

'From Our Own Correspondent'
The British press and Nazi Germany, 1933-1939

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ABSTRACT

The reporting of atrocity and the atrocious behaviour of states towards their own populations is not a phenomenon of the 21st Century. In the 1930s a major state in central Europe exhibited such behaviour. In considering the case of Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1939, the British press were faced with an unusual prospect. Here was a modern state descending into elements of barbarism in dealing with dissent and racial and religious difference.

This thesis will examine the responses of the British press to the rise of Nazism in Germany, from the appointment of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor at the beginning of 1933 to the onset of war in 1939. The study will examine the extent to which the British press reported and understood the nature of the dictatorship by examining the internal situation in Germany. The central theme of the study is the reaction of the press to the Nazi rejection of liberal and democratic values. This thesis concentrates on British press reactions to the destruction of democracy, the Nazification of the German state, and the brutal treatment of 'enemies' and 'outsiders'.

The thesis will study the clues, signs, and markers that could have informed the British people, and by extension the British government, about the aims, goals, and ambitions of Hitler's dictatorship. In doing so, the thesis will examine what people in Britain could have known about the internal situation in Nazi Germany by reading British newspapers. This is important because it provides insight into what people in Britain could have known about the nature of the Nazi dictatorship on the eve of war in 1939.

DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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The strength of my own family has also been an important influence on me. It was their encouragement and support that led me to History in the first place. Both my mum, Margaret Galbraith, and my dad, Ronald Galbraith, recognised my passion for History and learning from a young age and encouraged me to pursue it to university. Their

unwavering support has helped me through many a hard day. It has been a long road to this point, and they have been there through it all. I must also thank my brother Ryan Galbraith, who has always been just as much a friend as brother. Despite his teasing and joking, I have no greater supporter than Ryan. The exception to this may have been my Grandad whose faith in me never wavered. I wish he was here to see this. I know he would have been chuffed that his wee 'hen' had done it!

There are, of course, many friends and colleagues who inspired, assisted, and helped me in numerous ways. The list is long and would likely take many pages but a few deserve special mention. From the University of Adelaide, Dr Gareth Pritchard, Dr Thomas Buchanan, Dr Vesna Drapac, Dr Andre Lambelet, and Emeritus Professor Trevor Wilson, must be singled out for their advice and support. From Flinders University, Associate Professor Andrekos Varnava, Associate Professor Matthew Fitzpatrick, Associate Professor David Lockwood, and Professor Peter Monteath, have all offered advice. Dr Meleah Hampton, Dr Bodie Ashton, Daniel Ashdown and Amy Cupper were all there in the beginning. We went through it all together and I am truly grateful for their friendship. Astrid Lane, Thomas A. Mackey, William Prescott, Mark Neuendorf, Dr. Jess Loyer, Dr. Steven Anderson, Hilary Jane Locke, Stephanie Shing-Kelly, and David Milazzo, have all provided immeasurable support in the last few years (and many laughs). Thanks especially to Thomas A. Mackay and Daniel Ashdown who read drafts and offered kind words of support and much distraction. Any errors are most surely mine and not theirs! I really do treasure their input and pep talks. Astrid Lane deserves special mention — she makes me a better person and a better researcher and writer. I cannot thank her enough for her friendship this last year. I also want to acknowledge and thank the many friends who have stood by me and supported me all these years. This is especially true of the wonderful Alison Wooding, whose friendship and love has guided me through so much. I am also truly thankful to the friendship of Sarah Nickolai, Holly Burke, Erika Wiseman, Andrew Shelton, and Carlo and Samantha Espartero.

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There are surely more people that deserve mention and recognition for their support, advice and help during this process but, as I understand it, the acknowledgements for a thesis should not number more than the actual thesis itself. For those not mentioned, please know that you are not forgotten — I am thankful to you all.

ABBREVIATIONS

Berlin (etc) Corr. ‘From Our Own Correspondent in Berlin’ (etc)

Corr. ‘Correspondent’ (usually with author name included)

Dipl/Spec. Corr. ‘From/By Our Diplomatic/Special Correspondent’

Newspaper references are displayed in full then abbreviated for the rest of the chapter. This also applies to archival institutions, whereby the full institution name will be included for the first time it is cited in the chapter. Subsequent references to the institution will be abbreviated.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

Newspaper articles comprise the bulk of the sources for this thesis. Every care has been taken to ensure that as much information has been given in the footnote references as possible to help identify the source. This means that, when the article has been a leader (or editorial) or Letter to the Editor, it has been signposted as such in the footnote. Many articles were given an author tagline, such as 'From Our Own Correspondent, Berlin', 'From Our Special Correspondent' or 'From Our Diplomatic Correspondent'; these have been abbreviated (see Abbreviations). Because author names were often not included (in *The Times* and *Manchester Guardian* for instance), the references have not named correspondents, even if it is known that they were stationed there. Correspondents often went on leave or holiday and other journalists took over their duties and the newspapers published these articles under the same author tagline, such as 'From Our Own Correspondent'. Therefore, it was deemed best only to use the tagline that the newspaper used, and be wary of making presumptions as to the author of the article. The exception to this is Frederick Augustus Voigt, special/diplomatic correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*. Voigt's correspondence leaves no room for doubt as to which articles he wrote for the newspaper.

There are also articles that did not include author details. This is reflected in the source reference within the thesis. Short news stories that appeared in weekly newspapers, such as the *New Statesman and Nation* and *The Spectator*, often did not contain any author details. Finally, articles that were attributed to a news agency, such as Reuters or Central News, have been cited as such.

Quotes from sources (especially newspaper sources) are printed as they appeared. While the thesis uses British English, ie 'ise' rather than 'ize', British newspapers used 'ize'. This means that most quotes use 'ize' rather than 'ise'.

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Introduction

‘The world is confronted by a new technique of government. A great development in political history is going on before our eyes. We should study it with an open mind’.¹

G. Ward Price, *Daily Mail* Correspondent

‘What is happening in Germany is by far the biggest thing in Europe to-day — it is also the most horrible and the most tragic’.²

F.A. Voigt, *Manchester Guardian* Special Correspondent
to W.P. Crozier, Editor

The poet W.H. Auden described the 1930s as a ‘low, dishonest decade’ in his poem *September 1, 1939*.³ In a sense it was; the 1930s witnessed the crisis of capitalism that became the Great Depression, the continued rise of fascism and dictatorships, and the rejection of liberal democratic values. It was also a decade in which a persistent fear, specifically of another war, pervaded international relations. This was compounded by the aggressive rhetoric of several states, in particular Italy, Germany and Japan. In the late 1930s this violent rhetoric turned into territorial aggression, that violated international codes of conduct and, in 1939, led to war. At the heart of this was Germany. The stability of Germany was of the utmost importance to her neighbours. The balance of power in Europe hinged on Germany. The advent of the brutal and violent Nazi dictatorship in 1933 was, therefore, viewed with concern.

For the British press, the 1930s were the ‘golden age’ of newspapers.⁴ The newspaper industry was at its peak. There were nearly nine million wireless sets in British homes, and more and more people were tuning in to news broadcasts, but the printed newspaper was still the most important and accessible form of news in Britain.⁵ It was in the 1930s that the circulation wars reached their climax after the *Daily Express* took the title of largest daily circulation with 2,329,000 sold. The combined circulation of national daily newspapers rose from 5.4 million in 1920 to 10.6 million in 1939; local

¹ G. Ward Price, *I Know These Dictators* (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1937), 7.

² Voigt to Crozier, 14 March 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 136b, Folder 207, John Rylands Library (Manchester). Hereafter JRL.

³ W.H. Auden, *Another Time* (London: Faber, 1940), 112.

⁴ Franklin Reid Gannon, *The British press and Germany, 1936-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 1.

⁵ According to the 1939 BBC handbook, the number of licenses in the United Kingdom was recorded at 8,908,900 at 31 December 1939. This had risen from the 31 December 1937 figure of 8,470,600. The British Broadcasting Corporation, *BBC Handbook 1939* (London: Jarrold & Sons, 1939), 10.

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daily and weekly newspapers did not see such growth.⁶ The 1930s was also the era of the press barons. The interwar period saw a higher concentration of press ownership than ever before. The most powerful and influential of the press barons were Viscount Rothermere, and Lords Beaverbrook, Camrose and Kemsley.⁷ The combined circulation of their newspapers (daily national, daily local, and weeklies) was around 13 million.⁸ Furthermore, the expansion of the national newspapers into regional areas meant 'some proprietors commanded very large audiences, even when they owned relatively few papers'.⁹ Lord Beaverbrook, whose empire included the *Daily Express*, owned only four newspapers but the total circulation of these was 4.1 million.¹⁰

The British press, therefore, was in a prime position to observe and report the 'dark' decade. British journalist Malcolm Muggeridge described the 1930s as 'unusually eventful', and observed: 'There can seldom in ten years have been fewer days on which a chief sub-editor was embarrassed for lack of news'.¹¹ This was especially true for foreign news. The press had plenty to cover in the United States, India, Japan and China, to name a few, let alone on the European continent. Important news stories for British newspapers included President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, Indian demands for greater independence from Britain, the Soviet Union's economic policies for rapid industrialisation (that resulted in horrific famine), as well as the ongoing political turmoil in France. Other significant events included the assassination of Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, the death of German President Paul von Hindenburg, and the tragic death of Queen Astrid of Sweden in a motorcar accident. Some of the big stories for British popular newspapers included the disappearance and death of the Lindbergh baby and the resulting trial, the 'discovery' of the Loch Ness monster, the criminal banditry of Bonnie and Clyde and their deaths, the disappearance of Amelia Earhart,

⁶ James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain*, 5th ed. (London & NY: Routledge, 1997), 44.

Curran and Seaton point out that circulation figures for the interwar period are 'not entirely reliable' (see notes, page 58). While there may be some differentiation in the figures cited in sources they do still demonstrate that more people were buying more papers and, significantly, more national papers (than regional), and 'proprietors commanded very large audiences' with their newspaper empires.

⁷ Viscount Rothermere (Harold Harmsworth); Lord Beaverbrook (Max Aitken); Viscount Camrose (William Berry, later became Viscount in 1941); Lord Kemsley (James Gomer Berry, became Viscount in 1945).

⁸ Curran and Seaton, *Power Without Responsibility*, 44.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Malcolm Muggeridge, *The Thirties: 1930-1940 in Great Britain* (London: Fontana, 1972), 20.

At one point in the 1930s, Muggeridge worked for the *Manchester Guardian* covering the Soviet Union. He later wrote for the *Daily Telegraph* and *Evening Standard*, and was employed as Editor of *Punch* magazine in the 1950s. He wrote a number of books, including *The Thirties*.

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and the explosion of the Zeppelin *Hindenburg*. The Italian invasion of Abyssinia, the Spanish civil war, the Japanese invasion of China and Germany's annexation of the Sudetenland and forced Anschluss with Austria were defining moments of the turbulent mid to late 1930s.

In the 1930s Germany was one of the major news centres in Europe. Most British newspapers, at least at the national level, had teams of correspondents based in major cities throughout Europe, including Germany. They were on hand to observe the advent of the Hitler dictatorship, which sparked crisis after crisis in European relations. Hitler and the Nazi state treated the Treaty of Versailles with contempt and demonstrated a serious lack of concern for European stability and peace. Inside Germany the Nazi party, in control of the German state, overthrew Weimar democracy, crushed its enemies, and implemented a ruthless dictatorship that completely rejected liberal democratic values.

The degree to which the British press covered Nazi Germany is crucial, providing insight into what people in Britain could have known about the nature of the dictatorship on the eve of war in September 1939. Historians have explored British press responses to Germany in an attempt to understand the British government's policy of appeasement, but little effort has been devoted to how the press reported and understood the nature of the dictatorship. To what extent did the press report the destruction of democracy and the transition to ruthless dictatorship? Did the press understand what was happening in Germany? Did the press report the brutal persecution of political and religious groups? Did they understand what was happening to the Jews of Germany? How much was known about the intimidation, barbaric thuggery, and murder that was carried out under the Nazi regime. And, importantly, when the British Government were appeasing the Nazi government, were they aware (or could they have been aware) of what type of state they were dealing with? This thesis will explore these questions by examining the extent to which the British press reported and understood what was going on inside Nazi Germany prior to war. It will examine what the British public could have known about the Nazi regime by reading British newspapers in the 1930s.

The wording here is deliberate; the thesis will examine what people 'could' have known because it should not be assumed that everyone buying a newspaper read the foreign

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news section, nor is it assumed that people followed events in Germany. It is entirely possible someone who purchased a daily newspaper might only read the sports section or the society news. The thesis focuses on what people could have known and understood about the Nazi regime if they were reading (and following) press reports on Germany. It will examine the clues, signs and markers that could have informed the British public, and perhaps the British government, about the aims, goals and ambitions of Hitler's dictatorship.

The primary focus of the thesis is the domestic (or internal) situation in Germany rather than foreign policy, because central to the study is what the press understood about the *nature* of the dictatorship. In the 1930s the Nazi dictatorship challenged all the fundamental liberal values and institutions that are associated with democracy in a civilised country. The Nazis destroyed democracy and trampled civil liberties and freedoms, particularly religious freedom. This study focuses on how the press reported the emergence and development of policies and laws aimed at the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship and *Volksgemeinschaft*, or 'people's community'. This includes the process by which the Nazification of the German state was carried out, a process known as *Gleichschaltung* ('coordination'), as well as the brutal way in which the dictatorship treated 'enemies' and 'outsiders'.

Any study that tries to cover the British press in the 1930s needs to set some parameters. This is no less true for this thesis. The thesis incorporates a spread of newspapers that represent the political makeup of the press in the 1930s. In selecting the thirteen titles for this study, every effort was made to select titles that, together, would represent British press opinion in the 1930s. The following papers were chosen: *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Post* (*Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*), *News Chronicle*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *Observer*, *The Spectator*, *New Statesman and Nation*, and the *Jewish Chronicle*. This list includes daily and weekly newspapers, from across the political spectrum, which encompass different degrees of political opinions and influence. They range from class to popular newspapers, from a broadsheet style to tabloid. Furthermore, their readership and circulation figures vary — the newspapers represent different groups of society, from the working classes through to the upper classes and those in positions of power (government for instance). Most of the daily newspapers, with the exception of the *Manchester Guardian*, were London based.

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The Times and the *Manchester Guardian* are at the forefront of the study, representing the conservative centre-right and the liberal-left respectively. Also on the centre-right were the *Morning Post*, *Daily Telegraph* (and from 1937 the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*), and the weekly newspaper *The Spectator*. On the liberal-left, the *Observer*, *News Chronicle*, and the weekly *New Statesman and Nation* have been included. Three popular newspapers have been included — from the right, the *Daily Mail*, from the centre, the *Daily Express*, and from the left, the pictorial *Daily Mirror*. And finally, the weekly *Jewish Chronicle*, the most important Jewish newspaper in Britain, was selected. These newspapers incorporate different styles, readership, and ideological viewpoints. They provide an insightful and detailed cross-section of the British press in the 1930s.¹² This project is one of the most comprehensive studies of press responses to Nazi Germany.

The literature on press responses to Nazi Germany prior to the war is not vast. No study focuses on the British press coverage of the domestic situation in Germany in any detail. Those that have examined press coverage of Nazi Germany can be grouped into two distinct categories. There were those that examined appeasement through the lens of the British press, and those that examined how the press responded to the persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust. The two studies that examine the press and Germany's foreign policy are Franklin Reid Gannon's *The British press and Germany 1936–1939*, published in 1971 and Benny Morris', *The Roots of Appeasement: The British Weekly Press and Nazi Germany 1933–1939*, published in 1991.¹³ Unlike this study, they focused on Germany's foreign policy, with a particular emphasis on British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement. Gannon examined thirteen British newspapers, primarily London based, while Morris used fifteen major and minor weekly newspapers, including *Tablet*, *Truth*, *The Sunday Times* and *The Economist*.

Of the second category of works that examine press coverage and responses to Germany, there are four studies that deserve mention. Andrew Sharf's 1964 study, *The British press and Jews under Nazi Rule*, is more closely aligned to this study, but he focuses

¹² Other studies have included more titles but, in the end, provided only a cursory examination of the individual newspapers. This study wished to avoid that pitfall and provide a more detailed study of the press, and the included newspapers.

¹³ Richard Cockett also looks at the press but does so by examining how Chamberlain's government sought to direct and influence the press as appeasement took hold in the late 1930s. Richard Cockett, *Twilight of Truth: Chamberlain, Appeasement and the Manipulation of the Press* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989).

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only on press coverage of the persecution of the Jews inside Germany from 1933 to 1945. He relied on clippings from newspapers that were collected by an Anglo-Jewish literary figure Joseph Podro, held in Yad Vashem, and as a result he is forced to rely on what just one person deemed important and necessary.

There have been some studies of the press and Nazi Germany that do not include the British press. Deborah Lipstadt, Laurel Leff, and Robert Shapiro focus on the American, and in Shapiro's case, the International, Press.¹⁴ These historians approach the question of press coverage by asking what more could have been done for the Jews in Europe. They focus primarily on the extermination of the Jews during war, and are critical of the failure of the United States to act to save the Jews of Europe.

Additionally, a number of other studies deal with responses to Nazi Germany outside the press. These include Dan Stone's *Responses to Nazism in Britain, 1933-1959*, which examines literature on Nazism published prior to the war, Oliver Lubrich's *Travels in the Reich*, a collection of writing by foreign authors on their experiences in Nazi Germany, and Russell Wallis' *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust*, an examination British attitudes to Nazi atrocities, provide insight into non-press responses to Nazism.¹⁵ Other studies do briefly discuss the press. They include, Ian Kershaw's *Making Friends with Hitler*; and John Simpson's *Unreliable Sources*, both of which occasionally mention press responses to various aspects of the Nazi dictatorship.¹⁶

Several newspapers have their own history. Most notable are the official *History of the Times*, and David Ayerst's *Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper*, which touch upon how the newspapers dealt with the Nazi dictatorship and appeasement during the 1930s.¹⁷ Then there is Stephen Koss' *Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain: The Twentieth Century*,

¹⁴ Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1959* (NY: The Free Press, 1986); Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Robert Moses Shapiro ed. *Why Didn't the Press Shout? American and International Journalism during the Holocaust* (Hoboken, N.J.: Yeshiva University Press, 2003).

¹⁵ Dan Stone, *Responses to Nazism in Britain, 1933-1959: Before War and Holocaust* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Russell Wallis, *Britain, Germany and the Road to the Holocaust: British Attitudes to Nazi Atrocities* (London: IB Taurus & Co. Ltd., 2014).

¹⁶ Ian Kershaw, *Making Friends With Hitler* (London: Allen Lane, 2004).

John Simpson, *Unreliable Sources: How the 20th Century was Reported* (London: Macmillan, 2010).

¹⁷ The Times, *History of The Times: The 150th Anniversary and Beyond, 1912-1948*, Vol. 2. (London: The Times, 1952); David Ayerst, *Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper* (London: William Collins & Sons Co. Ltd., 1971).

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which deserves special mention.¹⁸ It is the most detailed study of the British press yet published. He offers a balanced approach as to why the press reported what they did about Nazi Germany, arguing that editors were conscious of calming prevailing fears of war, but were also conscious of advertising revenues and circulation figures. Koss focuses more on how the press dealt with the threat of war in the late 1930s, rather than on internal matters. As a result, it does not impinge upon this study in any way.

Unfortunately, the studies that do exist that focus on the British press in the 1930s (and those that focus on Nazi Germany), have often had an impact on how we understand foreign policy and appeasement in this period. Some could leave the reader with the impression, for example, that *The Times* was pro-German. In some studies, Geoffrey Dawson, as *The Times* editor, has been accused of misrepresenting the dictatorship by refusing to print articles that may have offended the German government. In a similar vein, the *Daily Mail* has been cast as a pro-Nazi paper for much of the pre-war period. This thesis will argue that, in both cases, the situation was more complicated and, whatever their editorial stance, the newspapers covered other aspects of the Nazi dictatorship in great detail.

The sources that underpin this thesis are the British newspapers. In addition, material from several excellent archives across Britain have been used as supplementary research.¹⁹ The material collected includes diaries, letters, correspondence and memoranda from the two major newspapers at the centre of the thesis, *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*. Furthermore, monographs written by correspondents and newspapermen during the 1930s, 1940s and after the war have been used to provide further insight into the experiences of foreign correspondents.

The survey of newspapers for this thesis included material in print, on microfilm, and through digital databases. It was deemed at the outset that keyword searches of the digital databases would not be sufficient. According to researcher Adrian Bingham keyword searching has some 'substantial methodological issues'.²⁰ He pointed out that

¹⁸ Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain: The Twentieth Century*, Vol.2 (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1984).

¹⁹ These include the John Rylands Library in Manchester, the News International Archive and Record Office in London, and the Bodleian library in Oxford.

²⁰ Adrian Bingham, 'The Digitization of Newspaper Archives: Opportunities and Challenges for Historians', *Twentieth Century British History* 21, no.2 (2010): 229-230.

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that it was a 'rather blunt instrument. The absence of a particular word does not necessarily mean that a subject is not discussed, it may merely indicate that an alternative terminology has been used'.²¹ Furthermore, 'keyword searching treats the newspaper archive as a repository of discrete articles'.²² He contended:

There is a danger in this process of forgetting that newspapers were material objects that were bought, read and passed around, and that the location and presentation of individual articles is of central importance in understanding how these articles were received by readers and much significance was ascribed to them. It is also important to be aware of surrounding articles, pictures, headlines and advertisements, because this peripheral content also affects how the article in question is understood by the reader.²³

Instead of using shortcuts by relying on keyword searches, the research for this thesis was conducted by *reading* newspapers. This meant that while the study utilised online collections for some of the newspaper research, each and every issue of the newspaper for the relevant period (1933-1939) was examined. For the microfilm copies of newspapers the same approach was used. For the original print copies, each issue was again examined to understand the context and placement of the relevant articles, as well as to determine what else was being reported and discussed on any given day. This was a process necessary for this study in order to appreciate the full range of press coverage and responses to the Nazi regime.

Material collected from the archives of *The Times* and *Manchester Guardian* provided important insight into the interaction between correspondents and editors. These papers shed light on the role of the journalists, editors and proprietors within the newspaper structure and how they were involved in what would be printed. This is something that is often not evident just reading the newspapers themselves. Further, the personal papers of *The Times* editor Geoffrey Dawson, kept at the Bodleian Library, provided information about the duties of an editor, as well as Dawson's connections with key government ministers. Books published by correspondents on the European situation during the 1930s, such as Frederick Augustus Voigt's *Unto Caesar*; G.E.R. Gedye's *Fallen Bastions* and George Ward Price's *Extra Special Correspondent* were also used. These monographs were a chance for correspondents to shed editorial restrictions that had

²¹ Ibid, 229-230.

²² Ibid, 230.

²³ Ibid, 230.

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been placed on them while working in Germany, and tell readers what they saw as the truth about the Nazi dictatorship.

The thesis begins with a chapter devoted to the British press as an industry. This was deemed essential to give the reader insight into the Press of the 1930s, particularly in terms of how the press functioned and operated. The gathering of news, the work of correspondents, and the efforts of the editorial team will be examined in this chapter. It will draw particular attention to the variety of relationships under which editors and correspondents operated. For some correspondents, like Frederick Augustus Voigt, the working relationship he had with *Manchester Guardian* editor William Percival Crozier was one of deep respect and collaboration. For other correspondents, like Norman Ebbutt, the relationship could be fraught and tense, compounded by the stress Ebbutt experienced working in a dictatorship.

The rest of the study was determined by the focus of press reports. Out of this two major themes are apparent. The first part of the thesis focuses on the nature of the Nazi dictatorship, and comprises chapters two through five. The latter part of the thesis will expand on this, focusing specifically on the treatment and persecution of religious groups, specifically the Jews but also encompassing the Nazi assault on Christian doctrine and values. These themes will be explored in chapters six and seven. The study is structured, for the most part, chronologically, beginning with the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship in 1933, and following it through till the onset of war in 1939.

Overall, the aim of this study is to examine what people in Britain could have known about the Nazi dictatorship by reading British newspapers. But more than this, the thesis examines what the press understood about the nature of the Nazi dictatorship. In doing so it seeks to fill a gap in the literature which has left the question of what was known and understood about the Nazi regime largely unanswered. And, it is important because in 1939 Britain goes to war with the Nazi state, after Germany invaded Poland.

* * * * *

Chapter One – The British press

In the early 1930s, when radio was just beginning to be considered a news medium and before television, the newspaper press was the most popular means of conveying information to the vast majority of people in Britain. The newspaper press was a thriving industry which, at this time, was moving from strength to strength. The high availability of newspapers in Britain resulted in an extremely competitive market, as newspapers battled for the highest sales and circulation figures. The press covered every class and demographic – all audiences were catered for in different ways by different newspapers. In 1937 there were 1,577 newspapers and 3,119 magazines and periodicals being published in Great Britain alone.¹ In 1934 every 100 families bought 95 morning and 57½ evening newspapers every day, and 130 Sunday newspapers every week.²

The British press of the 1930s can be separated into distinct categories. There was the newspaper press, which is the primary interest of this study, as well as periodicals and magazines. Periodicals and magazines appeared weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly and annually. In most cases the periodicals and magazines were specialised, focusing on one or two interest areas. The newspaper press appeared daily or weekly. There were three main types of newspapers, these included ‘quality’, ‘popular’, and ‘specialised’. The quality press had a readership of, primarily, the elite and educated of British society. This included the upper classes as well as politicians and prominent businessmen. Popular newspapers, as the title suggests, held popular appeal and were widely read by people of all classes across the country. ‘Specialised’ newspapers were aimed at particular groups of people or regions in Britain, for instance those of Jewish faith were catered for by the *Jewish Chronicle*, or in a similar fashion inhabitants of Yorkshire had their own newspaper, the *Yorkshire Post*.³ Characteristic of the press was their political attitude or affiliation. The newspapers could be distinguished as belonging, to varying degrees, the right or centre-right and the conservative press like *The Times*, or to the left and liberal-left like the *Manchester Guardian* or the socialist left like the *Daily Herald*.

¹ Political and Economic Planning (PEP), *Report on the British press* (London: Political and Economic Planning, April 1938), 3.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

Newspapers could be further categorised as either broadsheet, like *The Times*, or tabloid, like the *Daily Express*, both in terms of both size and content of the newspaper. As a general rule broadsheets were distinguished by a traditional approach to newspaper layout with six or more columns and detailed, in-depth articles. Tabloids on the other hand were smaller in size and often contained large sensational headlines and photographs to attract readers. These classifications generally follow the types of newspapers detailed above. A quality newspaper usually had a broadsheet layout while the popular newspapers was tabloid. The broadsheet layout of the 1930s differed considerably to that of a broadsheet newspaper today. Perhaps the most important difference was the front page which in the 1930s usually contained detailed advertisements in small print across seven columns. This would often continue for six pages. The newspaper would then have pages devoted to puzzles, book reviews, court news and so on. The news itself would not begin until around page ten. There would be a main page with a table of contents and news in short, as well as leaders and editorials, which were the main news articles offering opinion and analysis generally written by a team of leader writers. Following this would be local or national news and foreign news, often several pages of each. Both the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Times* followed this layout.

The layout of the tabloid newspaper has changed little since the 1930s. Unlike a broadsheet, the front page of a tabloid newspaper contained the big news stories of the day with large pictures and headlines to attract readers attention. The first three or four pages of the newspaper were dedicated to news stories, both local, national and foreign. Depending on the newspaper, subsequent pages were a blend of letters to the editor, book reviews, gossip, women's health, fictional short stories, court news, opinions, leaders, financial and business, and sporting news. The *Daily Mirror*; for instance, often had three to four pages devoted to women, including gossip, romance stories and a page entitled, 'A Woman's Point of View'.⁴ Unlike a broadsheet the tabloid newspaper did not follow a six or seven column policy in its layout of the news. The layout often contained large headlines that dominated a page, with a few photographs, then accompanying text. While the layout of a broadsheet newspaper like *The Times* changed very little from day to day, the layout of a tabloid was dictated by current news stories. For instance a big story with a eye-catching large headline would dominate front page coverage one day,

⁴ Example taken from *Daily Mirror*; January 20, 1933.

while the next day the front page might contain four or five shorter stories accompanied by small photographs. While *The Times* had a separate page devoted to the Imperial (foreign) news, the foreign news in tabloid newspapers had to share news pages with local news, and fight for front page coverage.

The news was collected and processed in a few different ways. Each newspaper had a team of reporters or journalists who would go out to local towns or cities and collect the news. Reporters were also sent out by the newspapers head office to cover a particular event or story for a feature article. News agencies helped to supplement what the reporters brought in. Local and national news was provided by Press Association, an agency which had been providing ‘home’ news service since its inception in 1868.

The foreign news was treated differently. Foreign news came from abroad but it could also be a foreign angle on a domestic issue, for instance German reactions to the boycotting of German goods in Britain.⁵ Most newspapers in this study had a team of correspondents stationed in the major cities of Europe who would report back to Britain any breaking news or emerging trends. In Berlin, in August 1937, there were thirteen chief and assistant correspondents working for British newspapers, four for Reuters and two for other agencies.⁶ *The Times*, for instance, had 120 foreign correspondents, of whom around 40 were on the permanent staff or retaining salary, while the rest were on a casual list of contributors.⁷ Correspondents for *The Times* were kept anonymous, writing under the tagline, ‘From our own correspondent’, while many of the popular newspapers liked to publish the names of their star reporters. Some of the weekly magazines included in this study, like *The Spectator* also sometimes published the names of its reporters.

British newspapers also relied on foreign news services from agencies, most often Reuters and Central News. Reuters especially had a long relationship with many British newspapers, notably the *Manchester Guardian*. The *Manchester Guardian* had been using Reuters for imperial and foreign news since the earliest days of the news agency in the

⁵ PEP, *Report on the British press*, 170.

⁶ *Ibid*, 160.

⁷ *Ibid*.

nineteenth century.⁸ In fact, from the 1930s to the 1950s three *Manchester Guardian* figures served on the board of Reuters — J.R. and L.P. Scott, and William Haley.⁹ For the *Manchester Guardian*, Reuters filled ‘a gap in the paper’s overseas coverage’.¹⁰ Donald Read, a historian who has spent most of his career studying the news agency, explains that Reuters operated under four tenets — speed, accuracy, equal dealing and impartiality. Reuters aimed to be first to provide news (and mostly was) ‘but not at the price of accuracy, which Reuters gave top priority’; ‘News from Reuter was made equally available to all newspaper and other clients willing to pay for it, without exclusivity’, and ‘News from Reuters professed to be impartial — without bias in what it said, and objective in what it chose to report (or not to report)’.¹¹ News Agencies provided services to all subscribers, giving no preference to political leanings.

For Darsie Gillie, the *Manchester Guardian*’s Paris correspondent after the Second World War, the news service provided by Reuters meant that he could ‘select the topics that interested him and leave the rest to Reuters and other news agencies’.¹² Such a service was invaluable to the *Manchester Guardian* after the removal of Werth from Berlin. For much of 1933 the *Manchester Guardian* relied upon Reuters for updates and news of developments in Germany, while Voigt and Werth focused on particular topics, like the persecution and terror of political opponents, in detail. Editors of the *Manchester Guardian* over the years never forgot that, as Donald Read states, ‘even of a journal of opinion such as the *Manchester Guardian* — bought their copies each day chiefly to learn the latest news; the appeal of editorial comment was limited’.¹³

Once the news was collected by foreign correspondents the story would be sent, often by telephone or telegraph, to London. If the article was a feature, and not pressing news, it was sent by mail. The foreign news was the responsibility of the foreign editor, who would enlist the help of his sub-editors to check the facts and the story, as well as edit it to an appropriate length. Once a report had been sent in by the foreign

⁸ Julius Reuter founded the news agency, which quickly got the name Reuters, in 1851. The *Manchester Guardian* first used Reuter telegrams in the newspaper in 1858.

