



Titel/Title: 'Herr Hitler's Nazis Hear an Echo of World Opinion': British and American Press Responses to Nazi Anti-Semitism, September 1930–April 1933

Autor*innen/Author(s): Stephanie Seul

Veröffentlichungsversion/Published version: Postprint

Zeitschriftenartikel/Journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung/Recommended citation:

Stephanie Seul (2013) '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 & Ideology*, 14:3, 412-430, DOI: 10.1080/21567689.2013.820453

Verfügbar unter/Available at:

(wenn vorhanden, bitte den DOI angeben/please provide the DOI if available)

<https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2013.820453>

Zusätzliche Informationen/Additional information:

The author can be contacted at: sseul@uni-bremen.de

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Politics, Religion and Ideology* on 24 Sept 2013, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2013.820453>.

‘Herr Hitler’s Nazis Hear an Echo of World Opinion’:¹ British and American Press Responses to Nazi Anti-Semitism, September 1930–April 1933

STEPHANIE SEUL*

University of Bremen

ABSTRACT Based on contemporary press articles and applying a comparative methodology, this study examines the responses of important British and American quality papers to the unfolding of Nazi anti-Semitism from September 1930 until April 1933. Besides reconstructing and comparing the press coverage, the study seeks to explain the patterns beneath the journalistic perceptions and interpretations of Nazi anti-Semitism in the liberal democracies. During the final years of the Weimar Republic the papers reported fully and critically on Nazi antisemitism, yet they underestimated its radical nature. The extent of the assault on the Jews following Hitler’s seizure of power therefore surprised British and American observers. Between 30 January 1933 and the anti-Jewish boycott of 1 April 1933 the journalists struggled to grasp the nature of Nazi anti-Semitism and the role of Hitler therein. Ultimately, their reading of events in Germany was preconditioned by their own liberal democratic outlook. Even if they reached differing conclusions, they were united in their conviction that Hitler and the Nazis would not dare to continue their anti-Semitic campaign in the face of adverse ‘world opinion’.

Introduction: Anglo-American Newspapers and Anti-Semitism in Germany

In *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* Tony Kushner argued that the destruction of European Jewry was not simply German, Jewish or Continental history. Rather it was also an integral yet neglected part of the histories of many countries. Research into the reactions of the liberal democracies to the Nazi persecution of the Jews had hitherto focused mainly on official governmental reactions. Kushner, in contrast, set out to explore the responses of two liberal societies – the British and the American – to the Holocaust. He argued that the Nazi persecution of the Jews essentially challenged three core foundations of liberalism, namely, the liberty of the individual, the concept of toleration and the belief in human progress.²

This study is specifically concerned with the reactions of the journalistic profession in the liberal democracies of Great Britain and the United States to the discrimination and persecution of the Jews in Germany. Focusing on the period from the Reichstag elections in September 1930 until the anti-Jewish boycott on 1 April 1933, it asks: How did Anglo-American newspapers understand and explain to their readers Nazi anti-Semitism

*Email: sseul@uni-bremen.de

¹New York Times (hereafter NYT), 26 March 1933, p. E1.

²Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp. IX, 2, 16, 18–19.

during Hitler's rise to power 1930–1933? How did Hitler's attainment of office and the first state-organised assault on German Jewry transform their perception of anti-Semitism in Germany? And finally, how did the journalists' own presuppositions, and more specifically their socialisation within a liberal democratic society, shape their interpretation of Nazi Jew-hatred?

A sharp radicalisation of anti-Semitism was among the first visible and revolting results of Hitler's accession to power.³ The anti-Jewish excesses during March and April 1933 provoked an outcry of indignation in the foreign press and yielded strong public reactions in the United States and in Great Britain. Mass demonstrations were organised in protest against the treatment of the German Jews and Jewish communities called for a boycott of German goods. The American and British governments, on the other hand, were reluctant to take measures against Germany for fear of worsening diplomatic relations with Germany's new rulers.⁴ Still, the attack on the Jews in the spring of 1933 did not come without forewarning. Anti-Semitic propaganda and violence was an integral feature of everyday life during the Weimar Republic, reaching a peak during 1930–1932 with the rise of the Nazis.⁵ Throughout the 1920s, Anglo-American papers reported frequently on anti-Semitic incidents in Germany; from 1930 onwards they monitored closely the growing Nazi movement with its anti-Semitic ideology.

Despite a considerable body of literature on the Jews and anti-Semitism in Weimar Germany and the Third Reich, the foreign media's responses to Nazi anti-Semitism have only been studied in part by historians. Whereas British and American press responses to the Nazi persecution of the Jews have received some scholarly attention – albeit with an emphasis on the wartime period⁶ – research on the coverage of Weimar anti-Semitism is still in its early stages.⁷ This article assumes a wider perspective in two respects. First, it not only considers Anglo-American press responses to the Jewish persecution during the Third Reich, but also to Nazi anti-Semitism during the late Weimar Republic. Second, it

³Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich: How the Nazis Destroyed Democracy and Seized Power in Germany* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), pp. 431–436.

⁴Carmen Müller, *Weimar im Blick der USA: Amerikanische Auslandskorrespondenten und öffentliche Meinung zwischen Perception und Realität* (Münster: LIT, 1997), pp. 374–382; Deborah E. Lipstadt, 'The American Press and the Persecution of German Jewry: The Early Years 1933–1935', *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 29 (1984), pp. 27–55; John P. Fox, 'Great Britain and the German Jews 1933', *Wiener Library Bulletin*, 26: 1–2 (1972), pp. 40–46; Philipp Caspar Mohr, 'Kein Recht zur Einmischung'? Die politische und völkerrechtliche Reaktion Großbritanniens auf Hitlers 'Machtergreifung' und die einsetzende Judenverfolgung (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), pp. 151–176; Andrew Sharf, *The British Press and Jews under Nazi Rule* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 6–41; Sharon Gewirtz, 'Anglo-Jewish Responses to Nazi Germany 1933–39: The Anti-Nazi Boycott and the Board of Deputies of British Jews', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 26 (1991), pp. 255–276.

⁵Werner E. Mosse and Arnold Paucker (eds), *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916–1923: Ein Sammelband* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1971); Dirk Walter, *Antisemitische Kriminalität und Gewalt: Judenfeindschaft in der Weimarer Republik* (Bonn: Dietz, 1999); Donald L. Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001).

⁶Andrew Sharf, 'The British Press and the Holocaust', *Yad Vashem Studies*, 5 (1963), pp. 169–191; Sharf, *British Press*; Lipstadt, 'American Press'; Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933–1945* (New York/London: The Free Press and Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1986); Robert Moses Shapiro (ed.), *Why Didn't the Press Shout? American and International Journalism during the Holocaust* (Jersey City: Yeshiva University Press, 2003); Laurel Leff, *Buried by 'The Times': The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁷Felicitas von Selchow, 'Antisemitism in Weimar Germany as Seen by the British Press 1918–1933' (MPhil thesis, University of Cambridge, 1995); Stephanie Seul, 'The British Press Coverage of German Anti-Semitism in the early Weimar Republic, 1918–1923' in Geraldine Horan, Felicity Rash and Daniel Wildmann (eds) *English and German Nationalist and Anti-Semitic Discourse, 1871–1945* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Peter Lang, 2013), pp. 183–209; Stephanie Seul, "'A Menace to Jews Seen If Hitler Wins': British and American Press Comment on German Anti-Semitism 1918–1933', *Jewish Historical Studies*, 44 (2012), pp. 75–102.

analyses the press of two countries using a comparative methodology.⁸ Thus, the reporting of newspapers from two different nations is evaluated and compared. The findings presented here derive from the analysis of four quality papers representing different geographic regions and political spectra: the London Times, the Manchester Guardian, the New York Times and the Chicago Daily Tribune. I have focused on quality papers rather than on the popular mass press for two reasons: First, quality papers are addressed to and read by the elites and opinion leaders of the countries in which they are published, and also in other countries. Despite their often small circulation figures they achieve a high reputation for reliability and expert knowledge and exert a considerable influence on government and business circles at home and abroad. Their coverage of foreign news is usually comprehensive as they aim to further international understanding.⁹ Second, during the 1920s and 1930s the popular press was much less interested in stories of Nazi anti-Semitism than the quality press. It concentrated on individual startling incidents, but did not report methodically. Its coverage was thus uneven and incoherent.¹⁰

In Great Britain, The Times was an influential conservative paper renowned for its reliability and fullness of coverage. Despite a rather small circulation of 185,000–190,000 copies per day its influence was considerable as it was widely read in educated, journalistic and political circles in Great Britain and abroad. It was generally considered the mouthpiece of the political establishment.¹¹ The Times' attitude towards Jews was not always benevolent; sometimes it was openly anti-Semitic. Some of its Berlin correspondents became notorious for their anti-Semitism.¹² The Manchester Guardian was a liberal, left-of-centre paper. Its circulation was even smaller (80,000 copies per day), but it had an excellent reputation at home and abroad for its business news and its political and cultural reportage.¹³ During the interwar years it was the British newspaper that showed the greatest interest in the Jewish question.¹⁴ The liberal (independent democratic) New York Times was the most important American newspaper and renowned at home and abroad for its full and reliable coverage, in particular of foreign affairs. Around 1930 its circulation numbered more than 400,000 during weekdays and 720,000 on Sundays, making it one of the larger American papers.¹⁵ It reported extensively on the unfolding of Nazi anti-Semitism.

