

British Press Coverage of Nazi Antisemitism, 1933 - 1938

Thesis

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Abstract

From Adolf Hitler's seizure of power in March 1933 until the *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, the British press provided a comprehensive narrative concerning the anti-Jewish persecutions in Germany. The staff of the *Times*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Financial Times*, the *Economist* and the *Spectator* condemned the Jewish persecutions and expressed concern for the Jews in different degrees. When they discussed the Jewish refugees, they were aware of Britain's national interests, and revealed their hesitation to accept the Jews through the press. A close examination of the reportage also shows that the editors and correspondents of these publications held different perspectives towards Nazi Germany, which influenced their narratives and attitudes towards the antisemitic events.

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Essay

In *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule*, historian Andrew Sharf points out that the reaction of the British newspapers to the Nazi persecutions of the Jews is “a picture of understanding and lack of understanding, a picture of willingness to help and hesitation in actually doing so, a picture of sympathy and bewilderment in the face of the great cataclysm of our day.”¹ At the end of his book, Sharf asserts that the Press can only give its reading public a “true picture” of every fact if it demonstrates both positive and negative attitudes.² This essay is specifically concerned with the *responses* and *attitudes* of the British press to the discrimination and persecution of the Jews in Germany. Focusing on the period between Adolf Hitler’s seizure of power in March 1933 until the *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, it asks: how did the British editors and correspondents write about Germany’s treatment of its Jews? How did they think of and respond to the Jewish refugees from Germany? And finally, what could influence their narratives and attitudes towards those anti-Jewish acts? A close examination of the *Times*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Financial Times*, the *Economist* and the *Spectator* sheds light on these questions. The staff of different British newspapers and weekly journals, in fact, talked about the Jewish persecutions largely through their perspectives of the Anglo-German relation as well as the Nazi regime as a whole. While they condemned antisemitism and expressed concern for the Jews in different degrees, virtually *all* of them were highly aware of Britain’s national interests and hesitant to accept the Jewish refugees into their country.

¹ Andrew Sharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 209.

² Ibid.

In the past decades, a generation of historians have carefully investigated the British attitudes toward Nazi racial propaganda, as well as the complex linkages among the press, society, and its antisemitic past. Tony Kushner, for instance, argues that British intellectuals have been constantly indifferent towards antisemitic words and acts. According to Kushner, relying on their liberal democratic traditions, many British editors suggested that rumors, doubts and fears of Hitler's regime exaggerated the Nazi assaults of Jews. These editors contended that Hitler made use of his aggressive racial policies in order to distract the German public's attention from social and economic crises at home.³ Stephanie Seul adds to Kushner's argument, stressing that the Anglo-American press understood the German events from their own liberal democratic lenses. In her opinion, the British journalists and editors believed that the Nazi attacks on Jews were not only a temporary "revolutionary" phenomenon as Hitler came to power, but also "a temporary measure to distract from domestic problems."⁴ Another group of historians understand the British press reactions to Nazi antisemitism through the newspaper staff's own thoughts about Jews. Richard Griffiths argues that many contemporary journalists saw Jews as "savage, embittered, pathetic people who have been taught to grasp and to hold," and revealed such bias through their reportage.⁵ Russell Wallis takes this thesis one step further. He finds that Britons responded compassionately to the African, Asian or Eastern European victims who suffered from

³ Tony Kushner, "Beyond the pale? British reactions to Nazi anti-Semitism, 1933-39." *Immigrants & Minorities* 8 (1989): 143-160. Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.

⁴ Stephanie Seul, "'Herr Hitler's Nazis Hear an Echo of World Opinion': British and American Press Responses to Nazi Anti-Semitism, September 1930-April 1933." *Politics, Religion and Ideology* 14 (2013): 412-430.

⁵ Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travelers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany, 1933-1939*. (London: Constable, 1980), 74.

oppression and persecution. However, due to their empathy for Germans and admiration of its culture, as well as their long-held deep suspicion of Jews, the British societies were much less concerned about the attacks on German Jews in the 1930s. Many even excused the Nazi policies and blamed the Jews for their own fate.⁶

In addition to liberal traditions, historians also connect the press coverage of Nazi antisemitism to Britain's national interests and diplomacy. Andrew Sharf scrutinizes the relationship between the press and the governmental decisions. In his view, the majority of the British editors were strongly against Hitler's racial policies and his dictatorship. However, considering Britain's overseas markets and the established international order, they chose not to criticize Hitler's regime harshly.⁷ In her dissertation, Barbara Bengé Kehoe adds to Sharf's thesis that a number of British editors were deeply concerned about the role that Britain played in maintaining the balance of power during that crucial, unstable power-transitional period. Having witnessed the German events, many editors intended to create and sustain a climate of public opinion favorable to the policy of appeasement.⁸ Alternatively, Franklin Reid Gannon explains to us how diplomacy could take a role in the news coverage of antisemitism. According to Gannon, although many British editors and journalists had doubts and fears of Nazism, they accepted it because they believed that Hitler would reconstruct Central Europe in peaceful ways. As a result,

⁶ Russell Wallis, *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust: British Attitudes towards Nazi Atrocities*. New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014.

⁷ Andrew Sharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule*. London: Oxford University Press, 1964.

⁸ Barbara Bengé Kehoe, "The British Press and Nazi Germany." PhD diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 1980.

they wrote much more about Germany's diplomacy than its antisemitic persecutions.⁹ Through his investigation of the British weeklies, Benjamin Morris agrees with Gannon's view, and demonstrates the British concern about Germany's rearmament. Due to Hitler's aggressive foreign policies, Morris argues, Britain and other major European powers worried about the established world order. Under the circumstances, the journalists became growingly aware of the Anglo-German antagonism. In order not to provoke diplomatic disputes, they were reluctant to pay close attention to Germany's racial policies.¹⁰

Taken altogether, the rich and evolving historiography demonstrates that liberal traditions, national interests, and diplomatic tensions all influenced the British press responses to the Nazi assaults of Jews. However, these scholars tend to focus on the general picture of the press coverage of German Jews, without comparing and contrasting the specific attitudes and narratives of each newspaper and journal. Besides, they largely neglect the responses of the editors and journalists to the Jewish refugee crisis. This essay fills the vacuum. By investigating the news coverage of the Jewish persecutions and the refugees, it agrees with and contributes to Sharf's and Gannon's arguments that national interest and attempts to preserve peace played a part in the British press reportage. In addition, the essay also demonstrates that individual editors and correspondents were important actors who could direct the narrative and opinion of facts.

⁹ Franklin Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

¹⁰ Benjamin Morris, *The Roots of the Appeasement: the British Weekly Press and Nazi Germany during the 1930s*. London: Cass, 1991.

As soon as Hitler became the German chancellor in January 1933, he and the Nazi party propagated that Jews were “the root of all evil.” Hitler’s idea of race largely appealed to the German public of his time. Humiliated and distressed by the nation’s defeat in World War I, many Germans suspected a Jewish betrayal of Germany, and thus backed Hitler’s anti-Jewish measures. It was in this context that the Nazis sought to construct a racial community by normalizing terror and legalizing persecutions. In April 1933, the Nazis set up the “Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service,” which banned Jews from the German civil service and restricted their participation in the economy. A considerable number of Jewish teachers, tradesmen, doctors, and lawyers either lost their jobs or became blue-collar workers thereafter. At the same time, the Nazis launched boycotts of Jewish businesses in Berlin and other German cities. These boycotts, along with the civil service laws and the atmosphere of hostility, prompted individuals to harass the Jews on their own. In May 1933, Hitler’s minister of propaganda and public information, Joseph Goebbels, organized public book burnings in front of the Opera House of Berlin, for the purpose of “re-educating” the German public.¹¹ Thousands of pro-Nazi students and Hitler’s supporters made huge bonfires of books by leftist intellectuals and such Jewish authors as Albert Einstein and the satirist Kurt Tucholsky. In September, Goebbels ordered the exclusion of Jews from German cultural life, including film, theater, music, fine arts, literature and journalism.

