses Grunsein) August 5, 1928. Pg 1.

¹¹⁶ *Republika-Górník*, "Jewish museum in Krakow gains riches" Oct 7, 1928. Pg 1.

¹¹⁷ *Republika-Górník*, "Jewish bride kisses 7,001 wedding guests in four hours" July 15, 1928. Pg 2.

mishap, he was going to visit the Rabbi and ask for a divorce. The same day, around 2pm, a tradeswoman handling vegetables heard a baby wailing in the Silberberg residence. Curious, the tradeswoman looked into the residence and witnessed a tragic scene: Nachuma had hanged herself, and her seven month old infant was crying. Silberberg was devastated, claiming he thought for certain that his wife had realized he was joking. Not only is the way the article written telling, as it was written in a sympathetic and respectful tone, unlike condescending articles which blamed accidents on those involved, but the title also demonstrates the loss was unnecessary and regretted. The article was certainly not written in an antisemitic tone.¹¹⁸

More serious stories were also covered. When President Moscicki visited Catholic and Lutheran churches in Krakow, he also visited a synagogue in Kazimierz; he was blessed by Rabbi Kornitzer and thousands of enthusiastic Jews attended the event. This gesture was seen as an official attempt at religious peace.¹¹⁹ The feud between Henry Ford -a renowned and influential man known for the creation of the Ford automobile and less known for his potent antisemitic campaigns- and the Jewish community in the United States was also extensively covered with stories in favour of the Jewish response to Ford's antisemitic behaviour. Originally, the Polish press admired Ford for his many accomplishments,¹²⁰ but when Ford was exposed as a vehement antisemite, the press published articles in favour of the Jewish community which admonished Ford's behaviour.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ *Republika-Górnik*, "Tragedy from a joke." April 3, 1927. Pg 2.

¹¹⁹ *Republika-Górnik*, "Pres. Moscicki Blessed by Jewish Rabbi" October 9, 1927. Pg 1.

¹²⁰ *Republika-Górnik*, "Henry Ford First Billionaire." September 19, 1926. Pg 1.

¹²¹ *Dziennik Zwiazkowy*. "Attacks on Ford (by Jewish community) December 15, 1926. Pg. 1. See also, *Republika-Górnik*, "Ford Liquidates Dearborn Independent." December 11, 1927. Pg 1.

Henry Ford, born and raised in Dearborn, Michigan, was taught as a child that the Jews were responsible for Christ's death, but he later recalled that his childhood only minimally influenced his future character.¹²² During Ford's formative years, the Populist movement, which was held together by an evident "anti-Semitic thread,"¹²³ was becoming increasingly popular. This movement also had little influence on Ford's opinions as it was barely mentioned in his vast array of biographical literature. It is even argued that Ford had not actually met a Jewish person before the age of twenty.¹²⁴ A long time friend and eventually the head of the Chemical and Metallurgical Laboratory of the Ford Motor Company, John McCloud, would speculate after Ford's death that the only plausible yet vague attribute to Ford's antisemitism was the "social atmosphere of the time."¹²⁵ Whatever the impetus might have been, it was clear that for Ford as well as for others, antisemitism did not "require the presence of Jews, only their images- as in the powerful image of the profit-motivated Jew, the economic creature. . . whose God was money."¹²⁶ In contrast, many citizens in Germany were also unacquainted with Jews, who made up a minority in Germany, and instead perceived the Jews as dangerous based on 'myths' perpetuated through propaganda.¹²⁷ With mythical images of Jews in mind, Ford, with the assistance of John Cameron of the newspaper *The Dearborn Independent*, published numerous antisemitic articles from 1920 to 1927 in what "became the chief trumpet of anti-Semitism in

¹²² Neil Baldwin, *Henry Ford and the Jews: The Mass Production of Hate*. (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), 28.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹²⁷ Michael R. Marrus. *The Holocaust in History*. (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1987), 18-21.

America in the 1920s.”¹²⁸ Most notably, from 1920 to 1922 specific articles were compiled into four volumes entitled *The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem*.¹²⁹ The volumes dealt with stereotypical issues of Jewish supremacy in the motion picture industry and how Jews used their influence in the industry to manipulate the public mind.¹³⁰ Most notoriously, Ford published articles which claimed that “Red Bolshevism. . . [took] root under Jewish influences.”¹³¹ *The Dearborn Independent* also mass produced the antisemitic pamphlet *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* that argued Jews were initiating a program of world domination.

The *Protocols* was a document forged in 1905, allegedly by members of the Russian secret police, to raise the spectre of plans for world domination by a secret Jewish Committee plotting in Switzerland in 1897.¹³² The document stated that Bolshevism was a “phase of Judaism,”¹³³ and that in Russia, Jewish-Bolshevist leaders were being substantially funded by American banks.¹³⁴ The *Protocols*, later to be dubbed a “paper pogrom,”¹³⁵ associated the world’s ‘problem’ with the specific culture of the Russian Jews. The thesis of the *Protocols* was

¹²⁸ Arthur Hertzberg, *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter, A History*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 241.

¹²⁹ See: *The Protocols and World Revolution Including A Translation and Analysis of The “Protocols of the Meetings of the Zionist Men of Wisdom”* Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1920.

¹³⁰ *Jewish Activities in the United States* vol. II, of *The International Jew*, being a reprint of a second selection from articles appearing in *The Dearborn Independent* from Oct. 9, 1920 to March 19, 1921. (Michigan: The Dearborn publishing co., 1921), 32.

¹³¹ *Aspects of The Jewish Problem in the United States* vol. IV, of *The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem* being a reprint from a series of articles appearing in *The Dearborn Independent*, May 22, 1920 to May 22, 1922. (Michigan: The Dearborn publishing co., 1922), 46.

¹³² David s. Wyman. *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941*. (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1968), 17.

¹³³ *The Protocols and World Revolution Including A Translation and Analysis of The “Protocols of the Meetings of the Zionist Men of Wisdom.”* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1920), 4.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Baldwin, 106.

that the Russian Jews, with the help of American Jews, were planning to perpetuate Jewish hegemony at the international level through influence in finance, labour movements, and the press.¹³⁶ Hitler himself was influenced by *The Protocols* and considered them proof of an international Jewish conspiracy.¹³⁷ *The Protocols* were officially discredited as a forgery by 1921 yet their sales and popularity continued to increase. By being supported, reproduced, and widely circulated by Ford, already a well-known and respected business man in American popular culture, the *Protocols* undoubtedly influenced the many people who read them, thereby, perpetuating antisemitic feeling prior to the Second World War.

In 1937 Ford was the proud recipient of the Grand Service Cross of the Supreme Order of the German Eagle, presented by Germany as the highest honor that could be awarded to foreigners. Hitler chose Ford for the award in recognition that he “provided a great service to America and the world by attacking Jews.”¹³⁸ Ford was discredited by newspapers and forced to apologise for mass producing a forged piece of antisemitic propaganda as well as creating and distributing his own only after the *Protocols* were exposed as false.

The Polish press was very sympathetic to the Jewish community with regards to Ford. Like the rest of America, American Poles were fascinated by Ford, tracking his successes as a capitalist in the automobile industry.¹³⁹ However, in the late 1920s many articles switched away from complimentary coverage, and reported on the struggle between the billionaire and the Jews with attention-catching headlines such as “Jews demand Ford Stop Campaign Against Them”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ *Protocols*, 10.

¹³⁷ Adolf, Hitler. Trans by Ralph Manheim. *Mein Kampf*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin company, 1943), 307.

¹³⁸ Baldwin, 172.

¹³⁹ *Republika-Górnik*, “Henry Ford First Billionaire.” September 19, 1926. Pg. 1

¹⁴⁰ *Republika-Górnik*, “Jews demand Ford Stop Campaign against them.” Nov 28, 1926. Pg. 1

and “Jews against Ford.”¹⁴¹ Furthermore, the Polish press printed stories of the Jewish community’s success in exposing him.¹⁴² For example, a complimentary piece was printed about Aronow Shapiro, who received a medal from the Jewish community for helping to expose Ford’s antisemitism and dishonesty in farming deals.¹⁴³ The Poles supported the Jewish community when it came to their grievances with Ford and in return, when Jewish support of Poland was shown, recognition was given. For example, when a great turnout of Jewish citizens (in Poland) appeared to show support for the country’s tenth year of independence in 1928, the story drew major coverage on the front page of many newspapers.¹⁴⁴

The most telling articles dealing with Jewish-Gentile relations were those that reported on antisemitism, both in Poland and elsewhere. Many reports of tensions in Kovno, Lithuania, were re-printed from *Lietuvos Aidas*, an organ of the government, describing how “tensions with Lithuanians show that Lithuanians have zero inclination to assimilate their Jews, and that Jews themselves do not wish to be assimilated.”¹⁴⁵ Another story reported how fourteen Jewish clerks were fired from city council in Kovno.¹⁴⁶ Generally such articles were not of interest to many (gentile) newspapers (the Jewish Telegraph Agency followed such stories closely), but the Polish

¹⁴¹ *Republika-Górník*, “Jews against Ford.” March 27, 1927. Pg. 4.

¹⁴² *Republika-Górník*, “Ford Changes His Front.” July 24, 1927. Pg. 1.

¹⁴³ *Republika-Górník*, “Shapiro receives medal.” April 15, 1928. Pg 1. See also, *Republika-Górník*, “Ford liquidates Dearborn Independent.” December 11, 1927. Pg. 1.

¹⁴⁴ *Republika-Górník*, “In Poland, even the Jews celebrate 10 years of independence.” November 18, 1928. Pg 1.

¹⁴⁵ *Republika-Górník*, “Tensions show Lithuanians have zero inclination to assimilate Jews, and that Jews themselves do not wish to be assimilated.” August 26, 1928. Pg 1. The article details the pogroms in Lithuania by the fascist group “Iron Wolves” where 30 were injured and property was destroyed.

¹⁴⁶ *Republika-Górník*, “14 clerks fired from city council for being Jewish.” January 22, 1928. Pg 1

press followed and printed such stories on a weekly if not daily basis demonstrating an interested and objective reading of Jewish issues.¹⁴⁷

There are two schools of thought on inter-war relations between Jews and Poles. As Ezra Mendelson notes in “Interwar Poland: good for the Jews or bad for the Jews?” there was the Jewish school –in which not all proponents were Jewish- and the Polish school, in which not all proponents were Polish. The Jewish camps claimed that Poland was ‘uniquely’ antisemitic and that the interwar period was, as Celia Heller suggests in *On the Edge of Destruction*, a “rehearsal for the Holocaust period.”¹⁴⁸

In this scenario, the Poles “pushed the Jews to the ‘edge of destruction,’ and the Nazis (with Polish help) destroyed them.”¹⁴⁹ Such assertions have been challenged by scholars such as Joseph Marcus (a Polish Jew) and Polish historian Jerzy Tomaszewski. Marcus claims that in the 1930s, Jews were more economically stable than the Poles, and that Polish attempts at hampering this economic success –such as using *numerus clausus* or the Sunday rest law- were fruitless. Marcus asserts that Polish strikes against Jewish businesses caused the real damage, and the “real problem was Polish poverty and Jewish over-population.”¹⁵⁰ Jews in Poland faced hardship “because they lived in a poor underdeveloped country. Discrimination added only marginally to their poverty.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ Other articles from the *Republika-Górnik* include: “Antisemitism in Soviet Union.” December 23, 1928. Pg. 1 “Antisemitic demonstrations in Prussia.” January 6, 1929. Pg. 1. “Boycott of Jews in Smolensk University” May 5, 1929. Pg. 3 “Antisemitism in Lwów.” June 16, 1929. Pg. 3.

¹⁴⁸ Michael R. Marrus, ed. *The Nazi Holocaust: Historical Articles on the Destruction of European Jews*. Vol. 5. *Public Opinion and Relations to the Jews in Nazi Europe*. Vol. 1. (Meckler: Meckler Ltd., 1989) Pg. 250.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Joseph Marcus. *Social and political history of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939*. (Berlin: Moulton Publishers, 1983), 231.

Tomaszewski agrees that the historiography on Polish-Jewish relations has emphasised Polish ‘backwardness’ when the focus should be, not in isolation, on economic and social issues. He continues his claim that societal grievances were just as much the fault of Jews as Poles, because Jews did not support the idea of an independent Polish state. Despite this, Poles would show great empathy towards the Jews, especially in the 1930s with their worsening situation in Germany. In direct opposition to Heller, Norman Davies retorts that “the destruction of Polish Jewry during the Second World War was...in no way connected to their earlier tribulations.”¹⁵² In the way of relations with the Poles, “[a]ll was not well: but neither was it unrelieved gloom.”¹⁵³ This is evident in both a “vital” Jewish community which flourished creatively as well the influx of Jews choosing to enter (or remain) in the country. The fact that Poles and Jews lived in a tense situation cannot be reduced to antisemitism, as Władysław Bartoszewski claims, and Mendelson is correct that antisemitism should not be removed from the equation, “but the fact that no one really knows *how* to define this phenomenon” is problematic.¹⁵⁴ Mendelson considers whether Polish support for Jewish emigration in the late 1920s was antisemitic, or a rational response to over-crowding and economic instability. Whereas many Jews perceived support of emigration as antisemitic, many Polish Zionists, including leaders, supported emigration, a fact that was well known in Poland.¹⁵⁵ Yitshak Grünbaum –a Polish-Jewish political leader in favour of Zionism and Jewish emigration from Poland- and others were

¹⁵²Norman Davies. *God’s playground: a history of Poland*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), Pg. 263.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Michael R. Marrus, ed. *Public Opinion and Relations to the Jews in Nazi Europe*. Vol.1. Pg. 252.

¹⁵⁵*Republika-Górnik*, “Jews want to immigrate to America.” October 29, 1937. Pg 1. See also: *Republika-Górnik*, “Jews want to emigrate.” August 5 , 1938. Pg 2.

accused of being antisemites rather than realists.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, many Poles claimed that Jews refused to consider emigration, and were in fact returning to Poland from Palestine,¹⁵⁷ precisely because conditions in Poland were ‘not so bad.’¹⁵⁸ Polish opinion was made clear through the Polish press in North America; they interpreted and upheld that Jews were treated in a respectful and tolerant manner.

Concerning Polish antisemitism used (both justly and unjustly) in anti-Polish propaganda, as late as 1937, Zionist Apolinary Hartglass stressed that Russia, and not Poland, “was the scene of the most terrible pogroms of the prewar years and that the current anti-Semitic terror was the work of a few men of ill will.”¹⁵⁹ Without the agitation by radical members of the Endecja, (a Polish right-wing nationalist political movement) the majority of Poles and Jews lived civilly. Mendelson himself agreed that “Jews do often exaggerate their suffering” but they are not alone as other minorities “including the Poles” were guilty of this also. He concurred with Marcus that “most Jews were in fact better off than most peasants...[and] that Polish Jewry after 1933 was in a happier situation than German Jewry.”¹⁶⁰

Furthermore, narrowing down the “Jewish problem” to only an economic one is too simplistic, as antisemitism was more pronounced in western regions where the population was more economically stable. Poland, after the First World War, did inherit “a Jewish problem.” Mendelson states that:

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 252-253.

¹⁵⁷ *Republika-Górnik*, “Jews are returning to Poland from Palestine!” August 28, 1927. Pg 7.

¹⁵⁸ *Republika-Górnik*, “Not so Bad for Jews in Poland.” March 21, 1926. Pg 7.

¹⁵⁹ Michael R. Marrus, ed. *Public Opinion and Relations to the Jews in Nazi Europe*. Vol.1. Pg. 253.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 254.

the crucial factor here was the belief among the governing Polish elite that Poland had re-emerged as a nation state –when being a ‘nation’ was defined as being able to absorb certain non-Polish elements but not being able, or not desiring, to absorb the Jews...Israelis are in a good position to understand that any state which defines itself as a mono-ethnic entity, but which in fact includes within its borders members of other ethnic groups that cannot be absorbed, must act in a way which is deleterious to the interests of these other groups.¹⁶¹

Conversely, he claimed that Jews should acknowledge they “owe Poles a good deal.” The debt of gratitude for “Polish freedom” offered to Jews allowed them in the 1920s and the 1930s to “participate in politics, open schools, and write as they pleased.”¹⁶² And although there is no doubt that the inter-war years witnessed antisemitism, Polish Jews predominantly experienced “Polish freedom, pluralism, and tolerance.”¹⁶³ Therefore, interwar Poland was “bad for the Jews, in the sense that it excluded them from first-class membership in the state. . . [i]nterwar Poland was good for the Jews because... it provided an environment in which forces were unleashed in the Jewish world which many Jews regarded then, and today, as extremely positive.” Historian Michael Marrus rightly asserts that “it would be idle to underestimate the national and even more so, the cultural differences between Jews and Poles. The Poles refused to accept the Jews, but the Jews did not want to be fully accepted. Few Jews in Poland wished to give up their heritage”¹⁶⁴ because, as Joseph Marcus claims, “cultural uniformity was undesirable” (by the Jews).¹⁶⁵

Polish-Jewish relations were not exclusive to Poland in the inter-war years; “they also took place in the United States between the sizeable group of Polish and Jewish immigrants and

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 256.

¹⁶² Ibid., 257.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 258.

¹⁶⁴ Marcus, 327.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

between these communities and their counterparts.”¹⁶⁶ The “mutual relations they established were similar to those which existed in the Polish villages they left: frequent commercial contacts, but complete social and cultural separation accompanied by mutually negative stereotypes.” Old Polish prejudices against Jews’ success and their alleged favouring of Prussia and Russia, and old Jewish prejudices in the form of accusing of Poles of antisemitism with every misunderstanding or disagreement, “were transferred to intergroup relations in America.”¹⁶⁷ Both of these communities kept close contact with their respective enclaves in Poland. Poles and Polish-Jews considered themselves to be part of a diaspora and therefore were extremely involved with what was happening in the old country. Due to this strong connection, “nationalistic ideologies dealing with the future of the Polish and Jewish Nations in Eastern Europe became very popular with members of both groups in the United States in the beginning of the twentieth century.”¹⁶⁸ Polish opinion, as evident through the Polish press in North America, held that Jews were treated in a tolerant manner (and had been for centuries), and that Jews’ civil rights were safeguarded by the constitution.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, Jews in Poland were granted “social and cultural autonomy” and repaid that tolerance with “unfair economic competition, a lack of loyalty to the Polish state, took sides with the enemies of Poland,

¹⁶⁶ Andrzej Kapiszewski. “The Federation of Polish Jews in America in Polish-Jewish Relations during the Interwar Jews (1924-1939). *Polish American Studies*. Vol. 56, No. 2 (Autumn, 1999), pp. 45-68. Pg 45.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 46.

¹⁶⁹ With ‘The Jewish Community Law of 1927’ approximately 600,000 Jews, whose right to Polish citizenship was questioned by the pre-1926 authorities, were later naturalized. In March 1931, the Sejm passed a special act, “which formally abolished formally all legal restrictions on Jews’ rights, dating since the times of partition.” See: Marcus, 327. Also see: *Republika-Górniki*, “Polish Jews and the Constitution.” March 31, 1935. Pg 4.

promoted communist ideology, had a negative influence on many aspects of Polish life, refused to integrate with Polish society and, finally, tired to establish a ‘state within a state.’¹⁷⁰

In 1928, the Federation of Polish Jews in America¹⁷¹ held a concert in celebration of its twentieth anniversary in order to raise funds to assist Polish Jews. The president of the Federation, Benjamin Winter, and Deputy Jan Ciechanowski both expressed a sense of loyalty towards Poland, even though they were now citizens of the United States, stating they both shared a strong connection to Polish issues. Ciechanowski praised Poles, who for centuries had granted Jews relative safety in Poland, and encouraged Jews (for the second time) to take their obligations as Polish citizens seriously.¹⁷² It is clear that Polish Americans, as evidenced by the press and Federation, promoted peace between both parties.

The *Republika-Górnik* did not view Jews as their enemy; the paper, like most Poles, viewed tensions as disloyal and dangerous but saw external aggressors as the real enemy. In an article titled “Disappointment,” enemies of the state –Lithuanians, Germans, and Bolsheviks- were outlined. They were the belligerents who united in an attempt to destroy Poland and take possession of the corridor to the sea. There were no hidden allusions to Bolsheviks being Jews; regardless of race or faith, an enemy of Poland had earned that title through belligerence. Although many skirmishes were the result of Jews supporting Bolshevik politics and displays,¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Kapiszewski, 47.

¹⁷¹ For more on the Federation of Polish Jews in America see: Andrzej Kapiszewski. “The Federation of Polish Jews in America in Polish-Jewish Relations during the Interwar Jews (1924-1939). *Polish American Studies*. Vol. 56, No. 2 (Autumn, 1999), pp. 45-68.

¹⁷² *Republika-Górnik*, “Deputy J. Ciechanowski addresses Jews.” May 6, 1928. Pg 1.

¹⁷³ *Republika-Górnik*, “They disappointed Us” June 13 , 1926. Pg 4.

the two were not mutually exclusive. Poland's chief concern¹⁷⁴ by 1929 and surely in the 1930s was Germany's plans for domination and destruction.¹⁷⁵

Beyond news of attempts to repair strained relations between Poles and Jew, are an abundance of news articles on the inevitability of war. It was the threat of future war and the reality of present antagonism by the Nazis that, in a very real way, bridged the gap between gentile Poles and Jews, particularly in the 1930s. Despite strained relations, Poles and Jews had a common enemy which strengthened their solidarity. War predictions, both sincere and dramatized, were nothing new in the 1920s and 1930s, but the analogies between the pretext to the First World War and those made for the upcoming war (particularly focusing on Germany's militarism) were remarkably intuitive.¹⁷⁶

To state that the destruction of Poland as a nation and as a people was a long-term goal of German militarism is not novel. The complete eradication of Poland "became the principal and unchanging goal of the policies first of Prussia and then of Germany united under Prussia's aegis."¹⁷⁷ Telling titles of other newer sources such as *Poland's Holocaust* or *Forgotten Holocaust* remind historians of Hitler's and Himmler's proclamations clearly outlining, as early

¹⁷⁴ This dissertation focuses on Poland's relationship with Germany regarding war and the Holocaust; however, it should be noted that in 1926, the Polish government was merely interested in easing strained relations with Russia but by 1929, it had agreed to take part in the Litvinov Protocol basically applying the tenants of the Kellogg-Briand Pact between Russia and neighboring Western countries. Three years later, the non-aggression pact was signed with Russia. In part, this was Poland's international demonstration of complete willingness for maintaining peace. Although, even in 1926, Poland named Germany as its 'main agitator.' See: *Republika-Górnik*, "German-Polish War Will End." July 4, 1926. Pg 1.

¹⁷⁵ Even in 1926, Poland named Germany as its 'main agitator.' See: *Republika-Górnik*, "German-Polish War Will End." July 4, 1926. Pg 1.

¹⁷⁶ See: *Republika-Górnik*, "Another War is Hovering over Europe." May 2, 1926. Pg 1 or *Republika-Górnik*, "Pan-Germans Foresee the Union of Austria with Germany." July 11, 1926. Pg 1.

¹⁷⁷ Prepared by Halina Brodzka et al. "*Poland and the German Question.*" (Poznan: Western Press Agency, 1963) 8.

as 1939, the eventual plan to eliminate all Polish people.¹⁷⁸ On August 22, 1939, Hitler granted his commanders permission to kill "without pity or mercy, men, women, and children of Polish descent or language." Clear orders were systematically initiated to commit genocide against the Poles, first gentile, then Jewish, but *all* Poles. On September 7, 1939 Reinhard Heydrich proclaimed that all Polish clergy, nobles and Jews were to be killed. Five days later, the intelligentsia was added to the order, and by March 15, 1940, Himmler decreed: "*All Polish specialists will be exploited in our military-industrial complex. Later, all Poles will disappear from this world. It is imperative that the great German nation considers the elimination of all Polish people as its chief task.*"¹⁷⁹

In fact, anti-Polish sentiment and exterminatory language can be traced back at least 200 years before Hitler. Because Poland had experienced multiple partitions and did not exist as a nation for over 150 years, a keen sense of history and memory was very much at the forefront of Polish relations with both Germany and the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s. An 'official' anti-Polish sentiment was evident in the ideology and policies of Frederick the Great, who cultivated a deep hatred of Poles. After his successful conquest of Poland in 1772, he equated "slovenly Polish trash" with the Iroquois of Canada, whom he considered a prime example of barbaric humanity deservedly conquered. Later, in the nineteenth century, it was conventional for Germans to compare Poles and 'Indians;' this became "a favourite theme of Prussian politicians...[arguing] that Poles were as doomed as the American redskins."¹⁸⁰ In fact, both

¹⁷⁸ Many intentionalists refer back to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* as evidence of premeditated genocide plans. This author takes a middle ground approach, but states that the origins of the Holocaust occurred sooner than currently regarded (1939-1940 vs. 1941-1942).

¹⁷⁹Piotrowski, 23. Emphasis is my own.

¹⁸⁰ David Blackbourn and James N. Retallack. *Localism, Landscape, and the Ambiguities of Place: German-speaking Central Europe, 1860-1930*. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2007). Pg.157.

Hitler and Hans Frank, the Governor-General of the General Government, would continue to use this analogy and compare Poles and Jews to ‘Indians.’¹⁸¹ In Frederick the Great’s complete conquest of Poland, Poles faced very similar persecution methods as they would under the Nazis in the 1930s: the Polish nobility was removed, different citizenship laws were enforced (such as paying higher taxes than the Germans), and the Catholic church was destabilized and its property seized. Furthermore, the Polish-language was stigmatized and Poles were forced to speak German. After 1795, Poles were under dual occupation, as they would be during the Second World War, and faced both Germanization and Russification.

The Russian government used a similar anti-Polish campaign which also included confiscating property and removing the nobility, persecuting Catholicism and prohibiting the use of the Polish-language. Poles who would not cooperate would be executed or sent to katorga camps. These camps have their origin in seventeenth century Siberia, where harsh labour was forced and weather conditions and food supplies were unfavourable. After a new penal law was enacted in 1847, more Polish ‘rebels’ were sent, by an order from Czar Nicholas I, for katorga where they were referred to as Sybiracy due to their sizeable population.¹⁸² French historian Jules Michelet commented on Russian policy towards the Poles at this time, claiming that the policy “was undertaken not only to kill Poland, her language, literature and national civilization, but to kill the Poles, to annihilate them as a race, to root out the heart of the nation.”¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Most of the rebels were composed from the November and January Uprisings, the rebellion of 1905-1907, and in 1939 with the Soviet Invasion. See Jerzy Jan Lerski et al, *Historical Dictionary of Poland, 966-1945*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996.

¹⁸³ Jules Michelet. *The Martyrs of Russia*. Trans. Author Unknown. (London: Reeves and Turner, 1851), 73.

In Prussia, and later Germany, Poles were forbidden to hold property.

Bismarck described Poles, as animals (wolves), that "one shoots if one can" and implemented laws which aimed at their expulsion from (historically) Polish lands. It was illegal to speak the Polish-language in public, and ethnic Polish children were punished in school for speaking their native language. Poles were subjected to evictions or '*Rugi Pruskie*' and the "German government financed and encouraged settlement of ethnic Germans into those areas aiming at their geopolitical Germanization while the Prussian Landtag passed laws against Catholics."¹⁸⁴

After the First World War, Poland's borders were hardly accepted by its previous occupiers. Persecution in disputed territories, such as in Silesia continued to inspire the 'Silesian Uprisings.' In the inter-war period, anti-Polish sentiment was as prevalent as ever. American historian Gerhard Weinberg purported that in the Weimar Republic many considered Poland "an abomination" with its citizens dubbed "an East European species of cockroach." Poland was commonly called a *Saisonstaat* (a state for a season), inferring that its independence would be short-lived. Germans also used the phrase *polnische wirtschaft* or "Polish economy" to describe an unfavourable economic situation. Weinberg states that in the 1920s and 1930s "every leading German politician refused to accept Poland as a legitimate nation, and hoped instead to partition Poland with the Soviet Union."¹⁸⁵

The foreign-language press was clearly disturbed by Germany's attitude towards Poland. Although Poland actively promoted peace and cooperation in an attempt to avoid war, including outreach initiatives such as Polish youth inviting German students to learn and partake in Polish

¹⁸⁴Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution*, 7.

¹⁸⁵ Gerhard L. Weinberg. *Germany, Hitler, and World War II: essays in modern German and world history*. (Cambridge University Press, 1995) Pg 42.

culture,¹⁸⁶ Germany showed little interest in consolidating peaceful relations. In fact, an “Office of Anti-Polish Affairs” led by Dr. Dammonn was reported in 1928, with a goal of encouraging German plans for taking over Polish territory.¹⁸⁷ Polish journalists working in Germany in the late 1920s and early 1930s were seen as a threat to German image and quickly ‘removed.’¹⁸⁸ Stories from Germany were constantly being featured to demonstrate Germany’s true ambitions. For example, an article reprinted from *Der Tag* (a newspaper published in Berlin) claimed that peace with Poland could indeed be achieved, by Poland giving Germany its maritime region; this was the only ‘real’ impediment.¹⁸⁹ The Polish press was clear in its response to this suggestion: “there is no Poland without access to the sea.”¹⁹⁰

In the United States, it was reported that 90% of American Germans were going to vote for Herbert Hoover for president, believing that Hoover would support Germany in obtaining pre-war territory.¹⁹¹ But the Polish public (both in American and Poland) and press were not worried; Hoover recognized Poland as an independent nation and gave no indication that he would act in favour of Germany.¹⁹² Poland showed open support towards those it considered its allies, and the press seriously valued the opinions of outsiders. Poland felt it was treating its citizens, including Jews and minorities, fairly and wanted to combat anti-Polish propaganda. Poland wanted to encourage tourism, especially from the United States. The country planned

¹⁸⁶ *Republika-Górnik*, “German Students in Poland.” November 14, 1926. Pg 1.

¹⁸⁷ *Republika-Górnik*, “Office for Anti-Polish Action.” January 15, 1928. Pg 3.

¹⁸⁸ *Republika-Górnik*, “Germans Expel Polish Journalists.” May 5, 1929. Pg. 3 And *Republika-Górnik*, “Attack on Polish Artists was pre-planned.” May 12, 1929. Pg. 7.

¹⁸⁹ *Republika-Górnik*, “Poland and Germany.” November 4, 1928. Pg 1.

¹⁹⁰ *Republika-Górnik*, “Poland must hold a strong front.” November 25, 1928. Pg 2.

¹⁹¹ *Republika-Górnik*, “German Americans to vote for Herbert Hoover.” July 22, 1928. Pg 1.

¹⁹² *Republika-Górnik*, “In Poland Poles are happy with the choice of Hoover.” November 18, 1928. Pg 2.

initiatives to refurbish its hotels, lower the prices of visa passports, and print appealing and illustrative tourist pamphlets. With the country under international scrutiny, if it had “anything to hide,” especially with regard to abusing the Jewish population or antagonizing Germany toward war, it certainly would not be encouraging critical tourists to come to Poland and “confirm” accusations of unsavoury behaviour.¹⁹³

Several articles reprinted from mainstream newspapers demonstrated how other visitors viewed their time in the country. After visiting Warsaw, Frank Simonds –a prominent American journalist- claimed that Poland was the “greatest post-war miracle in Europe.” While other countries survived the war, and were faced with food shortages and inflation, Poland had an additional double burden of a war against Bolshevism in 1920, but also the antagonism of Germany calling Poland a nation “for a season.”¹⁹⁴ In another article, Charles Dewey from the *New York Evening Post* wrote that despite the tremendous costs, Poland was working hard to pay off its war debts, a demonstration of Poland’s economic progress. He also wrote that the Polish mining industry was particularly successful and held great promise for Poland’s future economic security.¹⁹⁵ Poland encouraged open tourism, unlike the segregated areas that tourists would be allowed to visit in Germany during the Olympics, and felt it had nothing to hide. The Polish press was “waking up to the necessity of organizing publicity in foreign countries, not only in order to stimulate the tourist business but also to let the world at large...know the truth about [their] country.”¹⁹⁶ The greatest complaint British visitors had was that Poles talked “about

¹⁹³ *Republika-Górnik*, “Poland (is) interesting to international tourists.” January 15, 1928. Pg 3.

¹⁹⁴ *Republika-Górnik*, “What a prominent American journalist has to say about Poland.” April 15, 1928. Pg 2.

¹⁹⁵ *Republika-Górnik*, “What does the “New York Evening Post” say about Poland.” June 10, 1928. Pg 4.

¹⁹⁶ *Poland-America*. “A Little More Publicity.” Vol. XII. No. 9. Sept, 1931. Pg 405.

nothing else...but the so-called “corridor” and German revisionist plans.”¹⁹⁷ Despite the threat of civil war, tense Polish-Jewish and Polish-German relations, and economic and political issues, Poland had survived the 1920s, only to re-visit these issues with greater need and force in the 1930s.

¹⁹⁷ *Poland-America*. “As a Britisher Sees Poland.” Vol. XII. No. 12. Dec, 1931. Pg 548.

Chapter 2: Prelude to the Hitler Years 1929-1933

War alone can carry to the maximum tension all human energies and imprint with the seal of nobility those people who have the courage to confront it; every other test is a mere substitute.
Benito Mussolini, 1930.

One seldom recognizes the devil when he is putting his hand on your shoulder.
Albert Speer

For the Polish community in the United States, the early 1930s saw the same issues of interest as the 1920s.¹ The Polish-language press was equally concerned with Polish-Jewish relations and with Poland as a whole. On January 6, 1930, a story dominated the front page of the *Republika-Górnik* claiming that “Jews had a paradise in Poland.” The Jewish Telegraphic Agency claimed that there was no place better, with regard to political and social freedoms, than the United States and Poland.² Of course this was an exaggeration; not only were tensions evident in Poland but the United States struggled with relations as well. This chapter examines Jewish relations in Europe and America before Hitler took power, as well as how the growing threat of Nazism was reported.

In the United States, the years leading up to the Second World War witnessed many public manifestations of antisemitism, which ultimately contributed to the atmosphere of unsympathetic feeling toward the Jews. A portion of Jewish immigrants attempted to assimilate and sought out the facilities offered by the existing Jewish community. One method which

¹Support was shown for furthering Polish laws in favour of Polish-Jews. *Republika-Górnik*, “Abolishment of restrictive laws against Jews.” September 28, 1930. Pg 1.

² *Republika-Górnik*, “Jews have a paradise in Poland.” January 6, 1929. Pg 1.

offered immigrants a transition from their culture into the American culture was the adaptation of English. Yiddish newspapers offered help in Americanizing their readers linguistically by providing articles written in English at different levels of difficulty.³ *The Morgen Journal* defined Americanization as one accepting “the best that the spirit” of America had to offer.⁴ For some Jews, however, the best of the American spirit meant being exploited in the work force. In order to understand how America responded to the Holocaust it is important to be familiar with the situation for Jewish citizens in the United States. Some immigrants, Jews among them, were promised work at their trade and when reaching their destination, were required to do hard labour in harsh weather conditions for minimal pay.⁵ For other Jews, different forms of discrimination would also limit their desire and ability to assimilate into American society.

Assimilation to the American ideal of a citizen, namely white, Protestant, working-class, patriotic, and preferably native-born, was something which could only be achieved if one was already aware of the persona one was shedding in exchange for the American role. The great disunity within the Jewish communities provided additional obstacles to Americanization. A letter dated February 6, 1906, by Leo Stamm, a member of a small Jewish settlement in Meriden, Mississippi, described how “every one of the [Russian Jews] [was] trying to get the title of a German Jew,”⁶ a differentiation which held great sway as to how a Jew was perceived within as well as outside the Jewish community. The German Jews were traditionally viewed as tolerable

³ *Morgen Journal*, 1907, in Mordecai Soltes, PH.D., *The Yiddish Press: An Americanizing Agency*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925), 35.

⁴ *Morgen Journal*, July 14, 1915 in Mordecai Soltes, PH.D., *The Yiddish Press: An Americanizing Agency*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925), 189.

⁵ The Unskilled Immigrant in Chicago ‘Immigrants Protective League’ in Edith Abbot, ed. *Immigration: Select Documents and Case Records*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 484.

⁶ Letter of Leo Stamm In Robert A. Rockaway ed. *Words of the Uprooted: Jewish immigrants in Early Twentieth-Century America*. (London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 200.

by mainstream Americans, whereas the Russian Jews were analogous to the Bolshevik menace, a stereotype that would become especially problematic in the 1920s. Despite the restrictive immigration policy and tension between cultures within the Jewish communities, Jews chose to immigrate to the United States with hopes of opportunity and success, but were instead greeted by social and economic restrictions.

In 1904, Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, the dean of Harvard University's Lawrence Scientific School, claimed that Jewish students were 'irritating,' 'presumptuous' and "not interesting to [him] from a racial point of view."⁷ A. Lawrence Lowell of Harvard University also voiced his perspective on Jewish students, which mirrored the mainstream social consensus that the percentage of Jewish citizens should be limited in political, economic, and educational spheres of society. In 1922, the Quota System, which targeted Jews, was enforced at Harvard in hope of curbing the ever-increasing anti-Semitic feeling among the students which Lowell claimed grew in response to the "increase in the number of Jews."⁸ Lowell claimed that the hostility of the gentile clubs, hotels, and private schools was a reaction to "evils for the Jews," which could be remedied by further limiting the proportion of Jews in Harvard, eventually limiting the "race feeling among the students, and, as those students passed out into the world, eliminating it in the community."⁹ In Poland however, responses to antisemitism veered away from apologetically explaining current policies, and included a variety of initiatives to mend relations.

⁷ "The Hebrew Problem" 1904 in Lewis H. Carlson and George A. Colburn ed. *In Their Place: White America Defines Her Minorities, 1850-1950*. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1972), 267.

⁸ President Lowell of Harvard Defends the Quota System, 1922, in Lewis H. Carlson and George A. Colburn ed. *In Their Place: White America Defines Her Minorities, 1850-1950*. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1972), 283.

⁹ Ibid.

In Poland, despite existing tensions,¹⁰ Jews “succeeded in creating...the most important center of Yiddish culture as well as in developing their own communal organizations, youth movement, press, theater, even party politics.”¹¹ With Polish unity and identity at the forefront of Poland’s prerogatives, “it can be considered a paradox that in spite of the strong nationalist pressure of the Polish right wing and even some of the centrist parties...and the growing nationalism of the ruling elite, interwar Poland was the scene of a very differentiated, colorful, and rich intellectual life for the national minorities’ communities.”¹² True, there was anti-German and anti-Russian sentiment due to Poland’s tumultuous history with both countries, which were only intensified with the anti-Polish politics of the German Republic and eventually the Third Reich. In other cases, unrest was caused by economic issues or anti-Jewish propaganda (usually initiated by right-wing parties) ending in violence against Jews, or at times (like in Lwów) anti-Ukrainian clashes. Generally, however, “everyday life often led to normal neighborhood relations between people of different nationality.”¹³

Outside of Polish-Jewish relations, the American-Jewish and Polish American press was more concerned with monitoring international rather than national disputes. Particularly distressing were the concessions made to the Versailles Treaty by President Coolidge and the rise of Nazism. At the end of 1928, President Coolidge signed a bill which returned sections of land to Germany as a symbol of eliminating tension between the two nations.¹⁴ The Versailles Treaty

¹⁰ In 1931, 87% of the Jewish population (3,113,933) reported Yiddish or Hebrew as their native tongue. A symbol of the continued disconnect between Jews and Poles despite political concessions and guarantees for all minorities in Poland, including Jews. Timothy Wiles, ed. *Poland Between the Wars: 1918-1939*. (Bloomington, Indiana. December, 1989), 164.

¹¹ Ibid. 163-164.

¹² Ibid., 177.

¹³ Ibid., 178.

was widely contested from its inception. Polish Americans were of the opinion that there was nothing unfair about German reparations. Although the treaty was used as a propaganda tool by Hitler and the Nazis against the Allied powers, in reality, it was not excessive. Germany itself had placed harsher demands on France and Russia with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (1871). As far as reparations were concerned, France had paid more after 1871 than Germany did after 1919, partly because German payments were eventually cancelled. With regard to territory, Russia lost more land after the First World War than did Germany. The war guilt clause, particularly distasteful for German nationalists, helped create the ‘stab in the back myth’ which in reality was the result of the German army failing to recognize and admit that it indeed had lost the war. A decade after the Great War, Polish Americans still kept close watch on German reparations¹⁵ as well as the growth of Nazism which exacerbated other post-war tensions.

By the mid-1920s and early 1930s, reports on Nazism or the activities of ‘Hitlerites’ were common. Whereas mainstream American media found news of this sort unimportant until shortly before Hitler took power, North American Poles and the press were immediately engaged. In the autumn of 1930, the press claimed that since the Nazis rise in popularity and claims of being the “party of the future,” a close and careful examination of their leader’s political ambitions, as expressed in *Mein Kampf*, was necessary. The interest in *Mein Kampf* at this early stage is telling as most people, and certainly most of the foreign press, did not take the book seriously. Its original impact after publication (in 1926) was minimal as the book barely sold until after Hitler took power and made the manifesto required reading for all willing (and sometimes unwilling) Nazis. Many intentionalists’ consider *Mein Kampf* the ‘blueprint’ for Hitler’s plan not only for the Second World War and his quest for *Lebensraum*, but also for the Holocaust, as he calls for

¹⁴ *Republika-Górnik*, “Coolidge Signs Bill conceding land back to Germany.” March 18, 1928. Pg 1.

¹⁵ *Republika-Górnik*, “Germany still indebted \$217,144,197.” March 11, 1928. Pg. 1.

not only the ‘elimination’ of all Jews, but all Poles and other ‘undesirables’ also. In hindsight, the press was also partially intentionalist in its interpretation of events as it took Hitler’s claims and ambitions outlined in the book very seriously.

First and foremost, the press interpreted the book as an outline of Hitler’s political agenda for territorial conquest, and second as an expression of deep hatred that would have consequences for those not in his favour, the *untermensch* (subhuman). According to the press, the manifestation of hatred, expressed by intolerant behaviour toward the *untermensch* whose land Hitler wanted to possess, was bound to lead to war. Although the achievement of Hitler’s goals would be realized only through violence,¹⁶ the culmination of that hatred in the form of the Holocaust would not, and could not, have been perceived in the early 1930s.¹⁷

The immediate concern of the press in the mid-1920s revolved around Hitler’s blatant proclamations regarding the necessity of taking over Danzig from Poland. The Free City of Danzig was created in November 1920 in accordance with the Versailles Treaty, and had been a bone of contention between Germany and Poland ever since. According to the Treaty, it belonged neither to Germany nor Poland, but was under the protection of the League of Nations. However, Poland was in a customs union with the League, giving the country legal authority over communication, transportation and port facilities in the area. Ethnic Poles were a minority in the area, and were oppressed by Germans who forced Germanization on the local Poles and committed out-right violence and acts of persecution. The Free City had a long Polish history,¹⁸

¹⁶ *Republika-Górniki*, “Germans strive to territorial conquest of Poland and Russia.” October 12, 1930. Pg. 1.

¹⁷ There is still debate on whether or not *Mein Kampf* is indicative of Hitler’s plans for genocide. Take as an example an upcoming conference on the topic: *Mein Kampf*, warrant for genocide or *corpus delicti*? At the University of Manchester, School of Arts, Languages and Cultures. Planned for 2016.

¹⁸ See <http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Poland.htm#Danzig>

and Poland felt it should have full rights to the corridor which granted passage to the Baltic Sea. Because Poland relied heavily on exporting goods into the country, and because most of the country's importing and exporting activity happened in the area, any threat to accessing the sea through Danzig, the port of Gdynia, or the corridor was not merely a matter of pride but of economic stability and independence.

Just a few months after Hitler became dictator (January 30, 1933), the Nazi Party seized Danzig on May 28th and used force to ensure local cooperation, causing many Poles and Jews to flee the area (after the German invasion of Poland in 1939, Germany formally incorporated the area as Danzig-West Prussia). The next year, on January 26, 1934, Hitler and Poland signed the Pact of Non-Aggression which failed to tame the 'ruthlessness' of Nazi policy against Poles in Danzig. The League of Nations failed to intervene as a part of its appeasement policy and Poland remained 'tame' for the sake of good relations.¹⁹

Generally, discussions of the preconditions to the Second World War rarely focus on the corridor struggle.²⁰ If it is mentioned, the struggle is rarely attributed as one of the main causes for inspiring war. Currently, the accepted formula for the path to war includes various non-aggression pacts (which were never meant to be honoured), the annexation of Austria, the annexation of the Sudetenland, the occupation of Czechoslovakia, and various military developments in Germany that were in direct violation of the Versailles Treaty.²¹ The foreign-

¹⁹ *Poland and Danzig*. ed. By the Polish Research Centre. (London: The Cornwall Press 1941.) Pg 32.

²⁰For more on this issue of Danzig as a central cause of WWII, See John Hiden and Thomas Lane, ed. *The Baltic and the Outbreak of the Second World War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

²¹ See for example: Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Starting World War II, 1937–1939*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). Little attention is paid to the corridor struggle in this source, and much attention is paid to the aforementioned causes of World War II.

language press interpreted events much differently and placed the utmost importance on the corridor's protection; the alternative would be, and was, war.²²

“No person of Polish nationality was spared, whatever his condition, sex or age might be, but they were put to death without mercy individuals of age and under age, including children and infants at the breast, so that the news of this cruelty should spread and break the nerve of others who would fear to offer resistance in other towns and fortified places, and thereby render secure their occupation of the said land. Seldom was the spilling of Polish blood attending the conquest of any place more profuse, seldom the slaughter more inhuman.”²³ This quote was re-published in *Poland and Danzig* by the Polish Research Centre in London in July 1941. The Report clarifies that the quote did not refer to “German atrocities in Poland during the present war,” but to the occupation of Danzig in November 1308 by the Teutonic Knights. The Report uses this quote by Jan Długosz, a fifteenth century Polish chronicler, to demonstrate that “German methods of dealing with their Eastern neighbours have not changed since six centuries.” As the Polish Research Centre claimed in 1941, “Danzig was only a pretext for bringing about the conflict ... If some statesmen in the West thought this was a distant point of Europe possessing only secondary importance for the safety of their countries, they have been cruelly awakened to a more correct view.”²⁴

Hitler's first years as dictator were spent convincing international observers that peace was ensured where he was concerned. By 1933, the mainstream press was forced to take Hitler seriously and the Polish-language press had been cautious of him and the Nazis for years;

²² *Republika- Górnik*, Francis F. Nowicki. “Lest We Forget” February 15, 1948. Pg.3. In this article, the seizure of Danzig and the Polish corridor are interpreted as direct sparks leading to the Second World War.

²³ *Poland and Danzig*. pg 1.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

however, coverage by mainstream media was far from regular. The foreign-language press continued its vigilance with weekly if not daily coverage, although this coverage was not exclusive to media written in Polish. In 1920, a magazine initiated by the American Polish Chamber of Commerce, *Magazine Poland*, was established as “A magazine for those seeking information regarding life in Poland or activities of Americans of Polish extraction.” In July, 1931, its title changed to *Poland-America*.²⁵

The *Republika-Górnik* and other Polish outlets promoted the magazine which acted as a voice against anti-Polish propaganda by acknowledging the “value placed by the Reich upon the press as an instrument for influencing world opinion in favor of German political policies and aims [against Poland]. It is evidence too of the vital necessity for the Polish State and the Polish People of such an organ as POLAND Magazine, through which the English-speaking world may be informed regarding the Polish viewpoint on matters of international interest.”²⁶ Extensively promoted and written in English,²⁷ the magazine (in the early 1930s) primarily wrote articles in response to Germany’s criticisms against “*Polnische Wirtschaft*” (Polish Management) of the corridor²⁸ and was extremely vocal against the rise of Nazism. The periodical argued that the press served as an important tool in molding public opinion. An article titled “Elephants and Politics” described a gathering of foreign journalists at the Hotel Madison in New York City in March 1930, as expressing knowledge and concern not only regarding issues in Poland, but how

²⁵ *Poland-America Magazine*. “Poland-America The Successor to Poland.” Vol. XII No. 6. July, 1931. Pg 296.

²⁶ *POLAND Magazine*. “A New German Magazine.” Vol. XII No. 4. April, 1931. Pg 201.

²⁷ The monthly publication ‘POLAND’ was published in New York in English to get information across to a wider population, for example, responses to anti-Polish propaganda, Germany’s plans to take over the Corridor etc.

²⁸ *POLAND Magazine*. “Turning to the Sea.” Vol. XI No. 4. April, 1930. Pg 199.

those issues were reported and perceived by the American public. Mr. E. Klaessig, a representative of the Wolff Telegraph Bureau, commented:

It has often been said that the press wields a tremendous influence in the molding of public opinion, and that it can greatly co-operate in the furtherance of international understanding and peace by the truthful presentation of news developments of international interest and importance. Frequently the press has been accused of seeking primarily the sensational and of constituting a disturbing element in the activities of statesmen. The truth, however, is that we journalists prefer the good news of understanding and amity among the nations to the sensation of conflict and strife. It seems to me that newspapermen, by the very nature of their profession, are internationalists, and by inclination are pacifists. The Association of Foreign Press Correspondents prides itself on being a miniature League of Nations striving for the realization of the same high ideals entertained by League statesmen.”²⁹

The American press did have a profound impact on public opinion and preferred ‘good news’ over conflict stories, but it is clear they were unsuccessful in acting as a miniature League. It was the foreign press that published controversial and conflict stories on their front pages. Criticized for being exhaustive with their coverage of the corridor situation, the Polish press claimed that, as far as Poles were concerned, not enough could be written about Germany’s plans for vengeance. The press warned that if Poles and Americans alike were not educated on international issues an eventual war could emulate the Battle of Grunwald (an infamous battle in Polish history and one of the largest in Medieval Europe which took place in 1410); this meant, a massive battle of epic proportion was sure to ensue.³⁰ The Polish press saw little benefit in focusing on good news stories; they preferred to educate themselves on political developments, no matter how unsavory, in case of war. Their concerns were well-founded and based not only on understanding Hitler’s motives as written in *Mein Kampf* and expressed in his many ‘colourful’ speeches, but also on German news stories.

²⁹ *POLAND Magazine*. ““Elephants and Politics: Influence of the Press in Molding International Good-Will Emphasized at Gathering of Foreign Press Correspondents.” Vol. XI No. 5. May, 1930. Pg 270-271.

³⁰ *Republika-Górnik*, “German revenge propaganda.” March 10, 1929. Pg. 4.

The newspaper *Frankfurter-Oder Zeitung* called for a German drive to the east, claiming that Germans would regain their strength once they truly start looking for it. Maps were printed on which Poland's borders were called the "bloody borders;" there were calls to memorize the new boundaries that would eventually belong to Germany. The article was re-printed in the Polish press and went on to ask if Germany's ambitions had really changed since before the Great War. The Polish media felt Germany's goal had not changed (and would not) as territorial domination constituted its entire political philosophy.³¹

Because Poles welcomed foreigners into their country and felt they had nothing to hide, they considered any commentary on the corridor belonging to Germany as anti-Polish. For example, Congressman Fred A. Britten stated his belief that "Germany will not rest, until what is now the Polish corridor is returned to Germany, where, I truly believe it belongs," adding that "Poland will also be in a precarious situation" regarding Russian demands on Polish territory.³² The paper attributed the 'contamination' of American opinion in Congress to the success of German anti-Polish propaganda.³³

Another tactic of anti-Polish propaganda was to highlight Polish-Jewish tensions. Even after the Morgenthau report –an investigation conducted in 1919 of the conditions of Jews in Poland- international attention was interested in the Polish approach to relations with Jewish citizens. The Polish press wondered why focus on anti-Jewish relations seemed to be exclusive to Poland, where the *numerus clausus* quota, which was also in place in several other countries, including Germany, Austria, and even the United States, was a main headline. Furthermore, the

³¹ *Republika-Górnik*, "English Colonel helps Germans with Anti-Polish Propaganda." April 3, 1929. Pg. 3.

³² *Republika-Górnik*, "Congressman Britten asserts Corridor Belongs to Germany." October 26, 1930. Pg. 1.