⁸On this methodology see Yosef Gorny, *The Jewish Press and the Holocaust 1939–1945: Palestine, Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁹John Merrill and Harold A. Fisher, *The World's Great Dailies: Profiles of Fifty Newspapers* (New York: Hastings House, 1980), pp. 6–7, 9–10, 19.

¹⁰Kushner, *Holocaust*, p. 35; Sharf, 'British Press', p. 171; Sharf, *British Press*, pp. 13–17.

¹¹Merrill and Fisher, *Great Dailies*, pp. 320–329; Deutsches Institut für Zeitungskunde (ed.), *Handbuch der Welt- presse: Eine Darstellung des Zeitungswesens aller Länder* (Berlin: Duncker, 1931), p. 224; Karl Bömer (ed.), *Hand- buch der Weltpresse: Eine Darstellung des Zeitungswesens aller Länder* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Armanen, 1937), pp. 51–52; Stephen E. Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain. Vol. 2: The Twentieth Century* (London: Hamilton, 1984), pp. 67, 75; Oliver Woods and James Bishop, *The Story of The Times: Bicentenary Edition 1785–1985* (London: Joseph, 1985), pp. 252, 324.

¹²David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry 1841–1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 134–135; Frank McDonough, 'The Times, Norman Ebbutt and the Nazis, 1927–37', *Journal of Con- temporary History*, 27 (1992), pp. 407–424; Richard Thurlow, 'Anti-Nazi Antisemite: The Case of Douglas Reed', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 18 (1984), pp. 23–34; Colin Shindler, 'The "Thunderer" and the Coming of the Shoah: The Times of London, 1933–1942' in Shapiro, *Why Didn't*, pp. 156–158.

¹³Thomas Wittek, *Auf ewig Feind? Das Deutschlandbild in den britischen Massenmedien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005), pp. 64–66; Koss, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 38–39; *Weltpresse* (1931), p. 222; *Weltpresse* (1937), p. 49; Merrill and Fisher, *Great Dailies*, pp. 143–150.

¹⁴Sharf, *British Press*, pp. 11–12; Selchow, 'Antisemitism', pp. 14–15, 76.

¹⁵Merrill and Fisher, *Great Dailies*, pp. 220–230; John Maxwell Hamilton, *Journalism's Roving Eye: A History of American Foreign Reporting* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, LA, 2009), p. 127; Müller, *Weimar*, pp. 49–50; *Weltpresse* (1931), pp. 20, 31; Leff, *Buried*, pp. 9–10.

One possible reason for its interest in Jewish affairs may have been the German-Jewish origin of its proprietor, Adolph Simon Ochs. Moreover, the paper had a large Jewish readership as almost half of America's Jews lived in Greater New York.¹⁶ However, the New York Times was at pains not to appear to be a 'Jewish newspaper'; hence it was particularly critical towards news emanating from Jewish sources, especially after 1933.¹⁷ The Chicago Daily Tribune was the leading conservative paper in Greater Chicago and the Midwest with a circulation of about 820,000 during weekdays and one million on Sundays in 1930. It was the most read paper in the region and the metropolitan daily with the largest circulation in the United States. Like the New York Times it had a strong tradition in foreign reporting.¹⁸ Under Robert McCormick, editor and publisher during 1914–1955, its political orientation was pro-Republican and it was strongly nationalist, isolationist and anti-communist.¹⁹

All four papers reported comprehensively on the unfolding of Nazi anti-Semitism. However, the press reports should not simply be viewed as a mirror of events in Germany. Rather, they were the products of a conscious or unconscious selection process on the part of the journalists and editors. For the press never acts as a neutral observer: it is an actor who, by selecting items as newsworthy and by reporting and commenting on them in a certain manner, shapes the public's perception of them. As Deborah Lipstadt wrote, if the media pay attention to an event, its importance is enhanced in the public's eyes; if they ignore it, the public will not know about it. Even if the press cannot determine what people think, it can influence what they think about.²⁰ But the press not only shapes the public discourse on particular events, it also reveals how segments of the British and American public thought about Nazi anti-Semitism at that time. Lipstadt writes: '[The journalists'] values inform their view and understanding of events, and thus influence the creation and interpretation of the historical record. And since people's values tend to reflect those of the society they are part of, our examination of how the American journalists [...] treated the news of the persecution of European Jewry will also be an examination of the values of this society.'²¹

This study is based on an in-depth analysis of newspaper content, that is, of what the Anglo-American public could read in the quality press about Nazi anti-Semitism. This approach not only allows us to reconstruct the facts that were reported in the newspapers and shaped the public discourse, it also reveals the ideological undercurrents that influenced the journalists' perceptions and interpretations of Nazi Jew-hatred. Further research, which exceeds the scope of this article, is needed to examine in more detail the activities of individual journalists, their sources of information and their relationships with the politicians and the public in Germany. Likewise, we still lack a study of the editorial policy of the leading foreign newspapers in regard to Nazi anti-Semitism based on the archival

¹⁶Leff, *Buried*, pp. 10–13; Müller, *Weimar*, pp. 49–50, 211–212. ¹⁷Leff, *Buried*, pp. 19–48.

¹⁸Weltpresse (1931), pp. 20, 25–26; Weltpresse (1937), pp. 428–429. In 1927, 7.92 per cent of the reporting was devoted to foreign news. Hamilton, *Roving Eye*, p. 127.

¹⁹Müller, *Weimar*, pp. 48–49; Mark R. Wilson, 'Chicago Tribune' in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, <http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/275.html> [accessed 20 February 2012]; 'Chicago Tribune' in *Encyclopedia Britannica Academic Edition*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/110559/Chicago-Tribune> [accessed 20 February 2012].

²⁰Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, p. 3. See also Stephen Vella, 'Newspapers' in Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann (eds) *Reading Primary Sources: The Interpretation of Texts From Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century History* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 192–193.

²¹Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, p. 10.

record of these papers. A noteworthy exception is Laurel Leff's analysis of the New York Times.²²

My study is specifically concerned with the period between the Nazi victory in the Reichstag elections of September 1930 and the anti-Jewish boycott of 1 April 1933. This period is of particular interest as the onset of the first state-organised persecution of German Jewry shocked the public in the liberal democracies and led them to search for rational explanations for a seemingly irrational event.²³ As Deborah Lipstadt observed, Nazi anti-Semitism evoked more interest in the early months of Hitler's rule than in subsequent years, with the exception of such major anti-Semitic events as the promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 and the pogrom of the so-called Kristallnacht in 1938. Moreover, the early perceptions of Nazi anti-Semitism were to coin the attitude of the foreign press towards the Third Reich and the persecution of the Jews, thus setting the frame for its response to the Jewish persecution in later years.²⁴

The chronological structure of the study reflects the unfolding of Nazi anti-Semitism. Thus, the first part focuses on the rise of the Nazi Party during the late Weimar Republic 1930–1932; the second part covers the first weeks of Hitler's rule until the announcement of the anti-Jewish boycott on 27 March 1933; and the third part deals with the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses on 1 April 1933. Overall, there was less of a change, after January 1933, in the portrayal of Nazi anti-Semitism than one might expect. Throughout the Weimar Republic Anglo-American papers reported continuously on anti-Semitism, but doubted that the Nazis would turn their anti-Semitic rhetoric into a policy. Thus, the extent and fierceness of the attack on the Jews after Hitler's seizure of power shocked the international public and disproved previous assumptions of the press. The papers continued to report fully and critically but disagreed on Hitler's role in the campaign. Some hoped that the excesses were a passing revolutionary phenomenon. A majority of commentators believed that the Nazis would refrain from implementing their anti-Semitic policy under pressure from the nationalists in the Cabinet and from foreign public opinion. The anti-Jewish boycott of 1 April 1933 did convince them that the anti-Semitic terror had become official policy and that Hitler was the driving force behind it. Yet they still held on to the view that the Nazis could not possibly continue the Jewish persecution in the face of worldwide condemnation. They trusted that the Jewish persecution would ebb away once the Nazis had firmly established their hold over the country.

How to account for this view? A possible explanation, which would certainly require further investigation, seems to be the socialisation of the journalists within a liberal democratic tradition. In observing the unfolding of Nazi anti-Semitism they viewed events in Germany through the lenses of their own political stance. Political scientist Bernard Crick argued in the introduction to Brigitte Granzow's *A Mirror of Nazism* that the British press was reflecting liberal theories of politics when it maintained that the exercise of power would inevitably make the Nazis more responsible.²⁵ Granzow stated that 'To liberals anti-Semitism was something purely irrational; they could not see that it filled a logical role in the total ideology of the Nazis.'²⁶ Tony Kushner similarly argued that the

²²Leff, *Buried*.

²³Tony Kushner, 'Beyond the Pale? British Reactions to Nazi Anti-Semitism, 1933–1939' in Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn (eds) *The Politics of Marginality* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), pp. 148–149.

²⁴Lipstadt, 'American Press', pp. 27–28, 34–35, 53–55; Deborah E. Lipstadt, 'Pious Sympathies and Sincere Regrets: The American News Media and the Holocaust from Kristallnacht to Bermuda, 1938–1943', *Modern Judaism*, 2 (1982), pp. 54–55.

²⁵Bernard Crick, 'Introduction' in Brigitte Granzow, *A Mirror of Nazism: British Opinion and the Emergence of Hitler 1929–1933* (London: V. Gollancz, 1964), p. 18.

²⁶Granzow, *Mirror*, p. 160.

indiscriminate persecution of the Jews created a dilemma for liberal minds accustomed to seeking rational explanations. Hence, the ‘search for rationality in Nazi anti-Semitism was to occupy the thoughts of many in the liberal democracies in the first years of Nazi rule’.²⁷ And so the Anglo-American press reports mirror as much the developments in Germany as they reflect the foreign journalists’ own expectations and presuppositions that were shaped by the liberal democratic tradition.