From 1935 onwards, Nazi authorities had routinized violence and normalized coercion. Among their aggressive actions were the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935 that directly

¹¹ See “Book Burning, Historical Film Footage,” https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_fi.php?ModuleId=10005852&MediaId=158.

attacked German Jews. The laws consisted of two parts. The first component was the Law for Protection of German Blood and Honor, which forbade marriage and sexual relations between Jews and “Aryan” Germans. The second was the Reich Citizenship Law, which defined people with three or more grandparents of the Jewish faith as “Jews.” Through the Nuremberg Laws, the Nazi authorities intended not only to isolate the Jews and eliminate their influence, but pave the way for their persecution, deportation, and eventually the extermination of the Jewish race. In November 1938, the murder of a German diplomat by a young Jewish man opened a new round of terror. The SS led an orgy of violence called the *Kristallnacht*, in which they beat and murdered Jews, smashed their homes and businesses, and burned their synagogues. Long before their physical deaths in concentration camps, most German Jews had in fact suffered from a “social death” that pushed them to the margins of the societies during the prewar years.¹²

In terms of foreign affairs, Germany repetitively spoke against the military restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, and wanted to build up its army forces again. On 23 October 1933, Hitler’s government eventually announced Germany’s withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations. After two years of secret rearmament, in 1935 Germany reintroduced conscription and revealed its military to the world.¹³ In 1936, the German army occupied the Rhineland. Hitler and his Nazi officials further announced a “Four-Year Plan” to prepare the German economy and military for war.¹⁴ On 12 March 1938, Hitler ordered the

¹² Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 5.

¹³ Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 77.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

German army to cross the border into Austria, which was known as the *Anschluss*. In the face of Germany's aggression, the British government adopted an appeasement policy. Through a series of negotiations with Germany, Britain tried to preserve European peace.¹⁵ The Anglo-German naval agreement in 1935 was one example of Britain's conciliatory attitude towards Hitler's ambition of rearmament. In essence, the agreement recognized Germany's right to rearm. More importantly, it allowed the nation to have its own naval vessels as long as they were less than 35 per cent of the existing strength of Britain's Royal Navy.¹⁶ It was such concession to Hitler's bold and aggressive foreign policies as well as an attempt to prevent war that marked Anglo-German relations in the 1930s.

In this broad context, a variety of British newspapers and weekly journals outlined Hitler's antisemitic campaign in details. The *Times*, for instance, took on a vital role in informing middle- and upper-class readers of the latest German events. First produced in 1785 as the *Daily Universal Register*, the newspaper changed its name to the *Times* in January 1788. Owned by Major the Hon. John J. Astor and the original proprietorial family, the Walters, the *Times* had become "the most important newspaper" in the 1930s, and kept a large circulation of 185,000–190,000 copies per day.¹⁷ The owners granted the paper's chief editor, Geoffrey Dawson,

¹⁵ Frank McDonough, *Hitler, Chamberlain and Appeasement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 31.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁷ Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, 56. "Despite its price of 2d, and its daunting quality press' outlook and layout, its circulation rose steadily from 187,000 in 1930 to 192,000 in 1937 and 204, 491 in 1939." Also, see Viscount Camrose, *British Newspapers and their Controllers* (London: Cassell and Company Limited, 1947), 21.

“virtually complete authority as Editor,” and seldom commented on his work.¹⁸ Once a private secretary to Joseph Chamberlain and Lord Milner, Dawson not only embraced the British and Christian values of order and decency, but also was highly aware of the interests of the British Empire.¹⁹ Dawson’s assistant and colleague, Robert M. Barrington-Ward, joined the editorial committee of the *Times* in 1927, and “supported his chief without demur.”²⁰

While the *Times* considered itself an independent newspaper that avoided inaccuracy and bias, it was widely known as “an official spokesman for the British Government” in the 1930s.²¹ Since his resumption of the editorship in 1923, Dawson had established the ideas of “general support for the Government of the day,” and of “absolute impartiality of news reporting.”²² On the one hand, Dawson encouraged collective work and pursued accuracy of any piece of news. In his own words, “no single leading article has ever appeared in the *Times* until several members of the staff have had the opportunity of scrutinizing it,” and “nothing provides them [members of the editorial board] with greater amusement than the constant attempts that are made, both at home and abroad, to ascribe this or that contribution to the bias of some particular writer.”²³ On the other hand, however, the newspaper’s impartiality and accuracy did not keep it from

¹⁸ Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, 56 - 57.

¹⁹ Ibid., 58.

²⁰ Linton Andrews, *Lords And Laborers of the Press: Men Who Fashioned the Modern British Newspaper* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), 172 - 173.

²¹ The accuracy of the *Times*, see Sharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule*, 10, and Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, 70.

²² Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, 69.

²³ London *Times*, *History Through “The Times:” a Collection of Leading Articles on Important Events, 1800-1937* (London: Cassell and Company, 1937), vi.

becoming the mouth of the government. Many opinions published in the editorial and leading articles of the *Times* echoed the governmental policies. John Evelyn Wrench, writer and editor of the *Overseas Daily Mail*, recollected in his memoir that the British Foreign Secretary used to lunch with Dawson and express his gratitude to the *Times* for its “continuing support.”²⁴ Many Europeans also saw the views of the *Times* as those of the British government. On 9 June 1938, the German Embassy in London reported to Berlin that “the *Times* is utilized for such semiofficial *ballons d’essai*,” and “would not oppose the views and intentions of Prime Minister Chamberlain in questions of foreign policy.”²⁵ The archival record of the *Times* indicates that Dawson “espoused a policy of ‘giving fair play to the Government,’ without necessarily following them at every point.”²⁶

During the 1930s, the editorial board of the *Times* followed the appeasement policy of the British government and dedicated itself to promoting peace in Europe. In order to do so, it tried to avoid intensifying the Anglo-German relationship by carefully editing the newspaper. Dawson, in particular, was aware of the influence of the *Times* in the ruling circles of Britain and Germany. “I do my utmost, night after night, to keep out of the paper anything that might hurt their [the Germans’] sensibilities,” Dawson said. He was also convinced that “the peace of the world depends more than anything else on our getting into reasonable relations with Germany.”²⁷

²⁴ John Evelyn Wrench, *Geoffrey Dawson And Our Times* (London: Hutchinson, 1955), 298.

²⁵ Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, 70.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Colin Shindler, *Why Didn't the Press Shout?: American & International Journalism during the Holocaust*, ed. Robert Moses Shapiro (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 2003), 153.

Likewise, having witnessed the carnage and destruction during World War I, Barrington-Ward whole-heartedly embraced appeasement and exhibited a total hatred of war. According to British historian Colin Shindler, Barrington-Ward was especially loath to use his position to advocate too strong a policy against Germany. He feared that such an act would antagonize the Nazi leadership and thereby facilitate the movement towards war.²⁸ In fact, the editors of the *Times* had been reluctant to elaborate the dark side of the Nazi regime from the very beginning. In March 1933, the Nazis established their first concentration camp for political prisoners in Dachau. The correspondent of the *Times* in Bavaria, Stanley Simpson, wrote an informative news article about the “intense terrorism” in Dachau after conducting research and checking and re-checking his sources.²⁹ Having read the article, the editors firstly questioned Simpson’s ability to be objective and unemotional. After a conference, they reached to a consensus that the story of Dachau was “no longer relevant” and would not be published, because the *New Statesman* had already presented a comprehensive article on the camp at Sonnenburg.³⁰

This support of the appeasement policy at the *Times* exerted an enormous impact upon the paper’s coverage of the Jewish persecutions. In response to Germany’s ill-treatment of its Jews, the *Times* stressed Britain’s non-interventionist principle first and foremost. Soon after Hitler became the chancellor of Germany in January 1933, the editors made an open announcement in a leading article that the form of government which the German people had chosen and tolerated

²⁸ Shindler, *Why Didn't the Press Shout?*, 152

²⁹ Ibid., 155.

³⁰ Ibid., 156.

was “their own affair.”³¹ Having witnessed how the Nazis unleashed a campaign of violence against their political opponents in March, the correspondents of the *Times* described “the cruelties inflicted by Germans upon Germans” in detail. However, they held that such violence was “primarily a matter for Germany herself,” and “only if these methods were to be applied to foreign subjects would they become a matter of concern to other countries.”³² On 1 April 1933, the Nazis launched a boycott against Jews. While the editors published multiple articles about the event, they reinforced their appeasement principle that “there can be no question of any official intervention by this country [Britain] on behalf of the subjects of another State.” “Such action,” they argued, “would only make the position of the German Jews more perilous and would provoke German Nationalism to frenzy.”³³

In addition to its non-interventionist approach, the *Times* maintained a balance between criticizing anti-Jewish acts and differentiating antisemites from the German people. Across the 1930s, the staff of the newspaper never hesitated to uncover and condemn the irrationality of Hitler’s antisemitic campaign. In fact, they not only frequently and thoroughly reported anti-Jewish measures in Germany, but also paid much attention to the deteriorated Jewish life under the Nazi regime. For instance, soon after the boycott of April 1933, the paper’s correspondents highlighted the economic plight of the Jews. “Countless Jews have been driven from public and private posts into the ranks of the unemployed,” they wrote, “and thousands of business people,

³¹ “Tension in Berlin,” *Times*, 1 March 1933, p. 15.