³³ *Ibid.*

press questioned why isolated incidents in Poland were under scrutiny when planned pogroms and official antisemitic movements, particularly in Germany, were only weakly protested.³⁴

In fact, escalation of anti-Jewish measures in Germany, “amplified Poland’s position against Hitlerites”³⁵ and since Germany had made it clear that it had no regard for Locarno, Poland lost its trust in claims for peace and felt that Germany’s ambitions and anti-Jewish violence would lead to a world war. The press warned Jews that “soon French and British sympathy will dissipate and Jews in Poland should evaluate whether supporting Germany, and hence Hitler and plans for Germany, at the expense of Polish relations is worthwhile.”³⁶ Polish newspapers, such as *Czas* (based in Krakow) were concerned why pogroms in Germany elicited no action from the German police³⁷ or a minimal response from international observers.

Furthermore, when the Polish media published reports regarding the mistreatment of its minorities outside of Poland (in Pomerania for example), no one cared about the “ceaseless lawlessness and persecution” of those people.³⁸ Such “anti-Polish terrorizing [was] manifesting itself also in the neighboring land of East Prussia” but Polish pleas to the “civilized world for assistance” went unanswered.³⁹ When Poland appealed to the League of Nations, the issue was also ignored, primarily because unlike Poland and other countries in Europe, Germany did not have a minority treaty that protected religious, racial, or linguistic minorities within its borders.

³⁴ *Poland-America*. “Minding One’s Own Business.” Vol. XII. No. 9. Sept, 1931. Pg 404 and Pg 550 (Numerous Clausus not actually enforced in Poland).

³⁵ *Republika-Górniki*, “Pogrom against Jews of Berlin amplifies Poland’s position.” October 26, 1930. Pg. 3.

³⁶ *Poland-America*. “Minding One’s Own Business.” Vol. XII. No. 9. Sept, 1931. Pg 404.

³⁷ *Republika-Górniki*, “*Czas* on Jewish Pogroms in Germany.” October 26, 1930. Pg. 4.

³⁸ *Poland-America*. “Bloodshed in Prussia.” Vol. XIII. No. 1. Jan, 1932. Pg 53.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

The press reported that the Vatican's response to the Polish situation was more in favour of Germany, "owing the great number of Catholics in that country."⁴⁰ It was an odd justification as Poland was predominantly Catholic, but the message was clear. The Pope would not directly 'interfere' on behalf of Poles, gentile or Jewish. All in all, it appeared that readers in North America were more interested in opinions on Poland by Germans than understanding Jewish (or Polish) hardships in Germany.

The Polish media felt that mainstream media was one-sided when it came to Polish issues, due to the prevailing opinion that Poles (and all foreigners) were not 'quite' American.

An article titled "The Pole in America" stated:

The average American citizen considers the Pole in America as merely another foreign immigrant, who, either dissatisfied with conditions in his native country, or else in search of a land where success and good fortune pour forth as from a cornucopia, comes here and adds to the ever-growing category known in America as "foreign population." Charges against the Pole, especially those preferred by such as profess knowledge of Polish history, are not numerous, but still are serious and frequent. A common misconception is that Polish people in general are normally opposed to culture and to the finer things in life. Others charge an alleged indifference to things political in this country. It is said also that the Poles are by nature independent and self-seeking, and that their achievements in science and the arts are merely accidental and not representative of the people as a whole.⁴¹

The article continued that the:

origin of these charges is based neither on reason, observation, nor concentrated study of fact. Enemies of the nation managed to circulate such illusory ideas abroad in attempts to foster their own cause and to discourage outside support in Poland's long struggle of independence. Patriotic and well-meaning American citizens who would have immigration laws made more strict and the 'scum and offal' of Europe's population kept out of this country, so that their theory of 'America for Americans' be carried out more efficaciously, fail to realize that the entire population here consists of foreigners, and that it is only a question of at how recent a date the immigrant or his fore-fathers came to country. Everyone living in the United States, with the one exception of the native Indian, is, by definition, a 'foreigner.'⁴²

⁴⁰*Poland-America*. "The Vatican Expresses a Hope." Vol. XII. No. 9. Sept, 1931. Pg 431.

⁴¹ *POLAND Magazine*. "The Pole in America." By Anthony C. Tomczak. Vol. XI No. 8. August, 1930. Pg 477.

⁴² *Ibid*.

Anthony Tomczak, the author of the article, called for an approach “where all men are brothers and racial and nationalistic prejudices are unknown”⁴³ but this was far from reality.

Anti-Polish reports became so common that in response, Tytus Filipowicz, Ambassador of Poland to the United States, addressed reporters after returning from Europe in the fall of 1930. The Ambassador denied German allegations against Poland including anti-Jewish excess, plans to take over the corridor by force, and that the Polish army looted the Ruthenian peasantry.⁴⁴ Hellmut von Gerlach, one of the founding members of German Democratic Party and deputy in charge of Polish-German relations, told *World Unity* a monthly English-language publication, (this article was also discussed by the press in Chicago), that among all countries, Germany held the strongest hatred for Poland due to the corridor.⁴⁵

POLAND magazine wrote that “many careful students of international problems are asking questions in regard to the ultimate aim of so much German propaganda directed especially against Poland and Polish people. How is it that the German...allegation of a cultural inferiority of the Poles has gained such wide publicity here?”⁴⁶ There are a few reasons why the subject of Polish inferiority was widely discussed. First, popular English newspapers, such as the *Manchester Guardian* printed an abundance of stories on the topic, and second, many German lecturers were invited to American universities to discuss European issues of interest, and often asserted that Poland was an inferior country in every regard. And why was Germany so keen with its campaign? POLAND Magazine claimed the answer was “short and defie[d] criticism:”

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ *POLAND Magazine*. “Personals.” Vol. XI No. 11. Nov, 1930. Pg 701.

⁴⁵ *Republika-Górnik*, “Where Does German Hatred Toward Poles come from?” December 14, 1930. Pg. 1.

⁴⁶ *POLAND Magazine*. “Deplorable Propaganda.” Vol. XII. No. 1. Jan, 1931. Pg 86.

German propagandists throughout the English-speaking countries are endeavouring to hide the real issue, to belittle the significance of the results of the last German parliamentary elections. They are trying to force another issue – Polish inferiority and the question of the so-called “Polish corridor.” They want America to forget that Adolf Hitler emerged victorious, that this avowed world leader of anti-Semitism is trying to convince the German people that in his program of extreme, barbaric anti-Semitism lies the panacea for all the troubles of the German state. ... “It is indeed necessary to go back to the cave man period to find an analogy for such racial hatred on the part of two-thirds of a nation of more than sixty millions...As if to make his ‘law’ stronger (forced emigration), Hitler and his numerous followers demand the confiscation of all Jewish property in Germany. And this is why Professor Albert Einstein, one of the outstanding leaders of the German Jews, devoted his initial remarks upon his arrival in New York to Hitler and the great army of Hitlerites in the Reich. If you want an explanation of the insidious propaganda directed not only against the Polish nation of over thirty millions but against the entire Polish race, if you are interested in the reasons for the present ever-growing anti-Polish campaigns-look to Hitler and his anti-Semitic program directed against a great, ancient, industrious and highly cultured race, and think that would have happened had that very program received all the publicity it deserves.”⁴⁷

The Polish press would see most of Hitler’s actions as a smokescreen to his true ambitions. Poles were able to see things clearly because “[t]he strained relations between Germany and Poland- or better perhaps, the present German attacks directed solely toward Poland, are but a page in a conflict which has been going on for over a thousand years.”⁴⁸ Current German policy as expressed in the German press (and such articles were characteristic of the norm) stated that Germany’s future “lies solely to the East... [and she] must force its will upon the Slav with sword in hand if necessary.”⁴⁹ Despite (some of) Hitler’s public pronouncements guaranteeing peace in his myriad of speeches, closely observed by Poles and the Polish press, his true intentions⁵⁰ were

⁴⁷ *POLAND Magazine*. “The Underlying Cause.” Vol. XII. No. 1. Jan, 1931. Pg 88.

⁴⁸ From the New Year’s editorial in Danzig’s *Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 1, 1931.

⁴⁹ *Poland-America*. “Behind the German-Polish Situation.” By Joseph J. Szczepkowski (Professor of the Polish Naval Academy at Torun). Vol. XII. No. 8. Aug, 1931. Pg 393. See Also, *Poland-America*. “Press Propaganda.” Vol. XII. No.11. Nov, 1931. Pg 508.

⁵⁰ For example see Hitler’s “25 Principles” in Rita Steinhardt Botwinick. *A History of the Holocaust*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001. Pg..59. The main points stressed the ‘right of national self-determination, equality for the German nation and racial superiority and preservation.’ Above all, the welfare of the State came before the welfare of the individual.

not lost on the Polish community, even with his use of euphemisms.⁵¹ Anti-Polish sentiment remained so entrenched in Germany, that Poland was made the scapegoat for all its ills. Hatred of Poles was overtly expressed to the point that “*Gott strafe Polen*” (May God Punish Poland) was “on every German lip, irrespective of political conviction or religious creed.” The mantra took on an eerie form when a restaurant owner in Berlin remodeled his establishment to mimic a prison with waiters dressed in (prison) stripes, renaming the restaurant “*Cafe de Poland*.”⁵² If Germany got its way by acquiring *Lebensraum*, the Polish press predicted that the result would surely be “economic and political enslavement” of Poland’s inhabitants.⁵³

In addressing German claims of Polish plans for aggression, Foreign Minister Zaleski of Poland declared in a radio broadcast from Geneva on January 18, 1931 that Polish foreign policy could be summarized in three words: “We want peace.”⁵⁴ And when the Soviets began to increase their participation in propagating anti-Polish propaganda through their press, Poland officially responded by appeasing aggression and calling for peace.⁵⁵ Poland signed the Non-Aggression pact with the Soviets on July 25, 1932. The media was comfortable with this pact as it “lessens the dangers of Soviet aggression or invasion into Poland in case the latter should be confronted with any difficulty with Germany when Hitlerism takes the upper hand in the spring.”⁵⁶

⁵¹*Republika-Górnik*, “Hitler encourages Fascists to War.” December 14, 1930. Pg. 1. This article takes seriously, that according to Hitler, the way to re-establish Germany’s ‘legendary place under the sun’ was by sword.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 394.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *POLAND Magazine*. “A Subject Not Open for Discussion.” Vol. XII. No. 1. Jan, 1931. Pg 86.

⁵⁵ *Poland-America*. “Soviet Attitude” Vol. XII. No. 11. Nov, 1931. Pg 506.

⁵⁶ *Poland-America*. “The Non-Aggression Pact.” Vol. XIII. No. 3. Mar, 1932. Pg 99.

With Poland's main aim being peace, the country continued its efforts at maintaining orderly Jewish relations. Such attempts carried over to the United States with the establishment of the Polish-Jewish Good Will Committee at a conference held in the Hotel Delmonico in New York in the spring of 1930. The Committee, made up of seven Polish Jews and seven Polish gentiles residing in the United States, was created to foster a better understanding between these two groups both within the United States and in Poland.⁵⁷ To combat the belief that Jews were disloyal to Poland, relief initiatives were conducted and well publicised. For example, an article by Abraham Gravitky in *POLAND Magazine* entitled "Invisible Items of Export By American Jews to Poland: What American Jewish agencies Are Doing For the Welfare of Poland," highlighted how over thirty-five million dollars were sent to Poland by the Joint Distribution Committee.⁵⁸ He wrote that "Polish Jews in America continue to preserve the same love of the Vistula, the same admiration for the indomitable spirit that animated the Polish people in its passionate desire for freedom and unhampered self-expression, and, above all, they keep alive the memory of the traditional Polish hospitality that made Poland an asylum for the Jews from the inhuman persecutions of the Middle Ages."⁵⁹

When Polish-Jewish clashes occurred, the Good-Will Committee was quick to comment. For example, student clashes occurred in 1931 when gentile Poles, inspired by ultra-nationalists, violently provoked Jewish students over requests for special rights. For example, Jewish students could not dissect dead animals in biology due to religious law and requested special accommodation. The Polish government and police immediately responded by stopping the

⁵⁷ *POLAND Magazine*. "Polish-Jewish Good Will Committee Organized." Vol. XI No. 5. May, 1930. Pg 272.

⁵⁸ *POLAND Magazine*. "Invisible Items of Export By American Jews to Poland: What American Jewish agencies Are Doing For the Welfare of Poland." By Abraham Gravitky. Vol. XI No. 6. June, 1930. Pg 332-336.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

violence and reprimanding perpetrators. The Polish Telegraph Agency noted that the government has “taken stern measures to suppress any and all anti-Semitic activities in the country” and the Polish-Jewish Good Will Committee, unanimously passed a resolution “expressing the thanks and appreciation” to the Polish government, particularly Mr. M Pieracki (Minister of the Interior), “for the energetic measures putting down the Polish students’ anti-Semitic excesses.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, the Good Will Committee stressed this clash was not reflective of a national attitude and was dealt with quickly and appropriately by the government. Additionally, the attacks were not limited to Poles against Jews. It was reported in December 1932, that a group of Jewish students attacked Poles (also students) in Lwów resulting in several serious injuries and one death. The police responded similarly, reprimanding the aggressors and assisting the injured.⁶¹ The law was clear in Poland, and applied to all its citizens regardless of faith.

Other important issues were also commented on, such as the boycott of Jewish merchants which was “counteracted by official decrees and the police.”⁶² According to the Polish media antisemitic disturbances were ‘liquidated’ and “only the nationalistic element [was] still clinging to its program.” Furthermore, “two prominent Polish Jews have been decorated by the government of Poland, one of them being the editor of a nationalistic Jewish paper and the other a famous Jewish artist. The majority of the of Polish press organs has voiced its dissatisfaction with the anti-Semitic movement in the country and only a few of the ultra-radical nationalist

⁶⁰ *Poland-America*. “Student Disturbances.” (Based on the Polish Telegraph Agency’s Reports) Vol. XII. No. 12. Dec, 1931. Pg 578.

⁶¹ *Republika-Górnik*, “A Group of Jews Attacks Polish Students.” December 4, 1932. Pg. 1.

⁶² In March 1931, the government passed a special act, which formally abolished all legal restrictions on Jews’ rights, dating since the times of partition. Marcus, 327.

newspapers still cling to the original program.”⁶³ The notion of a genuine attempt at peace is “further corroborated by travelers visiting Poland, later writing of their impressions thereof” and having those impressions printed by their respective press.⁶⁴ Ultimately, Jewish agencies and press within Poland confirmed that reports of persecution against Jews by the majority of Poles, an accusation made by Germany, were “much exaggerated.”⁶⁵

What the Polish press felt was not exaggerated, however, was anti-Jewish persecution in Germany. Prior to 1933, the press felt that until recently German antisemitism was not taken seriously by Jewish leaders because of the influence and positions of German-Jews in the ‘financial, commercial and industrial life of the country.’ Most German Jews felt completely assimilated (unlike in Poland) and there was even “much sympathy for the German cause amongst the Jews of America, France and Great Britain. But conditions underwent a radical change with the advent of Hitlerism.” While acknowledging that antisemitism existed in Germany, Jews generally felt safe in Germany during the rebuilding process, but by the end of 1932, there existed a “pronounced fear amongst the world leaders of Jewry that things went a little bit too far.”⁶⁶

An article titled “Clouds over Europe” shared the Jewish sentiment that things were going too far with regards to Hitlerism. The article stated that at the time, German politics favoured Von Papen as Chancellor, but his partnership with Hitler “represents a menace to the peace and tranquility not only of Europe but of the entire world.”⁶⁷ The *Boersen Zeitung*, the

⁶³ *Poland-America*. “Liquidation of Anti-Semitic Disturbances.” Vol. XIII. No. 12. Jan, 1932. Pg 33.

⁶⁴ *Republika-Górnik*, “In Defense of Poland.” (written in English) December 25, 1932. Pg. 4.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶⁶ *Poland-America*. “Solving the Jewish Problem.” Vol. XIII. No. 9. Sept, 1932. Pg 391.

⁶⁷ *Poland-America*. “Clouds over Europe.” By James R. Ludlow. Vol. XIII. No. 9. Sept, 1932. Pg 393.

organ of General von Schleicher, national commander of the minister of the *Reichswehr*, published an article claiming that: ‘The annexation of Danzig to the Reich must be regarded as the first step in the direction of the revision of the Eastern frontier and of the liquidation of Pomerania.’⁶⁸ Hitler had used his cunning since the 1920s to reach his goals. In 1928, the Nazis secured 107 seats (18.3%, 6,406,397 votes) thus becoming the second largest party in Germany. Support for the NSDAP ranged from 17.9% in Bavaria to 22.6% in Mecklenburg-Strelitz.⁶⁹

Through the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Nazis attained enough electoral support to become the largest political party in the Reichstag in 1932 with 230 seats. With Hitler's awareness of the necessity of gaining power legally rather than through violence (after his failed Beer Hall Putsch of 1923) he was able to secure votes during the Weimar Republic's most vulnerable time. A year later, Hitler became Chancellor and despite the cabinet's intentions to keep him in an administrative role while capitalizing on his popularity, Hitler had other plans. Georges Simenon, a Belgian journalist, staying with his wife at the same hotel in Berlin as Hitler shortly before the Reichstag fire, (in fact they bumped into each other in the elevator) was informed by communist activists that they had bugged the Nazis and discovered they were planning a coup. Simmons relayed this news to *Paris-Soir*, but it ignored the story.⁷⁰ Two days later, on February 27, 1932, the Reichstag was set ablaze and the future Führer quickly blamed the communists for the incident. Other contemporaries also believed that the Nazis were likely responsible, but Hitler saw the event as a public relations victory. He used the incident to

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Dan Ryan. *Enigma: The Caldwell Series*. Google E-Book. Pg. 297. Other statistics include: Oldenburg (27.3%), Braunschweig (26.6%), Waldeck (26.5%), Lippe (22.3%) Mecklenburg-Schwerin (20.1%), Anhalt (19.8%), Thuringen (19.5%), Baden (19.2%), Hamburg (19.2%), Prussia (18.4%), Hessen (18.4%), Sachsen (18.3%), Lubeck (18.3%) and Schaumburg-Lippe (18.1%).

⁷⁰ Lubrich, 33.

convince President Hindenburg to issue an emergency decree suspending all civil liberties (including freedom of speech, assembly, the secrecy of postal and telephone correspondence).⁷¹ During this time, many influential communists and other adversaries were imprisoned, opening up seats in the Reichstag and allowing the Nazi party to evolve and eventually gain the majority. On the heels of this success, the Nazis asked for the passage of the Enabling Act for a total of four years, allowing the party to address the country's problems as efficiently as possible. The Enabling Acts were passed and *Gleichschaltung*, -the 'coordination' or Nazification of German institutions- ensued resulting in Germany becoming a totalitarian state.

The last step to Hitler legally seizing power came on August 2, 1934, when President Hindenburg died. Hitler, already Chancellor, consolidated the position with the Presidency and became the Führer of the Third Reich, which he promised would last for the next thousand years. His position left no ambiguity; the army and public officials were made to swear an oath to Hitler directly: "I swear by God this sacred oath: I will render unconditional obedience to Adolf Hitler, the Führer of the German Reich and people, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and will be ready as a brave soldier to risk my life at any time for this oath."⁷² The German people were now obligated to show allegiance not to the government or their constitution, but to the man who promised to *cleanse* the nation and restore it to its past glory.⁷³ What was to follow was a combination of overt terror in Germany and equally aggressive propaganda initiatives to camouflage that reality.

⁷¹ "The Reichstag Fire." *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Retrieved 17 March 2014.

⁷² Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression Volume IV. Document No. 2061-PS. Retrieved from: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/2061-ps.asp>.

⁷³ See Alan Bullock. *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1991. Pg. 147-148. And Jane Caplan. *Nazi Germany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. Chapter 2.

Chapter 3: The Commencement of National ‘Cleansing’ 1933-1936

Hitler will undoubtedly have a role in history, but it will be an unsavory one, one which the inheritors of the great literary, artistic, philosophic traditions of giant men will detest remembering.

Martha Dodd (daughter of the American Ambassador to Berlin, William Dodd)

Reflections from the summers of 1935-1936

Hatred of the Jews was Hitler's motor and central point, perhaps even the very element which motivated him. The German people, the German greatness, the Empire, they all meant nothing to him in the last analysis.

Testimony of Albert Speer, Munich, 15 June 1977

The “pronounced fear amongst the world leaders of Jewry that things went a little bit too far”¹ in 1932, was realized in 1933. A recent article in *Haaretz* stated that in the “recognition of the evolving nature of the genocide, the date most frequently associated with the start of the Holocaust is January 30, 1933: This is when Adolf Hitler was appointed German chancellor, setting in motion what would become the Nazi genocide against the Jews.”² Additionally, the BBC recently wrote that Jew hatred was an ancient tribulation which the Nazis did not invent, but they did bring:

their own strain of radical ruthlessness to these ideas. They glorified war and saw the uncompromising struggle for survival between nations and races as the engine of human progress. They rejected morality as a Jewish idea, which had corrupted and weakened the German people. They maintained that a great nation such as Germany had the right and duty to

¹ *Poland-America*. “Solving the Jewish Problem.” Vol. XIII. No. 9. Sept, 1932. Pg 391.

² *Haaretz*. “When did the Holocaust Begin? A Genesis of genocide.” February 17, 2014. Accessed Online February 17, 2014: <http://www.haaretz.com/1.574739>

build an empire based on the subjugation of 'inferior races'. They looked eastwards to Poland and Russia (where, as it happened, the great majority of European Jews lived) for the territorial expansion of their 'living space' (*Lebensraum*). Nazism was thus an unscrupulous and warlike ideology, *which always had the potential for genocide*.³ But it took some time for an organised killing programme to evolve."⁴

The BBC's 'official' timeline too, begins in 1933. Many intentionalists view the evolutionary process as having begun prior to 1933, and functionalists, much later, during the Second World War. Despite the differences in these interpretations, 1933 was an important year for several reasons including the establishment of Hitler's authority and the commencement of the 'cleansing' of Germany. The year before, Germany had released statistics revealing that over eight months (January-September 1932) 155 political murders were committed mostly against 'rowdy' nationalist-socialists and communists.⁵ Within a month after Hitler seized power, the Nazis began constructing concentration camps (*Konzentrationslager*) throughout Germany. Concentration camps were not invented by Hitler. As previously discussed, camps, such as the katorga camps, where prisoners were taken for forced labour, were not novel. More recently, concentration camps were revived during the Spanish war in 1896 and during the Second Boer War (1899-1902). This chapter examines the evolution of national cleansing and responses this process. With the introduction of concentration camps, racial laws, and eradicating 'life unworthy of life,' 1933-1936 represented the commencement of national cleansing in Germany.

³ Emphasis is my own.

⁴ *BBC History*. A View of the Holocaust. Dr. Steve Paulsson. Last Updated February 17, 2011. Online http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/genocide/holocaust_overview_01.shtml

⁵ *Republika-Górnik*, "Germans make a classic example of a country that commits political murder." October 23, 1932. Pg. 1.

One of the most famous images from the Boer War concentration camps comes from Bloemfontein:



This image is of 9-year-old Lizzie van Zyl who died in the concentration camp hospital due to disease and lack of food. Lizzie eerily resembles many Holocaust victims four decades later; a shocking manifestation of what the human body looked like after experiencing starvation and forced labour.⁶ Dachau, the first Nazi concentration camp which became the model for others, opened in March 1933 and could accommodate 5,000 prisoners. For Poles, the use of concentration camps by the Germans was not shocking, the press anticipated that this was just a stepping stone for greater crimes to come. As the *Dziennik Związkowy* claimed, the “New Reich Was Really like the Old Reich, [with the] Same Prussian and Barbaric Soul.”⁷

In 1933, German camps were primarily used for political adversaries (mostly communists and socialists), growing in number since the Reichstag fire. Shortly afterwards, Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, took charge of managing the camps which were administered by the Concentration Camps Inspectorate (1934) and eventually the SS in 1942.⁸ Once the camps were in full operation, the ‘cleansing’ of Germany began. Political opponents including criminals, homosexuals, and even Nazis, mostly from the *Sturmabteilung-SA*, who were purged during the Night of Long Knives⁹ were jailed, and attention was refocused in 1935 on racial ‘undesirables’ including Jewish and Roma citizens.

⁶ British Concentration Camps of the South African War 1900-1902. Online. Retrieved March 27, 2014 <http://www2.lib.uct.ac.za/mss/bccd/Histories/Bloemfontein>

⁷ *Dziennik Związkowy*. “New Reich Was Really like the Old Reich, [with the] Same Prussian Barbaric Soul.” April 15, 1933. Pg. 3.

⁸ See: Geoffrey P. Megargee, ed. *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945* in association with United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012; Richard J. Evans. *The Third Reich In Power*. London & New York: Penguin, 2005; and The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum “Nazi Camp System” <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007720> and Yad Yashem Online “The World of the Camps” <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/about/06/camps.asp>

⁹ Night of Long Knives: Political murders taken place between June 30-July 2, 1934. The most famous person murdered was Ernst Rohm, leader of the *Sturmabteilung* (SA-Brownshirts). Approximately 85 people were murdered and over 1,000 arrested. For more see, Richard Evans. *The Third Reich in Power*. New York: Penguin Group, 2005.

Dachau saw prisoners from all sides of the country enter its gates, a reality of which local Germans were well aware. The camp became so infamous that a common jingle was sung:

*Lieber Herr Gott, mach mich stumm Das ich nicht nach Dachau komm. [Dear God, make me dumb That I may not to Dachau come].*¹⁰ Edward Alder, interviewed in 1992, explains his experience in Dachau:

We worked ten hours a day, if I remember correctly. We slept on straw, on straw bags. It was a, uh, jute sack filled with straw. I guess that's common, uh, you know, under certain circumstances, many people sleep that way, and we worked ten hours a day, on a field that was approximately, I would say, a square kilometer, somewhere around that area. One area of this field was quite high, the other area was quite low. The area had to be leveled, and what was done was they had tracks running from one end to the other. On those tracks were mining cars. Now in this country, a mining car is square. Over there a mining car is a triangular shape. Steel mining cars, and each train had about ten of these mining cars on it. On each one of those mining cars a Storm Trooper was standing with a whip, and we had to run from one end of this field to the other, shovel the mining car full of dirt, and returned it to empty it out on the lower end. If anyone would have told me at that time that I can run 40 kilometers a day, I'd say you're crazy. But I did. Day after day after day.¹¹

Decades after the war, Edward was in awe of how he survived Dachau. A Jew from Hamburg, he was imprisoned for having a gentile girlfriend after the 1935 Nuremberg Laws prohibited marriage or sexual relations (*Rassenschande*) between Jews and non-Jews in Germany. Edward did marry his girlfriend, and his wife was able to secure emigration papers. Upon Edward's release in 1938, he and wife left Germany, eventually settling in America.¹² It took far less than *Rassenschande* to be placed in a concentration camp however. In a book entitled, *The Joke's on Hitler, Underground Whispers from the land of the Concentration Camp*

¹⁰ Morris Janowitz. German Reactions to Nazi Atrocities. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 52, No. 2. (Sept., 1946), Pg. 141.

¹¹ Concentration Camps 1933-1939 Oral History. Edward Alder. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Online http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_oi.php?ModuleId=10005263&MediaId=1120

¹² Ibid.

published in 1939, Count Alfred Hessenstein asserts that the Gestapo (the secret state police) was “the world’s most terrible machine, invisible, ever menacing, ever ready to pounce on its victims. No warrant of arrest is required; it has unlimited power...it is enough to be suspected to be doomed. For those whom the Gestapo seizes there is no hope. The gloom of dungeons awaits them, the unspeakable horrors of the concentration camp.”¹³ Furthermore, he stated that “many Germans [knew] the truth”¹⁴ of the horrors taking place within them.

After the war, “almost all Germans interrogated readily admitted that they at least knew of the existence of concentration camps in Germany before the arrival of Allied troops. Newspaper accounts continually told of the removal of enemies of the Reich to concentration camps.”¹⁵ It was precisely because news was readily available regarding the camps,¹⁶ that the Dachau jingle came into existence. Although the intricacies of the camps would not have been known to the general population, a “great sector of the uncritical German people claim[ed] that, before Allied occupation, their notion of a concentration camp was a prison-like camp whose inmates were made to work for the public benefit and for their own rehabilitation.”¹⁷

A German housewife (age twenty-eight at the time) who was questioned about knowledge of the camps claimed: We thought that the prisoners might be working hard, that they

¹³ Count Alfred Hessenstein. *The Jokes on Hitler, Underground Whispers from the land of the Concentration Camp*. (Dent of London Publishers, 1939), 6.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵ Janowitz, 141.

¹⁶ *Nasz Przegląd*. “Dark Day in a Concentration Camp.” September 29, 1929. Pg 11.

Note: *Nasz Przegląd* is the largest Polish-language Jewish newspaper published in Warsaw, of which I read from 1926-1939. It published a total of 8,962 issues between March 1923 and September 1939, with circulation estimates varying from 20,000 to 50,000. See: http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Nasz_Przegląd

¹⁷Janowitz., 142.

might not be getting plenty of good food, and we even imagined some beatings or making the prisoners shout in chorus "Heil Hitler." The majority of "less naive Germans" however stated that they were aware the camps were harsh institutions where members of the opposition, including German Jews, Communists, and criminals were imprisoned.¹⁸ Scholar Morris Janowitz claims that most Germans desired "psychological repression" meaning "avoid[ing] knowing the unacceptable aspects of National Socialism."¹⁹

Unlike the actual genocide taking place during the Holocaust, news of the development of concentration camps, and even what happened inside the camps, was widely reported by mainstream newspapers and media, both English-language and foreign. Headlines in the Polish press are telling: "Germans Deny Visas To Polish Jews,"²⁰ "Germans Attack America for Siding with Jews,"²¹ "Germans reject League Report,"²² "Germans took to cleansing their race,"²³ "Jews in Germany without Citizenship Rights,"²⁴ "They Want to Expel Jews From Germany,"²⁵ "Hitler orders individualization of Germany,"²⁶ "and "Anti-German demonstration in Poland."²⁷

¹⁸ Ibid., 142.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ *Republika-Górník*, "Germans Deny Visas to Polish Jews." April 2, 1933. Pg. 1.

²¹ *Republika-Górník*, "Germans Attack America for Siding with Jews." April 9, 1933. Pg. 1.

²² *Republika-Górník*, "Germans Reject League Report." June 4, 1933. Pg. 1.

²³ *Republika-Górník*, "Germans took to cleansing their race." July 30, 1933. Pg. 1.

²⁴ *Republika-Górník*, "Jews in Germany without Citizenship Rights." August 13, 1933. Pg. 5.

²⁵ *Republika-Górník*, "They Want to Expel Jews From Germany." August 27, 1933. Pg. 1.

²⁶ *Republika-Górník*, "Hitler Order Individualization of Germany." September 10, 1933. Pg. 1.

See also: *Republika-Górník*, "Germans close doors to Education for Jews." November 5, 1933. Pg. 1 and December 24, 1933. Pg. 2. *Republika-Górník*, "Germans Don't Allow Jews on Stage." March 18, 1934. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górník*, "Hindenburg purges Jews from Army." March 18, 1934. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górník*, "8,000 Jews from Germany to Poland." May 13, 1934. Pg. 5. *Republika-Górník*, "60,000 People Escaped in one year from Germany." May 27, 1934. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górník*, "Nazis Murder 500 People." (Night of Long Knives) July 15,

The Polish press reported on developments in Germany, and on the treatment of Jews, on a daily basis, and usually on the front page. Early on, the press recognized the hypocrisy of Jewish persecution and Aryan standards during the national cleansing process, noting that few Nazis resembled the Nordic ideal, and that even that Hitler's relatives may have been Jewish.²⁸

German efforts at 'cleansing' were well known and documented. As the 1930s passed, the number of individuals who were deemed to be opponents of the state or social deviants increased dramatically. In 1935, the Nuremberg Racial Laws were introduced signalling a civil and economic 'death' for Jewish citizens and Roma. The earliest manifestation of legal persecution against Jews in Germany came in 1933 with 'The Prevention of Progeny With Hereditary Diseases law' which called for the sterilization of all those who had hereditary diseases: congenital mental deficiency; schizophrenia; manic-depression; hereditary epilepsy; hereditary St. Vitus' Dance (Huntington's Chorea); hereditary blindness; hereditary deafness; serious hereditary physical deformity."²⁹ Once a person was deemed to have a 'disease' by the Eugenics Court the operation was to go forward, regardless of the 'patients' decision: "Once the Court has decided on sterilization, the operation must be carried out even against the will of the person to be sterilized, unless that person applied for it himself. The state physician has to attend to the

1934. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górník*, "Further Unrest in Germany." July 15, 1934. Pg. 1 *Republika-Górník*, "Anti-German demonstration in Poland." April 7, 1935. Pg. 1.

²⁷*Republika-Górník*, "Anti-German demonstration in Poland." April 7, 1935. Pg. 1.

²⁸*Republika-Górník*, "Hitler's grandparent was a Jew." October 22, 1933. Pg. 1.

²⁹ German History in Documents and Images. Volume 7. Nazi Germany, 1933-1945 Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases (July 14, 1933). Source of English translation: Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases (July 14, 1933). In US Chief Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression. Volume 5, Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1946.

necessary measures with the police authorities. Where other measures are insufficient, direct force may be used.”³⁰

The screening process was conducted objectively, meaning that anyone who “showed moral faults or poor social attitudes during screening were condemned to sterility.” Even if they did pass, those who were sexually active, unemployed or poorly educated could still be deemed “feeble-minded” or “schizophrenic.” Only 10% of the presented cases were deemed invalid, with “between 320, 000 and 350,000 people, or 0.5% of the population incurring sterilization.” Measures later conducted in Eastern Europe were more severe.³¹ Not only did the press report on and speak out against sterilization in an array of articles and political cartoons,³² but so did the Pope.³³

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Matthew Lippman. “Law, Lawyers, and Legality in the Third Reich: The Perversion of Principle and Professionalism.” *Temple International and Comparative Law Journal* (Fall 1997).

³² Several articles. See for example: *Republika-Górnik*, “Sterilization Statistics.” June 2, 1935. Pg. 1.

³³ *Republika-Górnik*, “Pope Speaks Out against Sterilization.” June 2, 1935. Pg. 1.



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³⁴ *Dziennik Związkowy*. Caption Reads: "Won't he get sick from this cleansing?" (This cartoon is mocking the hypocrisy the 'cleansing' idea) September 25, 1930. Pg 1.

Condemnations against sterilization had little effect until family relatives, who received suspicious letters notifying them of a loved one's death, spoke out. Demonstrations and protests by these Aryan family relatives caused the program to be halted (at least publicly). Hitler had learned that methods of 'cleansing' needed to be conducted in secret; he would certainly never sign a 'death' document again.

In *Hitler's Justice: The Courts of the Third Reich*, German lawyer Ingo Muller argues that generally the majority of the German population did not 'actively' resist such measures (aside from limited demonstrations by those who had personal relatives at risk) largely due to the legalization of the government's actions. Muller highlights that Germany accepted euthanasia, sterilization, concentration camps, and antisemitism because they were legal,³⁵ and because of the legality of Germany's cleansing practises, public protest was virtually nonexistent as the laws were scrupulously enforced.³⁶ Legally, the cleansing of Germany, from sterilization to genocide, was authorized and therefore, either formally or informally, accepted. Germans were after all, only doing what they were told to do, and what they were told to do was necessary for the collective benefit of the nation.

Propaganda successfully played a key role in gaining public acceptance of Germany's cleansing measures. Very little opposition to the Nuremberg Laws was displayed in Germany, and soon after procedures escalated against the disabled who were dubbed as a societal burden: "life unworthy of life." The next stage of the cleansing process was set for the T4 (euthanasia)

³⁵It worth mentioning that the term concentration camp at the time did not hold the same connotation as it does now. Concentration camps were literally holding areas; however, their use in Nazi Germany held different purposes which will be explained.

³⁶ Yitzchok Breitowitz. Review of *Hitler's Justice: The Courts of the Third Reich*, by Ingo Muller. (Harvard University Press, 1991), 2.

program,³⁷ an institutionalized method of killing (en masse) the physically and mentally disabled. In addition to these measures, by 1939 there were six major concentration camps in Germany: Dachau (founded 1933), Sachsenhausen (1936), Buchenwald (1937), Flossenbürg in northeastern Bavaria near the 1937 Czech border (1938), Mauthausen, near Linz, Austria (1938), and Ravensbrück (a women's camp 1939).³⁸

News of the camps and the harshness of the racial laws was not ignored by the mainstream press, but covered regularly. The foreign press was also heavily involved in reporting such news. Even travellers were perceptive of what was going at the time. Oliver Lubrich in *Travels in the Reich 1933-1939*, asserts that foreign experience is more objective than German, as local residents saw Nationalist Socialist policies evolve over time, whereas foreigners viewed circumstances in Germany as “abrupt and shocking.”³⁹ Also, foreigners were less likely to face censorship (or censor themselves) of their personal writing. Lubrich demonstrates how many of the writers changed their perspective with time and how very few “individual witnesses [wrote] outright apologies of the Third Reich.”⁴⁰ There are several revealing case studies by contemporaries of the 1930s worth mentioning. Perhaps one of the most interesting travellers was Christopher Isherwood, whose experiences were published as an autobiography entitled *Goodbye to Berlin* (1939), which was later reinterpreted as the musical *Cabaret* (1966).

³⁷ T4 was the code name given to the euthanasia program referencing the address of the program’s office: Tiergartenstrasse 4.

³⁸ The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Online. Concentration Camps 1933-1939. <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005263>

³⁹ Lubrich, 7.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 6.

As a twenty-five-year-old English teacher, Isherwood visited Berlin in 1929 and was able to gain employment. He was very observant of the political changes happening in Germany, which he noticed both in public and in his private encounters. With regards to the German press, he stated: “The newspapers are becoming more and more like copies of a school magazine. There is nothing in them but new rules, new punishments, and lists of people who have been ‘kept in.’ Goring has invented three fresh varieties of high treason.”⁴¹ He described his evenings in cafes “where the Jews and left-wing intellectuals bend their heads together over the marble tables, speaking in low, scared voices. Many of them know that they will certainly be arrested-if not to-day, then to-morrow or next week.”⁴² Personally, Isherwood knew people, including his students, who were in prison and “possibly dead.” He had come to terms with their possible fate as he believed they were aware of the consequences for speaking against the state, ‘purposefully’ and ‘heroically.’ Instead he felt sympathy for Rudi, a young man who naively wore an “absurd Russian blouse” and as a penalty was probably “being tortured to death.”⁴³

Anniemarie Schwarzenbach, a writer who received her PhD in history from Zurich in 1931, wrote to her close friend Klaus Mann describing her impressions of Germany in 1933. She described the changes in Germany as ‘frightful’ but thought that developing discussion on the topic was unwarranted as “any halfway intellectually oriented person, if European at least, naturally belongs to the opposition.” She did stress, however, that the worsening situation, especially for the Jews, demanded a reaction from Europeans beyond just “declaring oneself a

⁴¹ Christopher Isherwood. Introduction by Armistead Maupin. *The Berlin Stories*. (New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2008) 203.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 207.

member of the opposition.”⁴⁴ And the Germans themselves? Why were they allowing this inhumane process to unfold? The Nazis were merely “uniformed bandits and mercenaries with their barbaric savagery are actually the same people who, a few years ago, were going off for the weekend with their girlfriends, with collapsible boats and rubber balls, and were not amenable to the seductive words of popular speakers without good reason.” And that good reason? The ‘severity’ of Versailles, unemployment, and demoralization.⁴⁵

These ‘good reasons’ posed as justification for situations witnessed by twenty-four year old Martha Dodd, the daughter of William Dodd, United States Ambassador to Berlin from 1933 to 1937.⁴⁶ In July 1933, while walking to dinner, the Dodd family was distracted by the heckling of a nearby crowd. When they approached closer, they noticed the crowd was aggressively jeering at a woman who had had her head shaved. The ‘transgressor’ wore a sign which read “I have Offered Myself to a Jew;” the victim’s reaction to this public shaming was evidenced by her facial expression, which was “tragic and tortured.”

⁴⁴Lubrich., 38.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 39.

⁴⁶ The story of the Dodd’s experience has been recently been popularized in the book by: Erik Lawson. *In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler’s Berlin*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2011.



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⁴⁷ The following three images are examples of people being punished for *Rassenschande*. Both Jews and Germans, and Poles and Germans.



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⁴⁸ Polish man chained with shield for racial defilement, Eisenach (Thuringia) 15 Nov 1940:
<http://www.nrw-zwangsarbeit.de/fotos/index.html>;
http://www1.historisches-centrum.de/nrw_zw/fotos/foto25.jpg

Martha wanted to see how the situation would develop but was pulled away by her brother and other dinner companion. Martha, who initially enjoyed both being in Germany and the Germans, who earlier shouted an exuberant Heil! “as vigorously as a Nazi,” was no longer misled. She wrote:

I felt nervous and cold, the mood of exhilaration vanished completely. I tried in a self-conscious way to justify the action of the Nazis, to insist that we should not condemn without knowing the whole story. But here was something that darkened my picture of a happy, carefree Germany. The ugly, bared brutality I thought would make only a superficial impression on me, but as time went on I thought more and more of the pitiful, broken creature, a victim of mass-insanity.”⁵⁰

Martha asked their companion, Quentin Reynolds, a journalist, not to write of the experience (and send it the United States.) She felt it would make a bad impression that the Ambassador’s children were present at the scene and wanted to ‘foolishly’ believe such an incident was isolated from mainstream reality. Reynolds did not cable the incident, but only because “there had been so many atrocity stories lately that people were no longer interested in them.”⁵¹ As it turns out, another journalist who was present did cable the story which received massive coverage.

It was precisely this type of reaction towards Jews and Jewish sympathizers not only by extremists, but by everyday people –the same people Schwarzenback noted were just recently out on romantic adventures, or the regular civilians heckling the gentile woman who had relations with a Jew- that encouraged criticism against Germany. Gunnar Ekelof, a Swedish poet who resided in Berlin in 1933, poignantly described Germany as “sick at its innermost core, an

⁴⁹ German woman with shield: Expelled from the people's community (for being with a Pole), Altenburg (Thuringia) 7 Feb 1942: <http://www.nrw-zwangsarbeit.de/fotos/index.html>; http://www1.historisches-centrum.de/nrw_zw/fotos/foto24.jpg

⁵⁰ Lubrich, 47.

⁵¹ Ibid., 48.

unsatisfied and broken down sadist who strikes out at everyone around him and uses self-glorification to silence his doubts.”⁵²

The most compelling and revealing commentary however comes from Dr. W.E.B Du Bois.⁵³ For several reasons Du Bois’s interpretation on contemporary situations and the growing tensions in Nazi Germany are important and merit attention. Not only was he an (African-American) intellectual of the United States, but also the United States has come under severe scrutiny for not assisting European Jews (some claim due to antisemitism), ignoring (or at least side-lining) the fact that in their own country, a mass population of its citizens did not possess civil rights, were segregated, and were physically and emotionally harassed by others who were deemed ‘full’ members of society. Furthermore, Du Bois was an American whom the Polish and Polish-American society greatly respected.⁵⁴

Race relations in the United States were closely followed by the Polish press which sympathized with the African American community⁵⁵ and questioned their lack of civil rights in light of growing anti-Jewish sentiment in Europe.⁵⁶ In fact, the Polish press noted in 1943 when

⁵²Ibid., 54.

⁵³W.E.B. Du Bois was born on February 23, 1868, in Great Barrington Massachusetts. For a detailed study on Dr. Du Bois, See: David Levering Lewis. *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race 1868-1919*. (New York: Henry Holt And Company, 1993).

⁵⁴For example, On Du Bois 83rd birthday, Leon Kruczkowski, Chairman of the Union of Polish Writers, and Secretary Jerzy Putrament sent him a telegraph stating "His name is honored in Poland. His courage and fortitude in the struggle for peace has brought him the admiration of the whole Polish people." See: Union of Polish Writers. Telegram from Union of Polish Writers to W. E. B. Du Bois Testimonial Dinner Committee, February 21, 1951. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

⁵⁵*Republika- Górnik*, “Article on the topic of African-American Relations.” July 31, 1927. Pg.2. *Republika-Górnik*, “African Americans (Organizations).” April 4, 1932. Pg.5.

⁵⁶ *Republika- Górnik*, “Jews not allowed to ride trams (US perspective of the treatment of African Americans).”September 1, 1935. Pg.1.

Goebbels criticized the ‘hypocrisy’ of the United States for condemning Germany’s treatment of those they considered inferior when they themselves claimed to be democratic; yet, differentiated between citizenship rights based on race.⁵⁷ Although Du Bois did not think German prejudice was analogous to contemporary racism in the United States (he thought antisemitism in the 1930s in Germany was worse),⁵⁸ the situation of African Americans did closely resemble the legal and civil discrimination Jews faced. So *why would* mainstream America care about news stories regarding the poor treatment of a minority elsewhere when they treated their own African American population so poorly?

Du Bois’s background surely coloured his impression of international relations. He attended Fisk University from 1885-1888, where he was able to experience life in the Black Belt of the South. He enrolled at Harvard in 1890, and in 1892 travelled to Germany in order to study and research at the University of Berlin where he was exposed to the leading theories in racial history and historical progress.⁵⁹ His European travels not only aroused his curiosity of other cultures, but also exposed the existence of many other prejudices which afflicted humankind outside the sphere of race. Due to his European experience, Du Bois made the connection between race hate and antisemitism and frequently used this analogy in several of his future writings, “the African movement means to us what the Zionist movement must mean for the

⁵⁷ *Republika- Górnik*, “Hitler’s Fatal Mistake.” October 22, 1943. Pg.2.

⁵⁸ Du Bois wrote: “There has been no tragedy in modern times equal in its awful effects to the fight on the Jew in Germany.” See Lubrich, 147. Taken from Du Bois writings in “Forum of Fact and Opinion,” in the *Pittsburgh Courier* 1936-1937.

For more on Du Bois and antisemitism see: Benjamin Sevitch. W.E.B Du Bois and Jews: A Lifetime of Opposing Anti-Semitism. *The Journal of African American History*. Vol. 87, (Summer, 2002), 323-337.

⁵⁹ Eric J. Sundquist, ed. *The Oxford W.E.B. Du Bois Reader*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 9.

Jews.”⁶⁰ The formation of his enlarged view of Negro racism in connection to other prejudices was influenced by his visit to the remains of the Warsaw ghetto in 1949⁶¹ which facilitated his emergence from a “social provincialism into a broader conception of what the fight against race segregation, religious discrimination, and the oppression by wealth had to become if civilization was going to triumph in the world.”⁶² His experience in Germany in the 1930s clearly influenced his awareness of the connections between American racial hatred and racial hatred on a global scale. During his studies in Berlin, he also developed a sense of “historical basis of social analysis and psychological complexities of identity”⁶³ which would become characteristic of his work. His background demonstrates that he felt inequality and the plight of a people should be of international concern; a philosophy which greatly influenced his view on European politics.

In 1895,⁶⁴ Du Bois became the first black man to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard after successfully completing his thesis and dissertation, *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America 1638-1870*.⁶⁵ In this work, he wrote that America “congratulates itself on getting rid of a problem than on solving it.”⁶⁶ In contrast, Du Bois was determined to understand the roots of problems, events, and issues in order to advocate change and provide

⁶⁰ Ibid., 639.

⁶¹ For more on this see: “The Negro and the Warsaw Ghetto” in W.E.B. Du Bois. *The Social Theory of W.E.B. Du Bois*. Phil Zuckerman, ed. (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2004), 45-47.

⁶² Ibid., 472.

⁶³ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁴ Some sources note that Du Bois earned his Ph.D. in 1896, in fact, his successful Ph.D. dissertation which earned him his doctorate occurred in 1895. His dissertation, *The Suppression of the African Slave- Trade to the United States of America 1638-1870* was published a year later, 1896, sometimes inaccurately considered the date of authenticity of his doctoral degree. See: Marable Manning. *W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Radical Democrat*. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986) 22.

⁶⁵ Manning, 22.

⁶⁶ W.E. Burghardt Du Bois. *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America 1638-1870*. (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 199.

possible solutions to problems rather than ‘getting rid’ of them. To accomplish this, Du Bois’s method of study involved rigorous and scientific research adapted from the standard of late nineteenth-century German scholarship,⁶⁷ which included statistics, diagrams, memoirs, and analysis of sociological and psychological factors. The writing of history for Du Bois was “directly related to ethics,”⁶⁸ as understanding the causes of problems would presumably allow the social scientist to suggest educated methods for reform.

In 1896, the Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court decision validating state-imposed segregation came into effect which deeply disturbed Du Bois.⁶⁹ This disillusionment with the decision was perpetuated by a study he conducted in 1898 focusing on the social conditions of Virginia. During this study he discovered two distinct cases of intermarriage between colored men and white women that went ‘undisturbed’ despite the law.⁷⁰ Slavery, therefore, created racism and not the reverse.⁷¹ This discovery inspired the young scholar to begin considering the causes of racism and legal discrimination.

On war, Du Bois wrote that in each struggle, the American Negro “always fought for his own freedom and for the self respect of his race. Whatever the cause the war, therefore, his cause was peculiarly just.”⁷² Du Bois was originally an advocate for Negro commissioning in the American military, despite segregation, as he saw it as an opportunity to prove the capability of

⁶⁷ Manning, 25.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 23.

⁶⁹ Henry Lee Moon, ed. *The Emerging Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois: Essays and Editorials from The Crisis*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 13.

⁷⁰ Herbert Aptheker, ed. *Contributions by W.E.B. Du Bois in Government Publications and Proceedings*. (New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited. 1980), 18.

⁷¹ Sundquist, 31.

⁷² Ibid., 82.

the black soldier and earn equality within the army and ultimately within society.⁷³ After the Great War, evidence not of progress in the battle for equality but of heightened racism infuriated Du Bois who took a militant stance in rejecting his previous prediction of segregation as a stepping-stone to integration, and proclaimed in the article “Returning Soldiers” (1919), “We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting! Make Way for Democracy!”⁷⁴ After further research into the atrocities committed by the American army against the Negro soldier,⁷⁵ he uncovered prejudice instituted in the draft. The Negro, although constituting less than a tenth of the population, composed 13% of the soldiers called for service.⁷⁶ He boldly criticized America as a peacemaker, “no American nation is less fitted for this role.”⁷⁷ In short, he agreed with Goebbels’ accusations against American hypocrisy in that he equated the black man and woman as “America’s Belgium” and renounced America for condemning Germany while simultaneously committing brutal acts domestically such as lynching, tar and feathering, murdering, and abusing blacks.⁷⁸

Du Bois suggests this issue should be of international concern. It is evident that Du Bois’s primary passion for examining the ‘Negro problem’ of inequality with whites reached its height when “his career found in Pan-Africanism a vehicle that gave his struggle for African

⁷³ Sundquist, 12.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 381.

⁷⁵ For example, disproportion in ranks, honors, pay, as well as black soldiers being terrorized by white soldiers by being stripped naked of their uniform, which the white soldiers claimed the black soldiers were unworthy of wearing, and made to walk naked down streets. *Gift of Black Folk* pg. 110.

⁷⁶ *The Gift of Black Folk*, 130.

⁷⁷ Phil Zuckerman, ed. *The Social Theory of W.E.B. Du Bois*. (London: Sage Publications Inc., 2004) 36.

⁷⁸ Herbert Aptheker, ed. *Writings in Periodicals Edited by W.E.B. Du Bois: Selections for the Crisis*. (New York: Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited, 1983), 472.

American equality a global dimension.”⁷⁹ Du Bois, labeled the “Father of Pan-Africanism,”⁸⁰ a movement which sought to unify and strengthen the international African community and ultimately end colonialism, connected the color-line as the product of slavery and also of colonialism which was “not a provincial but an international issue.”⁸¹ He, like the Polish press, saw many situations of injustice, like the plight of Jews in Europe, as an international problem.