‘The Hysterical Nonsense of Hitler’:²⁸ Perceptions of Nazi Anti-Semitism during Hitler’s Rise to Power, 1930–1932

Throughout the Weimar Republic, Anglo-American newspapers monitored closely the anti-Semitic movement in Germany, which was treated as evidence of a political and social crisis and perceived as a serious threat to German democracy. They attributed its rise to disappointed sections of German society in search of scapegoats for military defeat, a humiliating peace treaty and economic misery. Moreover, anti-Semitism was linked to the anti-democratic activities of the German reactionaries, who used anti-Jewish propaganda to incite the hatred of the population against the Republican government.²⁹ During 1930–1932 anti-Semitism became the virtual monopoly of the Nazis. However, they used anti-Semitism in an opportunist way, playing it up and down when it suited their particular political needs. Whereas anti-Jewish defamation and violence was frequent, the party’s election programmes hardly contained any anti-Semitic references. To the public it was therefore not clear what the Nazis really wanted to do with the Jews.³⁰

The press noted carefully the anti-Jewish outbursts of a party that after 1930 was always likely to assume power in Germany.³¹ Hitler’s unexpected victory in the Reichstag elections on 14 September 1930 suddenly put the Nazi party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, or NSDAP), its political programme and anti-Semitism in the centre of the public interest abroad. American and British papers reported extensively on the NSDAP, pointing out that Jew-hatred was an intrinsic part of the political programme of this anti-democratic party.³² The Chicago Daily Tribune stated that the Nazis wanted to overthrow the government and ‘establish a dictatorship of “truly Germanic men”. They are anti-Semitic, occasionally they threaten pogroms against Jews.’³³ The New York Times wrote that Hitler’s party was responsible ‘for having projected anti-Semitism into a post-war political arena in Germany’ and continued: ‘With 107 accredited Deputies in a modern democratic Parliament pledged to anti-Semitism, the Hitler party’s representation on the new

²⁷Kushner, *Holocaust*, pp. 36–37 (quotation p. 37). For discussions of the ‘rationale’ behind Nazi anti-Semitism in the British press see Sharf, *British Press*, pp. 35–38; on the American press see Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, pp. 41–48.

²⁸‘New Movements in German Politics’, *Manchester Guardian* (hereafter MG), 23 August 1930, p. 10.

²⁹Detlev Clemens, *Herr Hitler in Germany: Wahrnehmung und Deutungen des Nationalsozialismus in Großbritannien 1920 bis 1939* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht 1996), pp. 82, 84, 272. Anglo-American press responses to early Weimar anti-Semitism are analysed in Seul, ‘British Press’; Seul, ‘A Menace to Jews’, pp. 84–92.

³⁰Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, pp. 2–3, 59–61; Evans, *Third Reich*, pp. 38–39, 152–153, 174–175; Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Persecution: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1933–1939* (London: Phoenix, 2007), pp. 95–105; Oded Heilbrunner, ‘The Role of Nazi Antisemitism in the Nazi Party’s Activity and Propaganda: A Regional Historiographical Study’, *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, 35 (1990), pp. 397–439; Oded Heilbrunner, ‘Where Did Nazi Antisemitism Disappear to? Anti-Semitic Propaganda and Ideology of the Nazi Party, 1929–1933: A Historiographical Study’, *Yad Vashem Studies*, 21 (1991), pp. 263–286; Donald Niewyk, ‘Solving the “Jewish Problem”: Continuity and Change in German Antisemitism, 1871–1945’, *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, 35 (1990), pp. 368–369; Niewyk, *Jews*, pp. 52–55, 79–81.

³¹For details see Seul, ‘A Menace to Jews’, pp. 93–100.

³²Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, pp. 61–65; Clemens, *Hitler*, pp. 160–168; Granzow, *Mirror*, p. 125.

³³‘Many Parties Ask Support of German Voters’, *Chicago Daily Tribune* (hereafter CDT), 31 August 1930, p. D1.

Reichstag makes it the largest single group definitely sworn to anti-Semitic policies in European parliamentary history for the past fifty years.³⁴

British papers regarded Nazi anti-Semitism initially as a propaganda show to rouse the support of the discontented. The Times and the Manchester Guardian reported extensively on the aims of the NSDAP, including its blatant Jew-hatred, but did not seriously believe that Hitler would turn his anti-Semitism into a policy.³⁵ The Manchester Guardian stated ironically that ‘the great majority of Germans could have nothing but dislike for the hysterical nonsense of Herr Hitler [...] who blames impartially the French, the Russians, and the Jews for all his country’s ills’.³⁶ It reassured its readers that a share in political responsibility would have a sobering effect on the Nazis. Apparently the paper doubted that Hitler could maintain his political success in the long run if he did not adjust his programme.³⁷ Similarly, The Times trusted that Hitler’s revolutionary movement would come to reason and ‘develop into a constructive force’.³⁸ This attitude is a reflection of the liberal theory of politics which argues that the exercise of power makes politicians inevitably more responsible.³⁹

Still, such hopes were over-optimistic and the papers soon took on a decidedly critical stance. The opening of the new Reichstag on 13 October 1930 was accompanied by a massive outburst of anti-Jewish violence. As the New York Times reported, gangs of young Nazi rioters stormed through downtown Berlin, crying ‘Down with the Jews’ and smashing windows of Jewish-owned shops and café’s.⁴⁰ Smaller outbreaks of Nazi violence continued throughout 1930–1932 and were reported by the foreign papers.⁴¹ An incident that provoked unanimous condemnation was the anti-Jewish riots of 12 September 1931 on the Kurfürstendamm in Berlin. For the Nazis this popular boulevard was the prime symbol of Jewish decadence.⁴² In the evening of the Jewish New Year, 1000 Nazis gathered there, attacked and beat Jews and Jewish-looking persons, smashed windows and destroyed café’s.⁴³ The Times and the Manchester Guardian stressed that this was not a spontaneous outbreak of anti-Jewish violence but a ‘display of organised Nazi hooliganism’.⁴⁴ The Times was particularly dismayed at the reaction of the people witnessing the outrages, who appeared to approve of the Nazi activities.⁴⁵ The Manchester Guardian considered the riots ‘the worst anti-Semitic excesses there have yet been in Germany’.⁴⁶

However, although Anglo-American papers repeatedly debated the possibility of Hitler taking over power in Germany, they rarely discussed the implications for

³⁴ ‘Antisemitic Fight Looms in Reichstag’, NYT, 21 September 1930, p. E3.

³⁵ Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, pp. 61–65, 94–95; Clemens, Hitler, pp. 83–84, 272.

³⁶ ‘New Movements in German Politics’, MG, 23 August 1930, p. 10.

³⁷ ‘German Democracy’, MG, 25 September 1930, p. 12. Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, pp. 62–63.

³⁸ ‘The Rise of the Nazis’, The Times (hereafter TT), 18 September 1930, p. 11; Granzow, Mirror, pp. 125, 160.

³⁹ Crick, ‘Introduction’, p. 18.

⁴⁰ ‘Hitlerites in Riots’, NYT, 14 October 1930, pp. 1, 16.

⁴¹ ‘Convict Three German Officers in Treason Plot’, CDT, 5 October 1930, p. 17; ‘German Fascists Smash Windows in Anti-Jew Riot’, CDT, 20 December 1930, p. 6; ‘Political Riots Sweep Germany’, CDT, 26 June 1932, p. 13; ‘Anti-Semitism in Germany’, MG, 7 October 1930, p. 6.

⁴² Philip Wegehaupt, ‘Kurfürstendammkrawalle’ in Wolfgang Benz (ed.) *Handbuch des Antisemitismus*. Vol. 4: Ereignisse, Dekrete, Kontroversen (Berlin: De Gruyter Saur, 2011), pp. 228–229; Cornelia Hecht, *Deutsche Juden und Antisemitismus in der Weimarer Republik* (Bonn: Dietz, 2003), pp. 236–268.

⁴³ ‘Attack on Jews in Berlin’, TT, 14 September 1931, p. 12; ‘Anti-Semitic Riot in Berlin’, MG, 14 September 1931, p. 12; ‘1,000 Fascists Attack Jews in Berlin Riot’, CDT, 13 September 1931, p. 22; ‘Berlin Courts Act to Crush Rioting’, NYT, 17 September 1931, p. 15.

⁴⁴ ‘Attack on Jews in Berlin’, TT, 14 September 1931, p.

12. ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; Granzow, Mirror, p. 155.

⁴⁶ ‘Anti-Semitic Riot in Berlin’, MG, 14 September 1931, p. 12; Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, p. 66.

German Jews if that happened. In Great Britain the newspaper that paid closest attention to the possible consequences of a Nazi takeover of power for the Jews was the *Manchester Guardian*.⁴⁷ After the Nazi excesses of September 1931 it held that it had 'now become difficult to give any assurance that Germany is a country safe for Jews'.⁴⁸ The *New York Times* also drew attention to the implications of Nazi Jew-hatred. Under the headline 'A Menace to Jews Seen If Hitler Wins' the paper wrote in December 1931 that the possibility of Hitler assuming power in Germany should be of great concern to American Jews, as anti-Semitism was an integral part of his political programme.⁴⁹ In September 1932 it warned that if the Nazis attained power in Germany there would be 'substantial ground for fear that the movement itself might get out of control, producing racial excesses with the worst results'.⁵⁰ Still, Anglo-American journalists did not discuss the roots of German anti-Semitism or the possibility that Germans might vote for the Nazis because they were anti-Semitic.⁵¹ They paid attention to the violent outbursts of Nazi anti-Semitism the moment they happened but quickly closed their eyes when they were over. More importantly, it seems that they did not believe that a civilised nation could regard anti-Semitism as an acceptable or even attractive political stance. Nor did they expect the Nazis to turn their Jew-hatred into practical politics.⁵² The extent of the assault on the Jews after Hitler's seizure of power therefore came as a shock.