³² “The Spirit of Potsdam,” *Times*, 22 March 1933, p. 15.

³³ “According to Plan,” *Times*, 3 April 1933, p. 15.

Jewish and non-Jewish, have been reduced to penury.”³⁴ Similarly, as soon as the Nazis announced the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935, the editors of the *Times* continuously published five news articles and one leading article to explain the laws and their impacts upon the Jewish communities.³⁵ Both correspondents and editors underlined the exclusion of Jews from German citizenship, the prohibition of marriage between Jews and Aryans, as well as the isolation of Jews from Germany’s social and economic life. Those Laws, the editors pointed out, were “based upon a pseudoscientific theory,” which “could not withstand the slightest scientific investigation.”³⁶ They further contended that all those anti-Jewish laws and policies aimed at stigmatizing the Jewish people as “a destructive force whose continued existence was to be deplored and whose extermination was to be brought about ruthlessly and speedily.”³⁷ From this perspective, the *Times* not only saw the cruelty and irrationality of the Nazi ideology, but also tried to provide its reader thorough and deep analysis of these state-sponsored crimes.

However, the staff of the *Times* did not blame the German people for those antisemitic acts. Throughout the 1930s, the editors and reporters tended to depict the antisemites as merely a “minority” in the Nazi party, whom they differentiated from the “good” German majority. In April 1933, for instance, the paper’s correspondent demonstrated that the German public showed “signs of critical reaction” to the Nazis’ dismissal of Jewish professors from universities. Friends

³⁴ “Herr Hitler’s Problem,” *Times*, 5 April 1933, p. 15.

³⁵ “New Laws in Germany,” *Times*, 16 September 1935, p. 12. “New German Laws,” 17 September 1935, p. 13. “Obedience the First Law,” 17 September 1935, p. 14, “Germany and the Crisis,” 17 September 1935, p. 15, and “Isolation of Jews in Germany,” 18 September 1935, p. 9.

³⁶ “German Cruelty to Jews,” *Times*, 3 October 1935, p. 14

³⁷ Ibid.

of those Jewish scholars, he claimed, did not agree that “every Jew, as a Jew, represents a lower form of humanity.”³⁸ The correspondent also cited the words and praised the position of the *Deutsche Zeitung*, which criticized that the Nazi order would “strike a deadly blow to science,” and “banish scholarly authority from the universities.”³⁹ A more illuminating example was the paper’s coverage of the *Kristallnacht*. On the one hand, the editors published four news articles to demonstrate the “systematic plunder and destruction” against the Jewish communities, which “had seldom taken place in a civilized country since the Middle Ages.”⁴⁰ But on the other hand, the paper’s correspondents tended to separate those Jews-baiters from ordinary Germans. One of them highlighted that “the crowd looked on” showed astonishment and disapproval, and many Germans expressed “strong dislike of the methods employed.”⁴¹ The leading article published on 16 November 1938 more clearly displayed the paper’s sympathy towards as well as belief in the German public. “It is true enough that the Jews are regarded in Germany with a positive hatred,” the editors wrote. But it was also true that the German people, “as distinguished from their rulers,” could be made “ashamed and uneasy by these excesses of their party leaders.”⁴²

A closer investigation of the *Times* also tells that its staff emphasized Nazi Germany’s role in keeping European peace while underplayed its antisemitic aggression. While the staff of the

³⁸ “German Students’ Power,” *Times*, 29 April 1933, p. 13.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ “Nazis attacks on Jews,” *Times*, 11 November 1938, p. 14. Other three articles are “The Victims of Reprisals,” 11 November 1938, p. 15, “Germany and the Jews,” 12 November 1938, p. 13, and “Germany and the Jews,” 14 November 1938, p. 8.

⁴¹ “Nazis attacks on Jews,” *Times*, 11 November 1938, p. 14.

⁴² “Germany and Africa,” *Times*, 16 November 1938, p. 15.

Times showed contempt towards Hitler and his ideology, nevertheless they maintained that a stable Anglo-German relationship could help preserve the political and economic order. “A genuine understanding upon present policy between the head of the Fascist State and the British Prime Minister,” the editors wrote, “might yet turn the activities of the Disarmament Conference into fruitful channels and prepare the way for a successful World Economic Conference.”⁴³

When it came to Germany’s treatment of its Jews, they hoped that the worldwide protests might give the Nazis a broader sense of ethnic unity and national strength, and thereafter abandon their racist doctrines. “If that happens,” it argued, the Nazis’ idea about the relationship between individual and community would be “a valuable contribution to economic and social experiment” in Europe.⁴⁴ Having witnessed five years of persecution as well as Germany’s withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations, the paper’s staff still wanted to display certain “good” sides of the Nazi regime. In January 1938, the editors presented a summary concerning Hitler’s rule in Germany. They claimed that “Herr Hitler’s unchallenged position does not rest on mere force.” Without mentioning the German-Jewish situation, the editors underlined that “millions of Germans regard him with burning devotion as the savior of his country,” because he “created an impressive military force with incredible speed,” and “restored Germany to her place as a Great Power in the world.”⁴⁵ Hence, despite its clear and

⁴³ “A Meeting in North Italy,” *Times*, 15 March 1933, p. 15.

⁴⁴ “Germany’s Ordeal,” *Times*, 30 July 1935, p. 15.

⁴⁵ “Five Years in Germany,” *Times*, 31 January 1938, p. 31.

accurate reports of the anti-Jewish measures, the *Times* largely followed the appeasement policy, and stressed that Germany was a major player in keeping European order.

In addition to the *Times*, the *Daily Mail* was another important newspaper that closely monitored the German events during the 1930s. Born on 4th May, 1896, the *Daily Mail* was the only popular daily paper which maintained a predominant upper and middle-class readership. In 1937, its circulation had reached up to 1,580,000.⁴⁶ The readership as well as large circulation of the *Daily Mail* indicated its enormous impact not just on the ruling circle, but also on the British general public. Viscount Rothermere, the paper's contemporary owner and co-editor, was a sympathizer of fallen monarchies in Europe. Influenced by some of his aristocratic friends such as Princess Stephanie von Hohenlohe, Rothermere tended to believe that the Treaty of Versailles treated the defeated nations badly. Meanwhile, he genuinely detested Bolshevism and considered Nazism an effective way to counter the communist ideology. Seeing the internal accomplishments of the Nazi regime, Rothermere thus maintained personal correspondence with Hitler across the interwar years. In his editorial article of 10 July 1933, "Youth Triumphant," Rothermere praised that under the Nazi rule, "a stream of young blood is revitalizing the country."⁴⁷ He also expressed his admiration for Hitler himself, emphasizing that "it is Germany's good fortune to have found a leader who can combine for the public good all the most vigorous elements in the country."⁴⁸ The Nazis used the article for their political

⁴⁶ Gannon, *The British Press and Germany, 1936 - 1939*, 32.

⁴⁷ "Youth Triumphant," *Daily Mail*, 10 July 1933, p. 10.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

propaganda throughout the 1930s.⁴⁹ Between January and June 1934, Rothermere was also an intimate associate of Oswald Mosley, and a supporter of Mosley's National Union of Fascists (BUF). In an editorial article published in January 1934, "Give the Blackshirts a Helping Hand," Rothermere backed the ongoing fascist movements in Britain by showing Germany's achievements and "confident enthusiasm."⁵⁰ He further underlined that "it is of urgent necessity for the younger generation of Britons to follow the example set in Germany and Italy."⁵¹

Besides Rothermere, the *Daily Mail's* senior correspondent in Berlin, George Ward Price, was an apologist for fascism as well. According to historian Franklin Reid Gannon, Hitler appreciated Ward Price's writing about Germany, and viewed him as "the only foreign journalist who reported him without prejudice."⁵² Due to their sympathy to the Nazis, Hitler occasionally invited the staff of the *Daily Mail* to meet with high German officials. On 19 December 1934, for instance, Rothermere, his son Esmond, and Ward Price were three of four foreigners among only two dozen guests who attended Hitler's first dinner party in his official residence in Berlin. Goebbels, Goering and Ribbentrop were also present.⁵³

The staff's pro-fascist position significantly influenced the *Daily Mail's* coverage of the Jewish persecutions in Germany. On the one hand, the newspaper provided a comprehensive

⁴⁹ Gannon, *The British Press and Germany, 1936 - 1939*, 32.