In July of 1935, Du Bois returned to Germany for five months after winning a fellowship from the Oberlander Trust “for the promotion of cultural relations between the United States and Germany.”⁸² He wrote:

“It is always difficult to characterize a whole nation. One cannot really know 67 million, much less indict them.” ... “Germany in overwhelming majority stands back of Hitler to-day. Germany has food and housing, and is, on the whole, contented and prosperous. Unemployment in four years has been reduced from seven to millions or less. The whole nation is dotted with new homes for the common people, new roads, new public buildings and new public works of all kinds. Food is good, pure, and cheap. Public order is perfect, and there is almost no visible crime. And yet, in direct and contradictory paradox to all this, Germany is silent, nervous, suppressed; it speaks in whispers; there is no public opinion, no opposition, no discussion of anything; there are waves of enthusiasm, but never any protest of the slightest degree...There is a campaign of race prejudice carried on openly, continuously and determinedly against all non-Nordic races, but specifically against the Jews, which surpasses in vindictive cruelty and public insult anything I have ever seen; and I have much. Here is a paradox and contradiction. It is so complicated that one cannot express it without seeming to convict one’s self of deliberate misstatement. And the testimony of the casual, non-German-speaking visitor to the Olympic Games is worse than valueless in any direction.”⁸³

⁷⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁸⁰ Gerald Horne. *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944-1963*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1986), 25.

⁸¹ Zuckerman, 67.

⁸² Lubrich, 135.

⁸³ Ibid., 143.

Hitler convinced Germany that he was the only way out of their depression and into the 'promised land.' Du Bois keenly observed that "Nine out of every ten Germans believe this today, and as long as they are convinced of this, they are going to uphold Hitler at any cost. They know the cost which they pay and they hate it. They hate war, they hate spying, they hate the loss of their liberties. But in return for this immense sacrifice, they have domestic peace after a generation of wars and rumours of wars; they have a nation at work, after a nightmare of unemployment; and the results of this work are shown not simply by private profits, but by houses for the poor; new roads; ... a new state, a new race."⁸⁴ Du Bois knew that without a doubt, "there is a ('instinctive') race prejudice in Germany, and a regular planned propaganda to increase it." Germany is not asking questions, "she is simply saying HEIL HITLER!"⁸⁵ Du Bois makes a serious connection between past horrors and the persecution of Jews: "There has been no tragedy in modern times equal in its awful effects to the fight on the Jew in Germany. It is an attack on civilization, comparable only to such horrors as the Spanish Inquisition and the African slave trade."⁸⁶ Such impressions of what was happening in Germany were well-known, as Du Bois noted, "Adolf Hitler hardly ever makes a speech today –and his speeches reach every corner of Germany, by radio, newspaper, placard, movie and public announcement- without belittling, blaming or cursing Jews...Every misfortune of the world is in whole or part blamed on Jews."⁸⁷

Poles were very aware of what outsiders had to say while in Europe. Because of anti-Polish propaganda perpetuated by Germany, the Polish press and Polish community was very

⁸⁴ Ibid., 145-146.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 146.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 147.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

concerned with what tourists had to say while in Poland. They hoped that honest news by tourists would combat lies regarding Polish aggression and excessive antisemitism. Likewise, the Polish community was very interested in the experience of tourists in Germany, especially stories from tourists who shared the experience of the travellers highlighted by Lubrich.⁸⁸ Three main patterns that are most discernible from the travel reports are: the Jews in Germany were being treated abhorrently as evidenced through discriminatory law; Germany was trying her utmost to counter this reality with their propaganda campaign most aggressively before and during the Olympics of 1936; and these conflicting scenarios (of an unacceptable yet charming Germany) would only get more complicated (rather than ensuring peace) with time. The pinnacle of Germany's national propaganda initiative was undoubtedly the Nuremburg rallies. The Nuremburg rallies held the purpose of persuading the nation that fascism -an ideology and movement the Polish press followed closely-⁸⁹ with its emphasis on the collective good, was the only solution to Germany's political problems.

From its inception in Germany, fascism, with "its mythical propaganda that dynamic activism would provide the impetus to solve the political, economic, and social crisis of the interwar years" attracted 'many.'⁹⁰ This belief held a grain of credibility "given the failure of liberal democracy."⁹¹ Liberalism, with its focus on the rights and dignity of the individual proved

⁸⁸ See for example: *Republika-Górník*, "Polish Tourists." December 23, 1934. Pg. 2.

⁸⁹ *Republika-Górník*, "(Italian) Fascism and influence in Poland." February 14, 1926. Pg. 5. See also: *Republika-Górník*, "Fascists can't become US citizens." October 2, 1927. Pg. 5. *Republika-Górník*, "Hitler provokes Fascists to War." December 14, 1930. Pg. 1. *Dziennik Związkowy*. "Fascists in Germany." September 16, 1930. Pg. 1. *Dziennik Związkowy*. "Fascists in Austria want a change in Constitution." September 4, 1930. Pg. 3. *Dziennik Związkowy*. "Announcement of Revolution by the Fascists in Germany." September 20, 1930. Pg. 1. *Dziennik Związkowy*. "Canadian Fascists start campaign against Jews." November 23, 1938. Pg. 1.

⁹⁰ Richard Thurlow. *Fascism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 19. Also see: *Republika-Górník*, "(Italian) Fascism- Reflections in Poland." February 14, 1926. Pg. 5.

⁹¹ *Ibid*.

an inadequate philosophy in face of social instability. Fascism, with its focus on the superiority of the collective will as originally inspired by a rejection of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1712-1778) belief in the capability of humankind to espouse change and more applicably by a selective understanding of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), would soon dominate the German (and Italian) understanding of progress, liberty, and freedom. Writing prior to the outbreak of the French Revolution, Rousseau advocated that humankind "was not inherently evil and that ordinary people could be motivated to bring about change."⁹² Fascists reject this theory on the basis of contempt for the masses and "sought transformation through strong, authoritarian and often brutal leadership."⁹³ Nietzsche's theory of the 'will to power' was manipulated by the Fascists into the collective theory of a national will to power. Nietzsche also appealed to the Fascists for his theory that unity was a compatible feature of rejuvenation.⁹⁴

Fascism (originally conceived in Italy) at its height embodied a civic religion which promoted irrational appeals to faith rather than reason which allowed for an abundance of vagueness cloaked in images, symbols, and rhetoric.⁹⁵ Faith has the potential to unify regardless of class, gender, age, a strength which liberalism, socialism, and Marxism lacked.⁹⁶ Rather than a future-oriented utopia of Marxism or heaven of Christianity, Fascism was "primarily concerned

⁹² Ibid. 15.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Jacob Golomb and Robert S. Wistrich, ed., *Nietzsche, Godfather of Fascism? On the Uses and Abuses of a Philosophy*. (Oxford: Princeton University Press: 2002), 177.

⁹⁵ Barbara Spackman. *Fascist Virilities: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Social Fantasy in Italy*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 126.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 127.

with life on earth”⁹⁷ and the present process of glorification of state and nation. Most importantly, Fascism as a secular faith, “could not be explained in solely rational terms.”⁹⁸

Through the aesthetic, the myth became tangible, it was given a visible and therefore seemingly tangible form of life. The myth became the reality, as “it allowed believers to express their hopes and needs.”⁹⁹ Nineteenth century Europe had entered a visual age, the age of political symbols,” such as national flags, anthems, which in the twentieth century proved “more effective than any rational political doctrine.”¹⁰⁰ The insight of Fascism was the “need to integrate the masses into a so-called spiritual revolution which represented itself through a largely a traditional aesthetic.”¹⁰¹

Most foreign-language newspapers in Europe covered the Nuremburg rallies and reprinted excerpts from Hitler’s lengthy speeches. However, the outward expression of fascism and Hitler’s ideals is best described by a man who experienced the rallies himself, Denis De Rougemont. De Rougemont, a (francophone) Swiss writer, describes his experience of March 11, 1936, as one out of over 35,000 attendees at a Nuremburg Rally where he reflects on the idea of a “collective soul” and Nazism as a religion:

A few women faint, they are carried out, and this makes a little breathing space. Seven o’clock. No one is getting impatient, *nor do they joke*. Eight o’clock. The dignitaries of the Reich appear, preceded by shouts from outside. Goring, Blomberg, the generals all greeted with joyful shouts of Heil. The gaulteiter utters a few nasalized commonplaces, barley listen to. I have been standing, squashed and supported by the crowd, for four hours.

Is it worth it?

⁹⁷ George L. Mosse. Fascist Aesthetics and Society: Some Considerations. *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.31, No.2, Special Issue: The Aesthetics of Fascism. (Apr., 1996), Pg. 245.

⁹⁸ Roberto Vivarelli. Interpretations of the Origins of Fascism. *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 63, No.1. (Mar., 1991), Pg. 241.

⁹⁹ Mosse, 246.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 247.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

But then a murmer runs through the surging crowd, trumpets can be heard outside, the arc-lights in the hall are turned out as illuminated arrows are lit up on the vaulted ceiling, pointing to a door on the level of the first balcony. A spotlight picks out a small man dressed in brown, bareheaded, smiling ecstatically, standing on the threshold. Forty thousand people, forty thousand arms have been raised in a single movement. The man comes forward very slowly, saluting with a slow gesture, like a bishop, to a deafening thunder of rhythmic *Heils*. ... He advances, step by step, receiving tributes along the whole length of the aisle leading to the platform. It takes six minutes, a very long time. No one can notice that I have my hands in my pockets; they are all standing rigidly to attention, motionless and shouting in time, their eyes glued to the illuminated spot, to that face with its ecstatic smile, and tears run down their faces in the darkness. (the Horst Wessel Lied plays) ... I have understood.

It is not possible to understand something like this without a special sort of shiver and heartbeat – but the mind still remains lucid. What I now experience is what one has to call the *sacred horror*.

I thought I was going to a mass meeting, some sort of political demonstration. *But it is worship that they are engaged in!* And it is liturgy that is unfolding, the great sacral ceremony of a religion of which I am not a part and which crushes and repels me with much force – *even physical force* – than all these horribly tense bodies.

I am alone and they are a community.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Lubrich, 86-87. Also see: Denis De Rougemont. *Journal aus Deutschland 1935-1936*. (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 1998).



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¹⁰³ A picture of the *litichdom* or “cathedral of light.” This Nuremberg Rally location was featured in the propaganda film “Festliches Nurnberg” (1937).

After the lengthy speech, Hitler had stood in his car, separated only by SS guards, and drove the street waving at his admirers. De Rougemont was in the front row, two meters away from Hitler. He wrote how easy it would have been for an assassin to shoot Hitler right then and there, and concludes, “You do not shoot at a petit bourgeois who is the dream of sixty million people.”¹⁰⁴

The man who represented the hopes and dreams of Germany had hopes and dreams of his own, and in order to accomplish them, he had to convince the international community that he was an honest and upstanding leader. He aimed to prove this by graciously hosting the 1936 Olympics.

.....

“The Sprinters”

*Owens the nigger is sprinting,
 The Aryans tasting defeat.
 The blond arena is musing,
 Der Fuehrer frowns in his seat.
 But more cheerfully they may consider
 All the Jewish women and men
 Who ran for their lives in the streets –
 With them they caught up in the end.*

*By Norwegian poet Nordahl Grieg (translated by Lars Finsen)
 From: Berlin Games*

¹⁰⁴Lubrich, 88.

Subsequent to Germany's national propaganda and *gleichschaltung* (coordination process of control over all aspect of society, thus establishing totalitarian rule) initiatives, were the country's international initiatives best exemplified through the 1936 Olympic Games held in Berlin. The purpose of the Olympic Games was clearly propaganda, and the press gauged this prior to the event. Although the *Republika-Górnik* printed very few articles on the topic,¹⁰⁵ its position was clear: the Olympics should not be based in Germany due to the enactment of racial laws.¹⁰⁶ The mainstream press, however, covered the event regularly and America's response was very telling of their attitude towards Nazi Germany.

The United States, traditionally the country with the most athletes at the Olympics, threatened to boycott the games (most loudly heralded by Judge Jeremiah Mahoney, President of the Amateur Athletic Union) due to Germany's ill treatment of Jews. It is clear that "between 1933 and 1936, the 1936 Berlin Games became the prize in a tug of war for control between the German National Socialist regime, the International Olympic Committee, and anti-Nazi supporters of an Olympic boycott."¹⁰⁷ In response to Olympic boycotters, Avery Brundage, President of the United States Olympic Committee (1929-1953), issued a press release highlighting the participation of Jewish Olympians. He wrote, "If conditions in Germany were truly as represented by the boycotters...why did these Jews participate?"¹⁰⁸ Brundage, an avid

¹⁰⁵It is unclear whether this was a conscious decision as protest against Germany, but one can reasonably hypothesize, as the press was quite vocal in its opinions against German policy, that this was the case.

¹⁰⁶*Republika-Górnik*, "Hitler's Decrees Against Jews (what this means for the Olympics)." November 24, 1935, Pg. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Carolyn Marvin. Avery Brundage and American Participation in the 1936 Olympic Games. *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Apr., 1982), pp. 82.

¹⁰⁸Guy Walters. *Berlin Games: How Hitler Stole the Olympic Dream*. (London: John Murray Publishers, 2006) 80.

believer in separating sports and politics, intended for the Olympic Games to thrive, despite the costs. Initially, “public unease in the United States about the Games of the Eleventh Olympiad was at first a reaction to German ambivalence. In quick succession, the Nazis claimed not to want the Games, called for the ouster of Dr. Theodor Lewald, the distinguished part-Jewish president of the German Olympic Organizing Committee, and barred Jewish athletes from sport clubs, training facilities and competition. Critics now had a focus for the steady stream of press accounts of indignities and abuses heaped on Jewish citizens by the Nazi regime.”¹⁰⁹ The Nazis on the other hand, ‘guaranteed’ that they would not discriminate any athletes and to demonstrate their sincerity, Brundage was invited (in 1934) to examine the situation in Germany firsthand. During his trip he met with many German officials (although he did not meet with Jewish athletes or sports leaders, at least not alone) and upon his return declared, "I was given positive assurance in writing ... that there will be no discrimination against Jews. You can't ask more than that and I think the guarantee will be fulfilled."¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Brundage felt any issues that needed correcting would be accomplished before the Games and there was no need to press the issue further as there was the matter of American hypocrisy in respect of her own "color line" in the South.”¹¹¹ However, some believed, (for example Congressman Emanuel Celler) that it was Brundage who was the hypocrite claiming he "had prejudged the situation before he sailed from America."¹¹² In response, Brundage “argued that the United States had no grounds for withdrawing from the Olympics if the Germans were behaving legally, and that authority for the

¹⁰⁹ Marvin, 84.

¹¹⁰ Allen Guttman. *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 72.

¹¹¹ Marvin, 86.

¹¹² Guttman, 70.

final determination of that fact lay with the IOC. Evolving with the legalistic arguments of public debate was a more subterranean anti-Semitic construction of reality directed at special audiences of allies and opponents. Some Olympic officials said to one another and to selected audiences that the Jews were complaining too much.” Evan Hunter, the secretary of the British Olympic Association (BOA) wrote to Brundage stating “that the British would likely accept the Olympic invitation in light of the AOC president's visit to Germany. Hunter shared that his “own view [was] that we are pandering too much to the Jews!”¹¹³

Brundage too felt the discussion about the situation in Germany was ‘pandering.’ When questioned about Jewish participation on the German team, he reported that in the history of the Olympic Games, there were only ever twelve Jews, and if there were none in 1936 it would not be ‘surprising.’ By the end of 1935, “Brundage publicly blamed Jews for the boycott campaign, especially those "with communistic and socialistic antecedents," and regarded himself as their personal target. His letters to German Olympic officials, who wrote for the purpose of giving reassurance about American intentions with each new wave of anti-Olympic expression, conveyed a new tone of fellow suffering. In late October he drafted the following letter to German sports official Hans von Tschammer und Osten:

May I assure you at once, my dear Herr von Tschammer und Osten, that personally, I have never had misgivings or doubts that Germany will not rigorously follow the rules of the IOC. It is because I have remained steadfast in my belief and because I have maintained faith in the integrity of the promises made to me, that so much abuse is being heaped on me ... In fact, the sordidness of the attacks against me and the lowly methods in the futile efforts pursued to block American participation have caused me to become more resolute than ever and I shall fight grimly to the very end.”¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Marvin, 88.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 89-91.

The endless press reports on the worsening situations for Jews and demands to boycott, which were reported by the mainstream press and well as the foreign press, were disregarded by Brundage for two reasons. Firstly, he regarded himself as an intelligent man and did not believe the Germans could pull “wool over his eyes;” he believed their intentions not to discriminate based on colour or race were sincere. And secondly, Brundage wrote that “since American media were largely controlled by Jewish owners, advertisers and reporters, nothing in the newspapers about the German situation could be credited.”¹¹⁵

In August 1936, Brundage received a letter from the *Volksfront Deutschlands* (German Popular Front), an anti-Nazi group. The “authors of this document portrayed the Olympic spectacle as a monstrous political deception, and appealed to Brundage to carry the hidden meaning of Hitler's Olympics to an unperceiving world:

The Olympiad goes under the heading of a "peaceful competition". Everything is well, exceedingly well organised; you find magnificent grounds for the plays, the sportsmen are excellently trained but all this is not done for a peaceful competition, everything is political propaganda, chiefly meant to impress the foreign visitor who upon his return will advertise nothing but a Germany of wealth, order, security, hospitality and perfect organisation. The splendid Technique may seem harmless to-day, but to-morrow it will become dangerous when all its powers will be used to organise a fight not with but against the other nations that will be anything but peaceful.

... .

The real sense of the Olympic Games will be invisible to the average visitor; the monstrous [sic] terror forbids the Germans to open their mouths and the enormous burden pressing on the German folk will be further borne in silence. An army of brave men whose ideal it was to fight for a peaceful competition and understanding with the other nations is being kept in prisons and concentration camps - a countless number - and it will be impossible for the foreigner coming from a country of democratic liberty to imagine the sufferings and tortures they have had to endure.... Under the enormous Nazi terror our work is difficult and we therefore beg

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 91.

you to help us in our task to prevent Hitler and his complices [sic] to get ready for another war. You are not included in the terror and can use your liberty to see the prisons and concentration camps.... Tell your countrymen what you see there.¹¹⁶

Brundage had no interest in investigating the claims of the letter and his disinterest was shared by others who preferred to ignore reality in favour of the games. "The message Brundage carried back to the United States was the one the Nazis had intended." On October 4, he gave a speech at Madison Square Garden thanking German-Americans for raising money in support of the Olympics. "In highly controversial remarks, Brundage compared the Olympic participation battle with the heroic struggle of the German people, who were also bound to triumph. The important change, he declared of Germany: is in the spirit of the people. Five years ago they were discouraged and demoralized - today they are united - sixty million people believing in themselves and in their country, and sixty million hard-working, thrifty, industrious people willing to make sacrifices and willing to put up with discomfort in order to obtain their object and get somewhere. Communism had been stamped out, and "all enemies of the country deported or interned." There were lessons for America in this, one of which was that "alien enemies of our country who abuse our hospitality and seek to undermine our American institutions must be deported."¹¹⁷ Communism was the 'alien' enemy, but who might be implicated by association was less (overtly) definite. Brundage's viewpoint was clear, nothing in the world was more evil than Communism, including fascism or its manifestation of Nazism in Germany, and anyone who did not believe that or in majority rule was unpatriotic.

The mainstream press asserted that Brundage "had exhorted his audience to emulate the Nazis. Although it is hard to construe his full remarks differently, Brundage regarded these

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 98.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 98-99.

accounts as vicious distortions.” In his personal letters he wrote: "I deliberately mentioned neither Hitler nor the Nazis and you may imagine my surprise when I read the headlines ... Because I told them how splendidly the Games were organized, and of the wonderful reception received by the American team, I have all the Jews and Communists in the country after me."¹¹⁸

In the end, Brundage was victorious. Despite public protest and threats of a boycott, the American Olympic Committee sent American athletes –the most controversial and famous being African American sprinter Jesse Owens- to compete. With no opposition to Germany coming from the United States “no other country felt disposed to offer any further challenge. The Berlin Olympics went forward as scheduled.”¹¹⁹ But as Marvin correctly states, “Brundage committed the error to which uncritical allegiance to the law is always most prone. Blind devotion to the rules overlooked the possibility that new conditions in the world might require adjustment of the rules, or adjustment in what it meant to observe them. Judge Mahoney's declaration in the heat of the boycott controversy ““This... is not a question of politics. It is a question of humanity’ challenged Brundage to look at the human goals the law was intended to serve and the circumstances in which existing law could not serve those goals.”¹²⁰

The only goals which met success were Hitler’s. Beyond the positive illusions of the Olympics, the *Economist* reported that between 1933-1935, Germany spent the equivalent (as of 2006) of approximately \$330,000 American Billion dollars on rearmament, a decision clearly not in line with the Versailles Treaty. When Charles Lindbergh visited as a distinguished guest, he

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 82.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 105.

wrote that feeling of an impending war became real to him. Even as a German and Nazi sympathizer, he realized the officers he spoke to “were not preparing for a game.”¹²¹

Olympians themselves were not naive as to the ‘purpose’ of the Olympics. Charles Leonard knew they were “used for propaganda purposes” whereas Alfred Gerdes commented that “visitors almost forgot that Hitler stuff.”¹²² Some athletes denied being ‘pawns’ but the truth is “the athletes participated in a show that helped the hosts to promote Nazism. There were no gas chambers as yet, but there were certainly pogroms, political murders and concentration camps, all of which were widely known and reported in every newspaper in the democracies.”¹²³

On August 16th, 1936, William Shirer, American journalist- and Berlin bureau chief of the American Universal News Service, wrote of the success of Nazi propaganda: “First, the Nazis have run the Games on a lavish scale never before experienced, and this has appealed to all of the athletes. Second, the Nazis have put up a very good front for general visitors, especially the big businessmen.”¹²⁴ Such commentary is useful as very few foreigners actually attended the Olympics. Only approximately 500 Americans turned up for the Winter Games and the Summer Games were mostly attended by German tourists.¹²⁵ As author of *Berlin Games* Guy Walters correctly asserts, regarding the success of Nazi propaganda, “Hitler laughed last. Germany had not just won the athletic games, it had also won the political games.”¹²⁶ Despite honest and wide

¹²¹ Walters, 181.

¹²² Ibid., 301-302.

¹²³ Ibid., 302.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 303-304.

¹²⁵ David Clay Large. *Nazi Games: The Olympics of 1936*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), 140.

¹²⁶ Walters, 304.

media coverage, it was, as Du Bois documented, “widely believed by many that the Jewish problem in Germany was episodic, and is already passing. Visitors to the Olympic Games are apt to have gotten that impression. They saw none who wish oppression, just as Northern visitors to Mississippi see no Negro oppression.”¹²⁷ The words of the popular maxim “hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil” applied at the Olympics; if one did not ‘see’ evil, despite evidence nearby, it must have not existed, or was at the very least easily ignored.

Like the *Republika-Górnik, Nasz Przegląd* dealt with the Olympics in a similar fashion: selectively.¹²⁸ *Nasz Przegląd* followed news coming from Berlin and had correspondents placed in Vienna; for obvious reasons they kept a (fairly) safe distance from the actual site of the games. The day the Olympic torch was to be paraded through Vienna, an article called the entire event a farce; the goal of the Olympics was to disseminate Goebbels’ propaganda. Germany would be on display for athletes and tourists alike, but Germany had a specific version of the Third Reich it was willing to share, a version that would “not include tours to concentration camps or to crematoriums where urns holding the murdered victims ashes are present.”¹²⁹ Instead, what was being shown to the world was a “joyous holiday celebrating the swastika...and Nordic ‘culture.’”¹³⁰ The author hoped that the world would be neither gullible nor blind to the realities

¹²⁷Lubrich, 174.

¹²⁸ *Nasz Przegląd* (of which I read from 1926-1939) was located in Warsaw, Poland, and published a total of 8,962 issues between March 1923 and September 1939, with circulation estimates varying from 20,000 to 50,000. See: http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Nasz_Przegląd

Nasz Przegląd also followed news being printed in the United States, particularly in places with large populations of Poles and Jews. See: *Nasz Przegląd*. “Chicago: News from circulars in Chicago.” January 29, 1933. Pg 8.

¹²⁹*Nasz Przegląd*. “Olympics-Berlin-Vienna: News from our correspondents.” Dr. Szymon Wolf. August 1, 1936. Pg 6.

¹³⁰*Ibid*.

behind the pomp and circumstance. As far as the Polish-Jewish press was concerned, the world should have been speaking out against Hitler, rather than humouring his every whim, and falling for the charade which became manifest in the Olympics.

Amidst the combined tension and excitement revolving around the Berlin Olympics, Poland was preoccupied with national issues including the death of Marshall Piłsudski and the aftermath of renewed stress with Jewish relations. All throughout the 1930s, the Polish government “still sought Jewish co-operation, though, obviously, in a subordinate capacity.”¹³¹ This, to a degree, makes sense as Polish Jews maintained their “strong sense of their own separate national identity as was demonstrated in the last census of 1931, when approximately 85 percent of Jews who were Polish citizens put down Yiddish or Hebrew as their mother tongue.”¹³²

At the eighteenth Zionist Congress in Prague in August of 1933, Nahum Sokolow, “in his presidential address, expressed ...his recognition of the Polish government’s measures against anti-Semitism, and of its desire for the peaceful co-existence of all Polish citizens.”¹³³ Neville Laski, the president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, concurred with Sokolow after returning from a trip to Poland in the summer of 1934: “the present government is better for the Jews than any other in the past.”¹³⁴ Many Polish Jews deeply admired and respected Piłsudski, who strongly opposed antisemitism and ensured that his government did so as well, for example, by limiting the power of the antisemitic Endek party. Piłsudski stood as a great equalizer

¹³¹ Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939*. 325.

¹³² Michael R. Marrus, ed. *The Nazi Holocaust Part 5: Public Opinion and Relations to the Jews in Nazi Europe*. Volume 2. (Westport: Meckler, 1989), 316.

¹³³ Marcus, 328.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

between Poles and Polish Jews. Because there was so much political disunity amongst Jews themselves, which posed a serious problem when lobbying the government, Piłsudski acted in the best interest of the majority. As the situation worsened in Germany, “most ordinary Jews felt that the government was their best shield against the fascists.”¹³⁵ Their admiration was such that an article was printed stating that soon after there would be many new ‘Józefs’ in Poland, as Rabbis encouraged new parents to name their sons after the Marshal.¹³⁶ In sum, “He had enjoyed the affection of many Jews, because he had not personally been prejudiced against them; and he had hated the Endeks. Jewish nationalists respected him because he had been a national leader, and his writings had quickly been translated into Hebrew.”¹³⁷ After the death of Piłsudski on May 12, 1935, combined with the economic disparity resulting from the Great Depression, Polish-Jewish relations faced a ‘turning point.’¹³⁸

Heightened tensions between Poles and Jews after Piłsudski’s death were evident in situations such as conflicts over work laws and ritual slaughtering. Previously, due to loopholes in the Sunday Laws, Jews were able to work on Sundays because of their observance of Sabbath. In 1936, the law was reinforced, which was viewed as promoting Jewish unemployment in favour of Polish workers. Whereas Poles would be unable to work on Sundays, Jews would now lose the entire weekend. Before this situation even came to fruition, discussions in the early 1930s of work laws became so heated that Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum resigned from the Goodwill Committee, stating: “Though fully convinced of the soundness of the underlying principles of the

¹³⁵ Ibid., 347.

¹³⁶ *Republika-Górnik*, “There will a be a lot of Jozefs: Rabbis call to name sons Jozef after Pilsudski.” May 26, 1935. Pg. 3.

¹³⁷ Marcus, 349.

¹³⁸ Timothy Wiles, ed. *Poland Between the Wars: 1918-1939*. A Publication of the Indiana University Polish Studies Center, Bloomington, Indiana. December, 1989. Pg. 165.

Goodwill movement in the interests of the good name, prosperity and greatness of the Polish Republic, I feel that under the present circumstances, I have no right to lend my name and work to this movement, and therefore, though with great regret, I tender my resignation as President of the Goodwill Committee between Poles and Jews in America.”¹³⁹

Despite these issues and condemnations, assistance from America to Polish Jews did not materialize. “Even political intervention, through the US or Polish governments, or mere protests at the treatment of Jews in Poland was hampered by lack of understanding between the rival Jewish leaders. There were other reasons, too, including indifference, poor organization, fears of undesirable publicity, and anxiety about the charge of ‘divided loyalties’ (split between American Jewish Committee AJC and the American Jewish Congress), especially at a time of rising isolationist sentiments in the USA.”¹⁴⁰ Marcus explains that “the only plausible excuse for this failure to help is that, notwithstanding their strong criticism of their counterparts in the West, the Polish-Jewish leaders themselves failed to form a united body representative of Polish Jews.” He further claims that “because of the continual conflicts between their leaders, the standing of Polish Jews was lowered – not only in the eyes of the Polish government and people, but also in the eyes of foreign Jewish leaders.”¹⁴¹

A further rift was caused when in April 1936, the government passed a bill banning ritual slaughter.¹⁴² This alienated Jewish butchers, who made up the majority of the profession in Poland. The government claimed the decision was based on humanitarian practices of butchering

¹³⁹ *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*. “President of Polish-Jewish Goodwill Committee Writes to Polish Ambassador He is Resigning.” December 2, 1931. Online: <http://www.jta.org/1931/12/02/archive/president-of-polish-jewish-goodwill-committee-writes-to-polish-ambassador-he-is-resigning-because-ex#ixzz2v1fsYoN4>

¹⁴⁰ Marcus, 372.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² This had been a long-standing issue in Poland. See: *Republika-Górnik*, “Poland on Kosher Laws.” February 26, 1936. Pg. 5.

while others viewed the ruling as one based on antisemitism. On June 4, 1936, Premier Felicjan Slawoj Skladkowski addressed both interpretations, stating: “My government considers that nobody in Poland should be injured. An honest host does not allow anybody to be harmed in his house.” When economics were an issue, however, “that was different.”¹⁴³ Therefore, the slaughter law was posited as “purely business and had nothing to do with feelings regarding Jews, who, it was reinforced were welcomed – their ‘barbaric’ practices were not.”¹⁴⁴

By the end of 1936, Poles felt the Jews wanted separation and Jews felt they were forcefully alienated through various work laws. Talks in Europe (including countries such as Britain and France) shifted focus from assimilation to renewed emphasis on resettlement plans. Some countries, such as Hungary and Romania, followed Germany’s example and began endorsing anti-Jewish legislation. However, no matter how severe tensions became, “Poland refrained from enacting anti-Jewish legislation and she proved to have had considerable opposition to extreme antisemitism.”¹⁴⁵ Poland would not only stand against antisemitism, the country would continue to stand for the defence of Jews.¹⁴⁶ The next three years would pass quickly and with every step that Hitler was appeased to take, the world came closer to total war and genocide.

¹⁴³ Sprawozdania stenograficzne Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej, (Government Minutes) June 4, 1936 as gathered from Antony Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland, 1921-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972). pg 466.

¹⁴⁴ Wiles, 166.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 165.

¹⁴⁶ See: *Republika-Górnik*, “Poland Stands in Defence of Jews.” December 10, 1933. Pg. 1. And *Republika-Górnik*, “Polish Government stands in Defence of Jews.” July 22, 1934. Pg. 1. And *Republika-Górnik*, “Jews ask Poles for Protection.” November 11, 1934. Pg. 1. And *Republika-Górnik*, “Poland Accepts Jews.” December 2, 1934. Pg. 1.

Chapter 4: On the War Path: 1936-1939

*Germany must either be a world power, or there will be no Germany.
Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf.*

After the 1936 Olympics and all of the news stories surrounding the event, the remainder of the year and the next year was generally a time of reporting on step-by-step procedures by Nazi Germany. The Polish-language press diligently followed all of Hitler's territorial ambitions as well as his Reichstag speeches.¹ The elections of March 1936 were known to have been 'rigged' and further means of Nazification were reported.² It was no secret what the Gestapo stood for and what they were capable of. Privacy was of secondary importance to the collective good. The public knew that by 1936 there was no secrecy when it came to the post or telephone calls, and that that was the least of the Gestapo's terror tactics.³ Any real assistance, including assistance for Poles who were being forcibly Germanized,⁴ could have been provided by the League of Nations had it actually been proactive. It was clear to the press at the time that the League, as a political venture, "could not assist even the weakest of nations."⁵ Although wide coverage of the Third Reich continued after the Olympics, the mainstream press and its reporting from 1936-1937 was, as best, sporadic regarding Nazi Germany. The same cannot be said of the Polish-language press, which continued to report on the Fuhrer's every move, particularly his

¹*Republika-Górnik*, "What Hitler Said in the Reichstag." March 15, 1936. Pg. 1.

²*Republika-Górnik*, "44 Million Germans Vote Yes." April 5, 1936. Pg. 2.

³*Republika-Górnik*, "Gestapo and Privacy (tactics used)." February 2, 1936. Pg. 1.

⁴*Republika-Górnik*, "Germanization of 1,500,000 Poles call for Polish Revenge." April 17, 1936. Pg. 1.

⁵*Republika-Górnik*, "In Paris there are discussions of completely dissolving the League of Nations. (Britain on board)." April 1936. Pg. 1.

treatment of Jews and minorities and growing territorial ambitions, which will be the focus of the following chapter.

From 1936-1939, main concerns of the press and Polish community included a revival of resettlement discussions as a solution to the “Jewish problem” in Europe, international responses to resettlement, and the worsening situation for Jews. Many Jews who were able to flee Germany, financially and bureaucratically, did so early on. One such person was Albert Einstein who was extremely vocal about the plight of Jews in Europe and particularly in Germany.⁶ Einstein arrived in the United States in October of 1933, shortly after Hitler took power. He was among thousands of Jews who were able to secure entry into other countries while escaping persecution. Despite winning the Nobel Prize and world recognition for his scholarly achievements, Germany banned the physics genius from working at any university in the Third Reich and even threatened to hang him. Notwithstanding the vocal encouragement by Nazis for Jews to leave, they made the process extremely difficult by increasing emigration taxes while simultaneously impeding bank transfers and denying passports. Others could not leave for a variety of reasons, including old age. An article printed on February 2, 1936 titled “100,000 Jews emigrating from Germany”⁷ reported that “many elderly who are living off of their savings will have to stay in Germany until they pass away.”⁸

Others, such as Victor Klemperer, a German Jew who had converted to Protestantism in 1912, made his experiences well-known through his multi-volume autobiography, *I Shall Bear Witness: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer, 1933-41, To the Bitter End: The Diaries of Victor*

⁶The Polish press followed Einstein’s entire journey to the United States and took seriously his warnings of the dangers of the Third Reich. See for example, *Dziennik Zwiqzkowy*. “Einstein Lands in Spain.” April 11, 1932. Pg. 2.

⁷ *Republika-Górnik*, “100,000 Jews emigrating from Germany.” February 2, 1936. Pg. 4.

⁸*Ibid.*

Klemperer, 1942-1945, and The Lesser Evil: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer, 1945-1959, which chronicle his life and demonstrate his understanding of what was happening around him.

Klemperer was able to avoid early deportation based on the fact that his wife was Aryan which provided him with limited protection. His commentary is raw and honest, and one of his greatest struggles was the fact that he primarily identified himself as an assimilated German, and not a German Jew. It was therefore difficult for him to understand the persecution, especially as a First World War veteran who loyally served his country, despite the fact he was horrified by what was happening to the Jews.⁹

An interesting dynamic that Klemperer discusses is the notion of Jewish loyalty to Germany as a means of self protection or self-denial. On June 20 1935, he writes that many Germans “were dulled to injustice inside the country and in particular not properly appreciating the misfortune of the Jews.”¹⁰ If turning inward and ignoring the negative aspects of the regime meant that Hitler would be able to “restore Germany’s power externally, then [the] cost [was considered] worthwhile.” Being dulled meant acquiescing to the Gestapo, Hitler, and abuses against “the other.” The collective good was after all greater than the individual. Even so, Klemperer remained hopeful, stating “I am German forever, German ‘nationalist.’” And if the Nazis could not see that, they were the ones who were “un-German.”¹¹ He did not identify with Judaism in any way; he was not Jewish but a “German, or German European”¹² and felt that as a German nationalist, a German veteran, a converted Protestant, and husband to an Aryan wife, the category of Jewish or ‘un-German’ simply did not apply to him. Undoubtedly other German

⁹ The first volume details many cases of the “Jew bating” he witnessed.

¹⁰ Klemperer, 127.

¹¹ Ibid., 129.

¹²Ibid., 134.

Jews must have felt the same way, especially considering the blood-line qualifications of who was considered a Jew (discussions ranged from 1/16 blood line, to having two or three Jewish grandparents. A person could be considered a *Mischling* or crossbreed in varying degrees with only one grandparent). Even at the time, the press found the Nazi definition of who was Jewish to be hypocritical and concluded that if it were so, Hitler too would be considered Jewish, as he was suspected of having a Jewish grandparent.¹³ German Jews struggled to decide how to respond to growing persecution; many, like Klemperer -who decided to keep himself busy to avoid thinking about what *may* happen- employed different coping mechanisms while hoping that the worst was over.

For those less optimistic, it would be an understatement to claim the choice of emigration was difficult for families, especially for those who did not have contacts abroad. “Often tipping the balance and inducing people to leave were simple everyday things, such as whether one could continue to earn a living or whether one had experienced firsthand some particularly threatening or disturbing episode.”¹⁴ And for some, if not many, such a decision was not so “simple” and many official Jewish organizations were also divided on their recommendations of what German Jews were supposed to do. Even Zionists recognized that Palestine was not the only answer as the country would not be able to absorb all persecuted Jews or even German Jews who numbered half a million in 1933. “In an era of unemployment, depression, and the associated anti-immigration politics, including latent or open antisemitism all over the advanced world, no one could imagine a mass open-door policy anywhere.”¹⁵

¹³*Republika-Górnik*, “Hitler’s Grandfather was a Jew.” October 22, 1933. Pg. 1.

¹⁴ *Jewish Responses to Persecution 1933-1938*. Vol 1. 64.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

Although no one anticipated an ‘open-door’ policy, some relief was hoped for. The Polish press was clear that Europe should be thinking of resettlement plans and the *Republika-Górnik* reported information (which they supported) from New York, that British delegates planned to come to the United States to discuss possible resettlement plans for Jews from Germany. The only problem was where to resettle them.¹⁶ There were encouraging signs that there was “Available Land in Brazil for Jews”¹⁷ and that President Vargas was supportive, but much more essential assistance was still lacking. Jews in favour of emigrating had one non-negotiable expectation, that the country was already well-developed, such as the United States, rather than countries like Madagascar. Józef Beck, Polish minister of foreign affairs from 1932 to 1939, took this suggestion to the League of Nations, but was met with little enthusiasm.¹⁸

Not only were Jews trying to emigrate with limited results, but many were also expelled and forced into new countries. Headlines such as “60,000 Jews Expelled from Germany”¹⁹ were not uncommon. Poland did take many of the expelled persons into the country but warned it could not handle the constant influx of Jews being forced over its borders and sought assistance, albeit unsuccessfully, from the League and individual nations. Not only was Poland trying to maintain Jewish relations with Polish citizens, but now many more Jews of different nationalities were pouring in, and not by their own free will, which escalated current tensions. The Polish-American press did state that they felt tensions were escalating because more and more Jews were entering Poland from Russia and Germany, and therefore felt no allegiance to the country.

¹⁶*Republika-Górnik*, “Plan to resettle Jews from Germany to Palestine.” January 20, 1936. Pg. 2.

¹⁷*Republika-Górnik*, “Available Land in Brazil for Jews.” June 5, 1936. Pg. 2.

¹⁸*Republika-Górnik*, “Jews want to immigrate to the United States.” October 29, 1937. Pg. 1.

¹⁹*Republika-Górnik*, “60,000 Jews Expelled from Germany.” April 12, 1936. Pg. 1.

Many newcomers were still emotionally loyal to Germany or supporters of the Soviet Union, an unsavoury combination for most gentile Poles. With the influx of new entrants it was suggested that Poles ‘give up’ 1,000,000 Jews.²⁰ This sentiment was echoed in the Polish government, which also included those who felt resettlement was the best choice over trying to assimilate. Prince and Senator Radziwill suggested there was a surplus of one million Jews in Poland (Jews who the article suggested were not sympathetic to Poland) and Senator Rostworowski agreed. This issue heightened tensions between Poles and Jews. Some reactions to this situation were called antisemitic reactions, while most Poles and the Polish press interpreted the backlash against Jews as a direct response against their allegiance to Germany, the Soviet Union, and communism.

Polish-Jewish relations in the late 1930s were continually being exacerbated by feelings of mistrust and disloyalty if not outright enmity. Norman Davies writes that Polish-Jewish relations “deteriorated sharply on each of these three occasions when the Soviet Red Army had invaded Poland –in 1919-1920, in 1939[-1941], and in 1944-1945.”²¹ In “1939 and 1944, some Polish Jews became co-participants in the Soviet reigns of terror, a regrettable fact that has now become a part of both Polish and Jewish history.”²² In court proceedings against communists in Poland between 1927-1936, “10 percent of those accused were Polish Christians and 90 percent were Jews.”²³ Stanislaw Krajewski, a Polish-Jewish scholar, claims there was indeed a “disproportionately large participation of Jews in the communist movement, especially in

²⁰*Republika-Górniki*, “Suggestions made that Poland give up 1,000,000 Jews.” March 1, 1936. Pg. 4.

²¹ Norman Davies. “Poles and Jews: An Exchange.” *The New York Review of Books*. April 9, 1987.

²² Piotrowski, 36.

²³*Ibid.*

Poland, both before and after the war.”²⁴ Richard Lukas adds that “Jews maintained their own lifestyle and values and preferred to have only limited contact with Poles, usually confined to business dealings,”²⁵ a relationship Piotrowski defines as one of “voluntary isolationism.”²⁶ What was being presented by the mainstream press in the 1930s was a “biased picture” and “for the most part, interaction between Poles and Jews was quite uneventful, even distantly cordial.”²⁷ Therefore, “in the interest of truth, just as Polish prejudice, discrimination, and anti-Semitism should not be swept under the rug of history, so too Jewish-Soviet collaboration should not be excluded from the overall history of the Jews in the Second Republic of Poland and during the two Soviet occupations.”²⁸ Piotrowski is correct; when analyzing the culpability of either group for rising tensions, “adjectives seem to stand in the way of that truth, “some” may be the only modifier acceptable to both sides.”²⁹

These sentiments were reported clearly and frequently in the Polish-language press. Poles reported on international cases of antisemitism, including those which happened in Poland³⁰ and for those reports not written in an objective tone, empathy for the Jews was always present. In other cases, empathy for Gentile Poles was clearly evident. For example, an article from April

²⁴Ibid., 38.

²⁵Richard Lukas. *Out of the Inferno: Poles Remember the Holocaust*. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1989) 8.

²⁶Piotrowski, 39.

²⁷Ibid., 41.

²⁸Ibid., 65.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰ The press was honest its portrayal of antisemitism, both happening internationally and domestically. For example, see: *Republika-Górník*, “Punishment for Antisemitic Poles.” December 10, 1933. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górník*, “Anti-Jewish writing found in Warsaw.” May 15, 1936. Pg. 1.

30, 1937 titled “Jews are provoking Poles in Poland”³¹ detailed that Poles were fed up with the open hostility by Jews, who regarded Poles as “Stupid goys.” The article expressed that there were issues with relations, but they had nothing to do with antisemitism and everything to do with the fact Jews expected everything from the Polish government but wanted nothing to do with the country itself; in this regard, they were exploiting both Poles and Poland. The end of the article reiterated that several official Jewish organizations in Poland stated that there were no ‘official attacks’ on Jews happening in Poland and the Jews themselves needed to curtail their violence.³² Official remarks were made that there were no pogroms happening in Poland. On July 23, 1937, another article entitled “Jews provoking Poles” adopted an even more critical tone, claiming that what Jews expected from Poland demonstrated they “lost their mind (reason).” For years, during relative peace, the Jews of Poland enjoyed the safety and benefits the country had to offer and rather than maintaining good relations, they (it was stressed not all, but many) currently chose to participate in illegal operations supporting Moscow Jews and their version of communism. Many verified cases of these Russian connections were communicated in Poland but were not receiving international attention. This issue was addressed in a book published in 1940 titled *My Name is Million: The Experiences of an Englishwoman in Poland* by an anonymous author (for the sake of security). The book was promoted and advertised in the Polish press and dealt with the issue of the animosity between Poles and Jews who supported communism.³³ The Englishwoman writes:

As a class, the Jews went over wholesale to the Bolsheviks. In Wilno and elsewhere the worst type of Jew turned informer overnight. Thousands of the same Jews who had

³¹ *Republika-Górnik*, “Jews are Provoking Poles in Poland.” By W. Puchala. April 30, 1937. Pg. 2.

³² See for example, *Republika-Górnik*, “Again, a Jews kills a Pole.” June 25, 1937. Pg. 1.

³³ *Republika-Górnik*, “Advertisement for My name is Million.” May 21, 1941. Pg. 5.

counted on the Polish Army to save them from Hitler arrived as refugees from the German occupation and proceeded to sell the Poles to the Russian occupation like hot cakes. Even the G.P.U. agents whom they guided from house to house expressed contempt for these self-appointed jackals...Nevertheless, the truth remains that within the Russian Occupation the patriot's worst enemy at this time was his Jewish fellow citizen. The Bolshevik regime, the Jews thought, meant power for themselves.³⁴

Increasingly, hostile Jewish groups were becoming more violent, killing or injuring police, soldiers, private citizens and even women and children. Several articles described these instances and stated that there was a heated reaction to these situations by Poles, but that it was substantiated. The reasons for the altercations were always categorized as pogroms or antisemitic outbursts, which was not the entire truth. Furthermore, the press addressed why Poles were switching from their regular (Jewish) vendors to new (Polish) vendors: precisely because the new motto of the Polish Patriot was “Poles for Poles in everyday interests of life” and not ‘Poles for those who are openly hostile against them.’ There was no abrupt burst of antisemitism; in this regard it was a direct response to the vocal and ever-present anti-Polish attitude of not all, but of growing numbers of agitating Jews. According to the Polish press, this reaction should not surprise anyone, except those who were missing the facts. Jews were behaving in a blatantly hateful fashion towards more and more Poles, and Poles’ reaction to this attitude (such as boycotting Jewish business) was an act of self-defence. Why after decades of relative peace, without any problems regarding business relationships, would Poles choose to change their dealings with their Jewish neighbours? Because Jews did not regard Poles as their neighbours, but as inferior and “stupid goys.” Therefore, if resettlement was a possibility, many Poles (and Jews) would support it.³⁵

³⁴ Anonymous. *My Name is Million: The Experiences of an Englishwoman in Poland*. (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1940), 262.

³⁵ *Republika-Górnik*, “Jews Provoke Poles.” By W. Puchala. July 23, 1937. Pg. 2.

A Polish Rabbi, Rabbi Rubenstein, acknowledged there were tensions and that Jews were not innocent bystanders to the issues but active participants, but warned Polish and international Jews not to ignore the real aggressor: Nazi Germany. Poland may have its issues but it was in Nazi Germany where ‘barbaric’ transgressions are occurring, transgressions so heinous, the “world has not yet witnessed such occurrences.”³⁶ Talking about a new homeland for the Jews was as primary an issue for Polish Jews as the corridor issue was for gentile Poles. In the 1920s and 1930s, *Nasz Przegląd* dealt with the concern in almost every issue.³⁷ In America, the *Republika-Górnik* acknowledged that no place in the Holy Land would satisfy the needs and wants of the Jews, the Palestinians, or the British. The goal was not to disturb the Arabs in the area, but for the British to (finally) give Jews what was promised to them in the Balfour Declaration, a land of their own. The point was also made that both areas (Jewish and Palestinian) should be sovereign. This option would be the most peaceful and efficient, and with Britain’s continued cooperation in the region, it could maintain strong relations with both Palestinians and Jews.³⁸ However, such a proposal was not acceptable as many Polish Jews did not support ‘splitting up’ Palestine and wished to have full sovereignty.³⁹ On the other hand, American Jews expressed favourable views toward the suggestion.⁴⁰ What was clear was that resettlement was a contentious issue for Jews and gentiles alike.

³⁶*Republika-Górnik*, “Jews blame Germans for antisemitism in Poland.” March 1, 1936. Pg. 1.

³⁷ See: *Nasz Przegląd*. “Palestine in Forum in League of Nations.” September 4, 1929. Pg 3. Or *Nasz Przegląd*. “Big debate on Palestine.” October 4, 1933. Pg 3. *Nasz Przegląd*. “In anticipation of Palestinian report.” July 1, 1937. Pg 5.

³⁸ *Republika-Górnik*, “New Jewish Homeland.” July 16, 1937. Pg. 2.

³⁹*Republika-Górnik*. “Jews in Poland and the splitting up of Palestine.” July 23, 1937. Pg. 6.

⁴⁰*Republika-Górnik*, “American Jews Agree to Division.” August 13, 1937. Pg. 3.

Overall, Polish public opinion –in both Poland and North America- was aggravated by the way Polish-Jewish relations and resettlement plans were being portrayed in the mainstream American press, referencing article titles (from Polish newspapers) such as “Ridicule by anti-Polish Jews in the United States” and “Excesses by American Jews.” Reports from *Gazeta Polska (Polish Gazette)* claimed that Poles were insulted that a Jewish organization appealed to Senator Hull to intervene in Poland after hearing only half of the story. The article claimed that anyone was welcome to come to the country and witness for themselves what was really happening. The country had an open-door policy for outside observers; it had nothing to hide and encouraged tourism. Between 1936 and 1938, tourism was on the rise in Poland, increasing from 650,000 to 800,000 visitors annually. Those tourists, including Jewish tourists, did not voice concern over the Polish treatment of Jews.⁴¹

Poles felt conflicted; on one hand, they were asked by Polish Jews to appeal diplomatically on their behalf in the case of Palestine, and on the other hand were expressing anti-emigration sentiment.⁴² One thing that remained consistent, according to the Polish press, was that Polish Jews were publicly expressing anti-Polish sentiment no matter what the issue.⁴³ With conflicting attitudes, Poland did not see how both groups could reach a compromise, and upheld her original position; no matter how inflamed relations got, the country would assist in immigration efforts “legally and peacefully, and reject the expulsion methods of Germany.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ *Republika-Górník*, “Poland for Tourists.” June 21, 1939. Pg. 4.

⁴² For example, Abraham Kobik was quoted in an article as saying, “We Jews in Poland have the same rights as Poles...why would we leave?” Noting that if anyone was unhappy with Jewish behavior, they should be the ones to leave. See: *Republika-Górník*, “Why Should We, and not Poles, Leave the Country?” March 3, 1939. Pg. 2.

⁴³ *Republika-Górník*, “Jews are only hurting their own image.” July 30, 1937. Pg. 1.

⁴⁴ *Republika-Górník*, “How Poland Views (the) Jewish Quest (for a homeland).” December 30, 1938. Pg. 1.

Among discussions of ‘where’ to place expelled Jews or Jews actively trying to emigrate, appeals were made to the United States. In Washington, Senator King from Utah appealed to the Senate to find means of assistance for persecuted Jews in Germany. He asserted that any existing immigration quotas should be disregarded as they represented an unnecessary obstacle in light of the desperate situation of European Jewry. Furthermore, German Jews deserved American help as approximately 600,000 of them were being persecuted by “terrifying racial laws.” Not only that, Senator King reminded the Senate that Hitler’s goal was to “exterminate Jews as a precondition to strengthening Germany.”⁴⁵ These stories, and numerous others, clearly outlining that Jews were targeted by Hitler and that the Führer’s long-term goal was to ‘exterminate Jews’ (although the exact means to reach this end were not known or even fully developed in the 1930s) were common on the front pages of the Polish-language press.