'No One Expects Revolutions to be Made With Rose-Water':⁵³ The Onset of the Jewish Persecution, February–March 1933

Contrary to foreign apprehensions, Hitler's accession to power was not followed by an immediate attack on the Jews. In a tactical move, Hitler assured Anglo-American journalists of his moderate intentions.⁵⁴ However, in the wake of the Reichstag elections on 5 March 1933 the Nazis launched an anti-Jewish campaign that culminated in the nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses on 1 April 1933 and the expulsion of Jews from the Civil Service and the professions.⁵⁵ Thus, during February and March Anglo-American journalists tried to get a feel of Nazi anti-Semitism and Hitler's role therein. What was the political function of the campaign? Was it the result of Nazi hotheads running out of control in the revolutionary upheaval or did it represent the official policy of the German chancellor?⁵⁶ Initially, the press doubted that Hitler would put into practice the anti-Semitic propaganda he had preached for over a decade. Three arguments spoke against it: First, the Nazis were in a minority position and had to compromise with the conservatives and nationalists in the Cabinet. Second, it was believed that Hitler would tone down his anti-Jewish rhetoric now

⁴⁷Selchow, 'Antisemitism', p. 76; Sharf, 'British Press', pp. 170–171. ⁴⁸'Anti-Semitic Riot in Berlin', *MG*, 14 September 1931, p. 12.

⁴⁹'A Menace to Jews Seen If Hitler Wins', *NYT*, 13 December 1931.

⁵⁰'Hitlerism Doomed, Lamport Declares', *NYT*, 9 September 1932, p. 8.

⁵¹Granzow, *Mirror*, p. 125; Niewyk, 'Jewish Problem', p. 369; Heilbrunner ('Where Did Anti-Semitism Disappear to?', pp. 264–66, 284–86) noted the need for further research regarding the role of anti-Semitism in Nazi propaganda to rouse the support of the masses.

⁵²Selchow, 'Antisemitism', p. 64; Granzow, *Mirror*, pp. 125, 157–158, 160; Dan Stone, *Responses to Nazism in Britain, 1933–1939: Before War and Holocaust* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 98–99.

⁵³'The Hitler Revolution', *TT*, 15 March 1933, p. 15.

⁵⁴'Bans Communist Rallies', *NYT*, 3 February 1933, pp. 1, 13; Selchow, 'Antisemitism', p. 81.

⁵⁵Friedländer, *Persecution*, pp. 19–21, 27–31; Evans, *Third Reich*, pp. 431–434, 437–438.

⁵⁶Selchow, 'Antisemitism', p. 76; Granzow, *Mirror*, pp. 220–221; Sharf, *British Press*, p. 23; Lipstadt, 'American Press', pp. 30–34; Kushner, *Holocaust*, pp. 35–36.

that he had assumed governmental responsibility. Third, the press trusted that Hitler would not dare to rouse world opinion over a policy of racial persecution.

From the first day of Hitler's rule the Manchester Guardian was suspicious of his designs. Referring to the Nazis' previous exploitation of anti-Semitism, the paper asked: 'What is to be expected of this Government [...]? Will Hitler [...] drive the Jews out of Germany and distribute the profits and property of capitalism among the impoverished middle class?' Yet the paper believed that it would be difficult for the Nazis to realise their racial ideals in a Cabinet dominated by the conservatives.⁵⁷ The New York Times was initially relieved that 'Herr Hitler's attainment of the Chancellorship [had] not provoked any anti-Semitic outbreaks'. Like the Manchester Guardian it argued that Hitler's moderation was due to the weakness of the Nazis in the Cabinet: '[...] Hitler] will have to compromise with those who are opposed to isolating the Reich from the rest of the world. He is not expected to carry into effect the rabidly anti-Semitic part of his program'.⁵⁸ Moreover, the New York Times claimed that 'perhaps the post of great responsibility which the leader of the German Nazis now held might curb his avowed extremist policies and particularly his anti-Semitism'.⁵⁹ The other three papers reported very little during February 1933. The Chicago Daily Tribune briefly mentioned that the *Vo'lkischer Beobachter* predicted an exodus of the Jews from Germany.⁶⁰ The Manchester Guardian reported sporadic anti-Semitic incidents provoked by Nazi students.⁶¹ The Times referred to Nazi anti-Semitism only once in passing.⁶² It reiterated its conviction that Hitler deserved a chance to prove his statesmanship and warned that it was too early to judge 'whether the street-orator will become an efficient ruler'.⁶³

In early March reports of Nazi anti-Semitism increased in number. After the Reichstag fire on 27 February the Nazis arrested a large number of political opponents from the Left and suppressed all left-wing newspapers. As the Anglo-American press noted, in the wake of the fire the persecution of the Jews also took momentum.⁶⁴ On 3 March several papers reported a speech of Dr Chaim Weizmann, President of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain, who warned that the very existence of German Jewry was imperilled 'by a policy which had inscribed anti-Semitism in its most primitive form as an essential part of its programme'. It was 'a severe shock to civilised people to find that it was possible for a great people like the German to relapse into barbarism'.⁶⁵ Yet the New York Times qualified such disquieting reports by printing a statement by James W. Gerard, American Ambassador to Germany during 1913–1918, who argued that Hitler would eventually dissociate himself from the anti-Semitism of his party as 'Nothing sobers like the attainment of high office.' Moreover, world public opinion would not tolerate 'a return to the prejudices and policies of the Middle Ages'.⁶⁶ Both arguments – that the takeover of political responsibility would render the Nazis more reasonable and that world public opinion would have

⁵⁷'Hitler', MG, 31 January 1933, p. 8; Selchow, 'Antisemitism', p. 76.

⁵⁸'Hitler at the Top of His Dizzy Path', NYT, 5 February 1933, pp. SM3, SM16.

⁵⁹'Rabbis Fear Hitler as Enemy of Jews', NYT, 6 February 1933.

⁶⁰'Rule of Hitler is Opened with Riots', CDT, 1 February 1933, p. 1.

⁶¹'German Rioting', MG, 2 February 1933, p. 4; 'Hitler's Widening Control', MG, 18 February 1933, p. 15.

⁶²'Intimidation in Germany', TT, 20 February 1933, p. 9.

⁶³'Chancellor Hitler', TT, 17 February 1933, p. 13; Selchow, 'Antisemitism', p. 78.

⁶⁴'Tension in Berlin', TT, 1 March 1933, p. 15; '2,000 Arrests in Two Prussian Provinces Alone', MG, 3 March 1933, p. 9; 'The German Scene', MG, 3 March 1933, p. 8; 'Nazis Act to Curb the Foreign Press', NYT, 3 March 1933, p. 5; Selchow, 'Antisemitism', pp. 83–84.

⁶⁵'Jews in Germany', TT, 3 March 1933, p. 16 (quotation); 'Weizmann Assails Reich Anti-Semites', NYT, 3 March

1933, p. 4; 'Safety of Jews in Germany', MG, 3 March 1933, p. 13. ⁶⁶'Return of the Kaiser Doubted by Gerard', NYT, 4 March 1933.

a restraining effect on Hitler – mirror once more the liberal understanding of government politics by the journalists.⁶⁷

After the Reichstag elections of 5 March the Nazis launched a concerted attack on the Jews. They systematically harassed and murdered Jews, boycotted Jewish shops, desecrated Jewish graveyards, vandalised synagogues and destroyed Jewish property. Jews were removed or suspended from their jobs and subjected to arrest and imprisonment.⁶⁸ Some scholars have argued that when the news of the Jewish persecution in the Third Reich reached the liberal democracies, many papers initially doubted the veracity of the stories on the ground that they might be exaggerated accounts along the lines of atrocity propaganda during the Great War, spread deliberately by opponents of the regime to discredit it abroad.⁶⁹ However, my analysis does not support this view. None of the papers examined here seriously doubted the truthfulness of the reports. Still, the responses to the news from Germany differed noticeably. Whereas all papers acknowledged that anti-Semitism was an intrinsic part of Nazi ideology, there was disagreement as to whether Hitler intended to pursue anti-Semitism as a governmental policy.

The Manchester Guardian reported extensively on the unfolding of the Jewish persecution, publishing nearly 50 articles and shorter notices between the Reichstag elections and the announcement of the boycott on 27 March. Three lines of argumentation stand out: First, the paper maintained that the Nazis were treating anti-Semitism not as propaganda, but as a policy. On 10 March it reported that Nazi stormtroopers had organised a boycott of Jewish shops and department stores in Berlin and openly knocked down Jews on the streets. ‘Such demonstrations’, the paper concluded ‘show that anti-Semitism is a doctrine that can be put into effect’.⁷⁰ Second, the Manchester Guardian emphasised Hitler’s personal responsibility. A leader stated that he had preached the ‘barbarian crusade’ against the Jews for years and had proclaimed ‘death to the Jews’.⁷¹ On 27 March the paper reiterated its claim that ‘The Nazi agitation has been one continual incitement to pogroms, and the chief inciter is Adolf Hitler. [. . . He is] responsible for the outrages far more than the fanatic Brownshirts who have done the bludgeoning, stabbing, and looting.’⁷² With this interpretation the Manchester Guardian stood on its own as most papers initially believed that the anti-Semitic drive originated with the ‘extremists’ around Hitler.⁷³ Third, the paper sought to counter the notion that its reports on the Nazi anti-Semitic terror were invented or exaggerated. From 24 March onwards it published a series of ‘Letters to the Editor’ written by Germans and British citizens living in Germany, who complained about allegedly ‘untrue’ reports. The Manchester Guardian strongly refuted these claims and stressed the correctness of its information.⁷⁴

The comments of The Times were more restrained. Until the boycott the paper never used the term ‘anti-Semitism’ in connection with Hitler, his party and his political

⁶⁷On the first argument see Crick, ‘Introduction’, pp. 12–13.