Donald Read, ‘Truth in News: Reuters and the *Manchester Guardian*, 1858-1964’, *Northern History* 31, no.1 (1995): 282.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, 297.

¹¹ Donald Read, ‘Reuters: News Agency of the British Empire’, *Contemporary Record* 8, no.2 (1994): 197.

¹² Read, ‘Truth in News’, 297.

¹³ Ibid, 281.

correspondent, it would often be sent directly to the foreign editor's room. From here it was sent out to all interested departments including leader-writers and, depending on the story, the Editor.¹⁴ Most newspapers preferred to keep the correspondent's voice or personality in the article so edited original messages minimally. There were instances, however, where a foreign editor or editor altered an article to tone down the message of the article. There were also instances where an entire article would be cut to make way for another story breaking that day or because an editor did not want to take a particular line on a story or event.

There were many considerations which went in to what was published and the way it was presented. On a broad level, the coverage of news could be affected, to varying degrees, by advertising contracts, circulation figures, readership concerns, the newspaper's proprietor, and the editor. While it is difficult to gauge how much these considerations influenced what the newspaper actually published, it is important to keep them in mind when analysing how a newspaper approached a particular topic.¹⁵ Advertising, for instance, was important revenue for newspapers and therefore could have considerable influence over the content and treatment of news. While an advertisers' concern could impact the editorial policy of a newspaper, a newspaper would not risk running with a major story just to please advertisers. If the newspaper ignored a breaking story just to satisfy advertisers, it risked losing sales and a subsequent drop in its circulation.

Attracting advertisers was also dependent on high circulation. This meant that while a newspaper wanted to satisfy its advertisers, it also had to serve its readers and maintain its high circulation.¹⁶ This was the case for the *Daily Mirror*; a popular left leaning pictorial newspaper that during the 1930s was in constant competition with the other high circulation newspapers, the centre-right *Daily Express*, and the more right-wing *Daily Mail*. Circulation had a big impact on the way the many popular newspapers approached news. The popular press, especially, were in a constant circulation battle

¹⁴ For a more detailed breakdown of the processing of news please refer to PEP, *Report on the British press*, Chapter VI. 'How News is Produced'.

¹⁵ It is possible to gain a better understanding of the editorial policy of a newspaper by examining correspondence, internal memos, proofs, diaries and so on, of newspaper personalities kept in archives, such as *The Times* at the News International Archive and Record Office in London, or *Manchester Guardian* at the John Rylands Library in Manchester, but, even with this approach, there are inevitably gaps.

¹⁶ PEP, *Report on the British press*, 188.

with each newspaper vying for greatest daily sale. By 1938 the *Daily Express* had succeeded in gaining the title of 'World's Largest Daily Sale', with over two million sold per day, easily overtaking its main competitor the *Daily Mail*.

The most important consideration which impacted editorial policy was the control of newspaper proprietors and editors. The influence of a proprietor over his newspaper had a lot to do with the proprietor's view of his role within the newspaper as well as his personality. In the 1930s the strongest newspaper proprietors were Lord Rothermere and Lord Beaverbrook who owned the London Express Newspaper Ltd., with the *Daily Express* at its forefront. Lord Rothermere took a keen interest in the *Daily Mail's* approach to European news, especially the advent of Nazism. He helped to define the newspapers policy in the 1930s, initially supporting the Nazi regime and contributing to the newspaper on several occasions; for instance his infamous 'Youth Triumphant' article in July 1933 which celebrated the 'success' of the regimes first six months. He also used the pages of the *Daily Mail* to urge for air rearmament, a cause he felt passionately about and which he wrote in his book, *Warnings and Predictions*, published in 1939.¹⁷ Lord Beaverbrook also maintained tight control over his newspapers, particularly the *Daily Express*. With nearly one hundred percent shareholder interest in the *Daily Express* at one point, Beaverbrook was in a position to control every element of the newspaper.¹⁸

Not all newspapers were structured the same way. There were different degrees of proprietorship and of shareholder interest which tempered how much control a proprietor or chairman had over newspaper policy. This was the case with *The Times* which, while owned by two proprietors, Major the Hon. John J. Astor and John Walter, was governed by a trust established in 1924. The trust was dedicated to ensuring the tradition of political independence of *The Times* and ensuring that the newspaper was not used for personal ambition or profit. In practice, the trust left the running of the newspaper to its editor, Geoffrey Dawson. In fact, the only reason Dawson returned to

¹⁷ Viscount Rothermere authored *My Fight to Rearm Britain*. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd., 1939).

¹⁸ Viscount Camrose, *British Newspapers and their Controllers* (London: Cassell and Company Limited, 1947), 38.

The Times as editor in 1923 was on the condition that he receive no interference from the trust in making editorial decisions.¹⁹

Somewhat easier to discern in understanding newspaper policy is the role of the editor. Once again, everything depended on the editor's personality and his strength of character, which meant that one editor could be a 'mere cipher' while another 'the creative spirit of his paper's policy'.²⁰ All decisions, however, went through the editor. Each day the editorial team would sit down and decide the layout of the newspaper, the features and what stories were to be printed. In most cases the editors had their own ideas about what they wanted their paper to represent and the type of articles they wanted to print. This was probably best exemplified by the *Manchester Guardian* editor William Percival Crozier. While the *Manchester Guardian* was controlled by John R. Scott, Crozier was given full editorial control over the newspaper. Scott believed that a chairman's duty was to make the newspaper as profitable as possible, all other decisions and considerations were for the editor.²¹ For his part, Crozier felt it was his duty to inform the public about the true nature of Nazi Germany. Furthermore, he felt that since the German press had been muzzled it was important for him to provide continuous coverage of the German situation for the benefit of the *Manchester Guardian's* German readership. To do this he assembled a strong team of correspondents and closely supervised the foreign news section throughout his editorship.

At *The Times*, editor Dawson also expected no proprietorial interference and full editorial freedom. During the 1930s *The Times* was seen as the voice of the British government – a fact taken seriously overseas, especially in Germany. This can be attributed to *The Times* quality circulation as well as its closeness to the National Government on the part of Dawson, particularly with Halifax and Chamberlain.²² One only need glimpse at Dawson's diaries during this period for confirmation of the close contact Dawson had with some of the key political figures of the day. In fact, at times, Dawson acted as more of a politician than a newspaper editor. But, importantly, he took his role as editor seriously and took a keen interest in all aspects of the paper. He

¹⁹ Dawson was editor of *The Times* from 1912-1919 and then from 1923-1941.

The Times, ed. *History of The Times: The 150th Anniversary and Beyond, 1912-1948* (London: The Times, 1952), II:793.

²⁰ PEP, *Report on the British press*, 179.

²¹ David Ayerst, *Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper* (London: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1971), 495.

²² Franklin Reid Gannon, *The British press and Germany, 1936-1959* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 70.

decided not to appoint a foreign editor because he was unable to find anyone suited to the job, although Robin Barrington-Ward assisted with many of the responsibilities.²³ In this way he had direct control over foreign news and maintained close contact with the foreign correspondents, both while they were stationed in Europe and when they visited England.

The foreign correspondents were potentially the most important link in the chain of supplying foreign news to the British public. Most of the newspapers in this study had correspondents stationed in the capital cities of Europe. In Germany there was usually a correspondent stationed in both Berlin and Munich. The correspondent would spend most of his time in the city to which they were assigned, but would also sometimes take special assignments to prepare stories for a feature article or to cover a particular event, for instance the Nuremberg rallies. The British newspapers of the 1930s benefitted enormously from having their own correspondents in Europe, especially in Germany. In most cases the foreign correspondents stationed in Germany had been there for a number of years before the Nazis came to power and were thus knowledgeable and experienced observers of the German scene. Foreign correspondent for *The Times*, Norman Ebbutt, had been stationed in Berlin since 1925, while Frederick Augustus Voigt had been the *Manchester Guardian* Berlin correspondent since 1920, before becoming Special Correspondent. This meant that Ebbutt and Voigt, among others, were witness to the struggling Weimar Republic and were in a position to appreciate what the Nazis coming to power in 1933 meant for democracy in Germany. Furthermore, these correspondents already had a network of sources and contacts from which they could draw on for information about the evolving political situation.

There were, however, a number of factors which could detract from the correspondents pivotal role in supplying news from Germany. The first factor was possible conflict or interference with the editors of the newspapers for which they worked. This could take the form of disputes over the approach to subject matter or the editing or printing of articles. This is clearly demonstrated in the case of Ebbutt. On a number of occasions

²³ Gannon wrote that after the post of Foreign Editor became vacant in 1929 Dawson decided not to appoint anyone else. He wrote to friend, Lord Brand, in 1936 'A really good Foreign Editor would be a great support', but that he had not been able to find anyone that was good enough. In the end Robin Barrington-Ward served as Deputy Editor, fulfilling the function of Foreign Editor, especially in terms of Anglo-German news stories. As quoted in Gannon, *The British press and Germany*, 61.

throughout the 1930s, Ebbutt had his dispatches either edited or omitted from the pages of *The Times*. It was a source of frustration for him, as William L. Shirer recounted in his book *The Nightmare Years*. Shirer wrote how Ebbutt took great care to write accurately and in detail about the excesses of the Nazis, only for his newspaper, not to publish ‘much of what he reported’.²⁴ According to Shirer ‘the unpleasant truths’ that Ebbutt telephoned nightly to *The Times* were often left out. Ebbutt turned to giving Shirer these dispatches so that ‘at least they would see the light of day’.²⁵

As early as 1931 Ebbutt was complaining his dispatches from Berlin were being cut and edited.²⁶ In early April 1933 Ebbutt wrote in a memorandum: ‘I fear that, as usual, the articles will be found too long ... Yet I feel incapable of doing anything more about than I have done, even if you given me up as a bad job’.²⁷ Defending the length of his articles, he wrote ‘The articles have been written under considerable difficulties; not only because of the very rapid changes which occur even as one is writing, but also because, since I spoke to you last on the telephone, I have had a long bout of unfitness’.²⁸ Again, in November 1934, Ebbutt wrote to Ralph Deakin, who served on *The Times* Imperial and Foreign desk, complaining that twelve of his recent articles had been cut, so much so ‘as to leave the original distorted’.²⁹ He also complained of whole paragraphs being ‘torn from their context giving a distorted effect to the whole message’.³⁰ Ebbutt also complained of being directed about which stories to pursue: ‘Leading articles are now being requested, setting a dangerous precedent, as it tends to give disproportionate prominence to matters which do not deserve it’.³¹

One of Ebbutt’s biggest complaints was the editing and cutting of his articles on the Church situation in Germany.³² Ebbutt followed the persecution and repression of the Catholic and Evangelical churches closely. He had a network of contacts in the

²⁴ William L. Shirer, *The Nightmare Years, 1950-1940* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1984), 206.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ See Gannon, *The British press and Germany*, 123.

²⁷ Ebbutt Papers, Memorandum, 1 April 1933, NE/4/4/2, News International Archive and Record Office (London). Hereafter NIA.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ebbutt to Deakin, 11 November 1934 quoted in Frank McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain, Appeasement and the British Road to War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 117.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Despite Ebbutt’s complaints of interference *The Times* still printed an enormous amount of articles on the church struggle. See Chapter Six.

government and in official circles, including the Nazi party, which gave him an advantage in that he was able to gain accurate, detailed, and importantly, current information about what was happening in Germany.³³ Ebbutt's articles were impeccably researched. He took a factual and detailed approach to his writing. For this reason he had specific instructions for Printing House Square about how his articles should appear in *The Times*.

Ebbutt's annoyance at PHS for editing his articles on the church situation can be seen in a December 1934 letter written to Dawson, complaining that one of his articles on the Church crisis had been distorted; his instructions had been ignored. He complained:

I was, however, thunderstruck when, having learned that confiscation had been ordered at once, the day of issue and 12 hours before arrival of ordinary sale copies in Berlin, I received our own early copy and saw what had been done. The message has been knocked to pieces and put together with sensational headlines. The lead consisted of two of the last paragraphs of a carefully constructed dispatch torn from their context and placed above the Church story. They were not news and were only justifiable in the place originally assigned to them. As presented, they had little meaning and gave a distorted and sensational effect to the whole message.³⁴

He worried that the managing of his articles would affect his credentials with some of his sources.³⁵ He concluded that he could only think that whoever changed the article wanted to add a 'bright touch' to the overall tone and added that there had been a number of occasions when he would receive messages urging him to give a *bright touch* as he called it, to his reports from Germany. He explained: 'in the present circumstances it strikes me as rather impolite, to put it nicely, and requiring some discussion. Our problems, I should have thought, are difficult enough here for us to be spared schoolmasterly nagging'.³⁶ Dawson replied a few days later attempting to ease Ebbutt's concerns:

I have however, had a word with the foreign sub-editors on the subject and emphasised the great difficulties under which you are working ... I

³³ Shirer, *The Nightmare Years*, 206.

³⁴ Ebbutt to Dawson, 18 December, 1934, Geoffrey Dawson Internal Correspondence, TT/ED/GGD/1/, NIA.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

have made it clear that you must be allowed to be the best judge of what you can and cannot say, and of how your messages can be framed most discreetly. Do not allow yourself to be discouraged by an episode of this kind, which is now not likely to recur. You are doing first-rate work for the paper and everyone recognises it.³⁷

Despite reassurances, Ebbutt continued to encounter problems with Printing House Square with regard to the cutting and editing of his reports, especially once Britain and *The Times* became caught up in appeasement to Germany. By this time however, with so much happening both inside Germany and concerning foreign relations, it was necessary to cut articles in some ways. For Ebbutt this was no doubt frustrating, given the trouble and effort he had put in to obtain the information and write the reports. Problems of this kind, between Ebbutt and Printing House Square, continued until his expulsion from Germany in 1937.

Conflict and disagreements between correspondents and editorial staff was not uncommon. G.E.R. Gedye, Vienna correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*, was often at odds with newspaper staff who, at times, thought his articles too eager or indignant.³⁸ Gedye was, observed Gannon, the ‘prototype of the leftist British foreign correspondent between the wars’, which inevitably conflicted with the conservative policy of his newspaper.³⁹ A keen observer of European politics, Gedye’s abhorrence of the Nazi party’s ideology and practices was clear, as an article, entitled *Impressions of Hitler’s Germany*, printed in *Contemporary Review* in 1933 attested.⁴⁰ Gedye scathingly observed that the Nazis only embraced Germans in their ‘Brotherly love’, who

have no Jewish blood in their veins, who reject all ideas of liberalism, democracy, socialism, trade unionism, the principles of Karl Marx, the political influence of the Catholic hierarchy, and parliamentarism, and submit themselves without reserve to worshipping the principle that salvation can come only through the divine and indisputable ordinances of men ‘born to rule’ by dictatorial methods.⁴¹

³⁷ Dawson to Ebbutt, 20 December, 1934, Geoffrey Dawson Internal Correspondence, TT/ED/GGD/1/, NIA.

³⁸ Gannon, *The British press and Germany*, 47.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 46.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 46.

⁴¹ G.E.R. Gedye, ‘Impressions of Hitler’s Germany’. *Contemporary Review* 143 (Jan/June 1933): 670.

He included a statement by a German writer from Munich who told Gedye that, Nazism would last 'because it suits the Germans like a Savile Row suit an Englishman. Our people can be divided into three: One part wants to be kicked, another part to kick. These make up 90 per cent. The remaining 10 per cent looks on at the spectacle and weeps'.⁴²

Gedye wrote passionately; his outrage over the Nazis' policies and actions was clear. His own ideological feelings prompted him to voice his revulsion at the Nazi movement. For this reason his articles for the *Daily Telegraph* often had to be toned down.⁴³ In 1939 it came to a head with the publication of Gedye's book, *Fallen Bastions*, which was advertised as the 'uncensored truth' about Austrian politics and the Anschluss in 1938, and was published by the Left Book Club.⁴⁴ Editor Arthur E. Watson wrote to Gedye following the advertisement of the upcoming book, and asked him to come immediately to London to discuss the fall-out that such a book would inevitably have. No agreement could be reached and Gedye left the newspaper with six months severance pay.⁴⁵

In a similar vein, *Manchester Guardian* Berlin correspondent, Alexander Werth, had interference from editor W.P. Crozier and fellow correspondent Frederick Augustus Voigt. However, unlike the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Manchester Guardian* was concerned that his articles were not forceful enough. In March 1933 Werth wrote an article about the terror of the Brown Shirts on the streets of Germany, particularly in Berlin, which included the unfortunate sub-heading, 'Rumours of a Terror'.⁴⁶ Voigt immediately contacted Crozier angrily asking: 'What is the good of having a man in Berlin if he cannot establish the truth'. He argued that he, for one, knew that there was a terror campaign being waged by the Nazis against their opponents.⁴⁷ Voigt expressed concern that the *Manchester Guardian* was not 'telling the truth of what is happening in Berlin'.⁴⁸

Soon after this correspondence, Crozier responded by withdrawing Werth from Germany citing the danger of the situation in Berlin. Whether this was also because of

⁴² Ibid, 676.

⁴³ Gannon, *The British press and Germany*, 47.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 47.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 47.

⁴⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 13 March, 1933 'Growing Reports of a Nazi Terror', Berlin Corr, 9. Hereafter *MG*.

⁴⁷ Voigt to Crozier, 15 March 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 145e, Folder 207, John Rylands Library (Manchester). Hereafter JRL.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Voigt's criticism is not clear. Was he removed because he was not telling the truth, or was he removed for fear of his safety? Before his transfer Werth wrote to Crozier trying to assure his editor of his safety: 'I really do not think that it's as bad as all that. I shall certainly not leave on my own initiative'.⁴⁹ He explained that the situation was 'calming down'.⁵⁰ Crozier, however, instructed Werth to leave Germany immediately for Paris. He wrote: 'You are not to think that you have not sent us all that you could, or should. I have been uneasy about your safety all the time, and should have been still more uneasy about your safety if you had sent us more complete accounts of what has been going on'.⁵¹ He explained: 'We must be able to get a full supply of news, and we must be unhampered by the fear of serious consequences to our correspondent'.⁵² Werth was not happy about the affair: 'Altogether I am feeling rather unhappy about your references to my personal safety. A journalist has to take certain risks — and I was fully prepared to take them; I feel that it was not my fault if you are now dissatisfied'.⁵³ The *Manchester Guardian* did not have a resident correspondent in Berlin until the end of 1933, when C.A. Lambert took up the post. For the rest of 1933 the *Manchester Guardian* relied primarily on Reuters for news from Germany, with regular special feature articles by Voigt.⁵⁴

Correspondents, in reporting from Germany, also had to take into account the type of newspaper that they were writing for. Popular newspapers, for instance, were more interested in sensational and dramatic news stories, often with a human interest spin — something that their correspondents had to take into account. The *Daily Express*, for instance, was a newspaper that strove to, in the words of editor Arthur Christiansen, 'make the unreadable readable'.⁵⁵ Additionally, Lord Beaverbrook, the *Daily Express*' proprietor, wished his paper to adhere to a policy of isolationism in which Britain refrained from getting involved in the troubles on the European continent. The *Daily Express* did have some distinguished correspondents, Sefton Delmer and Pembroke Stephens, whose talents were often wasted.

⁴⁹ Werth to Crozier, 17 March, 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 153a, Folder 207, JRL.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Crozier to Werth, 20 March, 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 160a, Folder 207, JRL.

⁵² Crozier, Letter to Werth, 20 March 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 160b, Folder 207, JRL.

⁵³ Werth to Crozier, 23 March 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 172a, Folder 207, JRL.

⁵⁴ Charles Lambert took over in Berlin in late November 1933. He went via Paris to meet with Voigt and discuss the German situation before traveling to Berlin, as indicated in a letter written to Crozier dated 27 November 1933.

⁵⁵ Arthur Christiansen, *Headlines All My Life*. (London: Heinemann, 1961), 144.

Most of Delmer's articles were scoops, the stories that other newspapers had not the chance nor, sometimes, the connections to get. These were often interviews with high ranking Nazis, exclusive articles, or special coverage of an event. Delmer had established contacts within the Nazi party, and other associated organisations including the police. He was friendly with Ernst Röhm, and knew Hitler after meeting him in 1931. In April 1932 and February 1933, Delmer travelled with Hitler on his election tours of Germany. Delmer had ingratiated himself with the Nazi movement in order to get the best stories for his newspaper. This did not necessarily mean he was sympathetic to Nazism, but he knew that these stories, each with a dramatic spin, would appeal to the readership of the *Daily Express*.⁵⁶

The other major factor that affected the way a correspondent reported on the situation in Germany was the danger inherent in living and working in a dictatorship. The constant fear of arrest, violence or expulsion from Germany took a toll on the health of correspondents. In 1934, Ebbutt wrote to editor Dawson:

Everything in Germany is torturous now. Straight stories are rare, and straight stories that can be taken at their face value are still rarer ... in general you have to play the game as it is played in the country, or confine yourself to official statements and the frank purveying of wild rumours.⁵⁷

His correspondence with Printing House Square demonstrated the toll this had on his health. In early 1934 Ebbutt took time away from Germany for health reasons. On his return Dawson wrote to Ebbutt: 'I hope you are finding Berlin more tolerable since your return'.⁵⁸ Dawson described Ebbutt's position in Berlin as a 'strained situation'.⁵⁹ In his uncompleted autobiography Ebbutt wrote: 'In January, 1936, I am ill, on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and the doctor orders me to go at once to the mountains

⁵⁶ Sefton Delmer describes his experiences in Germany in the 1930s in the first volume of his autobiography, *Trail Sinister*: During the war Delmer was in charge of a black propaganda campaign waged by radio from Britain against Hitler and the Nazi state.

⁵⁷ Ebbutt to Dawson, 18 December 1934, Geoffrey Dawson Internal Correspondence, TT/ED/GGD/1/, NIA.

⁵⁸ Dawson to Ebbutt, 1 March 1934, Dawson Correspondence, TT/ED/GGD/1/, NIA.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

in Czechoslovakia', where he could benefit from the 'fresh air'.⁶⁰ Over a year later, in August 1937, Ebbutt was expelled from Germany. A month after he returned to Britain, he suffered a stroke. In 1944 he wrote: 'Before being expelled from Germany in August 1937, I had had warnings of my state of health, but not, until afterwards looking back, of the catastrophe which fell upon me'.⁶¹ Ebbutt was paralysed down his right side and over the course of eight years had to learn to walk, write and speak again. He never wrote for *The Times* again.

Physical dangers were also present for foreign correspondents living and working in Nazi Germany. It is not an exaggeration to say that correspondents in Nazi Germany risked their lives to report the truth. The suppression, brutality and violence that was inflicted on Germans under the Nazi regime could also easily extend to foreign nationals, including correspondents. Throughout the 1930s, but especially in 1933, there were numerous cases of foreign nationals being molested in the streets for not raising their hands in a Hitler salute, or for looking *Jewish*. In early 1933 there were a number of cases of British and American nationals being beaten in the streets by Nazi Storm Troopers (the SA).

The Nazi authorities continually attacked foreign journalists for spreading so-called lies and propaganda against the German nation. There were regular reports in British newspapers about arrests and expulsions of foreign correspondents. By staging regular press conferences with foreign journalists, the Nazis hoped to convince the correspondents to moderate their reports. For some, however, these speeches by figures such as Hermann Goering and Joseph Goebbels, had the opposite effect and were published in British newspapers and ridiculed. The threat of expulsion from Germany, either for a designated period or on a permanent basis, loomed over foreign correspondents. Leading up to eventual expulsion correspondents suffered a range of intimidation and threats. In many cases they were arrested on bogus charges in an attempt to scare them silent. Often newspapers were suspended for several months for publishing an article the Nazis found undesirable. The *Manchester Guardian*, for instance,

⁶⁰ Norman Ebbutt Papers, Articles and Memoirs 1939-1945, Manuscript of 'My Twelve Years in Germany and After', Notes for Chapter X, NE/2/1/1, NIA.

⁶¹ Norman Ebbutt Papers, Articles and Memoirs 1939-1945, Manuscript of 'My Twelve Years in Germany and After', Introduction, NE/2/1/2, News International Archive and Record Office (London)

was suppressed for most of 1933 as a result of Voigt's reporting on the political terror campaign and the SAs brutal violence.

The expulsion of foreign correspondents began with some frequency after the Reichstag Fire. On 6 March 1933, three French correspondents were expelled for a period of two months for their reporting on this event.⁶² Visas could also be easily revoked by German authorities making it impossible for a correspondent to remain in Germany. There were also instances of correspondents fleeing Germany to escape police harassment and arrest. The *Manchester Guardian* published an official German statement on 9 March, 1933 regarding the treatment of foreign journalists:

In view of the mischievous reports on the political situation in Germany published in the foreign press, serious measures had been prepared against a number of foreign correspondents. Some of these questionable correspondents have escaped the police by leaving the country. As for the others, they have given assurances that they will avoid publishing reports of a mischievous tendency in future, and refrain from using ambiguous statements. In view of these assurances, and in view of the more sensible attitude now taken by the correspondents in regard to the German situation, they have been spared expulsion, and have been granted a probation period of two months.⁶³

This remarkable statement demonstrates the stress and pressure of working as a foreign correspondent in a dictatorship.

One of the first instances of a British correspondent being arrested by Nazi authorities was that of Noel Panter, Munich correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*, in late October 1933. He was arrested by the 'political police' on charges of espionage.⁶⁴ The British Consul-General at Munich was refused access to Panter, who had been imprisoned at the Ettstrasse prison. *The Times* reported that Panter had probably been arrested for his

⁶² *MG*, 6 March 1933 'Expulsion of Foreign Correspondents', Berlin Corr., 9.

⁶³ *MG*, 9 March, 1933 'German Communist Press Banned', Berlin Corr., 4.

⁶⁴ Panter brought libel action against the British Union of Fascists newspaper *Blackshirt* over an article in the paper on 4-10 November 1933. The article called Panter a 'literary sneak' and a 'ferreting spy' who had taken 'advantage of the hospitality of a friendly country', and who would have 'already been shot in a really nice war'. *The Times* reported that after initially denying defamation, the BUF 'wished now to withdraw all those defences'. The matter was settled with an apology of 'extreme regret' and a lump sum paid to Panter 'by way of earnest of their sincerity in the matter'. *The Times*, 15 November 1934, 'High Court of Justice: A Libel in the 'Blackshirt : Journalist's Suit Settled', 4.

article on an SA military parade through Kelheim.⁶⁵ Several complaints were lodged with the German Foreign Office over Panter's imprisonment, including by the British ambassador Eric Phipps and Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon. He was finally released after nine days, and ordered to leave Germany immediately. Once in Britain he wrote two feature articles about his imprisonment, drawing attention to the fact that most of those imprisoned, including political prisoners and Nazis, in the Ettstrasse prison were being held without charge, and for long periods of time.⁶⁶ It was made clear by German authorities that he had not been expelled, but on his attempt to again work in Germany in June 1934 he was expelled within a day.

The *Daily Express*'s Pembroke Stephens was also expelled in 1934. He was arrested in May 1934 after he questioned some workers about the construction of a factory he felt was suspicious in the forest around Aken. He, along with his wife and her cousin, were held by the Secret Police. They were released soon after. Their arrest was big news and the *Daily Express* seized upon the fame of their Berlin correspondent and gave his articles special prominence. Stephens' articles were characterised by his criticism of the Nazis and his focus on the persecution of the Jews. Unsurprisingly, due to the critical nature of his articles (and the new prominence of the articles after his arrest), Stephens was again arrested at the beginning of June 1934. He was then expelled from Germany. According to an article written by Reginald Steed in the *Daily Express*, the reason given by German authorities for Stephens' expulsion was the 'constant misrepresentation of the peaceful efforts of the German Government and frivolous and distorted reports in this connection which are an abuse of hospitality'.⁶⁷ Stephens, after his expulsion, stated:

I affirmed my determination to tell the truth about Germany, even at the risk of imprisonment and expulsion. My friends chaffed me at the time, but events have proved my belief that it is impossible to tell the truth, the real truth about Germany, and remain an accredited correspondent in Berlin.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *The Times*, 27 October 1933, 'Mr. Panter's Arrest', Munich Corr., 12.

⁶⁶ *Daily Telegraph*, 7 November 1933, 'My Fellow Prisoners in Munich', Noel Panter, 12.
Daily Telegraph, 8 November 1933, 'Nazis' Political Prisoners', Noel Panter, 12.

⁶⁷ *Daily Express*, 1 June 1934 'Pembroke Stephens Arrested Again', Reginald Steed, Daily Express Corr., 1. Hereafter *DE*.

⁶⁸ *DE*, 2 June 1934, 'My Expulsion by the Nazis', By Pembroke Stephens, 1.

Stephens wrote that there were only two alternatives open to him following his first arrest ‘either silence, humility, obeisance to officialdom, or the risk of continuing my work as if nothing had happened at all. I chose the second course and my expulsion was the almost inevitable result’.⁶⁹ Stephens continued to write critical articles about the Nazis from London, but by this time the drama of his expulsion had worn off and the *Daily Express* had begun to again tone down their focus on Germany.⁷⁰

Correspondents were just as afraid of being arrested and disappearing as the German population. In early 1933 when Ebbutt was walking home one night he saw the police go into his flat. He turned and went back the way he came to avoid them. In his unpublished autobiography he recounted the incident ‘that was just after the Reichstag fire when all sorts of people began to disappear in the night and had not been found locked up in the police stations in the morning’.⁷¹ He described what happened,

The porter said that the police did not enter at all the landlord’s flat, which was a big flat on the ground floor but said they must enter Herr Ebbutt’s flat above ... They may have looked over my things in the flat ... but if they had, they were thorough and left everything perfectly straight. There were no compromising documents or anything else in the least bit suspicious anyway ... The porter and his wife said that the police were after, so they thought, someone in the back court who did not materialise, but it was a very lame answer.⁷²

Voigt’s experience with the Nazis was alarming. As special correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* Voigt reported on mainly French and German news providing focused coverage, distinct from the day-to-day coverage provided by the resident correspondents. For safety reasons — his reports on the Nazi party prior to Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor had marked him as a undesirable correspondent — Voigt resided in Paris, rather than in Germany. He smuggled himself in to Germany on a number of occasions, following the removal of Werth as Berlin correspondent, to report on the brutal nature of the regime, particularly the political terror. He also had an

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Pembroke Stephens went on to work for the *Daily Telegraph*. He died in 1937 after being shot by a Japanese sniper, while watching the fighting during the Japanese invasion of China from a watch tower. He had been reporting on the conflict.

⁷¹ Norman Ebbutt Papers, Articles and Memoirs 1939-1945, Manuscript of ‘My Twelve Years in Germany and After’, Chapter IX, NE/2/1/12, NIA.

⁷² Ibid.

informant Max Wolf who fed him information about German affairs. His articles caused a furore with the Nazis and the newspaper was banned on a number of occasions in 1933. Yet by December of that year, there were clear concerns for Voigt's safety in Paris. On December 1, 1933 Voigt wrote to Crozier explaining that the situation had become grave and it would probably be best to leave Paris for a while as 'the Gestappa [sic] is determined to find out how my information is obtained'.⁷³ The Gestapo had apparently opened up a branch in Paris and had been carrying out surveillance all over Paris, taking an interest in Voigt. He proposed going to London to try to give the Gestapo the impression that he was permanently residing and reporting from London.