Senator King was not the only one who equated what was happening to the Jews in the 1930s to eventual and preplanned extermination. William Dodd wrote an assessment of what was happening in the Third Reich:

[S]everal policies were adopted during the first two years of the Nazi regime. The first was to suppress the Jews.... They were to hold no positions in University or government operations, own no land, write nothing for newspapers, gradually give up their personal business relations, be imprisoned and many of them killed.... [The Primer] betrays no indication of the propaganda activities of the Nazi government. And of course there is not a word in it to warn the unwary reader that all the people who might oppose the regime have been absolutely silenced. The central idea behind it is to make the rising generation worship their chief and get ready to "save civilization" from the Jews, from Communism and from democracy—thus preparing the way for a Nazified world where all freedom of the individual, of education, and of the churches is to be totally suppressed.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *Republika-Górnik*, “Appeal by Senator King to Remove Quota for Jews in Germany.” February 9, 1936. Pg. 1.

⁴⁶ William E. Dodd. “The Bible of a Political Church.” *The Nazi Primer: Official Handbook for the schooling of Hitler Youth*. (Harper and Brothers, 1938) 256.

Additionally, on June 10, 1938, Dodd gave a speech to the Harvard Club warning that Hitler's current actions against the Jews were stepping stones toward his ultimate goal to "kill them all."⁴⁷ Secretary Hull also appealed to twenty-nine different nations asking for help in assisting Jews, claiming that the Jewish situation is dire but the world could not expect America to solve the issue alone. And although Secretary Hull did not expect America to carry the entire burden of assistance, he did ask for a quota favourable to Jewish refugees.⁴⁸ His request was rejected. Between 1936 and 1939, any realistic assistance that could be provided for the Jews was allowing them asylum into other countries. Application wait times to enter the United States from Germany or Poland were anywhere from sixteen months to two years in the late 1930s.⁴⁹ In the fiscal year ending on June 30, 1938, 67,494 immigrants were to be allowed into the United States but only 42,895 of those 'quota' immigrants were allowed to enter. The foreign press heavily criticized these obstructive immigration policies; quotas did not have to be enlarged to help many in need; existing quotas could still be filled without lengthening of wait times.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, America remained firm in its belief in isolationism at all costs,⁵¹ including avoiding clashes with international problems caused by engaging with unwanted 'isms.' The Polish press understood America's stance, but did not agree with it and made its viewpoint clear in the following poster titled "ISMS."

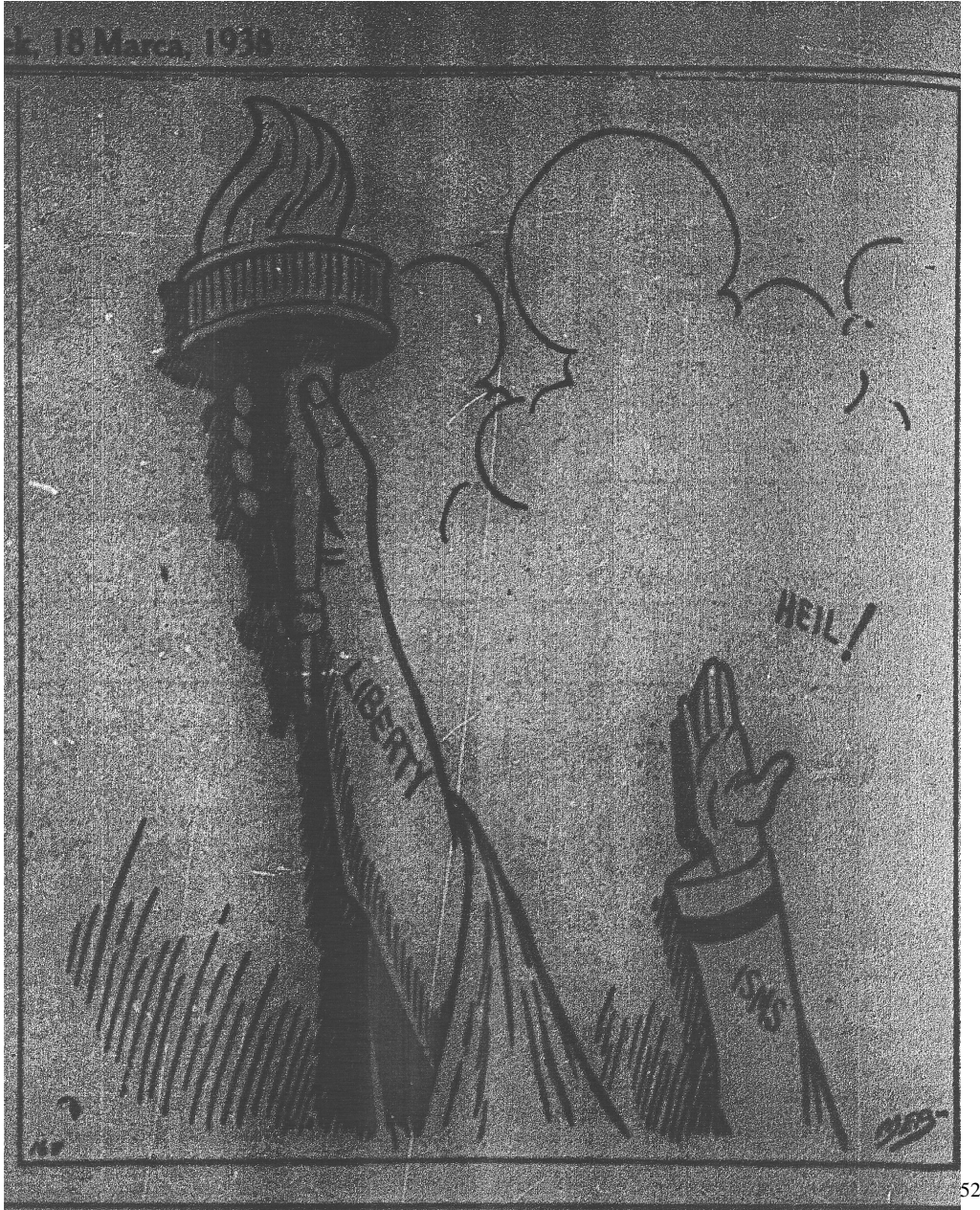
⁴⁷ Fred Arthur Bailey. *William Edward Dodd: The South's Yeoman Scholar*. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977), 194.

⁴⁸ *Republika-Górník*, "Sec. Hull Displays Support for Jews." February 9, 1936. Pg. 1.

⁴⁹ *Republika-Górník*, "Immigration Policy and Waits Lengthened." December 30, 1938. Pg. 5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ America's first priority was its own citizens and its own domestic issues, such as unemployment. See: *Republika-Górník*. "Against Immigration." July 14, 1939 P 5.



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⁵²Republika-Górník, "ISMS" March 18, 193. Pg. 2.

In June of 1933, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt informed Dodd of the position that he would maintain throughout the decade: “The German authorities are treating Jews shamefully and the Jews in this country are greatly excited. But this is also not a government affair. We can do nothing except for American citizens who happen to be made victims. We must protect them, and whatever we can do to moderate the general persecution by unofficial and personal influence ought to be done.”⁵³ It was clear the President would remain firm with his choice of inaction towards international issues despite further reports of worsening situations overseas; in other words, immigration was closed for Jews.⁵⁴

In the winter of 1938, when ambassador Anthony Biddle (ambassador to Poland from the United States 1937-1943) came to Warsaw, he was asked if the current wave of antisemitism in Romania was similar to the situation in Poland. He replied that it assuredly was not comparable and that in observing the situation in Poland, he was confident such extremes would not occur. Furthermore, he observed that problems between Poles and Jews were not of an antisemitic nature but of an economic nature.⁵⁵ It was “through the ambassador, the Poles hoped to inform America of their plight and their needs.”⁵⁶ After his trip, Biddle wrote a report (known as the Biddle Report) that “furnished the American government with indisputable evidence of the nature, intent, and tactics of Nazi aggression in Europe.” The report made clear, “that Roosevelt

⁵³ Arnold A. Offner, *American Appeasement: United States Foreign Policy and Germany, 1933–1938* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) 67-68.

⁵⁴ *Republika-Górník*, “Closed Immigration for Jews.” May 5, 1939. Pg. 1.

⁵⁵ *Republika-Górník*, “Amb. Biddle on Poland.” February 11, 1938. Pg. 1.

⁵⁶ Philip V Cannistraro Edward D. Wynot, Jr. Theodore P Kovaleff . ed. *Poland and the Second World War: The Diplomatic Papers of A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr. United States Ambassador to Poland 1937-1939* (Ohio State University: Columbus, 1979) Pg. Xi.

and his foreign policy advisers were given a clear assessment of the crucial circumstances surrounding the fall of Poland, as well as a remarkably accurate judgment on Hitler's long-range goals and ambitions.” Furthermore, “Biddle's dispatches to Washington also kept the administration abreast of domestic political and economic developments inside Poland, and of the entire range of extremely difficult external pressures under which Poland struggled for survival.”⁵⁷ The Poles trusted Biddle; his “credentials for the post were exceptionally good; for in addition to close personal and political ties to the Roosevelt administration, which afforded him the full confidence of the president, Biddle was equipped with a first-rate diplomatic mind and an engaging personality. His ability to gather and absorb detailed information, as well as to grasp the broad implications of complex diplomatic maneuvers, provided Roosevelt and the Department of State with a clear, accurate, and uncompromising analysis of the course of European diplomacy.”⁵⁸

It is clear that Biddle had his finger on the pulse of what was happening in Europe and unlike other instances when one could claim that they did not have direct access to the President, Biddle did. President Roosevelt knew well enough of what was happening and was even encouraged by King, Dodd, Hull, Biddle and Morgenthau to be more pro-active, but Roosevelt was firm in his decision to remain unresponsive regarding actual assistance. He demonstrated sympathy to the plight of Jews, and to others’ suffering, but would not intervene. In 1936, documents became available demonstrating that when Poland was in desperate need of

⁵⁷Ibid., xiv.

⁵⁸Ibid., 3.

assistance during the Polish-Soviet War, the U.S. chose not to assist. Poland desperately needed airplanes but lacked the financial means to purchase or build them. Britain offered aircraft, but because Poland could not afford them, the government proposed taking on some of Britain's war debt to the United States as payment. Several pleas were made to the United States; Poles were dying under Bolshevik tyranny and desperately needed aid. Two days after receiving the formal plea, the United States (as confirmed by secretary Colby) turned down the proposal.⁵⁹ In the *Republika-Górnik's* view -even though it did not agree with America's choices- it should have surprised no one that America was unresponsive to the plight of others.

Another prime example of America's steadfast position came with rising tensions and eventual war between the Chinese and Japanese in the 1930s. The mainstream and especially the Polish press were interested in the issue and in America's response, or lack thereof. The history of animosity between Japan and China is long and complex, and in 1931 the situation escalated when Japan captured Manchuria, an act the United States did not diplomatically recognize. Although sympathetic to the Chinese, America did not want to endanger trade relations, particularly in oil sales (America supplied Japan with 80% of its oil), oil that was used to fuel war against China. In 1937, Japan incited full war after attacking Peking and Nanking with such brutality that the event was called 'The Rape of Nanking,' which saw rape, genital mutilation and murder of over 20,000 civilian women and children. The press, both foreign and mainstream, criticized FDR on its front pages for not providing assistance to the victims of mass murder. Articles voiced disappointment that "United States Remain[ed] Quiet," but despite the

⁵⁹ *Republika-Górnik*. "In 1920 Poland asked the United States for Assistance." May 1, 1936. Pg. 1.

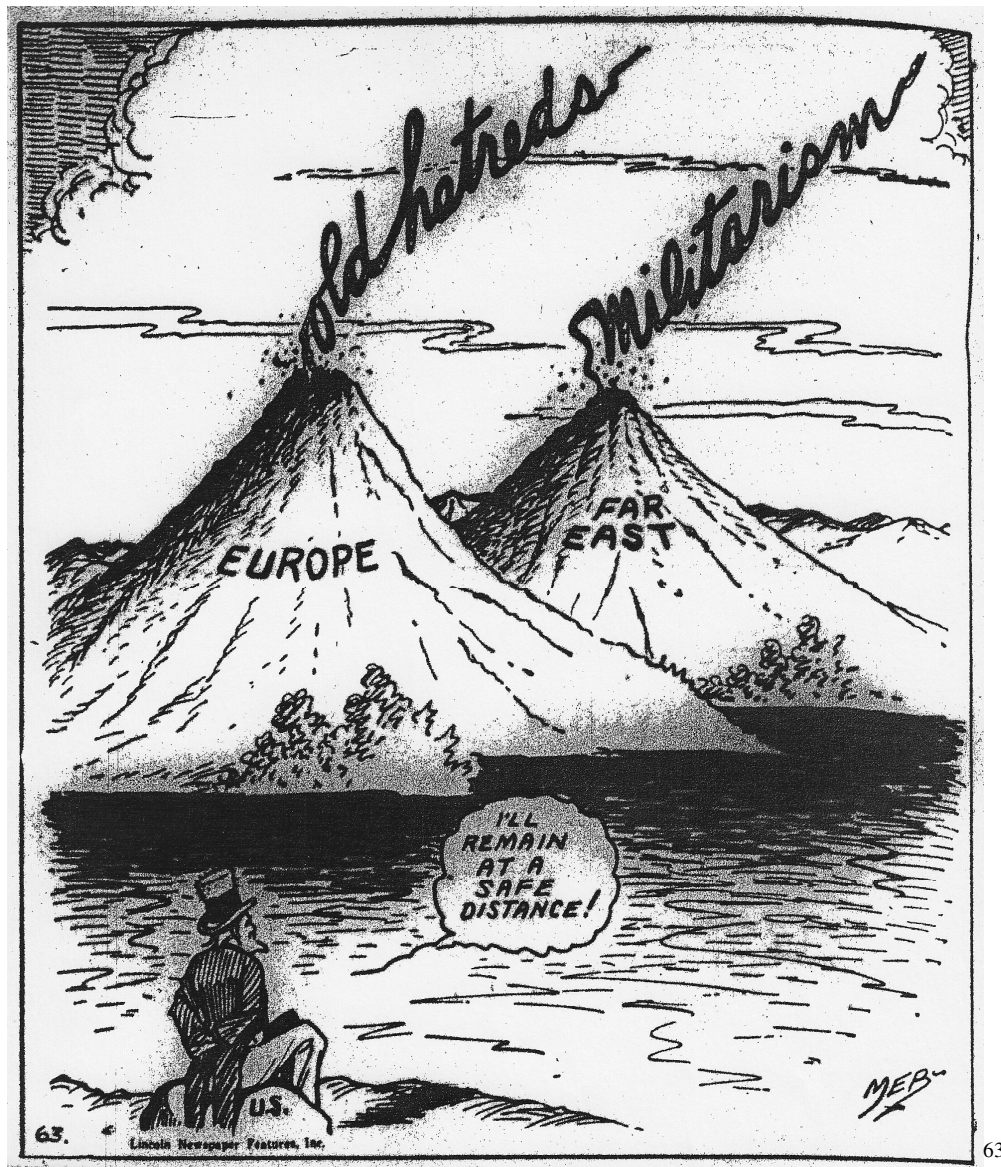
criticism, the President would not budge.⁶⁰ It would not be until July 1941 that the United States would fully embargo trade with Japan, an act which in part prompted Japan to attack Pearl Harbor just a few months later.⁶¹ Clearly, FDR, and even American policy before his Presidency, was consistent; the US was isolationist before the Great War, chose not to assist Poland in the Polish-Soviet War of 1920, Mexicans during the revolution of 1926, or the Chinese after the Rape of Nanking. There was therefore little reason to expect the United States to act on behalf of European Jewry, Poland during the Danzig crisis, or even join the Allies in 1939 with the start of the Second World War. American policy was clear and non-discriminatory and in that regard would not interfere with Hitler's expansionist policies in the Sudetenland and Austria, or in the expulsion of Jews.

Despite the lack of involvement of the United States at this time, the Polish-language press was greatly concerned and vocal; the cartoon below demonstrates the dissatisfaction of the Polish press with American isolationism. The Polish-language press printed stories daily, including those of Jewish hardships on their front page, documenting in detail the step-by-step 'destruction process.' Despite America's history of non-intervention, which was identified repeatedly, the press continued to call for action.⁶²

⁶⁰*Republika-Górnik*, "United States Remains Quiet." January 14, 1938. Pg. 1. See also: *Republika-Górnik*, "War with Japan Imminent." December 13, 1940. Pg. 1. The Polish press followed the Japanese conflict throughout the war. For a few examples see: *Republika-Górnik*, "Internment of Japanese on Ellis Island." December 12, 1941. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*, "Japanese take 10,000 American POWs." May 1, 1942. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*, "American's sink 4 Japanese Ships." October 2, 1942. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*, "Canada will not accept Japanese after War." August 11, 1944. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*, "JAPAN SURRENDERS." August 17, 1945. Pg. 1.

⁶¹ For more detailed information see: U.S., Department of State, Publication 1983, *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941* (Washington, D.C.: U.S., Government Printing Office, 1943) 87-97. And Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1941. Vol. 2: The Far East* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956) 37-39.

⁶² See for example: *Republika-Górnik*, "Further isolation of Jews in Germany." September 24, 1937. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*, "Germans confiscate Jewish Funds." November 12, 1937. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*,



“Increasingly worse for Jews in Germany.” January 7, 1938. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*, “Jews stripped of rights.” June 24, 1938. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*, “Nazis Expel Another 30,000 Jews.” July 8, 1938. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*, “Germans continue to open more concentration camps.” June 23, 1939. Pg. 1.

⁶³ *Republika-Górnik*, “Cartoon: Old Hatred/Militarism.” May 8, 1936. Pg. 1.

When Hitler declared Austria a part of the Third Reich in March of 1938 and took over the Sudetenland in October of 1938, it came as a surprise to no one, least of all the foreign press. What was unexpected was that in order to lessen criticism regarding the lack of response for the refugee problem, FDR initiated the Evian Conference as it was clear “the whole world want[ed] to dump the entire Jewish problem on the United States.”⁶⁴

The Evian Conference was held from July 6-15, 1938 in Evian-les-Bains, France and was attended by representatives from thirty-two nations. Like the Bermuda conference of 1943 (this topic, as well as increasing antisemitism within the United States during this period, which affected the way people interpreted news of the situation in Europe, will be re-visited in Chapter 6) the Evian conference was little more than a diplomatic display of half-hearted intentions. In short, it was clear nothing was to be done; America did not want Jews and “European countries were unable to accommodate” also.⁶⁵ The lack of will at the conference to assist Jews was interpreted by the Nazis as a ‘green light’ to escalate policies. In January 25, 1939, the German Foreign Ministry Memorandum on Policy Regarding Jews in 1938 read:

The American President Roosevelt, who, as is known, included a number of spokesmen of Jewry amongst his close advisors, convened an international conference to discuss the refugee question as early as the middle of 1938, which took place in Evian without producing any notable practical results. . . for Germany the Jewish Question will not be solved when the last Jew has left German soil.⁶⁶

Similarly, at a Nazi rally in Berlin, Joseph Goebbels acknowledged the intense reporting by the foreign press (of all kinds) of Jewish persecution and responded both to international criticism and to a lack of actual response by foreigners: “if the foreign press, or international observers,

⁶⁴ *Republika-Górník*, “England Does Not Want Jews.” July 15, 1938. Pg. 5.

⁶⁵ *Republika-Górník*, “Proposal of Africa for Jewish Homeland (Article a reflection on the failure of Evian to find adequate response to refugee crisis.” November 4, 1938. Pg. 5.

⁶⁶ Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, et al., ed. 128-129.

are so gravely concerned over the Jews, why don't they just take them. Germans would willingly oblige and give the country all her Jews without shedding a tear."⁶⁷ With over 100,000 in attendance at the rally, the crowd's response was "Away with the Jews!"⁶⁸

Determined Jewish pleas for assistance did not subside after Evian. A bolded headline on October 21, 1938 in the *Republika-Górník* read, "JEWS PLEAD TO PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT FOR HELP" and detailed how Jews were in desperate need of assistance.⁶⁹ Moreover, with escalating discrimination in Europe, more and more Jews living outside of Germany appealed to America for assistance.⁷⁰

Few would help desperate European Jews. The Polish press acknowledged that Jewish persecution was not solely a German issue, and printed articles from fascist papers from Rome, such as the *Relazioni Internazionali*, which warned Jews that it was not wise to think that their 'racial quest' was merely a phase.⁷¹ Of special interest, however, was how Romania treated its Jews as it escalated its official antisemitic policies in the late 1930s to mirror those of Germany.⁷² On January 7, 1938, it was reported that the new Premier of Romania, Octavian Goga, placed an "extraordinarily harsh anti-Jewish program which would deprive 1,200,000

⁶⁷*Republika-Górník*, "Goebbels warns Czechs and Jews." July 1, 1938. Pg. 1.

⁶⁸ Ibid. Also, this was clearly not so simple, and the foreign press recognized this. They noted that emigration was made harder for Jews in 1938, as Jews had to have and display Jewish names and identity cards to get (or rather be denied) appropriate travel and/emigration papers. See for example: *Republika-Górník*, "Jews must have (and display) Jewish names." August 26, 1938. Pg. 5.

⁶⁹ *Republika-Górník*, "JEWS PLEAD TO PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT FOR HELP." October 21, 1938. Pg. 1.

⁷⁰*Republika-Górník*, "Jews, en masse, appeal for help to America." September 9, 1938. Pg. 1. And *Republika-Górník*, "Jews in Italy ask to be let into America." September 9, 1938. Pg. 5 And *Republika-Górník*, "Mexico Deports Jews (as 'undesirable element')." December 10, 1939. Pg. 1.

⁷¹ *Republika-Górník*, "Reprint from *Relazioni Internazionali*." August 19, 1938. Pg. 1. And *Republika-Górník*, "Antisemitism in Italy." September 16, 1938. Pg. 3

⁷²*Republika-Górník*, "Romania confiscates Jewish estates." January 7, 1938. Pg. 1.

Jews of means for survival.” Enforcement of his new policies would be facilitated by 200,000 swastika-bearing “blue shirts.” Some of the new measures were to include the removal of Jews from civil service, confiscating estates, removing citizenship rights of all Jews who entered the country after 1922, removing Jewish liquor licenses, and banning all Jewish journalists from writing. Furthermore, any Jews who tried to escape to nearby Austria or Bulgaria would be denied entry. Five days after this article was printed, Romania did strip its Jews of all citizenship rights.⁷³

In an interview Goga stated: "For us there is only one final solution of the Jewish problem-the collection of all Jews in a region which is still uninhabited, and the foundation there of a Jewish nation. And the further away the better."⁷⁴ In another analogy, Goga compared the Jews to salt in soup. He said that “Jews are the self-proclaimed salt of the earth” and that may be true, but once one spills an abundance of salt into their soup, they no longer desire the soup and the soup must be thrown out. The same situation is happening in Romania, where its gentile citizens were the soup, and Jews the salt. Furthermore, he decried criticism from England or Spain, which he claimed dealt with their Jews using “drastic means.”⁷⁵ Goga responded to criticism stating that Romania was an independent nation and no one else had the right to interfere with its practises; after all, none of the critics appeared to be offering asylum.⁷⁶

⁷³*Republika-Górník*, “Romania Implementing Nazism.” January 7, 1938. Pg. 2.

⁷⁴*The Argus*. “Anti-Jewish Campaign.” January 24, 1938. Pg 9.

⁷⁵ *Republika-Górník*, “Jews try to escape en masse from Romania.” January 14, 1938. Pg. 1. And *Republika-Górník*, “Romania to move 250,000 Jews.” January 14, 1937. Pg. 5. And *Republika-Górník*, “Goga Reminds England and Spain of Jews.” February 11, 1938. Pg. 1.

⁷⁶*Republika-Górník*, “Jews protest against Romania (and responses).” January 14, 1938. Pg. 1.

That no one was willing to offer Jews asylum was made abundantly clear by the turning away of refugee ships. The mainstream as well as the foreign press widely covered one famous incident. *The New York Times* printed an article on June 8, 1939, which expressed the frustration felt by the passengers of the Hamburg-America Line's passenger ship, the *St. Louis*. The ship, containing approximately 900 Jewish refugees, left Hamburg on May 13, 1939 in search of refuge from the Nazi persecution they faced in Germany.⁷⁷ The *St. Louis* sought asylum at Havana Harbor and with no avail turned its appeal to Florida: "[n]o plague ship ever received a sorrier welcome."⁷⁸ The article read that many of the refugees could "see the shimmering towers of Miami rising from the sea, but for them they were only the battlements of another forbidden city."⁷⁹ With biting satire the article concludes that Germany would gladly accept the ship back "with all the hospitality of its concentration camps."⁸⁰ Although the *New York Times* was critical of American inaction in its presentation of the tragedy of the 'saddest ship afloat,' it failed to offer solutions for helping the vulnerable passengers.⁸¹ The government and the mainstream press both feared that letting the ship dock would set a "dangerous precedent."⁸²

After the *St Louis* incident, the Nazi journal *Der Weltkampf* commented on the Allied response: "[w]e are openly saying that we do not want the Jews while the democracies keep claiming that they are willing to receive them-and then leave them out in the cold. Aren't we

⁷⁷ See also: *Republika-Górnik*, "Cuba throws out Jews (commentary on how US will not accept them either)" June 9, 1939. Pg. 1.

⁷⁸ *New York Times*, June 8, 1939, in Robert H. Abzug. *The Bedford Series in History and Culture: America Views the Holocaust 1933-1945 A Brief Documentary History*. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 83.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the coming of the Holocaust 1933-1945*. (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 118.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 119.

savages better men after all?”⁸³ The American government, well aware of the sharp criticism it was receiving over the *St. Louis*, refused to change its policy when another ship, the *Orduna*, also appealed to America for help. On June 10, 1939, a sea letter from the *Orduna*, written by Austrian-Jewish refugees, addressed a plea to the President “for help confiding in your humanity.”⁸⁴ No reply and no help came. Inaction in helping the victims of these passenger ships in the late 1930s exemplifies that ultimately America had no interest or intention of facilitating rescue.

It was nearly 1939 and the situation was worsening in Poland also. Poles began comparing what was happening to Jews with what was happening to them.⁸⁵ A plethora of articles were printed detailing abuse of Poles by Germans. Approximately 1,500,000 Poles, particularly in the corridor area, were faced with forced Germanization. Germans classified Poles as inferior and made it illegal to speak Polish. Furthermore, Germans in Danzig were firing thousands of Poles, leaving them unemployed and starving, and tossing entire families out on the street.⁸⁶ Constant threats were being made, most vocally by Hitler and Albert Foerster, a Danzig Nazi Leader, who stated that “Danzig will be restored to Germany” and that “every shred of anti-

⁸³ Haskel Lookstein, *Were We Our Brothers' Keepers: The Public Response of American Jews to the Holocaust 1938-1944*. (New York: Hartmore House 1985), 103.

⁸⁴ Desperate sea letter to President Roosevelt pleading for help for seventy-two European refugees aboard the English steamer *Orduna* refused landing in Cuba, May 29, 1939, in John Mendelsohn ed. *The Holocaust: Selected Documents in Eighteen Volumes* vol. 7, *Jewish Emigration The S.S. St. Louis Affair and Other Cases*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982), 144.

⁸⁵ Such connections would continue to be made after war began in 1939.

⁸⁶ *Republika-Górnik*, “Germanization of 1,500,000 Poles- Calls for Retaliation in Poland.” April 17, 1936. Pg. 1. And *Republika-Górnik*, “In Gdańsk, against the law for workers to speak Polish.” May 22, 1936. Pg. 1. And *Republika-Górnik*, “How do Poles live in Germany?” June 5, 1936. Pg. 4. (No minority treaty/laws like in Poland).

Nazi opposition will be wiped out.”⁸⁷ Poland’s response was to not submit: the seizure of the corridor would mean war. Even Piłsudski’s widow spoke out on the issue, urging women to prepare for battle. If war were to break out, women would have to take on the men’s jobs in factories, but also fight on the front line. According to her, the entire country should “perish together, or live together. The entire nation needs to fight together, and will fight together.”⁸⁸

Poles and Jews in the United States did voice their distress regarding worsening situations for both groups. On May 14, 1937, it was reported that 1,000 New Yorkers protested in front of the German Consulate, shouting “Away with Hitler the butcher!”⁸⁹ However, some Jews in Germany felt such displays were counter-productive. For example, although Jews pleaded with authorities for assistance, other forms of protest were in fact discouraged by some Jewish groups as they feared retribution. An article in the *Republika-Górnik* clarified that “Jews in Germany are well aware that no country wants them. And although the United States has protested against the ill treatment of Jews it has made no difference in their treatment except perhaps only make matters worse. Demonstrations like those at Madison Square Gardens have no practical impact on the Jewish situation in Germany.”⁹⁰

Fear of retribution for the actions of others was warranted in the 1930s, particularly after Herschel Grynszpan shot and killed Ernst vom Rath (a German diplomat) on November 7, 1938, giving the Nazis an excuse to execute *Kristallnacht*, or the ‘Night of Broken Glass’ on

⁸⁷ *Jewish Telegraph Agency* reports from Havas News Agency. “Sees Danzig Restored to Reich in 1937.” November 10, 1936. See: <http://www.jta.org/1936/11/10/archive/sees-danzig-restored-to-reich-in-1937#ixzz31cTD62TX>

⁸⁸ *Republika-Górnik*, “Hitler’s Requests” April 14, 1939. Pg. 2. And *Republika-Górnik*, “Poland will not give Gdańsk to Germany.” April 21, 1939. Pg. 1.

⁸⁹ *Republika-Górnik*, “1,000 New Yorkers Protest Away With Hitler the Butcher!” May 14, 1937. Pg. 1.

⁹⁰ *Republika-Górnik*, “German Jews ask American Jews to not worsen their situation by protesting.” February 10, 1939. Pg. 1.

November 9-10, 1938. The story of vom Rath's assassination was covered by the mainstream and foreign press. Grynszpan, a Polish Jew, shot the diplomat in Paris after learning that his family in Hanover had been stripped of their property and handed over to the Gestapo for transportation back into Poland. After hearing (from his sister) that they were stuck at the border, the infuriated Grynszpan headed to the German Embassy in Paris and asked to see an official. Vom Rath, by coincidence, was the official Grynszpan was presented to, and he proceeded to shoot him while shouting vengeful comments.⁹¹ Two days later, a pogrom occurred where approximately 90 Jews were murdered, thousands taken to concentration camps, and dozens of synagogues and Jewish businesses were destroyed.⁹²

Herschel did not resist arrest afterwards and stood trial, although what actually happened to him is disputed. Dorothy Thompson, a very successful American journalist (who was actually expelled from Germany in 1934 for her writing), said in a broadcast:

They say a man is entitled to a trial by a jury of his peers, and a man's kinsmen rally around him, when he is in trouble. But no kinsman of Herschel's can defend him. The Nazi government has announced that if any Jews, anywhere in the world, protest at anything that is happening, further oppressive measures will be taken. They are holding every Jew in Germany as a hostage. Therefore, we who are not Jews must speak, speak our sorrow and indignation and disgust in so many voices that they will be heard. This boy has become a symbol, and the responsibility for his deed must be shared by those who caused it.⁹³

⁹¹See: Herschel Grynszpan http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206321.pdf
For a more detailed account see: Jonathan Kirsch. *The Short, Strange Life of Herschel Grynszpan: A Boy Avenger, a Nazi Diplomat, and a Murder in Paris* (Liveright, 2013).

⁹² *Republika-Górník*, "Jewish Pogrom, Attacks on Synagogues and Jewish Stores in Berlin." November 18, 1938. Pg. 1. And *Republika-Górník*, "50,000 Jews behind bars and in concentration camps." November 18, 1938. Pg. 1.

⁹³ Gerald Schwab. *The Day the Holocaust Began: The Odyssey of Herschel Grynszpan*. (New York: Praeger, 1990), 36.

President Roosevelt also expressed his frustration after *Kristallnacht*, and a broadcast by Herbert Hoover condemned the act as an “outrage” to civilization.⁹⁴ On November 10, 1938, Biddle penned a letter to FDR stating:

My dear Mr. President:

... At the present moment the following are highlights on developments in connection with the current European Jewish problem: (a) violent repercussions against the Jews throughout Germany as a result of the Jewish boy, Herschel Grunspan, murdering [Ernst] vom Rath, Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris; (b) signs of an approaching storm over the community of Jews in Rumania; and (c) difficulties encountered by the Polish official representatives in their negotiations in Berlin regarding the individual rights and properties of the Polish Jews recently ordered out of Germany to Poland (15,000 Jews recently crossed into Poland under 24 hours' notice from the German Government. From all accounts, German treatment of these unfortunate people was nothing short of brutal. On the other hand, the Polish Government went to great lengths in an effort to extend humane treatment under trying circumstances.⁹⁵

Although Grynszpan’s story received wide mainstream coverage, as did *Kristallnacht*, and there was a vocal backlash against the atrocity, no concrete action was taken as America’s “real national interest [was] accommodation rather than war with Germany.”⁹⁶ In a Gallup Poll conducted shortly after *Kristallnacht* asking: “Do you approve or disapprove of the Nazis’ treatment of Jews in Germany?” 94% of the respondents answered that they disapproved.⁹⁷ However, just six months after the incident, 83% of those polled in a *Fortune* magazine survey said they did not want immigration quotas changed in favour of those in danger in Europe.⁹⁸ It

⁹⁴Joseph Bendersky. *The Jewish Threat: Anti-Semitic Policies of the U.S. Army* (New York: Basic Books 2000), 239.

⁹⁵ Cannistraro et al. 250-252.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Maria Mazzenga. ed. *American Religious Responses to Kristallnacht*. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009) 2.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 3.

was clear that Americans did not approve of what was happening in Nazi Germany, but did not want to act upon that disapproval.

For many survivors, *Kristallnacht* represents “the writing on the wall” of what was to come.⁹⁹ Between 1933 and 1945, *Kristallnacht* was the most written about event regarding anti-Jewish violence by the mainstream North American press.¹⁰⁰ Victims, as well as national and international observers expressed shock at the event, but virtually nothing was done to stop it while it was happening and minimal retribution was taken against Germany in the pogrom’s aftermath. *Kristallnacht* symbolizes for many survivors, even prior to the T4 program, the “prelude to the destruction of a whole people, and an indication of what happens when a society falls victim to its baser instincts.”¹⁰¹

A political cartoon printed in 1939 described 1938 as a year of “atrocities, killings, invasion, bombing of helpless civilians, and religious persecutions” with no end in sight to the brutality of dictatorship in the coming future.¹⁰² Following *Kristallnacht*, January 1939 marked a seminal month in Holocaust history. Not only was anti-Jewish persecution on the rise and the fight over Danzig escalating, but Hitler made his infamous speeches outlining his future goals. In a speech to the Reichstag on January 30, 1939, he proclaimed, “Today I will once more be prophet. If the international Jewish financiers in and outside of Europe should succeed in plunging nations once more into a war, then the result will not be the bolshevization of the earth and this the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe!”

⁹⁹ Number 429 Survivor Testimony.

¹⁰⁰ Martin Gilbert. *Kristallnacht: Prelude to Destruction*. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006),14.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 15.

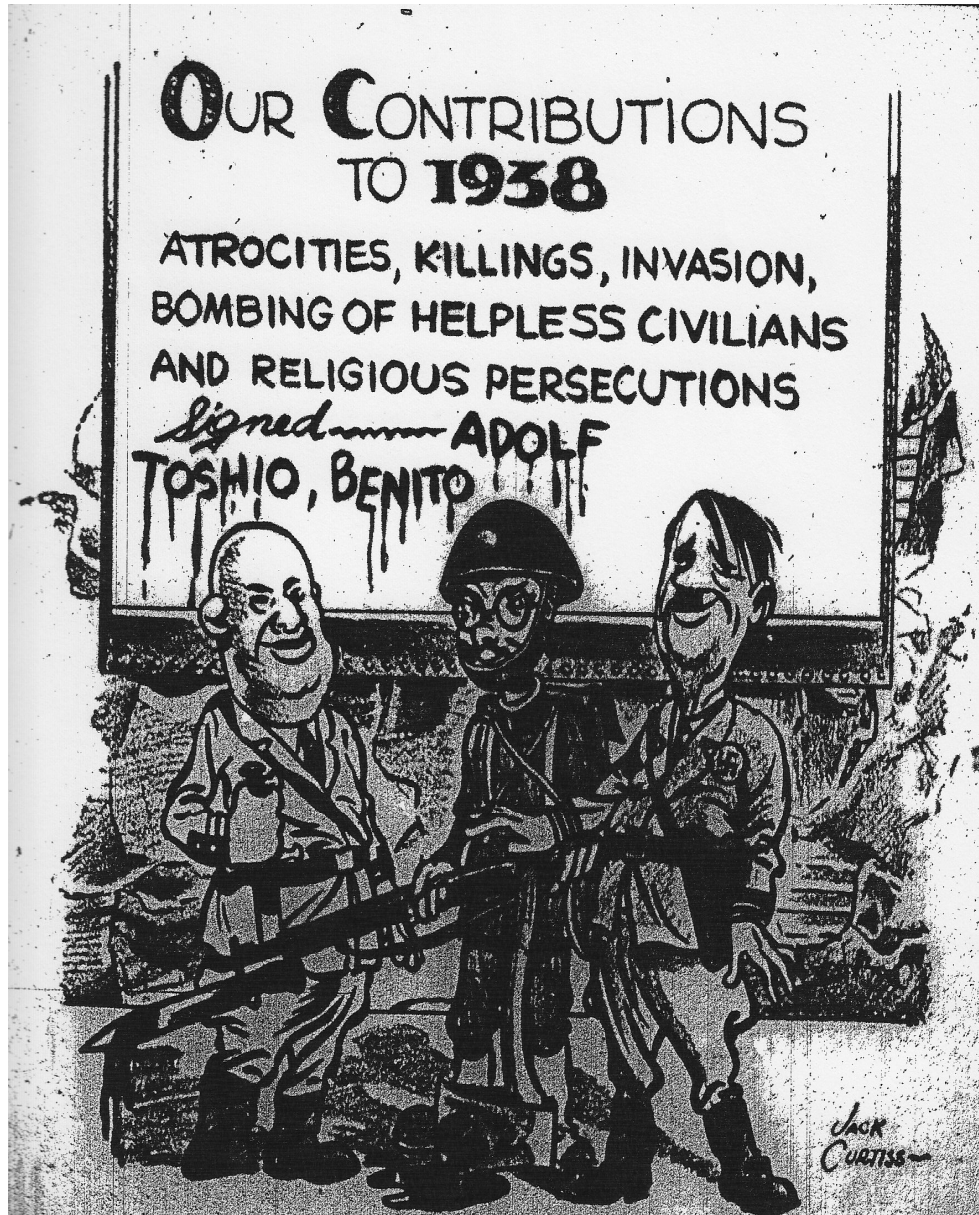
¹⁰² See Page 191 for Political Cartoon.

As the press reported daily, steps toward ‘annihilation’ included further anti-Jewish legislation, such as the addition of Israel or Sara to “non-Jewish” names and Jewish identity cards being stamped with a J (a law introduced a few months earlier).¹⁰³ Since the end of 1938 laws became more stringent and specific, such as a law from November 29, 1938, that forbade Jews from keeping carrier pigeons. The foreign press printed a plethora of front-page articles about Jews pleading for emigration possibilities. Two months later, Hitler, continuing to acquire *Lebensraum*, attacked Czechoslovakia on March 12, 1939, which drew further appeasement. As the world looked to the United States for a response, America was adamant that the “Czechs were the children of Europe”¹⁰⁴ and not their problem. Discussions in Congress clearly expressed the majority belief that Czechoslovakia was Europe’s problem, not America’s. Political cartoons in the Polish press, on the other hand, demonstrated what happens when one capitulates to Germany.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *Republika-Górnik*, “Germans Enact Decrees Against Jews.” January 20, 1939. Pg. 1.

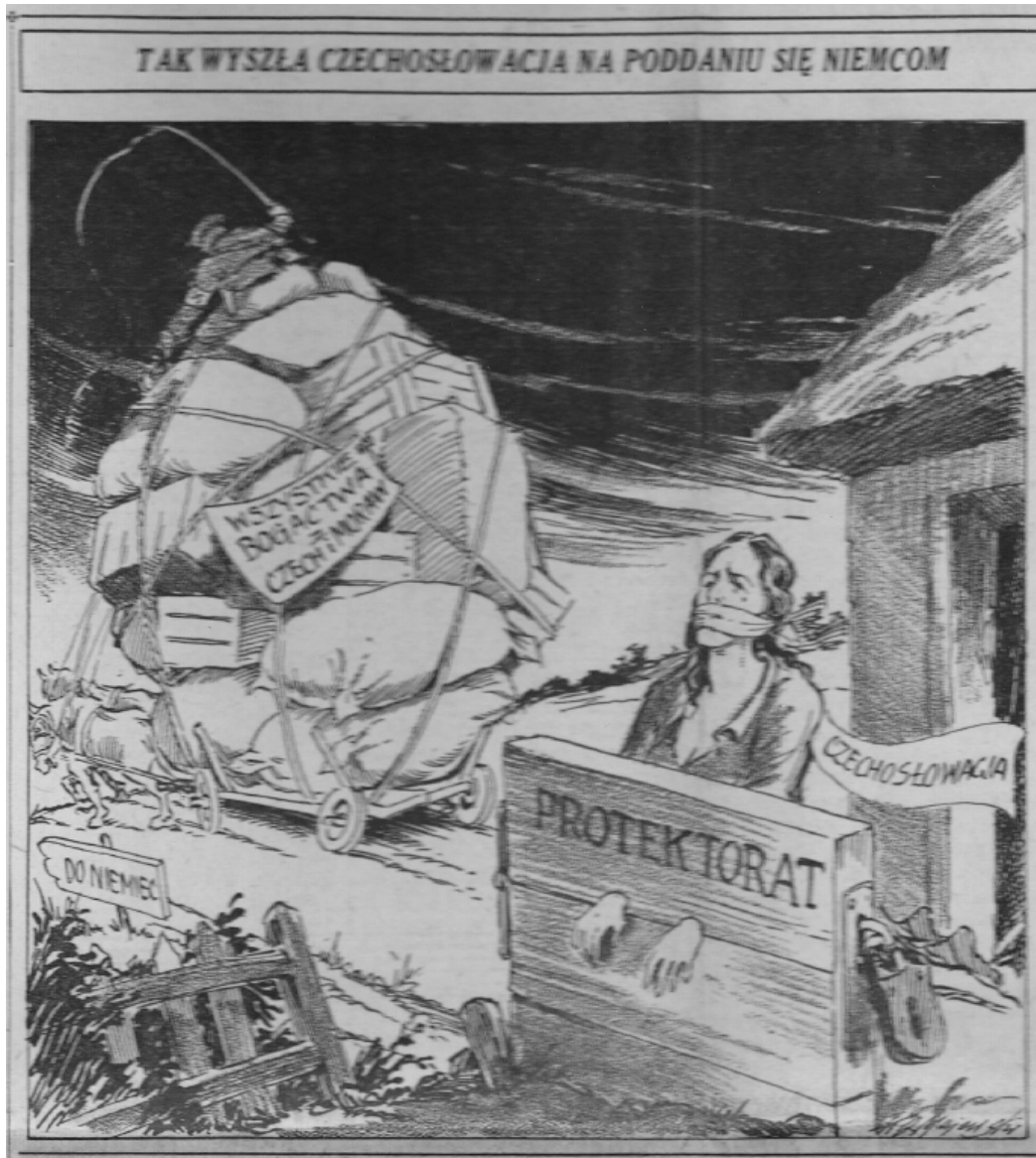
¹⁰⁴ *Republika-Górnik*, “Czechs were the children of Europe.” March 24, 1939. Pg. 1.

¹⁰⁵ See Page 192 for Political Cartoon.



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¹⁰⁶ *Republika-Górnik*, "Our Contributions to 1938." Jack Curtiss. January 20, 1939. Pg. 5. This cartoon was a reprint from Lincoln Newspaper Franchise Inc. 1939. (The artist's real name is Jack Kirby, born Jacob Kurtzberg, later to become the co-creator of Captain America).



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¹⁰⁷ *Dziennik Związkowy*. Caption Reads: "This is how things turned out for Czechoslovakia for capitulating to Germany – All Wealth Goes to Germany." May 23, 1939. Pg 1.

With Hitler's unstoppable or rather unstopped conquests, war was predictable. The Polish press was frustrated with those who were unsympathetic to the plight of Poland¹⁰⁸ and on April 14, 1939, the *Republika-Górnik* printed a piece by the Polish-American council asking for all Polish Americans to donate money for the protection of Poland. The article appealed to emotion and reiterated that it was on each Pole's conscience to donate; their brethren in Poland were preparing to die against tyranny, the very least one could do was make a monetary donation.¹⁰⁹ The paper too took a clear stance, publishing its opinion in "The Actions of Poles in Scranton: We Will Not Allow Germans to Spit in Our Face" clearly seeing Hitler as the aggressor against Poland¹¹⁰ rather than vice versa, as Germany claimed. The press also asked for donations to be sent to Poland for its defence. Seeing Hitler 'swallow smaller countries one by one,' Poland was undoubtedly on Hitler's war path and Polish Americans should not stand idly by. The article asked Poles to stand strong, as they had done twenty years ago, against their motherland's perpetual enemy: Germany. Poles in Scranton were known to be extremely patriotic, and that patriotism was called on with deep urgency.¹¹¹ The urgency was also felt by The Federation of Polish-Jews in America who also declared that with war clearly on the horizon, Polish-Jews (despite strain with Poles) would stand by Poland.¹¹² In August 1939, *Nasz Przegląd* wrote, "The Zionist organization and the Jewish people stand on the side of Poland, ready to fight for their dignity and freedom. This declaration ought to be the guide-post for World Jewry. The place of

¹⁰⁸ See Political Cartoon on Pg. 197.

¹⁰⁹ *Republika-Górnik*, "Appeal from the Polish-American Counsel." April 14, 1939. Pg. 2.

¹¹⁰ *Republika-Górnik*, "The Actions of Poles in Scranton: We Will Not Allow Germans to Spit in Our Face." April 21, 1939. Pg. 1.

¹¹¹ *Republika-Górnik*, "No one can trust Hitler." May 5, 1939. Pg. 1.

¹¹² *Republika-Górnik*, "Declaration by Federation of Polish-Jews." May 5, 1939. Pg. 1.

the Jews throughout the whole world is on the side of Poland.”¹¹³ In response to Hitler’s actions in Danzig, Beck refused to let him take territory without speaking out,¹¹⁴ and shortly after Nazi Germany invaded and annexed the free city of Danzig. After years of antagonism by Germany against the corridor, Poland knew the annexation of Danzig could only mean one thing: war.¹¹⁵

¹¹³Piotrowski, 36.

¹¹⁴ *Republika-Górnik*, “Minister Beck Throws Out Hitler’s Demands.” May 12, 1939. Pg. 1.

¹¹⁵ *Republika-Górnik*, “The Quest to defend Gdańsk is the Quest for Polish Freedom Says France.” September 1, 1939. Pg. 1.



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¹¹⁶ *Dziennik Związkowy*. Caption Reads: "Follow in the footsteps of your ancestors." A commentary on Hans von Kaltenborn, an American radio personality, and his unsympathetic reporting on Polish affairs. The wing he is cutting off represents Polish territory including the maritime region. April 21, 1943. Pg 4.

Chapter 5: Annihilation Becomes a Reality: 1940-1945

I mean the evacuation of the Jews, the extermination of the Jewish race. It's one of those things it is easy to talk about, "the Jewish race is being exterminated", says one party member, "that's quite clear, it's in our program, elimination of the Jews, and we're doing it, exterminating them." And then they come, 80 million worthy Germans, and each one has his decent Jew. Of course the others are vermin, but this one is an A-1 Jew. Not one of those who talk this way has watched it, not one of them has gone through it. Most of you know what it means when 100 corpses are lying side by side, or 500, or 1,000. To have stuck it out and at the same time - apart from exceptions caused by human weakness - to have remained decent fellows, that is what has made us hard. This is a page of glory in our history which has never been written and is never to be written. Reichsfuehrer-SS Himmler before senior SS officers in Poznań. October 4, 1943.

Suffering Poland Renews its Plea for Help and Appeals to the Conscience of the World.¹

On September 3, 1939, Britain and France finally declared war on belligerent Germany. For nearly twenty years Poland strove with everything it had to maintain peace and independence, signing peace treaties with both Germany and Russia, and focusing on maintaining relations with Polish Jews. After three weeks of fighting, the country fell to Hitler's ruthless blitzkrieg. The foreign press had a mixed response to war: devastation and a fierce hope of survival. The Polish-American Council stated that this was not just a war intended to destroy Poland's freedom, but a war intended to "destroy the very existence" of the country and its people.² The war Hitler was waging put everyone under occupation at risk; Jews and Gentiles, men and women, the young and old. Although Poles had long expected war, it was a tragic

¹*Republika-Górnik*, "Germans Arrest Five Thousand more Poles in Warsaw –New Wave of Terror." October 22, 1935. Pg.1.

² *Republika-Górnik*, "Response by the Polish-American Council." September 8, 1939. Pg. 1. See also: *Republika-Górnik*, "War." September 15, 1939. Pg. 2.

result. Anyone who followed the press regularly from the mid-1930s onward could sense in the pages the fierce anxiety of what was to come. Each daily mentioned Hitler and his territorial plans, and despite Hitler's vows of peace,³ the Polish press was never even slightly convinced of his sincerity.⁴ The rising tension communicated through the press as September 1939 neared was palpable; with the constant appeasement of Hitler for his acquisition of land and anti-Jewish and anti-minority decrees, war was inevitable, sooner or later. The foreign press reported news from New York that Germany had allegedly spent \$11,000,000 in 1939 alone on disseminating anti-Polish propaganda to be printed in the American press. The Polish-American community was hopeful the propaganda would not affect American moral support for Poles in the war, but they were doubtful the government would act outside of giving 'empty-promise' speeches.⁵ This chapter examines how the Polish-language press and other outlets responded to war and genocide.

War headlines encouraged bravery and assistance by any means possible including donations. After the 'beast-like' blitzkrieg, the conditions -which included the seizure of territory and the mass killing of civilians, including those in hospitals- in Poland went from dire to worse.⁶ Violence was -according to the re-print in the *Republika-Górnik* of an article from Warsaw- the "factual and physical German response to Roosevelt's humanitarian formal addresses."⁷ In Poland, "no target was spared,"⁸ and Biddle, who witnessed the destruction in

³*Republika-Górnik*, "Hitler proposes a 20 Year Peace." April 28, 1939. Pg. 5.

⁴*Republika-Górnik*, "No One Can Trust Hitler." May 5, 1939. Pg. 1.

⁵*Republika-Górnik*, "Nazis spent 11 Million Dollars on anti-Polish propaganda." September 15, 1939. Pg. 1.

⁶*Republika-Górnik*, "German Barbarism and Polish Heroism." September 15, 1939. Pg. 1.

⁷*Ibid.* Even at the time of the outbreak of war, Poland blamed America's inaction and appeasement of Hitler -even though the country was fervently and clearly isolationist- for *allowing* the Second World War to unfold.

Poland including the “killing of innocent civilians, reported to Washington that the German intention was to terrorize the civilian population and to reduce the number of child-bearing Poles irrespective of category.”⁹ On September 7, 1939, Reinhard Heydrich proclaimed that all Polish clergy, nobles, and Jews were to be killed. Five days later, the intelligentsia was added to the order, and by March 15, 1940, Himmler decreed: "All Polish specialists will be exploited in our military-industrial complex. Later, all Poles will disappear from this world. It is imperative that the great German nation considers the elimination of all Polish people as its chief task."¹⁰

An estimated 95% of Warsaw was ruined by bombing. A Polish courier from the underground recalled how the city looked after the blitz: “[t]he city resembled an overturned ant heap. The streets were full of rubble, already with pathways trodden through and over it by people hurrying in all directions.”¹¹ Germans ruthlessly killed civilian Poles during what became known as the September Campaign and to add salt to the wound, Russia invaded from the East (in accordance with the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement) on September 17, 1939. Just as Hitler promised, Poles were callously massacred, and with the country destroyed and thousands of bodies lying dead in heaps, the corpses, for lack of alternative options, were burned alongside demolished infrastructure. Devastation and death during the September Campaign meant for many that “Poland [was] on the altar of burnt offering.” The altar of burnt offering is a religious metaphor taken from Exodus symbolizing sacrifice. This metaphor, of a holocaust (a sacrificial

⁸ Richard C. Lukas with a foreword by Norman Davies. *Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles Under German Occupation: 1939-1944*. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2010), 1.