⁶⁸Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, pp. 84–85; Friedländer, *Persecution*, pp. 17–19; Evans, *Third Reich*, pp. 431–434.

⁶⁹Lipstadt, ‘American Press’, pp. 30–31; Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, pp. 15–18; Friedländer, *Persecution*, p. 19; Michaela Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press), pp. 31–32; Kushner, *Holocaust*, pp. 40–41.

⁷⁰‘Anti-Semitism in Berlin’, MG, 10 March 1933, p.

11. ⁷¹‘Cultural Revolution’, MG, 18 March 1933, p.

10.

⁷²‘Facts About the Nazi Terror’, MG, 27 March 1933, p.

9. ⁷³Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, p. 77.

⁷⁴MG of 24 March 1933, p. 20; 27 March 1933, p. 16; 28 March 1933, p. 18; 29 March 1933, p. 18; 30 March 1933, p. 18; 1 April 1933, p. 8; ‘Nazi Terror Reports Not Exaggerated’, MG, 25 March 1933, p. 13; Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, p. 87.

programme.⁷⁵ Article headers avoided the terms ‘Jew’ and ‘anti-Semitism’; instead captions were used such as ‘Germany under Nazi Rule. Big Stores Picketed’;⁷⁶ ‘Terrorism in Germany’;⁷⁷ or ‘Public Order in Germany’.⁷⁸ It was initially only in the ‘Letters to the Editor’ section that the ‘Jews in Germany’ or ‘Nazis and Jews’ appeared in the headings.⁷⁹ To readers of *The Times* it was therefore not clear that the Jews were singled out as special victims of the Nazi terror.⁸⁰ Moreover, *The Times* printed only half the number of reports on the anti-Jewish campaign that appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*.⁸¹ The German Jews featured in the headlines of *The Times* for the first time on 24 March in a report on the formation in the United States of a vast Jewish movement in protest against the Jewish persecution.⁸² The *Times*’ coverage was marked by the following points: First, the anti-Semitic outburst was treated as a passing revolutionary side-effect. Although the paper reported the Nazi boycott of Jewish department stores and shops and acknowledged that incidents of violence and intimidation in relation to Jews were occurring daily, it argued that ‘much of this, as Government circles suggest, is inevitable in present circumstances [...] fine distinctions cannot always be drawn in the stress of a national revolution’.⁸³ A leader of 15 March acknowledged that ‘indiscriminate violence and persecution’ was occurring but insisted that ‘no one expects revolutions to be made with rose-water’.⁸⁴ Second, the paper maintained that Hitler was a ‘moderate’ who initially had difficulties in controlling his radical followers but who would soon restore order.⁸⁵ Third, *The Times* considered the treatment of the Jews an internal German affair in which Britain had no right to interfere.⁸⁶ The paper was alarmed at Hitler’s unpredictable foreign policy and worried that he might upset the international status quo. It therefore held that ‘the internal excesses of [Hitler’s] regime should not debar foreign statesmanship from examining with an open mind the external claims of the German, as they would of any other, Government’.⁸⁷ In this *The Times* followed the official line of the British government that strongly favoured a policy of non-intervention on behalf of the German Jews for fear of worsening diplomatic relations with the new German rulers.⁸⁸

In the United States, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* was generally outspoken in its headlines and after initial doubts denounced Hitler’s government as the originator of the anti-Semitic campaign. ‘Anti-Semitism in Germany’,⁸⁹ ‘Jews Protest Persecution of Race by Hitler’⁹⁰ and ‘Berlin Worried by U.S. Reaction to War on Jews’⁹¹ were some of its headlines. The paper published about 20 articles between the Reichstag elections and the announcement of the boycott, recounting Nazi acts of anti-Jewish molestation and

⁷⁵Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, p. 88; Sharf, ‘British Press’, pp. 171, 173. ⁷⁶TT, 10 March 1933, p. 13.

⁷⁷TT, 13 March 1933, pp. 14,

16. ⁷⁸TT, 15 March 1933, p. 14.

⁷⁹TT of 11 March 1933, p. 6; 14 March, p. 13; 16 March, p. 10; 20 March, p. 8; 21 March, p. 10.

⁸⁰Sharf, ‘British Press’, pp. 171, 173; Mohr, *Kein Recht*, pp. 154–155.

⁸¹Between 5 and 27 March 1933, 23 articles mentioned anti-Semitism.

⁸²‘Treatment of Jews in Germany’, TT, 24 March 1933, p. 13.

⁸³‘Reprisals in Germany’, TT, 11 March 1933, p. 9.

⁸⁴‘The Hitler Revolution’, TT, 15 March 1933, p. 15; Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, p. 85.

⁸⁵‘Violence in Germany’, TT, 14 March 1933, p. 13.

⁸⁶Shindler, ‘Thunderer’, pp. 154–157.

⁸⁷‘The Spirit of Potsdam’, TT, 22 March 1933, p. 15.

⁸⁸Clemens, Hitler, pp. 272–281; Mohr, *Kein Recht*, pp. 155–171; Fox, ‘Great Britain’, pp. 40–46; Sharf, *British Press*, pp. 12–13.

⁸⁹CDT, 13 March 1933, p.

10. ⁹⁰CDT, 22 March 1933, p.

2. ⁹¹CDT, 23 March 1933, p.

10.

violence, the boycott of Jewish businesses, the removal of Jewish professionals and plans for the expulsion of all Eastern European Jews from the Palatinate.⁹² Initially, the journalists believed that not Hitler's government but fanatical party members were behind the anti-Semitic campaign,⁹³ and it hoped that Hitler would stop the campaign in the interest of Germany's international standing: 'If he has any regard for civilised opinion and for the maintenance of the friendly attitude of the American people toward Germany he will use all his power to prevent any recurrence of them.'⁹⁴ Yet, the paper soon changed its mind and wrote: 'The terrorism against the Jews is not the sporadic effort of unruly elements, but a governmental affair. [...] It applies to all Jews, whether liberals, reactionaries, agnostics. It is an attempt on a universal scale to humiliate 550,000 Jews.'⁹⁵ A few days later it reiterated its view that the anti-Semitic incidents were not the result of uncontrolled mob violence.⁹⁶ Recalling the Nazi rise to power it wrote that Hitler had ever since the beginnings of his movement consistently preached the hatred of the Jews and called for their removal from Germany.⁹⁷ However, like *The Times*, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* also warned of hasty criticism of Nazi anti-Jewish policy. On 26 March it reported Secretary of State Cordell Hull saying that any 'ill-considered criticism of the Hitler government's activities' might jeopardise America's relations with the new German government.⁹⁸ This was in line with the paper's editorial policy, which strongly advocated isolationism during the 1920s and 1930s.⁹⁹

The *New York Times*' coverage was ambivalent. On the one hand the paper reported meticulously on Nazi anti-Semitism and emphasised its central role in Nazi ideology, as it had done during the previous decade. Between the Reichstag elections and the announcement of the boycott it published more than 40 articles, twice as many as the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. A number of articles also appeared on the front page. A detailed report sent from Paris supplied a long list of anti-Semitic atrocities committed by the Nazis and concluded that in Nazi Germany 'to be a Jew is held a crime'.¹⁰⁰ In a long feature article on Hitler's future plans the Hungarian-born writer and historian Emil Lengyel reflected on the role of anti-Semitism in Nazi ideology. Pointing to the 'official' Nazi programme of 1920, which had never formally been altered, he asserted: 'Hitlerism is based on anti-Semitism. [...] Adolf Hitler's anti-Semitic utterances were the most characteristic parts of his early speeches.'¹⁰¹ On the other hand, the *New York Times* keenly maintained a distinction between Hitler and the Nazis, claiming that the latter were pursuing the anti-Semitic campaign without Hitler's consent. It argued that the anti-Jewish terror was a passing revolutionary phenomenon, not official policy, and attributed the racial persecution to 'National Socialist enthusiasts getting out of control'.¹⁰² Hitler would not take anti-Jewish measures because 'the Nationalist sentiment of the Cabinet [was] against any form of anti-Semitism'.¹⁰³

⁹²'Nazi Terrorism Grows', CDT, 9 March 1933, p. 1; 'Refugees Tell of Terrors at Hands of Nazis', CDT, 20 March 1933, pp. 1, 8; 'Hitler Demands Reichstag Make Him a Dictator', CDT, 21 March 1933, p. 3; 'New German Order Forbids Bank Withdrawals by Jews', CDT, 24 March 1933, p. 3; 'German Terror', CDT, 26 March 1933, pp. 1, 4.

⁹³'Nazi Terrorism Grows', CDT, 9 March 1933, p. 1; 'Hitler Orders Nazi Troops to End Terrorism', CDT, 11 March 1933, p. 11.

⁹⁴'Anti-Semitism in Germany', CDT, 13 March 1933, p. 10 (leader).