⁵⁰ "Give the Blackshirts a Helping Hand," *Daily Mail*, 22 January 1934, p. 13.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Gannon, *The British Press and Germany, 1936 - 1939*, 34.

⁵³ Sally Taylor, *The Great Outsiders: Northcliffe, Rothermere and the Daily Mail* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996), 294.

narrative of Hitler's antisemitic campaign, and was condemnatory of the ill-treatment of Jews from the very outset. As early as in February 1933, the correspondents of the *Daily Mail* had clearly pointed out that Hitler's antisemitism had "degraded the Jews to the rank of second citizens" and deprived them of the right to vote.⁵⁴ In the following months, the *Daily Mail* not only demonstrated anti-Jewish measures in an almost weekly basis, but also provided several articles to explain important events. For instance, the editorial board published five news articles about the boycott of April 1933 as well as its damage on the Jewish community. One correspondent condemned that "not since the Jews were driven out of Germany in the Middle Ages and found a home in Poland have they had to face such an onslaught as now."⁵⁵ At the same time, the *Daily Mail* devoted a generous amount of space to demonstrating the gradual exclusion of Jews from Germany's economic and civil life. Through the newspaper, the reading public could know about how the Nazis cleared the Jews "out of the learned professions and from the world of art, music, and the theater;"⁵⁶ how they further purged "German trade and industry of Jewish capital;"⁵⁷ how the Nuremberg Laws officially forbade the marriage between "Aryans" and Jews;⁵⁸ and how the Nazis asked Germans not to enter Jewish stores and business

⁵⁴ "Hitler Seeks Free Hand to Rule without Reichstag," *Daily Mail*, 1 February 1933, p. 10.

⁵⁵ "Germany's Boycott Surprise," *Daily Mail*, 1 April 1933, p. 13. Other four news articles are "All Germany to Boycott Jews," 29 March 1933, p. 12; "Hitler and a Jewish 'War'," 30 March 1933, p. 15; "Britain's Attitude," 31 March 1933, p. 12, and "Germany's Jewish Boycott," 3 April 1933, p. 13.

⁵⁶ "Dismissal of Jews," *Daily Mail*, 7 April 1933, p. 15.

⁵⁷ "Nazis to Control Jews' Wealth," *Daily Mail*, 28 April 1935, p. 14.

⁵⁸ "Hitler and Memel," *Daily Mail*, 16 September 1935, p. 13

houses, which meant “ruin for thousands of shopkeepers.”⁵⁹ In fact, between 1933 and 1938, the *Daily Mail* offered roughly 7400 articles about German events. Among them 220 directly concerned the treatment of Jews, which outnumbered its coverage of many other significant foreign affairs, including Germany’s rearmament (204), the Treaty of Versailles (164) and the Anglo-German naval agreement (64).

On the other hand, however, the staff of the *Daily Mail* were not quite convinced of the persecution of Jews, and constantly expressed their suspicion concerning the truthfulness of the antisemitic acts. In particular, the paper’s staff took on an active part in dismissing rumors about the state-sponsored violences against the Jews. For instance, On 4 March 1933, a correspondent noticed that “reports of an intended massacre of Jews throughout Germany tomorrow night have been circulated in London.” “Such reports,” he argued, “should be set aside as wild inventions.”⁶⁰ Another correspondent similarly stressed that “that some Jews were badly beaten and knocked about is true.” “But some of the stories of Jew baiting which have appeared in foreign countries,” according to his observation, “are sheer nonsense and are early refuted.”⁶¹ It is true that after the boycott of April 1933, the *Daily Mail* devoted more space to showing Nazi antisemitism. But in a leading article, the editorial board tended to view the ongoing anti-Jewish campaign as a temporary phenomenon following Hitler’s seizure of power. The board asserted that persecution of the Jews “forms no part of sound racist policy.” Instead, it was “one of the

⁵⁹ “Nazis to Control Jews’ Wealth,” *Daily Mail*, 28 April 1938, p. 14. Also see “Jews’ Shops to be Branded,” 17 June 1938, p. 13.

⁶⁰ “Tomorrow’s Poll,” *Daily Mail*, 4 March 1933, p. 13.

⁶¹ “Hindenburg Sanctions Dictator’s Powers from Hitler,” *Daily Mail*, 25 March 1933, p. 14.

results of the wild fanaticism which accompanied great upheavals.”⁶² Rothermere himself was eager to deny the misconception that “German Jews lead an almost hunted existence.”⁶³ In his signed article published on 28 December 1934, Rothermere believed that Germans were “most intelligent, industrious, high-spirited, and hardy people in the world.”⁶⁴ He emphasized that in German hotels and restaurants, he had “frequently seen merry and festive parties of German Jews who showed no symptoms of insecurity or suffering.”⁶⁵ Ward Price was eager to make contributions to this narrative as well. Having praised Hitler’s ambitious four-year plan in 1936, he proceeded to criticize “hate and mistrust” of other states towards Germany’s economic recovery. “And whom had Germany injured in doing it? From whom had she taken anything?” He posed these questions at the end of the article.⁶⁶

Apart from their suspicion of the truthfulness of the antisemitic acts, writers of the *Daily Mail* also held an enduring belief in German humanitarianism. This can be best illustrated by their responses to the *Kristallnacht*. In the aftermath of “the storm of anger” against the Jews on 9 November 1938, the *Daily Mail* showed its sympathy to the German people, while hesitated to condemn the government.⁶⁷ The editorial board claimed that the reprisals were indeed an outrage to the name of justice, but “the treatment of German Jews by Germany was an internal affair.”

⁶² “Keep Cool,” *Daily Mail*, 15 May 1933, p. 10.

⁶³ “Germany on her Feet Again,” *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1934, p. 8.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ “Hitler on his 4-Years Plan,” *Daily Mail*, 10 September 1936, p. 11.

⁶⁷ “Nazis’ Reprisals against Jews,” *Daily Mail*, 9 November 1938, p. 15.

The board concluded with the hope that “Germany might yet heed the call of humanity and show moderation - and mercy.”⁶⁸ Another correspondent followed the event of violence until the 11th of November. While he admitted that there still existed “furious onslaught against Jewish property,” he tended to attribute the violence to the “mobs” instead of the Nazi officials. According to his account, it was the mobs who ignored the “‘stern command’ of Propaganda Minister Dr. Goebbels that anti-Jew riots must cease.”⁶⁹ The news coverage about the *Kristallnacht* at the *Daily Mail* thus gave the reading public a sense that only a few fanatic antisemites should be responsible for the crimes. For the paper’s staff, the pogrom appeared to be an individual “incident” that would not influence their inclination to the German government and people. Only ten days after the *Kristallnacht*, the editorial board published a leading article to extol the benefits of Nazi rule to Vienna. It claimed that Vienna would become “a brighter and more prosperous, happier city than in those gloomy days before the *Anschluss*.”⁷⁰

Unlike the *Times*’ appeasement attitude and the *Daily Mail*’s pro-Nazi position, the staff of the *Manchester Guardian* held a strong antifascist view from Hitler’s assumption of power right until the end of World War II. Established in 1821, the paper maintained a “center-left” political position, and sought to appeal to a reading public who was “intelligent, free-thinking and with an international outlook.”⁷¹ Between 1932 and 1944, William Percival Crozier was the paper’s

⁶⁸ “The World Protests,” *Daily Mail*, 14 November 1938. Also see Wallis, *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust*, 185, p. 12.

⁶⁹ “Jew-baiters defy Goebbels’ Order,” *Daily Mail*, 11 November 1938, p. 13

⁷⁰ “New Vienna,” *Daily Mail*, 21 November 1938, p. 12.

⁷¹ John Calhoun Merrill, *The World's Great Dailies: Profiles of Fifty Newspapers* (New York: Hastings House, 1979), 114.

editor and senior journalist. A life-long supporter of Zionism and firm critic of the Nazi Party, Crozier tried to expose Hitler's aggressive actions through the newspaper.⁷² In his opinion, it was the mission of the British press to provide the public a full picture of contemporary German affairs, especially the Jewish and Christian persecutions. Crozier, therefore, was "bitter" against some national newspapers including the *Times*, which, he contended, ignored or did not pay sufficient attention to the dark side of Nazi Germany.⁷³ C. A. Lambert and F. A. Voigt were the newspaper's chief correspondents in Germany. Both of them abhorred the Nazi regime, its racial theories and barbarous practices. Voigt, in particular, constantly wrote about the terror, the persecutions, and the concentration camps in the Reich. He was also the first journalist who described and analyzed Germany's Gestapo in the British press.⁷⁴

Given its antifascist position, the *Manchester Guardian* not only used a generous amount of space to describe and condemn antisemitic acts, but also tried to openly defend the Jewish victims. The newspaper's staff believed that by recording *all* reliable details of events, they were able to show what the German-Jewish situation really was both accurately and objectively. For instance, the editorial board published four articles before and after the April boycott in 1933. The correspondents carefully described how the Nazis had assaulted, beaten, and robbed the Jewish citizens. "The antisemitic outrages of the last few weeks are far more horrible than could reasonably have been imagined at first," one correspondent claimed. "Nothing like them has

⁷² "WP Crozier," *Manchester Guardian*, see <https://www.theguardian.com/gnm-archive/2014/nov/20/wp-crozier-collection-in-focus>.