Then on 18 December 1933 Voigt wrote to Crozier to say that he had received information of a 'Nazi raid ... with the purpose of seizing my documents, notes and so on'.⁷⁴ In fact the situation had become so worrying that the French authorities had placed three detectives with Voigt for his protection: 'one of them, armed with an automatic pistol of a size that I'm sure it must come under the category of heavy armaments, sleeps in my room'.⁷⁵ He explained to Crozier: 'They say that the affair must be serious because it hardly ever happens that three men are detailed — usually it is only one or at the most two'.⁷⁶ According to Voigt, the Nazi Government 'is determined to silence the M.G. at any cost'.⁷⁷ He believed they were not after him, but after 'my documents, and above all, my sources in Germany (which they would be able to deduce from my documents — had these been seized, there would have been hundreds of arrests as a result)'.⁷⁸ Crozier, with London editor of the *Manchester Guardian* James Bone, repeatedly appealed to Voigt to move into a Paris hotel for the remainder of his stay in France for reasons of safety, but Voigt was notoriously stubborn and refused to move.

By the end of December, Voigt had realised how grave the situation had become. As he wrote to Crozier:

⁷³ Voigt often used the term 'Gestappa' interchangeably with 'Gestapo' in his correspondence and articles. Voigt to Crozier, 1 December 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 172a, Folder 210, JRL.

⁷⁴ Voigt to Crozier, 18 December 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 256a, Folder 210, JRL.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Voigt to Crozier, 18 December 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 256b, Folder 210, JRL. Emphasis in text.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

The Paris affair, so I now learn, was rather more serious than I at first thought. I had supposed that a burglary had been planned – possibly by French burglars engaged by the Germans. But apparently it was not to be a burglary but an assassination.⁷⁹

Crozier immediately responded by telling Voigt that he must move to a hotel and report the situation to the relevant authorities as soon as possible. Crozier was so worried about Voigt that he even wrote to Voigt's wife, Eleanor, asking her to speak to her husband and convince him to move from his present home in Paris.⁸⁰ On 29 December Voigt sent assurances to Crozier that 'I do not believe that the German Government has had anything to do with the matter', and explained that once they were aware of the situation the government would 'take steps to prevent anything of the kind from happening'.⁸¹ Nevertheless, the French authorities took the matter seriously and according to correspondence between Voigt and Crozier, investigated the incident. While the situation had largely blown over by February 1934, the British Home Office, the Foreign Office and Scotland Yard was made aware of the situation by Crozier. Voigt moved most of his sensitive documents to London, but remained in Paris visiting London frequently to give the impression that he carried out most of his work in Britain.

On the face of it, foreign correspondents were the most important link in supplying news to the British public about the social and political situation in Nazi Germany. But there were a number of factors which could detract from this role. First and foremost, as detailed above, was the interference of the newspapers for which they reported. From leader writers to sub-editors to the Editor of the newspaper, interference could take many forms. This could take the form of requesting that a correspondent stick to a particular line, editing and distorting stories, or to completely ignoring and cutting entire articles. The required approach to material could also impede the important role of a newspaper correspondent. As with Delmer, contacts and exclusive scoops were useless if the newspaper one wrote for was hesitant to get involved in European affairs. But perhaps the biggest factor that affected a correspondent's reporting was the dangers and risks inherent in reporting from a dictatorship. The Nazis used threats, intimidation and violence in an attempt to moderate what was written about the regime and what the

⁷⁹ Voigt to Crozier, 26 December 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 270, Folder 210, JRL.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Voigt to Crozier, 29 December 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 276, Folder 210, JRL. Emphasis in text.

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outside world could have known about life inside Germany. The material they did manage to get out of Germany will be explored at length in this thesis.

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Chapter Two — Hitler Becomes Chancellor

Overall, British press reaction to the appointment of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor on 30 January 1933, was one neither of excitement nor surprise because many newspapers had been following German politics for years prior.¹ Given Hitler's election successes Nazi participation in Government, and indeed the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor, had largely been expected and was considered an inevitable progression of German politics. The *Daily Telegraph* for instance, reported on 31 January 1933: 'The new turn given to the German political kaleidoscope on Saturday brought about, at last, the result that has so long seemed natural, if not inevitable'.² Referring to Nazi election successes, the *Daily Telegraph* continued: 'at last the logic of politics has prevailed to the extent of his being given the chance of proving his powers of statesmanship'.³ Other newspapers published similar statements. The *News Chronicle* commented:

[I]t has become steadily more evident of late that until Herr Hitler had been given a fair trial every other possible German Government was hopelessly handicapped. Whatever such a Government might do, there was always this strange figure behind its back outbidding it every time with windy promises of doing far better if given the chance. Now the chance has been given.⁴

The Times wrote in a leader: 'That Herr Hitler who leads the strongest party in the Reichstag and obtained almost a third of more than 35,000,000 votes in the last election, should be given the chance of proving that he is something more than an orator and an agitator was always desirable'.⁵ And *The Spectator* observed: 'It has been evident for some time that the experience of a Hitler administration was something that Germany had to face, if only to get it over ... No alternative was available, and the President, like everyone else, realised that the Hitler experiment must be tried sooner or later'.⁶

Press reports in the days and weeks that followed Hitler's accession to power were often plagued by doubt, suspicion, misunderstanding and rumour as the press grappled with

¹ Ian Kershaw, *Making Friends With Hitler* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), 30.

² *Daily Telegraph*, 31 January 1933, 'Hitler's Triumph and Test', Leader, 10. Hereafter *DT*.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *News Chronicle*, 31 January 1933, 'Herr Hitler's Triumph', Leader, 6. Hereafter *NC*.

⁵ *The Times*, 31 January 1933, 'Herr Hitler in Office', Leader, 11. Hereafter *TT*.

⁶ *The Spectator*, 3 February 1933, 'Hitlerism on Trial', 140. Hereafter *TS*.

the rapidly changing political situation in Germany. Misconceptions about the nature of the new government began with Hitler's appointment. For instance, while the advent of Hitler to power had been expected, some sections of the press struggled to understand the precise nature and circumstances of his appointment, particularly concerning the dismissal of former Chancellor Kurt von Schleicher. The *Daily Express*, in sensational style, declared with a large headline, 'Hitler Smashes Military Plot'. With front-page coverage, the newspaper reported:

A startling disclosure of a military plot to seize power in Germany threw light last night on the sudden move which made Adolf Hitler, ex-labourer, the Chancellor of Germany ... The ex-Chancellor, General von-Schleicher, had persuaded a number of officers and generals to establish a dictatorship while the country was still without a Government.⁷

The article tried to piece together the events and reported: 'Hitler, the popular hero, with his old enemy, von Papen, the autocratic Junker, joined hands to defeat the soldier's plot'.⁸ Needless to say, the *Daily Express* had the story wrong. There was no impending military plot. But in the early days of his succession rumour abounded.

One of the most common misconceptions was the view that Hitler was a pawn, or a prisoner in the new Government. This view was subscribed to not only by the British press, but also by leading German politicians at the time, namely Franz von Papen and Nationalist leader Alfred Hugenberg. Both politicians believed their positions in the new government would serve to check the power of Hitler and the Nazi party. The precise nature of the new Cabinet was the subject of much discussion in British newspapers. For some conservative newspapers, the fact that the cabinet included the strong figure of Papen as well as a significant number of Nationalists, *proved* that Hitler would be held prisoner by more dominant forces. The *Daily Telegraph* explained: 'Herr von Papen promises to be the controller of the new Hitler Cabinet. He has been given powers never before held by a Vice-Chancellor ... Almost all the important departments of the Reich have been withdrawn from Herr Hitler's influence'.⁹ On the other hand, the liberal press, while acknowledging the predominance of non-Nazis in the cabinet,

⁷ *Daily Express*, 31 January 1933, 'Hitler Smashes Military Plot', 1. Hereafter *DE*.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *DT*, 1 February 1933, 'Hitler Shorn of Real Power', 11.

importantly recognised that the posts occupied by Nazis were important. The *Manchester Guardian* wrote with some accuracy:

The Hitler Government is a coalition of Nazis and Hugenberg Nationalists, although the latter are more numerous in the Cabinet three of the most 'strategic' posts are held by Nazis, and it is by no means certain that the Nazis will be the 'prisoners' in this new Government.¹⁰

The *Daily Mirror* echoed this explaining that the new cabinet was designed to 'provide a check on Hitler, although his men hold important key posts'.¹¹ The *Observer* expressed similar sentiments.

The most spectacular article which described Hitler as a prisoner of stronger forces was written by Sefton Delmer for the *Daily Express* in February 1933. In sensational fashion the article stated:

[H]e has entered the Chancellor's palace only to find himself a shackled prisoner of von Papen and Dr. Hugenberg, his Nationalist colleagues, not to mention the grand old watchdog in the President's palace next door, Field-Marshal von Hindenburg ... [Hitler] has recognised his prison as a prison.¹²

The *News Chronicle* followed this line, describing Papen and other non-Nazi ministers in the new Cabinet as 'watch-dogs' of President Hindenburg'.¹³ For *Daily Telegraph* 'Herr Hitler in office is very far from being the national and international peril that he has so often vowed himself to become if given the chance'.¹⁴ A day later, the *Daily Telegraph*, under the headline 'Hitler shorn of real power', explained 'Herr Hitler is Chancellor in little but name, and is virtually a prisoner of his own Ministry'.¹⁵ The *Observer* merely contented itself with questioning whether Hitler was the conquerer or a captive in the

¹⁰ The three Cabinet posts were — Chancellor, Adolf Hitler; Interior Minister, Wilhelm Frick; and Minister without Portfolio, Hermann Goering.

Manchester Guardian, 31 January 1933, 'Hitler Forms His First Cabinet', Berlin Corr., 9. Hereafter *MG*.

¹¹ *Daily Mirror*, 31 Jan, 1933, 'Hitler May Rule as Dictator', Reuter, 1. Hereafter *DMirror*.

¹² *DE*, February 22, 1933, 'Germany's 21-Day Chancellor', 'D. Sefton Delmer', 10.

¹³ *NC*, 31 January 1933, 'Hitler's Message to the World', 1.

¹⁴ *DT*, 31 January 1933, 'Hitler's Triumph and Test', Leader, 110.

¹⁵ *DT*, 1 February 1933, 'Hitler Shorn of Real Power', 11.

new government.¹⁶ And the *New Statesman and Nation* declared that the Nazi inclusion in the new government was:

[H]ardly the glittering prize he clamoured for ... though he is Chancellor of the German Reich, he is not the head of a Nazi Government, but of a mixed body of Die-hards ... it is not likely that they are going to be ciphers, or to give Hitler a free hand to make a new Germany on 'National Socialist' lines. We shall not expect to see the Jews exterminated, or the power of big finance overthrown.¹⁷

The *Daily Mirror* reported: 'Hitler has achieved the ambition of his life ... but not without giving up a great deal of his "all or nothing policy"'.¹⁸ For the *Daily Telegraph*: 'Herr Hitler in office is very far from being the national and international peril that he has so often vowed himself to become if given the chance'.¹⁹ And the *Morning Post* optimistically reported:

The Government over which Herr Hitler is presiding is however, in itself proof that he has had to give up the ambition to rule Germany alone at the head of his party. He had not obtained the clear majority of the electorate, which was his declared aim. Heads will scarcely 'roll in the dust', as he promised in the autumn.²⁰

As a whole, the British press were largely unsure what to expect from Hitler and his fellow Nazis now that they were in office. 'Will Adolf Hitler, the statesman, be as successful as Adolf Hitler, the agitator?' the *News Chronicle* asked.²¹ The *Jewish Chronicle*, in a rather optimistic tone, commented: 'the most solid hope that still remains is that the Nazi chiefs may acquire, in office, that sense of responsibility which they could not feel when wooing the passions of the rabble'.²² This hope for Hitler's abilities as a statesman was echoed in other newspapers as well. The future of democracy in Germany was the focus in *The Times*: 'German Parliamentarism appears to depend mainly upon the unknown quality of of Herr Hitler's constructive powers, and of his ability for the first

¹⁶ *Observer*, 5 February 1933, 'Whither Germany?', 'By J. L. Garvin', 15. Hereafter *Obs.*

¹⁷ *The New Statesman and Nation*, 4 February 1933, 117. Hereafter *NS&N*.

¹⁸ *DMirror*, 31 January 1933, 'Hitler May Rule as Dictator', 1.

¹⁹ *DT*, 31 January 1933, 'Hitler's Triumph and Test', Leader, 110.

²⁰ *MP*, 31 January 1933, 'Hitler Chancellor of Germany', Berlin Corr., 11.

²¹ *NC*, 31 January 1933, 'Hitler's Plans', Berlin Corr., 2.

²² *Jewish Chronicle*, 3 February 1933, 'Hitler's Victory', 7. Hereafter *JC*.

time to exercise power with responsibility'.²³ This was also the case for *The Spectator* which reported: 'This is less Hitler's hour of triumph than his hour of trial. At last he has the chance of proving himself, and in the process he will in all likelihood make or break his party, and quite possibly the Weimar Constitution, too'.²⁴

In some ways it is not surprising that the British press failed, with the notable exception of the *Manchester Guardian*, to perceive the deadly intent of the Nazi Party to remain in power at all costs, and overrate the power of the rather feckless conservative elites to rein them in. On the other hand, the Press were well aware of the tactics used by the Nazi in previous years to further their purpose. The beatings inflicted by the Storm Troops on the political opponents and the general intolerance of the Nazis of any divergent view, were somehow discounted by many of the Press in their early appraisals of Hitler. The willingness of the Press to give to Nazis the benefit of the doubt, to 'normalise' them, meant that the British public were off to a shaky start in their ability to establish the inwardness of the new regime.

* * * * *

At the beginning of February 1933 the *Manchester Guardian* reported:

On the whole, Berlin is fairly quiet and the general attitude is one of expectation. The Nazis are expecting to see wonders, the others are waiting with mixed feelings of distrust and curiosity. At the moment the Nazis are still the happiest people on earth.²⁵

It was in this climate that the Reichstag was dissolved and an election was scheduled for 5 March, 1933. This marked an important turning point in press understanding and reporting of Hitler's fledgling coalition. Misunderstanding about the nature of Hitler's Chancellorship quickly began to give way to suspicion and unease as repression became the hallmark of the pre-election period. Throughout February the British press reported how the Nazis' election campaign was dominated by brutality, violence and suppression of civil liberties, demonstrating contempt for the democratic election process. At the call

²³ *TT*, 31 January 1933, 'Herr Hitler in Office', Leader, 11.

²⁴ *TS*, 3 February 1933, 'Hitlerism on Trial', 140.

²⁵ *MG*, 1 February 1933, 'Hitler's First Days in Power', Berlin Corr., 9.

of the elections, the Nazis began to wage a ruthless campaign against rival political parties.

One of the first steps taken by Hitler that alerted the British press to his true nature was one that was personal for many correspondents. It was the freedom of the press itself. The newspaper press in Germany was an important tool used by political parties during election campaigns and, for that reason, it was one of the first targets of the Nazis. The Nazis' war on opposition newspapers was made possible by a decree, originally prepared under the Papen administration, that came into force on 4 February 1933.²⁶ The 'Decree for the Protection of the German People' was an important tool by which the Nazis were able to ban opposition newspapers and meetings, severely limiting the ability of rival political parties to stage an effective election campaign. To the British press, this decree was a powerful weapon, which in the hands of the Nazis, could effectively wipe out any, and indeed all, newspapers in Germany. The *Manchester Guardian* explained that the decree was worded in such a way that 'almost any article may come under it'.²⁷ The *Morning Post* gave readers a clear understanding of the application of the decree:

The effect of the Decree largely depends on its interpretation by the Ministry of the Interior and the Government Press Bureau both of which are in the hands of Nazis ... It is, therefore, comprehensible that many opposition newspapers, whose journalistic ethics, if not impeccable, are incomparably superior to those of Herr Hitler's Party Press, should be disquieted by the penalties which await them if they are considered to have violated the new Decree.²⁸

In the words of the liberal German newspaper, the *Berliner Tageblatt*, quoted by the *Manchester Guardian*, the new decree 'will make it possible for the Government to exterminate completely any paper'.²⁹

The effect of the decree was swift. On 6 February 1933 *The Times* reported that *Vorwärts* the principal organ of the Socialist party had been suspended for three days, along with eight Socialist newspapers in Silesia and eighteen Communist newspapers throughout

²⁶ Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, 1889-1956* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 439.

²⁷ *MG*, 6 February 1933, 'Political Murders in Germany', Berlin Corr., 12.

²⁸ *MP*, 7 February 1933, 'Confusion in Germany', Berlin Corr., 13.

²⁹ *MG*, 7 February 1933, 'Newspapers in Germany', Berlin Corr., 13.

Germany, based on a ‘charge of infraction of the sedition clause of the penal code’.³⁰ The reason for suspension, according to *Vorwärts* and quoted by *The Times*, was that the newspapers had published the Socialist election manifesto which ‘was an exhortation not to violence but to the use of the weapon of the voting paper’.³¹ To the *Manchester Guardian*, the suppression of *Vorwärts* ‘gives one a sufficiently clear idea of the methods with which the Nazis propose to conduct the election campaign’.³² By late February, Sefton Delmer of the *Daily Express* observed: ‘The newspaper stall at the corner of our street ... has rather a different appearance to that which it had three weeks ago. There are far fewer newspapers on sale than there were. The reason is that a large number have been prohibited by Hitler’.³³

British press reports on the prohibition of German newspapers ranged from a few lines in popular newspapers like the *Daily Express*, to in-depth analysis in the quality newspapers such as *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph*. The suppression of the German press was of interest to newspapers of all political leanings — this was not a matter of politics but a matter of the freedom of newspaper press. *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Post* and the *Manchester Guardian* published frequent, if not daily, reports as newspaper after newspaper was prohibited in Germany for periods ranging from a few days to a few weeks, even several months. For instance, on 16 February the *Daily Telegraph* reported how suppressions continued even though

[T]he opposition press, threatened by heavy financial losses through suspension, has already become exceedingly tame ... Violent language is now confined to the Government press, which day after day hurls unbridled insults at its political opponents.³⁴

The *Daily Telegraph* then went on to list prohibited newspapers and included follow-up reports on new suppressions on 18, 20 and 24 February. Despite some press prohibitions being quashed by the courts in Germany, the *Daily Telegraph* explained: ‘the voice of public opinion has been almost completely stifled in this country. A minority of the nation is given absolute freedom to say what it likes about the majority, which has

³⁰ *TT*, 6 February 1933, ‘Election Moves in Germany’, Berlin Corr., 12.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *MG*, 4 February 1933, ‘Effort to Dissolve the Prussian Diet’, Berlin Corr., 15.

³³ *DE*, 22 February 1933, ‘Germany’s 21-Day Chancellor’, By Telephone from D. Sefton Delmer, 10.

³⁴ *DT*, 16 February 1933, ‘Herr Hitler Prepares to Suppress Opponents’, Berlin Corr., 13.

been completely cowed by the ruinous Press prohibitions'.³⁵ During the month of February, the suppression and prohibition of the German press remained a primary focus of British press reports on the election campaign.

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In reporting the election campaign, correspondents also focused on the ways the Nazis tried to win over voters. While Communists and Socialists had their newspapers suppressed, their election posters and placards banned, and their election demonstrations prohibited, the Nazis waged a vigorous campaign using the same methods that were denied to their opposition. Election posters, the wireless, speeches and demonstrations, and Nazi-controlled newspapers such as the *Völkischer Beobachter* were used to their full potential by the Nazis, and were reported extensively in the British press. This became the primary avenue by which the British press came to understand Nazi aims and goals. The British press closely followed and documented the regular articles that appeared in Nazi newspapers, as well as the election speeches given by Hitler and fellow Nazis, in order to gain an understanding of what the new Hitler Government intended for Germany.

By the middle of February, it was clear to many correspondents that Hitler intended to secure complete power, regardless of the outcome of the election process. British newspapers published official speeches and broadcasts by Hitler and his fellow Nazis which demonstrated a contempt for the election process, and for democracy in general. For instance, on 13 February *The Times* referred to a speech given by Hitler: 'An important passage in Herr Hitler's national broadcast of Friday, though heard by millions of listeners, was omitted from the official report. It was: — "If the German people should desert us that will not restrain us. We will take the course that is necessary to save Germany from ruin"'.³⁶ Berlin correspondent, Ebbutt, explained in the article 'it is inferred from this statement that Herr Hitler intends in any event to stay in power'.³⁷ *The Times* was not the only newspaper to publish this illuminating passage. *The Spectator* also picked up on the omitted statement explaining: 'It is now evident that

³⁵ *DT*, 20 February 1933, 'Hitler Defies German Constitution', Berlin Corr., 13.

³⁶ *TT*, 13 February 1933, 'Hitlerism', Berlin Corr., 11.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

every conceivable expedient is to be invoked to secure the return of the present Government in Germany at the elections on March 5th'.³⁸

On 16 February *The Times* again outlined Hitler's intentions:

It can now be stated on the best authority that the Nazi partners in the present Nazi-Nationalist alliance are avowedly working to establish the 'Nationalistic State' by which their followers certainly understand the Hitlerist State — irrespective of opposition, and expect to realise their ambition in the immediate future.³⁹

The following day *The Times* explained: 'The elections might be important if their results were allowed to count; but no attempt is now made to disguise the intention of the Hitler-Papen Government, and especially the Nazi part of it, to "find other means" of remaining in power if it does not obtain a majority'.⁴⁰ Ebbutt, took an astute interest in the changing relationship between the National Socialists, the state, and the electorate. His articles provided readers with the chance to understand the true intentions of Hitler and his Nazi party towards German democracy. Ebbutt recognised that the Nazis' suppression of their political opponents, through means of controlling the press and propaganda, was the precursor to Hitler's attempt to subvert, and thereby destroy, the democratic electoral process of the Weimar Republic.

Similar points were made in other British newspapers. On 16 February, the *Manchester Guardian* published part of a speech by Walter Funk, chief of the Government press department: 'I want you to all grasp the brutal fact that the accession of Hitler to power did not mark a mere change in Government but a change of regime in Germany'.⁴¹ This was powerful proof of Nazi intentions, reported the *Manchester Guardian*:

Herr Funk said that Parliamentary Government was 'finished'. The Nazi position could not have been defined more clearly, more precisely, and — to use Herr Funk's own adjective — more brutally ... If the Nazis have their own way Germany will be Fascist within a few months, perhaps within a few weeks.⁴²

³⁸ *TS*, 17 February 1933, 'Hitler's Campaign', 201.

³⁹ *TT*, 16 February 1933, 'A Hitlerist State', Berlin Corr., 12.

⁴⁰ *TT*, 17 February 1933, 'Dangers in Germany', Berlin Corr., 13.

⁴¹ *MG*, 16 February 1933, 'A Change of Regime in Germany', Berlin Corr., 9.

⁴² *Ibid.*

It was clear to the press that the German elections were no great hurdle to the Nazis' quest for power; they were now a mere formality. As the *Daily Telegraph* explained: 'Herr Hitler, Chancellor of Germany, to-night committed himself to the definite statement that, failing a majority at the elections on March 5, he intends to govern with a minority'.⁴³ In his speech 'Hitler added significantly: "I did not make the present constitution"'.⁴⁴ This was also reported in the *Observer*.⁴⁵ Harking back to initial reactions to Hitler's Chancellorship, the *Manchester Guardian* remarked: 'Nobody is speaking any more of Hitler and Göring being the prisoners of Von Papen and Hugenberg. The Hugenberg people are beginning to show signs of nervousness'.⁴⁶

While it was clear that the Nazis were actively working to undermine the democratic process, there was less certainty about the future, specifically what would happen after the election. This was partly to do with the difficulty in obtaining accurate information about the evolving situation in Germany. The German press, by this stage, was largely muzzled and, as the *Manchester Guardian* put it, all decisions were made 'behind closed doors'.⁴⁷ The *Manchester Guardian* summed up the difficulty in obtaining information: 'The general public knows next to nothing of what is going on behind the scenes. The papers to-day are either ignorant or reticent, and even some of the best informed people have to supplement a great deal of the official information with more or less reliable verbal reports and rumours'.⁴⁸ For the most part, correspondents had to piece together what was happening from official reports and speeches, supplemented by information from informants and conversations on the streets of Berlin and around Germany. There were exceptions to this — *The Times* Ebbutt had access and connections in German political circles, and Delmer of the *Daily Express*, had established close contact with the Nazi party and other organisations, including the police. Their reporting styles, and the way they utilised these connections, had marked differences. While Ebbutt wrote soberly and factually, Delmer favoured a more sensational and dramatic style — one that he knew appealed to the readers of the *Daily Express*.

⁴³ *DT*, 20 February 1933, 'Hitler Defies German Constitution', Berlin Corr., p13.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Obs.*, 26 February 1933, 'South Germany and Hitler', Corr., 10.

⁴⁶ *MG*, 18 February 1933, 'Hitler's Widening Control', Berlin Corr., 15.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *MG*, 27 February 1933, 'The Election in Germany', Berlin Corr., 12.

By getting close to the Nazis, Delmer supplied dramatic news stories that appealed to readers who wanted to get an insight into the personality of the new Chancellor of Germany. Having access to Hitler and the Nazi party meant that Delmer was able to supply the *Daily Express* with ‘scoops’ — the stories that other newspapers had not the chance to report or did not have the connections to get. The *Daily Express*, however, sought to give its readers an exclusive, and personal insight into the Nazi election campaign and main figures of the party. One of his more sensational stories recounted his experience accompanying Hitler on an election tour of Germany by plane. He described Hitler as a ‘middle-aged man in a fawn coat, with a kindly reddish face beneath a mop of carefully brushed brown hair’.⁴⁹ Of his political prowess, Delmer wrote: ‘His blue eyes ... were now staring fiercely straight ahead of him, hypnotising all that came within their range of vision. Hitler’s mouth was grim and aggressive. This at last was the real Hitler — the Messiah of Militant Nationalism’.⁵⁰

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One of the most dramatic events during the election period was the fire in the Reichstag which broke out on the night of 27 February 1933. Delmer’s best scoop came when he was able to accompany Hitler, Göring, Goebbels and other officials on a tour of the still-smouldering Reichstag after it was set alight by Marinus van der Lubbe. Delmer arrived at the scene of the fire in the Reichstag building soon after it was deliberately lit ‘watching the flames licking their way up the great dome into the tower’.⁵¹ Leading Nazi reactions to the arson were described in detail in the resulting article entitled, ‘Nothing Shall Stop Us Now’, published on 28 February 1933. Of Hitler’s anger at the scene, Delmer wrote: ‘Never have I seen Hitler with such a grim and determined expression. His eyes, always a little protuberant, were almost bulging out of his head’.⁵² Acknowledging the arrest of one man and the alleged presence of a number of Communist deputies Goering declared, according to Delmer: ‘This is undoubtedly the work of Communists’.⁵³ Delmer recorded how Hitler watched fire fighters battle with the fire ‘a savage fury blazing in his pale blue eyes’, and, when he met with von Papen,

⁴⁹ *DE*, 25 February 1933, ‘Whirlwind Election Tour by Airplane’, By D. Sefton Delmer, 3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *DE*, 25 February 1933, ‘Nothing Shall Stop Us Now’, By D. Sefton Delmer, 1.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Hitler declared: 'This is a god-given signal! If this fire, as I believe, turns out to be the work of Communists, then there is nothing that shall stop us crushing out this murder pest with an iron fist'.⁵⁴ Speaking to Delmer, Hitler dramatically declared:

God grant, that this is the work of the Communists. You are witnessing the beginning of a great new epoch in German history. This fire is the beginning ... You see this flaming building ... If this Communist spirit got hold of Europe for but two months it would be all aflame like this building.⁵⁵

Delmer's exclusive access gave readers an insight into the fire which no other newspaper was able to provide. No other British correspondent was allowed access to the burning building or witnessed the immediate reactions of Hitler, Göring, Goebbels and other key figures as they surveyed the damage. The Berlin correspondent for the *Daily Mail* described his attempts to gain access: 'Just after 10p.m. I tried to get to the burning building. A policeman warned me to go back, and the production of a police-card was to no avail. "Not even members of the Reichstag are allowed to approach", he said'.⁵⁶

However, many correspondents happened to be in the vicinity of the Reichstag when it was set alight. For instance, *The Times* correspondent recalled:

Your correspondent, who by chance was passing the Reichstag shortly after 9 o'clock, saw the central dome surmounting the rectangular Parliament building, with its four corner towers, blazing furiously — a beacon which must have been visible for miles ... fire engines from all parts of Berlin came tearing through the Tiergarten, and hundreds of police in lorries and on horseback arrived and cleared the streets.⁵⁷

Many newspapers, including the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Mirror*, and the *News Chronicle*, also printed large photographs of the fire to accompany articles.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ *DE*, 'Nothing Shall Stop Us Now', 'By D. Sefton Delmer', continued on 11.

⁵⁶ *DMail*, 28 February 1933, 'German House of Deputies Destroyed by Fire', Berlin Corr., 1.

⁵⁷ *TT*, 28 February 1933, 'Reichstag on Fire', Berlin Corr., 14.

⁵⁸ See Appendix I, Illustrations/Photographs for examples of coverage of the Reichstag Fire.

Sensational accounts dominated press coverage of the fire, especially after it was revealed that the arsonist had alleged ties to the Communist party.⁵⁹ Newspapers reported that the Communist headquarters at Karl Liebknecht house in Berlin were raided shortly after the fire and were accompanied by wide-scale arrests of members of the Communist party. Official reports quoted in British newspapers, revealed the raid had uncovered ‘proof’ that the party had been planning revolts to undermine the present Government and throw Germany into chaos. The raid had allegedly, wrote the *Morning Post*, unearthed ‘plans for revolution and civil war’.⁶⁰ The *Daily Mail* observed the uncovered documents demonstrated,

[R]evolution and civil war throughout Germany were planned to begin on Saturday, the eve of the general election. They state that the Communists intended to assassinate a number of prominent men and had plans for poisoning large quantities of food and for killing people wholesale. The Communists further intended to disguise themselves in Nazi and police uniforms and shoot down their political enemies in the streets.⁶¹

At the beginning of March 1933, British newspapers announced the Reichstag Fire Decree, drafted by Nazis, and authorised by President Hindenburg, which gave the Government emergency powers while dramatically restricting the constitutional rights and liberties of the German people. In the words of the *Manchester Guardian*, the decree would allow Nazi authorities to combat the ‘Communist danger’ in Germany.⁶² The *Daily Mail* explained to readers that the President’s authorisation of the decree ‘shows his sense of the danger in which Germany stands’.⁶³ While the *Daily Telegraph* reported that the emergency measures

[A]re officially declared to be necessary to thwart a wholesale communist plot. This, it is asserted, aimed at leading up to civil war by

⁵⁹ There is a general consensus of the ‘single culprit’ thesis, originally put forth by Fritz Tobias, that Marinus van der Lubbe was responsible for the fire. A few historians, including Benjamin Carter Hett, have recently come out and argued against this thesis, citing new evidence. See Benjamin Carter Hett, *Burning the Reichstag: An Investigation into the Third Reich’s Enduring Mystery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). This has been vigorously refuted by others, most notably Richard J Evans, in the *London Review of Books* in 2014. See Richard J. Evans, ‘The Conspiracists’, Review of *Burning the Reichstag: An Investigation into the Third Reich’s Enduring Mystery*, by Benjamin Carter Hett. *London Review of Books* 36 no. 9 (2014): 3-9, <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v36/n09/richard-j-evans/the-conspiracists>.

⁶⁰ *MP*, 1 March 1933, ‘German Constitution Suspended’, Berlin Corr., 11.

⁶¹ *DMail*, 1 March 1933, ‘Berlin Reds Raided’, Berlin Corr., 12.

⁶² *MG*, 1 March 1933, ‘German Dictatorship’, 9.