⁹⁵'Jews Protest Persecution of Race by Hitler', CDT, 22 March 1933, p. 2.

⁹⁶'German Terror', CDT, 26 March 1933, pp. 1, 4.

⁹⁷'Rise of Hitler to Dictator One of Europe's Odd Dramas', CDT, 22 March 1933, p. 2.

⁹⁸'Hull Obtains Consuls' Data on Jews' Cases', CDT, 26 March 1933, p. 4.

⁹⁹See note 19.

¹⁰⁰'German Fugitives', NYT, 20 March 1933, pp. 1, 5.

¹⁰¹'Hitler's Plans for Germany are Still Cloaked in Doubt', NYT, 12 March 1933, p. XX5.

¹⁰²'Nazi Bands Stir Up Strife in Germany', NYT, 9 March 1933, pp. 1, 10.

¹⁰³[No title], NYT, 7 March 1933.

Like the London Times,¹⁰⁴ the New York Times highlighted Hitler's order to the Nazi storm-troopers to refrain from terrorising individuals and interfering with business life¹⁰⁵ and Goering's proclamation that 'law-abiding Jews' would have nothing to fear as the government would not tolerate racial persecution.¹⁰⁶ (Kushner has argued that the notion of 'law-abiding Jews' implied that those not abiding the law were provoking the anti-Semitic measures themselves; he held that this was yet another liberal attempt to find a rational explanation for the Nazi persecution of the Jews.¹⁰⁷) Moreover, the New York Times believed that the German people would not tolerate for long the anti-Semitic campaign: '[. . . A] great nation will not permit itself to play traitor to its own past and to the cause of civilization, but will make the necessary effort to wrench itself out of a condition of momentary madness'.¹⁰⁸ Likewise, the paper was convinced that Hitler, if faced with the pressure of international public opinion, would come to reason and abandon his anti-Semitism. On 26 March Managing Director Edwin L. James¹⁰⁹ wrote: '[T]he world is watching the development of Hitler's policies, and [...] Germany will suffer in her world relations if Berlin consecrates officially anti-Jewish campaigns of a legal and economic nature.'¹¹⁰

Despite the differences in their interpretation of the Nazi anti-Semitic campaign during March 1933, the papers had one feature in common: they reported widely on the formation of a protest movement in Great Britain, the United States and other foreign countries.¹¹¹ This movement originated within the Jewish communities, but was soon joined by the Christian churches and labour organisations. The protesters organised mass meetings in New York, Chicago, London and other big cities, they demanded from their respective governments a diplomatic inquiry, and they called for the boycott of German goods.¹¹² Roughly half of all articles published in the Chicago Daily Tribune and in the New York Times between the Reichstag elections and the announcement of the anti-Jewish boycott on 27 March were devoted to this protest movement and they reflected the outspoken condemnation by the protesters of Nazi racial persecution.¹¹³ That the Anglo-American journalists reported so widely on the formation of this global protest suggests yet again that they thought that in some way or another Hitler and the Nazis might be impressed by this worldwide condemnation and induced to abandon their anti-Semitic campaign.

¹⁰⁴'Germany Under the Nazis', TT, 27 March 1933, p. 11.

¹⁰⁵'Violence in Reich Subsidies in Order', TT, 14 March 1933, p. 13.

¹⁰⁶'Goering Says Jews Will Be Tolerated', TT, 26 March 1933, p. 28; 'Germans Aroused by Attacks Abroad', TT, 26 March 1933, pp. 1, 28.

¹⁰⁷Kushner, *Holocaust*, pp. 38–39.

¹⁰⁸'The German Scene', NYT, 21 March 1933.

¹⁰⁹After 13 years as the NYT's foreign correspondent in Europe (Paris), James became Managing Editor in 1932, holding this post until his death in 1951. Leff, *Buried*, p. 165.

¹¹⁰'Herr Hitler's Nazis Hear an Echo of World Opinion', NYT, 26 March 1933, p. E1.

¹¹¹'Reported Boycott of German Goods', MG, 15 March 1933, p. 13; 'American Jews and the Nazis', MG, 22 March 1933, p. 15; 'Jewish Boycott of German Goods', MG, 24 March 1933, p. 10; 'Treatment of Jews in Germany', TT, 24

March 1933, p. 13; 'Germany and the Jews', TT, 27 March 1933, p. 14. ¹¹²Müller, Weimar, pp. 375–76; Gewirtz, 'Responses'; Fox, 'Great Britain'.

¹¹³'Jews Protest Persecution of Race by Hitler', CDT, 22 March 1933, p. 2; 'U.S. Consuls Ask Data on Hitler Policy To Jews', CDT, 22 March 1933, p. 2; 'Jews in Heated Rally Vote for Hitler Protest', CDT, 24 March 1933, p. 1; 'Jews in England Boycott German Goods and Cafes', CDT, 26 March 1933, p. 4; 'Jews Here Demand Washington Action', NYT, 21 March 1933, pp. 1, 10; 'Berlin Inquiry Ordered', CDT, 22 March 1933, pp. 1, 8; 'Christian Leaders Protest on Hitler', CDT, pp. 1, 9; 'Move for Boycott Gaining in London', CDT, 25 March 1933, p. 10; '250,000 Jews Here to Protest Today', CDT, 27 March 1933.

‘An Attempt to Intimidate World Opinion’:¹¹⁴ The Anti-Jewish Boycott of 1 April 1933

Nazi anti-Semitism reached a climax when, on 27 March, the Nazis announced a nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses on 1 April 1933. Although the boycott was planned and carried out by the Nazi Party, it was in effect a governmental act unprecedented in modern times.¹¹⁵ It was presented as an act of self-defence of the German nation against atrocity stories about the alleged maltreatment of German Jews spread by international Jewry in the Anglo-American press in order to harm Germany.¹¹⁶ The announcement received wide publicity in the Anglo-American press¹¹⁷ and triggered much discussion over the degree of government complicity in the anti-Semitic campaign since Hitler’s attainment of power. Most papers now concluded that the German chancellor was the driving force behind the campaign.¹¹⁸ Hence, the boycott served to reinforce the existing views of the Manchester Guardian and the Chicago Daily Tribune that Hitler’s government was responsible for it, whereas The Times and the New York Times modified their interpretation of Nazi anti-Semitism as a consequence of the boycott. However, although the journalists now realised that the anti-Semitic drive was more than a passing revolutionary phenomenon, they still held on to the belief that ultimately Hitler would have to stop it under pressure from world public opinion.

The adjustment was particularly noticeable in The Times. On 28 March, the day after Goebbels’ announcement, the paper began to report more widely on the maltreatment of the German Jews and to highlight the distinctiveness of the Nazi terror against the Jews from that against other political and social groups.¹¹⁹ The Nazi plans for the boycott were described in detail¹²⁰ and The Times argued that ‘[t]here is nothing spontaneous about the boycott [. . .]; it is the product of propaganda on an unprecedented scale’.¹²¹ Still, the paper hoped that the German government would come to its senses and call off the boycott for fear of its potential grave effects on the German economy.¹²² After the boycott, which was equally fully reported,¹²³ The Times expected ‘the war against the Jews’ to soon cease.¹²⁴ Yet, contrary to its previous view, the paper at this point admitted that the boycott had been a governmental act, not a spontaneous stroke of the Nazi party for which the government bore no responsibility.¹²⁵ A leader denounced openly Hitler’s political programme with its anti-Semitic provisions: ‘[T]here is quite

¹¹⁴ ‘Hitler’s New Drive Against the Jews’, MG, 30 March 1933, p. 9.

¹¹⁵ Friedländer, *Persecution*, pp. 19–21, 27–31; Evans, *Third Reich*, pp. 431–434, 437–438; Hannah Ahlheim, ‘Deutsche, kauft nicht bei Juden!’ Antisemitismus und politischer Boykott in Deutschland 1924 bis 1935 (Goettingen: Wallstein, 2011), pp. 243–265; Müller, *Weimar*, pp. 374–382; Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, pp. 76–92; Lipstadt, ‘American Press’, pp. 29–39; Sharf, ‘British Press’, pp. 169–174.

¹¹⁶ Friedländer, *Persecution*, p. 19; Evans, *Third Reich*, pp. 434–35; Ahlheim, *Deutsche!*, pp. 248–49; Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, p. 89; Frank Bo’sch, ‘Medien im Nationalsozialismus: Transnationale Perspektiven’, *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 62 (2011), pp. 522–23.

¹¹⁷ ‘Nazi Reprisals’, MG, 28 March 1933, p. 13; ‘Anti-Jewish Campaign’, TT, 28 March 1933, p. 13; ‘Nazis Strike New Blow at German Jewry’, CDT, 28 March 1933, p. 4; ‘Boycott on Jews Ordered By Nazis’, NYT, 29 March 1933, pp. 1, 8.

¹¹⁸ Lipstadt, ‘American Press’, pp. 39–40.

¹¹⁹ ‘Anti-Jewish Campaign’, TT, 28 March 1933, p. 13; Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, pp. 78, 89.

¹²⁰ ‘Nazis and Jews’, TT, 29 March 1933, p. 14; ‘Boycott of Jews in Germany’, TT, 31 March 1933, p. 13; ‘Nazi Boycott of Jews’, TT, 1 April 1933, p. 10.

¹²¹ ‘Nazi boycott of Jews’, TT, 30 March 1933, p. 13.

¹²² ‘Boycott of Jews in Germany’, TT, 31 March 1933, p. 13; Selchow ‘Antisemitism’, p. 91.

¹²³ ‘Boycott of Jews’, TT, 3 April 1933, p. 14.