⁷³ Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, 76.

⁷⁴ "How the 'Gestapo' Works," *Manchester Guardian*, 17 February 1936, p. 9. Also see Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, 82.

been known in Germany for generations.”⁷⁵ In fact, during the first two years of Hitler’s rule, the staff of the *Manchester Guardian* published the greatest amount of news about the Jewish question among Britain’s national dailies.⁷⁶ In addition to their criticism against the Nazis, the staff also attempted to defend justice for the Jewish victims. In the aftermath of the *Kristallnacht*, for instance, the editorial board published more than a dozen news articles to document the “monstrous event.” In the meantime, some correspondents tried to speak for the German-Jewish community. One of them contended that the assassination was surely an individual case. Therefore “the Jews can have no responsibility for the crime of a despairing youth of seventeen.”⁷⁷ While other influential newspapers such as the *Times* and the *Daily Mail* only condemned the anti-Jewish violences, the *Manchester Guardian* clearly took a step further and played an active part in defending the victims.

Apart from its thorough descriptions of the anti-Jewish measures, the *Manchester Guardian* differentiated itself from other newspapers by placing antisemitism at the center of the Nazi ideology. In their works, Andrew Sharf and Franklin Gannon both noted that the *Manchester Guardian* had “a clear conception of what Nazi Germany was and what it meant.”⁷⁸ Indeed, even before the April boycott, the paper’s staff had already paid sufficient attention to the antisemitic sentiments in Germany. Having described an anti-Jewish demonstration before the

⁷⁵ “Official Boycott of Jews in Germany,” *Manchester Guardian*, 29 March 1933, p. 9. Also see “Jews in Germany,” 27 March 1933, p. 12, and “More Facts about the Nazi Terror,” 8 April 1933, p. 15.

⁷⁶ Sharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule*, 11.

⁷⁷ “The Murdered Nazi Official,” *Manchester Guardian*, 10 November 1938, p. 10. “Conditions in Germany Growing Worse,” 14 November 1938, p. 9., and “Still Darker Threat Against the Jews,” 23 November 1938, p. 11.

⁷⁸ Gannon, *The British Press and Germany 1936-1939*, 87. Also see Merrill, *The World’s Great Dailies*, 18.

March election in 1933, one correspondent commented that the act had “no doubt a propagandist value for the Nazi party.” For “it showed that antisemitism is a doctrine that can be put into effect.”⁷⁹ The paper’s editorial board echoed this view by condemning the upcoming anti-Jewish boycott. It maintained that the drive against the Jews had “long been part of the Hitlerite program.”⁸⁰ The *Manchester Guardian* kept presenting similar criticism against the Nazis’ racial ideology as the party initiated series of other anti-Jewish measures. For instance, in 1937 the Nazis created an exhibition entitled *Der ewige Jude* to commemorate the fourteenth anniversary of the Beer Hall Putsch in 1923. The paper’s staff not only reported its racial content, but also clearly pointed out that “the exhibition is educational in purpose.” In their view, the exhibition aimed at justifying the Nuremberg Laws as well as other “legal” persecutions of the Jews.⁸¹

In comparison to all the newspapers examined above, the staff of the *Financial Times* held a moderately positive attitude towards Nazi Germany, and believed in appeasement throughout the 1930s. During the prewar years, the *Financial Times* was one of the leading national newspapers with the second largest circulation of its kind in the world (The *Wall Street Journal* was the first). It provided its reader not only a full list of the Stock Exchange dealings and guidances on taxations and employment everyday, but also the latest news about urban life across the world.⁸² D. S. T. Hunter was the chief editor between 1924 and 1937. Archie Chisholm succeeded Hunter, and edited the paper until 1940. As Hitler gained total power and prepared to

⁷⁹ “Anti-Semitism in Berlin,” *Manchester Guardian*, 10 March 1933, p. 11.

⁸⁰ “An Attempt to Intimidate World Opinion,” *Manchester Guardian*, 30 March 1933, p. 9

⁸¹ “German Ridicule of Jews,” *Manchester Guardian*, 22 November 1937, p. 5.

⁸² Viscount Camrose, *British Newspapers and their Controllers*, 78.

rearm Germany, both Hunter and Chisholm chose to be on the side of the appeasers.⁸³ Thus when Hitler occupied the Rhineland in March 1936, the paper's staff confined their criticism and disapproval. Instead, they speculated that after the occupation there might "well emerge in the end a clearer prospect of European peace than has existed for a generation past."⁸⁴ In March 1938, Hitler annexed Austria, and at the end of September he managed to achieve the Munich agreement. The staff of the *Financial Times* again kept a positive view about Hitler, telling their subscribers that "the latest news from Munich indicates that once again Peace is coming into view."⁸⁵ They further contended that although "dismemberment is a painful thing for a proud country [Czechoslovakia] to contemplate," "it possesses one virtue, that it will have spared countless millions of horrors of a war more intense and destructive even than that of 1914-18."⁸⁶

Due to its sympathy to the appeasers, the *Financial Times* reported the Jewish persecutions in a highly brief and selective way. Historian Kushner once noted that the *Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Manchester Guardian* "gave a thorough and consistent account of the early attacks on German Jewry but outside these papers there was less success in reporting Nazi antisemitism."⁸⁷ The *Financial Times* largely fit into this category. Its staff not only failed to offer a complete picture of each antisemitic act, but also marginalized the ill-treatment of Jews from contemporary German events. For instance, on 1 April 1933, the newspaper published a

⁸³ David Kynaston, *The Financial Times: A Centenary History* (London: Viking, 1988), 128.

⁸⁴ "Herr Hitler's Latest Declaration," *Financial Times*, 9 March 1936, p. 4.

⁸⁵ "Peace Coming Into View," *Financial Times*, 30 September 1938, p. 4.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, 35.

short, concise article about the place and timing of the anti-Jewish boycotts.⁸⁸ Yet, the next piece of news about the Jewish question was published in late May, concerning how 100 Jewish stockbrokers in Germany lost their jobs to the “Aryans.”⁸⁹ Throughout April and May, readers could hardly know about the consequences of the boycotts, including the financial losses of the German Jews and the impact on the European stock markets. Moreover, correspondents of the *Financial Times* tended to minimize the coverage of antisemitic acts and policies when they reported German affairs. For instance, after the Nazis announced the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935, the correspondent only briefly mentioned that two laws “dealt with the position of Jews in Germany.”⁹⁰ Under the title “Herr Hitler declares for peace,” the correspondent devoted more space to demonstrate how Hitler “emphasized Germany’s great love of peace,” and how the dictator would not use Germany’s rearmament “to attack other nations, but to maintain freedom for the German people.”⁹¹ It was only after the *Kristallnacht* that the editors of the *Financial Times* offered a slightly more detailed description of Nazis’ antisemitic measure, as well as its “very disturbing effect on the psychology of the world markets.”⁹²

Apart from daily newspapers, a variety of weekly journals also published news articles of Nazi antisemitic persecutions. The *Economist*, for instance, was such an influential publication

⁸⁸ “Jews in Germany,” *Financial Times*, 1 April 1933, p. 7.

⁸⁹ “Nazis and the Jews,” *Financial Times*, 22 May 1933, p. 1.