⁹Ibid., 2. To see the entire “Biddle Report” See Philip V. Cannistrano, et al., *Poland and the Second World War: The Diplomatic Papers of A.J. Drexel Biddle, Jr. United States Ambassador to Poland 1937-1939*. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1976.) 39-191.

¹⁰Piotrowski, 23.

¹¹Ibid.

offering that is burned completely on an altar), was first used to describe what was happening to Poles in 1939.¹²

When Poland officially fell on September 28, 1939 (although fighting continued until October 5th and sabotage and resistance continued throughout the war), estimated losses were projected at 200,000 killed and wounded and 420,000 taken prisoner.¹³ The Polish-language press reprinted (and translated into Polish) an article from *The New York Times* titled “Poland and Freedom” detailing Poland’s history and praising Poland for being the first country in Europe to establish a Parliamentary system that promoted the ideals of democracy which other countries later adopted. The article reiterated that Poland had always been a country which prioritized freedom and independence¹⁴ and what was happening to it at the hands of Nazi Germany was beyond reprehensible. And what was the trigger for initiating another World War despite global efforts to avoid conflict? To the Polish press the answer was simple: Danzig.¹⁵ The Polish press, which ‘obsessed’ over the issue since the 1920s, attributed the outbreak of war primarily to the corridor conflict, an issue that was treated as unimportant (or least of secondary relevance) to America until the invasion.

The following month, Germany began deporting Jews from Austria and Czechoslovakia into Poland, -which was infested with typhus and cholera-¹⁶ and a couple of weeks later the first

¹² *Republika-Górník*, “Poland on the altar of burnt offering.” September 22, 1939. Pg. 2. The use of poisonous gas by the Germans in Warsaw also inspired the ‘nickname’ of Golgotha for the Polish capital. See: *Republika-Górník*, “Golgotha for Polish mothers in Warsaw (Difficult time in protecting their babies from inhaling smoke).” October 6, 1939. Pg. 5.

¹³Piotrowski, 23.

¹⁴ *Republika-Górník*, “Poland and Freedom.” September 29, 1939. Pg. 2.

¹⁵ *Republika-Górník*, “Did it have to do with Gdańsk?” October 6, 1939. Pg. 2.

¹⁶ *Republika-Górník*, “Typhus and Cholera Rampant in Warsaw.” October 20, 1939. Pg. 1.

ghetto in Poland was established by the Nazis in Piotrków. Thousands of murders and public executions took place; the bodies were placed on transports and dumped near the ghetto, then burned.¹⁷ By October 8, 1939, through a series of decrees, Poles and Polish Jews were stripped of all their rights and forced to abide by decrees forbidding the use of the Polish-language, closing secondary and post-secondary schools, destroying Polish art and culture, forcing Polish men into the German army, destroying Polish churches and synagogues, confiscating Polish and Jewish property, and authorizing the mass arrest and murder of Polish priests, leaders, and intelligentsia. Based on their experiences at the hands of the Nazis, Poles and the Polish-language press immediately connected their fate with the fate of their Jews, a fate of extermination. A month after Hitler invaded Poland, the press recognized “that Hitler regards Poles and Jews on the same level (of inferiority) and wants to murder them all simultaneously.”¹⁸

German ruthlessness did not cease after the Blitzkrieg and October decrees. After October 25, 1939, when the German army joined the SS and police to control the country, their “merciless and systematic campaign of biological destruction” continued.¹⁹ During the occupation of Poland 531 towns were torched (Warsaw and Łódź suffered the heaviest casualties) and 714 executions were administered by the Wehrmacht and police, murdering over 16,376 people, mostly Polish Christians. The Wehrmacht was responsible for 60% of these civilian executions, which only strengthens the thesis of many historians that the German army willingly participated in mass murder and genocide and was not only, as it claimed for so long,

¹⁷Richard C. Lukas with a Foreward by Norman Davies. *Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles under German Occupation 1939-1944*. Revised Edition. (Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 2000) 36.

¹⁸ *Republika-Górnik*, “Hitler’s mad idea.” October 13, 1939. Pg. 5. Several other articles also related the situation of Poles and Jews as ‘mutual’ victims of Nazism. See for example: *Republika-Górnik*, “Germans pauperizing Poles and Jews- Confiscating Money.” November 17, 1939. Pg. 2.

¹⁹Lukas, *Forgotten Holocaust*, 3.

fulfilling its duty on the battlefield.²⁰ A British woman who witnessed Nazi brutality in

Bydgoszcz described what she saw:

The first victims of the campaign were a number of Boy Scouts, from twelve to sixteen years of age, who were set up in the marketplace against a wall and shot. No reason was given. A devoted priest who rushed to administer the Last Sacrament was shot too. He received five wounds. A Pole said afterwards that the sight of those children lying dead was the most piteous of all the horrors he saw. That week the murders continued. Thirty-four of the leading trades-people and merchants of the town were shot, and many other leading citizens. The square was surrounded by troops with machine guns...These are only a few examples of the indiscriminate murders which took place. The shooting was still going on when I left the town. At the beginning it was done by the soldiers, afterwards the Gestapo and the SS took it over, and exceeded the troops in cruelty.²¹

News and witness testimony, like that of the incidents in Bydgoszcz, poured out of the Polish and foreign-language press, particularly in 1939-1940²² as many people in the country, both Polish and non-Polish, hurried to escape and were able to deliver news. By early November of 1939, international news reports classified what was happening in Poland as the “mass murder of civilians” reporting 127,463 civilians dead as casualties of war, an additional 17, 264

²⁰ For more on the Germany army and their participation in mass murder and the Holocaust see: Omer Bartov. *Hitler's Army: soldiers, Nazis and war in the Third Reich*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) And Omer Bartov. *Germany's War and the Holocaust: disputed histories*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

An excellent documentary on this issue is: Michael Verhoeven. *The Unknown Soldier*. (www.firstrunfeatures.com, 1996).

²¹ Polish Ministry of Information. *The Black Book of Poland*. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1942) 134. This book (in English) was readily available in the United States and promoted by the *Republika-Górnik*.

²² Countless articles were printed detailing the mass execution of Poles. See for example: *Republika-Górnik*, “700 Poles in Bydgoszczy await Death Penalty.” (News from Amsterdam) December 15, 1939. Pg. 5. Or *Republika-Górnik*, “Germans Shoot 5,000 Poles.” (News from London, England) December 15, 1939. Pg. 5. Or *Republika-Górnik*, “Bloody Massacres in Warsaw.” (detailing murders as well 8,000 Poles being sent to concentration camps) January 12, 1940. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*, “310,000 Polish Prisoners in Germany.” January 26, 1940. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*, “Germans Massacre Priests in Poland.” February 2, 1940. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*, “Germans Take all of Poles' Savings (pauperization)” February 2, 1940. Pg. 5. *Republika-Górnik*, “1,000 People Die Daily in Poland from Malnutrition.” August 30, 1940. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*, “German Terror Rages in Countryside.” February, 1941. Pg. 2. *Republika-Górnik*, “Tolls of Carnage and Death.” (News from London, England) June 13, 1941. Pg. 2.

individually executed, 13,907 sent for forced labour, and 23,707 citizens imprisoned (30% of these prisoners were women).²³

Central to understanding how the Polish press interpreted both Polish-Jewish relations and the Holocaust is an appreciation of how the Poles perceived their situation in comparison to Jews during the Second World War. As in the inter-war period, Polish-Jewish relations during the war is a very sensitive topic that few historians have approached objectively. The reason for this, as Yisrael Gutman points out, is that Jewish scholars who criticize Poles are deemed anti-Polish, and Polish historian who offered “sensible” interpretations were deemed antisemitic. In contrast, in other historical fields this anomaly is not present. Critical of Vichy France, Robert Paxton and Stanley Hoffman, both American writers, “are not regarded as distinctively anti-French but as scholars who produced an illuminating analysis of this dark chapter in history.”²⁴ Likewise, Fritz Fischer, who wrote on German ‘intentions’ prior to the Great War, is not considered to be anti-German.²⁵ The same objectivity needs to be applied in order to understand how contemporary Poles and Jews interpreted their situation both in Europe and the United States.

Gutman criticizes scholars of Polish-Jewish relations who do not consult primary Jewish or Polish sources from the war period. Here the foreign-language press lends credence to Bartowszewski’s claims of a greater sense of a shared cause between Poles and Jews strengthened by facing a common enemy. The war was able to bridge –although not completely eliminate- the gap between Polish gentiles and Jews in their joint fight against Nazism. The same Poles who were frustrated with what they interpreted as Jewish disloyalty to Poland in the inter-

²³ *Republika-Górnik*, “Mass Murder in Poland.” (News re-printed from Paris) November 10, 1939. Pg. 1.

²⁴ Marrus, *Public Opinion*, 330.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

war period, demonstrated Philosemitism under Nazi occupation, a sentiment that, when acted upon earned Poles the death penalty. Many Poles felt that in the Nazi hierarchy of *untermensch*, they were the primary –albeit not the exclusive- target for extermination, followed by (Polish) Jews as a close second. The Polish-language press printed a wealth of stories relating the shared experience of Poles and Jews, and after 1943, when Jews (of all nationalities) were clearly the main target of Nazi destruction, Poles acknowledged this shift and relayed it on their front pages. The press reported and advertised news from diplomats, ambassadors, the international press and other publications such as *The Black Book*, all sources detailing the evolution of genocide committed against both Poles and Jews.

It is true that “every nation under enemy occupation during WWII experienced a reign of terror by the Nazis. But no nation suffered more than Poland. Poles were shot not only for resisting or fighting the Germans but also...for merely being Polish.”²⁶ SS Brigadeführer Schöngarth himself admitted during the war that “No other nation has ever been so oppressed as the Polish nation.”²⁷ As has been noted, “the Germans indiscriminately killed civilians during the September campaign,” then aimed at destroying the intelligentsia and “political enemies.” Between 1939 and 1941, “Poles were more exposed than Jews to arrest, deportation, and death. [Whereas] Most Jews during this period had been herded into ghettos.”²⁸ Emmanuel Ringelblum wrote on May 8, 1940, “that Polish people had been seized for deportation to Germany and Jewish barbers were used to shave their hair prior to transfer. Poles escaping the Nazi roundups, which resulted in either deportation or execution, discovered, as another Jewish historian noted,

²⁶Lukas, *Forgotten Holocaust*, 34.

²⁷ Kazimierz Iranek-Osmecki. *He who Saves One Life: The complete, documented story of Poles who Struggled to save Jews During World War Two*. (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 1971), 179.

²⁸ Lukas, *Forgotten Holocaust*, 34.

an odd ally: the Jewish badge.”²⁹ Poles were actually purchasing armbands with the Star of David on them to escape death and deportation by the Germans while at the same time Jews were “being screened to make certain they were not camouflaged Poles. Prior to the deportation of the Jews to the death camps, an OSS informant reported that the treatment of Poles by the Germans was even worse than that of Jews.”³⁰ Because Poles were classified as racially inferior to the Germans, any anti-German behaviour was an offence punishable by death. For example, in 1940, the Nazis murdered nine people, including three teenage Boy Scouts, for posting the words of Maria Konopnicka, a famous poet and patriot: “No German will spit in our faces or make Germans of our children.”³¹ In 1940, the procedure of removing both Jews and Poles from the Reich (for example, by February 1940, 200,000 Poles and 100,000 Jews, had been removed from the Warthegau) “meant that the fates of both Poles and Jewish populations had merged.”³²

The spring of 1940 witnessed a serious escalation in Hitler’s extermination policies. In May of 1940, the extermination of Polish intelligentsia, known as AB (*Ausserordentliche Befriedungs-aktion*), commenced and on June 14, 1940, a transport of 740 Polish political prisoners entered Auschwitz, which would serve as a camp for primarily Polish prisoners for the next two years. Poles were the first and largest group of prisoners in Auschwitz until 1942;³³ in fact, “so many Poles were sent to the concentration camps that virtually every Polish family had

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰ Philip Friedman. *Their Brothers’ Keepers*. (New York: Holocaust Library, 1978), 37.

³¹Wladyslaw Bartoszewski. *Warsaw Death Ring: 1939-1944*. (Warszawa: Interpress Publishers, 1968), 28.

³²Marrus, *Public Opinion*, 317. Also See: *Republika-Górník*, “Bloody Massacres in Warsaw.” (detailing murders as well 8,000 Poles being sent to concentration camps) January 12, 1940. Pg. 1.

³³ Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, 16.

someone close to them who had been tortured or murdered there.”³⁴ Hitler’s ‘prophecy’ from August 22, 1939, was coming true. In his speech given just days before the outbreak of war he commanded: kill "without pity or mercy, all men, women, and children of Polish descent or language. Only in this way can we obtain the living space [*lebensraum*] we need." Methodical and clear orders were initiated to commit genocide against the Poles, first gentile, then Jewish, but *all* Poles. Heinrich Himmler reinforced Hitler's decree by stating: "All Poles will disappear from the world.... It is essential that the great German people should consider it as its major task to destroy all Poles."³⁵ In late 1939 and 1940, “the repressive and racially discriminating measures carried out against the Polish Jews branded them as a racial group...but did not suggest [unlike the gentile Poles] that the entire Jewish population might be exterminated.”³⁶ Therefore, “in the face of the mass executions [of Poles], the introduction of compulsory labour for Jews from the age of fourteen, the necessity to wear armbands bearing the Star of David; the limiting of free movement; the creation of the first ghettos (in Piotrków and Łódź), fiscal pressure and the confiscation of property, did not then appear either to Poles or Jews to be a less bearable hardship.”³⁷

Hitler’s ‘war of annihilation’ began with annihilating Poles first and foremost. The Führer clearly stated: “[t]he destruction of Poland is our primary task. The aim is not the arrival at a certain line but the annihilation of living forces...Be merciless! Be brutal...It is necessary to

³⁴ Lukas, *Forgotten Holocaust*, 38.

³⁵ Lukas, *Out of the Inferno*, 3.

³⁶ Marrus, *Public Opinion*, 318.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

proceed with maximum severity...The war is to be one of annihilation.”³⁸ As mentioned, Poland’s intelligentsia was the first group to be systematically massacred by the Nazis for the purpose of turning Poland into what Hans Frank dubbed “an intellectual desert.”³⁹ It is estimated that throughout the war Poland lost 57% of its attorneys, 45% of its physicians and dentists, 40% of its professors, 30% of its technicians, 18% of its clergy, 15% of its teachers, and ‘most’ of its journalists.⁴⁰ Lukas asserts that “there was never any doubt among Nazi officials that Poland and the Polish people were sooner or later to be obliterated.” Hans Frank, Hitler’s Viceroy in the General Government –the part of Poland not annexed by Germany but treated during the war as a gigantic labor camp- declared on September 12, 1940, that Hitler had “made it quite plain that this ‘adjacent country’ of the German Reich has a special mission to fulfill: to finish off the Poles at all costs.” Two years later, referring to the General Government, Frank said: “Constantly the necessity arises to recall the proverb: ‘You must not kill the cow you want to milk.’ However the Reich wants to milk the cow and ...kill it.”⁴¹ Meaning, “most Poles would work as helots until they too ultimately shared the fate of the Jews.”⁴² By 1942, the Polish-language press in North America was aware that being sent for forced labour meant that “in other words, Poles were sentenced to certain death.”⁴³ Throughout the war, over 2,000,000 Poles were used for forced

³⁸Lukas, *Forgotten Holocaust*, 4.

³⁹Polish Ministry of Information, *The Black Book*, 444, 490-492.

⁴⁰ Lukas, *Forgotten Holocaust*, 9. Also see: *Republika-Górník*, “Protest Against German Violence (against faculty)” December 8, 1939. Pg. 1. And *Republika-Górník*, “Germans Massacre Priests in Poland.” February 2, 1939. Pg. 1.

⁴¹Lukas, *Forgotten Holocaust*, 5.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 4.

⁴³*Republika-Górník*, “Germans sending Poles to Crimea (for work).” March 20, 1942. Pg. 1.

labour.⁴⁴ Polish labourers deported to the Reich were forced to wear a violet “P” on their uniform and were not allowed social interaction with Germans or German society; for example, they were not allowed to attend church or the movies.⁴⁵

The international tracing service (ITS) holds an abundance of documentation describing the workings of the forced labour system. In a "Report of German Concentration Camps by a Polish Officer, secret document of the War Office, 3.1.1945" information gives credence to Frank's philosophy of using Poles for labour until they were no longer needed and should be killed. The document states:

Prisoners condemned to death were invariably hanged although to comply with the regulations they were recorded as having been shot. Frequently skilled tradesmen or men employed on some special task had their sentences postponed until a substitute would be found or the job was finished. In no case however was the condemned man informed of his sentence, or even of the fact that proceedings were pending against him, until immediately before execution.⁴⁶

Regarding the treatment of prisoners, the source revealed that "in the first year of the war treatment for prisoners was bad. The Poles in particular, after the 1939 campaign, were singled out as objects of brutality. Gradually, however, as the Germans had reason to appropriate the economic value of prison labour, the early rigours were relaxed."⁴⁷ The document further revealed that the "most frequent topic of prisoners' conversations was the question of what would happen to them when Germany collapsed. Nothing official ever appeared on this subject but the source was once told by an SS Scharfuhrer in a moment of alcoholic confidence that sometime in

⁴⁴ *Republika-Górnik*, "2 Million Poles in Forced Labor." February 18, 1944. Pg. 1.

Note: The ITS (International Tracing Service) collection is useful in gathering specific information on prisoners if one knows of a searchable name/location.

⁴⁵ Polish Ministry of Information, *The Black Book*, 427-428.

⁴⁶ Report of German Concentration Camps by a Polish Officer, secret document of the War office, 3.1.1945. Location 1.1.0.6/82328954-0-1. ITS Digital Archives, USHMM.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 1.1.0.6/82328954-0-2.

1942 or 1943 a secret order was circulated to Concentration Camps to the effect that in an emergency all the prisoners were to be liquidated. If possible, however, skilled tradesmen (*Fucharbeiter*) were to be evacuated."⁴⁸

Poles in Germany were banned from having sexual intercourse with anyone, including other Poles, "but if a Pole had intercourse with a German, it called for the death penalty."⁴⁹ Hundreds of thousands of Poles were forcibly Germanized by a variety of means including Germans stealing children or 'breeding out' the Polish race through forced sexual relations with Aryan-looking Polish women. All of these realities were well documented and communicated in the Polish-language press, generally on the front page.⁵⁰

Furthermore, similar to the policy against Jews, "the German attempt to destroy Poland socially was accompanied by a policy of economic destruction."⁵¹ Just as Jewish property was confiscated, so too was Polish property seized "through a plethora of bureaucratic agencies"⁵² including taking art and Church property.⁵³ This process led "to the pauperization of the Polish people," leaving the "average Pole to live in misery."⁵⁴ From 1939 to 1945, Poland's losses totalled 62,020 billion zloty.⁵⁵ By 1944, Frank reflected that when the war was over and Polish

⁴⁸ Ibid. 1.1.0.6/82328955-0-1.

⁴⁹ Lukas, *Forgotten Holocaust*, 33. Also see Bohdan Wytwycky. *The Other Holocaust. Many Circles of Hell*. (Washington: The Novak Report, 1980), 77-78.

⁵⁰ *Republika-Górník*, "Mass Murder in Poland." November 10, 1939. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górník*, "Nearly 900,000 Poles doing Forced Labor." August 29, 1941. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górník*, "Germans Plan to Germanize 80,000 Polish War Orphans." September 5, 1941. Pg. 1.

⁵¹ Lukas, *Forgotten Holocaust*, 27.

⁵² Ibid. Also see *The Black Book*, 267-269.

⁵³ *Republika-Górník*, "Further confiscation of Polish Treasures – Taken Out of Poland." January 17, 1941. Pg. 2.

⁵⁴ Lukas, *Forgotten Holocaust*, 30.

labour was no longer required, the remnants of the Polish people had a predetermined fate: “As far as I am concerned...the Poles...and their like may be chopped into small pieces.”⁵⁶

Therefore, the Poles and Jews were to “share the same fate...though the methods would be varied.” This perception was no more clearly expressed than in the Polish-language press which printed stories on the pauperization, expulsion, and annihilation of both Polish gentiles and Polish Jews. “Even Polish Jews who survived the war shared the conviction that the scale of Hitler’s hatred and the logic of wartime policies toward the Poles inevitably meant the Polish Christians would have been exterminated if the war had been prolonged.” Therefore, Lukas is convincing in his assertion that “had the war continued, Poles would have been ultimately obliterated either by outright slaughter in gas chambers, as most Jews had perished, or by a continuation of the policies the Nazis had inaugurated in occupied Poland during the war-genocide by execution, forced labor, starvation, reduction of biological propagation, and Germanization.”⁵⁷

David Engel succinctly outlines that: “The military occupation of Poland, ... placed both groups (Poles and Jews), on the level of conquered populations. From the moment of conquest, the attitudes of each group toward the other would be determined according to a new set of factors, not the least important of which was each group’s estimation of the other’s willingness and ability to assist it in the achievement of its aims vis-a-vis the occupiers.”⁵⁸ Since the early days of Polish-Jewish relations, both communities were “living, in essence, beside one another

⁵⁵Jan Tomasz Gross. *Polish society under German occupation: the Generalgouvernement, 1939-1944*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 97. Also see: *Republika-Górniki*, “What Have the Germans Stole from Poland.” (70 banks, 4,300 factories, 500 warehouses with their materials, 8,500 stores, 11,200 workshops owned by Poles and Jews) February 28, 1941. Pg.1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁷ Lukas, *Forgotten Holocaust*, 5.

⁵⁸Marrus, *Public Opinion*, 299.

but not together.”⁵⁹ Even with the creation of ghettos, this relationship was still viewed in the same way by many Poles and Jews; however, rather than becoming fissiparous, Polish-Jewish bonds strengthened against a common enemy.

With the publication of stories in North America detailing the terror in Poland, the Polish press rebuked the free international community for “look[ing] on..while Poland is crucified..and people die (en masse).”⁶⁰ There were many pleas for assistance to the United States while Poles and other European were being ‘slaughtered,’ but the response was one of indifference. The Polish press highlighted a story in which Churchill’s daughter, Sarah, spoke out on behalf of Poland: “We can’t forget Poland was the first to resist the Germans. Poland gave us an example, we cannot abandon her. It is our duty to fight with Poland”⁶¹ But help was not offered to Poland. “Has the human conscience completely hardened?”⁶² an article asked. If the situation did not directly affect those in question, the answer was apparently yes.⁶³ The reason for not assisting those in need was a lack of personal connection and thus a lack of personal interest, not because news of what was happening in Europe was unavailable or unbelievable. During the time this article was printed, the *Republika-Górník* took on an initiative to publish articles in English (called the ‘English Section’). This is important for several reasons. First, the paper was acknowledging that the younger generation of Polish descent was becoming more fluent in English than in Polish, and in order to address this shift while maintaining the current readership

⁵⁹Ibid., 316.

⁶⁰ *Republika-Górník*, “Barbarism in the 20th Century.” December 8, 1939. Pg. 4.

⁶¹ *Republika-Górník*, “Churchill’s Daughter on Poland.” June 20, 1941. Pg. 1.

⁶² *Republika-Górník*, “Barbarism in the 20th Century.” December 8, 1939. Pg. 4.

⁶³Several articles made it clear that despite information of the conditions in Europe, America was not going to join the war. See: *Republika-Górník*, “America Will Not Go to War.” December 20, 1940. Pg. 1.

and addressing issues important to Polish-Americans, this section was added. The inclusion of the English language is important for another reason. Other Polish papers began adopting such sections and beginning in 1939, stories that were being printed in the Polish-language press were no longer exclusive to fluent Poles. Important information coming into the United States from Europe, including the situation of Poles and Jews, was now available to an English-speaking readership. In December 1939, for example, a series (exclusive to the *Republika-Górnik*) was started by Ted Stefanik⁶⁴ titled “22 Days Neath Nazi Bombs” which detailed, in English, his experience in Poland during the September Campaign.⁶⁵ He recalled,

Time and again I appeared in the streets of Warsaw, between September 1 and 21, feeling and being utterly helpless as men, women, and children died around me. The scene of weeping mothers –near ruins of freshly wrecked buildings, their homes- staring helplessly and wildly at arms, legs of their children under the wreckage was common after a few days. This gruesome picture repeated itself monotonously as the shelling and bombing of the bravely defended city became more intense as Nazi forces closed in on it. There I was, like many others, unable to do anything about it. Time and again I scurried for cover as planes dropped bombs. Bits of flying shrapnel, machine gun fires and bullets have rained around me, *the life about which no one seemed to care over there...*bombs were raining death upon the defenceless non-combatants. Soon flames arose here and there.⁶⁶

Henry Dende, John Dende’s son, revived his former column “Just Between Us” in the English Section with the goal of continuing to give “unbiased information on news concerning our beloved Poland; to make just criticisms to build up more Polish spirit in our youth; and to continue being loyal Americans and good Poles.”⁶⁷

Moreover, the mainstream press including the *New York Times* was also printing news stories clearly calling what was happening to Poles an extermination. A couple of telling titles

⁶⁴A Polish-American from Chicago who was actually ‘school chums’ with Henry Dende.

⁶⁵ *Republika-Górnik*, “22 Days Neath Nazi Bombs.” Ted Stefanik. December 8, 1939. Pg. 5.

⁶⁶ *Republika-Górnik*, “22 Days Neath Nazi Bombs.” Ted Stefanik. December 15, 1939. Pg. 8. Note, emphasis is my own.

⁶⁷ *Republika-Górnik*, “Just Between Us.” Henry J. Dende. December 8, 1939. Pg. 5.

include, “Deaths in Poland Put at 5,000,000 – Hitler Accused in Report of Pursuing Systematic Plan of Extermination,”⁶⁸ and “Even General Blaskowitz Balks at Tactics Held Aimed at Virtual ‘Racial Extermination’” which was actually printed on the cover page.⁶⁹ The *Republika-Górnik* reprinted such stories in Polish. For example, a story entitled “Salute to the Poles” was highlighted and read: “While Poland itself has been held captive, while her people endure a process of cold-blooded extermination, thousands of Poles have continued the struggle...”⁷⁰ News stories detailing the evolution of genocide in Poland were not only a focus in the Polish-language press. The world was cognizant of the extent of Nazi terror inside of Poland and printed information on the subject regularly. Many such articles were then reprinted in the Polish papers. For example, a detailed article entitled “2,500,000 Poles Killed by Germans”⁷¹ came from a French information agency and clearly demonstrated that information was available and just as importantly, was believed. News from Stockholm included a correspondent’s witness testimony stating that he had never seen so many mass graves in his life as he had in Poland. He believed that what was happening in Poland was the most “bloody and strenuous” war in modern history.⁷² There was never a shortage of information and that information was being reported on internationally. The Polish press printed translated articles from dozens of newspapers. An article from the *Daily Herald* was reprinted detailing an escapee’s experience while in Auschwitz. The

⁶⁸ *New York Times*. “Deaths in Poland at 5,000,000 – Hitler Accused in Report of Pursuing Systematic Extermination.” February 3, 1940. Pg. 4.

⁶⁹ *New York Times*. “Even General Blaskowitz Balks at Tactics Held Aimed at Virtual ‘Racial Extermination.’” January 30, 1940. Pg. 1.

⁷⁰ *New York Times*. “Salute to Poles.” August 31, 1940. Pg. 12. Reprinted in Polish in the *Republika-Górnik*, “Hello Poles! September 13, 1940. Pg. 2.

⁷¹ *Republika-Górnik*, “2,500,000 Poles Killed by Germans.” April 5, 1940. Pg. 1.

⁷² *Republika-Górnik*, “He has never seen so many graves than in Poland.” July 18, 1941. Pg. 1.

Polish escapee detailed the horrendous conditions in the camp, stating that the torture committed in the camp was so severe that there would be no survivors.⁷³ In fact, the *Dziennik Związkowy* claimed that “everyone who goes there (Auschwitz) is destined to die.”⁷⁴ By May of 1943, the Polish press was printing exact details on how the camps were run, based on escapee testimony and radio reports from London, England. How people were selected, killed, and burned was at that point common knowledge in the case of Majdanek.⁷⁵ Although the plight of Poles under the Nazi Regime was a primary focus of news, Poles did not want the world to forget they were suffering under Soviet oppression also, although less attention was given to this problem in the Polish-American press, on account of the possibility that Russia would still join the Allies in fighting against Hitler.⁷⁶ In short, although the mainstream press covered these stories far less frequently, and usually printed them in their back pages, news was relayed to the public of extermination occurring in Europe less than a year after the outbreak of war.

Not only were articles and reports printed in English in the Polish-language press, but *The Black Book of Poland* was published in the United States in 1940 and was advertised and promoted by the Polish press.⁷⁷ The book “is so named because of the record of German

⁷³*Republika-Górniki*, “Daily Herald on the Situation in Poland.” January 24, 1941. Pg. 2.

⁷⁴*Dziennik Związkowy*, “And Another Camp in Poland.” December 8, 1941. Pg.3.

⁷⁵*Dziennik Związkowy*, “How Majdanek is Organized.” May 14, 1943. Pg. 10.

⁷⁶*Republika-Górniki*, “Poland Under Enemy Occupation.” January 31, 1941. Pg. 2. Less attention was given to this issue as there was still hope in America that Russia would join the Allies in defeating Hitler. See: *Republika-Górniki*, “America Strives to Win Over Russia.” February 7, 1941. Pg. 1. Also, *Republika-Górniki*, “Times on Polish-Soviet Relations (Poles willing to compromise if Russia guarantees Poland’s freedom)” July 18, 41. Pg.1. *Republika-Górniki*, “Moscow Solicits Poland’s Friendship.” July 25, 1941. Pg. 1.

Poland was willing to cooperate with the Soviet Union in order to fight the Nazis, but was very aware that Russia was not to be trusted. See: *Republika-Górniki*, “Nation’s Voice on War between Germans and Russians. (article warns “Be Poles and Only Poles” – Russia does not have Poland’s interests at heart)” July 25, 1941. Pg. 2. During the war years, it is estimated that 1,600,000 gentile Poles were sent to Siberia.

⁷⁷*Republika-Górniki*, “Poland ‘Black Book;’ Advertisement between September 11-18, 1942.

barbarism ...covering twenty-two months.”⁷⁸ The book contains nearly 600 pages of documents and photographs, with minimal comment so that the material could speak for itself. The book details ‘persecutions, murders, expulsions, massacres, and tortures:’ in sum, the evolution towards “The Extermination of an Entire Nation” including both gentiles and Jews.⁷⁹ World leaders are criticized for not naming the Jews outright as primary victims of Nazism’s brutality, but Part III of the book, similar to the articles printed by the Polish press, specifically chronicled “The Persecution of the Jews and the Ghettos.”

Included in *The Black Book* is a document known as “The Goebbels Circular,” published in January 1940 (by the *Kleiner Presse-Informations-Dienst* propaganda service of the Third Reich) which asserted that “gypsies, Jews and Poles ought to be treated on the same level.”⁸⁰ This is the most common theme that is presented throughout the duration of the war; Poles felt that they were the primary target for extermination –followed by the Jews- by the Nazis. It was reported that “the Germans in relation to Poland are applying the policy of clearing a *Lebensraum* for themselves by systematic extermination of the whole population living in those territories, wiping out all traces of Polish life and culture.”⁸¹ Thus, although the methodology was not yet established, by January 1940 if not earlier, Nazi publications were clear in their initiative of implementing ‘systematic extermination.’ Later in the war, when it came specifically to (known cases of) torture, it was reported that the Jewish situation was worse than

⁷⁸Polish Ministry of Information, *The Black Book*, Preface.

⁷⁹Ibid., vii.

⁸⁰Ibid., 433.

⁸¹Ibid., 580.

for any other group. The suffering in “the ghetto in Warsaw is already well known, where hunger, death, sickness, are systematically exterminating the Jewish population.”⁸²

The Black Book also stated that “the people of Poland think that the reaction to the unexampled tortures carried out on them is too weak as much on the part of the Pope and the Allies.”⁸³ In 1941, Stanisław Mikołajczyk (Polish Minister of the government-in-exile) spoke at the British Ministry of Information stating that in addition to an “increase in terroristic methods applied to Poles...is the beginning of a wholesale extermination of Jews.”⁸⁴ The entire book is compiled of documents clearly stating that what was happening was “wholesale extermination,” by means of eliminating both the cultural and physical existence of Poles and Jews: in other words, genocide.⁸⁵

Shmuel Zygielbojm of the National Council of the Polish government-in-exile, who committed suicide on May 12, 1943 to protest American inaction during the Holocaust, wrote in 1941 that the “mass slaughter of Jews is only part of the plan to exterminate the whole Polish nation...The whole nation is suffering hell. Nevertheless, the Poles still fight on. I believe our duty and that of all the free countries is to do everything possible to help them before it is too late or the Germans will exterminate the whole nation.”⁸⁶

⁸²Ibid., 579.

⁸³Ibid., 580.

⁸⁴Ibid., 582.

⁸⁵The same information detailing “wholesale extermination” of both Poles and Jews was reported on in the foreign-language press on a daily basis. Articles like: *Republika-Górnik*, “News From Occupied Poland.” September 13, 1940. Pg. 2 were the norm. These updates were printed in the English section as well, for example: *Republika-Górnik*, “POLAND: A review of events happening in Poland.” September 13, 1940. Pg. 5. The process included “forced labor in the Third Reich” and “expulsion.” See: *Republika-Górnik*, “Forced Labor in the Third Reich.” November 29, 1940. Pg. 4 and *Republika-Górnik*, “Expelling Poles is Hitler’s Goal.” November 29, 1940. Pg. 4.

⁸⁶Polish Ministry of Information, *The Black Book*, 585.

Despite the devastation, the press evoked familiar history to make clear that, although the country was in ruin, the “Polish SPIRIT,” the same spirit that survived Frederick the Great and Catherine of Russia, would once again be triumphant.⁸⁷ Triumph, however, began seeming like less of a possibility as time went on. In February 1940, the Polish government-in-exile released a statement that was printed by the Polish-American press and communicated internationally. The document outlined ‘Nazi crimes’ committed against Poles and predicted that Nazi Germany’s next steps would be extermination. An article titled “Document of Nazi Crimes” rebuked the world for knowing of the brutal mass “murder of Poles and its minorities” and yet choosing to remain unresponsive. The article highlighted the main points of the document stating Germany has initiated the following: indiscriminate mass killing of men, women and children, particularly targeting Polish leaders and intellectuals; continue sending Poles to concentration camps where they will ultimately die from hunger, inhumane living and weather conditions, or disease; remove all Poles from Polish land to ‘make room’ for Germans. All remaining Poles who have not been killed or sent to concentration camps will be sent to Germany for forced labour; all civil rights will be removed from these Poles (forced labourers); the liquidation of Polish culture, language and history including the destruction of monuments will continue to ensue; persecution of the Catholic Church in Poland will continue; and political decrees will guarantee that remaining Poles will always remain inferior (slaves) to the Germans (using a variety of subjugation methods). This document also detailed casualty rates with a specific emphasis on targeting the intelligentsia, church officials and youth⁸⁸ (twelve to sixteen year olds).⁸⁹ The

⁸⁷ *Republika-Górnik*, “Heroes of Warsaw Will Live Always.” January 12, 1940. Pg. 5

⁸⁸ Killing and abducting Polish children was a major news focus for the Polish-language press. Many horrific stories were printed detailing the abuse of youth. For example, in *Republika-Górnik*, “Hitler is a Vampire after Polish Blood.” June 7, 1940. Pg. 1 the article details how children were being bled so that the blood could be

document, basically outlining the steps towards what we now define as genocide, was printed in several languages as a testimony to Nazi crimes and a plea for help from the outside world.⁹⁰

Several articles like these were published clearly stating that Hitler planned to annihilate the Poles and the Jews; despite talk of ghettoization or deportation, the long-term goal was genocide.⁹¹ Hitler's ultimate goal, already in progress, was the "extermination of the entire Polish race."⁹²

Hitler's goals were verified by further eye-witness testimonies which were reported on a regular basis. For example, Franciszek Koszarek, a Polish-American studying at Jagiellonian University, was able to return to the United States in 1940 after three years of studying in Europe. He described the situation in Poland as "one large labour camp." He fled the country and described the terror on Polish streets. He claimed he was lucky to escape as all youth aged sixteen to twenty-five were required to register with the Labour Board and forced to work either

transferred to help German soldiers at the front. The article made special note of how hypocritical the Nazis were in using 'inferior' Polish blood and mixing it with Aryan.

⁸⁹ *Republika-Górnik*, "Document of Nazi Crimes." February 9, 1940. Pg. 2. See also: *Republika-Górnik*, "Germans Murdered 428 Sick Children in Chelm – Murdering Priests." April 19, 1940. Pg. 1.

⁹⁰ Genocide, as defined by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish-Jewish lawyer is:
Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:
 (a) *Killing members of the group;*
 (b) *Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;*
 (c) *Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;*
 (d) *Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;*
 (e) *Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.*
 See: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Online. "What is Genocide"
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007043>

⁹¹ *Republika-Górnik*, "Hitler's Goals and 'Jewish Reservations'." February 16, 1940. Pg. 2.

⁹² *Republika-Górnik*, "Germans strive in exterminating the entire Police race." June 7, 1940. Pg. 2. Also See: *Republika-Górnik*, "Germans Torture Poles." (Story include abuse of Poles and Jews) June 14, 1940. Pg. 5.

in factories or on farms.⁹³ Those who were not working in the factories were working in camps and it was reported as a front-page story that in August of 1940, 800,000 Polish political prisoners were incarcerated in concentration camps, without any international intercession made on their behalf.⁹⁴

On November 23, 1939, Jews in occupied Poland were forced to wear the Star of David on a visible patch or armband. There is abundant evidence that Poles were not indifferent⁹⁵ to ever harsher laws⁹⁶ and in many cases, although they were devastated by the effects of war themselves, provided food, especially to children. Speaking of these acts of kindness, Ringelblum noted: “The cooperation between smugglers on both sides of [the Warsaw] wall was one of the finest chapters occurring between Poles and Jews during the Second World War.”⁹⁷

During the first two years of war, Poles felt that they were in greater danger than the Jews living inside of the ghetto. Jews were contained under horrible conditions, but starvation and disease also plagued the ‘Aryan’ side, and additionally, hundreds of thousands of Poles were being beaten and shot in the street or ‘removed’ for forced labour in Germany. “In 1942 the majority of the Polish population in the urban areas of central Poland lived in conditions of abject poverty, and although one cannot compare the subsistence levels and standard of living of

⁹³ *Republika-Górník*, “Poland is one large Labor Camp.” July 19, 1940. Pg. 2.

⁹⁴ *Republika-Górník*, “Huge Loss - 800,000 Polish prisoners interned in Germany dead- died of hunger.” August 2, 1940. Pg. 1.

⁹⁵ See: *Republika-Górník*, “250,000 Jews lost their lives in Poland; 2,500 commit Suicide.” February 2, 1940. Pg. 5 Mass death occurred through typhus and disease, hunger, war casualties and mass executions. Women, children, and the elderly were not exempt from Nazi brutality.

⁹⁶ The press reported on the war and treatment of both Poles and Jews daily. Particularly in 1939, each new law against Jews (in Poland and in Germany) was reported on. See for example: *Republika-Górník*, “New Law Against Jews in Germany.” November 17, 1939. Pg. 1. Or *Republika-Górník*, “Death Penalty for Jews who don’t wear armbands.” December 1, 1939. Pg. 1.

⁹⁷ Marrus, *Public Opinion*, 288.

the people in the ghettos with that of the people living outside, nevertheless we cannot totally disregard the fact that the Polish population was totally absorbed in the day-to-day battle for the most basic means of survival.”⁹⁸ This is not to say that Poles did not understand or acknowledge the excruciating situation of the Jews. The Polish press did not shy away from front-page headlines, such as “250,000 Jews lost their lives in Poland; 2,500 commit Suicide,” just one of a multitude of stories detailing that Jews were also victims of mass killing through disease, starvation, and execution. Indeed, Polish-Jewish relations at this time were, as Ringelblum suggested, epitomized by the cooperation between smugglers. In 1941, ration cards were enforced allowing for the following caloric disbursement: 2,613 for Germans, 669 for Poles, and 184 for Jews⁹⁹ when it is suggested that 1400-1800 calories (differences are based on sex and height) are needed daily to maintain a sufficient diet for human survival. Clearly, the ration law had the intention of death through starvation and nearly 80% of food within the ghetto needed to be smuggled to ensure any chance of survival.¹⁰⁰ Generally, children made the most efficient smugglers due to their size; they could crawl through small exits undetected, although the less fortunate were killed if caught. Richard Lukas praises these young heroes and attributes the survival of most inhabitants to their bravery.¹⁰¹ A poem entitled “The Little Smuggler,” written by Henryka Łazowertówna, a famous Polish-Jewish poet and dweller of the Warsaw ghetto in 1941, vividly encapsulates the smuggler experience:

⁹⁸Marrus, *Public Opinion*, 321.

⁹⁹ Israel Gutman, ed. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Vol. 2. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1995) Pg. 1163.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Richard C. Lukas, *Did the Children Cry? Hitler's War against Jewish and Polish Children, 1939–1945*. (New York, Hippocrene Books, 1994) Pg. 31.

Past rubble, fence, barbed wire
Past soldiers guarding the Wall,
Starving but still defiant,
I softly steal past them all.

At noon, at night, in dawning hours,
In blizzards, in the heat,
A hundred times I risk my life,
I risk my childish neck.

Clutching a bag of sacking,
With only rags to wear,
With limbs numbed by winter,
And hearts numbed by despair

Yet everything must be suffered;
And all must be endured,
So that tomorrow you can all
Eat your fill of bread.

Through walls, through holes, through brickwork,
At night, at dawn, at day,
Hungry, daring, cunning,
Quiet as a shadow I move.

And if the hand of sudden fate
Seizes me at some point in this game,
It's only the common snare of life.
Mama, don't wait for me.
I won't return to you,
Your far-off voice won't reach.
The dust of the street will bury
The lost youngster's fate.

And only one grim thought,
A grimace on your lips:
Who, my dear Mama, who
Will bring you bread tomorrow?¹⁰²

¹⁰²Lukas, *Did the Children Cry?* Pg. 31.

The history of the ghettos in Poland is well known,¹⁰³ although more recent documentation has illuminated how many more of them existed than previously known in the *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945* published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The Warsaw ghetto was liquidated beginning in July of 1942, all remaining survivors from the ghetto were deported to concentration or death camps. This was the fate of Łazowertówna, who was killed at Treblinka.¹⁰⁴

Polish and Jewish fates were also linked by similar expulsion and deportation experiences. On November 28, 1942, the expulsion of Poles began, administered by SS, Gestapo, and Ukrainians in German service.¹⁰⁵ Poles were separated into three main categories: Poles with ‘desirable racial characteristics’ were sent to Łódź for ‘racial examination;’ a work category; and a final category of Poles “slated for Auschwitz and certain death.”¹⁰⁶ During the expulsion of Poles from Zamość, one survivor recalls the experience:

They began to rap at the windows and doors. Chattering in German proved that we were surrounded and there was no escape for us. At that moment I realized, though as a child, the immensity of the horror and misfortune befalling us...when the Germans rushed into the dwelling they gave us only five minutes to prepare and to take some things and immediately pushed us out of the house, disregarding the weeping of children and the requests of our parents.¹⁰⁷

They were then sent to transit camps under harsh conditions where many children perished or were abducted in order to be Germanized. One witness recounts seeing children being taken

¹⁰³ A good resource on camps for Poles outside of Poland is: Roman Hrabar. *NIEMIECKIE OBOZY DLA POLAKÓW NA ŚLĄSKU W CZASIE II WOJNY ŚWIATOWEJ – POLENLAGER*. (German Camps for Poles in Silesia During World War II- Polenlager) (ŚLĄSKI INSTYTUT NAUKOWY W KATOWICACH WYDAWNICTWO JŁĄSK, 1972).

¹⁰⁴ Israel Gutman, ed. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Vol. 4. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1995), 884.

¹⁰⁵ Lukas, *Forgotten Holocaust*, 21.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Roman Hrabar. *The Fate of Polish Children During the Last War*. (Warszawa: Interpress Publishers, 1981) 51.

from their parents: “some were even taken from the breast and the devastated parents beaten by Germans.”¹⁰⁸ Another form of Germanization included taking children born to female workers in Germany. Many Slavic women faced forced abortion,¹⁰⁹ but “if the pregnancy promised a desirable result from the Nazi point of view, especially if the father were German, the woman had the baby and it was placed in the care of the National Socialist Public Welfare Association for adoption.”¹¹⁰ However, the lack of consent regarding sexual relations which resulted in pregnancy is a topic less discussed and one which the Polish-language press dealt with honestly.

Another “phase of Himmler’s attack on the sheer numbers of the Poles [was the] the separation of the men from the women.”¹¹¹ On November 27, 1940, *The New York Times* printed a story entitled “Women of Poland Depict Its Misery – Plea For Deliverance From Nazi Oppression Brought Here From War- Extermination Held Aim – 3,000,000 Have Been Slain or Died in ‘Living Hell’ Document Asserts.” The article printed an “appeal from the women of Poland to the women in America to raise their voices for the ‘deliverance’ of Poland from German oppression” released by the Committee of Polish American Women. Although the Polish National Council of New York had shipped nearly \$1,000,000 worth of food and supplies to Poland, the appeal, written by a group of women in Warsaw and smuggled into the United States, made it clear that funds were not their primary concern. The appeal spoke of the “ruthless

¹⁰⁸Janusz Gumkowski and Kazimiesz Leszczynski. *Poland Under Nazi Occupation*. (Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1961), 154. This is an excellent resource on the topic of Polish and Jewish persecution under Nazis. The authors detail how an equal amount of Polish Jews (3 million) and Polish Gentiles (3 million) were murdered under Nazism as a means of ethnic extermination, while acknowledging the differences between each group’s experience and reality pertaining to the methodology employed to accomplish this end. This book is generally known as the ‘precursor’ to Lukas’s *The Forgotten Holocaust*.

¹⁰⁹ Either of their planned unborn children or unborn children as a result of rape. Gumkowski, 173.

¹¹⁰Lukas, *Forgotten Holocaust*, 26.

¹¹¹ Wallace Rankin, Deuel. *People Under Hitler*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and company. 1942), 112.

invasion marked by pillage, murder, abduction, and slavery.” It recognized that previous wars had devastated countries and their people, but insisted that “history fails to record a Calvary equal to that which we, the women of Poland, are living through now. We are suffering as Catholics, as Poles, as mothers, as wives, as sisters, as daughters. Our husbands, our brothers and fathers perished in mass murders which wiped out tens of thousands. They die slowly...or perish from starvation and cold in war prisoners’ camps.” The appeal also described how Polish boys as young as twelve are sent to labour camps “whence there is no return.” Their girls were being abducted “and deported to German brothels.” Truly a ‘fate worse than death,’ the appeal continued, “and there are among us mothers who, no longer able to shed tears, ask God for thing only-that our daughters might die.” The appeal spoke of Arthur Greiser the “famous executioner” and the goals of Hitler and Frank; Poles were “living in hell.” The appeal assured its readers that their “words are true and that our accusations are not exaggerated.” The plea ended asking not for pity but for assistance, let the world “be moved by [Poland’s] misfortune; let it understand our plight.”¹¹²

On July 30, 1942, the Day of Protest against the victimization of Polish women by the Nazis took place. Initiated by the Polish Mid-eastern Women’s Auxiliary Corps in Jerusalem, it marked the plight of women, both gentile and Jewish, with a moment of silence.¹¹³ Three months earlier, the first transport of 127 women, mostly political prisoners, had arrived at Auschwitz, but women had been directly victimized since the start of war in 1939. Countless thousands of

¹¹²*The New York Times*, “Women of Poland Depict Its Misery – Plea For Deliverance From Nazi Oppression Brought Here From War- ‘Extermination’ Held Aim – 3,000,000 Have Been Slain or Died in ‘Living Hell’ Document Asserts.” November 27, 1940. Pg. 8

¹¹³ *Republika-Górnik*, “Minute of Silence in Jerusalem.” Aug 14, 1942 Pg. 1.

women, including teenagers, were captured by the Nazis and sent to German factories as forced labourers, and worse.

On May 20, 1941, a letter written by a seventeen-year-old Polish girl to her mother in Poland reached the Polish Information Center in London, England. The girl had been sent to a German “public house” (the euphemism for a brothel) and described the fate that she and thousands of other women faced: “Farewell, Mother dearest, I will not see you again. We Polish girls in Germany serve only as mattresses for Nazi soldiers. We are all infected. There isn’t a night that goes by where one of us isn’t executed. I know what awaits me. I am very sick, and cannot walk.”¹¹⁴ The article made clear that sexual abuse was a tool consciously used for “cleansing the entire Polish race.”¹¹⁵

Generally, very little was written in the mainstream press regarding the tragedy of mass rape, but such crimes were well documented by the Polish-language press in Canada and the United States. News reports made plain the fact that rape was used to breed out the Poles. Polish women were classified as inferiors, but their children by German men received German citizenship rights. And because the targets of these rapes were primarily gentiles, some women tried to hide their true identity by wearing the Star of David to avoid being targeted as sex victims. Remarkably, even in the midst of the Holocaust, some women believed it was safer to be a Jew than a gentile.¹¹⁶

The foreign-language press provides countless stories on sexual violence during the war. The *Republika-Górnik* cited several dozen stories from the height of the war in 1941 until its

¹¹⁴ *Republika-Górnik*, “Perverts and Sadists.” June 13, 1941, Pg. 2.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ See for example *Republika- Górnik*, “What is Happening in Poland?” January 30, 1942, Pg. 4.

conclusion in 1945.¹¹⁷ Articles detailing violence against women ranged from stories of the rape of women from Wilno, Grodnie, and Kovno¹¹⁸ to attacks on nunneries.¹¹⁹ Toronto's *Związkowiec*¹²⁰ (*Alliancer*) highlighted similar stories. For example, in one article entitled "Documents of German Crimes in Poland," rape was clearly defined as a tactic of racial cleansing, with the ultimate goal of "exterminating the entire Polish nation."¹²¹ Dorothy Thompson was once again the voice of reason in America and spoke directly to Polish women in a radio program sympathizing with their plight. She spoke of the ruthless rape of Polish nuns and the rape of young Polish girls for the purpose of breeding Germans even though Poles were regarded as subhuman. She stated, "Polish women, we American women know about all of this... and have love towards you and indignation towards your oppressors."¹²² She asked the women not to give up and praised their courage which was well known in the United States, alongside other heroic contributions to fighting the war including the successes of Polish pilots. Her broadcast made abundantly clear that the dire situation in Poland, including the mass rape of women as a tool of extermination was common knowledge.¹²³

¹¹⁷ Rape during the Soviet Occupation is not dealt with here, but the author would like to recognize that rape did not end with the Second World War.

¹¹⁸ *Republika- Górník*, "German Barbarism in Poland." July 18, 1941. Pg. 2.

¹¹⁹ *Republika- Górník*, "Germans Murdering Nuns (or taking them to brothels)" December 18, 1942. Pg. 5.

¹²⁰ *Związkowiec* was established in 1933 and was one of the most popular Polish-Canadian newspapers published weekly.

¹²¹ *Związkowiec*, "Documents of German Crimes in Poland." March 29, 1942. Pg. 5.

¹²² *Związkowiec*, "Dorothy Thompson to Women in Poland." October 4, 1942. Pg. 3.

¹²³ The ITS collection at the USHMM holds thousands of documents in sub-unit 3 pertaining to female forced laborers who had illegitimate children with Germans. Sub-unit 4 holds documents signed by Himmler ordering that the illegitimate children conceived with German fathers were to be handed over to the SS. These children would be raised in Germany as Germans whereas their mothers would not be involved in their upbringing due to their inferior status. UNRAA also documented case of rape and this was reported by the press: *Republika- Górník*, "Methods of Coercion and Rape." April 25, 1947. Pg. 7.