¹²⁴ ‘Herr Hitler’s Problem’, TT, 5 April 1933, p.

15. ¹²⁵ ‘Nazis and Jews’, TT, 5 April 1933, p. 13.

enough evidence of anti-Jewish planning in the policy of the Nazis [...]. The “racialism” of their original programme was notorious, and that programme has never been formally abandoned.¹²⁶ Still, *The Times* rejected suggestions for a formal British intervention as inappropriate interference with the internal affairs of a sovereign state. Any British protest would merely provoke German nationalism to frenzy and further aggravate the situation of the German Jews.¹²⁷

Like *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* was little impressed with Goebbels’ argument that the boycott was a response to anti-German atrocity propaganda. From 28 March onwards it reported extensively on the preparations for the boycott, arguing that the Nazis were exploiting the international protest against the Jewish persecution to justify that drive in the eyes of the German public.¹²⁸ Because the Nazi regime was ‘perturbed by the world-wide protest against atrocities for which it alone is responsible’, it sought to make the Jews, international labour, and the press outside Germany stop protesting. The paper sharply condemned this method as ‘an attempt to intimidate world public opinion’.¹²⁹ The boycott confirmed the *Manchester Guardian*’s previous conviction that Hitler’s government was responsible for the anti-Semitic campaign. It argued that the boycott was a logical consequence of the propaganda the Nazis had preached for years.¹³⁰ A long article published on 1 April identified anti-Semitism as the core element of Hitler’s ideology and emphasised that Hitler’s ideas had not changed, as so many had hoped, when he took office.¹³¹ ‘[A]nti-Semitism is the leitmotiv of “Mein Kampf”. Take away that anti-Semitism and one takes away the one fundamental basis of Hitler’s conception of the universe [...]’.¹³² The *Manchester Guardian* warned that the boycott meant the complete economic ruin of the Jews in the Reich so that there remained only expulsion or starvation for 600,000 German Jews.¹³³ It forecast gloomily: ‘In Germany, if the process [of a wholesale boycott] is carried through, there will be no future for the Jews.’¹³⁴

The boycott also reinforced the *Chicago Daily Tribune*’s conviction that Hitler was behind the anti-Semitic onslaught. On 28 March it reported that ‘Chancellor Hitler and his Nazis struck a new blow at German Jewry today.’¹³⁵ A day later it asserted that the boycott was ordered by the Nazi Party, of which Hitler was the head.¹³⁶ For a whole week the Jewish persecution featured prominently in the paper, including its front page.¹³⁷ On 30 March the paper affirmed Hitler’s personal responsibility in a page-one article headlined ‘Hitler Puts O.K. On Jewish Boycott’.¹³⁸ Like the other papers, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* objected strongly to the Nazi claim that the boycott was Germany’s response to Jewish defamation of Germany in the foreign press and a declaration of ‘war on

¹²⁶ ‘According to Plan?’, *TT*, 3 April 1933, p. 15.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ ‘Nazi Reprisals’, *MG*, 28 March 1933, p. 13; ‘Official Boycott of Jews in Germany’, *MG*, 29 March 1933, p. 9; ‘Persecution of Jews in Germany’, *MG*, 31 March 1933, p. 11; ‘Peril to Jewish Professional Classes’, *MG*, 31 March, p. 15; ‘One-Day Boycott of Jews in Germany’, *MG*, 1 April 1933, p. 13.

¹²⁹ ‘Hitler’s New Drive Against the Jews’, *MG*, 30 March 1933, p. 9.

¹³⁰ ‘The Jews in Germany’, *MG*, 31 March 1933, p. 10.

¹³¹ Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, p. 92.

¹³² ‘Adolf Hitler and the Jews’, *MG*, 1 April 1933, p. 14.

¹³³ ‘What Does a Boycott Mean?’, *MG*, 1 April 1933, p. 12.

¹³⁴ ‘The German Jews’, *MG*, 3 April 1933, p. 8.

¹³⁵ ‘Nazis Strike New Blow at German Jewry’, *CDT*, 28 March 1933, p. 4.

¹³⁶ ‘Jews Face Drastic Boycott’, *CDT*, 29 March 1933, p. 1.

¹³⁷ ‘German Mob Lynches Jew as Boycott Ends’, *CDT*, 2 April 1933, p. 1; ‘Nazis Keep Up Jew Boycott in Several Cities’, *CDT*, 3 April 1933, pp. 1, 6.

¹³⁸ *CDT*, 30 March 1933, p. 1.

World Jewry' and the 'Jewish Enemy'.¹³⁹ A leader appearing on 2 April reiterated that Hitler was personally and spiritually responsible for the anti-Semitic outrages and concluded: 'Even when the government will be able to stop the pogroms the spirit standing behind the government will not change as long as Hitler is in power.'¹⁴⁰

The New York Times' treatment of the boycott was peculiar. Events would at last lead to a modification of the paper's representation of Nazi anti-Semitism, but initially it held to its view that Hitler was not responsible for the Nazi anti-Semitic excesses, and it gave much publicity to Nazi denials of anti-Semitic atrocities. Whereas the other three papers reported on the boycott plans as soon as they became known, the New York Times was one day behind. The dominating topic of 28 March was the mass protest of Jewish organisations and Christian churches in the United States and abroad against Nazi racial policy.¹⁴¹ Then, on 29 March, a front page article reported on the Nazis' announcement of a 'sweeping boycott against the Jews of Germany' in reaction to demonstrations in the United States, Great Britain and elsewhere against anti-Semitism.¹⁴² The paper emphasised that the boycott was organised not by the government, but the Nazi Party, and that the party and the government were two separate institutions. Moreover, it was optimistic that the boycott might be called off by the Nazis 'pending developments in the outside world'.¹⁴³ This hopeful view was corroborated by an interview with the American Ambassador in Berlin, Frederick M. Sackett. He held that the 'period of violent incidents' was now over and warned against a general condemnation of the German government as this might result in 'a real anti-Semitic movement in Germany'.¹⁴⁴

First signs of a change in the New York Times' coverage became visible on 1 and 2 April when the paper admitted for the first time that Hitler's government stood behind the anti-Semitic campaign. On 1 April it reprinted an article from the Manchester Guardian that strongly refuted the Nazis' claim that the boycott was Germany's answer to foreign atrocity propaganda and asserted that anti-Semitism had long been part of Hitler's programme.¹⁴⁵ A day later, Edwin L. James argued in an editorial that the anti-Jewish campaign originated years ago and had always been an intrinsic part of Hitler's political programme.¹⁴⁶ It was this long history of Nazi anti-Semitism and its central role in Nazi ideology, James maintained, that had prompted the international press to watch Hitler's politics with particular suspicion, and it would continue to do so: '[T]he world-wide disapproval which greeted the initial attempts of the Nazis to put into effect their anti-Jewish doctrine [...] will not disappear with the lifting of the boycott against Jewish stores if at the same time there continues the effort to take away from German Jews the civic, social and economic rights to which they are entitled.' James drew the important conclusion that Nazi anti-Semitism would not simply fade away once the boycott was stopped: 'In one form or another, the trouble will continue so long as the Nazis try to put into practice what they have so long

¹³⁹'Hitler Nazis Declare War on World Jewry', CDT, 31 March 1933, p. 1. Nazi propaganda on the 'Jewish Enemy' is analysed in Jeffery Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2006).

¹⁴⁰'Germany of Today', CDT, 2 April 1933, p. 12.

¹⁴¹'Other Faiths Join In', NYT, 28 March 1933, pp. 1, 12; "'We Ask Only for the Right", Says Wise', NYT, 28 March 1933 (no page number); 'Bishop Manning Denounces Acts of Racial or Religious Persecution [...]', NYT, 28 March 1933 (no page number).

¹⁴²'Boycott on Jews Ordered by Nazis', NYT, 29 March 1933, pp. 1, 8.

¹⁴³Ibid. (quotation); 'Reserves Right of Renewal', NYT, 5 April 1933, p. 10.

¹⁴⁴'Plea for Germany Made by Sackett', NYT, 30 March 1933, p. 12.

¹⁴⁵'Excuses of Nazis Called Hypocrisy', NYT, 1 April 1933 (no page number); 'Hitler's New Drive Against the Jews', MG, 30 March 1933, p. 9 (see note 129 above).

¹⁴⁶'The Nazis Begin to Dodge Anti-Semitic Boomerang', NYT, 2 April 1933, p. E1.

preached.¹⁴⁷ Thus, at last, the New York Times made it clear to its readers that it was Hitler's government that was the driving force behind the anti-Semitic campaign.