⁶³ *DMail*, 1 March 1933, ‘Sensational German Decree to Smash Communism’, Berlin Corr., 11.

acts of incendiarism, bomb outrages, poisoning of wells, and other horrors. Terrorism was to be begun all over Germany.⁶⁴

The British press, from popular newspapers to class newspapers, quoted the decree at length and included passages from the Weimar Constitution that had been repealed. For instance, the *Manchester Guardian* reported that under the first clause of the decree, the following articles had been suspended: ‘personal liberty, the right of free expression of opinion, the freedom of the press, security against house searching, the right of holding meetings and forming associations, the privacy of letters, telegrams, and telephone calls’.⁶⁵ Suspended passages from the constitution included, quoted the *Daily Mail*, ‘Article 114, guaranteeing freedom of person ... [and] Article 118, which states: Every German has the right to express his opinion by work, writing, printing, or picture’.⁶⁶ In addition to the suspension of articles governing liberty and civil rights in the Constitution, the decree imposed the death penalty for a range of broadly defined crimes. These included, quoted *The Times*,

[A]ttempting the life of the President, or members of the Reich Government, or Reich Commissioners, or of conspiring with others in such an attempt, or of incitement to such an attempt ... cases of grave disturbances of the peace, of deprivation of liberty with a view of using the victim as a hostage, of high treason, of incendiarism, of causing floods or explosions, and of poisoning to the common danger.⁶⁷

This section of the decree was highlighted in a number of newspapers, including the *Manchester Guardian*, *News Chronicle*, *Daily Mail* and the *Morning Post*.

Meanwhile, the *News Chronicle* printed an excerpt from the statement of a government spokesperson, made to foreign journalists about the necessity of the decree: ‘This Government is going to stay in office. The only alternative to it is Communism. Parliamentary and democratic government is done with for ever in Germany’.⁶⁸ For Berlin correspondent John Segrue, it left little doubt as to what the decree, in the hands of the Nazis, would mean to democracy in Germany, as he explained in the article: ‘The

⁶⁴ *DT*, 1 March 1933, ‘Martial Law Proclaimed in Germany’, Berlin Corr., 13.

⁶⁵ *MG*, ‘German Dictatorship’, 9.

⁶⁶ *DM*, ‘Sensational German Decree to Smash Communism’, 11.

⁶⁷ *TT*, 1 March 1933, ‘The German Crisis’, Berlin Corr., 14.

⁶⁸ *NC*, 1 March 1933, ‘Hitler’s Death Decree’, From John Segrue Berlin Corr., 1.

decree, stated to have been framed for “warding off Communist acts of terror that may endanger the security of the State,” sets up in effect a dictatorship far exceeding in strictness any form of government that has hitherto existed in Germany’.⁶⁹

It was not just the *News Chronicle’s* John Segrue who examined the effects the decree would have on Germany. The press quickly recognised the impact the severe limitations would have on both public and private life.⁷⁰ *The Times* reported:

A ‘state of emergency’ has been declared, with a severe curtailment of public liberties. The Left Opposition has thus been completely silenced, and the violence of a supposed fanatic has enabled the authorities to gag both the Communists and the Socialists, who represent at least as many grades of opinion as does our own Labour Party.⁷¹

The *Morning Post* explained: ‘The Reichstag fire has overnight hastened and intensified the movement towards Fascist dictatorship in a degree that would have seemed incredible yesterday’.⁷² The *Manchester Guardian* argued the emergency measures placed Germany ‘under an absolute dictatorship’, while the *Daily Mail* wrote that the decree had ushered in the ‘end of democracy’.⁷³

In the days that followed, given the severity of the decree and the wide scale arrest of political opponents, the British press began to ask questions about the fire. While British papers generally accepted that Marinus van der Lubbe was behind the arson, they were suspicious of Nazi claims that the fire had been the German Communist party’s signal for civil war and revolution. The *Morning Post* was one of the first newspapers to speak out about the allegations levelled against the Communist party: ‘The charges amount almost to accusations of political insanity, so certain was the act of arson to play into the Government’s hands’.⁷⁴ A day later, on 2 March, the *News Chronicle* weighed in:

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ The official title of the ‘Reichstag Fire Decree was the ‘Decree of the Reich President for the Protection of the People and the State’.

⁷¹ *TT*, 1 March 1933, ‘Tension in Berlin’, Leader, 15.

⁷² *MP*, 1 March 1933, ‘German Constitution Suspended’, Berlin Corr., 11.

⁷³ *MG*, ‘German Dictatorship’, 9. And, *DM*, ‘Sensational German Decree to Smash Communism’, 11.

⁷⁴ *MP*, ‘German Constitution Suspended’, 11.

While the campaign of dictatorship against the so-called ‘Red terror’ grows more violent, doubts as to its wisdom — as to its honesty even — continue to spread here ... I have still to meet an intelligent German, not blinded by party passion, who believes that the Communist Party countenanced Monday night’s attempt to burn down the Reichstag, or that they have been hatching a revolutionary plot, of which hair-raising particulars are being printed hourly in the Nazi and Nationalist newspapers.⁷⁵

The *Manchester Guardian* similarly stated:

[T]here are millions of people in Germany to-day who simply cannot and will not believe the extraordinary stories circulated about the ‘Red’ revolution which has only just been averted ... The details which have been given of the Communist plot sound too fantastic for many ears to accept unreservedly as true. The stories that food and water were to be poisoned, that women and children were to be sent in front of ‘terror groups’, that buildings were to be set alight, and that hostages were to be seized and shot, and so on are regarded as incredible.⁷⁶

The *New Statesman and Nation* not only dismissed allegations against the Communist party but also challenged the idea that van der Lubbe was the arsonist. Citing rumours in Germany that the Nazis were behind the Reichstag fire, the *New Statesman and Nation* declared:

Germany has gone this week from purgatory to hell. The burning of the Reichstag building was the signal for an outburst of savage decrees, of wholesale arrests and of blood-curdling threats against all adversaries of the regime. The Nazi leaders, of course, seized upon this arson as ‘a heaven-sent opportunity’. A great many people believe that it was not Providence, but the Nazis themselves, who arranged it, for it is incredible that this foreign incendiary could have been left free to do all he did in the building without the custodians, and others behind them, knowing anything about it. The pretence that it was a plot of the German Communist Party, which had everything to gain by keeping quiet with its enemies in power, is too thin to take in any sane man ; but unhappily insanity is widespread in Germany to-day, and the lie will help the Government in fermenting the fear of the populace and the fury of their own gunmen against the Reds.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ *NC*, 2 March 1933, ‘Germany under the Iron Hand’, Berlin Corr., 1.

⁷⁶ *MG*, 2 March 1933, ‘Berlin a City of Rumours’, Reuter, 13.

⁷⁷ *NSe&N*, 4 March 1933, 241.

The *New Statesman and Nation's* in-depth commentary on the methods employed by the Nazis to secure power in Germany was a defining feature of the British weekly press at this time. The very nature of a weekly newspaper meant that articles were not able to contain the sheer amount of factual detail present in daily newspapers. Instead, the weekly press sought to contextualise the weeks events in lengthy articles that combined a blend of commentary and analysis. For the *New Statesman and Nation* this took the form of vocal condemnation of the Nazi Government. These articles were intended to expose the Nazis' brutal practices and ruthless drive for power. One of the earliest articles published in the newspaper of this type appeared on 11 February, 1933, barely a fortnight after Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany:

At first the impression prevailed that Hitler had again been tricked by the die-hards, but already doubts are arising lest they have bitten off more than they can swallow ... there has been a skillfully organised Nazi stampede of the nation, by a dexterous combination of honeyed words from Hitler with the seduction of pageantry against a background of terrorism. The Chancellor's slogan of two Four Year Plans was an unblushing demand for irresponsible power. Meanwhile frank murders of Socialists and Communists go unpunished; the now official Nazi press has a superb technique by which these crimes are presented as the splendid actions of provoked heroes.⁷⁸

Several weeks later, on 3 March, another weekly newspaper, *The Spectator*, summarised the developments in Germany with an article by its correspondent Harrison Brown:

The rapidity with which Fascism in its ugliest form has burst upon Germany seems to have bewildered the country. Every day sees the perpetration of acts weeks earlier would have been scouted as impossible ... The press is in chains, liberty has disappeared, telephones are constantly tapped, letters may be intercepted, and nobody known to be interested in politics can consider himself safe.⁷⁹

In addition Brown reported: 'It is difficult to convey the state of tension prevailing in Berlin to-day, and still more the rapidity with which the realization of insecurity has burst upon the ordinary citizen'.⁸⁰ This climate of insecurity and fear was captured by a

⁷⁸ *NS&N*, 11 February 1933, 'The Nazi Heaven', Berlin Corr., 153.

⁷⁹ *TS*, 3 March 1933, 'Terror in Germany', By Harrison Brown, 279.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

number of newspapers, including dailies, but it was the British weekly press that, prior to the 5 March elections, chronicled the increasingly repressive atmosphere in depth.

In addition, the British weekly press painted a bleak picture for the outcome of the elections and the future of German parliamentary democracy. For instance, *The Spectator*, in its last issue before the 5 March elections, explained to readers the impossibility of a free election:

Germany to-day is one of the world's black spots. Force is in control and ... force will inevitably have its hour of triumph. A democratic Germany will no doubt re-emerge. But there is a chapter of force to live through first, and force wielded by incompetents can be a tragic business. The elections on Sunday will of course be a farce.⁸¹

On the day of the election the *Observer* printed a similar comment: 'What has happened in Germany can only be called a volcanic eruption in politics ... with the resolve of the Nazis to keep in power in any case, to-day's voting is a farce. The situation could hardly look darker'.⁸²

A number of daily newspapers echoed similar sentiments on the eve of the German elections, as correspondents reviewed the progression of German politics since Hitler had become Chancellor. For the British press as a whole, the election campaign had been unique — one-sided from the start, and increasingly characterised by terror. It had become increasingly clear to the press that Hitler and his Nazi party would disregard the results of the election if they did not obtain their desired majority. Similarly to *The Spectator* and the *Observer*, *The Times* in a leader article commented: 'There cannot, of course, be the slightest doubt that the present Government intend to remain in office whatever the result of the election; and to that extent the consultation of the people is a farce'.⁸³ Taking criticism of the election a step further, the *Daily Telegraph* commented:

The German Nation will be asked on Sunday whether it wants to be deprived of its political rights. The answer will have no effect on major events. Both the partners in the Cabinet have put it beyond any doubt that, if democracy is unwilling to cut its own throat, they are

⁸¹ *TS*, 3 March 1933, 273.

⁸² *Obs.*, 5 March 1933, 'The German Revolution', 16.

⁸³ *TT*, 4 March 1933, 'Germany Polls To-Morrow', Leader, 13.

determined to perform the operation for it. But, as is usual before executions, the condemned man is being allowed to express his last wish.⁸⁴

The *Daily Mail* was more diplomatic, although it did cite the inevitability of the death of democracy in Germany: 'The Government parties, the National Socialists, led by Herr Adolf Hitler, the Chancellor, and the Nationalists hope that the nation will give them an overwhelming majority, and thus enable them to abolish parliamentary rule in Germany altogether'.⁸⁵

Despite this bleak outlook, some newspapers expressed a modicum of hope. The *Manchester Guardian*, in a leader article on 4 March, reported:

The German voter, in spite of the repression of the last few days, can still exercise the faculty of choice. Neither intimidation nor the suppression of his newspapers and meetings can stop the Socialist or Communist or Catholic from voting for his party lists. If this were not a fact the electoral efforts of the Nazi party would be empty of all meaning.⁸⁶

Berlin correspondent Werth, believed that the fear and repression that pervaded Germany might impact voter turnout. He explained: 'No one can tell how this vague fear of the Storm Troops, which undoubtably exists, will influence the elections. It is said that in small towns in particular many people will abstain from voting'.⁸⁷ President Hindenburg had assured those concerned that 'he would do everything within his powers to assure freedom of the voter and prevent any excesses in the election campaign'.⁸⁸ But, on this, Werth reported: 'This statement is a little surprising when one considers that the Socialists, for instance, are not even allowed to display election posters'.⁸⁹ *The Times* Berlin correspondent came to similar conclusions, reporting:

⁸⁴ *DT*, 4 March 1933, 'Will Hitler Get His Majority?', Berlin Corr., 11.

⁸⁵ *DMail*, 4 March 1933, 'Germany's Third Election in Eight Months', Berlin Corr., 13.

⁸⁶ *MG*, 4 March 1933, 'Germany's Choice', Leader, 10.

⁸⁷ *MG*, 4 March 1933, 'Eve of the Elections in Germany', Berlin Corr., 11.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

While adequate measures may be taken to protect the polling stations, and while the counting of votes may be scrupulous, the present aspect of Germany suggests that many people will be frightened to go to the poll at all ... The reasons for the fears which possesses these people must be found between the lines of such brief announcements as that which told yesterday of the discovery of 'a workman' murdered in his dwelling; in the flight and self-concealment of prominent Socialists and Communists; and in the innumerable arrests.⁹⁰

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Despite fears for the freedom of the elections, according to *The Times*, 'passed off yesterday, at any rate until the closing of the polls, with comparative tranquility'.⁹¹ As the election results began to come in on 5 March, it was clear that the election had been a success for the Nazis. *The Times* reported: 'The result, it need hardly be said, was a complete victory for the Chancellor and his Nationalist-Socialist followers'.⁹² *The Spectator* remarked: 'The result of the German elections ... was what might have been expected after a campaign in which the opposition parties had been virtually silenced by terrorism of varying degree'.⁹³ Popular newspapers, like the *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror* and the *News Chronicle* gave front-page coverage to the elections. Dramatic headlines like, 'Hitler's Great Triumph at the Polls' (*Daily Mail*), 'Sweeping Victory for Hitler' (*Daily Express*) and 'Germany Votes for Nazi Rule' (*Daily Mirror*) were accompanied by large photographs, especially of President Hindenburg and Hitler at the polling stations.⁹⁴ The dramatic headlines announcing the election results were not restricted to the popular press with a number of quality newspapers using similar language — 'Triumph for the Nazis' (*The Times*) and 'Hitler Sweeps Germany' (*Morning Post*).⁹⁵

Coverage of the election in the British daily newspapers included a breakdown of polling. On 6 March 1933, citing provisional figures, *The Times* included a table that

⁹⁰ *TT*, 4 March 1933, 'Eve of Poll in Germany', Berlin Corr., 12.

⁹¹ *TT*, 6 March 1933, 'Elections in Germany', Berlin Corr., 12.

⁹² *TT*, 7 March 1933, 'Herr Hitler's Election', Leader, 15.

⁹³ *TS*, 10 March 1933, 'The German Elections', 321.

⁹⁴ *DMail*, 6 March 1933, 'Nazis Seize Hamburg', 11. *DE*, 6 March 1933, 'Sweeping Victory for Hitler in German Elections', By D. Sefton Delmer, Daily Express' Corr., 1.

⁹⁵ *TT*, 7 March 1933, 'Triumph for the Nazis', Berlin Corr., 15. *Morning Post*, 6 March 1933, 'Hitler Sweeps Germany', 11.

accounted for all 39,162,419 votes cast.⁹⁶ Included in their table were: the Nazi vote — 17,264,298 (288 seats), the Nationalists — 3,130,715 (52 seats), Socialists — 7,032,612 (118), Communists — 4,845,003 (81 seats) and even the Württemberg Wine-Growers party — 83,563 (1 seat).⁹⁷ *The Times* printed a follow-up article that compared results to the November 1932 elections. From this it was clear that the Nazi party had increased their votes from previous election in which they had polled 11,737,391 votes (196 seats). More interestingly the losses suffered by the Nazis' opponents, particularly the Communists and Socialists, were included; for the Communists — 4,845,379 votes (81 seats), down from 5,980,540 (100 seats); while the Social Democrats only lost one seat, from 121 to 120 seats.⁹⁸ This approach was taken by a number of other daily newspapers, including the *Morning Post*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Telegraph*, *News Chronicle*, *Daily Mail* (who contrasted the results against both the July 1932 and November 1932 elections) and the *Manchester Guardian* which compared results of the last four elections.

What was clear from the results was that although the Nazis had increased their vote they had not secured the majority they had desired. Despite an intense propaganda drive and the suppression of the opposition, the Nazis only had a majority in their partnership with the Nationalists. In an early report the *Daily Mail* explained: 'It would seem already clear that the Nationalist Socialists will not have the sole majority which they had hoped for, that is to say, they will not have a majority *without* the Nationalists'.⁹⁹ Summing up the election result the *New Statesman and Nation* commented: 'Herr Hitler has won a victory at the polls, but it was not the resounding triumph that he wanted, and he is still faced ... with a solid and formidable opposition and with exceedingly difficult friends at his side'.¹⁰⁰ To John Segrue of the *News Chronicle*, the election result demonstrated that there was still strong opposition to the Nazis:

Not only did the Chancellor fail to get a majority over all other Parties for his own Party, but to-day's voting clearly shows that organised Labour in Germany now, as in the past, resolutely refuses him its support and remains loyal to those 'Marxist' Parties which it is his ambition to crush.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ *TT*, 6 March 1933, 'Elections in Germany', Berlin Corr., 12.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *TT*, 7 March 1933, 'Triumph of the Nazis', Berlin Corr., 15.

⁹⁹ *DMail*, 6 March 1933, 'Nazi Coup at Hamburg', Berlin Corr., 12.

¹⁰⁰ *NSe&N*, 11 March 1933, 'Hitler's Victory', 241.

¹⁰¹ *NC*, 6 March 1933, 'Hitler's Day', From John Segrue 'News-Chronicle' Corr., 9.

While the Nazis had gained 92 seats in the Reichstag, the major opposition parties had still managed to hold onto most of their seats. Unsurprisingly given the campaign of persecution and repression, the Communist party had lost the most seats, but they still retained 81 seats in the Reichstag. The German Socialist party, according to *The Times*, retained 120 seats in the Reichstag (losing only one seat), while the Centre party actually gained three seats giving them a total of 73.¹⁰² The elections demonstrated that, for the most part, the German people voted for the same political parties they had voted for in previous elections. That is to say, those that supported conservative and left-wing political parties were still willing to show their support despite the campaign of violence and repression against these parties that had plagued the lead-up to the election.

The fact that many political parties had retained their voters while the Nazi vote increased significantly was attributed by a number of British correspondents to ‘new voters’. Correspondents in Berlin noted in their reports that polling on election day had been ‘exceptionally heavy’.¹⁰³ The *News Chronicle* reported in some towns that 90% of the electorate had turned out to vote — a ‘considerable’ increase from the November 1932 elections.¹⁰⁴ The *Daily Mail* explained: ‘The German people flocked in their millions to elect a new Reichstag to-day, and the size of the poll has easily broken the record established last November, when 35,247,192, or 77 per cent. of the electorate recorded their votes. More than 39,000,000 have been counted’.¹⁰⁵ For the *Daily Telegraph* it was clear where the ‘extra’ votes had come from: ‘Evidently the Nazis have succeeded in mobilising the greater part of the normal abstainers. This has undoubtably been the main source of their enormous gains’.¹⁰⁶ Breaking down the votes the *Manchester Guardian* commented:

With the exception of the Communists ... none of the other great parties have lost more than a tiny fraction of their votes ... and out of 5,000,000 votes won by the Nazis 4,000,000 have come to them from former non-voters. It is there hitherto neutral and politically inexperienced people who have made this election such a success for

¹⁰² Figures taken from *TT*, ‘Triumph of the Nazis’, Berlin Corr., 15.

¹⁰³ *MG*, 6 March 1933, ‘Nazis Win the General Election’, 9.

¹⁰⁴ *NC*, ‘Hitler’s Day’, 9.

¹⁰⁵ *DMail*, 6 March 1933, ‘Record Poll’, Berlin Corr., 12.

¹⁰⁶ *DT*, 6 March 1933, ‘A Triumph for Hitler’, 11.

the Nazis. These people and not the Socialists or Centre voters have been impressed by the Communist scare, by the loud assertions that Germany was on the eve of an indescribably horrible Bolshevik revolution.¹⁰⁷

For the *Manchester Guardian* then, the Nazi propaganda drive had been ‘tremendously efficient’, for ‘their poll has increased much less at the expense of the other parties than through their ability to persuade the non-voters, especially women and other people who had never taken any interest in politics — to go to the polls this time’.¹⁰⁸

What the elections meant was that, in the words of the *Manchester Guardian*, Germany was now ‘faced with a long period of Hitlerism’.¹⁰⁹ But *The Spectator* reported: ‘it remains now to see how he will use the power he has grasped’.¹¹⁰ The most likely scenario, according to the newspaper, was that Hitler would seek to consolidate his position, and

The Government, so long as its two component parts hold together, can command a majority in the Reichstag, and there should be no difficulty in carrying a Bill conferring extensive powers on the Cabinet, after which the Reichstag itself will no doubt disappear from view indefinitely.¹¹¹

Importantly, *The Spectator* pointed out that a two-thirds majority was required to change the Constitution. However, it explained, ‘even that should not be unattainable, for the Nazis have quite effective means of discouraging such Communists as are not under lock and key, and a good many Socialists as well, from attending the Reichstag’.¹¹²

Other British newspapers also speculated about what Hitler and his Nazi party might do with their election success. A number of newspapers including *The Times*, *Daily Mail*, *Morning Post*, *Daily Telegraph* and the *Manchester Guardian* postulated that a cabinet reshuffle could be imminent, and might be accompanied by the Nazis’ rejection of their Nationalist partners. To do so, the *Manchester Guardian* explained:

¹⁰⁷ *MG*, 7 March 1933, ‘Fruits of Efficient Propaganda’, Berlin Corr., 9.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *MG*, 6 March 1933, ‘Nazis Win the General Election’, 9.

¹¹⁰ *Spectator*, 10 March 1933, ‘The German Elections’, 321.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

[I]t is regarded as probable that the Nazis will arrest all Communist deputies and thus keep an absolute majority in the new Reichstag even without the help of their allies the Nationalists ... But to change the Constitution as they desire there must be a two-thirds majority, which cannot be forthcoming without the assistance of the two Catholic parties.¹¹³

The Times pointed to possible changes in the Constitution, the Cabinet and the makeup of the Reichstag, but what was definite was 'Herr Hitler and his Nazi movement have won all along the line and established their virtual control over the country'.¹¹⁴

At first, the British press had been willing to give the newly installed Hitler government the benefit of some doubt. However, the passing of the 'Decree for the Protection of the German People' and the ruthless election campaign that brutally targeted their political opponents, helped to remove the scales from the eyes of the Press. By this stage, the Press were under no illusion as to the intentions of the Nazis to remain in power whatever the result. The uses to which Hitler put the Reichstag fire only confirmed the Press in their opinion that Hitler and the Nazis were intent on destroying democracy in Germany. As the campaign developed, their reporting was, in general, accurate and frank. Correspondents, with the insights gained from their experiences during the election campaign, were in good stead to observe and report the next phase in the Nazis' quest for total power.

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¹¹³ *MG*, 'Nazis Win the General Election', 9.

¹¹⁴ *TT*, 'Triumph of the Nazis', 15.

Chapter Three — The Destruction of Democracy

After the March 1933 election, the British press was confronted in Germany by a Nazi regime that was now likely to be permanent. That democracy would be destroyed was beyond question. The course that destruction would take was less clear. As it happened, one of the first Nazi moves came against those sources of power that still remained in Germany — the federated states. On 6 March 1933 the *Daily Mail* gave precedence to the Nazi takeover of Hamburg (a federal state) over commentary on the initial election results with the headline, 'Nazis Seize Hamburg, Dramatic Election Day Coup'.¹ The Berlin correspondent began:

While the Nationalist Socialists and their allies, the Nationalist, were sweeping the polls in Germany yesterday, dramatic coups were staged by Nazi Storm Troops in the Free City of Hamburg and at Anhalt. They seized control of Hamburg, which is a stronghold of Communists and Socialists, while the Senate was in session, and hoisted their Swastika flag over the City Hall.²

He noted that this important move meant 'that the Central Government intends to smash the opposition of all States having governments which are out of harmony with National Socialism'.³ This action was also reported by the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Morning Post* and *The Times*.

It became strikingly clear to British correspondents in the following days that the seizure of Hamburg was only the beginning in a Nazi campaign to take control of state governments. On 7 March Hermann Goering, at the time Prussian Minister of the Interior, was quoted in *The Times* as stating:

[T]he enormous ascendancy of the National Front, especially in the South German States, no longer gives the South German Governments the right to continue to govern in the name of the people, as the people have placed themselves behind Adolf Hitler there, too.⁴

¹ *Daily Mail*, 6 March 1933, 'Nazis Seize Hamburg', Berlin Corr., 11. Hereafter *DMail*.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *The Times*, 7 March 1933, 'Triumph of the Nazis', Berlin Corr., 15. Hereafter *TT*.

The aggressive actions of Nazi Storm Troops throughout Germany confirmed for many British correspondents the reality of Goering's threats. For instance, on 8 March the *News Chronicle* reported: 'To-day up and down the country Nazi Storm Troops and Steel Helmets continued their 'war' upon cities where the local authorities display their reluctance to accept the political situation created by the Chancellor's triumph'.⁵

The British press were particularly interested in the resistance of the southern states to Nazi attempts at consolidation. The question of the political future of the southern federal states was featured in several articles during the election campaign in February 1933, as the press reported tension between the government in Berlin and the state governments. In fact, a number of correspondents questioned whether the southern states, particularly Bavaria, would attempt to cede from the rest of the Reich if the Nazis won the election. British newspapers commented that while the realignment of northern Germany along National Socialist lines had been met 'without too much resistance', the southern states would not not be as accommodating.⁶

The most important state in the struggle, by far, was Bavaria and British newspapers reported its seizure in early March 1933. On 9 March, the *Daily Telegraph* had announced from Munich the arrival of 'Several high officials of the Nazi movement' who were to report 'how best the Government of Bavaria can be reconstituted in order to fit in with the balance of power in the Reichstag'.⁷ The article went on to suggest that a compromise between Berlin and the state government was on offer, but if the local authorities firmly resisted the regime there was likely to be trouble.⁸ The view that Hitler would 'compromise' on control of the state was to prove wide off the mark, as the *Daily Telegraph* had to acknowledge on 10 March when the newspaper reported: 'Hitlerites seize control in Bavaria'.⁹ The *Daily Telegraph* went on to provide readers with a concise, yet detailed account of events in Bavaria, highlighting the overwhelming strength of the Nazis and the relative ease in which they seized control. A special

⁵ *News Chronicle*, 8 March 1933, 'Nazis Besiege Building in Defiant City', John Segreue, 9. Hereafter *NC*.

⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 8 March 1933, 'Nazi Coup in Hessen', Berlin Corr., 12. Hereafter *MG*.

⁷ *Daily Telegraph*, 9 March 1933, 'Bavarian Cabinet: Reconstruction Urged by Nazis', Munich Corr., 11. Hereafter *DT*.

The high officials mentioned were Ernst Röhm and Gaultier Adolf Wagner who, with orders from Hitler, travelled to Munich to demand the resignation of the Bavarian Prime Minister Heinrich Held and the appointment of Ritter von Epp in his place as Reich Commissioner.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *DT*, 10 March 1933, 'Hitlerites Seize Control in Bavaria', Munich Spec. Corr., 13.

representative for the newspaper described the atmosphere in Bavaria: ‘Munich awoke this morning to rumours of an impending Nazi “Putsch”. By midday these rumours had been partly confirmed, and an expectant public knew that it stood on the threshold of a dramatic afternoon’.¹⁰ Concluding this article the correspondent wrote:

The Nazis are the masters of Munich to-night. The newly appointed Reich Commissioner for Bavaria, Gen. von Epp, who had arrived from Berlin by air, informed Dr. Held, the Premier, that he had been empowered by the Reich Minister of the Interior to assume the supreme control of affairs. Dr. Held was forced to comply with the request, but has addressed another telegram of protest to Herr Hitler. Nazi Storm Troops to-night occupied the Bavarian Parliament and several other State buildings. At 10 o’clock a tremendous Nazi victory demonstration was held on the Odeonsplatz.¹¹

The following day, on 11 March, the *Daily Telegraph* reported ‘The Hitler Government now has complete control of Bavaria and the other big German states ... In Bavaria hundreds of arrests have been made. Many papers have been suppressed and officials dismissed’.¹² For readers unaware of the significance of Nazi advances against the states, the correspondent explained:

With the capture of Munich the Nazis’ conquest of the German states is complete. They now control the situation in all the capitals of the Federal States. The only remaining opposition comes from their partner in the Cabinet of the Reich (the German Nationalists), and it does not seem to be very strong.¹³

The *Daily Telegraph* provided readers with a clear picture of the process through which the Nazis had secured their hold over the federal states in Germany. For Bavaria this involved the arrival of Nazi officials in Munich, threatening demands and ultimatums made against the local government, and finally the seizure of the power structures of the state. The *Daily Telegraph’s* correspondent highlighted the overwhelming strength of the Nazis and their efforts to wipe out all potential opposition.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *DT*, 11 March 1933, ‘Hitler Urges his Men to Keep Order’, Berlin Corr., 11.

¹³ Ibid.

Most British newspapers reported the seizure of Bavaria on 10 and 11 March 1933. Popular newspapers and quality newspapers alike included lengthy reports about the Nazi takeover of Munich, often making the story a feature of their foreign news section. For instance, the *News Chronicle* gave front page coverage to the news with the headline: ‘Nazi troops besiege Bavarian Cabinet; Munich Frenzy’, and the *Daily Express* declared, ‘Hitlerites Capture Bavaria; Hostile Cabinet cowed by Storm Troops’, which was also featured on the front page.¹⁴

Since the 5 March elections correspondents had been in a race to keep up with events and the takeover of Bavaria, the last of the states to fall under Nazi control, was an opportunity for correspondents to review, analyse, and reflect. As Berlin correspondent for *The Times* remarked: ‘the sequence of events has been almost bewildering in its rapidity’.¹⁵ The *Morning Post* reported:

This is an event of the greatest importance in Germany history since never before would it have been possible for Berlin to intervene in this way in Bavaria. It makes clear the absurdity of the speculations still entertained in some quarters abroad upon the possibility of detaching Bavaria from the Reich.¹⁶

Pushing Nazi justifications¹⁷ for the seizure of the states aside, the *Manchester Guardian* argued: ‘The events of the past week have confirmed probably beyond dispute that what is going on in Germany to-day is a first-class revolution’.¹⁸ Highlighting Nazi successes the article went on:

If one is to judge their work not by its methods but by its results, there can be no doubt that it has been successful beyond all expectations. The succession of coups in all the Federal States, including Bavaria, during the past week has placed the police of the entire German Reich under their control. They have scored one success after another; their Nationalist colleagues have merely looked on with surprise and bewilderment. A list of the present Federal Administrations shows that

¹⁴ *NC*, 10 March 1933, ‘Nazi Troops Besiege Bavarian Cabinet’, John Segrue, 1. And *Daily Express*, 10 March 1933, ‘Hitlerites Capture Bavaria’, Spec. Corr., 1. Hereafter *DE*.

¹⁵ *TT*, 10 March 1933, ‘Nazi Coup in States’, Berlin Corr., 14.

¹⁶ *MP*, 10 March 1933, ‘Nazis Seize Bavaria’, Berlin Corr., 11.

¹⁷ According to Nazi authorities, under the emergency decree of 28 February, it was to step in “‘for the protection of the German people” and in the interests of law and order’.

MG, 10 March 1933, ‘Nazis Take Control of Bavaria’, Berlin Corr., 11.

¹⁸ *MG*, 11 March 1933, ‘Ease of Nazi Revolution’, Berlin Corr., 15.

wherever there is not a purely Nazi Government there is a police commissioner, and in every case this police commissioner is a Nazi. In the states now under commissarial control there are to be either new elections or drastic changes in the Government, with the inevitable result that in every case Nazis will have before long not only the virtual but also the formal control of public affairs.¹⁹

Similarly *The Times* reported: ‘The Nazi machine now controls the regular police, and the as yet unspecified number of armed auxiliaries, throughout the country. Only control of the Reichswehr is lacking to make Germany a completely Hitlerist State’.²⁰

The speed of the Nazi takeover prompted *The Times* correspondent to observe: ‘Germany herself probably does not fully realize yet what has happened to her’.²¹ The *Observer* also commented on the swiftness of Nazi actions: ‘Munich, like every other city and hamlet in Germany, is now Nazi ... The whole story makes astonishing reading’.²² The *Observer*, with a correspondent in Munich, reported the changed atmosphere in the city:

As I write uniformed Nazis often pass the window of this cafe. The police patrols have been doubled, and they are now often accompanied by an SA or SS man. Some of the big multiple shops have been closed, or have closed voluntarily. Yesterday Nazis moved on anybody curious enough to stand at their closed doors. Probably much the same scenes are going on all over Bavaria.²³

To the British press the takeover of the states, by all appearances, had occurred with little resistance.