A tremendously detailed article in the *Republika-Górnik* was entitled “Germans abduct Polish Women for Public Houses.” A re-print of news taken from the *Libere Belgique* Belgian press, it reports how Polish women are forced into prostitution. Countless thousands of women were kidnapped in broad daylight and raped. After the women were raped they were shipped off to public houses for soldiers while the Jewish women who were kidnapped were forced to clean and maintain the facilities.¹²⁴

An entire chapter in the *The Black Book of Poland* is dedicated to the treatment of women, and in particular, organized rape as a tool of genocide. The chapter details the “most monstrous crime committed by the Germans on Polish women ... the wholesale arrest of young Polish girls and women to be violated by Germans.”¹²⁵ Furthermore, it was known that “these filthy attacks on Polish women are not isolated incidents, but that they are the result of the coldly methodical policy of the Reich authorities.”¹²⁶ Moreover, despite racial purity laws, there are many documented accounts proving that Germans also ‘systematically raped young Jewish girls.’¹²⁷

Not only were cases of rape detailed but forced sterilization was reported on also:

Last Tuesday I received the order to report at the Labor Bureau (Arbeitsamt). There were about five hundred girls in all. We were compelled to strip and to remain naked as the Lord created us. A doctor first examined our lungs; then he inserted from below a long tube. Through that tube he

¹²⁴*Republika- Górnik*, “Germans abduct Polish Women for Public Houses.” February 23,1940. Pg. 1. See also: *Republika- Górnik*, “Premeditated Murder of Polish Women.” January 15,1943. Pg. 1 See also: *Republika- Górnik*, “Polish Girls Deported for German Soldiers.” December 10,1943. Pg. 2. See also: Związkowiec, “Hard Losses - Women.” (Article details that women are treated on par with men with regard to capture, being put in forced labor or concentration camps, and eventually killed). March, 13, 1944. Pg. 7. Also see: Związkowiec, “In the Hell camp for Women in Auschwitz.” April 9, 1944. Pg. 7. Also see: Związkowiec, “Hell on Earth for Women.” January, 14, 1945. Pg. 2.

¹²⁵*The Black Book*, 105.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, 106.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, 225.

thrust a long pin, and some long, narrow scissors, white hot. He cut several times; the blood flowed and I fainted. He preformed that operation on all the young girls there. It was a crime.¹²⁸

The Polish press also printed stories of forced sterilization describing the barbaric act in articles such as “Germans Castrate Youth in Poland.”¹²⁹ The press was clear in its stance that Hitler was not solely responsible for these methods of “cleansing;” rather, the process of torture, forced labour, killing, rape, and sterilization, among other things, was being perpetrated by the “entire German nation.”¹³⁰ The Polish press was abundantly clear that what was occurring in Europe was not conventional warfare and that because intentional methods of ‘racial cleansing’ were being committed against Poles, America should want to assist victims in Europe.¹³¹ Women were not only “tortured morally” by being raped, but “also sent to death camps...gas chambers, electric chambers, and nightmarish laboratories.”¹³² This was not an ordinary war, and therefore an extraordinary response was needed from the United States.

Furthermore, other contemporary articles such as Leaflet Two from the White Rose pamphlets describe the plight of Nazism’s victims -including women who were used as sexual victims- with a tone that suggested the information being shared was well-known and understood:

Here we see the most frightful crime against human dignity, a crime that is unparalleled in the whole of history. For Jews, too, are human beings - no matter what position we take with respect

¹²⁸Ibid., 112. From a letter written in March, 1940.

¹²⁹ *Republika- Górnik*, “Germans Castrate Youth in Poland.” August 15, 1941, Pg. 5. See also: *Republika- Górnik*, “Appeal of Polish Women to the World.” (Article mentions one case where 500 Polish women were sterilized, and further claims that this is just one of many known cases) June 20, 1941, Pg. 3.

¹³⁰ *Republika- Górnik*, “Perverts and Sadists.” June 13, 1941, Pg. 2 and *Związkowiec*, “Appeal to (and from) Polish Women.” October 19, 1941. Pg. 7.

¹³¹ *Republika- Górnik*, “Perverts and Sadists.” June 13, 1941, Pg. 2.

¹³² *Związkowiec*, “Poles in a German Hell.” April 9, 1944. Pg. 3.

to the Jewish question - and a crime of this dimension has been perpetrated against human beings. Someone may say that the Jews deserved their fate. This assertion would be a monstrous impertinence; but let us assume that someone said this - what position has he then taken toward the fact that the entire Polish aristocratic youth is being annihilated? (May God grant that this program has not fully achieved its aim as yet!) All male offspring of the houses of the nobility between the ages of fifteen and twenty were transported to concentration camps in Germany and sentenced to forced labor, and the girls of this age group were sent to Norway, into the bordellos of the SS! Why tell you these things, since you are fully aware of them.¹³³

It is clear in these documents that sexual violence against women was reported, although rarely discussed by individual victims outside of rare circumstances. There were some women however, who did share their stories even during the war. Eugenia Rutkowska was interned in Liebenau in 1942. She describes that Liebenau was only one of many “love camps” where Polish girls were forced “to settle the nerves” of German soldiers who had been fighting on the front lines or “those carrying out massive executions on innocent civilians.” Twenty-six-year-old Maria Tomczak, “by a miracle” was able to escape a roundup of Polish girls in 1939 who were sent to “amuse German soldiers on their holiday” at a nearby hotel. Her divine intervention came in the form of her American citizenship; she was of Polish descent and resided in Poland since 1938 with the intention of marrying her fiancé who was killed in combat. After that experience she went into hiding, spending a lot of time in basements and animal shelters. Her miracle ran its course when in 1942 she was discovered, captured, and sent to Liebenau.¹³⁴

Many monographs and articles have been written on the experience of women, both Jewish and gentile, during the Third Reich. Some well-known titles are included in Ofer and Weitzman’s *Women in the Holocaust* and deal with topics such as “Ordinary Women in Nazi Germany,” “Women among the Forest Partisans,” and “Gendered Suffering?” While sexual

¹³³ See the Center for White Rose Studies <http://www.white-rose-studies.org/Leaflet_2.html> Accessed July 17, 2012.

¹³⁴ Związkowiec, “Poles in a German Hell.” April 9, 1944. Pg. 3.

abuse is discussed in articles such as “Women in the Forced-Labor Camps” and “The Split between Gender and the Holocaust,” it is neither dealt with exclusively nor extensively. The introduction to this staple monograph suggests that “[a]lthough the incidents of rape by the Nazis appears to have been rare –at least that is [the book’s] impression, based on the diaries and testimonies [the authors] have read- it is clear that many Jewish women were terrorized by rumors of rape.”¹³⁵

Millions of women (some estimates project two million women)¹³⁶ were sexually abused during the Second World War; the reality was worse than fear based on rumours. Although German men were forbidden from having sexual relations with Jewish women -as such behaviour was deemed *Rassenschande* (racially shameful)- the law certainly did not stop many German soldiers from sexually abusing Jewish women, with some participating in collective rape. For example, Dr. Felicia Karay, herself a survivor of the Holocaust, notes that several testimonies speak of rape committed by the Werkschutz commander Fritz Bartenschlager who attended selections with the purpose of choosing “escort girls.” Karay notes that in October 1942, five such escort girls were taken to Bartenschlager’s apartment where they were forced to strip nude and serve his guests who raped them. A similar occurrence happened in January 1943, when SS commander Herbert Boettcher and Franz Shippers (SS commander of Radom) were among Bartenschlager’s guests. In this case three young women, including nineteen-year-old

¹³⁵ Dalia Ofer, and Leonore J. Weitzman, ed. *Women in the Holocaust*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 7-8.

¹³⁶ Due to a lack of existing evidence, it is unclear how many women were subjected to sexual violence during the Second World War. Statistics often cite *in the millions*; what is clear was that rape was used en masse as a means of targeting women and ethnic cleansing. For more on contemporary estimates of women raped during wars other than WWII, See “Rape as a Crime of War: A Medical Perspective” Reprinted from JAMA, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. Shana Swiss, MD. Jean E. Giller, MA, MB. August 4, 1993. Vol. 270. Available online: <<http://www.womens-rights.org/Publications/JAMA%2093.pdf>> ALSO, See *The Economist*. “War’s overlooked victims Rape is horrifyingly widespread in conflicts all around the world.” January 13, 2011. Available online: <<http://www.economist.com/node/17900482>>

Gucia Milchman, were murdered after being viciously raped. Girls who were not killed after being raped, but who became pregnant, were ‘dealt with’ by being “sent to the shooting range.”¹³⁷

A major problem in understanding the experience of women during the Second World War is a lack of testimony. Testimonies that do exist act as individual microcosms of wide-spread issues such as fear of rape, sexual violence, and survival. A memoir briefly utilized in *Women in the Holocaust* is *Seed of Sarah: Memoirs of a Survivor* by Judith Magyar Isaacson. More attention to this truly moving piece is worthwhile when discussing the plight of women during the Second World War. Isaacson recalls back to 1976 when she, then Dean of Students at Bates College, was asked to give a talk at Bowdoin College following a screening of *Night and Fog*. During her time in Auschwitz when she was a girl of nineteen, she vividly pictured not only recording her experiences after the war, but also fantasized about them turning into a Hollywood film. As time after the war passed, her fantasy did not come to fruition and it was at Bowdoin College when Isaacson first spoke of her experiences in public. Following her talk, questions ensued. One young lady in the audience asked a question which inspired Isaacson to commit her experience to paper, “Dean Isaacson, were you raped in Auschwitz?” Raped? Isaacson replied, “I’ll tell you how I escaped it...”¹³⁸

Isaacson recalls the type of fear (of rape) previously mentioned when in 1944 German soldiers were to be billeted in their family home in Hungary.¹³⁹ Despite the unwanted guests’ unsavory manners, Isaacson’s grandfather assured the ladies of the house there was nothing to

¹³⁷ Ofer and Weitzman., 291.

¹³⁸ Judith Magyar Isaacson. *Seed of Sarah: Memoirs of a Survivor*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990), xi.

¹³⁹ Despite the law banning relations between Aryans and Jews, numerous German soldiers were billeted in Jewish homes.

worry about: “[d]on’t be afraid to speak to any man. Soldiers may be beasts on the battlefield, but they all had a mother, just like you and me.”¹⁴⁰ But Isaacson was uneasy, “I wanted to ask, but I was too embarrassed: could I convince a German soldier not to rape me?”¹⁴¹

Rumours of unwed girls being sent to the Russian front as prostitutes for German soldiers in spring 1944, fueled Isaacson’s anxieties.¹⁴² However, it was not only the fear of rape which caused Isaacson anxiety; nudity and the feeling of exposure greatly affected her. When Isaacson, her mother, and aunt Magda came to Auschwitz-Birkenau in July of 1944, she recalls a head count where the women were forced to strip naked for a medical exam.¹⁴³ Naked and forced to march in circles, Isaacson felt emotionally tormented and sexually threatened: “I was nauseated by all the nudity, the breasts, the buttocks, the pathetic pubic slits, so visible on the shaven parts... thousands upon thousands of bald women swirling in the nude. [Was this] Twenty-first-century Europe?”¹⁴⁴

Passing selection and escaping death, Isaacson’s next encounter with [the possibility of] rape happened in August of 1944 when she and her relatives were sent to Hessisch Lichtenau as forced labourers. During a routine *Zähl Appell* (in this case a head count) Kommandant Wilhelm Schäfer had asked the kapo (Manci Pál) for a clean girl. Isaacson agonized over the prospect of being chosen. Suddenly the kapo pointed at Isaacson “You!” Isaacson felt paralyzed. As the Kommandant began his walk home, Isaacson hesitantly followed. During the walk she thought of the tale of the Sabine Women and of Hunor and Magor. “My plight is not unique...I’m caught

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 42.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid., 44.

¹⁴³ Later, Isaacson reflects that the doctor conducting the exam was most probably Dr. Mengele Pg. 84.

¹⁴⁴ Isaacson, 84.

in an ancient rite of sex and war” she thought.¹⁴⁵ Admitting that she deeply feared rape, she pondered what awaited her:

I ruminated about the lot of all the women captured in wars, in every inhabited spot on this planet. The Sabine and Magor mothers were famous models, but similar dramas must have unfolded millions of times. I could hear Mr. Kövary’s lecture: ‘The enemy raped and plundered, they slaughtered the men and took all the women and children hostage.’ Of course, it was always the enemy who committed those detestable acts. Never one’s own nation. Never one’s own tribe.¹⁴⁶

Isaacson escaped a *fate worse than death* yet again, as the Kommandant had brought her to the house of his mistress who was in need of a cleaning lady.

Although the rest of the memoir reveals exactly what the introduction had promised, a story of woman who escaped rape, others whom Isaacson personally knew were not as fortunate. On a trip back to Hungary with her grown daughter Ilona, Isaacson is told of the fate of one of her classmates Marika Erdos: “The day the Russians liberated Budapest, Marika was among the first to venture into the streets. The capital was in tumult, drunken troops everywhere, hardly any women in sight, Marika was raped and shot on the bank of the Danube.”¹⁴⁷ Marika’s story illustrates that liberation for some meant danger for others as the war neared an end. Ilona reflected, “Thousands of women were raped during the war, but no one hears about them.”¹⁴⁸ Ilona’s reflection remains true. One rarely hears of the sexual plight of women in any war. The reason for this is both obvious and ubiquitous; survivors of rape [rarely] share their experience, and rape within the context of war was seen as a normal reality of the victors’ spoils- winning

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 90.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 91.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 144.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

both “beauty and booty.”¹⁴⁹ In this regard *The Seed of Sarah* is unique, but very rare when considering the millions of women who have been raped in war and have not, or could not document their experience. Although few detailed memoirs exist which focus on the theme of rape,¹⁵⁰ there was an abundance of primary evidence in the foreign-language press and other contemporary documents.

An additional reason for the lack of such stories is due to the victims experiencing a “double trauma.” An article in *Der Spiegel* which spoke of Köpp’s work claims that “women have rarely reported voluntarily on their encounters with violence during and after the war. Experts describe this experience as a double trauma: the act of violence itself, and having to keep it hidden.” Dr. Philipp Kuwert, head of the department of psychiatry and psychotherapy at the University Hospital of Greifswald in northeastern Germany and a trauma expert, began conducting research in 2009 on the consequences of sexual abuse in the Second World War. He interviewed twenty-seven women, mostly teenagers during the Second World War, who were victims of sexual violence and stated that “It is one of the first and probably the last study of this

¹⁴⁹ Common civil war language regarding to sexual violence, for example see Confederate General Beauregard’s writings from June 5, 1861. See Head Quarters Department of Alexandria, Camp Pickens, June 5, 1861, in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and the Confederate Army*, Series 3, III (Washington, DC, 1880-1902), series 1, vol. 2: 907.

¹⁵⁰ There have been some recent developments where the issue of not discussing sexual violence is slowly being corrected. A recent memoir published by Gabriele Köpp in 2010 titled *Warum war ich bloss ein Mädchen?* (*Why Did I Have to Be a Girl?*) is an example of a memoir which discusses rape. Köpp’s book is credited with being the first of its kind; a memoir by woman who was raped during the conclusion of the Second World War. Previous to Köpp’s work, a memoir titled *A Woman in Berlin* (published in 1954 and republished in 2003) chronicled the experience of an anonymous woman near the end of the war. After the author’s death in 2003, the authenticity of the story was questioned when it was discovered the book had likely been co-authored and not the actual experiences of the writer. Köpp’s book is a chilling first person account of her experience being raped multiple times at the age of fifteen. See: *Der Spiegel Online*. “Harrowing Memoir: German Woman Writes Ground-Breaking Account of WW2 Rape.” By Susanne Beyer. February 26, 2012. Accessed online July 27, 2012. <<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/harrowing-memoir-german-woman-writes-ground-breaking-account-of-ww2-rape-a-680354.html>>

nature, because 95 percent of the women who were affected are no longer alive."¹⁵¹ Although memoirs by victims of sexual violence are rare, the documentation and stories reported in the foreign-language press (and through other media) clearly demonstrates that world knew what was happening to the many victims of Nazi (and also Soviet) oppression including crimes committed against women.¹⁵²

Clearly news was filtering into the United States and was readily available, however due to the heinous nature of the reports from Europe, suspicion arose over the validity of the stories. In May 1942, the Jewish Labor Bund in Poland provided a verified summary report of the mass murders of 'undesirables' by Nazis to the Polish Government-in-exile in London, England.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹*Der Spiegel Online*. "Harrowing Memoir: German Woman Writes Ground-Breaking Account of WW2 Rape." By Susanne Beyer. February 26, 2012. Accessed online July 27, 2012. <<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/harrowing-memoir-german-woman-writes-ground-breaking-account-of-ww2-rape-a-680354.html>>

For further reference on this study, please consult: Kuwert P, Klauer T, Eichhorn S, Grundke E, Dudeck M, Schomerus G, Freyberger HJ. (2010): Trauma and current posttraumatic stress symptoms in elderly German women who experienced wartime rape in 1945. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 198: 450-451. **Abstract of study:** The aim of this study was to determine the persistent trauma impact and significant posttraumatic stress symptoms in a sample of very elderly German women who survived the mass rapes committed by soldiers at the end of World War II. A total of 27 women were recruited, interviewed, and then administered a modified Posttraumatic Diagnostic Scale. They all reported a very severe degree of trauma exposure in 1945; 19% reported significant current posttraumatic stress symptoms indicating a possible posttraumatic stress disorder at the time of the study, and 30% fulfilled the criteria of a current partial posttraumatic stress disorder. The results highlight the necessity for prevention and treatment programs for women exposed to wartime rapes in current conflict settings worldwide, and the need to identify and treat posttraumatic conditions in the elderly generation of all countries exposed to World War II trauma.

¹⁵²*Republika- Górník*, "34,445 Polish Women were in Ravensbruck." June 1, 1945, Pg. 3. *Republika- Górník*, "Russians Raping Hundreds of Polish Women Daily." November 9, 1945, Pg. 2. *Republika- Górník*, "Rape of 10,000 Polish Women by Russian Soldiers." January 25, 1946, Pg. 2. *Republika- Górník*, "Soviets Killing Poles- Polish and German Women Getting Syphilis From Soviet Soldiers." March 29, 1946, Pg. 2.

¹⁵³ "Report of the Bund Regarding the Persecution of the Jews," in *David S. Wyman, America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.1, Confirming the News of Extermination. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 20-23.

The Bund Report was crucial in promoting news of the crimes against Jews and specifically called on the help of the United States¹⁵⁴ but America remained firm in its inaction.

Aside from official contemporary sources, throughout the entire war, the Polish-language press documented an array of news. Many of the stories, unlike the formal and objective documentation presented to leaders, appealed to readers' emotion by speaking of individual cases or detailed personal events. For example, when well-known Poles were taken to Auschwitz, such as a well-known priest named Karol Albrecht and theatre actor Stefan Jaracz, it made front page news.¹⁵⁵ In an article titled "What is Happening in Poland Today?" published on January 16, 1942, the press was vocal in stating that the past two years of war could be defined as a time of "mass arrests and executions." From the "onset of occupation, the Nazis systematically set out to eliminate the nation beginning with those who the Nazis thought would put up the greatest resistance."¹⁵⁶ The article revealed the desperation of young gentiles who were trying to sneak into the Jewish ghetto as at the time it was safer; they would not be shot in the street or sent to the Reich. Since 1941, Poland has been "victim to regular roundups with the goal of racial extermination." Others were sterilized and sent for forced labour to meet this end.¹⁵⁷ Reports made headlines such as "Death Tolls Increasing in Poland"¹⁵⁸ including the deaths of Jews within the Ghetto.¹⁵⁹ Jewish suffering was acknowledged, deplored, and almost

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 23.

¹⁵⁵ *Republika- Górnik*, "Stefan Jaracz and Father Karol Albrecht in Concentration Camp Auschwitz." October 3, 1941. Pg.1.

¹⁵⁶ *Republika- Górnik*, "What is Happening in Poland Today?" January 16, 1942. Pg.5.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ *Republika- Górnik*, "Death Tolls Increasing in Poland." October 17, 1941. Pg.1.

¹⁵⁹ *Republika- Górnik*, "Jewish Death Tolls on Warsaw." October 17, 1941. Pg.6.

always a main page story such as “1,135,000 Jews in 11 Ghettos in Poland.”¹⁶⁰ By 1942, the actions of the Nazis clearly shifted from mass murder to genocide; for the Polish press, it was “Hard to imagine things could get worse for Poles.”¹⁶¹ The press predicted in 1942 that “Six Million Poles Will die at the Hands of the Germans.”¹⁶² And “What Does 400,000 Dead Poles Signify” to the outside world? What did it mean that Poles were dying and there was a “massive extermination of Jews” taking place?¹⁶³ Not much as far as Polish the press was concerned, as evidenced by a failure to directly intervene on behalf of victims. In February 1942, Roosevelt made a speech addressed to Poles. He failed to mention Polish Jews in his address, but did outline that Poles were a main victim of Nazi terror. Poles appreciated Roosevelt’s sympathy but desperately needed direct intervention. After the United States entered the war in December of 1941, they thought their pleas were reasonable.¹⁶⁴ All that was offered were words of comfort that German barbarism would be accounted for and that Poles would once more be free, “Polish blood w[ould] be not wasted.”¹⁶⁵ What happened after this speech with regard to assisting Poles or Jews was very little outside of actually fighting the war.

In an attempt to garner a direct American response, the Polish-language press advertised Wallace Deuel’s book (Deuel was an American correspondent in Berlin) *People Under Hitler*, a

¹⁶⁰*Republika- Górnik*, “1,135,000 Jews in 11 Ghettos in Poland.” January 2, 1942. Pg.1. Also, *Republika- Górnik*, “In Warsaw there are no more Jews (being deported).” September 18, 1942. Pg.5.

¹⁶¹*Republika- Górnik*, “Year 1942 –Hard to imagine things could get worse for Poles.” January 2, 1942. Pg.2.

¹⁶² *Republika- Górnik*, “Six Million Poles Will die at the Hands of the Germans.” February 6, 1942. Pg.2.

¹⁶³*Republika- Górnik*, “What Does 400,000 Dead Poles Signify?”(Poles are dying and there is a massive extermination of Jews taking place) July 24, 1942. Pg.1.

¹⁶⁴*Republika- Górnik*, “Roosevelt Speaks to Poles.” February 6, 1942. Pg.1.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid.* A similar message was given in 1943: *Republika- Górnik*, “Suffering of Poles will be accounted for, say FDR.” July 16, 1943. Pg.1.

book telling the “story of human beings involved in the greatest tragedy of modern times.”¹⁶⁶ The book clearly outlined that Poles were being exterminated at such an alarming rate that their bodies were being burned to clear the corpses. This was on top of a raging epidemic in Poland which was claiming lives; those who were not killed through executions, disease, starvation, or labour, were being killed in concentration camps. The plight of Jews was also documented with details of extermination methods, as well as looting and pauperization.¹⁶⁷ The book also demonstrates the shared experience of Poles and Jews. In referencing how Himmler set out to “destroy whole nations” the author claims the SS officer “developed his technique by experimenting on the Jews. He is perfecting it in his operations against the Poles.”¹⁶⁸ After mass executions, “Himmler relies on hunger, thirst and disease to do the major part of his killing for him. The war conditions themselves cause conditions that are bound to decimate the Poles...his primary purpose [is] destroying the Poles.”¹⁶⁹ The *Republika-Górnik* commended the book and praised the fact that it was written by an American; its hope was that finally the country would open its eyes and take the words and witness of an American seriously.¹⁷⁰

Unfortunately, Deuel’s publication did not elicit Poles’ desired response. Despite a lack of action, the Polish community’s concerns did not cease to be reported. Blunt front-page headlines continued into the 1940s, such as, “Order to Eliminate Jews in Poland.” News came from the Polish Underground in Poland which reported 50% of Jews were killed in the ghettos,

¹⁶⁶Deuel, v.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 110-112, 357.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 111.

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ *Republika- Górnik*, “Six Million Poles Will die at the Hands of the Germans.” February 6, 1942. Pg.2.

and the remaining 50% of Jews would be “liquidated later.”¹⁷¹ Other notable headlines read “Germans Kill 250 Poles a Day in Torture Camp: Auschwitz”¹⁷² and “Germans are making fertilizer out of Jews” which reported, from Rabbi Wise, that Germans were burning Jewish corpses.¹⁷³ The press called for immediate reprimand of Germany by the League of Nations and the Allies; waiting until the war ended (the popular response given by the Allies) was not stopping the extermination of Poles and Jews. The Polish press stated that Poles had been begging for help for years, yet received no concrete response.¹⁷⁴

America’s response, and that of the Allies, was that in order to help those suffering in Poland, the war needed to be won. The Polish press, once objective in tone, had changed its approach in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Poles understood the world was at war, but what was happening to their people was indeed unprecedented. A full literature has been published on news coming from the Polish underground in Britain, and the Polish-language press constantly reprinted that information in bold on front pages to garner attention, using headlines such as “2,500,000 POLES FELL AS OFFERING TO NAZI TERROR AND 1,000,000 JEWS.”¹⁷⁵ On May 7, 1943 the *Republika-Górnik* reported (from news from the underground) that “Germans [were] Liquidating Ghettos in all of Poland,” and sending the surviving Jews to Auschwitz, which was now consistently being called a death camp. The article described the excruciating

¹⁷¹ *Republika- Górnik*, “Order to Eliminate Jews in Poland.” December 4, 1942. Pg.1. See also, *Republika- Górnik*, “Jews being massacred in Brzescia.” March 5, 1943. Pg.1.

¹⁷² *Republika- Górnik*, “Germans Kill 250 Poles a Day in Torture Camp Auschwitz.” March 12, 1943. Pg.3.

¹⁷³ *Republika- Górnik*, “Germans are making fertilizer out of Jews.” December 4, 1942. Pg.1.

¹⁷⁴ *Republika- Górnik*, “The Time is Now for Punishing Germany.” February 26, 1943. Pg.2. (The *Dziennik Polski* shared this sentiment).

¹⁷⁵ *Republika- Górnik*, “2,500,000 POLES FELL AS OFFERING TO NAZI TERROR AND 1,000,000 JEWS.” March 12, 1943. Pg.1.

conditions in the camp and that its purpose was to murder Jews by gassing and then to dispose of the bodies by burning them in crematoria.¹⁷⁶ A month later it was reported, via news from Stockholm, that “In Auschwitz, 640,000 People have Already Perished.”¹⁷⁷ Clearly Hitler’s war, was not a conventional one, but its victims were receiving a conventional response.



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¹⁷⁶ *Republika- Górnik*, “Germans Liquidating Ghettos in all of Poland.” May 7, 1943. Pg.1.

¹⁷⁷ *Republika- Górnik*, “In Auschwitz, 640,000 People have Already Perished.” June 11, 1943. Pg.1.

¹⁷⁸ *Republika- Górnik*, “Photo-First Captions Reads: Poland was attacked on September 1, 1939, and is suffering the most among the nations. Second Caption Reads: According to official statistics, Germans have murdered 3,200,000 Poles with 1,800,000 of that statistic being Jewish.” October 1, 1943. Pg.3.

Note: Not only were Polish and Jewish fates seen as linked during the war, their strengthened bond (facilitated in the joint fight against Nazism) is evident in the fact that Jews (and other minorities, for example the Ukrainians) were

With little help from the outside world, Poles and Jews alike fought the Nazis with the utmost bravery. The photograph displayed above, printed in the *Republika-Górník* on October 1, 1943, demonstrates that even in 1943, the Polish press interpreted genocide as a shared experience between Poles and Jews even while acknowledging that there was a shift in Hitler's hierarchy of targets with Jews being the primary victims at that time. They never shied away from talking about the murder of Jews (by name) as was the common practise in mainstream media. The Polish press maintained this interpretation even after the war. On December 24, 1949, the *Republika-Górník*, now titled the *Polish American Journal*, wrote “[d]uring the occupation of Poland the Germans exterminated some three million Polish Jews and almost as many Poles”¹⁷⁹ identifying that genocide was a shared experience.

With regard to official contemporary documentation and response to the Holocaust, one of the most influential actors on behalf of the Jewish Committees in spreading awareness was Rabbi Doctor Stephen S. Wise,¹⁸⁰ President of the American Jewish Committee, whom Felix Frankfurter, an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, would later call a man of “moral courage-the rarest ingredient of character...[w]hen he spoke, he spoke out.”¹⁸¹ In response to the horrific news of atrocities in Europe, even before the Holocaust was officially recognized, Wise organized a mass demonstration at Madison Square Gardens in New York City

fully included in Poland's formation of their underground government during the war. See: *Republika-Górník*, “Appointments of the New Polish Government.” (News from London) February 13, 1942. Pg. 1.

¹⁷⁹ *Polish American Journal*, “How the Poles Fought in World War II.” December 24, 1949. Pg.8.

¹⁸⁰For a detailed account of Dr. Wise see: Stephen Wise. *Challenging Years*. (New York: G.P. Putnam's 1949). And Justine Wise Polier and James Waterman Wise., ed. *The Personal Letters of Stephen Wise*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956.)

¹⁸¹ “Rabbi Stephen S. Wise 1949” in Philip Elman, ed. *Of Law and Men: Papers and Addresses of Felix Frankfurter 1939-1956*. (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 355.

on July 21, 1942.¹⁸² The demonstration, which attracted approximately 20,000 participants and inspired other such demonstrations nationwide,¹⁸³ attempted to arouse awareness and action on behalf of European Jews. President Roosevelt responded to the Madison Square Gardens demonstration by publicly claiming that although America would not directly intervene in the situation, it would “hold the perpetrators of these crimes to strict accountability in a day of reckoning which will surely come.”¹⁸⁴ The government made clear that any intervention on behalf of European Jewry required proof that such crimes were undoubtedly being committed and were not a product of exaggeration.

Wise received important information regarding the Holocaust in a document which is now known as the Riegner Report. The World Jewish Congress (WJC) representative in Geneva, Gerhard Riegner, obtained information from a German manufacturer, Eduard Schulte — who had connections in Hitler’s general headquarters — indicating that Hitler had decided to systematically annihilate all of European Jewry, and that gas was being used to attain this goal. After Riegner gathered further information about his source, he approached the American Consulate in Geneva with the report. He handed the deputy-consul a cable and asked him to forward it to Stephen Wise. The cable contained the information that Riegner had obtained from Schulte concerning the plans for the murder of European Jewry:

Report: Received alarming report that in Fuhrer's headquarters plan discussed and under consideration according to which all Jews in countries occupied or controlled Germany

¹⁸² *The New York Times*, July 22, 1942, 1, 4, in *David S. Wyman, America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.1, Confirming the News of Extermination. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 75.

¹⁸³ *Congress Weekly*, August 14, 1942, 15, *David S. Wyman, America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.1, Confirming the News of Extermination. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 81.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

numbering 3 1/2 - 4 million should after deportation and concentration in east be exterminated at one blow to resolve once and for all the Jewish question in Europe. Action reported planned for autumn; methods under discussion including prussic acid. We transmit information with all necessary reservation as exactitude cannot be confirmed. Informant stated to have close connections with highest German authorities and his reports generally speaking reliable.¹⁸⁵

The State Department received the cable, but decided not to transmit messages from “private individuals.” On August 28, the second addressee of the cable, Sidney Silverman, a member of the British Parliament, sent a copy of the cable to Wise. The Assistant Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, summoned Wise and asked him not to disclose the information until it could be verified. Wise agreed, yet he informed a number of cabinet ministers, President Roosevelt, Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, and Christian clergymen. The State Department continued to claim that because the reports could not be substantiated, they would not be made public. The Division of European Affairs justified the suppression of this information both to the public and from Dr. Wise due to the “fantastic nature of the allegation.”¹⁸⁶ A telegram which was sent to Roosevelt on September 3, 1942, from the President of the Agudath Israel World Organization claiming to have substantial evidence of the Jewish slaughter, was also ignored.¹⁸⁷

After much of his own investigation into the validity of Jewish peril in Europe, Dr. Wise arranged a meeting with the President on December 8, 1942, at which time he presented a detailed memorandum with evidence from Europe of Nazi crimes against the Jews. He also read

¹⁸⁵The State Department Receives and Suppresses News of the ‘Final Solution,’ 1942 in Mark A Stoler and Melanie S Gustafson, ed. *Major Problems in the History of World War II*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), 335-338.

¹⁸⁶ Memorandum, Division of European Affairs, Department of State, August 13, 1942, in *David S. Wyman, America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.1, Confirming the News of Extermination. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 194.

¹⁸⁷ Telegram from Jacob Rosenheim, President, Agudath Israel World Organization, New York, to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 3, 1942, in *David S. Wyman, America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.1, Confirming the News of Extermination. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 202.

a letter to Roosevelt stressing that “unless action is taken immediately the Jews of Hitler[‘s] Europe are doomed.”¹⁸⁸ Wise appealed to Roosevelt as the “symbol of humanity’s will to fight for freedom,”¹⁸⁹ and pleaded that he “employ every available means”¹⁹⁰ to help the Jews of Europe. Wise suggested that American action on behalf of the Jews would encourage other Allied and neutral nations to help facilitate rescue.¹⁹¹ Roosevelt’s response to Wise clearly eliminated any speculation on behalf of Wise and the American Jewish Congress that he was unaware of the information being filtered into the White House. The President stated that “[r]epresentatives of the United States government in Switzerland and other neutral countries have given us proof that confirm the horrors discussed by you.”¹⁹² Wise took the President’s reply as official support in relaying the details of the mass murders to the public but the State Department, which already warned Wise to “tone down, the present world-wide publicity campaign concerning mass murders,”¹⁹³ officially reiterated to Wise that it had not confirmed any of the reports.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ Maurice Wertheim, Stephen Wise, Adolph Held, Henry Monsky, Israel Goldstein, and Israel Rosenberg to President Roosevelt, December 8, 1942 in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.2, *The Struggle For Rescue Action*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 50.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 51.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Adolph Held, “Report on the Visit to the President,” December 8, 1942, English Trans., in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.2, *The Struggle For Rescue Action*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 73.

¹⁹³ Eddy, State Department. To Gordon, State Department, December 7, 1942 in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.2, *The Struggle For Rescue Action*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 102.

¹⁹⁴ Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State, to Stephen Wise, February 9, 1943, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.2, *The Struggle For Rescue Action*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 150.

The American Jewish Congress became increasingly frustrated with the lack of cooperation and the inaction of the American government, specifically, the State Department. Wise persisted to Roosevelt that the “threat of retribution after the war [had] not served to deflect the intent of the Nazi leaders from their announced policy of mass murder.”¹⁹⁵ Wise pleaded that the inefficiency of the President and the State Department was resulting in the “growing horror of [the] unrelieved situation.”¹⁹⁶ On November 24, 1942, when the U.S. government was finally convinced, Wise broke the news of the cable, together with other supporting information to the press.

Also in 1942, news was brought to the Allies by a fearless resistance activist named Jan Karski, a Catholic Pole born on June 24, 1914. As a resistance member he began courier missions between the Polish underground (and the Government-in-Exile) in January of 1940. In July of 1940 he was captured and severely tortured by the Gestapo, but managed to escape. Based on his fearlessness and trustworthiness he was selected in 1942 to be an informant to Prime Minister Władysław Sikorski in England, reporting on atrocities occurring in Poland. With the help of the Jewish underground he was smuggled into the Warsaw ghetto twice and recorded detailed information of its happenings while also acquiring microfilm from the underground containing information on extermination policies. Karski returned his findings to the Allies which were mostly supported by Count Edward Raczynski, the foreign minister. On December 10, 1942, Raczynski sent to the Allies an address based on Karski’s findings entitled *The mass extermination of Jews in German occupied Poland*. In July 1943, Karski again personally approached Roosevelt about the dire situation in Poland. In an interview conducted with Karski

¹⁹⁵ American Jewish Congress, March 1, 1943, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.2, *The Struggle For Rescue Action*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 172.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

in 1978 (conducted by Claude Lanzmann), it was communicated that “Karski first told Roosevelt that the Polish nation was depending on him to deliver them from the Germans. Karski said to Roosevelt, “All hope, Mr. President, has been placed by the Polish nation in the hands of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.’ Karski says that he told President Roosevelt about Belzec and the desperate situation of the Jews. Roosevelt concentrated his questions and remarks entirely on Poland and did not ask one question about the Jews.” By 1942 and certainly 1943, Karski claimed that regarding the Holocaust, *it was one thing not to believe, and another not to know.*¹⁹⁷

In addition to Karski’s documented evidence of the Holocaust, additional testimony was provided in the form of Witold’s Report and the Auschwitz Protocols (otherwise known as the Vrba Wetzler Report). Witold Pilecki was a member of Polish resistance who voluntarily entered Auschwitz (on September 19, 1940 he made himself a target during a routine ‘roundup’ in Warsaw) and compiled a report detailing the workings of the camp. Through clandestine underground efforts, he was able to send information to the Allies as early as 1941, but was largely ignored. In late April of 1943 he was lucky enough to escape, allowing him to present his 100 page report.¹⁹⁸ The Allies treated Pilecki the same as others who brought them evidence: by dismissing his reports as ‘exaggerated.’¹⁹⁹ Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler were also prisoners at Auschwitz who were able to escape and provided the Allies with a detailed account of what was transpiring in the infamous death camp from 1943-1944. The reports were published by the War

¹⁹⁷ Emphasis is my own. Claude Lanzmann. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Claude Lanzmann “Interview with Jan Karski”. Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive. http://www.ushmm.org/online/film/display/detail.php?file_num=4739

Karski’s travels were recognized by the press, both foreign and mainstream. In 1945, his influence was greatly praised. See: *Republika- Górnik*, “Karski.” May 11, 1945. Pg.10.

¹⁹⁸Raul Hilberg. *The Destruction of the European Jews*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 1212.

¹⁹⁹Pilecki’s report has recently been published in English in: Witold Pilecki. Trans. Jarek Garliski. *The Auschwitz Volunteer: Beyond Bravery*. (Los Angeles: Aquila Polonica, 2012).

Refugee Board in November of 1944, but at that time, with the majority of killing completed,²⁰⁰ the formation of the WRB and acknowledgment of the report was of little consequence.²⁰¹

Much has been written in Holocaust historiography on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (1943)²⁰² and the Warsaw Uprising (1944),²⁰³ and most mainstream press outlets covered these events also. News of other types of sabotage was also printed in the foreign press, such as attacks by the Polish and Jewish underground and German reaction to that sabotage.²⁰⁴ With every German death, every train derailed, a “New Wave of Terror Swe[pt] Poland.”²⁰⁵ Similar to the start of war, generally Poles and Jews joined in solidarity against the German front.²⁰⁶ Poles assisted Jews, and paid with their lives when caught doing so.²⁰⁷ By September of 1944, the Polish press, anticipating a German defeat, focused on news stories about what would happen to Poland after the war, particularly regarding the Soviet Union encroaching on Poland.²⁰⁸ By war’s

²⁰⁰ Killing Centers. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007327>

²⁰¹ Further discussion on the WRB and America’s handling of information is available in the conclusion.

²⁰² See: Israel Gutman. *Resistance: The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994).

²⁰³ See: Norman Davies. *Rising '44: The Battle for Warsaw*. (New York: Viking Press, 2004).

²⁰⁴ *Republika- Górník*, “Underground Anti-German Action in Poland.” October 8, 1943. Pg.1. *Republika- Górník*, “Sabotage of German Trains.” November 12, 1943. Pg.1.

²⁰⁵ *Republika- Górník*, “New Wave of Terror Sweeps Poland.” November 12, 1943. Pg.1.

²⁰⁶ In fact, even after the war, the Poles had perceived the Holocaust be a shared experience with an equal amount of Polish gentile and Polish Jews murdered: *Republika- Górník*, “3 Million Poles and 3 Million Jews Killed in War. February 15, 1946. Pg.1.

²⁰⁷ *Republika- Górník*, “1,000 more Poles Lost for Helping Hide Jews.” May 12, 1944. Pg.1. In fact, not only did many Poles try to assist Jews during the war, they also tried to assist Germans who refused to fight or support Nazi Germany. Many Germans deserters on Polish soil were assisted by civilians: *Republika- Górník*, “Poles help German Deserters.” April 2, 1943. Pg.1. See also: *Republika- Górník*, “German army desertions in Poland. (Poles assisting/hiding them).” May 7, 1943.

²⁰⁸ *Republika- Górník*, “Quebec Conference Done.” September 22, 1944. Pg.1.

end, the Polish press covered the liberation of the camps²⁰⁹ –and even reported that now Germans were using the Star of David for protection-²¹⁰ but the liberation stories took a secondary place to new Soviet terror. When the Germans capitulated to the Allies on May 7, 1945 (news of their surrender was reported on May 8, 1945),²¹¹ it did not end the war for Poland.²¹² Weeks before Germany surrendered, Poland appealed to the Allies for help against a new wave of Soviet aggression. The press deplored the way the Allies ignored what happened to Poles and Jews during the Second World War. Not only that, but the Allies continued to ignore the Soviet Union which was destroying Poland with as much fervour as the Nazis had. The world needed to stop ignoring its plight and realize, “[t]his is not just a Polish issue, this is a world peace issue.”²¹³ In an article re-published from *The Tablet* (London, England) entitled “Poland as I saw it,” a veteran claimed the end of war and (apparent) end of systematic murder was “nothing of a victory for Poles who lived in constant fear, were being taken over by Russia, and experiencing mass rape and murder.” Poland begs for assistance!²¹⁴ But who would help? By then it was clear that Poland’s fate was decided at the Yalta conference in February of 1945, a

²⁰⁹ *Republika- Górnik*, “German Crimes – Auschwitz Liberated- an estimated 1,500,000 killed by the camp.” February 9, 1945. Pg.1. See also: *Republika- Górnik*, “German Crimes.” April 13, 1945. Pg.2.

²¹⁰ *Republika- Górnik*, “Germans Pretend to be Polish and Jewish.” March 16, 1945. Pg.1.

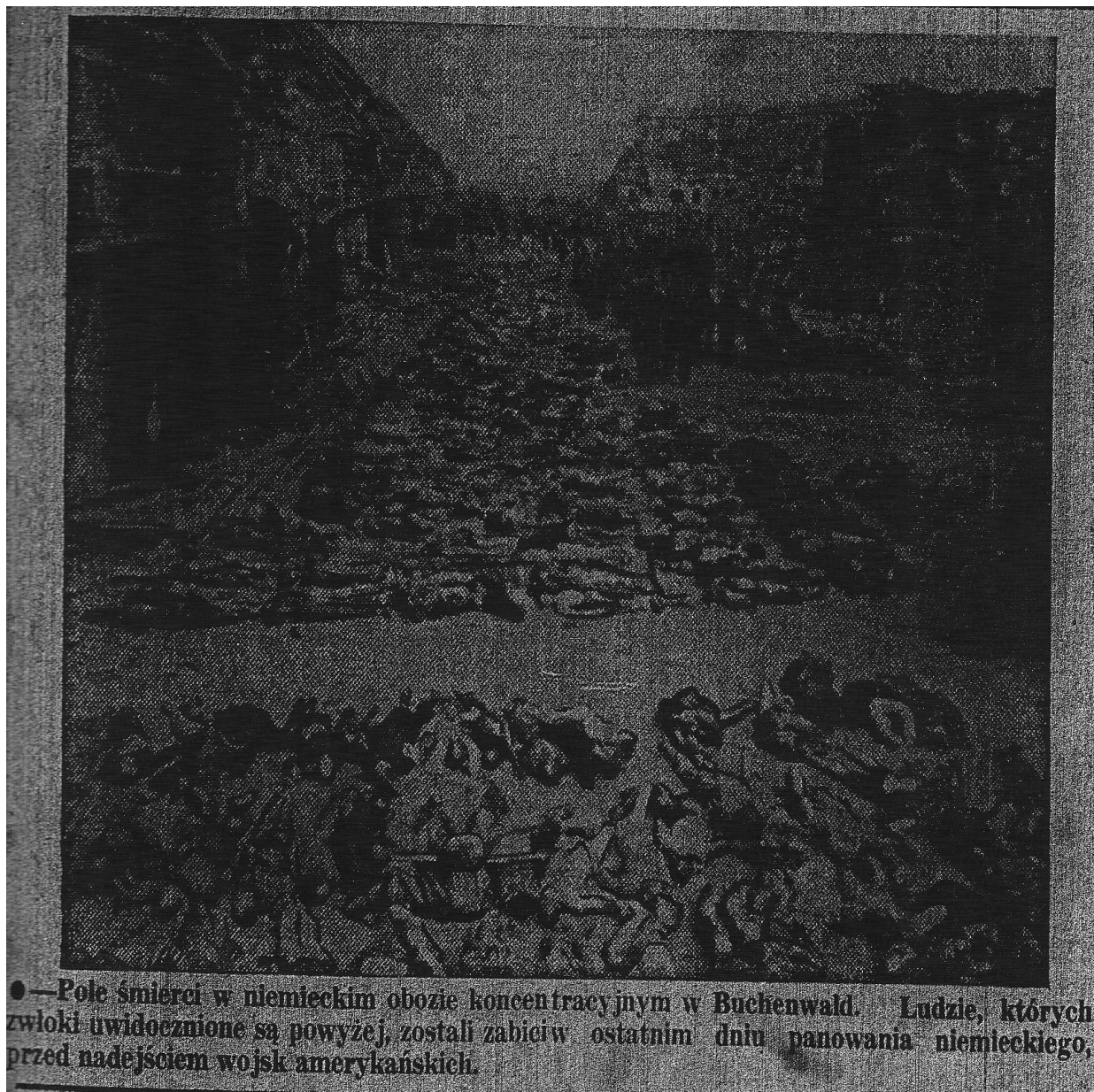
²¹¹ *Republika- Górnik*, “VE.” May 11, 1945. Pg.1. Also see: *Republika- Górnik*, “Americans find death factory.” April 20, 1945. Pg.5.

²¹² *Republika- Górnik*, “Our Path.” (No Liberation Coming for Poles) April 16, 1945. Pg.6. See also: *Republika- Górnik*, “Situation in Poland NOT just Poland’s Issue.” April 6, 1945. Pg.6 and April 13, 1945 Pg. 1.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Republika- Górnik*, “Poland as I Saw it.” June 15, 1945. Pg.3.

decision the United States Polish Congress called “THE BIGGEST HISTORICAL MISTAKE”²¹⁵ the country made.



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²¹⁵*Republika-Górnik*, “Department of the Polish Congress (report).” April 6, 1945. Pg.3. Note, the way this quote was written in the article was in capital letters.

On April 12, 1945, the day that President Roosevelt died, General Dwight Eisenhower and others visited Ohrdruf concentration camp and claimed: “We are told that the American soldier does not know what he is fighting for...Now, at least, he will know what he is fighting against.”²¹⁷ In nearly “six years of war, Poland lost 6,028,000 of its citizens, or 22 percent of its total population, the highest ratio of losses to population of any country in Europe.”²¹⁸ Approximately 50% of the victims were (Polish) Christian and 50% (Polish) Jews.²¹⁹ Since the start of the war, Poles saw their grim fate at the hands of the Nazis as intertwined with the fate of their nation’s Jews. This was not meant to take away from the Jewish plight, a very real plight where they were a primary target and ‘the’ primary target of Nazi genocide policy after late 1942. What was outlined, very clearly in the Polish-language press, is that from the beginning of war, Poles, regardless of faith, were subject to genocide in every sense of the word. The political cartoon below²²⁰ demonstrates that even after the war, Poles felt a shared sense of history with the Jews during the Second World War. Not only Poles but Jews also believed at the time that there was a hierarchy of victims, and that that hierarchy shifted throughout the war. In 1942, Jan Stanczyk delivered an address at a meeting of the Federation of Polish Jews of Great Britain and Ireland. During the address he claimed: “In the initial state of their preparations for war the Germans could not openly say they were out to destroy Poles.... They knew so brutally frank an expression of their intent might have united the menaced nations and have nipped in the bud all

²¹⁶ *Republika- Górnik*, “Picture of Mass Grave in Buchenwald. Caption Reads: Field of Death in German concentration camp in Buchenwald. These victims were killed during the last days of war before the arrival of the American army.” August 3, 1945. Pg.1

²¹⁷See: Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial, Online: www.eisenhowermemorial.org/stories/death-camps.htm

²¹⁸*The Forgotten Holocaust*, 38-39.

²¹⁹ Norman Nurowski. *War Losses in Poland 1939-1945*. Vol 8. (Wydawn. Zachodnie, 1960) 44.

²²⁰Please see Pg. 253 for the Political Poster.

the plans of the Third Reich. So at first they confined the application of their racist theory to the Jews, and encouraged hatred of the Jews.”²²¹ This address was printed in the *POLISH JEW Journal*²²² and although it is problematic for suggesting Hitler’s “true” victims were gentile rather than Jewish, what is important is that he outlines Poles were also a primary target. In late 1942, the *Journal* warned that millions were facing “certain death” and that “mass murder of Jews (was occurring) in Poland.” The *Journal* condemned inaction in the face of mass murder, writing that all “who shut their eyes are guilty.”²²³ For a variety of reasons, discussed further in the next chapter, the United States, not surprisingly chose not to assist. One cannot state that the rationale behind not assisting was a lack of knowledge of what was happening. There are myriad primary documents, both in the foreign-language press and other contemporary writings, exposing that the evolution of the destruction of Poles and European Jewry was connected to those involved either “directly or indirectly.”²²⁴

²²¹ *POLISH JEW*. Jan Stanczyk. “Jews in Post-War Poland.” September 1942. Pg. 5. Location 1.2.7.2/82170490_0_1. ITS Digital Archives, USHMM.

²²² *POLISH JEW* was a Monthly Journal Published in English (in New York) by the American Federation for Polish Jews. Available through the ITS collection at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

²²³ *POLISH JEW*. “Millions Facing Certain Death.” October-November 1942. Pg. 3. Location 1.2.7.2/82170502_0_1. ITS Digital Archives, USHMM.

²²⁴ Lawrence Lesser, WRB, draft of the statement, “Germans!” to be made by General Eisenhower [September 27, 1944]. in Davis S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.9, *War Refugee Board: Special Problems*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 18.



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²²⁵ *Republika-Górnik*, "Poster: Make Sure They Have Not Died in Vain." September 6, 1946. Pg. 12.

Chapter 6: Why the Debate of ‘Who Knew What, When?’ Still Matters: The Availability of Information and the Choice Not to Respond

*No other nation has ever been so oppressed as the Polish nation.
SS Brigadefuhrer Schöngarth*

*Press coverage of the Holocaust as an ‘intentional policy-driven omission’ or ...?
Laurel Leff, Buried by the Times.*

*One thing is sure. We have to do something. We have to do the best we know how at the moment... if it doesn't turn out right, we can modify it as we go along.
FDR*

In the introduction to *The Forgotten Holocaust*, Norman Davies claims, “The history of wartime Poland is not a simple subject. Yet, it is frequently oversimplified and misunderstood.”¹ During the war “occupied Poland became the scene of numerous other campaigns of exterminatory violence.”² Lukas adds, “From a historical point of view, no reasonable student of World War Two can deny that Hitler’s policy toward the Poles was also genocidal and that about as many Polish Christians as Polish Jews died as a result of Nazi terror....By failing to broaden the scope of research on the Holocaust, we have allowed our perspective on it to become distorted, and this has led to simplistic and false conclusions about the subject.”³ It is true that one rarely, if ever, hears about the plight of Poles during the Holocaust within the framework of genocide victims. Like other victims of the Holocaust, Poles are given, at most, a peripheral

¹*The Forgotten Holocaust*, ix.

²Not only in the sense that there were other victims of the Holocaust besides the Jews, including Poles, Roma, Homosexuals, etc. but also that exterminatory policies were enacted against the Poles by the Soviets and Ukrainians. To see more on this, please refer to *The Forgotten Holocaust*.