⁹⁰ “Hitler Declares for Peace,” *Financial Times*, 16 September 1935, p. 7.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² “Halt to Rise in Stock Markets,” *Financial Times*, 15 November 1938, p. 5. Also see “Anti-Jewish Riots in Germany,” 11 November 1938, p. 5, and “*Financial Times*” Weekly Commodity Index,” 14 November 1938, p. 6.

that had followed and criticized the internal policies of the Reich since Hitler came to power. Sir Walter Layton, a Cambridge-trained economist, edited the journal from 1922 until the end of 1938. Layton was firm in his commitment against appeasement, and was deeply concerned about “the safety of the mother country, the colonies and the Dominions.”⁹³ Luigi Einaudi and F. Long, the journal’s chief correspondents in Italy and Germany, were strong opponents of fascism. The staff of the *Economist*, in news reviews as well as leading articles, had never been reserved in condemning the internal policies of the Reich and portraying Hitler’s rearmament as a serious threat to European peace. From the time of Hitler’s assumption of power, they believed that the Nazi regime was “carrying on a ‘struggle against pacifism’ and deliberately inculcating militarism and the sentimentalizing of war with all the propaganda-instruments at its command.”⁹⁴ In the face of Germany’s military aggression, the staff criticized the idea of appeasement, pointing out that “a policy of appeasement [that] might have achieved everything in the past is no proof that it can achieve anything today.”⁹⁵ Instead, they argued that Britain needed to arm itself, and, in particular, should not have “an air force inferior to any other within striking distance of our shores.”⁹⁶

A thorough examination of the *Economist* shows its strong, consistent criticism against Germany’s ill-treatment of its Jews in the 1930s. Immediately after the boycott of April 1933, the journal’s Berlin correspondent presented an informative article to condemn the act. “For our own

⁹³ Morris, *The Roots of the Appeasement*, 17.

⁹⁴ “Nazi Pacifism,” *Economist*, 20 May 1933, p. 488.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ “A Defence Loan?,” *Economist*, 28 September 1935, p. 598.

part,” he stated, “we can only say that one of the surest indices of any Gentile nation’s standing in the scale of civilization is its treatment of the Jews within it.”⁹⁷ Since the non-Jewish Germans were “one of the most highly educated and efficient Gentile nations in the world,” the present outbreak of antisemitism in Germany was “particularly odious.”⁹⁸ In the following months, the *Economist* continued to provide news of Nazi antisemitism. This included how Professor Ewald Banse’s “poisonous” military doctrines became mandatory readings for non-Jewish German children only;⁹⁹ how Germany’s taxation laws forbade the Jews to become members or directors of financial offices;¹⁰⁰ and how a new wave of antisemitic attacks and a revival of “anti-Jewish mania” took place in Germany roughly one year after the boycott of April 1933.¹⁰¹ As soon as the Nazis announced the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935, the *Economist* offered three news articles to demonstrate their antisemitic content.¹⁰² One correspondent called the laws as “caste legislation” and “ancient barbarism,” which marked “a terrible social regression.”¹⁰³ Another contended that the marriage ban between Jews and “Aryans” had, in fact, been put into practice long before the official announcement of the laws. When the *Kristallnacht* took place in November 1938, the *Economist* provided six articles in four continuous weeks to demonstrate the

⁹⁷ “Germany and Jewry,” *Economist*, 1 April 1933, p. 682.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ “Nazi Pacifism,” *Economist*, 9 September 1933, p. 488.

¹⁰⁰ “Germany,” *Economist*, 3 November 1934, p. 827.

¹⁰¹ “A new Anti-Jewish outbreak in Germany” *Economist*, 19 May 1934, p. 1080.

¹⁰² See “Germany,” *Economist*, 21 September 1935, p. 560, “Germany and her Laws,” 21 September 1935, p. 554, and “Germany,” 23 November 1935, p. 1011.

¹⁰³ “Germany and her Laws,” *Economist*, 21 September 1935, p. 554.

scale and degree of the violence. Besides describing how “the thing was done in cold blood,” the journal’s correspondent firmly asserted that “everybody saw the outrages; almost everybody hated them [the antisemites]; hardly anybody dared to protest.”¹⁰⁴

In addition, the staff of the *Economist* tended to use the Jewish persecutions to confirm and back their view that Hitler’s regime posed a serious threat to European peace. Two weeks after the boycott of April 1933, for instance, the editorial board published a leading article, in which it concluded that “the story of the campaign against the Jews” illustrated “the action of the extremist forces” in the Reich.¹⁰⁵ The board further assumed that Germany’s internal aggression might undermine the international stability. In its own words, Hitler had “gained power at the cost of exciting evil passions at home and profound alarms abroad.”¹⁰⁶ This is because he had not only “preached violence to the youth of Germany,” but also “allowed them to practice this violence” against Jews, Marxists as well as advocates of pacifism and internationalism.¹⁰⁷ In September 1933, a correspondent reinforced the “terror” that Hitler might bring to Europe. He recollected the boycotts and attacks against the Jews in the past months, and insisted that Hitler’s government disregard “the ordinary canons of justice and humanity in revenging its own fellow-countrymen.” Such an aggressive government, he argued, should not “claim the right to equality of status among other nations.”¹⁰⁸ Having witnessed Germany’s withdrawal from the World

¹⁰⁴ “Death to the Jews,” *Economist*, 19 November 1938, p. 369.

¹⁰⁵ “The Outlook of Germany,” *Economist*, 15 April 1933, p. 795

¹⁰⁶ “Word and Deeds,” *Economist*, 20 May 1933, p. 1059.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ “The Hitler Terror,” *Economist*, 2 September 1933, p. 440.

Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations, along with its racial policies and rearmament declarations, the editorial board presented a lengthy article concerning Hitler's rule in February 1938. It claimed that the impact of Hitler's internal policies had fundamentally broken "the bonds of sympathy" that once subsisted between the world and the Weimar Republic. "His autarky, his militarism, his racialism, his antisemitism, his anti-liberalism, and his repressive campaign against both of the Christian Churches" could hardly keep Europe stable and peaceful.¹⁰⁹ Focusing on their concern about the prospects of Britain's and Europe's security, the staff of the *Economist* thus largely used the antisemitic events to publicize the danger and uncertainty of the Nazi regime.

Apart from the *Economist*, the *Spectator* was another mainstream weekly journal that provided a consistent, critical view of Nazi antisemitism from 1933 till 1938. Founded in 1828, the *Spectator* was the oldest of the serious weeklies in the 1930s and kept a long and distinguished news reporting career.¹¹⁰ Henry Wilson Harris was the editor of the *Spectator* from 1932 until 1953 and determined the general policies of its publication. A life-long Liberal and pacifist, Wilson Harris genuinely deplored Nazism, denounced Hitler's internal and foreign policies, and considered Germany's aggression a danger to the stability of Europe.¹¹¹ In his signed article published after the Disarmament Conference in June 1933, Wilson Harris suspected that Germany was "secretly and illegitimately rearming" itself, which was a "great

¹⁰⁹ "Five Years of Hitler," *Economist*, 5 February 1938, p. 278.

¹¹⁰ Sharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule*, 216. Also see Morris, *The Roots of Appeasement*, 11.

¹¹¹ Morris, *The Roots of Appeasement*, 15.

problem” for the world.¹¹² On the political side, R. A. Scott-James served as Wilson Harris’ assistant editor and leader-writer from 1933 to the end of 1935. Goronwy Rees fulfilled these roles from February 1936 until August 1939. Both Scott-James and Rees shared Wilson Harris’ antifascist view, and were firm critics of the Third Reich. Rees, in particular, was not only familiar with the movement and ideology of the Nazis, but also stayed in Germany during the late 1920s and early 1930s.¹¹³ The leading article published on 26 May 1933, “Is Liberalism Dead,” illuminated the *Spectator*’s critics and doubts about Hitler’s government. For the journal’s staff, the menace to Liberalism came from “the revival of the War Spirit in Germany,” because there was “nothing more infectious than military madness.”¹¹⁴

This antifascist view at the *Spectator* led to its consistent and strong criticism against Nazi antisemitism. Both editors and reporters recognized the danger of the racial ideology soon after Hitler’s seizure of power. On the eve of the boycott of April 1933, one correspondent foresaw that the Nazis would make the life of German Jews “literally intolerable.” He pointed out that these antisemitic measures might help the Nazis gain their ends on the short view. But on the long view, they would do Germany “infinite harm” by mobilizing the Jews of all the world and millions of Christian sympathizers against Nazism.¹¹⁵ Another correspondent echoed this sentiment, arguing that it would be a “profound mistake” to speculate that similar antisemitic acts

¹¹² “The World from Geneva,” *Spectator*, 2 June 1933, p. 8.

¹¹³ Morris, *The Roots of Appeasement*, 15.

¹¹⁴ “Is Liberalism Dead,” *Spectator*, 26 May 1933, p. 7.