British newspapers also reported local elections, which saw the Nazis secure their hold over town councils, the country diet and the provincial diet across the German states. On 14 March the *Daily Telegraph* reported that the mayors of Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt, Mannheim, and many other towns had been driven out.²⁴ Of Nazi (and Nationalist) victories in the local elections the *Manchester Guardian* wrote: ‘Thus the Nazi revolution

¹⁹ *MG*, 11 March 1933, ‘Ease of Nazi Revolution’, Berlin Corr., 15.

²⁰ *TT*, 10 March 1933, ‘Nazi Coup in States’, Berlin Corr., 14.

²¹ *TT*, 11 March 1933, ‘Nazi Rule in Germany’, Berlin Corr., 10.

²² *Observer*, 12 March 1933, ‘Bavaria Bows to the Storm’, Berlin Corr., 12. Hereafter *TO*.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *DT*, 14 March 1933, ‘Great Exodus of Jews From Germany’, Berlin Corr., 11.

is winning all along the line'.²⁵ *The Times* reflected on what the seizure of government in the German states, the major cities and the various diets (parliaments) meant. The newspaper, like the *Manchester Guardian*, concluded that the Nazi advances in Germany could be described as a type of revolution. It had been so complete that most did not understand, and could not comprehend, what had happened. *The Times* stated:

So complete has been their victory that the rest of the world hardly yet realizes that what has happened throughout the length and breadth of Germany is no mere change of Government, no sudden swing of the political pendulum from Left to Right, but a real Revolution. No other term indeed can fairly be applied to the change from a more or less constitutional democracy to what is to all intents a two-party Dictatorship in which one party has almost a monopoly of dictation.²⁶

The Times captured the revolutionary fervour of the first months of Hitler's government, examining the changes to the political scene in a succinct and clear manner that could leave readers with little doubt of the revolutionary character of Hitler's Chancellorship. Few newspapers could rival *The Times* in its coverage of German events and analysis, but the press, as a whole, did report the seizure of the states. In doing so, they deemed that it was an important issue that deserved attention. British newspapers recognised that the seizure of the states was an important (first) step in what was increasingly becoming the 'Nazi revolution'.

* * * * *

Following the coordination of the federal states of Germany, focus turned back to Berlin and the impending meeting of the newly appointed Reichstag. Scheduled to open with a ceremony on 21 March 1933, reports in the intervening period focused on the continued suppression of the Communist and Socialist parties and, in particular, the campaign of violence directed against individuals in what was soon to become labelled by correspondents as the 'Brown Terror'. It had become increasingly clear before and after the March elections that the Nazis were intent on driving Communists and Socialists out of politics. Raids on Communist and Socialist headquarters and offices, as well as trade union offices, were accompanied by an announcement by Interior Minister

²⁵ *MG*, 14 March 1933, 'Nazi Successes in Council Elections', Berlin Corr., 13.

²⁶ *TT*, 15 March 1933, 'The Hitler Revolution', Leader, 15.

Wilhelm Frick, reported in the *Manchester Guardian* and several other newspapers, that there would be ‘no Communists in the Reichstag when it meets on March 21’.²⁷ Frick was reported as declaring that ‘not only Communists but also the Socialists must be exterminated’.²⁸ The *Manchester Guardian* clarified: ‘Presumably he did not mean ‘exterminated’ in the literal sense — though for the simple Storm Troopers such phrases have at times been misleading — but that the Nazi Government is determined to crush Socialism and Communism in Germany is certain’.²⁹ What was clear from the reports was that Communists and Socialists in Germany were destined for newly established concentration camps, where they would receive ‘retraining’ to become ‘useful citizens’.³⁰

The absence of the Communists from the Reichstag meant that the Nazis, with support from the Nationalists and Centre Party, would be able to pass an Enabling Bill which would allow for constitutional amendments, reported *The Times* in mid-March.³¹ A few days later *The Times* reported attempts by the Nazi newspaper, *Völkischer Beobachter* to undermine the Socialist party. The article explained that if the Socialist deputies were prevented from participating in the Reichstag, the Government (Nazi and Nationalist) would have the majority required to pass the Enabling Bill and ‘Centre support could be dispensed with’.³² It was clear that the Nazi-Nationalist government were intent on further constitutional changes and were prepared to silence any opposition by any means possible, from discrediting the political left (and individual members of the Communists and Socialists) to throwing elected Reichstag deputies into a concentration camp.

What did the British press understand about the proposed ‘Enabling Bill’? The *Daily Mail* explained to readers: ‘this law, if accepted, will give the Government very wide powers to carry on without the Reichstag for a period which, it is expected, will run into years’.³³ In reports the *Daily Mail*, along with a number of British newspapers, included a drafted copy of the act to be put forth for approval in the Reichstag. Correspondents who reported the release of the draft bill clearly conveyed to readers that it was

²⁷ *MG*, 11 March 1933, “‘No Communists in Reichstag’”, Berlin Corr., 15.

²⁸ *MG*, 11 March 1933, ‘Ease of Nazi Revolution’, Berlin Corr., 15.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *MG*, 11 March 1933, “‘No Communists in Reichstag’”, Berlin Corr., 15.

³¹ *TT*, 13 March 1933, ‘Reichstag Session’, Berlin Corr., 13.

³² *TT*, 18 March 1933, ‘Nazis and the Reichstag’, Berlin Corr., 11.

³³ *DMail*, 16 March 1933, ‘Reichstag to Shut?’, Berlin Corr., 12.

intended to bypass the Reichstag and give the government, in the words of the *Daily Mail*, ‘a free hand for the next four years’.³⁴ For instance, the *Daily Express* reported: ‘A “Bill for the Relief of the Distress of the German People and the German Reich”, which will be laid before the Reichstag to-morrow, is nothing less than a blank cheque authorising Hitler to rule Germany with dictatorial powers for four years’.³⁵ While the *Manchester Guardian* did not include a detailed description or excerpt from the draft bill it did inform readers that if passed the bill would grant the Hitler government absolute dictatorial powers — powers more complete than those enjoyed even by Stalin or Mussolini’.³⁶ The *Morning Post* echoed this, explaining that the bill would ‘bestows upon the present Cabinet dictatorial powers regarded at least as wide as those of any Government in the world, possibly wider’.³⁷ However, in contrast to the *Manchester Guardian*, the correspondent for the *Morning Post* provided a thorough and detailed summary of the nature of the bill. An extended excerpt deserves inclusion as it gives an insight into what a reader could have understood about the bill under discussion by the Reichstag:

The Reichstag will be asked to empower the Government to legislate on any subject, to decree the Budget, to alter the Constitution (except that it may not declare the Reichstag or Reichsrat abolished), and to ratify treaties.

The Chancellor is to promulgate the laws instead of the President. Legislative rights of the Reichsrat and of the President fall into abeyance.

The Bill is to remain in force until April 1, 1937, unless the present Government resigns before that date. In the meanwhile the Cabinet can make any change in the Constitution, suspend the independence of the judges, administer the finances without making public the state of the Budget, and therefore the expenditure of the Army and Navy. It can, in fact, do anything except declare that the functions of the Parliament has ceased to exist.

From the moment this law is passed no German has a right of appeal of any kind against a Government measure.

The President himself loses all his functions except that of head of the army, and even this function can be taken from him by a Government resolution. The Reichswehr, the last control upon the autocratic

³⁴ *DMail*, 21 March 1933, ‘German Government’s Free Hand for Next Four Years’, Berlin Corr., 8.

³⁵ *The Times* also used the term ‘blank cheque’ to refer to the bill in its article published on 21 March 1933, ‘Nazi Powers in the Reich’, From Our Own Correspondent, Berlin, 14.

DE, 21 March 1933, ‘Hitler to Rule as Dictator’, Berlin Corr., 1.

³⁶ *MG*, 21 March 1933, ‘Absolute Power for Hitler’, Berlin Corr., 9.

³⁷ *MP*, 21 March 1933, ‘Hitler as Absolute Dictator’, Berlin Corr., 13.

powers of Herr Hitler could thus be completely at his disposal, and the President would thereby become an ornamental figurehead.³⁸

On 21 March 1933 the newly appointed Reichstag was ushered in with an elaborate ceremony in the town of Potsdam. The ceremony itself was held in the garrison church, because the Reichstag had been burnt down in Berlin. The location, in the words of *The Times*, was ‘once the Imperial centre of Court splendours and military display’, as well as, noted by the *Manchester Guardian*, ‘where Frederick the Great is buried’.³⁹ The historic nature of Potsdam played heavily in the days celebrations, as the *Manchester Guardian* acknowledged: ‘The atmosphere was charged with a peculiar mixture of revivalism and imperial memories’.⁴⁰ British newspapers described in vivid detail the days festivities where the Nazi flag flew alongside the Republican flag. *The Times* reported: ‘The day, nominally no more than the occasion of the opening of a Reichstag which enjoys no credit at all in Nationalist Germany, was deliberately celebrated as that of the rebirth of the German Reich’.⁴¹

In contrast to the celebrations for the opening ceremony, the ‘business meeting’ of the Reichstag held in the evening of 21 March 1933 took on a different tone according to the *News Chronicle*, whose correspondent remarked that the scene at the Kroll Opera House was a ‘sombre’ one.⁴² The stage-managed pageantry was gone, but Nazi flag still featured heavily. Noticeably absent were the eighty-one newly elected Communist deputies (most of whom had been arrested) and, to again quote to the *News Chronicle*:

[O]ver the two other parties who hitherto have composed the Opposition — Catholic Centre and Socialists — there hung a gloom resulting partly from the recent campaign against political liberty in Germany and partly from a feeling that at the end of the two-day session the Reichstag, by according the necessary two-thirds majority to the measure conferring full powers upon the Government, will decree its own doom.⁴³

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ *TT*, 22 March 1933, ‘The Spirit of Potsdam’, Leader, 15. And *MG*, 21 March 1933, ‘Reichstag Opens Today’, Berlin Corr., 13.

⁴⁰ *MG*, 22 March 1933, ‘Hitlerism’, Leader, 10.

⁴¹ *TT*, 22 March 1933, ‘The Spirit of Potsdam’, Leader, 15.

⁴² *NC*, 22 March 1933, ‘The Potsdam Spirit’, Berlin Corr., 2, cont. from 1.

⁴³ Ibid.

Any attempt to thwart the passing of the Act would, according to a Nazi press statement quoted in *The Times*, ‘mean a challenge that the Government would at once take up’.⁴⁴ The *Manchester Guardian* also referred to this statement noting: ‘Non-acceptance by the Reichstag of the Enabling Bill ... would be considered tantamount to a declaration of war, and its consequences would be visited not only upon the parties themselves but also upon their supporters’.⁴⁵ In view of this the *Manchester Guardian* observed: ‘It is expected that the two Catholic parties – the Centre and the Bavarian People’s party – will, despite certain misgivings, help the Government to obtain the requisite two-thirds majority for the bill in order to avert a dangerous aggravation of the situation’.⁴⁶

On 25 March 1933 the *News Chronicle* reported that the Enabling Act had passed, securing for Hitler’s government ‘dictatorial powers’.⁴⁷ Of the passing of the act the *Manchester Guardian* stated: ‘In view of the threats made by the Nazis on Wednesday to the non-Government parties, the passing of the bill is not surprising’.⁴⁸ All parties except for the Socialists voted for the bill, reported newspapers such as *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*, easily giving the government the two-thirds majority required to pass the bill. Reporting the passing of the Act, the *Daily Mail* informed readers that the final tally of the vote amounted to 441 votes to 94.⁴⁹ As the only party to outwardly oppose the bill, the Socialists were targeted by the government with arrests reported before and following the vote. A number of newspapers noted the arrest of Carl Severing, ‘one of the most famous German Socialists’, who was, according to *The Times*, arrested on his way to the meeting of the Reichstag, allowed to cast his vote against the bill and then rearrested.⁵⁰

For the British press the Enabling Act was an important step in Hitler’s quest for total and uncontested power throughout Germany, however it was unclear at this stage exactly what lay ahead for Germany. With the passing of the Act Hitler had been established, in the words of the *Daily Express*, ‘as open dictator of the Fatherland’.⁵¹ The

⁴⁴ *TT*, 23 March 1933, ‘Nazis and the Reichstag’, Berlin Corr., 14.

⁴⁵ *MG*, 23 March 1933, ‘German Declaration for Unity with Austria’, Reuter, 13.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *NC*, 25 March 1933, ‘German Trade Unions to Go’, Spec. Corr. John Segrue, 1.

⁴⁸ *MG*, 24 March 1933, ‘Dictatorship Bill Passed in Germany’, Reuter, 11.

⁴⁹ *DMail*, 24 March 1933, ‘Hitler’s New Powers’, Berlin Corr., 14.

⁵⁰ *MG*, 24 March 1933, ‘Dictatorship Bill Passed in Germany’, 11. And *TT*, 24 March 1933, ‘Power for the Nazis’, Berlin Corr., 14.

⁵¹ *DE*, 21 March 1933, ‘Hitler to Rule as Dictator’, Berlin Corr., 1.

Press got the intent of the Enabling Act correct. It would wipe and the Reichstag as a legislative body, and give Hitler sweeping new powers. Hitler still had a way to go before securing total power over Germany, but the Enabling Act was an important step in this process. The Enabling Act, as the *Morning Post* reported, would help sweep away some of the most important tenets of the Constitution. Importantly, the law undermined the position of the President, transferring more power to Hitler, including, for instance, the ability to promulgate new laws. Many newspapers simply summed this up by reporting that the Nazis had essentially been given a blank cheque to do what they wanted in Germany.

* * * * *

The next action against the political left and socialism took the form of a concerted attack on trade unionism. The *News Chronicle* was one of the first newspapers to recognise this. On 25 March 1933, the *News Chronicle* reported: ‘The first use Chancellor Hitler proposes to make of the dictatorial powers conferred upon him yesterday by the Reichstag will be to abolish German trade unions as they are at present organised’.⁵² It was obvious the unions were to be the next target, the *News Chronicle’s* John Segrue pointed out; one only needed to look at

The Chancellor’s writings and speeches ... He is known to hold the view that trade unions have become an obstacle to industrial development ... The trade unions are well aware of their impending doom. Even before the advent of the Nazis to power, Herr [Theodor] Leipart, the secretary of the Trade Union Federation, was at pains to show that the movement was “Marxist” no longer.⁵³

It meant, Segrue explained, that trade Unions ‘in the British sense would cease to exist in Germany’.⁵⁴ In its place ‘one huge trade union, having at its head a Government Commissioner, will replace the dozens of unions now in existence’.⁵⁵ Leipart was reported as having submitted a memorandum to Hitler ‘accepting the principles of the State supervision of the unions’, and at the same time taking steps to distance the union

⁵² *NC*, 25 March 1933, ‘German Trade Unions to Go’, Spec. Corr., John Segrue, Berlin, 1.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

movement from the Socialist Party.⁵⁶ According to Segrue, union leaders who were both leaders of the movement and Socialist members of Parliament would soon have to choose ‘between politics and their trade unions work’.⁵⁷ Segrue, somewhat naively, stated that trade union leaders could possibly remain in the state union so long as they distanced themselves from Socialist connections, something that the existing unions had already initiated.

In the meantime, press reports focused on the first National Socialist May Day which was to be marked by celebrations on an ‘unprecedented scale’.⁵⁸ As *The Times* reported: “German Socialism” is to be honoured. The Nazis mean to outdo all Socialist May Days’.⁵⁹ The *Manchester Guardian* was more scathing of Nazi plans to stage a National Socialist May Day as the following excerpt demonstrated:

For Socialists the first of May is Labour Day rather than a spring festival; at the present time to celebrate spring with maypoles and flowers and sprigs of birch and broom is a distinctly bourgeois activity. Hitler indeed, attempts gallantly if unconvincingly to combine the two festivals ... Hitler tried to make of May Day a festivity in which not only the Socialists but National Socialists can join. The deception will not succeed; there is something pitifully ludicrous in the spectacle of Hitler, Göring, and Goebbels leading the German workers in a merry romp around the maypole. There would hardly be enough common interests to make the party go: the Socialism in the Nazi programme is a mere name for their intention of restoring the depressed German middle class to its privileged position. Even in wolf’s clothing, Hitler and Göring remain petty bourgeois sheep.⁶⁰

In all, socialism was in a perilous position, the *Manchester Guardian* concluded: ‘In Germany the Social Democrats and the Communists must be phoenixes if they are to rise from the ashes of the Reichstag fire’.⁶¹

Reports on Nazi May Day festivities appeared in only a few newspapers, including *The Times*, but the British press keenly reported the seizure and destruction of the trade unions that followed. The seizure on 2 May 1933 was, in the words of the *Daily Mirror*;

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ *TT*, 1 May 1933, ‘Nazi May Day’, Berlin Corr., 14.

⁵⁹ *TT*, 1 May 1933, ‘Nazi May Day’, Berlin Corr., 14.

⁶⁰ *MG*, 2 May 1933, ‘May Day’, Leader, 8.

⁶¹ Ibid.

the result of a ‘sudden swoop’, in which Hitler ‘strengthened his wide power by a dramatic coup — the seizure of all free trade unions’.⁶² The *Daily Mirror* described the action as a ‘surprise blow at socialism’.⁶³ However, for the astute observer, like *News Chronicle’s* Segrue, the seizure and suppression of organised labour was expected. The *New Statesman and Nation* commented:

The knockout blow administered to the German Trade Unions on Tuesday comes as no surprise. It was known that it was only a question of time, and hopes that the submission of the Labour leaders might save their organisations were clearly doomed to disappointment.⁶⁴

The action against the trade unions was not just reported by the Centre Left press in Britain, *The Times* also gave it considerable coverage. It noted that the ‘the secret of the impending seizure of the trade unions had been well kept, and it was carried out with ruthless efficiency’.⁶⁵ It went on to give details of the arrest of the union leadership:

[T]he president of the Trade Union Federation, Herr Leipart, and 11 other leaders of the Trade Union Federation (among them a former Minister for Economics Herr Wissell, and a prominent trade union leader, Herr Grassmann); the presidents of 28 trade unions affiliated to the Federation; two senior officials of the Workers’ Bank; and three editors of trade union journals. Herren Leipart and Grassmann, according to the officials statements, were, after arrest, “taken to hospital on account of illness”.⁶⁶

They had in fact been arrested and beaten, which resulted in hospitalisation, as a report in the *Manchester Guardian* made clear.⁶⁷ Most reports in British newspapers cited that fifty trade union officials and representatives had been arrested on 2 May 1933, and placed under ‘protective arrest’. The *Manchester Guardian* further noted that those arrested would, according to the government ‘be released shortly if not found guilty of any offences’.⁶⁸

⁶² *Daily Mirror*, 3 May 1933, ‘Hitler’s Surprise Blow at Socialism’, 5. Hereafter *DMirror*.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *NSe&N*, 6 May 1933, ‘Adolf Hitler Will Give You — ?’, 561.

⁶⁵ *TT*, 3 May 1933, ‘Another Nazi Coup’, Berlin Corr., 14.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *MG*, 3 May 1933, ‘Nazis Take Over German Trade Unions’, Reuter, 9.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

For the *Daily Telegraph* the action against the free trade unions was ‘the real meaning of German May Day celebrations’.⁶⁹ It had been, reported the newspaper, ‘the hardest blow so far by the Nazis at the Socialists. Its reaction among the working class cannot at the moment be ascertained’.⁷⁰ Importantly, the *Daily Telegraph* pointed out:

The seizure is very characteristic of the judicial anomalies at present existing in Germany. According to the Government Press, it was not carried out by any authority known to the law, but by ‘the National-Socialist Committee of Action, commissioned by Adolf Hitler.’⁷¹

This was reiterated by *The Times*:

The seizure of the trade unions, which have played so important a part in the last 50 years of German history — and whose capacity for resistance to a Fascist regime was overestimated by nearly everybody — was carried out by the Nazis as a party. The Government’s part in it is the passive one of non-intervention, but there can be no question that the party as acted as the instrument of policy.⁷²

Nazi justifications for the seizure of the trade unions featured heavily in British press reports. As the *Daily Mail* explained with some sarcasm:

The reason given for the action is that the trade unions remained under Socialist influence, and in a proclamation to their members, Herr Ley, Nazi president of the Prussian State Council, who directed the entire operation, explains that it has been done for their good. What each trade union member has to understand, declares Herr Ley, is that “Adolf Hitler is thy friend. Adolf Hitler fights for thy freedom. Adolf Hitler gives thee bread”. And further that all members, must be delivered from the devilish teaching of Marxism.⁷³

Robert Ley’s statement about the seizures was also quoted in *The Times*, specifically where Ley referred to the free unions as ‘those Red criminals who for generations misused you, good-humoured, honest and upright German workman, in order to dispossess and disinherit you and the whole nation’.⁷⁴ Herein was the reason for the

⁶⁹ *DT*, 3 May 1933, ‘Hitler’s Blow at Trade Unions’, Berlin Corr., 11.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *TT*, 3 May 1933, ‘Another Nazi Coup’, Berlin Corr., 14.

⁷³ *DMail*, 3 May 1933, ‘Hitler Takes Over Trade Unions’, Berlin Corr., 11.

⁷⁴ As quoted in *TT*, 3 May 1933, ‘Another Nazi Coup’, 14.

crushing of the unions; a justification that was summed up by the *Daily Mirror* quite simply as a move to ‘to suppress Marxism’.⁷⁵ The *Morning Post* pointed out, with some justification, that German trade unions had long since ceased to be Marxist in any real meaning of the term. In their view, the real motivation for the move against the union was the overall Nazi policy ‘of controlling all important organisations in the country’.⁷⁶ This was reiterated by *The Times* who informed readers that although the trade union leadership were willing to see their status sink to that of a provider of banking and other social insurance, ‘This was not enough for the Nazis, and the Socialist trade unions have gone the way of all other potential opposers of their onward march’.⁷⁷

Here *The Times* offered insight into the reason for the seizure of the trade unions – it was a bulwark in the Nazis’ quest for total power across the German state. The correspondent added: ‘Herr Hitler said yesterday that the next aim of the Government was to increase and consolidate its power until the whole nation lay within its dominion’.⁷⁸ With this article a reader of *The Times* could be in no doubt that the seizure of the trade unions was another step in the Nazis’ attempts to eliminate opposition and secure their hold over the German state.

The weeklies reflected on what this all might mean for German society. *The Spectator* held out a ray of hope, noting that sometimes, ‘Opposition driven underground can be ultimately more dangerous than opposition in the open. But so far effective opposition hardly exists even underground in Germany. Its day no doubt will come, but no man can say when or in what conditions’.⁷⁹ The *Observer*, however, saw no hope and no prospect for optimism: ‘All present possibility of opposition has been annihilated. Without a struggle, almost without a cry, freedom as the English-speaking races conceive it has perished in the Reich’.⁸⁰ Perhaps it was the *New Statesman and Nation* that summed up the situation best. It provided a detailed summary of the state of play in

⁷⁵ *DMirror*, 3 May 1933, ‘Hitler’s Surprise Blow at Socialism’, 5.

⁷⁶ *MP*, 3 May 1933, ‘Hitler’s New Coup’, Berlin Corr., 13.

⁷⁷ *TT*, 3 May 1933, ‘Another Nazi Coup’, Berlin Corr., 14.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

In fact on 5 May all other trade unions dissolved and submitted to the authority of Hitler, including the Christian trade unions.

⁸⁰ *Obs.*, 7 May 1933, ‘Whither Germany?’ By J.L. Garvin, 18.

Nazi Germany after the destruction of the trade unions. It deserves to be quoted at length:

[T]hey [trade unions] are — for the time being, and probably for a long time to come — as effectively broken as the political parties of the Social Democrats and the Communists. The Nazis are now very nearly complete masters of the situation. Any resistance that might have come from the proletariat they nipped in the bud. Their bourgeois allies, the Nationalists and Junkers, who thought that Hitler, with his Brownshirts and his popular histrionics, was to be their catspaw, have been hopelessly duped. The Stahlhelm has been overcome with scarcely a struggle and merged in the Nazi forces. President von Hindenburg is no more than a rubber stamp of the Government. And the Government is a coalition only in name; its non-Nazi members are ciphers, and may disappear at any moment. What is to be the next stage in this triumphant revolution? So far we have had nothing but destruction — the elimination of ‘Marxism’, the hounding down of the Jews, the filching of the States’ autonomy and the suppression of private rights. The technique has been at once simple and clever, combining terrorism with a pretence of constitutional forms, elaborate play-acting and appeals to mass emotion.⁸¹

* * * * *

The British press did not have to wait long for the next stage in the National Socialist revolution. Only days after the seizure of the trade unions and the arrest of union officials and members, the Nazi government began the process of suppressing and dissolving all other political parties in Germany. Despite the trade union leadership distancing themselves from the Socialist party prior to their takeover, in the eyes of the Nazi party the unions and the Socialist party were the same — symbols of the labour movement. Thus, merely days after reporting the seizure of the trade unions, *The Times* reported the confiscation of Socialist party funds and property, in what was described by the Berlin correspondent as ‘the final blow’ to the party.⁸² As the correspondent explained:

With many of its leaders abroad, its Press suppressed, the Socialist trade unions already taken over, and its 7,000,000 voters in confusion, the Socialist Party was already dying: and this is the *coup de grâce*. It is difficult to see German Socialism rising again: if and when the turn of

⁸¹ *NSe3N*, 6 May 1933, “Adolf Hitler Will Give You — ?”, 561.

⁸² *TT*, 11 May 1933, ‘New Blow By Nazis’, Berlin Corr., 14.

the tide comes some new and more resolute force would have to be waiting to take it.⁸³

This latest attack on the Socialists took place on 10 May and was reported in the British press on 11 May. *The Times* reported that funds contributed by Socialist party members had been seized. In addition, their publishing concerns, which included many news printing offices, had been shut down, and the grounds and buildings, once owned by the party, had been taken into state ownership.⁸⁴ The importance of these measures was brought out by the *Daily Telegraph*:

As soon as the new Government assumed office, the work of Socialist printing presses had been practically suppressed throughout Germany. Of the 200 papers published by the party in 1929, only about a dozen are now appearing ... They have bought toleration by printing practically colourless news. Now they will probably share the fate of many of the leading Liberal papers and be issued under Nazi control.⁸⁵

The Times was not taken in by Nazi justifications for these measures. They dismissed the excuse of Marxist corruption brought forth by the Nazis as a sham, suggesting that they were as plausible as ‘the frequent reports of people being shot “while trying to escape”’.⁸⁶ The *Morning Post* also reported the seizure of the Socialist party’s assets under the headline, ‘Hitler the Ruthless’, and like *The Times*, saw the future of the party in Germany as a hopeless case:

The Socialist Party still exists in theory — the Reichsbanner has dissolved itself in despair — but it is completely incapable of action. It has now no Press and no property; even the property of those leaders who were members of the Braun Cabinet has been seized. Many leaders are in exile, others are in prison, and the remainder are incapable of any sort of political activity.⁸⁷

But, it took the *Manchester Guardian* to express disbelief in the enormity of the Socialist Party’s demise:

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ *DT*, 11 May 1933, ‘Hitler Suppresses the Socialist Party’, Berlin Corr., 13.

⁸⁶ *TT*, 11 May 1933, ‘New Blow By Nazis’, 14.

⁸⁷ *MP*, 11 May 1933, ‘Hitler the Ruthless’, Berlin Corr., 12.

The complete collapse of the Socialist party, which commanded over 7,000,000 votes in the election last March compared with the 17,000,000 cast for the Nazis, is certainly one of the most remarkable events in recent years. Before the rise of Hitler the Socialist party occupied first place in numerical strength, and after the last election was still the second largest, with 125 seats compared with the Nazis' 287.⁸⁸

The *Daily Mirror* said much the same thing.⁸⁹

While it would be over a month before the Socialist party was officially dissolved and banned, it was clear to the British press that the latest attack on the already floundering party was, as so many newspapers reported, the 'death-blow'. Like the Communist Party in Germany, the Socialist party had endured press suppressions, violence and raids on both their residences and offices, most of which was reported by British newspapers. With the Communist party all but suppressed and most of its deputies and supporters in prison or in concentration camps, the Socialist party was the last pillar of organised Socialism in Germany. This did not stop the Socialist party from trying to save some vestige of the party and party leader Otto Wels, and other Socialist officials left for Prague where they established the party headquarters in exile.⁹⁰ The *Manchester Guardian* was one of the few newspapers that reported the move to Prague, with an article on 7 June 1933.⁹¹ This move was used by the Nazi government as a pretext for the total ban of the party, issued on 21 June 1933. *The Times* reported:

Recent events, he [Frick] stated in explanation of the order, had provided incontrovertible proof of treasonable Socialist undertakings against Germany and the legitimate German Government. Leading members of the party, such as Herren Wels, Breitscheid, Stampfer, and Vogel, had been settling in Prague for weeks past in order to conduct the treasonable campaign against national Germany.⁹²

What this proscription meant was summed up by *The Times*: 'All Socialists who still belong to elective bodies like the Reichstag, State Diets, or municipal councils are immediately to be deprived under the order of their seats and salaries. Meetings of the

⁸⁸ *MG*, 11 May 1933, 'Nazis Strike at the Socialists', Reuter, 9.

⁸⁹ *DMirror*, 11 May 1933, 'Hitler Crushes Socialism in Germany', 3.

⁹⁰ Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889-1936*, 477.

⁹¹ *MG*, 7 June 1933, 'Opposition to Hitler; Socialists Organise', Geneva Corr., 12.

⁹² *TT*, 23 June 1933, 'Nazi Blow at Socialists', Berlin Corr., 14.

party or dependent organizations are not allowed, nor may Socialists newspapers or other publications appear'.⁹³ Given the existing persecution of Socialist deputies, the seizure of assets, property and the suppression of the Socialist press, *The Times* called the ban 'a superfluous order'.⁹⁴ This latest move against the party was merely the nail in the coffin of the already maligned Socialist Party: 'This measure will, of course, hit the remaining Socialist Deputies and other leaders, but it can hardly do much more than has already been done to smash the party organization'.⁹⁵ Other newspapers like the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Observer*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express* and *Morning Post* printed similar articles about the proscription of the party; an action that had effectively wiped out 'active political opposition' in Germany, to quote the *Daily Express*.⁹⁶ As with *The Times*, the reason given for the action was treasonable offences committed by the Socialist Party against the German state.

With the destruction of the largest labour movement in Europe the other German political parties were soon dissolved. Between June and July 1933 the British press recorded the demise of all other political parties in Germany. Of these, the most widely reported by the press was the struggle of the Nazis' coalition partner, the Nationalist Party led by Alfred Hugenberg. It became clear, especially following the March elections and the passing of the Enabling Act, that the Nazi-Nationalist alliance was an unequal one. The British press were not only interested in the increasing marginalisation of the Nationalist party in politics but also keenly reported the outrages by Nazi Brown Shirts against the Stahlhelm (or Steel Helmets), the paramilitary league aligned with the Nationalist party.⁹⁷ For instance, the violent suppression of the Stahlhelm in Brunswick by the local SA at the end of March 1933 was reported by several newspapers. The incident at Brunswick involved raids on Stahlhelm offices and property, the arrest of all leaders and a general ban or dissolution of the local organisation on suspicion, according to *The Times*, 'of opening its ranks to "Marxists," and even of "preparing counter-revolutionary acts"'.⁹⁸ The ban was soon overturned by the intervention of Franz Seldte,

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ *DE*, 23 June 1933, 'Hitler Wipes out 7,000,000 Voters in One Night', 1.