However, despite these gloomy predictions British and American papers did not abandon their hope that, ultimately, liberal principles of politics would prevail. They remained convinced that the Nazis could not possibly ignore world opinion, and they continued to argue that Hitler would be called to reason if he realised that his anti-Semitic policy was causing economic and diplomatic damage. Thus, the Chicago Daily Tribune claimed that economic and diplomatic considerations had guided Hitler's decision to stop the boycott after one day.¹⁴⁸ The Times believed that the boycott had severely damaged Germany's prestige in Great Britain and it hoped that the public protest in the press and in the House of Commons 'may persuade the Nazis to abandon the boycott'.¹⁴⁹ Even the Manchester Guardian – the paper that had consistently underlined that anti-Semitism was an intrinsic part of Nazi ideology – continued to pin its hope on the possibility that Hitler might somehow be impressed by world opinion. It held that he had suspended the boycott 'essentially because of international opinion',¹⁵⁰ and argued that 'the only possible means of saving [the Jews] is that all outside Germany should unite in expressing their hatred of Nazi anti-Semitism in such a manner that even the German Government will recognise, and recoil from, the price which it will have to pay'.¹⁵¹ Publishing the truth and building up the pressure of world public opinion on Hitler's regime seemed 'the best way to serve the cause of justice and decency'.¹⁵² Similarly, Edwin L. James claimed in the New York Times that the world-wide protests had led to a change of opinion in the German Cabinet and to a realisation that Germany would 'lose enormously materially through the further development of anti-Semitism. [...] The world has its eye on Germany, and whether the Nazis like it or not the moral standing of a government in the community of nations still has a value'.¹⁵³

Conclusion

Looking at the coverage of the four papers as a whole, it seems difficult to attribute differences or similarities to the papers' nationality or political party orientation. On the one hand, the liberal Manchester Guardian and New York Times reported fuller than the conservative London Times and Chicago Daily Tribune. This holds true for the Weimar years as well as for the Third Reich. Thus, during March 1933 the Manchester Guardian and the New York Times printed twice as many articles on the persecution of the German Jews than The Times and the Chicago Daily Tribune. On the other hand, the Manchester Guardian and the New York Times differed considerably in their assessment of Hitler's role in the anti-Semitic terror during March 1933, while the conservative Chicago Daily Tribune agreed with the liberal Manchester Guardian on Hitler's involvement in the anti-Semitic terror. However, there was a consensus between the conservative Times and Chicago Daily Tribune: both opposed the intervention of the British and American governments on behalf of the German Jews as an inappropriate interference in the affairs of a sovereign

¹⁴⁷Ibid. James' views were supported by another article affirming that Hitler had personally approved the boycott: 'Hitler Challenges American Protests', NYT, 7 April 1933, p. 10.

¹⁴⁸'Hitler Orders Nazis to Halt Jewish Boycott', CDT, 4 April 1933, pp. 1, 4.

¹⁴⁹'According to Plan?', TT, 3 April 1933, p. 15.

¹⁵⁰'The German Persecution', MG, 7 April 1933, p. 10. ¹⁵¹'The German Persecution', MG, 10 April 1933, p. 8.

¹⁵²'Letters from Germany', MG, 3 April 1933, p. 16; Selchow, 'Antisemitism', p. 90.

¹⁵³'The Nazis Begin to Dodge Anti-Semitic Boomerang', NYT, 2 April 1933, p. E1.

state. The New York Times represents a special case. During 1930–1932 the paper reported widely on Nazi anti-Semitism and was outspoken in its criticism, predicting a threat to Jewish life should Hitler attain power. After 30 January 1933 it continued to report fully, but markedly toned down its criticism of the Nazis. Of the four papers it was the last to acknowledge that the outrages against the Jews represented official policy. It has been argued that the New York Times, which had a Jewish proprietor and a large Jewish readership, was at pains not to appear to be a ‘Jewish newspaper’ and that it was therefore reluctant to publish news concerning Jews, especially if they emanated from Jewish sources.¹⁵⁴

On the whole there seems to have been less of a change in the portrayal of Nazi anti-Semitism after January 1933 than one would expect. During Hitler’s rise to power over 1930–1933 the journalists reported comprehensively and consistently on Nazi Jew-hatred, identifying it as one of the most striking components of Nazi ideology. But with their repeated assertions that the Nazis could not possibly continue their racial persecution in the face of worldwide public condemnation they also created the impression abroad that the Jews would have nothing serious to fear in the long run.¹⁵⁵ What made it so difficult for Anglo-American journalists to understand the nature of Nazi anti-Semitism were the different political and cultural norms in which they were socialised. In evaluating its political significance they were led by their own liberal democratic outlook. They attributed the characteristics of a liberal democracy on the Third Reich, assuming that the Nazis, once in power, would act rationally and that even in a dictatorship public opinion would have its weight on the decisions of the political leadership. This explains why the journalists so often assured their readers that sooner or later the ‘echo of world opinion’ – the storm of public indignation in the liberal democracies over the persecution of the German Jews – would make an impression on the Nazi rulers.

Ultimately, the press in the liberal democracies was in search of rational explanations for an apparently irrational phenomenon. Initially, British and American papers did not take Nazi anti-Semitism seriously; they thought the Nazis were using it as a propaganda instrument in their conquest of power. After Hitler’s attainment of power they presumed that the anti-Semitic campaign would soon be passing. They also raised doubts regarding Hitler’s role in the anti-Semitic campaign, as they did not believe that a head of state could be involved in racial persecution. After the boycott of 1 April the papers did finally acknowledge Hitler’s involvement, but still doubted that the Nazis could possibly continue the Jewish persecution in the face of worldwide public condemnation. It seems that the journalists were unable to envisage that for the Nazis anti-Semitism was something more than propaganda, namely, a paranoid ideological framework and a political end in itself.¹⁵⁶ Nor could they believe that a people, renowned for its great culture, could regard Jew-hatred as something attractive and support – or at least tolerate – Nazi anti-Jewish policy.¹⁵⁷

Deborah Lipstadt has argued that this kind of thinking prevailed in the Anglo-American press even until Kristallnacht in November 1938 and beyond.¹⁵⁸ After the boycott the newspapers continued to report fully on the unfolding of the Nazi persecution of Jews, yet their understanding of these events remained preconditioned by liberal thinking. Thus, many of the early perceptions of Nazi anti-Semitism were to form the basis of the American attitude towards the Jewish persecution in later years. These were, first, the belief that the

¹⁵⁴Leff, *Buried*, pp. 10–13, 19–48; Müller, *Weimar*, pp. 49–50.

¹⁵⁵Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, p. 38.

¹⁵⁶Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, pp. 48–51; Granzow, *Mirror*, p. 160.

¹⁵⁷Selchow, ‘Antisemitism’, p. 95; Granzow, *Mirror*, pp. 157–160; Kushner, *Holocaust*, pp. 36–37, 54–55; Mohr, *Kein Recht*, p. 154.

¹⁵⁸Lipstadt, ‘Pious Sympathies’, pp. 54–55.

persecution of the Jews was a temporary measure to distract from domestic problems and would pass once Hitler had firmly established his rule. Second, it was thought that the Nazis would not dare to implement their anti-Semitic policy in the face of world public condemnation. And third, the press considered the persecution of the Jews an internal German affair in which foreign governments had no right to interfere.¹⁵⁹

These observations also hold true for British newspapers. The latter likewise regarded the Nazi persecution of the Jews an internal German affair that even after the pogrom in 1938 was not considered an issue that should be allowed to jeopardise an Anglo-German rapprochement.¹⁶⁰ Tony Kushner has emphasised the journalists' difficulty in understanding the extremism behind the Nazi persecution of the Jews as a race. Hence they were searching for some rational explanation for the anti-Jewish campaign. Some held that the Nazis were using the attack on the Jews as a temporary means to distract the German public from economic problems. Others argued that this anti-Semitism must in a way be 'well-earned', that is, that it was the result of a resentment felt against Jewish dominance in German society and against the Jews' failure to assimilate.¹⁶¹ As Kushner states, 'Nazi anti-Semitism remained a mystery to many in Britain because it could not be justified in terms of a response to Jewish behaviour. [...] The treatment meted out to the Jews quite simply did not fit into the dominant liberal discourse in Britain.'¹⁶²

In the end, the formation of an 'echo of world opinion' that would eventually force Hitler to stop the anti-Jewish campaign also depended on how the public was informed. For with their reporting, the Anglo-American journalists shaped the public discourse on the Nazi anti-Jewish campaign at home, thus potentially determining how the public and the government thought and acted.¹⁶³ Yet, Deborah Lipstadt claims that the American public was apathetic in regard to the Jewish persecution for most of the period 1933–1945. She blames the press for this apathy for it failed to adequately highlight the dimension and radical nature of Nazi Jew-hatred and to rouse public opinion in favour of the persecuted Jews.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, Laurel Leff maintains that the *New York Times*, which was in a rare position to influence American opinion leaders, was downplaying the significance of the Nazi persecution of the Jews through the way it presented the information in isolated stories on inside pages which did little to help readers to understand its importance.¹⁶⁵ This article has examined how Nazi anti-Semitism was publicly debated in the Anglo-American quality press at the time of Hitler's rise to power over 1930–1933. Yet its implications are broader: It has revealed a number of characteristics in the Anglo-American press' perceptions of Nazi anti-Semitism that were to lay the ground for subsequent assessments of the Nazi persecution of the Jews during 1933–1945.

Notes on Contributor

Stephanie Seul is a lecturer in Media History at the University of Bremen. Her main publications include 'The Representation of the Holocaust in the British Propaganda Campaign Directed at the German Public, 1938–1945', *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute*, 52 (2007), pp. 267–306; "'A Menace to Jews Seen If Hitler Wins': British and American Press Comment on German Anti-Semitism 1918–1933", *Jewish Historical Studies*, 44 (2012), pp. 75–102.

¹⁵⁹Ibid.; Lipstadt, 'American Press', pp. 27–28, 34–35, 53–55; Stone, *Responses*, pp. 98–99. ¹⁶⁰Kushner, 'Beyond the Pale?', p. 155.

¹⁶¹Ibid., pp. 145, 148–149; Kushner, *Holocaust*, pp. 35–42.

¹⁶²Kushner, 'Beyond the Pale?', p. 149 (emphasis as in original).

¹⁶³Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, pp. 2–3; Vella, 'Newspapers', pp. 192–193; Leff, *Buried*, pp. 5, 10.

¹⁶⁴Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, pp. 2–3, 278.

¹⁶⁵Leff, *Buried*, pp. 14–15.