³ *Ibid.*, 220.

space in the literature. Piotrowski, Lukas, and Davies are rare in this regard, and have been received with little criticism. This should not be surprising as their methodology and factual evidence is sound, although the history can be controversial if one views it as a means of taking away from the Shoah, which it is most definitely not the objective. It is true that “because of a lack of understanding of the Holocaust in its broadest terms, writers have perpetuated the stereotypical view of the anti-Semitic Pole as the primary or even the sole explanation for Polish attitudes and behavior towards the Jews during WWII...[and] Polish-Jewish relation did not revolve exclusively around anti-Semitism, or in the Jewish case, Polonophobia, and that Poles and Jews lived more in harmony and mutual tolerance for a longer time is their shared history than is understood today.”⁴ This chapter will re-examine debates concerning Polish-Jewish relations, as well as why the origins debate still matter. Subsequently, responses in America and rationales for why the United States government did not provide direct assistance will be examined, ultimately illustrating that a lack of information was never the main cause for inaction.

Rarely is a Polish-Jew portrayed as anything but a victim rather than a flourishing individual or one who holds their own prejudices against others. Jewish culture once flourished, and due to a cultural revival continues to flourish in Poland. In fact, even today Jewish institutions recognize that even though there were issues between Poles and Jews, “Poland was once the home of the largest Jewish community in the world and until World War II was one of the great centers of Jewish political, cultural, and religious life.”⁵ But communities are never homogeneous or hold homogeneous attitudes towards others, and the truth is that although both

⁴Ibid.

⁵ See: <http://polishjews.yivoarchives.org/>

Poles and Jews tried to live in harmony, it was at times difficult. This is partly because some Poles were prejudiced against Jews and because some Jews were prejudiced towards Poles.

More often than not, Poles are portrayed as the prejudiced neighbour, or complacent to the plight of Jews. This is despite the fact that Poland was one of the only countries after the Great War to voluntarily enact civil rights treaties for the protection of minorities, and assist Jews in the largest number as righteous gentiles during the Second World War, even though in Poland (as opposed to other European countries) the penalty for doing so was death.

Reinforcement of unflattering and untrue stereotypes is perpetuated in television and movies where Poles are the villain (*Winds of War*) or completely ignored as victims of Nazism (*NBC's Holocaust*).⁶ Current websites, such as the one by Debbie Schlusel (an attorney and political commentator from America), directly link Poles as Nazi sympathizers. Recently, due to a mistake he made in a speech, President Barack Obama was forced to clarify the distinction clarified between saying Polish concentration camps and concentration camps in Poland and Schlusel responded:

Barack Obama has done enough legitimately bad things that we don't need to manufacture phony outrage over things he does that really aren't so bad. Such is the case with the feigned shock and fake moralizing over his comments, yesterday, about German Nazi death camps in Poland being a Polish death camp. Here's a tip for Poland and ignoramuses in the lumpenconservatariat who now engage in revisionist history: Poles murdered millions of Jews, they maintained several death camps, and they wiped out almost all of both sides of my family, as well as those in hundreds of thousands of other Jewish families. This wasn't just the Nazis. It was tens of thousands of eager Poles and more. Obama made no gaffe here. Poland's willing executioners took their significant place among Hitler's willing executioners.⁷

⁶*The Forgotten Holocaust.*, 221.

⁷*Poles Were Complicit in Holocaust: Outrage Over Obama "Gaffe" is Fraudulent, Ignorant.* Debbie Schlusel. May 30, 2012. <http://www.debbieschlusel.com/50114/poles-were-complicit-in-holocaust-outrage-over-obama-gaffe-is-fraudulent-ignorant/>

True, as a historian, one must take such commentary with a grain of salt, as is the case with most opinion-based websites. However, what such accusations demonstrate is that “[i]f a more objective and balanced view prevailed in the historiography on the Holocaust, there would be less said about Polish antisemitism and more about the problems that faced the Poles and their military and political leadership in dealing with the Germans. If the magnitude of the Polish tragedy were objectively presented, unrealistic and unhistorical judgements about the possibilities and opportunities available to the Poles to render greater aid than they did to the Jews would not be made. Ironically, many of the Jews themselves at the time understood this better than latter-day historians.”⁸

Opportunity to assist those in need is a major component in the origins debate and involves two factors, when information was made available and what methods of assistance were available. Reflection on Laurel Leff’s claims merit attention. She states that in March 1944, “One-quarter of a million were about to die, 3 million were already dead. Yet, no one at the New York Times said, ‘This is not routine. This is a catastrophe. Perhaps we can not stop it, but we can lay bare the horror. We can move this story from page four to page one. We can give it a headline that befits the tragedy. We can write a forceful editorial today and tomorrow and the next day. We can recall the calamity in Sunday’s week in review. We can help our readers understand the pain, the panic, the powerlessness of a people about to be exterminated.’”⁹ She asserts that from the start of the Second World War to May of 1945, the “New York Times and other mass media treated the persecution and ultimately the annihilation of the Jews of Europe as a secondary story.” And although the persecution of the Jews was receiving attention, “the story

⁸ *The Forgotten Holocaust*, 221.

⁹ Laurel Leff. *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America’s most important Newspaper*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2.

never received the continuous attention or prominent play that a story about the unprecedented attempt to wipe out (including ‘articles that focused on the discrimination, deportation, and destruction of the Jews’) an entire people deserved.”¹⁰

Furthermore, Leff correctly asserts that “the New York Times did not downplay the Holocaust because it lacked the information to play it up...[or] doubted the veracity of the information it received.”¹¹ Walter Laqueur remarked on why the *Times* would put a story about the death of one million people on page 7, “If it was true that a million 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 printed at all.”¹² Several reasons have been proposed for not printing the stories: American antisemitism, a focus on war news, and the unbelievability of the stories due to heightened exaggerations during the First World War. In this summary the focus is largely on the response to news of Jewish persecution; Poles are rarely in the equation in mainstream historiography when it comes to America and the Holocaust.

The United States has a long history of antisemitism which was acknowledged by the Polish press in articles like “Antisemitism in America”¹³ that detailed how anti-Jewish sentiment was an issue in American society. The Polish press published articles that detailed Jewish-American efforts to battle antisemitism and was empathetic to their situation.¹⁴ After Henry Ford was discredited and forced to apologize for mass-producing a forged piece of antisemitic

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., 3.

¹²Ibid., 3-4.

¹³ *Republika- Górnik*, “Antisemitism in America.” May 26, 1939. Pg.1.

¹⁴ *Republika- Górnik*, “Jews speak out against Antisemitism (with the Help of Dr. Stephen Wise).”September 21, 1930. Pg.1.

propaganda as well as creating and distributing his own, a *New York Times* correspondent from Berlin correctly predicted that Father Charles E. Coughlin would be “the new hero of Nazi Germany.”¹⁵ The Polish press followed and printed stories regarding Ford and Coughlin and heavily criticized them both.¹⁶

David S. Wyman, author of several works dealing with America and the Holocaust, claims that “unquestionably the most influential anti-Semitic leader was the Canadian born priest, Father Charles E. Coughlin.”¹⁷ In the 1930s and 1940s Reverend Charles E. Coughlin of the Shrine of Little Flower in Detroit spread the notion that Jews were related to, and ultimately responsible for, the financial instability and spread of communism both inside and outside of America. Reverend Coughlin, like Ford, was extremely successful in relaying his message of hate to a mass audience. Coughlin’s weekly tabloid *Social Justice*, was circulated to an estimated 185,000-350,000 subscribers¹⁸ and by 1938 his radio program was able to reach large audiences in industrial states such as Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.¹⁹ It was estimated that over fifteen million American citizens had heard at least one or more of Coughlin’s broadcasts.²⁰

During his program on Sunday November 6, 1938, Coughlin asserted that there could be “no armistice between Christianity and Communism,”²¹ which he linked with Jewish influence

¹⁵ Baldwin, 299.

¹⁶ *Republika- Górnik*, “Father Coughlin to be censored.” December 2, 1938. Pg.1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Am I an Anti-Semite? 9 Addresses by Charles E. Coughlin in Gerald N. Grob, ed. *Anti-Semitism in America 1878-1939*. (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 25.

²⁰ David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 17.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

two weeks later on November 20, 1938.²² On November 13, 1938, he claimed there was “no Christian reason for 14 million men to be unemployed,”²³ which surely affected the sentiment of his working class audience who were still experiencing economic hardship from the Great Depression. Richard Cary, from the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), compared the rise of German and American anti-Semitism to the fact the “unemployed [were] bitter”²⁴ and looking for anyone or anything to blame for their distress. Coughlin reaffirmed the existence of America’s anxieties over the stereotypical Jewish traits, anxieties that had been growing over the centuries; mainly, that due to persistence and ‘aggression,’ Jews came to dominate journalism, radio, finance, and the arts and sciences.²⁵ In the summer of 1938, *Social Justice* printed several long excerpts from the *Protocols*, thereby, exposing itself as blatantly antisemitic despite Coughlin’s few defenses against this accusation. Coughlin would continue to spread his anti-Jewish thoughts into the 1940s, and the foreign-language press openly accused him of being pro-Nazi.²⁶ Rabbi Cohen of the Cleveland Jewish Center reprimanded Coughlin for using stereotypes and lies to “arouse anti-Semitic reaction in the country.”²⁷ Beyond a few similar statements from the Jewish community, the majority remained quiet and docile in fear of escalating an anti-

²² Ibid., 37.

²³ Ibid., 27.

²⁴ Richard L. Cary, Letter to Clarence E. Pickett, July 23, 1933, in Robert H. Abzug. *The Bedford Series in History and Culture: America Views the Holocaust 1933-1945 A Brief Documentary History*. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1999), 31.

²⁵ Grob, 36.

²⁶ *Dziennik Związkowy*, “Coughlin Supporter of Nazism.” September 15, 1941. Pg 2.

²⁷ Grob., 57.

Semitic backlash in a society where Coughlin's "evil broadcasts" were reaching "an ever more sympathetic audience."²⁸

With the Second World War unfolding in Europe in 1939, Coughlin advocated isolation from foreign affairs in defense of Americanism; with twelve million people out of work, America "must stand aloof."²⁹ Charles Lindbergh, another American icon known for being the first to fly solo non-stop across the Atlantic Ocean, was also firmly against intervention in the Second World War. Lindbergh blamed the Jews as a group that was "pressing [America] toward war."³⁰ He also criticized Jewish control over motion pictures, radio, the press, and government,³¹ and claimed that their supremacy in these spheres was used to coerce America to participate in a foreign problem.³² It is not surprising that with so many areas of American society displaying blatant prejudice against the Jews, and respected voices advocating isolationism in foreign affairs, news of Jewish persecution in Europe would be regarded as of minimal importance. The following political cartoons titled "Their Freedom" and "Hitler's Front Guard in the U.S.A" demonstrate that genuine liberty was misunderstood by advocates of isolationism (such as Charles Lindbergh) and the America First Committee. The proponents of

²⁸ Lookstein, 10.

²⁹ Grob., 149.

³⁰ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 11, 1941 in Robert H. Abzug. *The Bedford Series in History and Culture: America Views the Holocaust 1933-1945 A Brief Documentary History*. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 101.

³¹ The Roosevelt administration placed more Jews into official positions than under any previous Presidency.

³² *New Republic*, September 22, 1941 in Robert H. Abzug. *The Bedford Series in History and Culture: America Views the Holocaust 1933-1945 A Brief Documentary History*. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 104.

Also see: *Dziennik Związkowy*, "Nazis Support Lindbergh in his Attacks against Jews." September 30, 1941. Pg 8.

these ideals were not in fact furthering American democracy, but by choosing inaction and not assisting European victims, were perpetuating Nazism.



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³³ Dziennik Związkowy. Caption Reads: "Their Freedom." September 15, 1941. Pg 4.



³⁴ Dziennik Związkowy. Caption Reads: "Hitler's Front Guard in the U.S.A." October 12, 1941. Pg 4.

In the early 1930s news had begun to spread to America of Germany's anti-Jewish programs, laws, and violence. The American Jewish Congress and Jewish Labor Committee sought a boycott of German goods not only to stifle the German economy but to raise social awareness of Jewish suffering in Europe.³⁵ Other Jewish groups, such as the American Jewish Committee and the B'nai B'rith fraternal organization, opposed the boycott for fear that it would inflate antisemitism both domestically and internationally, causing more harm than good for the Jews.³⁶ Robert E. Asher from the *Christian Century* claimed that ultimately, mainstream America failed to propose any means of intervention against Nazi-instigated persecutions in Europe because the general public had "so little sympathy for [the Jews]."³⁷ In retrospect, Wyman also contends that between 1938 and 1945 antisemitism reached a peak in the United States, and that the Jewish community was well aware of this hostility. A poll taken in March 1939 found that 45% of the American Jewish community questioned believed antisemitism was sharply on the rise.³⁸

Deborah L. Lipstadt, author of the controversial book, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933-1945*, claims that "rarely, if ever, . . . can America's inaction be attributed primarily to a lack of information or knowledge."³⁹ Lipstadt argues that it was not a matter of "ignorance, but a matter of priorities, and aiding persecuted

³⁵ G.E. Harriman, *Anti-Nazi Boycott Circular Letter*, 1933 in Robert H. Abzug. *The Bedford Series in History and Culture: America Views the Holocaust 1933-1945 A Brief Documentary History*. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 34.

³⁶ Robert E. Asher, "A Jew Protests against Protesters," *Christian Century*, April 12, 1933 in Robert H. Abzug. *The Bedford Series in History and Culture: America Views the Holocaust 1933-1945 A Brief Documentary History*. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 36-38.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

³⁸ Lookstein., 91.

³⁹ Lipstadt., 120.

Jews was never one of them.”⁴⁰ By 1941 it was evident that violence against European Jews had escalated. On October 28, 1941, *The New York Times*, albeit at the back of the paper, reported that “the complete elimination of Jews from European life now appear[ed] to be fixed German policy.”⁴¹ An editorial in the *Herald Tribune* warned that Nazi atrocities were “nothing less than systematic extermination,” and that the “future of Jews [was] not an isolated problem.”⁴² In due course, warned the article, Americans would be next. The likelihood of this was not analyzed in 1941; instead the issue at hand was that the plight of the Jews was a global issue which required some means of intervention by the United States and its allies.

Evidently, it was “not a failure of information”⁴³ that condemned the stories of the Holocaust to the back pages, it was the manner in which the *Times* and the “rest of the media told the story of the Holocaust which engendered no chance of arousing public opinion.”⁴⁴ Laurel Leff, author of *Buried by The Times: The Holocaust and America’s Most Important Newspaper*, proposes that it was difficult for the press, which had previously contributed in establishing the Jews as “the other,” outside of the authentic American society and “its audience’s sphere of concern, to [report] adequate media attention no matter the extent of the catastrophe.”⁴⁵ However, Leff does not excuse the *Times*, which she attests was internationally considered a

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ *The New York Times*, October 28, 1941, 10, in David S. Wyman *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.1, *Confirming the News of Extermination*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 2.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Leff, 4.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 5.

“powerful organ of American opinion,”⁴⁶ and was therefore the most qualified paper by means of ‘resources and readership’ to publicize the destruction of European Jews.⁴⁷ With an estimated 1,245,000 papers sold weekly, the *Times* coverage was “most likely to influence national discourse.”⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the *Times* failed to treat the Holocaust as newsworthy, at least not as newsworthy as “informing motorists to visit the Office of Price Administration if they did not have their automobile registration number and state written on their gasoline ration coupons,” a story which on March 2, 1944, appeared on the front page, while news about the Holocaust was demoted to page 4.⁴⁹ It was evident that the press “reflected the general mood of the nation, which certainly played a role in establishing the parameters for the particular Jewish reaction to the situation.”⁵⁰

In juxtaposition to the hidden articles on the Holocaust in mainstream American newspapers, the Jewish-American newspapers, such as the *Jewish Frontier*, printed an abundance of information. By 1942 the *Jewish Frontier* stated that with all of the stories that had poured into America from Europe, no one should have considered the atrocities as “shocking or new.”⁵¹ The *Jewish Frontier* also admonished American antisemitism as a “familiar evil,”⁵² and

⁴⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 10-11.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁰ Guli Ne’eman Arad, *America, Its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 110.

⁵¹ *Jewish Frontier*, March 1942, 10-13, in David S. Wyman, *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.1, *Confirming the News of Extermination*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 13.

⁵² Ibid.

warned that if national and international antisemitism was not corrected, it would soon “destroy the whole of Europe and perhaps all humanity.”⁵³

Due to the heinous nature of the crimes being reported from Europe, suspicion arose over the validity of the stories. Newspaper articles aside, in May of 1942, the Jewish Labor Bund in Poland provided a verified summary report of the mass murders of ‘undesirables’ by Nazis to the Polish Government-in-exile in London, England.⁵⁴ The Bund Report was crucial in promoting the publication of news of the crimes against Jews in Allied countries. The Bund specifically called on the United States for help,⁵⁵ but the American government remained firm in its inaction. Virtually all of the documentation outside of the buried newspaper reports were dealt with exclusively within the Government or by official Jewish Committees and were not accessible to the public.

The State Department continued to receive other documents that were just as credible as the Polish Bund Report, among them a series of confidential memorandum and telegrams from the U.S. representatives in Geneva at the Swiss Legation confirming the mass extermination of the Jews and other Nazi victims. The strictly confidential telegram dated August 11, 1942, cited that an:

Informer reported to have close connections with highest German authorities who [had] previously [provided] generally reliable reports [said] that in Fuehrer’s headquarters plan under consideration to exterminate at one blow this fall three and half to four million Jews following deportation from countries occupied, controlled by Germany and concentration in east.⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ “Report of the Bund Regarding the Persecution of the Jews,” in David S. Wyman, *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.1, Confirming the News of Extermination. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 20-23.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁶ State Department correspondence between Swiss legation and Washington, August 11-17, 1942, in David S. Wyman, *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.1, Confirming the News of Extermination. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 185.

The State Department continued to claim that because the reports could not be substantiated, they would not be made public. The Division of European Affairs justified the suppression of this information both to the public and from Dr. Wise due to the “fantastic nature of the allegation.”⁵⁷ A telegram which was sent to Roosevelt on September 3, 1942, from the President of the Agudath Israel World Organization claiming to have substantive evidence of the Jewish slaughter, was also ignored.⁵⁸

An alternate voice of criticism came from Freda Kirchway of *The Nation* who published an article on March 13, 1943, which reprimanded America for its highly restrictive immigration quotas as well as for “the lack of funds and awareness being raised”⁵⁹ outside of the Jewish communities. Kirchway stated that America “could have offered an example of decency to a world hungry for evidence of good feeling.”⁶⁰ She repeated the warning given in 1941, that in such an individualistic and self-absorbed American society, the Jews would not be helped unless Americans recognized that their fate was “inextricably linked”⁶¹ with their own. An advertisement in the *New York Times* argued that to continue to “be silent is to help Hitler carry out his program of killing of one people today. . .another people tomorrow. . .[i]f this is to be,

⁵⁷ Memorandum, Division of European Affairs, Department of State, August 13, 1942, in David S. Wyman, *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.1, *Confirming the News of Extermination*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 194.

⁵⁸ Telegram from Jacob Rosenheim, President, Agudath Israel World Organization, New York, to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 3, 1942, in David S. Wyman, *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.1, *Confirming the News of Extermination*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 202.

⁵⁹ *The Nation*, March 13, 1943, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.2, *The Struggle For Rescue Action*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 181.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

America must speak out.”⁶² Due to growing pressure from the Jewish Committees, critical journalists, and “flood of mail to the President and State Department,”⁶³ America was forced to respond. America’s ally, Britain, was also being faced with the question of inactivity which was presented in a racially speculative tone. On February 9, 1943, *The Manchester Guardian* stated that “if the refugees were British, American, or Russian, the United Nations would be up and doing something despite all difficulty.”⁶⁴ With public pressure on the rise, questions were raised about the possibility of Britain assisting refugees. On February 24, 1943, various Members of Parliament urged for an open-door policy, but were rejected.⁶⁵ The British, appealed to the State Department, which they observed were also attached to “their quota system with tenacity.”⁶⁶ To pacify the ‘embarrassing’ questions being raised in America and Britain over inaction in rescue or relief policy, the United States proposed the two countries partake in a “preliminary exploration at a conference in Ottawa.”⁶⁷ The conference, although originally to be held in Ottawa, took place in Bermuda from April 19-29, 1943.

The Jewish Committees were determined to influence action, and in order to stifle the disunity among some of their fractions, the decision was made to establish The Joint Emergency

⁶² *The New York Times*, December 5, 1942, 16, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.2, *The Struggle For Rescue Action*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), foldout in between 161-163.

⁶³ Memorandum on the Bermuda Conference on the Refugees Problem held April 19 to April 29, 1943, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.3, *The Mock Rescue Conference: Bermuda*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 11.

⁶⁴ *Washington Post*, April 20, 1943, 10, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.3, *The Mock Rescue Conference: Bermuda*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), foldout in between 61-65.

⁶⁵ Martin Gilbert, *Auschwitz & The Allies: Could the Jews have been Saved?* (Middlesex: Cox & Wyman Ltd., 1983), 125.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Committee (JEC), a temporary committee formed to unify the voice of the multiple Jewish committees in promoting rescue.⁶⁸ The JEC was not permitted to participate in the Bermuda conference despite its request; Dr. Wise was also intentionally barred. While this purposeful snub disheartened many members in the JEC, Dr. Wise took it upon himself to write a letter to the Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, to be submitted to the Bermuda Conference which urged that “time for action is long past due. Unless action is to be undertaken immediately there may soon be no Jews left alive in Europe.”⁶⁹ The Bermuda Conference, rather than finding a solution to the Jewish crisis, argued over how proposed rescue and relief policies would fail.

The War Cabinet Committee on Refugees suggested on the first day of the conference, that America accept refugees on its own soil rather than search for alternate countries in which to place refugees, as the American quota system for immigration still contained an unused ‘margin.’⁷⁰ Because America found this suggestion highly undesirable, combined with Britain’s unwillingness to extend its quotas for Jews entering Palestine, the first meeting decided “by mutual Anglo-American agreement, the United States quota system, and the 1939 Palestine restrictions, were subjects to be avoided.”⁷¹ The minutes of the morning discussion on April 23, 1943, further exemplify the attitude of the entire Conference: “It is clear there is nothing that we

⁶⁸ Stephen Wise, President, American Jewish Congress (for Joint Emergency Committee for European Jewish Affairs), to Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State, April 14, 1943, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.3, *The Mock Rescue Conference: Bermuda*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 40.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Gilbert, 128.

⁷¹ Ibid., 131.

can recommend.”⁷² However, the only report published for public disclosure, claimed that the “two Governments worked in complete harmony and in a spirit of mutual cooperation.”⁷³

On May 2, 1943, U.S. Secretary of State A.A. Berle spoke at a mass protest against German atrocities being held in Boston. Berle stated that the Bermuda conference had come to the “blunt and cruel conclusion” that “nothing [could] be done. . . except through the invasion of Europe, the defeat of the German arms, and the breaking of German power.”⁷⁴ Berle concluded to the public and the press that there was “no other way.”⁷⁵ According to historian Sir Marin Gilbert, it was the “allied policymakers themselves in London, Washington, and Bermuda who had made sure that no other way was even to be tried.”⁷⁶ Some reporters criticized Bermuda shortly after its closure as a “mockery and cruel jest,”⁷⁷ evidence for Hitler that the world was “neither ready nor willing to answer his threat with action.”⁷⁸ William Langer of North Dakota rebuked the conference as a failure and cautioned the Senate to immediately initiate a program for action, because with every minute wasted “thousands of [Jews] [were] being exterminated.”⁷⁹

⁷² American Minutes of the Bermuda Conference Sessions: Morning Conference, April 23, 1943, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.3, *The Mock Rescue Conference: Bermuda*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 139.

⁷³ H.K. Travers, Chief, Visa Division, State Department, to Reinhold Niebuhr, August 26, 1943, David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.3, *The Mock Rescue Conference: Bermuda*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 305.

⁷⁴ Gilbert, *Auschwitz & The Allies*, 135.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *The New York Times*, May 4, 1943, 17, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.3, *The Mock Rescue Conference: Bermuda*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), foldout in between 291-294.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 143.

Langer predicted that if no action was taken, the United States would undoubtedly face “the moral responsibility of being passive bystanders.”⁸⁰ The *Christian Century* would write later in the war that a “bullet will kill a Nazi, but it will not kill Nazism,” and that many of the Nazis’ “false ideas” were found in the United States and had to be conquered domestically before America would be willing to conquer them abroad.⁸¹

Wise outlined that a critical deterrent which stalemated assistance was the immigration law, which perpetually acted as a barrier to the Jews because of its restrictive quotas.⁸² Three weeks later Roosevelt responded to Wise stating that under the pressures of the war, the U.S. was doing all in its power to assist the refugees.⁸³ However, as early as 1940, prior to America formally entering the war, the decision was made by the Assistant Secretary of State and Head Advisor to the Visa Division, Breckinridge Long, to “delay and effectively stop”⁸⁴ immigration. On June 26, 1940, Long proposed that an immigration deadlock could be accomplished by “simply advising [their] consuls to put every obstacle in the way. . . which would postpone and postpone and postpone the granting of the visas.”⁸⁵ Two years later, the struggle over immigration had not advanced in favor of the Jews. An entry in Pickett’s (AFSC) journal on May

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ *The New York Times*, May 4, 1943, 17, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.3, *The Mock Rescue Conference: Bermuda*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), foldout in between 291-294.

⁸² American Jewish Congress, March 1, 1943, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.2, *The Struggle For Rescue Action*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 173.

⁸³ President Roosevelt to Stephen Wise, March 23, 1943, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.2, *The Struggle For Rescue Action*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 178.

⁸⁴ Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long, to State Department officials Adolf Berle and James Dunn, June 26, 1940, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.4, *Barring The Gates to America*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 2.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

5, 1942, expressed that George Warren's (from the International Migration Services) description of the immigration process was "one of incredible obstruction to any possible securing of a visa."⁸⁶ On January 13, 1942, Long adamantly upheld his position on immigration, and in his War Diary claimed that he had become acquainted with hostility from "various powerful and vengeful elements; the Communists, extreme radicals, Jewish professional agitators, refugee enthusiasts,"⁸⁷ who would not be appeased while he remained in office.

On June 18, 1942, at the 54th Meeting of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, Warren condemned the fact that the Visa Review Committee "appeared to present definite evidence of bias."⁸⁸ Evidence of witness testimonies claimed that the Visa Review Committee attempted to alter claims of people defined as social democrats and socialists to claims of them being communist, or in conflict with the law or federal policies.⁸⁹ A personal exchange of letters between other AFSC members stated that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was also involved in "excluding all the aliens"⁹⁰ that they could from America. A letter written to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt described the American immigration policy as one which had "bolted the gates of the slaughter house of Europe from the outside . . . The U.S. and

⁸⁶ Journal entry, Clarence E. Pickett, Executive Secretary, AFSC, May 5, 1942 in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews vol.4, Barring The Gates to America*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 16.

⁸⁷ Diary entry from January 13, 1942, in Fred. L. Israel ed. *The War Diary of Breckinridge Long: Selections from the Years 1939-1944*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 243.

⁸⁸ Minutes, fifty-fourth meeting of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, June 18, 1942, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews vol.4, Barring The Gates to America*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 65.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Joseph P. Chameberlain, to Marjorie Page Schauffler, AFSC, March 12, 1942, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews vol.4, Barring The Gates to America*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 83.

the U.N. [had] given up before even trying.”⁹¹ The *New Republic* outlined that despite claims of exhausted immigration quotas, immigration into the United States in 1942 will “have been less than ten percent of what it has been in ‘normal’ years before Hitler.”⁹² The Polish-language press was also aware of, and reported on, unfilled quotas prior to the outbreak of war. The press noted that Germany was claiming that emigration was an option for Jews, but that no country offered entrance, even under existing and un-filled quotas.⁹³

On December 10, 1943, Long publicly defended his contribution to aiding Jews and his statistics on immigration which “ignited a burst of criticism”⁹⁴ and exposed his use of ‘erroneous’ statistics. It was reported that from the latest arrival of alleged Jewish refugees declared at 580,000, barely 250,000 were admitted and “many of them were not Jews.”⁹⁵ Retrospectively, the *New Republic* had been astoundingly accurate; in between 1941-1945 only “10% of those to be legally admitted under immigration quotas were let in.”⁹⁶ To defend his actions Long argued that ‘all that could be done’ was being done, further assistance was improbable due to the lack of transportation, however, it was ‘commonly’ known by many officials that several Allied and neutral passenger ships, “which plied the Atlantic throughout

⁹¹ Michael Potter, Emergency Conference, to Eleanor Roosevelt, July 15, 1943, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.5, *American Jewish Disunity*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 24.

⁹² Varian Fry for the *New Republic*, December 21, 1942, in Robert H. Abzug. *The Bedford Series in History and Culture: America Views the Holocaust 1933-1945 A Brief Documentary History*. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1999), 133.

⁹³ *Republika-Górnik*, “Germans agree to Jewish emigration.” February 10, 1939. Pg.1.

⁹⁴ David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 197.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 316.

the war, were sailing to the United States less than one-fourth full.”⁹⁷ Long also defended the apparent favoring of admitting non-Jews into America as due to the fact that public opinion recognized Jews were not the sole victims of Nazism and therefore focusing attention on the Jews would “improperly single out one group for assistance when many people were suffering under Nazi brutality.”⁹⁸ The response to this argument was best encapsulated by Willem Visser’t Hooft, one of the world’s most foremost churchmen, who claimed such a statement was, “a dangerous half-truth which could only serve to distract attention from the fact that no other race was faced with the situation of having every one of its members. . . threatened by death in the gas chambers.”⁹⁹

Well aware that Jews were the primary target of Nazi racial destruction, members of the Jewish community refused to stop trying to initiate action to help European Jews. On June 1, 1943, Welles proposed that refugees be transported to America or other Allied territory on neutral ships which had been recently discovered as possessing substantial amounts of unfilled cargo space. The request was postponed due to the fear that an influx of refugees, without proper screening, would amount to a security risk of allowing Nazi spies into the country, a claim which Wise stated was “hardly convincing.”¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, relocation of refugees remained at a halt. On October 3, 1943, Dr. Rueben Levovitz of the Emergency Committee wrote to Stephan Early, Roosevelt’s Press secretary, requesting to see the President on October 6th in order to give him a petition signed by several prominent Jewish-Orthodox leaders while accompanied by a group of

⁹⁷ Ibid., 197.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 337.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Stephen S. Wise, American Jewish Congress, to Eleanor Roosevelt, April 1, 1942, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.5, *American Jewish Disunity*.(New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 115.

300 rabbis pleading for assistance to the Jews.¹⁰¹ Dr. Levovitz received a quick reply that such a meeting was impossible due the President's schedule; the entry in Roosevelt's appointment diary for October 6, 1943, showed no scheduled engagements after lunch time, only a plan to leave early to Hyde Park for a quiet weekend.¹⁰² Wyman contends that it was "not a lack of workable plans that stood in the way of saving many thousands of Jews,"¹⁰³ nor was it scarcity of available shipping, the threat of infiltration by subversive agents, or the prospect that rescue projects would obstruct the war effort. The real obstacle, according to Wyman, "was the absence of a strong desire to rescue Jews."¹⁰⁴

Tensions within government and within the Jewish councils were on the rise, and it was becoming obvious that the U.S. government was under 'increasing pressure' from Jews for action.¹⁰⁵ At a meeting held on December 18, 1943, between the Secretary of Treasury, Henry Morgenthau Jr., and members of his staff, the notion was raised that in order to accomplish anything worthwhile in assisting the Jews, a new committee of 'sympathetic' people of relative importance would have to be formed.¹⁰⁶ Morgenthau, in an exasperated state claimed, "[j]ust

¹⁰¹ Reuben Levovitz, Emergency Committee, To Stephen Early, Secretary to President Roosevelt, October 3, 1943, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.5, *American Jewish Disunity*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 78.

¹⁰² Entry for Wednesday, October 6, 1943, President Roosevelt's Appointment Diaries in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.5, *American Jewish Disunity*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 81.

¹⁰³ David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 339.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Gilbert, 165.

¹⁰⁶ December 18, 1943, transcript of a meeting on "Jewish Evacuation," between Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and members of his staff in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.6, *Showdown in Washington: State, Treasury, and Congress*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 92.

because I am a Jew. . . why shouldn't I look after the Jews."¹⁰⁷ His frustration exemplifies the anxiety faced by Jewish officials within the government on the issue of being able to assist Jews without being criticized for being racially biased. Annoyed with the immigration policies, which still claimed to be assisting the Jews at the maximum legal capacity but in actuality were "by no means filled up,"¹⁰⁸ Morgenthau openly accused Long of being anti-Semitic.¹⁰⁹ Long, after having originally asked Morgenthau's opinion of him within government, unconvincingly denied the accusation. Morgenthau replied to Long that: "the gloves were off."¹¹⁰

Morgenthau, determined to change the Government's docile policies toward rescue, was especially shocked when he received a confidential memorandum from the Treasury based on evidence from State Department documents. The report warned Morgenthau that the evidence was "so shocking and so tragic that is [was] difficult to believe."¹¹¹ The memo outlined that on October 5, 1942, Welles had instructed the U.S. Minister in Switzerland by telegram (#2314) to obtain information which could confirm the German Government's plan for the total destruction of the Jews. Welles outlined in the telegram that until then, no legitimate action could be taken. Long and members of his staff, Atherton and Dunn, are accused in the memo to Morgenthau of

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 97.

¹⁰⁸ December 19, 1943, transcript of a meeting on "Jewish Evacuation," between Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and members of his staff in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.6, *Showdown in Washington: State, Treasury, and Congress*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 115.

¹⁰⁹ December 20, 1943, transcript of a meeting on "Jewish Evacuation," between Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and members of his staff in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.6, *Showdown in Washington: State, Treasury, and Congress*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 158.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 167.

¹¹¹ Memorandum, "For Secretary Morgenthau's Information Only," by Foreign Funds Control Staff, Treasury Department, December 23, 1943, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.6, *Showdown in Washington: State, Treasury, and Congress*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 182.

being responsible for purposefully concealing the entire situation from the Treasury.¹¹² The memo to Morgenthau explains that the officials counter-acted the instructions from Welles and requested that any such information not be processed. On January 21, 1943, another telegram (#432) addressed to Welles with the request that Dr. Wise also receive a copy, was received back from Switzerland with detailed confirmation of mass murder in Europe. It was never delivered to Welles or Wise, and yet another telegram (#354) which was deliberately concealed from Welles, Wise, or the Treasury, was sent in response to the January 21, 1943, telegram ordering that in the future such reports would not be accepted as they “circumvent neutral countries censorship.”¹¹³ When the Treasury requested to see the telegrams inquiring as to why no response had been received from Switzerland, Long paraphrased the January cable and omitted any reference to the latest cable, thus “destroying the only tangible clue to the true meaning”¹¹⁴ of the messages enabling him to ‘postpone and postpone’ any effective action by the Government.

In response to the memo which provided an abundance of evidence, Morgenthau and the Treasury Department prepared a summary on January 13, 1944, which stated that “unless the government takes immediate action it will have to share for all time responsibility for this extermination.”¹¹⁵ The report outlined how Government machinery was purposefully used to delay any action and thus “prevent the rescue of these Jews,”¹¹⁶ and that the facts in the report,

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 184.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 186.

¹¹⁵ “Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of Jews,” in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.6, *Showdown in Washington: State, Treasury, and Congress*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 238.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

which had not been made public, expose the “gross procrastination and willful failure to act.”¹¹⁷ Morgenthau presented the report to Roosevelt, and on January 23, 1944, by Executive Order 9417 the War Refugee Board (WRB), to be staffed with ‘sympathetic’ officials, was established.¹¹⁸ This victory was short-lived as the funding allocated for the WRB was minimal and “weakened the board from the start.”¹¹⁹ Most of the government funding allotted to the WRB was used for administration fees;¹²⁰ the majority of the available funds for relief came from private donations, the vast majority from the Jewish community.¹²¹ It was the Jewish organizations which had to provide the money for evacuations and resettlement options, not the WRB. It was clear that American society had become so immune to the plight of the Jews that any pleas for assistance were received with “a shrug of the shoulders.”¹²² Others simply reiterated that it was evident “no country in the world want[ed] [the Jews]”¹²³ or wanted to help them, and America was no exception.

Despite financial constraints, the WRB attempted to initiate a plan to help the Jews. It was perceived among many Jewish and Gentile members of the WRB that in order to assist the

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 239.

¹¹⁸ President Roosevelt, Executive Order 9417, January 23, 1944, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.7, *War Refugee Board: Basic Rescue Operations*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 1.

¹¹⁹ David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 215.

¹²⁰ “Government Funds for Board Purposes,” in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.7, *War Refugee Board: Basic Rescue Operations*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 56.

¹²¹ Ibid., 57.

¹²² *The New Republic*, July 31, 1944, 117, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.8, *War Refugee Board: Hungary*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 186.

¹²³ Postcard to Samuel Dickstein, May 24, 1945, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.9, *War Refugee Board: Special Problems*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 333.

“stateless Jews” there had to be a serious consideration of a Jewish state.¹²⁴ Others concentrated on the immediate problem at hand and requested that the bombing of extermination camps be immediately initiated.

To understand when information was made available during the Holocaust -both to the public and officially to the government- the historian must be honest and realistic as to what could have been done to assist Holocaust victims. Realistically, even if information was confirmed prior to 1942 and 1943, the Allied Nations would most likely not have assisted anyway.¹²⁵ With regard to America, such an action, although morally undesirable (particularly in hindsight) was not unprecedented. The United States remained isolationist not only toward the plight the Jews, but also to the plight of others including Christian Poles, the Chinese, and many others, including those facing hardship during the Mexican revolution. To leave the past in the past is not the objective of genocide scholarship. One seeks to learn the mechanics of genocide in order to prevent future ones. The analysis of information is critical when dealing with the origins of situations. The foreign-language press makes it abundantly clear that information was available and reliable at the very beginning of the Second World War and detailed the extermination process step-by-step.

Even after the Holocaust was verified, the response was the same: minimal assistance for the victims. In mid-May 1944, as deportations from Hungary to Auschwitz began, Jewish leaders

¹²⁴ Final Summary Report of WRB, September 15, 1945, in David S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.10, *Token Shipment (Oswego Camp); And War Refugee Board "Summary Report."* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989), 73.

¹²⁵This author argues that the only substantial assistance that could have been granted was entrance into the United States (or other countries) under refugee status by 1939-1940. Many more victims could have been saved if allowed entry into the United States under their current quota system which was not filled. It was the impression of the Polish-language press that refugees should have been allowed into the country, both prior to and during the war. The press did not outline any other specific plans that the U.S. should have facilitated; however, they did not view the war and genocide as two separate issues. The Polish press viewed these two occurrences as one and the same, but they were not treated as such by Allied governments.

from Budapest sent a plea to the Allies asking to them bomb the rail routes to the death camp.¹²⁶ The plea emphasized the military relevance of bombing the railroads as they served as main connections for 'Axis military transportation.'¹²⁷ These requests were telegraphed to New York to be relayed to the military but no replied was issued.¹²⁸ Similar pleas were being sent by other Jewish officials from Europe, one, after being illegally transmitted through 'Polish diplomatic channels,' bypassed American censorship and reached American Jewish officials.¹²⁹ The requests were relayed to the WRB and on June 21, 1944, the plea was officially presented to the War Department but no action was taken.¹³⁰

After the Allied victory of the Second World War and the liberation of the European concentration camps, Americans clearly viewed themselves as liberators and not accomplices to the crimes committed against humanity, particularly, against the Jews. It would take nearly two decades before Americans would begin to question not only if blame for inaction was justified, but who was to blame, and why. In viewing the documents both released to the public, and more revealingly, the private and confidential documents which circulated among government, military, and Jewish Committee officials, it is evident that much of what could have been done to assist the Jews financially, diplomatically through immigration, or militarily was not initiated or was for the most part too little, too late. From the arrival of Jewish immigrants in America, their experience by and large has consisted of social, legal, and economic discrimination perpetrated by the American government and many elements within society. Centuries of accepted

¹²⁶ David. S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, 289.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 290.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 291.

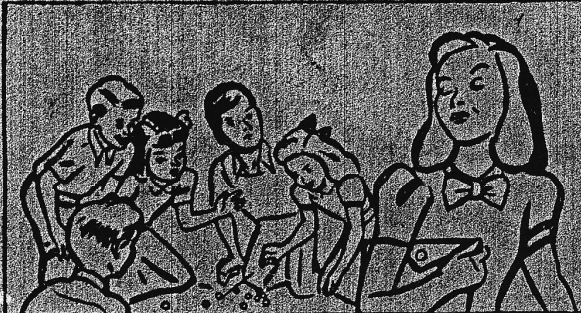
antisemitism within mainstream American culture undoubtedly contributed to the unwillingness to consider immediate or direct intervention during the Nazi persecution of European Jews.¹³¹ It has been stated more than once by critical journalists that Americans are “concerned chiefly about themselves;”¹³² however, when considering General Eisenhower’s warning to the Germans on September 27, 1944, that responsibility for the destruction of European Jewry was connected to those involved both “directly or indirectly,”¹³³ it is worth considering whether his condemnation is applicable to those who could have assisted and chose not to, including the American government and American society. The Polish press was keenly aware of the racism and prejudice that existed in American society and took a more vocal stance against such attitudes after the war. An interesting cartoon, published on October 31, 1948 and entitled “About People,” clearly demonstrated that intolerance was ludicrous and unacceptable.

¹³¹ Roosevelt made clear he would not intervene in foreign affairs even after Hitler became Chancellor of Germany which resulted in public protests by the Polish community. See: *Republika-Górnik*, “Chicago Poles Protest Against Hitler.” May 7, 1933. Pg. 2. Also: *Dziennik Związkowy*. “We Condemn Hitler (Poles in Chicago).” April 22, 1933. Pg 4. *Republika-Górnik*, “Roosevelt Looking Out for American Interests First.” June 9, 1933. Pg. 1. *Republika-Górnik*, “Polish people protest against Nazis.” July 31, 1936. Pg. 1. The United States would not officially enter the war until after Pearl Harbor and maintain that the only way to assist Jewish plight under Nazism (or to assist any victim’s plight) was to win the war.

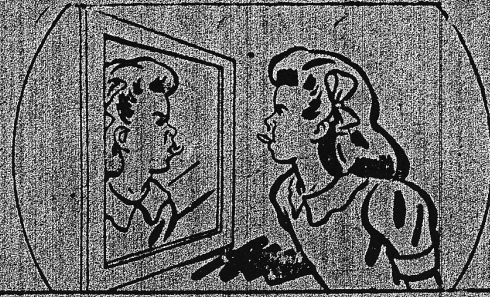
¹³² *The New York Times Magazine*, May 14, 1944, David. S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.13, *Responsibility for America’s Failure*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991), 121.

¹³³ Lawrence Lesser, WRB, draft of the statement, “Germans!” to be made by General Eisenhower [September 27, 1944]. in Davis S. Wyman ed. *America and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews* vol.9, *War Refugee Board: Special Problems*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 18.

ABOUT PEOPLE



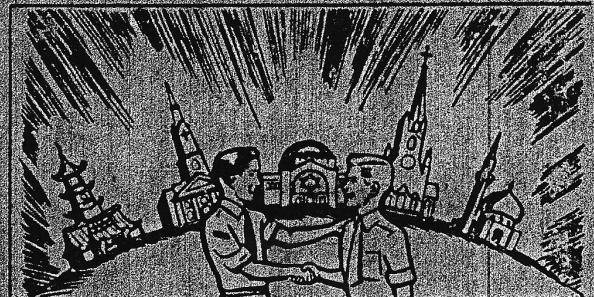
YET SOMETIMES, SOME PEOPLE FORGET. YOU MAY SOMETIMES HEAR PEOPLE SAY THEY DON'T LIKE FOREIGNERS, OR THEY DON'T LIKE NEGROES, OR THEY DON'T LIKE METHODISTS OR JEWS. ISN'T THAT A CURIOUS THING TO SAY?



IF THEY DON'T LIKE FOREIGNERS, OR PEOPLE WHOSE FATHERS AND GRANDFATHERS CAME FROM FOREIGN LANDS, THEY MIGHT AS WELL DISLIKE THEMSELVES! ALL OUR FOREFATHERS CAME FROM FOREIGN LANDS - EXCEPT THE INDIANS!



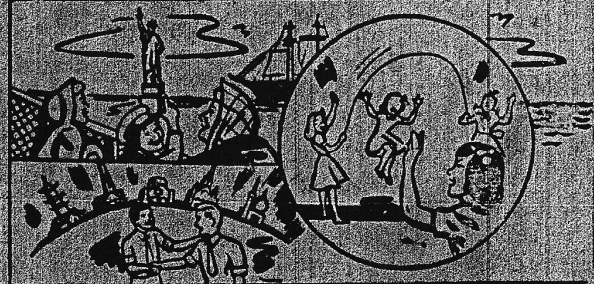
INDEED, IT IS THE MANY KINDS OF PEOPLE AND THEIR DIFFERENT WAYS THAT MAKE AMERICA WHAT IT IS TODAY.



YOUR NEIGHBOR MAY WORSHIP GOD IN A WAY DIFFERENT FROM YOUR OWN, BUT YOU CANNOT TELL WHETHER OR NOT YOU LIKE THIS NEIGHBOR UNTIL YOU KNOW HIM.



AND WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN THAT THE COLOR OF A PERSON'S SKIN MAKES NO DIFFERENCE IN WHAT HE DOES - OR IN HOW BRIGHT OR FRIENDLY HE IS.



SO IT MAKES NO SENSE TO REFUSE TO BE FRIENDS WITH A PERSON BECAUSE OF HIS COLOR, BECAUSE OF THE WAY HE WORSHIPS, OR BECAUSE HE OR HIS PARENTS CAME FROM A FOREIGN LAND.

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It is also worth mentioning the argument that the American press and public could not know “what was really happening” as even (the majority of) German citizens did not know what was happening. Such an assertion, although widely discredited, still holds some sway with scholars. The Polish press was very clear in its belief that the collective guilt was applicable to the majority of Germans.¹³⁵ The press acknowledged that blaming Hitler was not enough, for he was not carrying out his plans alone.¹³⁶ In research conducted on the town of Sonderburg by Henry Francis, gentile bystanders who were interviewed on their experiences during the Nazi era repeatedly used the word *machtlos* (powerless). They described the feeling of powerlessness caused by fear although evidence proved there was minimal retribution against people who chose not to comply with anti-Jewish measures in the town.¹³⁷ The gentiles of Sonderburg were willingly converted by Nazism into bystanders. They had lived peacefully among Jews prior to 1933. After the Nazis took power and began expropriating Jews’ rights and property, the non-Jews of town, not ignorant to what was happening to their fellow citizens, had continued with their lives “oddly uninvolved, as though it had nothing to do with them.”¹³⁸

In another case study of the town of Mauthausen, a vast number of employees for the euthanasia center at Hartheim were employed from the nearby town. These employees, mostly assistants and secretaries, quickly learned of the happenings inside the camp. Researcher Gordon Horwitz reveals how the proximity and visibility of the camp allowed the townspeople, including

¹³⁵ *Republika- Górnik*, “70 Million Hitlerites.” February 20, 1942. Pg.2.

¹³⁶ *Republika- Górnik*, “Brilliant German gives opinion on Germany (collective guilt).” April 24, 1942. Pg.4. Also see: *Republika- Górnik*, “Not one German will get away with it.” July 10, 1942. Pg.2. *Republika- Górnik*, “Germany will have to Answer for Crimes in Poland.” July 24, 1942. Pg.1.

¹³⁷ Barnett., 5. Francis discovered only two instances in which people were punished for assisting Jews or openly expressed disapproval for Nazi policies.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

those not employed at the camp, full vision of the inmates' suffering.¹³⁹ Before the camp's liberation in May 1945, "prisoners were often murdered within sight of, and often with the active complicity of wide sections of the civilian population."¹⁴⁰ Barnett claims that where physical detachment is impossible, psychological distance is the alternative: "the townspeople, although cognizant of the terror in the camp. . . learned to walk a fine line between unavoidable awareness and prudent disregard."¹⁴¹ By refusing to acknowledge the activities happening in the camp, the ordinary citizens who lived near Mauthausen "had become an extension of it, clearly aligned with the murderers, not with their victims."¹⁴²

The indifference to the plight of Jews displayed by many non-Jews was multi-faceted in that it was displayed in many levels of society. From the doctors who filled out competency forms, to the teachers who noted unsatisfactory student merit, to the secretaries who did not question why their colleague was unnecessarily dismissed, all of these actions and behaviours were compartmentalized in such a way to divorce the individual, a competent and necessary part of the bureaucratic Nazi killing machine, from any sense of personal agency and guilt. Whether such active and passive Nazi participants knew their actions were part of a complex process which would lead those they judged, or purposefully ignored, to a crematorium is unknowable; however, that does not change the reality that those actions, or non-actions, took place and should be evaluated. From the earliest stages of the Nazi regime, all of those involved in the killing process "from bottom up, shared a common delusion that their individual actions were not

¹³⁹Ibid., 6.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 7.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²Ibid., 8.

instrumental to the entire process.”¹⁴³ This is true within Germany when evaluating both the bystanders in the larger cities who experienced a more domineering atmosphere of Nazi power and also the smallest villages where Nazi propaganda was just as influential.

Some smaller camps in rural or less industrialized areas of Nazi Germany behaved just as brutally as larger ones. Melk, a small camp which opened in April 1944, witnessed 495 inmates attempting to escape. Out of those who escaped, 300 were recaptured but only 57 survived: “local farmers and residents joined the SS in hunting down and brutally murdering the escapees.”¹⁴⁴ Those who did not assist the SS remained apathetic to the plight of Jews. Therefore, as Marion A. Kaplan, author of *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* rightly asserts, it was not only cities which were under a powerful Nazi stronghold. Small villages also offer telling case studies of ‘normal’ bystander and active participant behaviour.¹⁴⁵

In addition to the definition of bystander as an ordinary citizen and neighbor, the word literally means to be present or to witness. Theologian Miroslav Volf argues that unlike the story told by the bystanders of Sonderburg the reality was far more complex. Not all bystanders were truly powerless: “[t]hey themselves [were] perpetrators and victims, often both at the same time.”¹⁴⁶ In a philosophical, religious, and ethical sense, being a witness presupposes an active role with certain ‘expectations of behaviour.’ As Barnett claims, bystanders have ‘behavioural

¹⁴³ Ibid., 7.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 8.

¹⁴⁵ Marion A. Kaplan. *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹⁴⁶ Barnett, 10.

options' and therefore "bear some responsibility for what happens."¹⁴⁷ Psychologist Erwin Staub defends the same notion that "the support, opposition, or indifference [of bystanders] largely shapes the course of events"¹⁴⁸ and thus is a central factor when analyzing the possibility of events to occur. Bystanders, therefore, are "simply somewhat more passive perpetrators."¹⁴⁹ Because several of these aspects are 'subjective' and 'immeasurable,' analysis and interpretation of bystander behaviour naturally varies accordingly to their specific condition.¹⁵⁰ Conversely, Theologian David Gushee argues that from a moral perspective there might be 'no such thing' as a bystander. Gushee rightly asserts that if a person is a witness they are culpable for their action or inaction.¹⁵¹

Marrus highlights that the problem in trying to link the historical and the ethical is that we are dealing with 'negative history,' or what did not happen: "the history of inaction, indifference, and insensitivity."¹⁵² These characteristics of negative history, although immeasurable in most situations, do play a role in human interaction and hence human outcome. Therefore, the historian must be cautious not to over-generalize. Staub suggests differentiating between three levels of bystander involvement: "the individual, the institutional, and the international," which conclusively share similarities.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Erwin Staub. *The roots of evil: the origins of genocide and other group violence*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 20.

¹⁴⁹ Barnett, 11.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 10.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 11.

¹⁵² Marrus, *The Holocaust in History*, 157.

¹⁵³Staub, 20.