⁹⁷ The Stahlhelm had aligned itself with the Nationalist Party but was not part of the party. The Nationalist Party instead had the Nationalist Fighting League, also known as the Green Shirts, as its paramilitary wing.

⁹⁸ *TT*, 29 March 1933, 'Nazis and the Stahlhelm', Berlin Corr., 13.

who as Hitler seemingly forgot, was Minister of Labour in his government, as well as leader of the Stahlhelm.

Nevertheless, the whole incident was a particularly example of the deteriorating relations between the two parties, as *The Spectator* reported:

It has been obvious from the first that a split must come sooner or later between Herr Hitler and Herr Hugenberg, each with his band of retainers. At Brunswick the Stahlhelm, charged with the heinous crime of admitting Marxists to its ranks (everyone who is not a Hitlerite is a Marxist now), was disarmed by the local Nazis on the instructions of the Brunswick Minister for the Interior, himself of course a Nazi, and it is not yet clear how far the efforts of the Reich Ministers to patch the affair up have been successful.⁹⁹

For the *Daily Telegraph* it also emphasised existing divisions within the coalition: ‘The old saying holds good that the régime which is divided against itself cannot stand. This Brunswick incident emphasises the division’.¹⁰⁰ While *The Times* observed: ‘the incident shows clearly how unsafe it is to regard German affairs as settled for a period of years’.¹⁰¹

The conflict between the Stahlhelm and the Nazis came to a swift conclusion at the end of April 1933 and was reported by several quality newspapers, including *The Times* and *Manchester Guardian*. In mid April 1933, *The Times* reported that violent outbursts between the ‘uniformed organizations’ of the Nazi and Nationalist arms of the government, the SA and the Stahlhelm respectively, ‘have engaged the serious attention of the government, and this blemish — amongst the only remaining one — on the countenance of a Germany which has now been thoroughly ‘Hitlerized’ seems likely soon to be removed’.¹⁰² Indeed by the end of April 1933, *Manchester Guardian* announced: ‘Herr Franz Seldte, head of the Stahlhelm ... has joined the Nazi party, carrying the Stahlhelm with him’.¹⁰³ The merger of the Stahlhelm into the SA signified to *The Times*

⁹⁹ *TS*, 31 March 1933, ‘News of the Week’, 447.

¹⁰⁰ *DT*, 29 March 1933, ‘Nazi-Nationalist Rivalry’, Leader, 12.

¹⁰¹ *TT*, 29 March 1933, ‘Nazis and Stahlhelm’, Berlin Corr., 13.

¹⁰² *TT*, 17 April 1933, ‘Nazi-Stahlhelm Conflicts’, Berlin Corr., 9.

¹⁰³ *MG*, 28 April 1933, ‘Gain to Nazis’, Reuter, 9.

that: ‘it would seem only to be a matter of time before the Nationalist Party itself, in spite of the efforts of Herr Hugenberg, is submerged by the Nazi tide’.¹⁰⁴

In early May, *The Times* reported the further alienation of the Nationalists, documenting the appointment by Hitler of ‘Staatthalter’ (State Governors) for several states across Germany, including Württemberg, Baden, Saxony and Brunswick, where none of the newly appointed governors were Nationalists. Of this latest move by the Nazis, *The Times* declared: ‘The progressive elimination of Nationalist influence by the party which the Nationalists helped into power has now reached a point at which the disappearance of the Nationalist leader, Herr Hugenberg, from the Government seems almost inevitable’.¹⁰⁵

For the British press the resignation of Nationalist leader Alfred Hugenberg and the dissolution of his party in June 1933 was widely reported in British newspapers. As *The Times* had been reporting throughout the Spring of 1933, the Nationalist party and its ally the Stahlhelm (Steel Helmets) had been subject to intimidation and repression by its National Socialist coalition partners. With the Stahlhelm placed under Hitler’s leadership in April, and increasing numbers of the Nationalist party defecting to the Nazi party, Hugenberg was in an isolated position. He was to become even more vulnerable following the suppression of the Nationalist Fighting League, or the ‘Green Shirts’ (the rather feeble Nationalist equivalent of the SA), in June 1933. As the *Daily Mail* declared of Hugenberg’s position following the forcible suppression of the Nationalist Green Shirts: ‘He is powerless’.¹⁰⁶ The *Morning Post* observed: ‘The Government’s action makes Dr. Hugenberg’s resolute clinging to office even more undignified in the eyes of the general public, and is probably another effort on the part of his Nazi enemies to force him to resign’.¹⁰⁷

Days later, the British press reported that Alfred Hugenberg had tendered his resignation to President Hindenburg. The *Daily Mail* revealed Hugenberg took the step of resigning because ‘the Nationalist party, whose leader he is, would be dissolved, as most of the

¹⁰⁴ *TT*, 28 April 1933, ‘Stahlhelm and Nazis’, Berlin Corr., 13.

¹⁰⁵ *TT*, 6 May 1933, ‘Nationalists and Nazis’, Berlin Corr., 11.

¹⁰⁶ *DMail*, 22 June 1933, ‘Nazis Swoop on German Nationalists’, Corr., 11.

¹⁰⁷ *MP*, 22 June 1933, ‘Hitler Suppresses his Rivals’, Berlin Corr., 11.

other parties have been'.¹⁰⁸ The *News Chronicle* also reported: 'After a fierce conflict behind the scenes with Chancellor Hitler, Dr. Hugenberg, Minister of Economic Affairs and Leader of the Nationalist Party, sent his resignation to President von Hindenburg this evening'.¹⁰⁹ After threats of forcible dissolution, the Nationalists 'decided to capitulate to the Nazis [and] ... announced that they had decided to dissolve the party'.¹¹⁰ The following day, on 29 June, the *News Chronicle* explained to readers:

Even among the millions of Germans who hate Hitlerism, little sympathy is shown to-day for Dr. Hugenberg, the politician who intrigued to put the Nazis in power in the hope, so swiftly shattered, that he and other Nationalists would dictate the policy.¹¹¹

Of Hugenberg's resignation *The Times* stated: 'It will certainly be regarded as a miracle if the resignation is not accepted'.¹¹² The *Morning Post* too acknowledged that the acceptance of Hugenberg's resignation by President Hindenburg was a 'foregone conclusion', and for that reason focused more on the future of the Centre party which was reported as awaiting 'execution'.¹¹³ The newspaper explained: 'Only the Centre Party remains to be dealt with, and the delay is presumably due to a desire not to offend the Vatican'.¹¹⁴

Statements made by leading Nazis following the resignation of Hugenberg confirmed that it was only a matter of time before the Nationalist Socialists were the sole party in Germany. The *Manchester Guardian* quoted a statement by Hermann Esser, a Nazi Bavarian Minister, in which he demanded the dissolution of political parties in Germany: "'They are no earthly use any more", he declared. "They have to disappear in the interests of the inner political consolidation which is essential for the final aim of our movement — namely Germany's freedom, work and bread"'.¹¹⁵ Just a day later, Goebbels was quoted as declaring to a meeting of the 'old guard': 'Except for the Nazi party, there must be no other party or organisation'.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁸ *DMail*, 28 June 1933, 'Hugenberg resigns', Berlin Corr., 12.

¹⁰⁹ *NC*, 28 June 1933, 'Hugenberg Bows to Storm', Berlin Corr., 1.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *NC*, 29 June 1933, 'Hindenburg and Hitler', Berlin Corr., 1.

¹¹² *TT*, 28 June 1933, 'Nazi Hold on Power', Berlin Corr., 14.

¹¹³ *MP*, 28 June 1933, 'Dr. Hugenberg Resigns', Berlin Corr., 13.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *MG*, 26 June 1933, 'Resignation of Hugenberg', Reuter, 12.

¹¹⁶ *MG*, 27 June 1933, 'Hugenberg Meeting Banned', Reuter, 14.

The acceptance of the resignation of Alfred Hugenberg by President Hindenburg marked the end of the Nationalist party. Reporting on 29 June the *Morning Post* reported: ‘The terms on which the Nationalist party has dissolved itself are more advantageous than might have been expected’.¹¹⁷ These terms, according to the *Daily Telegraph*, stated that:

[T]he former German Nationals are to be admitted into the Nazi party on a footing of complete equality, and are to be protected against all prejudicial treatment. German Nationals who have been arrested on political grounds are to be liberated immediately, and no further action taken against them.¹¹⁸

With this *The Times* informed readers: ‘Thus a balance is struck in the two Ministries between the “old guard” of the Nazi party and the Nationalist or Conservative forces now bound to it by a “treaty of friendship” and destined to eventual absorption’.¹¹⁹ One of the best articles that reported the downfall of Hugenberg and the Nationalist party appeared in the *New Statesman and Nation* on 1 July 1933 which, laden with irony, reported:

The Nazis have been having another busy week. Herr Hugenberg, the Nationalist leader, has been forced at last to resign, and his Party has ‘dissolved itself’. This action is charmingly described in an official announcement as a proof of the goodwill of the Nationalists to the Government. There have been more wholesale arrests of Socialists, Communists and Trade Unionists, attacks on the Catholic and Protestant churches, and a determined drive against the Bavarian People’s Party. Herr von Papen has gone to Rome to discuss the Catholics’ position in Germany and, it is said, to negotiate a Concordat with the Vatican. He should have his work cut out!¹²⁰

The only other major political party in existence was now the Catholic Centre Party. That his situation would not continue was made clear by Goebbels. The *Manchester Guardian* quoted Goebbels: ‘There is no longer room for the Centre Party ... we should render a service to the Catholic Church in causing the Centre Party to disappear’.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ *MP*, 29 June 1933, ‘Hugenberg’s Fate’, Berlin Corr., 15.

¹¹⁸ *DT*, 28 June 1933, ‘Hitlerites Absorb Nationalists’, Berlin Corr., 11.

¹¹⁹ *TT*, 30 June 1933, ‘Nationalists in Germany’, Berlin Corr., 14.

¹²⁰ *NSe3N*, 1 July 1933, ‘The Nazis’ Progress, 1.

¹²¹ *MG*, 29 June 1933, ‘Hindenburg and Hitler’, Reuter, 9.

The Bavarian People's Party, another Catholic party, was soon dealt with. It had been attacked, with its offices raided and leaders arrested. This was carried out, reported the *News Chronicle*, 'with the object of stamping out what the Nazis describe as "political Catholicism"'.¹²² *The Times* explained the action was, to quote Adolf Wagner Bavarian Minister of the Interior, part of the revolution which 'will continue its course until every force which does not unite with it is eliminated'.¹²³ The following day *The Times* acknowledged: 'The Centre Party alone now stands in the way of the outward achievement of the "totalitarian" State, and the Nazis are plainly threatening to dissolve it by force if it does not dissolve itself'.¹²⁴

Negotiations between the Vatican and the Nazi Government were carried out in June and July 1933, and reported by British newspapers.¹²⁵ However, the result of these negotiations was not as widely reported as one might expect. Most newspapers only published a short paragraph on the conclusion of the Concordat discussions. In fact, the *Manchester Guardian*, *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* were the only newspapers to discuss the outcome of the negotiations between the German Government and the Vatican in any detail. On 1 July 1933, the *Daily Mail* reported: 'No doubt now remains that the last independent political party left — the Centre party, representing the Catholics of Germany — will disappear like all the others'.¹²⁶ On the same day, the *Manchester Guardian* acknowledged: 'A completely Nazified Germany is now only a matter of hours'.¹²⁷

The actual dissolution of the Centre Party was reported more widely as it signified the end of political parties in Germany. As the *Manchester Guardian* reported: 'With the announcement by the former Chancellor, Dr. Brüning, that the German Centre party has dissolved itself, the last vestige of Parliamentary opposition to the Nazis has been eliminated'.¹²⁸ According to the article, a last manifesto on the part of the Centre party declared: 'The German Centre party is no more. Its retirement from the scene of

¹²² *NC*, 27 June 1933, 'Hitler Strikes Again', Berlin Corr., 1.

¹²³ *TT*, 22 June 1933, 'New Coup in Germany', Berlin Corr., 14.

¹²⁴ *TT*, 30 June 1933, 'Nationalists in Germany', Berlin Corr., 14.

¹²⁵ The negotiations and the aftermath of the negotiations will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

¹²⁶ *DMail*, 1 July 1933, 'Catholic heads join Nazis; End of a great party', Berlin Corr., 10.

¹²⁷ *MG*, 1 July 1933, 'A One-Party Germany', Reuter, 13.

¹²⁸ *MG*, 7 July 1933, 'Catholicism in Germany', Reuter, 6.

political history occurs, like its birth, under the stars of a new age'.¹²⁹ *The Times* also referred to the Centre party's 'farewell message':

In the sincere endeavour to collaborate in the reconstruction of the State and the national community the former supporters of the Centre should not and will not allow themselves even to-day to be outdone by anybody. 'Let the hour of farewell be an hour of respectful remembrance of our great leaders and of sincere gratitude to all who have stood loyally by the old flag. If we now dismantle the framework which has served its time, it is with the firm will to continue serving the nation as a whole, true to our proud tradition, which has always put the State and Fatherland before party.'¹³⁰

With the dissolution of the Centre Party, the Nazi party became the sole political party in Germany. As the Centre Party issued its final farewell to the German public, British newspapers reported Nazi proclamations that the 'revolution was over'.¹³¹ While the statement was primarily intended to publicly curtail the efforts of the SA in securing control over Germany and reassure the German public that the revolutionary violence was due to come to an end, it also demonstrated, to quote the *Daily Express*, the National Socialist party 'has become the state'.¹³² *The Times* agreed:

With the disappearance of all other parties, the attainment of full and unchallenged power throughout the land and the consequent completion of the 'totalitarian' Nazi State, Herr Hitler and his advisors have evidently decided to apply the brake firmly to the party machine ... The National-Socialist Party has thus become sole bearer of the State. All power in this State lies in the hands of the Government, which is led by the Chancellor alone, and in which all decisive posts are occupied by trustworthy National-Socialists.¹³³

On 16 July 1933, the *Observer* reported the passing of several laws, including a decree which made it compulsory for state officials to greet each other with the Hitler salute and, significantly, a law that banned the formation of new political parties. The newspaper wrote:

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ *TT*, 7 July 1933, 'German Centre Party', Berlin Corr., 14.

¹³¹ *DE*, 12 July 1933, 'Hitler puts the brake on; 'Ruthless Measures', Berlin Corr., 1.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ *The Times*, 12 July 1933, 'Check to Nazi Extremism', Berlin Corr., 13.

Now that the last of the old parties has disappeared from the political stage, it is stated, and the impatience of the Nazis for the realisation of the total State has expressed itself, the Government come forward with all these new measures guaranteeing the permanency of the Nazi regime and making it impossible for anyone else to seize political power from the triumphant Nazis.¹³⁴

With these latest developments in mind, the *New Statesman and Nation* asked in August 1933:

Is there still a Germany to-day apart from Hitler? It appears to be unthinkable. The news which comes from Germany daily speaks of a sudden transformation of an entire nation — of the end of all parties, of the disappearance of all non-Socialist organisations and leaders, of the cessation of all non-Fascist thought. There is nothing outside Hitler.¹³⁵

Special Correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, F.A. Voigt, wrote a series of articles about the demise of parliamentary democracy in Germany. On 30 June 1933, Voigt expressed disbelief at the destruction of the political left:

Everywhere there is surprise that the German Left did not 'go down fighting'. Those formidable labour organisations that were unsurpassed in the world, this great Socialist movement, this Communist party, the most powerful that existed outside Russia, this Catholic Centre with its skilful leaders who, since the Revolution, were never without a share of Governmental power — why, it is asked, did they all collapse like some old worm-eaten building in a storm? No struggle, no resistance, no protest, not even a defiant gesture — nothing! Why?¹³⁶

Voigt argued the fundamental problem was that democracy was imposed on Germany with ideas of 'English Liberalism and Wilsonian idealism'; it was not a 'struggle for freedom' as it had been in England and France, a battle where democracy had grown 'teeth and claws'.¹³⁷ From the beginning political parties in Germany had been working against this imposed democracy: 'a freedom introduced from abroad is never so precious as the freedom that comes from within and, having been won by hard sacrifice, is the more fiercely defended'.¹³⁸ The desire to overthrow parliamentary democracy blinded

¹³⁴ *TO*, 16 July 1933, 'The New Nazi Decrees', Spec. Corr. Berlin, 17.

¹³⁵ *NSeN*, 5 August 1933, 'The Revolutionary Movement in Nazi Germany', Ernst Henri, 153.

¹³⁶ *MG*, 30 June 1933, 'The Nazi Dictatorship; Why German Labour Collapsed', Spec. Corr., 5.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

political parties to the reality of Hitler's aims and aspirations. As Voigt explained in an article on 28 June: 'Conservatives who play with Fascist ideas play with instruments for the destruction of themselves and all they stand for'.¹³⁹ Voigt expanded on this idea in the third instalment of commentary on the Hitler dictatorship:

Why did not Parliament suppress the Counter-Revolution, which was hostile, above all, to Parliament itself? The Reichstag never had a collective consciousness, never had a sense of its own dignity. The Nazis, the Communists, many of the Nationalists, and even some of the 'People's party' entered the Reichstag so as to work against it...The German Parliament itself prepared the way for non-Parliamentary government. Nazis and Communists both wanted dictatorships (though of different kinds), and were equally zealous in their efforts to weaken and discredit Parliamentary institutions.¹⁴⁰

Furthermore, wrote Voigt, the very system that Hitler worked to overthrow enabled each and every measure that undermined the German democratic system:

[A] revolution or a counter-revolution is easy when it is subsidised and sheltered by the regime it works to overthrow ... Organised labour fought at a tremendous disadvantage — it could not win the immediate fight, all it could hope for was to stave off defeat until "better times" came along.¹⁴¹

* * * * *

British newspapers, with correspondents in Germany, captured with some accuracy, the Nazis destruction of democracy in each of its stages. Beginning immediately after the March elections, correspondents reported the attack on the freedom of the German states. The forcible coordination of the states culminated in the seizure of Bavaria, a story reported by many British newspapers. The takeover of the states was recognised by the Press as an important step in the Nazis pursuit of total control over the Germany. Equally importantly, the recognised the intent of the Enabling Act. For the British press, this constitutional amendment laid the foundation for the Nazi dictatorship.

¹³⁹ *MG*, 28 June 1933, 'The Nazi Dictatorship; I. Its Real Nature', *Spec. Corr.*, 11.

¹⁴⁰ *MG*, 3 July 1933, 'The Nazi Dictatorship; III. Terror', *Spec. Corr.*, 9.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Newspapers, like the *Morning Post*, quoted the Act at length in order to give readers a clear picture of exactly what the amendments meant to German parliamentary democracy. It was clear from these reports that Hitler had drastically increased his power and, at the same time, limited that of President Hindenburg. Newspapers now discussed the Nazi coordination of the state as part of a 'revolution'.

A crucial part of this process was the destruction of the political Left. At the beginning of May, British newspapers reported the assault on organised labour. The trade unions were swiftly destroyed in one fell swoop. Not only were the offices taken over and funds seized, but the trade union leaders were ruthlessly pursued and arrested. It was not just the liberal and left-leaning newspapers that reported this series of actions against trade unions. *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, as well as popular newspapers like the *Daily Express* and *Daily Mail*, reported the seizure of the trade unions in May 1933. This can perhaps be put down to the fact that the seizure of the unions was understood to be part of the assault on democracy. It was an integral part of the organised Left and, for that reason, was a bulwark in the Nazis pursuit of complete control.

For the press, the next assault on democratic values came with the forcible dissolution of political parties. British newspapers keenly reported the proscription of the Socialist party, which had followed months of arrests and violence against their members. They paid special attention to the resignation of Nationalist leader Alfred Hugenburg, and reported the capitulation of the Nationalist party. But it was the dissolution of the Centre Party (and Bavarian People's Party), secured through the Concordat with the Vatican, that caught the attention of many British newspapers. This was because, with the disappearance of the Centre party from German politics, the Nazi party had become the sole political party in Germany. For the British press, democracy had been destroyed in Germany. In just six months the Nazis had been able to dismantle Weimar parliamentary democracy, destroy the political left and establish control over Germany. And British newspapers had reported the entire process.

The point to be made here is that not only did the press report these steps in the destruction of democracy, but the press *understood* what was happening and conveyed that to readers. They were onto the Nazis from the beginning. Correspondents recognised that what was happening in Germany was no ordinary change of

government and documented that for readers. As a result, even a cursory reading of a British newspapers could have given readers a good idea of the destruction of democracy in Germany.

As the votes were being counted after the March elections, the SA was storming government buildings and seizing control. British newspapers wasted no time in reporting this, and in reporting and following the rest of the actions taken by the Nazis to violently and forcibly dismantle democracy. The seizure of the states, the Enabling Act, the suppression of the trade union movement, and the dissolution of the political parties in Germany, were reported as fundamental steps in the destruction of democracy. By the end of this process it was clear to the British press, and could have been clear to readers, that Hitler and his Nazi party were firmly in command of the government in Germany.

All sections of the British press reported the destruction of democracy, whether it was because the events were dramatic and would appeal to readers, or because correspondents and their editors felt a moral urgency to speak out. The frequency of articles on the destruction of democracy certainly varied between newspapers but, overwhelmingly, the British press reported the major events. The degree of reporting in the first six months of 1933 demonstrated that the British press were vitally interested in the death of democracy in Germany. It was a different case when it came to reporting the campaign of political terror in Germany; there were clear divisions in reporting between newspapers. The terror was a subject on which British newspapers differed and disagreed. These resulting reports, and the divisions they created, will be explored in the next chapter.

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Chapter Four – The *Manchester Guardian* and the Terror in Germany: A Special Case

British correspondents had witnessed and reported the violence that accompanied the Nazi party's election campaign in February 1933. Most also reported the wide scale arrests of Communists and Socialists after the Reichstag Fire and as well as the opening of the first concentration camp near the town of Dachau in March 1933. But far fewer reported the brutal terror campaign that followed and then accelerated after the Nazis election win. The terror in Germany was a campaign of political repression, led by the Nazis particularly the *Sturmabteilung* or Storm Troops (SA), mainly against the political left. Communists and Socialists were the primary targets. They were arrested en masse and taken to Brown Houses, prisons, and from late March 1933, concentration camps where they were beaten, tortured, and, in some cases, murdered. Many were held in 'protective custody' (without charge) in makeshift prisons and concentration camps for months. Some correspondents did try to report what was happening in Germany, particularly the early stages of the terror. In one case this reporting received a backlash from readers. Other correspondents that tried to report the terror were silenced by their newspapers. There were also a number of newspapers that that did not report the terror in 1933 at all, and some that even denied its existence. This left a gap in reporting, one that would be filled by the *Manchester Guardian*. It would be these reports that defined the newspaper as the most outspoken critic of the Nazi regime.

In early 1933, *The Spectator* attempted to bring news of the beginning of the terror in Germany to the attention of their readers. Harrison Brown wrote an article in early March 1933 which described an atmosphere of fear that pervaded Germany, particularly in Prussia, brought on by the violence and repression of the SA and auxiliary police. Brown explained to readers: 'It is difficult to convey the state of tension prevailing in Germany to-day, and still more the rapidity with which the realization of insecurity has burst upon the ordinary citizen'.¹ He wrote that Germany was now 'under martial law and the tyranny of gunmen, and the most unpolitical of citizens look forward with something like panic to a future of apparent chaos'.² Brown recounted how the 'insane orgy of unchecked violence proceeds': 'Nazi outrages had been committed for

¹ *The Spectator*, 3 March 1933, 'The Terror in Germany', 279. Hereafter *TS*.

² *Ibid.*

impunity for several weeks ... For the capital alone the casualty list last week was a regular feature. Three or four people each night were either shot down in cold blood or killed in political scraps'.³ While the article contained rumour and conjecture, and did not actually refer to a 'terror campaign', it did convey to readers the sense of desperation and fear that had spread throughout Germany.

But not all readers were appreciative of Brown's investigative report. His story was met by a flurry of letters to the journal suggesting that much of the detail given by Brown was exaggerated or invented. *The Spectator* made the decision to print many of these letters in the next few issues. One reader, Ernst Deissmann of Lexham Gardens, complained: 'Your editorial notes on the German situation and Mr. Harrison Brown's article "Terror in Germany" in last week's issue of *The Spectator* can hardly claim — to put it mildly — to have maintained the high standard of reliability and impartiality which one has come to expect from your quarter'.⁴ His letter criticised *The Spectator* not only for its reporting on the increasing terror, but also for its reports on the Reichstag fire decree, the suppression of the German press and political parties, exclaiming that 'what has taken place during the last few weeks falls nothing short of a national revolution' and that 'one is bound to admit that normal standards for political and parliamentary life are for the time being not appropriate measures of judgement'.⁵ Deissman was annoyed not just at *The Spectator's* reporting but also other 'sections' of the press:

Instead of seeing things in their proper proportion, sections of the English Press have, during the last few weeks, given the widest publicity to a series of deplorable clashes and acts of violence in which altogether not more than a few hundred Nazis and Communists were involved ... Ten or fifteen cases of violence against particularly unpopular opponents have been described and dealt with at the greatest length. Of the thousands of meetings and demonstrations which have taken place undisturbed all over Germany, hardly a word has been mentioned.⁶

³ Ibid.

⁴ *TS*, 10 March 1933, Letters to the Editor, 'Terror in Germany?', 337.

⁵ *TS*, 10 March 1933, Letters to the Editor, 'Terror in Germany?', 337.

⁶ Ibid.

Another reader I. Posner wrote to *The Spectator*, that in light of Brown's recent article 'one cannot help thinking that for you Communism would be better in Germany than the Hitler system'.⁷ At this, the editor responded: 'Almost anything — except Communism — would be better than an administration owing its position to such methods as upholders of the Hitler system have pursued in the recent election'.⁸ The editor of *The Spectator* also responded to another letter, printed on 24 March 1933, in which the writer, A. Munthe complained: 'As a student of history I must protest against the letters you have been publishing on this subject. The very phrase strikes anyone living in this peaceful, orderly, kindly country as utterly ludicrous'.⁹ The letter then proceeded to give a lengthy historical overview of Germany, which Munthe claimed the correspondent, Harrison Brown, knew nothing of. *The Spectator's* editor made it clear where his newspaper stood:

No facts in recent history are established more incontestably — to a large extent on the evidence of witnesses essentially friendly to Germany — than the numerous cases of murder, assault, and various forms of intimidation for which the Nationalist Socialist Party in Germany has been responsible in the last two months. Out of the mouths of its spokesmen, Captain Göring and Dr. Goebbels, the party stands convicted. The organised economic boycott of the Jews is the climax. *The Spectator* has consistently shown itself a friend of Germany, but it is a friend of freedom first. Resort to violence is not condoned by styling it revolution.¹⁰

The Spectator continued to receive and print letters in response to Brown's report, and other commentary by news staff, throughout March and April 1933. Some of these letters were from people living in Britain but they also included those who had recently travelled to Germany or resided in Germany. In early April 1933, *The Spectator* printed several articles by Sir Evelyn Wrench, former editor and major shareholder of the newspaper. Wrench urged 'an impartial attitude towards Germany and show that we are really desirous of understanding the German aspirations'.¹¹ Wrench was referring to the persecution of the Jews in Germany but, regardless, it was a disappointing turnaround for the newspaper. *The Spectator* did not report the escalation of the terror, nor did they

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ *The Spectator*, 7 April 1933, Letter to the Editor 'The Terror in Germany', (A. Munthe), 501.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

return to reporting the violence of the regime in 1933. In late October 1933, Harrison Brown wrote to *The Times* explaining that the world needed to judge Nazi Germany by her deeds, not the rhetoric of her leaders'.¹² Hitler's 'professed desire for peace' was at odds with the violence which had 'become an integral part of a system which retains 80,000 people in confinement without charge'.¹³ He wrote: 'Those who are personally acquainted with conditions there are unable to accept the statement that a few minor excesses occurred in the early days, but that they have now ceased'.¹⁴ He concluded: 'the Terror continues'.¹⁵

The Times was restrained in its reporting of the terror in Germany. The newspaper did publish reports by Berlin correspondent Norman Ebbutt about the creation of concentration camps, and provided readers with updates on those arrested and imprisoned, but there was little attempt to combine the details of Ebbutt's reports as evidence of a terror campaign. There was limited editorialising. Details about the concentration camps and arrests were often included as part of a larger article that dealt with other developments in the German situation. The newspaper did not refer to a campaign of terror.

On several occasions in 1933 *The Times* did publish testimony about the conditions in the concentration camps. One, by a 'correspondent lately in Germany', described his 'repulsion' at witnessing such 'inhuman treatment'.¹⁶ Another report was by a young man who had been imprisoned in the Oranienburg concentration camp.¹⁷ But, *The Times* refused to print an investigative report by Stanley Simpson that chronicled the cruel and harsh treatment of prisoners in Dachau concentration camp. Ebbutt wanted the paper to do more in uncovering and reporting the terror campaign. For that reason he supported the publication of the investigative report. Simpson, who had been living and working in Munich, sent *The Times* the article in late 1933. It was the result of months of 'examination' by Simpson, and exposed the 'conditions at Dachau'; the information for which came from 'various sources, ex-prisoners, Nazi SS guards, the widows and

¹² *The Times*, 26 October 1933, 'Nazi Germany', Letter to the Editor, Harrison Brown, 10. Hereafter *TT*.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *TT*, 26 August 1933, 'Nazi Camp for Unbelievers', Corr., 7.

¹⁷ *The Times*, 19 September 1933, 'Life in a Nazi Camp', German Corr., 13.

relatives of the victims'.¹⁸ It would have been the most outspoken report on the terror and concentration camps that the newspaper had published. It went beyond reports on the camps previously published, providing greater scope and level of detail, especially in regards to the horrors inflicted upon prisoners. For Simpson, it was a story that must be exposed because 'If the facts about Dachau can be made known to the whole world it is possible that several lives may be saved and countless torments prevented'.¹⁹

At this point, it was approved by Ralph Deakin, on the Imperial and Foreign News desk. However, deputy editor Robin Barrington-Ward was concerned about the accuracy of the report and requested that Ebbutt be contacted to confirm the details. Barrington-Ward questioned whether Simpson was getting carried away with 'atrocious stories'.²⁰ Correspondence between Deakin and Barrington-Ward testified that if the story could be authenticated and 'If Simpson is thoroughly trustworthy, and Ebbutt can find no serious flaw, the article will certainly have to be given, probably in company with a discriminating leader'.²¹ Ebbutt, for his part, was supportive of the article being published, writing to Deakin: 'we should publish it and take the opportunity of challenging Hitler and Goebbels in a leading article'.²² Ebbutt went so far as to write an introduction that would accompany the article when it was printed:

[W]e have felt bound to publish this, despite the official German assurances that little or nothing of the kind has occurred or is occurring in the concentration camps, not because we wish to keep nagging about a particular aspect of German internal policy ... but because it comes from sources we cannot discuss lightly and it becomes more and more clear that until this matter is cleared up relations between British public opinion and the N-S regime will be seriously hampered.²³

Since the article only dealt with the conditions in the first half of 1933, Simpson continued to collect testimony and facts about continued brutality in the camp that had taken place from August onward. During this time, the article went through several

¹⁸ Simpson to Deakin, 20 December 1933, Ralph Deakin Correspondence, TT/FN/1/RD/1/, News International Archive and Record Office (London). Hereafter NIA.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Barrington-Ward to Deakin, 5 January 1934, Ralph Deakin Correspondence, TT/FN/1/RD/1/, NIA.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ebbutt to Deakin, 12 January 1934, Ralph Deakin Correspondence, TT/FN/1/RD/1/, NIA.