¹¹⁵ “News of the Week,” *Spectator*, 31 March 1933, p. 1.

would not take place again in the future.¹¹⁶ Following the boycotts, the Nazis banned the Jewish medical students from dissecting non-Jewish corpses, and removed Jewish judges, doctors, dentists and lawyers from Germany's civil life. The *Spectator*'s reporters not only described these acts in details, but also saw them as "almost wholly repressive and hardly at all constructive" for the German nation.¹¹⁷ In the following years, some reporters of the *Spectator* began to see the negative impact of antisemitism upon the relationship between Britain and Germany. They made an argument that the racial persecutions had left "advocates of an Anglo-German understanding in this country [Britain] powerless."¹¹⁸

While the staff of the *Spectator* expressed their anger about Germany's treatment of its Jews, they followed the appeasement policy and rejected to intervene any antisemitic event through their press. "I think the best service we can do the Jews in Germany, having expressed our disapproval of the anti-Jewish campaign, is to try and maintain an impartial attitude towards Germany and show that we are really desirous of understanding the German aspirations," said one of the journal's Berlin correspondents.¹¹⁹ From 1935 onwards, except a few monumental events such as the Nuremberg Party Rally in 1935, the *Anschluss*, and the *Kristallnacht* in 1938, the reporters offered much less information about anti-Jewish acts. "Pogrom methods and ghetto-making ought to cease," the editorial board stated in a leading article of 1936, but "to argue

¹¹⁶ "News of the Week," *Spectator*, 7 April 1933, p. 1.

¹¹⁷ "News of the Week," *Spectator*, 7 April 1933, p. 1. Also see "News of the Week," 21 April 1933, p. 1., 28 April 1933, p. 1., and 12 May 1933, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ "News of the Week," *Spectator*, 5 July 1935, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ "What I saw in Germany," *Spectator*, 14 April 1933, p. 7.

against the purpose [of the Nazis] is probably futile however monstrous we may think it.”¹²⁰

After five years of persecution, its reporters still maintained the idea of appeasement: “except so far as the spirit underlying the internal regime determine Germany’s relationship to other countries, it [antisemitism] is quite definitely not our business.”¹²¹ In this case, while the staff of the *Spectator* condemned racial persecution, they made it clear that they preferred to be bystanders.

As examined above, the staff of the British press showed a variety of attitudes towards Nazi Germany and its treatment of Jews from 1933 to 1938. However, they were virtually unanimous in their hesitation to accept the refugees when reporting the Jewish emigration. In fact, for many contemporary British intellectuals like editors and reporters, the arrival of Jews as well as other ethnic groups threatened to intensify both financial and social problems at home. Behind such concern, fear or bias lay a few long-term conflicts between Britain’s mainstream society and the Jewish settlers. Dating back to the nineteenth century, Jews in Britain had been faced with both acceptance and discrimination. On the one hand, the Jewish campaign for expanding civil rights since the 1830s removed legal disabilities and repealed a substantial number of antisemitic declarations and expressions. Not only were many lower-class Jews able to move out of traditional blue-collar jobs into diverse white-collar professions relying upon their newly achieved civil rights. Also, a growing number of Jewish intellectuals managed to participate in national politics, set up international businesses, and study and lecture at Oxford and Cambridge.

¹²⁰ “The Jews in National Life,” *Spectator*, 3 January 1936, p. 9.

¹²¹ “Five Nazi Years,” *Spectator*, 28 January 1938, p. 4.

On the other hand, however, prejudice against the Jews still existed.¹²² Jews were constantly depicted as malicious and crude in novels, newspapers, and the theater. Many political and social elites accused the Jews who took high positions in government, academia, banking, and international firms of constructing a chain of interests exclusively for themselves. Within this broader context, a wave of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe tremendously increased the racial and social antagonism that constantly blocked the acculturation of British Jews. In particular, the newcomers intensified series of social problems such as poverty, overcrowding, housing shortage and unemployment. At the same time, their foreign languages and habits, as well as religious practice and large population, gave the Anglo-Jewry an “alien, lower-class image.”¹²³ Under the circumstances, native and newly arrived Jews *alike* were portrayed as a threat to the cultural purity of the British society and a disturbing element in the national life.

In the first half of the twentieth century, Britain’s domestic antisemitism continued to be connected with international events, which increased social concern for new tides of foreign immigrants. In 1900s Britain, industrial depression, long-term unemployment, labor unrest, and bad housing conditions kept increasing anti-Jewish sentiments. The outbreak of World War I only brought more hostilities against the Jewish communities. During the war, close to ten thousand Jewish men volunteered to fight for Britain even before the military conscription. Yet a number of gentile intellectuals, including the well-known journalists Leopold Maxse and W. T. Steed, suspected that many Jews would betray the country due to their familial and business links with

¹²² Paul Kennedy and Anthony Nicholls, eds. *Nationalist and Racist Movements in Britain and Germany before 1914*. (Oxford: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1981), 88.

¹²³ Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1650 to 2000* (London: University of California Press, 2002), 130.

Germany long after emigration.¹²⁴ The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 further contributed to this anti-Jewish suspicion that many Jews in Britain were followers of communism, and would rely on foreign powers to defend their own interests. After Hitler rose to power, the Jews found themselves in a difficult situation again. Since Chamberlain's government adopted an appeasement policy for rapprochement with Germany, the Jewish voice against Nazi racial policies was to some extent restricted. For instance, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association withheld their support for Jewish protests against Nazi antisemitism in March 1933. Leaders of the Board believed that these activities would not only provoke anti-Jewish sentiments at home, but also conflict with the government's appeasement policy. Such international affairs, along with domestic high unemployment, xenophobia and antisemitism, created an environment that was hostile to large-scale Jewish immigration. British government ministers and officials held that a dramatic increase in the size of the Jewish community would stir the antisemitic atmosphere, and thus "saddle Britain (and themselves) with a German-style 'Jewish Question.'"¹²⁵ In 1933, the British Home Secretary, Sir John Gilmour, emphasized the importance of the existing 1919 Aliens Act, because the Act could help control the activities of aliens in Britain, and ensure that "undesirable" foreigners, such as East European Jews, Germans, and Chinese, were, in general, kept out of the country.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1650 to 2000*, 184.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 213.

¹²⁶ Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination*, 33.

The Jewish emigrants from Hitler's Germany reminded many British intellectuals of the difficulties that foreigners faced in settling in their country. During the early months of Hitler's rule, while many editors and reporters had become interested in the Jewish emigration, they largely perceived it as an economic problem that could be alleviated by funding activities. Between 1933 and 1945, more than 75,000 Jewish refugees emigrated from Central Europe due to the racial persecutions. During the first year of Hitler's rule, about 37,000 Jews left Germany. 74 per cent of them found settlement in continental European countries such as France and Holland, and few of them came to Britain.¹²⁷ The *Times* paid attention to the Jews who left Germany for neighboring countries and Palestine from the very beginning. Its correspondents largely believed that private organizations in Britain could help the Jewish emigrants settle down somewhere through collecting funds.¹²⁸ The *Daily Mail*, likewise, understood the Jewish emigration through the economic perspective. In May and June 1933, the paper's editors published two leading articles. They praised that the Central British Fund had successfully collected 60,000 pounds "for the relief of Germany Jewry."¹²⁹ While the editorial board of the *Financial Times* seemed reluctant to explain the anti-Jewish measures in Germany, it presented a couple of news articles to describe how Britain helped the Jews by donating funds. One correspondent reassured his reader that "a great appeal is being launched by British Jewry for

¹²⁷ Sharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule*, 155-156.

¹²⁸ "German Jews for Palestine," *Times*, 30 May 1933, p. 10.

¹²⁹ "60,000 Pounds for German Jews," *Daily Mail*, 27 May 1933, p. 7, and "Fund for German Jews," 1 June 1933, p. 16.

funds to succor their German Brethren.” This might help the Jews migrate to Palestine.¹³⁰ The paper’s staff held this view even after three years of Hitler’s rule. In January 1936, they announced that Sir Herbert Samuel, leader of the Liberal Party, had raised 3,000,000 pounds in Britain and America, which could assist the emigration of German Jews.¹³¹

As the persecutions went on, many British reporters became worried about the impact of the Jewish emigration upon the host countries. In December 1933, the Nazis announced the “flight tax” and attached various additional regulations. In the end, the emigrants had practically no personal belongings and little more than 6 per cent of their cash when they left the country.¹³² Andrew Sharf had rightly pointed out that “it was thus not only a Jew and refugee that the world was called on to accept, but an utterly destitute individual as well.”¹³³ In the news article published on 7 April 1933, a correspondent of the *Spectator* had already noted that the Jews who had managed to leave Germany could not take enough money with them to support their future living.¹³⁴ Therefore, the question of the Jewish settlement became “a matter of extreme urgency.”¹³⁵ People who wrote for the *Economist* described the Jewish emigration as a financial “burden.” They stated that wherever German Jews went, “their transfer problem” would affect

¹³⁰ “Help for German Jews,” *Financial Times*, 1 June 1933, p. 5.