Pertaining to individual behaviour, the totalitarian system in Nazi Germany relieved German gentiles of individual culpability for their actions by compartmentalizing their participation. For example, Horwitz's case-study of Mauthausen highlighted the role of the Hartheim nurse, whose sole task was to assist patients as they removed their clothes. Consequently, because she was not directly involved in the killings, she was able to divorce herself from responsibility for their deaths. Nazi Germany provides countless similar paradigms of the 'compartmentalization' of genocide.¹⁵⁴ The compartmentalization of the annihilation process, where several of those engaged directly or indirectly did not explicitly witness their victims or their murders, "is certainly a contributing factor to the passivity of some individuals."¹⁵⁵ This is precisely the assessment made by the Polish-language press as early as 1942; individuals may not have been the actual killers but many knew what was happening in varying degrees or had some role to play in facilitating extermination.¹⁵⁶

Interestingly, in assessing individual –and arguably institutional and international– powerlessness, Barnett questions "to what extent did powerlessness actually reflect the realities of the situation; to what degree did it mask implicit approval for what was happening or serve as a rationalization for passivity?"¹⁵⁷ Numerous studies and survivor testimonies, both published and unpublished, suggest that rather than powerlessness through fear being imposed on citizens by the Nazi regime, powerlessness was "actually embraced by many German citizens" and other international onlookers. Using the example of Sonderburg –due to the fact that the town is an accurate model for general trends observed in smaller towns– the enthusiasm and efficiency with

¹⁵⁴ Barnett, 17.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ *Republika- Górnik*, "70 Million Hitlerites." February 20, 1942. Pg.2.

¹⁵⁷ Barnett., 18-19.

which its gentle citizens voluntarily accepted “their new situation (and in this they were typical) suggests a new, Nazified identity was hardly forced upon them.”¹⁵⁸ Powerlessness can represent both reality and an excuse for escapism during the Nazi era; however, as the ‘phenomena’ of resistance and rescue illustrate, other choices existed.¹⁵⁹

Furthermore, Barnett clearly and concisely states that “collective will is never completely imposed from above; it is created and reinforced by the complicity and passivity of individual citizens.”¹⁶⁰ Using Hannah Arendt’s description of the ‘ordinariness’ and ‘banality’ of citizen’s daily lives in Nazi Germany is insightful as such composed and mechanical behaviour cannot be detached from the reality and horror of the Holocaust.¹⁶¹ The practices and behaviours she described in the Eichmann trial “introduced the world to the phenomenon of mass murder carried out not in passion or in the heat of battle, but with cool bureaucratic exactitude.”¹⁶² Browning’s *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, reaches a similar conclusion. Browning discovers that a battalion of fewer than 500 ordinary men -salesmen, clerks, and artisans- readily participated in the shooting of approximately 38,000 Jews and deported over 45,000 more to the gas chambers of Treblinka. These men were not passionate anti-Semites, fanatical party members, or sadists, but ordinary men who readily adopted to their role of killer based on what Browning concluded was peer pressure or personal opportunism.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸Ibid., 19.

¹⁵⁹Ibid.

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Hannah Arendt. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a report on the banality of evil*. Revised. (New York: Viking Press, 1964).

¹⁶²Ibid., 23.

¹⁶³ Christopher R. Browning. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion and the final solution in Poland*. (New York: Harper & Collins, 1992).

Finally, the book speaks to another important issue; few Germans who did speak out against Hitler or the Regime were punished. There were remarkably very few demonstrations against Hitler in Nazi Germany and certainly nothing in comparison to the displeasure demonstrated at Wilhelm's 67th birthday.

The purposeful disconnect between those in power (or not considered a target) and those not in power allowed individuals in Nazi occupied areas to ignore what was happening to the "other" once they acknowledged that they were different from themselves and hence none of their concern, unlike the victims of the T4 program. The personal connection that did exist between perpetrator, either active or passive, and the victim was prejudice which had been allowed to manifest into government policy. In order to allow a group of people to be persecuted socially, legally, economically, and lethally, genocide "has to be personal" on the level of disregard for the fate of the victims.¹⁶⁴ Collective intolerance begins from individual prejudice (which at times is supported by institutions such as the church or government); once individual prejudice becomes state policy genocide is "inevitable."¹⁶⁵ Barnett contends that society is "built on the convictions and beliefs held by the majority of its members; where anti-Semitism is viewed with abhorrence, intolerant speech and action will not succeed. Conversely, however, dominant values in society can shape beliefs of individuals or intimidate them into silence."¹⁶⁶

Searching for the origins of the Holocaust requires examination of the role of ordinary citizens and bystanders who legitimized the collective will through their action or inaction. The success of Hitler and his propaganda campaign was his capacity was to foster an "inability . . . to

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Barnett, 110.

tolerate a limited solution to the ‘Jewish problem’. . . a solution depending on German-Jewish coexistence.”¹⁶⁷ As Hermann Graml states in *Antisemitism in the Third Reich*, “[n]o measure of discrimination against Jews could make such coexistence possible in the long term.”¹⁶⁸ This logic led Jews to concentration camps and death prior to the outbreak of war. With the outbreak of total war the Final Solution to the Jewish Question would require “nothing less than the extermination of European Jewry.”¹⁶⁹

When confronting the two main enquires posed by the intentionalists and functionalists, namely, the nature of the decision making process and the timing of the decision to implement mass murder, it is clear that with the outbreak of war in 1939 it was ‘too late’¹⁷⁰ to stop the process of annihilation. The very definition of annihilation is total destruction or complete obliteration; hence, whether this implied deportation or mass murder is inconsequential for, as Browning states, even the deportation plans were “genocidal in [their] implications.”¹⁷¹ The nature of the decision making process was undoubtedly chaotic and not pre-planned in the sense that there existed a blue print for the logistics of the Final Solution. Although the Reichstag speech of 1939, should not to be taken literally, it should not be dismissed as a mere moment within a rant. What is telling about the speech is the lack of response against it, reinforcing the point that *it was too late*, people were already ‘convinced’ by Nazism and therefore easily disregarded disastrous implications regarding Jews. The ‘psychological’ war was won; either people conformed or withdrew into a private sphere.

¹⁶⁷ Hermann Graml. *Antisemitism in the Third Reich*, trans. Tim Kirk. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 2.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Number 204 Survivor Testimony and Gotz interview.

¹⁷¹ Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy September 1939-March 1942*, 89.

Hitler was certainly aware of the genocidal developments and decisions regarding the Final Solution. This is evident not only through written testimonies of leading Nazi officials, but also in the very nature of proceedings in Hitler's totalitarian regime. Hitler, successfully placing the Jews in a 'defenceless position' (as highlighted by Browning in the moderate functionalist approach) by gaining public approval and complacency regarding social, legal, and economic persecutions, realized he had few obstacles to using radicalized methodology in becoming *judenrein*, unlike his experience with the T4 program. As Friedlander asserts, fear was not an obstacle for opposition against the treatment of the Jews.

Dawidowicz is correct in stating that the war had a 'double purpose,' the goal of simultaneously attaining *Lebensraum* and being *judenrein* was the means for attaining a racially pure Third Reich. The realization of the logistics for this goal was not inspired solely during Operation Barbarossa. In Hillgrüber's interpretation, Operation Barbarossa was not the impetus for inventing the Final Solution; rather, it was during the Operation that Hitler realized his opportunity to initiate systematic mass murder. This was not due to, as Broszat claims, the war in the East 'escalating' because Hitler had already established that Barbarossa was to be a war of destruction. Destruction was the goal, not a by-product of evolving circumstances.

The Final Solution was not decided at Wannsee in 1942. The goal of being *judenrein* had already been long established from the inception of the Nazi dictatorship in the 1930s which shares a relationship to the events which followed in the 1940s. The meeting at Wannsee –stating that deportation plans had been a provisional measure in becoming *judenrein*– organized the logistics of total annihilation. Survivor testimony claims that the plans for annihilation, in whatever form annihilation would become manifest, had its origins in the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, and more clearly on the night of broken glass, *Kristallnacht*. For many survivors

Kristallnacht was “the writing on the wall.”¹⁷² The impetus for society in allowing the social, legal, economic and violent persecutions are complex, and certainly many individuals and institutions faced circumstances that limited their ability to assist. However, profiteering, peer pressure, fear, or antisemitism fell secondary to Germany’s collective will of supporting Nazism in its entirety, either actively or passively. The support of Nazism by the majority of German citizens fostered Nazism’s goals and allowed them to come to fruition. Whatever the impetus, without the support and complacency of ordinary citizens and bystanders, the Holocaust would have not been possible.

Many historians will agree that individuals were convinced of antisemitism because they supported Nazism, not vice-versa.¹⁷³ The majority of Germans might have not been antisemitic, but many did agree that “there was really a Jewish question”¹⁷⁴ and proved to be gladly inactive in choosing not to object to the dehumanization of Jews such as they had acted against the T4 program. Furthermore, as Hilberg attests, the Nazis were seldom left wanting when searching for obedient executioners.¹⁷⁵ The public’s motives for allowing the exclusion of Jews from German society were at times economic, personal, or due to a genuine belief in racial superiority.¹⁷⁶ The uncaring and complacent behaviour of the German public arguably reveals “indifference and contempt rather than hate or fear,”¹⁷⁷ suggesting that passivity was a conscious choice.

¹⁷²Number 429 Survivor Testimony.

¹⁷³ Hartmann, 636.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 638.

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 639.

Few historians will continue to suggest the German public was ignorant of the Holocaust. As Koonz suggests; “[k]nowledge about genocide was available to anyone who cared to find it.”¹⁷⁸ Not only was information available, the Polish-language press discussed and reported on genocide on a daily basis. Marrus is correct in his assertion that the entire logistical and tactical process of the Final Solution, from the early stages of allowing Jews to be excluded from society, to the deportations to the death camps, required “not only the cold-blooded killers of the SS but also remote officials of the postal ministry, tax and insurance adjusters, bankers and clergymen, mechanics and accountants, and municipal officers etc.”¹⁷⁹ Active participation of ordinary citizens from the very origins of Germany’s attempt to be *judenrein* is clearly evident in the fact that the power of the Gestapo was not predominantly based on active investigations, but on the “voluntary work of the accusers.”¹⁸⁰ News stories regarding the tactics employed by the Gestapo were plentiful and frequent in the Polish-language press, particularly of the brutality enforced on Poles.¹⁸¹ Awareness of the gravity of the regime’s actions is clearest in the attempt to maintain secrecy of procedures. The Polish press too was vocal in its condemnation; not all Germans were Nazis, but most Germans had knowledge of the annihilation process either directly (through some form of participation) or indirectly (by being a bystander).¹⁸²

The relevance of the secrecy which Hitler and regime officials tried to maintain, is telling of Hitler’s genuine awareness of the importance of public relations both nationally and

¹⁷⁸ Koonz, 269.

¹⁷⁹ Michael Marrus. “The History of the Holocaust: A Survey of Recent Literature.” 137.

¹⁸⁰ Bankier, 282. Also see: *Republika- Górnik*, “Gestapo hunting 100,000 Poles.” March 17, 1944. Pg.1.

¹⁸¹ *Republika- Górnik*, “Gestapo kill 300 sick in Chelmno and 40 kids.” June 7, 1940. Pg.5. Also see: *Republika- Górnik*, “Germans Torturing Poles-Gestapo.” June 14, 1940. Pg.5. *Republika- Górnik*, “Gestapo Kills Poles Daily.” August 22, 1941. Pg.1.

¹⁸² *Republika- Górnik*, “70 Million Hitlerites.” February 20, 1942. Pg.2.

internationally. It is reasonable to suggest that the main reason that the intentionalist, functionalist, and Browning's moderate functionalist approach are ultimately inadequate, is because all frameworks lack an extensive analysis of the impact of public reaction to the entire 'evolution' of Nazi procedure. Once Hitler and his Nazi officials felt confident that the public would not oppose their policies against the Jews, evident by the lack of opposition to the stages of exclusion, and that the sentiment on the international scene was similar –as evidenced by Goebbels admonishment of foreign press articles which lacked actual response- the Reich's foremost goals of becoming *judenrein* and attaining *Lebensraum* were within reach.

An article from the SS publication *Das Schwarze Korps* from November 24, 1938, illustrates the sense that public support and adherence to Nazi policy allowed the process of achieving the regime's goals to evolve:

The real situation and truth is that these diploma-democrats know the Jewish Question very well, in fact-one need only look at their immigration regulations and their fear of Jewish immigrants-and even derive practical conclusions from them. If we had solved the Jewish Question completely and by the most brutal methods back in 1933, the outcry would have been no worse than it has been since then. But it had to remain theoretical because at that time we lacked the *military might that we possess today*. . .the loudest of the democratic screechers will be the ones to hesitate the longest. Finally because no power in the world can stop us, we shall therefore now take the Jewish Question towards its total solution. . . total elimination.¹⁸³

In January 25, 1939, the German Foreign Ministry Memorandum on Policy Regarding Jews in 1938 read:

The American President Roosevelt, who, as is known, included a number of spokesmen of Jewry amongst his close advisors, convened an international conference to discuss the refugee question as early as the middle of 1938, which took place in Evian without producing any notable practical results. . . for Germany the Jewish Question will not be solved when the last Jew has left German soil.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³Ibid., 119.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., 128-129.

Evidently, the passivity of Allied nations played a crucial role in the Nazi regime's confidence of being unstoppable. To leading Nazi officials it was clear that minimal efforts, such as those at Evian, would be initiated in order to assist Europe's Jewry. With the general appeasement and support of the German and Nazi-occupied countries, alongside the lack of protest and action expressed by the Allies, the Final Solution of being 'cleansed' of Jews was given the green light. The importance of the Allies' reaction to Jewish peril in Europe cannot be underestimated when analysing the evolution of the Holocaust.

A further issue to address in the debate over 'who knew what when' is the argument that news which *was* relayed, was considered to be unbelievable and exaggerated due to the public's previous experience with the use of propaganda during the First World War. The American government too, used this defence. With the escalation of severity in twentieth century total warfare it is evident that "every technologically advanced country has used propaganda to sell policies and programs to its citizens to demoralize the enemy, or to make allies seem more palatable."¹⁸⁵ A prime example of the exercise of mass propaganda to reach these ends is exemplified by President Woodrow Wilson's Committee on Public Information (CPI), which formed and operated during America's official involvement in the Great War (1917-1918). Using several diverse means of persuasion, the CPI successfully roused public support in favor of war involvement by presenting it as a *Holy Crusade*. In order to appreciate the support and enthusiasm of America's war involvement during the First World War, and consequently their lack of enthusiasm for believing news during the Second World War, a study of the CPI is

¹⁸⁵ Richard Wood, and David Culbert, ed. *Film and Propaganda: A Documentary History, Vol. 1., World War I*. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), ix.

integral to understanding America's position(s), "because a favorable public opinion is a prerequisite to the successful prosecution of modern war."¹⁸⁶

From the onset of the Great War to April of 1917, America remained "the greatest of neutrals,"¹⁸⁷ by remaining out of the global conflict. President Woodrow Wilson's re-election for a second Presidential term is largely attributed to the Democratic slogan of 1916, "He Kept Us Out of War."¹⁸⁸ By 1917, this ideal would be challenged by several factors. Firstly, frustrated by the British naval blockade, Germany retracted its promise to maintain limited submarine warfare. Secondly, on January 19, 1917 British cryptographers deciphered a telegram attributed to Arthur Zimmerman, the German foreign Minister, sent to von Eckhardt, the German Minister in Mexico. Zimmerman allegedly offered U.S. territory to Mexico, to "re-conquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas and Arizona,"¹⁸⁹ in exchange for Mexico "joining the German cause."¹⁹⁰ The telegram, originally viewed as suspicious, was later authenticated by Zimmerman himself who confirmed the telegram in a speech he gave on March 29, 1917.¹⁹¹

To show support for the war after two and a half years of neutrality was to become a "public duty."¹⁹² Wilson asked that his message to the American public be reproduced by

¹⁸⁶ Ralph Haswell Lutz. Studies of World War Propaganda, 1914-33. *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 5. No. 4. (Dec., 1933), 497.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 510.

¹⁸⁸ Thomas G. Patterson, *American Foreign Policy: A History*. (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1977), 271.

¹⁸⁹ Michael Duffy, *First World War.Com: The War To End All Wars*, 2005, <<http://firstworldwar.com/source/zimmermann.htm>>

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Michael Duffy, *First World War.Com: The War To End All Wars*, 2005, <http://firstworldwar.com/source/zimmermann_speech.htm>

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

advertising agencies, publishers, and clergymen. In order to insure his message would be repeated, as well as providing a means for recruiting as many volunteers as possible to fight the war, Wilson established by Executive Order the Committee on Public Information (CPI) on April 14, 1917.¹⁹³ The Committee was to be comprised of the Secretary of State (George Marshall), the Secretary of War (Newton Baker), the Secretary of the Navy (Josephus Daniels), and a civilian to be the Executive Director of the Committee. The choice of the civilian was made by Wilson who chose a young journalist “with a passion for adjectives,”¹⁹⁴ named George Creel.

As defined by the CPI, the primary purpose of the Committee was “to drive home the absolute justice of America’s cause.”¹⁹⁵ Realizing the importance and value of public opinion as a “vital part of the national defense,” its purpose was to “devise machinery with which to make the fight for friendship and understanding of neutral nations of the world.” The ‘machinery’ to facilitate this goal was comprised of several media made possible through technological capabilities and was instructed to highlight the positive aspects of patriotism and unity to inspire war support. The CPI was neither to focus on the negative aspects of the war nor replicate the “falsehood from abroad.” The CPI was to ‘fight’ “indifference and disaffection” while stimulating the “verdict of mankind by truth-telling.”¹⁹⁶

Although the decisive factor of war propaganda cannot be weighed in terms of affecting loss or victory, it is evident that when “the veteran German troops realized the aerial propaganda

¹⁹³ Committee On Public Information, *The Creel Report: Complete Report of the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information 1917:1918:1919*. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 1.

¹⁹⁴ Stephen Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines: Democracy, Nationalism, and the Committee on Public Information*. (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 21.

¹⁹⁵ *The Creel Report*, 1.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

accounts (dropped by the Allies) were fairly accurate, they became demoralized.”¹⁹⁷ The War Information Series had advertised the war to the American people until its “Liberty” products were in almost every home in the land,”¹⁹⁸ with the CPI only costing taxpayers \$4, 912, 553.00, “less than half what Germany spent in Spain.”¹⁹⁹ The major criticism of the CPI was that it did “not preach a gospel of hate... in the name of patriotism.”²⁰⁰ The criticism came mainly “from groups and individuals who felt that the CPI was not patriotic enough and who even accused it of ‘reasonable moderation.’”²⁰¹ Others did not agree that the CPI was moderate, and suggested that “the fabricated atrocity stories of World War I” caused editors to be skeptical of news on violence, attributed to disbelief in Holocaust news.²⁰² During spring 1945, “American newspaper editors blamed the false atrocity stories of the First World War for their earlier skepticism about Nazi war crimes.”²⁰³ Other historians support this view arguing that “[l]ies in one war helped obscure realities in another.”²⁰⁴

Defenders of the CPI claim that “American methods may not be compared with the spirit of British and French propaganda.” Being formed by the President and attracting “intellectuals

¹⁹⁷ Lutz, 516.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 513.

¹⁹⁹ Creel, 12.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 443.

²⁰¹ Vaughn, 236.

²⁰² David S. Wyman, *Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 322.

²⁰³ Ibid., 325.

²⁰⁴ Jay Winter and Antoine Prost. *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 156.

and muckrakers;”²⁰⁵ the CPI carried government authority and the aura of credibility. The CPI proved so overwhelmingly convincing in unifying the public in support of intervention that prior to the Second World War, it was theorized that “whatever change might come over our state in new war, a propaganda ministry would hold a vital place in the government.”²⁰⁶ If indeed, the Great War failed to ‘end all wars,’ “no American would need to read the story of the CPI [they] would relive it.”²⁰⁷

Although one can never be certain of the exact contribution of propaganda to either the victory of the Allies or the defeat of the Axis, the “fact remains that propaganda is one of the most powerful instrumentalities in the modern world;”²⁰⁸ the CPI functioned as a sales agency of war, but one which undoubtedly believed in the product. With the goal of ‘mobilizing’ and unifying the minds of America -albeit using the melodramatic tactic of invoking spiritual diction- the campaign for psychological mobilization of the American people in behalf of the effort was an outstanding success.”²⁰⁹ Creel stated, “it was the heart and mind of that nation that we directed our appeals- and their response was our reward.”²¹⁰ By exploiting the press, media, film, and art, the battle on the American home front was truly, a “holy war of ideas.”²¹¹ It is important to recognize the relevance and use of propaganda in war to judge the value of public support, or

²⁰⁵ Vaughn, 23.

²⁰⁶ James R. Mock and Cedric Larson. *Words that Won the War: The Story of the Committee on Public Information 1917-1919*. (New York: Russell & Russell, -1939 and republished- 1968), 340.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 346.

²⁰⁸ Lutz, 516.

²⁰⁹ Robert H. Zieger, *America’s Great War: World War I and the American Experience*. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2000), 83.

²¹⁰ Creel, 108.

²¹¹ Mock, 338.

lack thereof, to the morale of the soldiers, the civilians on the home-front, and ultimately in the perception of a 'just' war.

The American and Canadian governments, along with the majority of the population, truly believed they were fighting a just war during the Second World War. Similar metaphors were exploited: a 'holy war' by democracy against Nazism, liberalism versus barbarism, and more simply, good versus evil. Creel and others recognized during the Great War that propaganda was indeed going 'too far' in its portrayal of the enemy. North American governments were careful not to repeat this mistake, particularly the United States, which up until 1917 and again prior to 1941, remained isolationist. Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, the American population did not want war "over there" again. Hitler and Nazism, although abhorrent, were not its problem, and (Poles or) Jews even less so. But two important points need to be made abundantly clear: news was not relayed not because of a keen sense of propaganda and its abuse during the First World War, but due to a lack of interest in the plight of Jews; and to be fair, historically, the United States did not help other citizens in their time of need: not Catholics, Protestants, or Jews. In this regard the United States was not behaving out of character.

News did reach America and Canada from the beginning, as it was happening. Almost every move that Hitler made was given central attention in the Polish-language press. Concentration camps were reported on, the ghettos received abundant attention, and what we now know as genocide was reported regularly, stating the key targets of persecution as Poles and Jews. The stories were not buried in the back pages, and were believed by their readers. Why would they not believe? There is a monumental difference between stories of Huns slicing off

the breasts of nuns,²¹² and stories of concentration camps, ghettos, and mass murders particularly because these were not fantastical concoctions, but situations that had been happening in Europe –albeit in an unprecedented fashion- for centuries. News and other forms of reliable information was available, and options for assisting those in needs, primarily by providing available refuge, were also possible. It is undeniable that by winning the war, the Allies had stopped Nazi Germany from committing further atrocities, but this unconventional war required an unconventional response to directly assist victims of genocide;²¹³ in this regard the Allies failed the victims of the Holocaust.

²¹² See: Thomas F. Schneider. *"Huns" vs. "Corned Beef": Representations of the Other in American and German Literature and Film on World War I.* (V&R unipress GmbH., 2007).

²¹³ By winning the war, the Allies clearly stopped further atrocities by the Nazis. However, pleas to the US during the war, such as by the press, other media outlets, community organizations, and even individuals such as Jan Karski, demonstrate that in addition to US military intervention, direct assistance to those slated for extermination was greatly needed and continuously asked for even after 1941.

Conclusion: A Human Issue

To Forget the Dead Would be Akin to Killing Them a Second Time.
Elie Wiesel

For prying into human affairs, none are equal to those whom it does not concern.
Victor Hugo

On October 6-7, 2013, a conference was held in Toronto, Canada entitled, “The Holocaust: New Scholars – New Research.” *The Canadian Jewish News* wrote an article on the conference highlighting current issues of interest in Holocaust Studies, and stated that the conference “raised more questions than answers.”¹ Questions in the first panel “focused on journalistic reporting of the Holocaust, or the lack thereof.” Norman Domeier, an assistant professor of modern European history at the University of Stuttgart, gave a talk entitled “What Did the Global Public Know? Foreign Correspondents in the Third Reich, 1933-1945.” He said the fact the atrocities did not dominate the front pages of world newspapers can only be attributed to “insensitive, unprofessional journalism.”² Domeier’s assertion is far from the truth in the case of the Polish-American press wherein one would be hard-pressed to find an issue that did not detail Nazi atrocities happening in Europe on nearly every single front page or main story page. However, rather than focusing on a comprehensive analysis of the foreign-language media, which still needs substantial work -especially using a comparative approach- historians have focused their attention elsewhere.

¹ Cara Stern, “Conference uncovers new angles on the Holocaust,” *Canadian Jewish News*, 9 October 2013. Accessed 10 October 2013 <<http://www.cjnews.com/index.php?q=node%2F115712>>

²Ibid.

For decades, Holocaust historians have searched for a smoking gun, one document with Hitler's signature on ordering genocide. More recently, it has become a mainstream assertion that after the public backlash against Hitler's euthanasia program, for which there is clear documentation, Hitler would not err twice. But why has there been such focus on finding a single document that would prove the exact time when genocide became an option and eventually state policy? Is "elimination of all people" not a clear enough indicator as to what was intended to happen? In current historiography not enough attention is paid to how contemporaries of the time interpreted what was happening and the terminology used to describe the situation at hand. The term genocide was not coined until the Nuremburg trials after the war and 'holocaust' had several meanings at the time. But diction used the time -the same diction used in main reports from both official outlets and the Polish-language press- clearly defined what was happening at the time: annihilation, total destruction, racial and ethnic cleansing, elimination, and mass murder in a civil, social, and physical sense, all qualifiers now associated with genocide. Furthermore, these reports, and the statements within them, were rarely accused of being purposefully distorted or extremist in their meaning.

Unlike many news stories during the First World War, which were purposefully embellished to demonstrate the evil of the barbaric Hun, news stories during the Second World War were less exaggerated. They were often written as a presentation of facts with scathing editorials warning that inaction against genocide would be unforgivable. Although the contention that the origins of the Holocaust were unknown to North Americans partly because the news did not exist or was not relayed, and also due to the fact that when news was relayed, it was done so in an 'unbelievable' manner, is simply not true. Unlike the mainstream English language press, the Polish- language press in America reported on Hitler, the rise of Nazism, war, and genocide

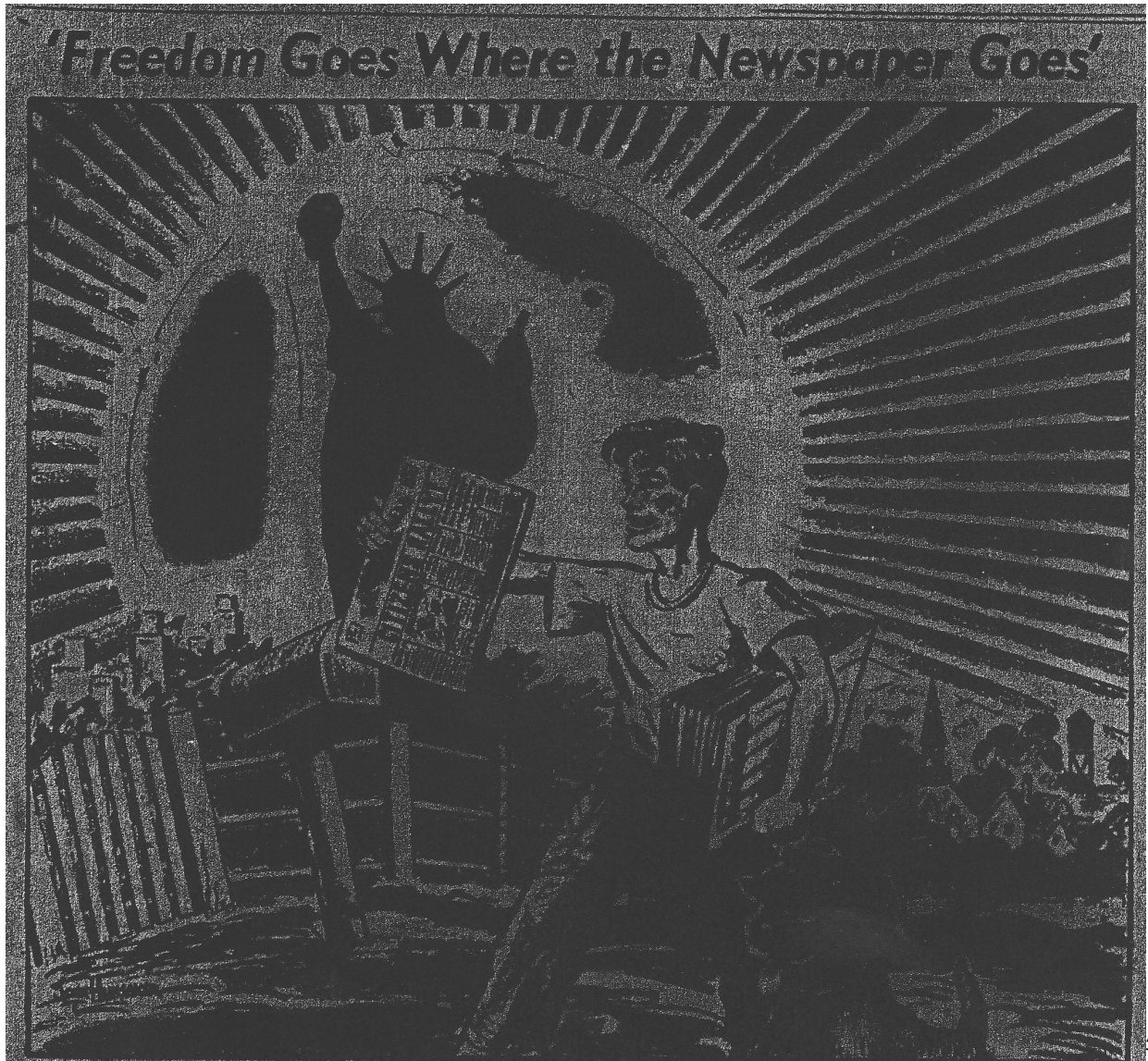
on its front pages daily and highlighted, by name, the plight of European Jews. The news was also published in English sections and books, like *The Black Book*, were printed entirely in English in the sincere hope that it would provoke a response from Americans. Furthermore, the news being printed came from global (and official) sources, just as news is today; Holocaust news was not exclusive to the Polish community.

News was available and how it was relayed by the mainstream English press was a choice, and even then it was not embellished to the point of meriting serious consideration of authenticity. Jan Karski was right; that it was one thing not to know and another to not believe, and many survivors will attest to the fact that they themselves could not believe what was happening during the Holocaust, but there were even more people who knew, believed, and chose to do nothing.³

The Polish-language press chose to not be a bystander; they chose to spread awareness on their front page and main story pages on a daily basis. The press rightly believed both during the war and after that by freely reporting news, they were contributing to freedom.⁴ The following political cartoon from the *Polish American Journal* captures this sentiment perfectly.

³For more on information that was made available to the Allies and was purposefully dismissed, see Richard Breitman's *Official Secrets: What the Nazis planned, what the British and Americans knew*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998.).

⁴ Although it hard to quantify the influence of the Polish American press on official or mainstream public opinion, it does provide an invaluable primary source of how and when information was indeed made available, and how it was interpreted by the media.



⁵ *Polish American Journal*. "Freedom Goes Where there the Newspaper Goes." October 1, 1949. Pg. 1.

Collectively, the Polish press in North America was undoubtedly intentionalist in their interpretations of what was happening both during and after the Holocaust. Because of their long history of plagued relations with Prussia and the Soviets, which included discrimination, a loss of civil rights, pauperization, concentration and forced labour camps, and mass murder, Poles certainly believed news coming from Europe. From the rise of Nazism and the struggle over the corridor, to the September campaign of 1939 onward, Poles and the Polish press believed that these actions were a part of eliminating not only the Polish nation, but all Polish people. They had experienced mass murder before -albeit not by the same industrialized methodology employed by the Nazis- and anticipated that Hitler, from the beginning, had intended to destroy Poland in its totality by one means or another.

It is not hard to understand how purposeful passivity occurred during the Holocaust; every day we see a plethora of news stories regarding genocide, mass violence, mass rape, poverty and disease and other 'bad news stories' without providing direct assistance. The latest Winter Olympics in 2014, in Sochi Russia, garnered much attention for having similarities to the Berlin Olympics, not only based on human rights violations but also due to the general response by the public of "see no evil, hear no evil." And how has North America responded to such news? Just like the response given during the Second World War: spoken declarations against heinous crimes, (empty) threats, minute news clips, and then a return to normalcy. The reason for this reaction is also the same: North Americans do not care enough about what is happening to non-North Americans -especially minorities- unless the victim has a connection to their personal roots. The majority of North Americans regularly point to the fact that their own citizens are suffering from unemployment, under-employment, hunger, poverty, disease, natural disasters,

violence, crime, and prejudice.⁶ Has North America the resources to assist every international injustice? Hardly. Is the help of North America during times of crisis always wanted? Certainly not. The truth is North America knew what was going on during the time of the Holocaust, including its antecedents, almost from the very beginning. The United States or Canada could not have done much to help Jews after 1939, nor did they want to. In fact, after information became ‘believable’ after the liberation of the concentration and death camps, North America, Canada included, had no desire to assist survivors.⁷ In today’s global world with all of its technological, social, and economic capabilities, when one chooses, quite knowingly and purposefully, to turn the other cheek when a persecuted minority is pleading for assistance, assistance that is quite possible to give (for example taking in refugees in 1938-39 when the immigration quota was not yet filled) it is quite different than imposing a nation’s will on another, or over-extending itself when it reasonably cannot offer help. As a society we need to stop seeing persecution as a Jewish issue, a gender issue, an African issue, a foreign issue, but rather, a *human issue*. Hatred on any level has a greater impact than just an immediate one, whether it be taking place near or far, especially when it is allowed or even encouraged to flourish. As a responsible and compassionate society, what is within our capability is our responsibility if we are sincere in our declaration of ‘never again.’ An article printed on August 31, 1945, entitled “Where are we Headed?” called for America and the world to have a different outlook on global issues where mass slaughter is concerned. It claimed that all victims, including the Jews, were the world’s problem when they

⁶ See for example: <http://www.debate.org/opinions/should-america-police-the-world>

⁷ For more see: Irving Abella and Harold Troper. *None is too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe: 1933-1948*. (Toronto: Lester and Dennys Limited, 1982), Franklin Bialystok. *Delayed Impact: The Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community*. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), and Magdalena Kubow. "Kanada: The Effect of *The Canadian Jewish News* and Survivors on the Memory of the Holocaust." *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*, Vol. 19, No.3, 2013 – Published April 2014).

faced extermination.⁸ This attitude of accepting others' plight as our own as a means for providing care and assistance has not yet been realized. We need to be reminded that racism as "a social construct, [can] be remedied. Therefore, the role of the Historian [is] to use the methods of scientific research to not only attain truth, but to present the truth in a way which would 'encourage and help social reform.'"⁹ Much more work needs to be done with regard to examining how information is disseminated during times of war and genocide. In an attempt to understand the origins of genocide, sources outside of the mainstream media are very telling and deserve a place in the historiography. In addition to what we now know was available regarding documents between officials and the media in its various forms, it substantiates the argument that reliable information was available during the entire process of the Holocaust. A comparative analysis of the approach by the Polish press in North America and the Jewish press in North America is a worthwhile future project that needs to be conducted, as well as comparative research between other foreign-language media outside of the Polish-language, and their handling of news on the Holocaust. The conversation of how information is reported and interpreted is a worthwhile one, as only the dissemination of reliable information can elicit public response. Jan Eliasson, United Nations Deputy-Secretary-General, recently asserted that "Genocide can only happen when we ignore the warning signs – and are unwilling to take action."¹⁰ I hope that at the very least, my dissertation has made a small contribution to

⁸*Republika-Górnik*, "Where are we Headed?" August 31, 1945. Pg. 6-7.

⁹ Du Bois, Zuckerman, 12.

¹⁰ *UN News Center*. "Genocide occurs when 'warning signs' ignored, action not taken – UN deputy chief." January 21, 2015. Accessed January 22, 2015.
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=49865#.VMuklf54q3u>

furthering this very important conversation about how we interpret, report on, and react to genocide.

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- Zygmunt, Bauman. *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Curriculum Vitae

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Thesis:

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Thesis:

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Languages:

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Awards:

2014: William Edgar Award granted by the History Department (UWO)

2013-2014: Ontario Graduate Scholarship

2011-2013: Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada Doctoral Award.

2008-2013 Western Graduate Research Scholarship.

2013: Ley and Lois Smith Military History Fund

2013: Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC 610) Award for Academic Achievement

2013: Nominated for Graduate Teaching Award for Course 3427E "The Holocaust."

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2012: Nominated for Graduate Teaching Award for Course 3427E "The Holocaust."

2011: Ontario Graduate Scholarship (declined- due to acceptance of SSHRC).

2011: Ivie Cornish Memorial Fellowship in History for receiving the highest grades on that year's comprehensive examinations.

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2011: Research Award from The University of Western Ontario.

2010: Nominated for Graduate Teaching Award for Course 2179 "The Two World Wars."

2009-2010: Ontario Graduate Scholarship.

2008-2009: Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (CGS).

2006: J.M.S. Careless History Club Scholarship: Awarded by King's University College to the History student with the highest overall average in General, Honours or Combined Honours History Program.

2006: Academic Award in History: Awarded by King's University College to a full-time third or fourth year student with the highest average in the senior courses in their discipline.

2005: Academic Award in History: Awarded by King's University College to a full-time third or fourth year student with the highest average in the senior courses in their discipline.

2003-2006- Dean's Honour List

2003-2006: King's University College Entrance and Continuing Academic Scholarship.

2003-2006: Queen Elizabeth II: Aiming for the Top (Provincial) Scholarship.

Research:

Book Reviews:

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Alan S. Rosenbaum *Is the Holocaust Unique?: Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, published in the *Canadian Military History Book Review Supplement*, Autumn 2009.

Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman *Denying History: Who Says The Holocaust Never Happened And Why Do They Say It?*, published in the *Canadian Military History Book Review Supplement*, Autumn 2009.

Phillip T. Rutherford *Prelude to the Final Solution: The Nazi Program for Deporting ethnic Poles, 1939-1941*, published in the *Canadian Military History Book Review Supplement*, Autumn 2009.

Martin Dean *Robbing the Jews: The Confiscation of Jewish Property in the Holocaust, 1933-1945*, published in the *Canadian Military History Book Review Supplement*, Autumn 2009.

Doris Bergen *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*, published in the *Canadian Military History Book Review Supplement*, Autumn 2009.

Theodore S. Hamerow *Why We Watched: Europe, America, and the Holocaust*, published in the *Canadian Military History Book Review Supplement*, Autumn 2009.

Nicholas Fraser *The Voice of Modern Hatred: Tracing the Rise of Neo-Fascism in Europe*, published in the *Canadian Military History Book Review Supplement*, Autumn 2009.

Other:

Article commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the Day of Protest which was initiated by the Polish Mid-eastern Women's Auxiliary Corps in Jerusalem. Published in the *London free Press* (July 28, 2012), *The Ottawa Citizen* (July 30, 2012), *The Canadian Jewish News* (August 2, 2012), *Polish American Journal* September issue, *Center for White Rose Studies* August Newsletter.

Article on Women and War titled "Caught in an Ancient Rite of Sex and War: The Sexual Abuse of Women during World War II" published in the inaugural Magazine by the *Center for White Rose Studies* "Roses at Noon: The quarterly journal of the Center for White Roses Studies" (January 2013).

Article "A lesson in humanity from inhumane place" on the topic of re-visiting concentration camps in Poland published in the *London Free Press* (July 26, 2013) and the *Polish American Journal* (September 2013).

Article "The CJN and the memory of the Holocaust" in *The Canadian Jewish News* (May 27, 2014).

Article "Solidarity movement for Poles took root in 1945" in the *London Free Press* (June 7, 2014).

Article commemorating the 70th anniversary of the liberation of concentration camps (*London Free Press* – January 24, 2015 & the *Polish American Journal* – February 2015 and the *Canadian Jewish News* - January 2015).

Scholarly Articles:

Scholarly Article- (*The Polish Review*, Vol. 58, No. 2, 2013) "The Solidarity Movement in Poland: Its history and meaning in collective memory."

Scholarly Article- (*Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*, Vol. 19, No.3, 2013 – Published April 2014) "Kanada: The Effect of *The Canadian Jewish News* and Survivors on the Memory of the Holocaust."

Scholarly Article- (Peer Review: *Magistra*) "'She is (not) to keep silent:' Women in the Church? A Historical Survey."

Seminars and Lectures:

Seminars:

- 1.) In attendance for the 2012 International Tracing Service Seminar: Poland and Ukraine during and after World War II in the Records of the International Tracing Service Collection. The seminar was conducted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies from August 6 until August 10 in Washington, D.C. Each year, the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies organizes academic programs that enable new and established scholars to further their research and teaching based on the archival holdings of the International Tracing Service (ITS). The ITS collection, recently opened as a result of an international campaign led by the Museum, includes over 100 million Holocaust-era documents relating to the fates of more than 17 million people who were subject to incarceration, forced labor, and displacement during and after World War II.

- 2.) In attendance for The Museum's Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies and The Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust & Genocide's International Research Workshop "The Holocaust in Eastern Europe in the Records of the International Tracing Service Digital Archive" at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. This workshop seeks to provide scholars specializing in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during and after World War II with new opportunities to conduct research within the International Tracing Service (ITS) digital collections, the largest archive of Holocaust and World War II-era documentation, which was opened only recently for research. Seminar conducted from July 28-August 1, 2014.

Conference Papers:

"The origins of the Holocaust reconsidered: Where do we go from here?" Taking the Fire from the Altar of the Past: 1st Annual UWO History Graduate Student Conference, London, March 25-27, 2011.

"Kanada: The Effect of *The Canadian Jewish News* and Survivors on the National Memory of the Holocaust." New Frontiers Graduate History Conference, York University, Toronto, February 23-25, 2012.

"Kanada: The Effect of *The Canadian Jewish News* and Survivors on the National Memory of the Holocaust." From Here to There: Change, Travel and Transformation, Conference, Western University, London, Sept 27-29, 2012.

"The CJN and Holocaust memory in Canada: Reflections." BAJS Annual Conference 2013: Memory, Identity, and Boundaries of Jewishness. University of Kent, Canterbury, July 7-9, 2013.

“The Solidarity Movement in Poland: Its history and meaning in collective memory.”
Nightmares and Daydreams. 3rd Annual UWO History Graduate Student Conference, London,
October 18-19, 2013.

Participation in the “Speaking About English” Online Conference. Conference Focus: Teaching
Writing. Online Attendance from 10:00am-3:00pm on Friday April 4, 2014. Access Code: 536-
561-906.

“Writing with a Purpose: L.M. Montgomery and the Canadian Experience of the Great War.”
11th Biennial International Conference: L. M. Montgomery and War. University of
Charlottetown, P.E.I., June 25-29, 2014.

Other Conference Involvement:

In attendance for “The Great War: From Memory to History” 2011 Interdisciplinary Conference,
London, November 10-12, 2011.

In attendance and volunteer for the documentary screening “A People Uncounted” at Western
University, March 7, 2013.

Other talks:

Presenter at the Bruce McCaffrey Memorial Graduate Seminar Series on November 12, 2009.
Presentation titled: "Origins of the Holocaust Reconsidered: The Role of Purposeful Passivity."

Presenter at the Bruce McCaffrey Memorial Graduate Seminar Series on February 9, 2012.
Presentation titled: “Kanada: The Effect of *The Canadian Jewish News* and Survivors on the
National Memory of the Holocaust.”

Guest Lecturer. “Kanada: The Effect of the *Canadian Jewish News* and survivors on the National
memory of the Holocaust,” delivered to a third-year seminar on the Holocaust, Western
University, London, ON, 22 March 2012.

Presenter at the UWO History department’s Professional Development Workshop titled:
"Applying for Grants and Scholarships (including SSHRC and OGS)." Workshop held on
October 11, 2012.

Presenter at The Women's Studies and Feminist Research Graduate Student Seminars on October
25, 2012. Presentation titled: “Caught in an Ancient Rite of Sex and War: The Sexual Abuse of
Women during World War II.”

Guest Lecturer. “America, Britain, and the Holocaust: The Abandonment of the Jews?” delivered to a third-year seminar on the Holocaust, Western University, London, ON, 7 February 2013.

Presenter at the Bruce McCaffrey Memorial Graduate Seminar Series on April 17, 2013.
Presentation titled: “Caught in an Ancient Rite of Sex and War: The Sexual Abuse of Women during World War II.”

Invited as a Guest Speaker on Holocaust Remembrance Day for Adult Education at the Jewish Community Centre, London, ON. January 27, 2014.

Initiated and arranged for a Holocaust survivor, Mr. Elly Gotz, to speak at Western University (open to the department, other departments, and the public) held on March 6, 2014.

Invited as a Guest Speaker for King's Foundation in the Humanities Program March 20, 2014. (Honarium Granted)

Initiated and arranged for a Holocaust survivor, Mr. Elly Gotz, to speak at Western University (open to the department, other departments, and the public) to be held on March 11, 2015.

Teaching Assistantships:

2008-2009: Department of History, University of Western Ontario. Teaching assistant for HIS 2179 “The History of the Two World Wars”; responsible for marking 3 exams, conducting exam reviews, meeting with students, and teaching on the subject of the Holocaust.

2009-2010: Department of History, University of Western Ontario. Teaching assistant for HIS 2179 “The History of the Two World Wars”; responsible for marking 3 exams, conducting exam reviews, meeting with students, and teaching on the subject of the Holocaust. Also initiated and arranged for a Holocaust survivor, Mr. Elly Gotz, to speak to the class on March 17, 2010.

2010-2011: Department of History, University of Western Ontario. Teaching assistant for HIS 3427E (Sections 1 & 2) “The Holocaust”; responsible for marking 2 exams, 2 papers, conducting exam reviews, conducting writing workshops, conducting weekly online forum discussions in place of tutorials, assisting the professor with choosing readings and lecture material, teaching on the subjects of the Holocaust and the United States, the Holocaust and Britain, Holocaust denial, and Holocaust memory in Canada and the United States. . Also initiated and arranged for a Holocaust survivor, Mr. Elly Gotz, to speak to the class on November 23, 2010.

2011-2012: Department of History, University of Western Ontario. Teaching assistant for HIS 3427E “The Holocaust”; responsible for meeting with students, marking 2 exams, 3 papers, conducting exam reviews, conducting writing workshops, assisting the professor with choosing readings and lecture material, teaching on the subjects of the Holocaust and the United States and

the Holocaust and Britain as “Bystanders.” Also initiated and arranged for a Holocaust survivor, Mr. Elly Gotz, to speak to the class (open to the department, other departments, and the public) on March 6, 2012.

2012-2013: Department of History, University of Western Ontario. Teaching assistant for HIS 3427E “The Holocaust”; responsible for meeting with students, marking essay proposals, marking 2 exams, 3 papers, conducting exam reviews, conducting writing workshops, assisting the professor with choosing readings and lecture material, teaching on the subjects of the Holocaust and the United States and the Holocaust and Britain as “Bystanders.” Also initiated and arranged for a Holocaust survivor, Mr. Elly Gotz, to speak to the class (open to the department, other departments, and the public) held on March 5, 2013.

Other Duties:

History Exam Proctor- 2008-2013, 2015.

Current Teaching & Other:

- Taught “Introduction to University Writing” Course #1020 at King’s University College at Western University (4 half courses from September 2013-April 2014).
- Currently co-teaching 2 courses in History (United States Survey 2301 and Seminar on Terrorism 4300) September 2014-2015 and a half course in University Writing (1020) September 2014-2015.
- Currently also a marking assistant for History 2131B “The Presidency in American History.” January-April 2015.
- Currently working part-time as a private tutor for high-school student(s) in History, English, and Writing.

Other Contributions:

- Current Article Reviewer for the NeoAmericanist. The NeoAmericanist is an online multi-disciplinary journal for the study of America publishing work predominantly by Undergraduate and Graduate students. NeoAmericanist's goal as a journal is to push the boundaries of scholarship and theory by blurring the lines of academic disciplines and popular culture by building an online community of students and professional scholars,

and by supporting alternative methods for expression. We therefore invite students of history, theory and criticism, philosophy, political studies, economics, sociology, geography, first nations studies, anthropology, women's/gender studies, architecture and design, film studies, amongst others, to submit any original work pertaining to the study of America. Reviewers will be responsible for assessing and responding to these submissions anonymously.

Website: <http://www.neoamericanist.org/>

- Supporter of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation
- Co-Chair of the Canadians Remember Foundation as of February 2015. Canadians Remember is a grassroots, viral campaign created by and for Canadians to support Holocaust remembrance.

Teaching Interests:

The Holocaust

Holocaust Memory

International Relations and Conflict

The Two World Wars

17-20th Century United States History

19-20th Century Canadian History

18-20th Century World History

19-20th Century United States History: Popular Culture, Gender, and Politics.

18-20th Century United States History: Presidential History.

Women and War

Writing and Critical Thinking

Graduate Courses:

2008-2009:

HIS 9202 Canada and the First World War (Dr. Jonathan Vance)

HIS 9406 Women in the Western World (Dr. Katherine McKenna)

HIS 9824 Revolution and Reaction (Dr. Robert Ventresca)

HIS 9403 English Society, 1714-1790 (Dr. Allyson May)

HIS 9809 Social Memory (Dr. Jonathan Vance)

2009-2010:

HIS 9818 Reading Course (Dr. Jonathan Vance)

HIS 9206 Canada in the 20th Century (Dr. Keith Fleming)

Comprehensive Fields:

- 1.) International Relations and Conflict with a focus on the Second World War and the Holocaust. (Dr. Jonathan Vance)

Passed with Distinction

- 2.) 18th-20th Century United States History (Dr. Alison Meek)

Passed with Distinction

- 3.) 18th-20th Century Canadian History (Dr. Keith Fleming)

Passed with Distinction

Memberships:

Member of the Polish Studies Association 2015

Member of the British Association of Jewish Studies 2013-2014.

Member of “Emerging Leaders” London, ON., 2012-2014.

Volunteer Work:

1994-2015: Involved in Parish fundraisers for relief initiatives as well as sponsoring villages in India with Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish, London ON.

2001-2003: Make a Wish Foundation. Volunteer for events such as “Bingo Night” at “Lucky Days Bingo Hall,” London, Ontario, to raise funds for the charity.

2007-2015: Volunteer tutor Mondays and Wednesday to high school children struggling with grade average as well as undergraduate students- by request.

2007-2015: Annual Donations to World Vision.

2009-2015: Cancer Foundation Volunteer. Volunteer for money-raising events associated with breast cancer, colon cancer, and mental health awareness. Volunteer for awareness raising events such as “The Giant Colon Tour” held on January 16-17, 2010, in London ON.

2010-2015: Annual Donations to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

2011-2014: Donations in support of “Movember” campaign.

2011: United Way Stair Climb with the History Department at The University of Western Ontario held on November 3, 2011.

2013: Volunteer for UWO screening of the documentary “A People Unaccounted.” Provided transportation for the director, assisted with dinner and meet and greet, and assisted with advertising the event. Held on March 7, 2013.

2013: Volunteer for Fundraising Initiatives for Boys Soccer Club “Euro Star” in London, ON.

2013: Made donations for Fundraising Initiatives by Western’s History Department “Relay for Life” Team sponsoring the Canadian Cancer Foundation as well as the Holiday (2013) fundraiser for All Breed Canine Rescue.

2014: Donation to Animal Aid (St.Thomas)

2014: Donation to Canadians Remember

2014: Donation to Children’s Health Foundation (Holiday Home Tour)

2014: Donation to Western’s History Department’s Holiday Fundraiser- Animal Aid

Other community involvement:

2010-2015: Supporter of “Ignite London.”

Ignite is a high-energy evening of 5-minute talks by people who have an idea - and the guts to get on stage and share it. Run by local volunteers, Ignite London is a force for raising the collective IQ and building connections in the city of London.

2012-2014 Member of “Emerging Leaders” London, ON.

The nonprofit Emerging Leaders organization aims to bring new vitality to the London landscape by developing the talents of young leaders. Many of the group’s members draw on their experiences in the business, arts, political, nonprofit, and technology sectors to direct the firing of their collective neurons into some 50 community-development projects. Emerging Leaders tackles election activism, green initiatives, diversity campaigns, and other projects.