²³ Ibid.

galley proofs, demonstrating Deakin's willingness to publish the report. However, in February 1934, Deakin was instructed to write to Simpson that the article would not be printed. As Barrington-Ward explained: 'the editor [Dawson] is now inclined to feel that what has appeared lately in *The New Statesman and Nation* really disposes of this article'.²⁴

What had probably happened was that Dawson had decided not to print the report because he 'thought it better not to annoy the German government at that time'.²⁵ The *New Statesman and Nation* had, on 20 January 1934, published an article entitled, 'The Terror Continues', which was actually a 'translation of part of a report ... which recently found its way out of Sonnenburg Concentration Camp', and which documented the brutal and inhumane conditions in that camp.²⁶ The article did not report conditions in Dachau. It focused on an entirely different concentration camp and, therefore, did not render Simpson's article outdated or void in any way. Whatever the reasons for the decision, *The Times* had decided not to print an important report on the terror campaign and the conditions endured by thousands in concentration camps. This was in spite of the endorsement of Berlin correspondent Ebbutt. *The Times*, would report on many aspects of the terror, but would not report some of the more grisly details about the concentration camps, nor would it refer to a campaign of terror.

Several other British newspapers did print articles that, at the very least, mentioned the violence in Germany. Of these, the *New Statesman and Nation* best conveyed to readers the nature of the violence. Several articles in 1933 referred to violent arrest and imprisonment of Communists and Socialists. Then in January 1934 the *New Statesman and Nation* published a report on conditions in Sonnenburg concentration camp which had 'found its way out' of the camp. It was the same report that Dawson had cited as the reason for not publishing Simpson's Dachau article. The report was printed under the headline 'The Terror Continues'.²⁷ The editor of the newspaper explained that the terror 'continues unabated, though with increased secrecy'.²⁸ The *Jewish Chronicle*, the *Observer*, and the *News Chronicle* also printed several articles about violence in Germany,

²⁴ Barrington-Ward to Deakin, 15 February 1934, Ralph Deakin Correspondence TT/FN/1/RD/1/, NIA.

²⁵ Lee Kersten, 'The Times and the Concentration Camp at Dachau, December 1933 – February 1934: An Unpublished Report', *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 18, Issue 2 (Winter 2000): 101.

²⁶ *NSe&N*, 20 January 1934, 'The Terror Continues', 77.

²⁷ *New Statesman and Nation*, 26 January 1934, 'The Terror Continues', 77.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

particularly in the concentration camps. In June 1933, the *News Chronicle* gave front-page coverage to an article by special correspondent and Liberal MP Robert Bernays which described his experience touring a ‘big’ concentration camp at Breslau.²⁹ The article was restrained with Bernays stating: ‘it is not for me to make any comment on the political morality of Concentration Camps’.³⁰ His ‘memory’ of the camps was of ‘prisoners watering the flowers behind the barbed wire. They had been planted in the shape of a swastika’.³¹ That a liberal left-leaning newspaper could seemingly be so naive was disappointing. Another feature that appeared in the *News Chronicle* also missed an important chance to expose the brutality of the regime. Lady Oxford (Margot Asquith) obtained an interview with the head of the German Foreign Office Alfred Rosenberg, for the *News Chronicle*.³² She raised the issue of the concentration camps but was seemingly distracted by Rosenberg protesting against the idea that Hitler and the Nazi party wanted war.³³ It was a missed opportunity for the newspaper, especially as the *News Chronicle* later reported that issue of the newspaper had sold out in Berlin in seconds.³⁴

Other British newspapers tried to downplay the terror, and some did not report it at all. The *Morning Post*, like the *News Chronicle*, were seemingly convinced by the forced unity displayed at concentration camps during propaganda tours for foreign visitors and journalists. A special correspondent for the *Morning Post* described prisoners as ‘cheerful’ on a visit to Dachau: ‘Many prisoners were sitting on wooden seats near their sleeping quarters or lying in the sun on the grass banks of the swimming pool, some of them sucking on empty pipes’.³⁵ Prisoners ‘looked well’ and there was ‘no shortage of food’.³⁶ The *Daily Express* did report the arrest of Communists and Socialists but described it as as the inevitable outcome of the Communists war on Nazism. The newspaper focused more on the persecution of the Jews, especially in 1933.

²⁹ *News Chronicle*, 17 June 1933, ‘Nazis’ 20,000 Prisoners’, Robert Bernays, 1. Hereafter *NC*.

Robert Bernays was a British Liberal MP (serving 1931 – 1945) who worked as a correspondent and journalist till late 1933. He subsequently published a book about his experiences *Special Correspondent* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1934).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Margot Asquith, or Lady Oxford and Asquith, was the widow of Herbert Henry Asquith, 1st Earl of Oxford and Asquith, former British Prime Minister (1908 – 1916).

³³ *NC*, 9 May 1933, ‘Lady Oxford Meets the Mystery Man’, 1 and 2.

³⁴ *NC*, 11 May 1933, ‘News-Chronicle Sold Out’, Berlin Corr., 1.

³⁵ *Morning Post*, 20 September 1933, ‘Behind Bars in Germany’, Spec. Corr., 13.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

There were also several newspapers that did not even try to tell the story of the terror. Both the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Telegraph* did not report it at all. The *Daily Mail* was perhaps one of the most extreme examples of a newspaper that tried to ignore the terror. After reporting the initial arrest of Communists and Socialists after the Reichstag fire in late February 1933, the *Daily Mail* remained silent on the activities of the SA. In July 1933, they broke their silence but in a rather bizarre fashion. In that month the newspaper published an article by proprietor Viscount Rothermere, entitled ‘Youth Triumphant’, which praised the new regime and denounced those who had criticised it.³⁷ His hatred of the left, and of communism, came through in the article:

The most spiteful detractors of the Nazis are to be found in precisely the same sections of the British public and Press as are the most vehement in their praises of the Soviet regime in Russia. These ranters, who can see nothing in the Bolshevist slave-labour camps but an admirable example of civic organisation, shut their eyes to the practical achievements of the Nazi movement and shudder at the sight of the enthusiasm it has aroused in every walk of life in Germany.³⁸

Unsurprisingly, Rothermere ignored the existence of the concentration camps set up by the Nazis, where forced labour was already being utilised. In addition, he denied the existence of a campaign of terror:

They have started a clamorous campaign of denunciation against what they call “Nazi atrocities”, which, as anyone who visits Germany quickly discovers for himself, consist merely of a few isolated acts of violence such as are inevitable among a nation half as big again as ours, but which have been generalised, multiplied, and exaggerated to give the impression that Nazi rule is a bloodthirsty tyranny.³⁹

He called critics of Nazi methods ‘the old women of both sexes’, and referred readers to the example of Italy where the ‘incidental extravagances of the early days of Fascism are forgotten. In the same way the minor misdeeds of individual Nazis will be submerged by the immense benefits that the new regime is already bestowing upon Germany’.⁴⁰

³⁷ See Appendix I for photograph of Rothermere’s ‘Youth Triumphant’ article.

³⁸ *DMail*, 10 July 1933, ‘Youth Triumphant’, By Viscount Rothermere, 10.

See Appendix I — Illustrations/Photographs for photo of the story.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

The *Daily Mail*, by categorically denying the existence of a campaign of violence, was an extreme example of a British newspaper's response to the terror in Germany. Most British newspapers failed in reporting the terror campaign perpetrated by the SA, SS, and Gestapo against political opponents in 1933 and 1934. Some newspapers simply did not report the horrors perpetrated by the regime and others omitted any reference to a 'campaign of terror', while some sought to downplay the brutality of the regime. Others tried, and failed, to get the story of the terror into the pages of their newspaper. What this all meant was that there was a serious gap in the reporting of the establishment and practice of the dictatorship in Germany. There was a vacuum — fortunately for British readers, the *Manchester Guardian* stepped in to fill the void.

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The *Manchester Guardian* stood out for its reporting on the terror in Germany in 1933, with unrivalled coverage of the phases of the political terror, and articles that gave readers a vivid, detailed, and often graphic, insight into the horrors committed by the Nazi regime. In early 1933 however, the newspaper's editor W.P. Crozier balanced the desire to tell the truth about Germany, specifically the brutalities of the regime, with the need to have a correspondent in Berlin. For Voigt this was not acceptable. Voigt took issue with the *Manchester Guardian's* reporting on Germany, particularly Berlin correspondent Alexander Werth's dispatches. He was particularly annoyed at an article by Werth which stated, 'there are rumours about a sort of Nazi Cheka' and blamed the 'nervous tension' in Berlin for stories of 'abductions, tortures, and secret executions', and which included the unfortunate sub-heading, 'Rumours of a Terror' — an addition by a sub-editor and not Werth's doing.⁴¹

Voigt also informed Crozier that correspondents working for other newspapers felt the *Manchester Guardian* should do more in reporting the terror. The *Morning Post's* Berlin correspondent, Darsie Gillie, had been threatened by the German government. His newspaper backed off printing critical reports. Gillie contacted Voigt, 'begging me to do

⁴¹ *Manchester Guardian*, 13 March 1933, 'Growing Reports of a Nazi Terror', Berlin Corr., 9. Sub-editors heading referred to in unsent message Crozier to Voigt, 16 March 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 144, Folder 207, John Rylands Library (Manchester). Hereafter JRL.

what I can to get something at least that tells the real story into the Guardian — the Morning Post will not speak up as he would wish it to'.⁴² As far as Voigt was concerned 'on the German news the Guardian is being beaten hollow by the Times and the Telegraph (not to speak of the French papers) whereas it should be the other way about'.⁴³ Voigt implored Crozier to permit him to go to Germany to collect information for a series of articles on the Terror:

[W]hat is happening in Germany is so awful that I cannot possible remain deaf to it ... The Brown terror is not just one of the many dust-ups that have been going on in Europe in the last few years — it is a frightfully dangerous inrush of barbarism into the civilised world.⁴⁴

Crozier, for his part, was keen to tell the full story of the violence in Germany. In the beginning though he balanced his desire to speak out about Nazi brutalities against a need to have a correspondent in Germany. He had been instructed by Crozier in early February: 'I should prefer that you did not get yourself expelled, if it can be avoided ... On the whole stick to the facts and avoid strong judgements'.⁴⁵ Crozier also worried about the safety of Voigt if he were to go to Germany. The editor wrote to Geneva correspondent Robert Dell:

I should regard him as being in greater danger than Werth. That would not worry Voigt, I daresay, because as you say he is a man of great courage ... I am extremely anxious to get and to give everything possible about the Terror, and I detest the idea that the "Times" or any other paper should be thought to be doing more about it than we are. On the other hand I do not desire to get Voigt murdered which, if he went, I should be afraid of every day.⁴⁶

Shortly after Crozier withdrew Werth (for the moment) as Berlin correspondent, and sent Voigt to Germany to collect information from sources and informants for a series of articles on the terror.⁴⁷ It was the first in a series of visits that Voigt made in 1933. The articles that resulted from this trip established the *Manchester Guardian* as an outspoken critic of the Nazi regime.

⁴² Voigt to Crozier, 15 March 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 145a/b/c, Folder 207, JRL.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Crozier to Werth, 6 February 1933, Foreign Correspondence, File 54, Folder 207, JRL.

⁴⁶ Crozier to Dell, 15 March 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 141a/b, Folder 207, JRL.

⁴⁷ There was suggestion that Werth might return to Germany after Voigt's articles had appeared.

Voigt's articles commenced publication in the *Manchester Guardian* in March 1933. They were based on evidence and testimonies from confidential sources (some of whom had been targets of Nazi aggression) which he had collected on his recent trip to Germany. Voigt's aim with these early reports was to reveal the extent of the Terror, and debunk rumours that the violence was merely the excesses of over-zealous Storm Troops. Furthermore, Voigt wanted readers to understand that the terror was continuing after the initial arrests after the Reichstag Fire, and indeed after the elections. As he wrote in his first report on the Terror, printed on 25 March 1933:

Now that the Brown Terror has ebbed, every effort is being made to show that, except for a few deplorable excesses, there never was a terror. It is necessary to state in categorical fashion not only that there was a Terror but that the facts, so far from being exaggerated, have been understated (although many false rumours have gotten into print). The Terror was also entirely unprovoked. Had there been resistance to the counter-revolution or any conspiracy against it there might have been some excuse for rigorous action, but there was no resistance. In spite of this, scores of perfectly inoffensive people, many of whom had never taken part in active politics, have been killed and hundreds have been injured (many of them in a horrible fashion).⁴⁸

There were difficulties in determining the full truth, wrote Voigt, but it was important to understand:

[T]he Terror did not consist of sporadic excesses, that it was not a series of disorders, that it was not mob rule, but that it was systematic and an integral part of the counter-revolutionary offensive. This is not in the least disproved by the fact that there were individual excesses which the Government did not condone.⁴⁹

And just as important, Voigt established:

For the Terror as a whole the regime is responsible. Although it has ebbed it has not ceased. There are continual raids by Brown Shirts; there were at least two in the "Norden" quarter of Berlin on Tuesday. Arrests are being made the whole time. Prisoners are continually being shot "while trying to escape", and dead bodies are continually being

⁴⁸ *MG*, 25 March 1933, 'Nazi Terror Reports Not Exaggerated', Spec. Corr., 13.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

found. The number of persons now imprisoned or interned goes into many thousands.⁵⁰

Voigt expanded on this in another article, in which he examined the nature of the emerging regime. He argued that it was not possible to put the Terror down to ‘natural excesses’:

[A]s for the belief that the violence of the last few weeks has been of the kind natural in a period of excitement, it is necessary to state categorically that this belief is wholly erroneous. To hold it is wholly to misconceive the character of the Hitlerite counter-revolution. The German Government, and more particularly, Captain Göring, who, no less than Hitler himself, is the dictator of Germany, by admitting a few and denying the many excesses (while designating the few as perfectly natural, indeed excusable ...) ... attempt not only to conceal by far the greater and by far the more terrible part of the truth, but also to make themselves and their so-called “revolution” appear unique and resplendent by reason of the kindness and the magnanimity of its leaders and the prodigious decency and self-discipline of their followers.⁵¹

The actions of the Nazis, and particularly the SA, towards those considered enemies of the regime was clear:

The Opposition (collectively and individually) must not merely be defeated according to normal constitutional procedure, it must be broken up, demoralised, and intimidated by physical force — this, and this alone, is the real intention of the Dictatorship towards that Opposition.⁵²

Like *The Spectator*, the *Manchester Guardian* came under attack by readers, who criticised the paper for its hardline stance on the violent methods of the Nazi regime. In fact, some of these letters, complaining about the reporting of the *Manchester Guardian*, were in response to Werth’s articles, and came in before Voigt’s appeared. The *Manchester Guardian*, like *The Spectator*, decided to print many of them

[B]ecause they show the state of mind, and in particular the ignorance of recent events, prevailing in Germany. As however, the newspapers

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ *MG*, 28 February 1933, ‘The Terror in Germany’, Spec. Corr., 9.

⁵² Ibid.

of the Left are either suppressed or terrorised and the newspapers of the Right either would not or could not print accounts of the outrages which began on March 3, nothing else is to be expected. To accusations against our own columns it is necessary to reply. The full story of the Terror has not yet been told.⁵³

Readers criticised the reporting of Berlin correspondent, with one reader, Joan Gray, alleging Werth's articles were '50 per cent fantasy'.⁵⁴ Gray stated: 'I can hardly think a newspaper as renowned and important as the "Manchester Guardian" would lower itself to propaganda of such cheap and unworthy style'.⁵⁵ Other letters were printed in the same issue, written primarily by readers who lived in Germany.

The *Manchester Guardian* received more letters of criticism following the publication of Voigt's articles on the Terror in late March. The primary criticisms levelled against the newspaper, especially from those living in Germany, were that his reports had either been falsified or at the very least exaggerated. Some readers admitted that while violence had occurred, it was only a natural given that what was happening in Germany was a revolution not a mere changing of government. For these readers some excesses and violence was expected; one just had to look at Russia to see that revolutions were violent affairs and by comparison the revolution in Germany was rather peaceful. As one reader wrote on 1 April 1933: 'seldom has a revolution been so free from violence and so quickly over'.⁵⁶ Another letter authored by a group of Germans declared:

As in every revolution, news and reports from Germany are bound to be contradictory. We feel, however, that the British public is receiving up to this day a distorted view of the great events in Germany, since most English observers lay all the stress upon certain incidents on the surface and overlook the deeper significance of the present struggle of the German national to lay the foundation for the future.⁵⁷

For other readers the arrest and intimidation of political opponents, especially the Communists, was necessary as they posed a grave threat to order and security in the

⁵³ *MG*, 24 March 1933, 'Letters to the Editor', 20.

⁵⁴ *Ibid* (Joan Gray).

⁵⁵ *Ibid*.

⁵⁶ *MG*, 1 April 1933, 'Letters to the Editor: Germany Under the Nazis' (Englishman in Germany), 8.

⁵⁷ *Ibid* (K.H. Abshagen et. al.).

Reich. For instance a letter printed on 24 March 1933 by an ‘Englishwoman’ in Germany read:

[W]ith regard to German politics, you are wrongly informed. Your reports of the Nazi Terror are ridiculously distorted. Decent people here only speak of the Communist Terror. All my friends are pleased that the Communist Terrorists are being put down.⁵⁸

For these readers it was important that the Communists be suppressed; any Jews or Socialists caught up in the arrests and violence must have been ‘Communist sympathisers’ or so the argument went.

Not all letters were critical; the *Manchester Guardian* also received letters from readers applauding the efforts of the correspondents (and the newspaper) in trying to get the full story out to readers about the political (and religious) persecution in Germany. On 28 March 1933, for instance, one reader wrote: ‘It is pretty obvious that we in this country, thanks to the well-organised news service of such journals as yours, know more of the German, or rather the Hitler-Nazi, Terror than the peaceful citizens of Germany itself.’⁵⁹ And historian A.L. Rowse wrote to the paper:

Your readers are grateful to you for publishing that batch of letters putting the Nazi point of view in your issue of March 24. It enables us to judge the extent to which people’s common sense, let alone their political judgment, can be swamped by nationalist hysteria.⁶⁰

What these letters revealed was that reports about the terror in Germany divided readers. For many readers of the *Manchester Guardian* the reports on the terror were so fantastic that they could not be true. Most of the letters, printed in March and April 1933, were written by men and women who either lived in Germany, or had recently visited the country. Prominence was given to these letters because, for Crozier and the *Manchester Guardian*, the letters confirmed the degree to which people in Germany (and even in Britain) were ignorant of their new governments actions, particularly the brutal persecution of the political left. Crozier used these letters as proof that free speech had

⁵⁸ *MG*, 24 March 1933, ‘Letters to the Editor: The Revolution in Germany’ (Hilda Smith), 20.

⁵⁹ *MG*, 28 March 1933, ‘Letters to the Editor: The Persecution’ (I.W. Slotki), 18.

⁶⁰ *MG*, 29 March 1933, ‘Letters to the Editor: Germany Under the Nazis’ (A.L. Rowse), 18.

been suppressed in Germany. A letter printed on 30 March 1933 is a particularly good example.

If I were in England reading the British reports I might get the impression that it is a most dangerous thing to live in Germany to-day. Yet here I am living my ordinary quiet life and, up to now at least, wholly unmolested. And this though I am one of the much-abused believers in internationalism and though I have, in the past, written in pacifist German papers with the greatest decision against anti-Semitism.⁶¹

He explained that British subjects and, for the most part, Jews should feel safe in Germany, but acknowledged: 'Communists must avoid Germany, as against Communists the condition here is that of war'.⁶²

Voigt's articles on the terror were the envy of some correspondents from other newspapers. According to Voigt, Norman Ebbutt and Douglas Reed of *The Times* were upset that their own newspaper refused to give prominence to the violence in Germany.⁶³ As Voigt wrote to Crozier on 30 March 1933: 'I must add — and this was impressed upon me in Berlin — that the M.G. is looked up to as the only paper in the world that can do justice to the German Republic'.⁶⁴ This was reiterated by French Prime Minister at the time Édouard Daladier who, according to Voigt, 'thinks the Guardian is the best paper of all. It's editorial policy is magnificent (his own expression), while that of the Times makes him sick'.⁶⁵

The *Manchester Guardian's* scathing reports did not escape the attention of the German authorities. The Nazi party, already trying to suppress reports about Germany from appearing in foreign newspapers, prohibited the sale and distribution of the *Manchester Guardian* in Germany. The newspaper was informed of the decision by a telegram from the Wilhelm Frick, Minister of the Interior, which instructed that the newspaper would be prohibited 'until further notice'.⁶⁶ The *Manchester Guardian* responded by stating:

⁶¹ *MG*, 30 March 1933, 'Letters to the Editor: Germany Under the Nazis' (Harold Picton), 18.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Voigt to Crozier, 30 March 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 186a, Folder 207, JRL.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Voigt to Crozier, 1 April 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 198a, Folder 207, JRL.

⁶⁶ *MG*, 8 April 1933, 'More Facts About the Nazi Terror', 15.

This paper is not the first to be prohibited in Germany, nor will it be the last. Dictatorships abhor freedom and fear truth. The tyranny which attacks its own citizens, however distinguished, however humble, because of their opinions or their race, is unlikely to spare the foreigner who practices outspokenly the freedom on the suppression of which its own existence hangs ... But other things besides newspapers are forbidden activity in Germany to-day: pacifist leaders, liberal writers and thinkers, Jews who are the ornament of their professions, Jews who are only honest workmen. A newspaper is, therefore, in good company. And, forbidden or not, it cannot be stopped from exhibiting what it believes to be the facts.⁶⁷

As Alexander Werth had previously stated, the *Manchester Guardian* was the 'best-hated foreign paper' in Germany.⁶⁸

The decision to ban the newspaper did, however, complicate matters, especially the question of Werth returning to Berlin as resident correspondent. It was clearly something that troubled Werth who, while wanting to return to Germany and recognising the importance of having someone in Berlin to report on German affairs, was worried about living there given the reaction to Voigt's articles. Even before the *Manchester Guardian* was prohibited Werth wrote to Crozier: 'Voigt is urging me to go back to Berlin at once. That is all very well: but I do not quite see why he should have all the fun of stirring up the hornets' nest, and then ask me to take the consequences'.⁶⁹ Voigt did not advocate for Werth's return for long. In April 1933, he wrote to Crozier to request that Werth remain in Paris for his own safety. He thought that the atmosphere in Germany was too poisonous for a correspondent of Jewish extraction and, as a result, that Werth would find it difficult to work effectively.⁷⁰ Crozier agreed.⁷¹ In early May 1933, he wrote to Voigt suggesting that it was not worth sending a correspondent to Berlin. For the moment, the paper would have to rely on Voigt and his articles.⁷²

The *Manchester Guardian* did not have a correspondent in Germany for many months. In September 1933, Geneva correspondent Robert Dell was sent to cover the Reichstag fire trial. His time in Germany was short. After a few weeks he was withdrawn from

⁶⁷ *MG*, 8 April 1933, 'Forbidden in Germany', Leader, 14.

⁶⁸ Werth to Crozier, 4 April 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 209a, Folder 207, JRL.

⁶⁹ Werth to Crozier, 30 March 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 196a, Folder 207, JRL.

⁷⁰ Voigt to Crozier, 11 April 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 223a/b, Folder 207, JRL.

⁷¹ Crozier to Voigt, 18 April 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 243a, Folder 207, JRL.

⁷² Crozier to Voigt, 2 May 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 4, Folder 208, JRL.

Germany after a German friend was arrested and closely questioned about the activities of the *Manchester Guardian*, specifically the identity of the newspaper's special correspondent. According to Voigt, Dell's friend was asked by the Gestapo interrogators: 'Who ... is the swine-hound who is slinging mud at Germany in the M.G.?'⁷³ Dell left Germany for France at the beginning of November 1933. He wrote to Crozier of his relief at leaving Germany, describing it as a 'horrible country ... It is worse than anybody could imagine who has not stayed in it for some time. The apologies for the Nazis of some silly sentimental fools in England and elsewhere make the men here, who know what it really is, furious'.⁷⁴

After Dell withdrew, the *Manchester Guardian* did not have a correspondent in Germany until December 1933, when C.A. Lambert took over as Berlin Correspondent. This did not mean, however, that the *Manchester Guardian* ceased to report on the German situation. Voigt continued to gather material by clandestine visits into Germany to collection information from his network of sources. His articles painted a horrific picture of life in Germany, especially for those unlucky enough to be considered opponents of the new regime. The *Manchester Guardian* was able to print these articles without fear of retribution — the newspaper was already prohibited in Germany, complaints by the German government had already been made to the British government (and were ignored), and no correspondent for the newspaper resided in Germany which meant there were no fears for their safety which might have impacted the editorial policy. This meant that the newspaper could focus on printing the truth about the terror.

* * * * *

Voigt's initial reports for the *Manchester Guardian* on the Terror had established the scope and intent of the campaign of violence. He had made it clear that complicity and responsibility for the Terror lay with the Nazi regime. They were guilty of waging a terror campaign to annihilate their opposition, the political left. In April and May 1933, Voigt's articles built on these earlier reports by providing details and examples, often graphic, on the nature of the terror. These articles were, in part, a response to readers

⁷³ Voigt to Crozier, 4 November 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 104a, Folder 210, JRL.

⁷⁴ Dell to Crozier, 4 November 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 105, Folder 210, JRL.

who had claimed that the ‘terror’ was something invented by reporters and correspondents. The articles exposed the actions of the SA and the SS and documented cases of abuse, torture and murder. They were the direct result of Voigt’s continued investigations into the violence in Germany perpetrated by the Nazis, particularly the SA.

On 8 April 1933 the first of this type of report was printed in the *Manchester Guardian*. It was entitled ‘Examples of Nazi Terror’, and was written from Frankfurt. In it Voigt documented several cases where people had been intimidated and beaten in their own homes:

In the small hours of this morning a workman’s home was raised by Black Shirts ... drawers and cupboards were ransacked and windows, pictures, and crockery smashed ... two girls were threatened with revolvers. One of them was struck in the face by a Black Shirt — her face is still swollen. Your correspondent has inspected the raided premises. He has also spoken with the victims and witnesses of several recent beatings.⁷⁵

It was not just suspected Communists and political opponents that suffered the violent wrath of the SA:

At Worms also a number of Jews were arrested, shut up in a pigsty and beaten on the buttocks, so that the flesh was bruised and lacerated. They were then made to hit one another. The names of three of the victims are known to your correspondent.⁷⁶

The torture and subsequent death of other Jews was also documented. For Voigt it was imperative that the horrific particulars of the terror was documented as well as his own role as onlooker, witness and reporter, especially with the *Manchester Guardian* under attack from parts of its readership. And, in case a reader was to further question the reliability and accuracy of the reporting, the *Manchester Guardian* printed several photographs in the 8 April issue. It included a photograph of the ransacked house

⁷⁵*MG*, 8 April 1933, ‘Examples of Nazi Terror’, Spec. Corr., 15.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*

mentioned in Voigt's article and several photographs of inmates in the concentration camp at Oranienburg.⁷⁷

These cases were not exceptional — similar incidents were occurring all over Germany, reported Voigt in another article printed in April 1933:

[D]igging only an inch below the surface, which to the casual observer may seem tranquil enough, will in city after city, village after village, discover such an abundance of barbarism committed by the Brown Shirts that modern analogies fail.⁷⁸

The brutality, Voigt reported, was difficult to comprehend because the crimes 'by their very magnitude and persistence tend to stifle the protests or even the interest of the outside world simply because the normal civilised mind can no longer accommodate the ever-growing accumulation of horrors'.⁷⁹ This, he wrote, was the 'Brown Terror in Germany'.⁸⁰ In Cassel for instance, beatings by the SA 'have left the victims bruised, bleeding, and lacerated human wrecks, with minds dazed or blank'.⁸¹ They were carried out 'systematically and according to a general plan — general, that is to say, for all Germany — in the "Brown Houses" that are nothing less than torture chambers'.⁸² Voigt made it clear that these beatings 'were not carried out in the heat of a political struggle but in cold blood, and on victims who were helpless and who were found guilty of no offence whatsoever'.⁸³

So far, Voigt reported: 'Against the Brown Shirts there is no defence, for the torture they inflict there is no redress'.⁸⁴ The German Government 'knows exactly what it going on. It had received abundant evidence in the form of sworn statements, medical certificates, photographs, reports from witnesses, but it does not take the slightest notice'.⁸⁵ Voigt had also been able to collect this type of evidence from his sources in Germany. This included victim testimonials of experiences in the 'Brown Houses of

⁷⁷ See Appendix I, for photographs. *MG*, 8 April 1933, 'The Terror in Germany', 18.

⁷⁸ *MG*, 12 April 1933, 'Investigation of the Nazi Terror', Spec. Corr., 12.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *MG*, 20 April 1933, 'Nazi Cabinet's Responsibility for Terrorism', Spec. Corr., 3.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Berlin'.⁸⁶ Voigt explained that for many of these testimonials the 'details are unprintable'.⁸⁷ But in early June the *Manchester Guardian* printed the testimony of a Bulgarian doctor who had been arrested by the SA and taken to one of the many torture houses. His story vividly captured the brutal treatment of prisoners in the Brown Houses at the hands of the SA. He recounted his first beating:

The Brown Shirts then began to beat me with their rubber truncheons, leather whips, and "Stahlruten" (rods of flexible steel). They seemed to be in a mad, bestial rage. They jumped on chairs and tables and struck downwards at me without mercy. Most of the blows fell upon my head. The blood streamed down my face. Then someone hit me with an iron bar, there was a whistling noise in my left ear, and I collapsed and lost consciousness.⁸⁸

When he had been arrested he was already ill with influenza and so his condition deteriorated quickly following the beatings. He was initially refused treatment but, following another beating, he was finally taken to hospital. When he was discharged, he was informed the arrest had been a mistake.⁸⁹

For the *Manchester Guardian*, these witness testimonies were evidence of the brutality of the Nazi regime, as well as evidence of the campaign of Terror. They were intended, in part, to dispel readers doubt about the veracity of reports printed in the *Manchester Guardian* in March and April 1933. By the end of June 1933 the *Manchester Guardian* was able to add more detail to the story of the terror in Germany, as information and testimony about the concentration camps began to emerge. The opening of the first concentration camp at Dachau had been reported by British newspapers in March 1933, but it took longer to find out what was happening inside the camps and by the time that details were emerging most British newspapers had moved on to other news. For the *Manchester Guardian* however, the use of the concentration camps marked an important shift in the terror. Even then, Voigt observed: 'No more than occasional glimpses of what goes on in the German concentration camps are possible, so elaborate

⁸⁶ *MG*, 13 April 1933, 'Nazi Torture Chambers in Berlin', Spec. Corr., 6.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *MG*, 8 June 1933, 'In a Brown House; A Doctor's Story', 9.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

are the precautions taken to secure secrecy'.⁹⁰ But, he explained, even these glimpses 'leave no doubt at all as to the inhuman treatment of the interned prisoners'.⁹¹

In late June 1933, Voigt explained that it was difficult to estimate how many were imprisoned: 'estimates vary from 13,000 to 50,000 or 60,000'.⁹² But what Voigt did establish was that the victims were those who 'were first ill-treated in one of the "Brown Houses", which are really torture chambers ... before being sent to a camp'.⁹³ In these camps 'the treatment combines hard labour, rigorous military discipline, ferocious corporal punishments, and the arbitrary ill-treatment of individuals'.⁹⁴ Importantly Voigt established: 'Few, if any, of the prisoners have been tried — many of them do not know why they are interned'.⁹⁵

In July 1933 Voigt reported how the terror had entered a second stage, whereby new 'opponents' were targeted in a final push to 'destroy all potential resistance or rivalry'.⁹⁶ The concentration camp occupied an important place in this new stage. In early July 1933 Hitler had called a halt to the violence and excesses by the SA — the revolution, Hitler declared, was over. Other sources of possible resistance were now targeted. As Voigt reported: 'There is probably not a single German pacifist known as such who is not in prison, in exile, or in a Concentration Camp'.⁹⁷ This new phase of the terror was

[D]riving hundreds of trade union officials from their homes. Even those Socialists who accepted the regime are being beaten. It threatens the Conservatives — all they ever stood for is in danger of total destruction. Priests of the Catholic Church are being arrested. The Protestants who, like the Conservatives, supported the Nazis are not being spared, and many of the Evangelical clergy must prepare to suffer for their religion.⁹⁸

Those targeted were innocent; their treatment at the hands of the Nazi guards was brutal and inhuman. Voigt reported:

⁹⁰ *MG*, 23 June 1933, 'The Terror in Germany', Spec. Corr., 11.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *MG*, 13 July 1933, 'The Triumph of the Nazis', Spec. Corr., 5.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Hundreds of men whose integrity is beyond any doubt are being arrested all over the country and are being sent to endure lives of suffering in the Concentration Camps. In the Camp at Bornicke (between Nauen and Kremmen), for example, there are eighty prisoners ... Some of the prisoners work in the Camp, others are 'loaned' out to employers in the neighbourhood – that is to say, they are used for 'slave labour'. The prisoners are continually goaded on to greater efforts by blows from whips of rhinoceros hide.⁹⁹

These reports added a new layer to the story of the Terror in Germany. They were further testimony of the violent methods of the dictatorship. Voigt's reports established that the Terror was not just part of the revolution but, increasingly, a crucial part of the dictatorship.