¹³¹ “Fund to be Raised for German Jews,” *Financial Times*, 28 January 1936, p. 7. Also see “Funds for Jewish Emigration,” 13 February 1936, p. 11 and “560,000 Pounds for German Jews,” 15 May 1936, p. 6.

¹³² Sharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule*, 156.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 157.

¹³⁴ “News of the Week,” *Spectator*, 7 April 1933, p. 1.

¹³⁵ “The Problem of Palestine,” *Spectator*, 27 April 1934, p. 7.

“interest payments and imports” of the potential host states.¹³⁶ The *Times*’ correspondents echoed this sentiment. They noticed that the Jews who had worked abroad and returned to Germany had to “undergo a period of ‘education’ in a camp. This act, they predicted, would not only “discourage the return of German Jews from abroad,” but also contribute “stimulating a fresh wave of panic emigration, which will hardly be welcome to surrounding countries.”¹³⁷ The paper’s editors presented a similar opinion the very next day, when they talked about how 1,200 Jewish scientists could not find work or a permanent place to settle down after leaving Germany. These “wandering scholars,” they claimed, had become an “extraordinary migraine” and “a challenge” to the rest of the world.¹³⁸ The staff of the *Daily Mail* gave a more pessimistic voice, showing that the refugees had already caused certain challenges in their settler societies. One of the paper’s correspondents accounted that many local residents in Trinidad were protesting against the immigration of Jews from Germany, Austria, and elsewhere, because their arrival had increased unemployment rates.¹³⁹

It was largely before and after the Evian Conference that the press began to discuss how the British should deal with the problem of Jewish refugees from Central Europe. In early July 1938, delegates of 32 countries met and negotiated at the French resort of Evian on Lake Geneva, wishing to find a solution to the Jewish refugees. However, at the end of the meeting,

¹³⁶ “Germany,” *Economist*, 9 September 1933, p. 493.

¹³⁷ “Pressure on the Jews,” *Times*, 8 March 1935, p. 18

¹³⁸ “The Wandering Scholars,” *Times*, 9 March 1935, p. 13.

¹³⁹ “Trinidad and Jews,” *Daily Mail*, 7 May 1938, p. 7.

none of the participant countries accepted more than a tiny number of the Jews.¹⁴⁰ While the staff of the *Daily Mail* commended the Evian Conference and its proposal to aid the Jews, they firmly opposed loosening the British immigration laws. One correspondent reminded his reader that “the maintenance in gaol of Stateless foreigners during the past three years has cost the Exchequer more than 1,000,000 pounds.” Still worse, many of these “foreigners” faced “insuperable difficulties” in finding a job.¹⁴¹ In view of Britain’s unemployment rates, another correspondent held that it was necessary to enforce the immigration laws “to the fullest.”¹⁴² The *Economist* held a similar view. Having elaborated Britain’s domestic problems including housing shortage and unemployment, reporters of the weekly journal announced that “to open the door indiscriminately wide would be both impracticable and improvident.”¹⁴³ In order to be a responsible power and help the Jews, Britain could “receive and train settlers for the far outposts” and become “a general headquarter for the planning of their dispersion.”¹⁴⁴ The *Economist*, however, did not offer any follow-up articles and tell its reader how effective this ambitious plan could be. Even the *Manchester Guardian* saw the refugees as an insoluble economic problem. “Unfortunately there was never in history a time when Governments were less prepared to admit aliens than today,” its correspondents stated a few days before the Evian

¹⁴⁰ Wallis, *Britain, Germany, and the Road to the Holocaust*, 180. Also see the website of “United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,” <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005520>.

¹⁴¹ “These People Have No Country,” *Daily Mail*, 15 July 1938, p. 10.

¹⁴² “German Jews Pouring into This Country,” *Daily Mail*, 20 August 1938, p. 11.

¹⁴³ “Aliens in England,” *Economist*, 3 September 1938, p. 442.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Conference. “The refugee without capital is still regarded as a liability, as an unredeemable charge on the national income.”¹⁴⁵ Considering Britain’s unemployment problems, they believed that their country could be “justified economically” if it did not accept refugees.

Another group of press publications such as the *Times* and the *Spectator* were more aware of the British responsibility for helping the Jewish refugees, but they were quite uncertain about specific arrangements. Reporters of the *Times* argued for international cooperation. Yet, they appeared to be ambivalent about the role of the British government in assisting the refugees. In a leading article published after the Evian Conference, the editorial board asserted that “right men” should be “allotted to right places.”¹⁴⁶ To do so, the Evian states must extend “a mixture of mercy and cool calculation.”¹⁴⁷ However, none of the paper’s reporters and editors informed their reader how exactly the British government could demonstrate this “mercy” and “calculation.” In a similar way, the staff of the *Spectator* suggested that Britain and other countries should work together to help those Jews “deprived of country and citizenship.”¹⁴⁸ Seeing that the Nazis treated illegal Jewish emigrants from Germany, Austria, Belgium and Holland as criminals, the *Spectator* emphasized the urgency and significance of the refugee crisis. But when it came to the solutions of this problem, the journal’s staff only vaguely stated that the Evian states should provide “temporary camps to relieve the suffering of the Jews.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ “The Task at Evian,” *Manchester Guardian*, 5 July 1938, p. 10.

¹⁴⁶ “Political Refugees,” *Times*, 27 July 1938, p. 15.

¹⁴⁷ “Results at Evian,” *Times*, 16 July 1938, p. 13.

¹⁴⁸ “Evian and Palestine,” *Spectator*, 15 July 1938, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ “The Refugees,” *Spectator*, 28 October 1938, p. 3.

After the *Kristallnacht*, British editors and reporters took the Jewish refugees into serious consideration and provided some specific plans for their settlement. While they mentioned the British responsibility for helping the Jewish refugees, *all* of them suggested that the Jews should be arranged somewhere in the empire instead of the metropole. In late November, the correspondents of the *Manchester Guardian* were enthusiastic about Chamberlain's "well-received" and "promising" statements about the possible settlement of Jewish refugees in Kenya, Northern Rhodesia and Tanganyika.¹⁵⁰ The *Times* echoed this sentiment, and praised that the British government had already "opened up the possibility of small-scale settlement in East and Central Africa, and of large-scale settlement in British Guiana."¹⁵¹ People of the *Economist* were more reluctant to create a Jewish settlement in the empire. "There was little or no room for large-scale settlement in the Colonial Empire," they argued, "but Kenya, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland might be able to receive a moderate number of immigrants."¹⁵² Other press reporters tended to oppose the immigration laws and rejected the Jewish refugees at all. The staff of the *Daily Mail* directly stated that it would be impossible to give permanent shelter in "this thickly populated land [Britain] to masses of immigrants."¹⁵³ The *Spectator's* correspondent similarly argued that while Britain and its empire could "find homes and work" for refugees, "too great an influx" might stimulate anti-semitism in their societies.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ "The Refugees," *Manchester Guardian*, 22 November 1938, p. 10.

¹⁵¹ "The Refugees," *Times*, 19 December 1938, p. 13.

¹⁵² "Refugees," *Economist*, 26 November 1938, p. 416.

¹⁵³ "Netting the Rogues," *Daily Mail*, 22 November 1938, p. 10.

¹⁵⁴ "The Case of Refugees," *Spectator*, 25 November 1938, p. 1.

Overall, the British press provided a comprehensive narrative concerning the anti-Jewish persecutions in 1930s Germany. The staff of the *Times*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Financial Times*, the *Economist* and the *Spectator* more or less condemned the Jewish persecutions and expressed concern for the Jews. When they discussed the Jewish refugees, they were aware of Britain's national interests, and revealed their hesitation to accept the Jews through the press. A closer examination of the reportage also shows that the editors and correspondents of these publications held different perspectives towards Nazi Germany, which influenced their narratives and attitudes towards the antisemitic events. Such an approach to the press content allows us to see the undercurrents of values and ideologies behind the journalistic writing. As Stephanie Seul writes, "the press reports should not simply be viewed as a mirror of events in Germany. Rather, they were the products of conscious or unconscious selection process on the part of the journalists and editors."¹⁵⁵ An in-depth analysis of what the British public could read in newspapers can not just tell us the journalistic perceptions and responses to the German affairs. It may also inspire us to think about to which degree the press staff should be responsible for the Jewish persecutions throughout World War II.

¹⁵⁵ Seul, "'Herr Hitler's Nazis Hear an Echo of World Opinion,'" 415.

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