* * * * *

The central role that terror played in the Nazi system of governance was made clear in reports in the *Manchester Guardian* in late 1933. By this point, the *Manchester Guardian* noted, the 'Brown Terror' had largely subsided. The system of terror that replaced it was far more horrific, as the *Manchester Guardian* reported in October 1933. In two articles the *Manchester Guardian* charted the shift in SA-led violence to Gestapo and SS terror and persecution. The story was first reported by 'a correspondent', possibly Robert Dell who was in Germany at the time reporting on the Reichstag Fire. The correspondent observed that the 'beatings by Nazi Storm Troopers have greatly diminished and may cease altogether in their old form. They are evidently discouraged by the authorities, because such action on the part of the S.A. infringes on the functions of the S.S.'¹⁰⁰ The 'Brown Houses', the 'notorious as Nazi torture chambers in the early days of the Hitlerite Terror have been partly replaced by the prisons or detention barracks of the "Gestapo" (the Secret State Police) ... The chief terrorist force in Germany now is the "Gestapo"'.¹⁰¹ The article had been based primarily on the testimony of a victim and described the horrific treatment he had endured at the hands of the SS, who had beaten and tortured him over several days.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ *MG*, 4 October 1933, 'The New Nazi Secret Police', Corr., 15.

¹⁰¹ *MG*, 11 October 1933, 'Germany's New Detention Barracks', Corr., 12.

Voigt also recognised this important shift in state sponsored violence and terror in Germany in his own article days later. He reported that the function of the SA had shifted — the violence of the early days of the regime had given way to a more organised system of terror: ‘The cruelties practised in the prisons of the “Gestapo” are worse than those that went on in the Hedemannstrasse and the other well-known Brown Houses, for they are more secret, more systematic, and more prolonged’.¹⁰²

The violence of the unruly SA had been replaced by a more systematic and organised Terror carried out by the Gestapo and SS. Voigt referred to this terror as a ‘legal terror’ in a letter to Crozier in November 1933.¹⁰³ This legal terror was being conducted with the greatest secrecy. This had implications for how the British press would observe and report on life in Germany:

They will try to conceal it and I think they’ll succeed with the Times, the Telegraph and the Morning Post, for there will be superficial order (unless there is resistance and a fight in Germany — this is still not altogether impossible). People will say, order has been restored, there is firm Government and so on. But the M.G. can, I think, do a great service by exposing the character of the regime.¹⁰⁴

In light of this, it was important that the *Manchester Guardian* continue to give prominence to articles about the Terror and violence in Germany. In December 1933, as concerns for his safety in Paris grew, he wrote the following to Crozier:

I have had a good deal of information about the Terror and from people who have supplied me at great risk to themselves. There is no mention in the German press of the hundreds of arrests that have been made in the last few weeks and, of course, nothing is said about the ill-treatment of the prisoners. Many — indeed most — even well-informed Germans know nothing about these things ... I have had appeal after appeal, with the information that has come to me (by various routes) that it be published with all speed ... I don’t want to be a nuisance and I quite understand that you are hard pressed for space, but perhaps it would be possible to show a slight bias in favour of speedy publication of messages ... When I get such reports — and they come to me at great risk — a number of people wait, day in day out, with keen anticipation for them to appear. Many of the facts I get are

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Voigt to Crozier, (7 — 12) November 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 118b, Folder 210, JRL.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

unprintable or they are so fantastic (although true) that I suppress them, for plausibility comes second only to truthfulness ... All other papers of any standing have stopped publishing the facts about the Terror (although the Terror is worse than ever) and this, it seems to me, makes it all the more desirable that the M.G. should not stop.¹⁰⁵

The *Manchester Guardian* continued to report print Voigt's reports on the violence and terror in Germany in late 1933 and into 1934. Every care was made to distinguish the new Berlin correspondent C.A. Lambert's reports from Voigt's reports. Articles by Voigt were given the clear tagline, 'From Our Special Correspondent'. Voigt's reports had established the *Manchester Guardian* as an outspoken critic of the Nazi regime. While other newspapers had remained silent, or merely omitted details of the terror from their reports, the *Manchester Guardian* had continued to report and uncover details of the brutalities committed in the regime. And importantly, Voigt had established that the terror was not merely a by-product of the 'revolution' taking place in Germany, but played an important part in the conduct of the Nazi state.

The *Manchester Guardian* was definitely the exception to the rule when it came to reporting the terror in Germany. As correspondent Voigt repeatedly informed readers, the violence in Germany was part of a campaign of terror — it was not a series of sporadic excesses by unruly Storm Troops. It was part of a system of terror for which the Nazi regime was responsible. Some other newspapers had tried to report the terror, while others ignored or denied it. But when other British newspapers went silent, the *Manchester Guardian* filled the vacuum left.

The *Manchester Guardian* was the only newspaper that provided sustained coverage of the brutal nature of the Nazi regime throughout 1933 and into 1934 and beyond. Voigt's analysis of the role of the terror in the consolidation of the Nazi dictatorship set the *Manchester Guardian* apart from other British newspapers. For Crozier, as editor, it was extremely important to keep news of the brutal persecution of political opponents and religious groups in the news as a constant reminder of the reality of life in Germany under the Nazis. This decision not only saw the *Manchester Guardian* prohibited but also put correspondents, such as Voigt and Dell, in danger. But for these correspondents the risk was worth it because in risking their safety, Voigt and Dell, as well as the other

¹⁰⁵ Voigt to Crozier, 15 December 1933, Foreign Correspondence File 251a-e, Folder 210, JRL.

correspondents, exposed the brutal nature of the Nazi regime. As Franklin Reid Gannon wrote: ‘The *Manchester Guardian’s* leaders and articles on all aspects of the Terror in Germany, and Voigt’s reports as ‘Our Diplomatic Correspondent’ and especially as ‘Our Special Correspondent’, stand out as humanitarian and journalistic monuments to the men who wrote them and the paper which printed them’.¹⁰⁶

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¹⁰⁶ Franklin Reid Gannon, *The British press and Germany, 1936 – 1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 77.

Chapter Five – A Second Revolution? The Röhm Purge

At the beginning of 1934 *The Times* reported: ‘Official Germany and the Press are welcoming the New Year with hearty optimism’.¹ The Nazi government had secured its hold over the political apparatus of the state and opposition had been all but crushed. As *The Times* noted: ‘Not a dissentient voice breaks into the jubilant chorus; there is barely a mention of the problems of the future’.² British correspondents soon began to note discontent within Germany, especially amongst the German population as they waited on the Nazis election promises to be fulfilled. But underneath the surface, away from the eyes of correspondents, there was increasing tension between the Nazi government and the movements paramilitary army, the *Sturmabteilung* or SA.

The British press remained in the dark about the mounting pressure on Hitler to ‘solve’ the problem of the SA. By the middle of 1934 this underlying tension had escalated and in late June Hitler made the drastic decision to purge the SA of its troublesome elements, in particular its long-serving head Ernst Röhm. For the British press, and indeed the German public, the purge came as a surprise. The behind-the-scenes discussions, meetings, and plots that led to the June purge remained a secret from both the British press and the German public. Even today, with the noticeable absence of documents relating to ‘Operation Hummingbird’ (or accounts tainted by association to the Nazi party), historians grapple with piecing together the lead-up to the purge of the SA.

The reasons for the purge, and indeed Röhm’s intentions towards the dictatorship, have been the subject of debate among historians. Most historians now recognise it was unlikely that Röhm was planning a ‘second revolution’ or a putsch against Hitler. However, many historians still accept that a clash between the Nazi dictatorship and the SA was inevitable, arguing that Röhm was the ‘victim of his own political mistakes’.³ Other historians, such as Eleanor Hancock, dispute this, claiming that Röhm was receptive to Hitler’s requests to ‘tone down his rhetoric’, and would often ‘back down’ in

¹ *The Times*, 1 January 1934, ‘A ‘Happy and Free’ Germany’, Berlin Corr., 12. Hereafter *TT*.

² *Ibid*.

³ This argument is disputed by Eleanor Hancock. Please see article for details of the main debates in the historiography Eleanor Hancock, ‘The Purge of the SA Reconsidered: “An Old Putschist Trick”?’ *Central European History* 44 no.4 (Dec. 2011): 674.

confrontations with Hitler.⁴ The reasons for the purge are also still debated over. Was Röhm murdered and the SA purged to satisfy the Reichswehr? Did President Hindenburg, the Reichswehr leadership, or the Nazis' conservative political allies pressure Hitler to act against the SA? Was the action taken against Röhm because of 'moral reasons', specifically Röhm's homosexuality? Did Hitler instigate the action against Röhm and the SA, or was Hitler misled by others, namely Hermann Göring and Heinrich Himmler? All these questions, have at various times, occupied historians. With a notable absence of documents surrounding the decision to purge the SA, and murder its key leaders, the answers to some of these questions still seem unattainable.

With hardly a consensus amongst historians, is it any surprise that the British press struggled to understand the putsch? What they did do in the days that followed was report the purge in detail. Most newspapers gave it front-page coverage (popular newspapers) or made it a feature in the foreign news section (daily quality newspapers). The story of Hitler turning on his own paramilitary army was a sensational story. While 1934 started off quietly for foreign correspondents reporting on Germany, by mid-1934 the focus of foreign news had turned squarely back on German affairs. For the British press, the passing of President Hindenburg in August 1934 and the oath of loyalty by the Reichswehr to Hitler as newly appointed Führer, was the final step in the establishment of the National Socialist dictatorship.

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The brutal purge of the SA took the British press by surprise. In the weeks following the purge the press struggled to piece together what had happened during the purge and, importantly, why Hitler had decided to take such drastic action against the movement's own paramilitary organisation. There had been little or no indication in the months and weeks leading up to the purge that such violent action was about to take place. There were articles about the SA in British newspapers in early to mid 1934, but nothing to indicate that such drastic action was coming. The *Manchester Guardian* in early 1934, for instance, noted that the SA were more closely monitored than they had been in the 'wild' days of 1933 but they, in addition to the Gestapo, continued to commit

⁴ Ibid.

barbaric acts of torture against so-called political opponents.⁵ Just the previous month, the *Manchester Guardian* had quoted Röhm's denials that the SA were soldiers; the Storm Troops 'were the bearers of the will and the philosophy of the Nazi revolution'.⁶ Despite being more than two million strong, they were non-military, while the Reichswehr 'was the sole armed force of Germany'.⁷

Most of the historical literature on this period would argue that these statements by Röhm were an attempt to satisfy concerns over the rapid growth of the SA (including the concerns of France and Britain that the SA would become Germany's new armed forces). Historians might argue that behind-the-scenes Röhm not only desired but planned to establish a new German army based on the SA, or at the very least establish a militia alongside the existing Reichswehr. But what the press had to base their articles on were public utterances and speeches, policy and information from sources (if that could be relied upon). With little hint of the coming purge, British press reports in early to mid 1934 centred on the evolving church situation, especially the attempts to create a 'German church', and the continued persecution of so-called opponents of the regime and ongoing Jewish persecution. These reports were interspersed with articles about concentration camps, issues of the economy, decreasing unemployment, and the occasional special feature or interview in the case of the popular newspapers. For instance on 17 February 1934 the *Daily Mail* featured an interview with Hitler by Special Correspondent George Ward Price in which the Chancellor expounded his views on foreign affairs, German nationalism, and winning over his opponents.

Of the articles that appeared there were several which provided insight into the tension within the government and its associated agencies in Germany. Marking the one year anniversary of Hitler coming to power, *The Spectator's* special correspondent H. Powys Greenwood, observed: that 'revolution is in the air ... The mental strain is intense, the atmosphere charged with electricity'.⁸ 'This does not mean that there is the slightest chance of the present régime being overthrown', wrote Greenwood, but there was

⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 16 January 1934, 'The Terror in Germany', From Our Special Correspondent, 12. Hereafter MG.

⁶ MG, 8 December 1934, 'Storm Troops More Than Two Million Strong', Berlin Corr., 14.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *The Spectator*; 2 February 1934, 'Germany To-Day: I-Hitler's Supremacy', By H. Powys Greenwood, 151. Hereafter TS.

discontent in Conservative circles.⁹ The *Observer* similarly noted that while Hitler was ‘firmly in the saddle’, there was ‘a long way to go before the whole nation accepts its [Nazi government’s] major theses’.¹⁰

In April, the *New Statesman and Nation* examined disillusionment with the regime amongst the Storm Troops. The atmosphere in Germany was one that could be compared to the later days of William II: ‘an atmosphere of nervous threats and personal intrigue’.¹¹ While some in the regime sought to argue that the SA was ‘a company of peaceful young persons’, statements by Röhm and the actions of the Storm Troops proved otherwise.¹² Röhm often ‘indulged in ambiguous but ominous threats’, declaring the Storm Troops were vital in continuing the revolution at home and, if Germany were to be ‘attacked from outside’, the Storm Troops would ‘fanatically defend her soil’, as would all other Germans.¹³ As the *New Statesman and Nation* reported in June 1934: ‘Hitler has plenty of anxieties to keep him busy at home’.¹⁴ It was becoming increasingly clear to British correspondents that a struggle was going on behind the scenes between the Right and Left in the government and party, dominated by personal rivalries and factions.

This was reiterated by *Manchester Guardian’s* special correspondent Voigt in late June. Writing about the situation in Germany, he observed mounting discontent, felt by the public, the conservatives, and Catholics, and between the Reichswehr and SA, and between the Stahlhelm and the SA. He wrote: ‘While there is no revolt against the Nazis, discontent with them is widespread — in Berlin it has become almost general’.¹⁵ The pretext for this report was a speech delivered by Vice-Chancellor Franz von Papen at Marburg University on 17 June 1934. The speech was swiftly banned by Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels (not before many German newspapers had printed portions of it). The speech warned against a coming ‘second revolution’ ‘to be staged by “Nazi fanatics”’.¹⁶ He argued that the months of political turmoil must come to an end.¹⁷ A

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Observer*, 4 February 1934, ‘Hitler Faces his Second Year’, Spec. Corr., 15. Hereafter *Obs.*

¹¹ *New Statesman and Nation*, 28 April 1934, ‘The Second Spring’, Corr., 631. Hereafter *NS&N*.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *New Statesman and Nation*, 16 June 1934, ‘The Nazis’ Domestic Troubles’, 902.

¹⁵ *MG*, 27 June 1934, ‘Germany and the Nazis’, Spec. Corr., 9.

¹⁶ *MG*, 26 June 1934, ‘Von Papen’s Banned Speech’, 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

number of British newspapers reported the speech, including the *Manchester Guardian*, *The Times*, *Daily Express*, *News Chronicle*, and *Morning Post*, using it as evidence of the mounting turmoil in the country. The *Manchester Guardian* reported of the speech:

This was the most sustained and formidable criticism of the ugly sides of National Socialism to which the Propaganda Minister and his like can have listened since they came to power. No wonder they are angry. But if Von Papen spoke effectively, he spoke with triple weight because he spoke for many others, not least for the President.¹⁸

In response, Rudolf Hess warned that ‘monarchists and other reactionaries against entertaining false hopes’ as well as those ‘National Socialists who might be contemplating a ‘Second Revolution’ without the Fuhrer’s orders’.¹⁹

For the British press, Papen’s speech had brought the problems in the dictatorship and the mounting pressure on Hitler to deliver on promises made in the days of revolutionary fervour to the forefront of public discussion. *The Times* argued that the speech was likely ‘intended to inspire a moment which might help Herr Hitler to check exaggerations in his movement and carry out a purge of certain fanatical elements, which has been admitted to be overdue even among moderate National Socialists’.²⁰ One can assume what the newspaper was imagining was more the dismissal of officials and party members rather than their murder. The *News Chronicle* warned that if Hitler did not act, and get rid of problem elements, then it was likely that of a coup *against* the Nazi dictatorship. In a feature article, Diplomatic Correspondent Vernon Bartlett wrote:

Herr von Papen is not a clever or courageous man. It is certain that he would not have made such a speech unless his friend and protector, President von Hindenburg, had told him to do so. And behind Hindenburg are the officers of the Reichswehr, the industrialists, the landowners, the upper middle-class, and most of those people whom the rank and file of the Nazi Movement are determined to dispossess. The crisis has reached this point. Unless the more bitter and extreme elements in the National Socialist Party are cleared out of office within the next few months there will quite probably be an attempted *coup d’état* by the Reichswehr.²¹

¹⁸ *MG*, 26 June 1934, ‘Dr. Goebbels and Herr von Papen’, Leader, 10.

¹⁹ *TT*, 27 June 1934, ‘Nazi Dissension’, Berlin Corr., 15.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *News Chronicle*, 27 June 1934, ‘Germany To-Day and To-Morrow’, By Vernon Bartlett, 10. Hereafter *NC*.

In another article entitled, ‘Germany To-Day and To-Morrow’, Bartlett wrote that if such a coup was to be staged, the member of the ‘Old Gang’ needed to act quickly:

[W]hile President Hindenburg is still alive. He is surrounded in East Prussia by landlords who would like him to use the Reichswehr to defend their interests. If Hindenburg died and Hitler succeeded him it might not be so easy to use the Reichswehr in this way. Therefore there is no time to lose.²²

It had become clear to a number of British correspondents that the time had come for something to happen. Whether it would be action by the National Socialists, or an attempted coup by conservative forces or the *Reichswehr* (German Army), was still unclear at this stage. What correspondents did not know was that preparations for the brutal purge of the SA were already being made behind-the-scenes and kept secret from everyone not essential to the plan. The press, like most Germans, were left to guess what might lie in store for Germany and for the Nazi dictatorship. And so when the news of the bloody purge came it took British correspondents (and indeed most Germans) by surprise.

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The purge of the SA (Operation Hummingbird) began on Saturday 30 June 1934, continuing until Monday, 2 July 1934. Because the action was carried out on the weekend, news of the purge was not reported in most British newspapers until Monday 2 July 1934. Three popular daily newspapers featured the story on the front page of Monday’s issue — the *Daily Express*, *News Chronicle* and *Daily Mirror*.²³ The *News Chronicle*’s front-page had the headline ‘Hitler’s Week-end of Ruthless Slaughter: Army Now in Control’, with the sub-heading’s, ‘Storm Troop chief and seventeen leaders executed; von Papen prisoner at home; President gravely ill; Brown Army to disappear; ‘All Quiet’ in Berlin’.²⁴ The article also featured a photograph of Hitler performing the

²² *NC*, 28 June 1934, ‘Germany To-Day and To-Morrow: Between Hitler and Heaven’, By Vernon Bartlett, 6.

²³ See Appendix I — Illustrations/Photographs for examples of the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Express* front page coverage of the Röhm purge.

²⁴ *NC*, 2 July 1934, ‘Hitler Week-End of Ruthless Slaughter’, 1.

Nazi salute to marching Reichswehr troops.²⁵ Most of the front-page was devoted to news of the purge with only a few other side articles about home news, including an article about England's third test team, a train hold-up in London, and a story of a disgraced Mayor who had been found guilty of seduction in a court of law. The main article on the purge was printed in a larger font with bold type and reported the final moments of 'Captain Roehm' before he was executed (including the fact that he was offered the chance of suicide prior to his execution). The *News Chronicle* reported:

The attempted revolution is declared to have been a plot between discontented Storm Troop leaders and General von Schleicher, to overthrow the Hitler regime. Mr John Segrue, the 'News Chronicle' Berlin Correspondent, telephoning last night said: Germany is quiet to-night, Chancellor Hitler being, ostensibly, the master of the country. His position, however, is fundamentally changed as a result of happenings to-day and yesterday. The Brown Army which was the main prop of the Nazi regime, has in fact disappeared and will not be recreated as before.²⁶

In reporting the purge, *The Times* gave readers one of the most thorough accounts of how events played out in Munich which included the arrest and subsequent murder of SA leader Röhm. The newspaper devoted most of its foreign news section on 2 July 1934, to the news of the purge. Pages fifteen and sixteen of this issue featured news of the purge, with four out of seven columns on page sixteen devoted to the news from Germany. The main article, entitled 'Herr Hitler's Coup; A Midnight Descent on Munich', opened with:

Herr Hitler and his chief lieutenants stuck suddenly on Saturday at Brown-Shirt leaders and non-Nazi "reactionaries" who were alleged to have been conspiring to bring about a "second revolution". Many prominent and highly placed men were shot or 'committed suicide'.²⁷

In addition, *The Times* informed readers: 'A second reason given for the authorities' drastic action is the degrading private conduct of some of the Storm Troop leaders'.²⁸ This introductory piece led into an article by the newspapers Berlin correspondent, entitled 'Story of the Crisis', which was remarkable in its detail and depth. The

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ *TT*, 2 July 1934, 'Herr Hitler's Coup', 16.

²⁸ Ibid.

correspondent explained the justifications for the purge, detailed how events unfolded, remarked on the responses by the German public, covered General Göring's press conference in Berlin, included the names of other victims, and commented on the 'inevitability' of such action. The correspondent detailed how Röhm was alleged to have been planning a 'second revolution' 'without the Führer's knowledge and with the support, or friendly interest, of a foreign Power'.²⁹ General von Schleicher and others were said to have been 'linked up in some way or other with the revolutionaries in the conspiracy'.³⁰ Of the 'degrading conduct', the article explained: 'The unfortunate tendencies prevailing in those quarters have been known since long before the revolution'.³¹ This was not a case of Hitler discovering that Röhm and others were homosexual and retaliating, instead 'it would appear from an official statement that Herr Hitler, who had long spared the offenders in consideration of their service to his movement, suddenly lost patience with them when the plot was discovered'.³²

The level of detail provided in *The Times* article (obtained from an official, but anonymous source) was unrivalled.³³ According to this account, the Führer had hardly slept for some days, nevertheless he had flown in the middle of the night from Berlin to Munich with Dr. Goebbels and others. His attitude during the flight was 'one of tremendous resolution'.³⁴ Once Hitler had arrived in Munich he learned that, overnight, the local Storm Troops had begun mobilising after being told that the Führer and the Army was against them. This action had been quelled by Bavarian Minister of the Interior Wagner, and its leaders had been suspended. They were later arrested in Hitler's presence. Hitler 'faced them alone, and himself tore off their shoulder straps'.³⁵ Hitler and his associates then

[D]rove at 5:30a.m. to Bad Wiessee, where Röhm was at his country house. Chief Group leader Heines was also there ... The Führer entered, and in person arrested Chief of Staff Röhm, who yielded "silently and without resistance" in his bedroom. In Heine's room immediately opposite "a shameful picture" met the Führer. "Heines was in bed with a youth; the repulsive scene which accompanied their

²⁹ *TT*, 2 July 1934, 'Story of the Crisis', Berlin Corr., 16.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

arrest cannot be described. It pitilessly reveals the conditions reigning in the circles around the former Chief of Staff".³⁶

Similar versions of this account of events in Munich on 30 June 1934 appear in the contemporary literature today, including, but not limited to, Norbert Frei's *National Socialist Rule in Germany* and Richard Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*. It is therefore remarkable that the correspondent for *The Times* was able to obtain such a detailed account so soon after the purge. The details of what happened in Berlin and other places were often less precise. Other newspaper accounts, and articles relied on details from Göring's statements for the press and, in the days and weeks that followed, from other official announcements and eyewitness testimony. But none rivalled *The Times* eyewitness account for detail.

The article in *The Times* also explained the initial reaction of the German populace to the purge:

The bulk of the population, though aware that something was afoot, first received definition information from special editions of the newspapers in the early afternoon. ... there were extraordinary scenes. A newspaper seller arriving with these sheets was instantly submerged by a clamant crowd. Eventually he fought his way out hugging the tattered remnants of his wares, ran off with the crowd hotfoot after him, and took refuge in a doorway. Then special editions followed in rapid succession, each with new and more extraordinary tidings.³⁷

The general feeling of disillusionment and even disgust at the SA was documented in another article, also written by *The Times* Berlin correspondent and which made up the entire fourth column of the spread on page 16 on 2 July 1934. The article explained how many German's had complained about the 'extravagant uniforms', the 'showy' 'luxurious' cars, and the lavish entertainments in which the SA leadership indulged.³⁸ The article concluded by stating that Hitler had made much of ending these decadent displays and that the public was impressed by his 'personal reckoning with traitors, and at any rate glad that something has been done'.³⁹ In their concluding remarks, however,

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

The Times seemed to swallow the government line that they were moderates steering ‘a middle course’ and cleaning up ‘conspiratorial “reactionaries”’.⁴⁰ It is odd that *The Times* described him in this way for later they made much of the fact that Hitler had thwarted a so-called second revolution. Such was the confusion caused by the lack of hard news following the Röhm purge.

Other newspapers also made much of Hitler the moderate. In the *Daily Mail* this view was given its most strident form. The *Daily Mail* proclaimed Hitler the saviour of his country:

Hitler’s love of Germany has triumphed over private friendships and fidelity to comrades who had stood shoulder to shoulder with him in the fight for Germany’s future. He has acted with the knowledge that the best men in Germany desire to see the country purged of those whose influence was evil and whose plots were a perpetual danger.⁴¹

The German public ‘is rejoicing in Germany as if the nation had awakened from a nightmare. A fresh wind is blowing through the land’.⁴² The newspapers Special Correspondent G. Ward Price, explained the details of the ‘plot’:

News which has just come into my possession throws an entirely new light on Saturday’s tragic events. I have received the following details of the great plot which was discovered and which led Herr Hitler to take measures of so violent a nature. What Hitler had discovered was that the leaders of the Storm Troops with Captain Roehm at the head were conspiring with the leaders of the Army to overthrow his government, to drive him from power, and to take the direction of Germany into their own hands. A list of Ministers of the proposed Government fell into the hands of Hitler’s secret service. It included the names of General von Schleicher, General von Frisch, Commander of the Army, Captain Roehm, and Gregor Strasser, ex-National Socialist. Hitler learned further that the benevolent support of a foreign Power had been guaranteed for this Government, whose fixed intention would be the restoration of the monarchy.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ *DMail*, 2 July 1934, ‘Why Hitler Swooped: Midnight Disclosures’, 11.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ *DMail*, 2 July 1934, ‘The Rebel Plot Disclosed’, Spec. Corr., Sunday, Midnight, 11.

The *Daily Express* also accepted the official government line that the SA had been planning a coup. In its front page coverage of the purge the *Daily Express* declared: 'With these executions, and the death of nearly thirty Storm Troop commanders who were despatched on Saturday, the Brownshirt mutiny against Hitler is regarded as having been completely crushed'.⁴⁴ The details of the purge, continued over the page, explained: 'The failure of the coup and its energetic suppression have filled all with new hope for immediate peace'.⁴⁵

The weekly newspapers did not add much perspective. Like *The Times* they focused on providing readers with an overview of events with little inference or opinion. Relying on official statements including one released by the National Socialist party in Munich (and made available through the official German news agency), one of several articles printed in the *Observer* on 1 July said that the 'ruthless' action could be seen as a 'cleaning-up process'.⁴⁶ They emphasised the sordid nature of some of the most notorious leaders. Nevertheless, the *Observer* did conclude that the purge demonstrated that Hitler was willing 'to proceed strenuously and ruthlessly against any opposition of any kind whatever, and from whichever direction it comes'.⁴⁷

The *Manchester Guardian* was uncharacteristically cautious in its reporting of the purge. However, unlike the *Observer*, some doubt was cast upon claims that there had been a plot in Germany against the Hitler government. As with many British newspapers, the *Manchester Guardian* devoted most of its foreign news section on 2 July 1934 to news of the violence in Germany. The newspaper included several articles on the purge which described how events had transpired, but also included short biographies on some of the victims, including Schleicher, Röhm, and Heines, as well as a leader article and a special feature article. It was the special feature article, written by a 'a close observer of German affairs', that urged caution in accepting the government line regarding the purge. The article opened with the statement:

It would be unwise to take the statements made by Hitler, Göring, and the German news agencies at their face value. Until there is more

⁴⁴ *Daily Express*, 2 July 1934, 'Captain Roehm Executed', 1. Hereafter *DE*.

⁴⁵ *DE*, 2 July 1934, 'Storm Troop Leader Cries 'Heil Hitler' to Firing Squad', 2.

⁴⁶ *Obs.*, 1 July 1934, 'Plotters' Plans Discovered', Spec. Corr., Saturday night, 17.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

evidence to the contrary it is permissible to suspect that the 'plot' which Hitler is alleged to have crushed never existed.⁴⁸

But, the *Manchester Guardian* was careful not to take this line of thinking too far, and examined the possible reasons that Röhm and the SA might join forces with conservatives like Schleicher:

It was inevitable that the Storm Troops should be inarticulately angry with the course events were taking. The many genuine idealists among them saw their hopes of 'German Socialism' receding every day. The ruffians, who have brought disgrace upon the name of Germany, saw that their licence to do evil when and as they pleased was being limited and might be cancelled. Both types were naturally nervous at the prospect of a month on leave without the certainty that they would find their uniforms again in August.⁴⁹

Of Schleicher's possible involvement the author had this to say:

It may at first appear incredible that the Junker General von Schleicher should have been concerned in such a scheme with such associates. But shrewd intriguers sometimes lose their judgement, and better men than Schleicher have been taken in by less impressive plotters. ... His former friends cold-shouldered him, for Papen had replaced him in the President's confidence. He therefore turned towards the Nazi 'Radicals'; if he could not come back to office through the Reichswehr, he might come back to office through the Storm Troops.⁵⁰

Even though the author had suspicions about official statements, at this stage these official statements were all that the press had.

The *News Chronicle*, however, got closer to the truth than the *Manchester Guardian*. Correspondent Segrue found the idea that Schleicher had worked with the SA ridiculous:

The plotters seem to have acted in a singularly nonchalant fashion, ill-suited to their temperaments, and hardly making for the success of

⁴⁸ *MG*, 2 July 1934, 'Storm Troops' Future', 6.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

their projects ... It is suggested both that the Storm Troop leaders wanted a “second revolution” — that is, one to enforce their pure Nazi doctrine — and that their allies were General von Schleicher and the reactionaries, including Herr von Papen, who, however, has not been mentioned by name: men to whom Nazism is hateful, and who influenced the restoration of normal conditions in Germany. To explain away this contradiction, it is suggested that the Storm Troop leaders were using the “reactionaries”, or that the “reactionaries” were using the Storm Troop leaders in a project of mutual destructive purposes.⁵¹

Segrue also found the claim that Papen and Schleicher worked together unbelievable, especially as the former had ousted the latter, working to replace him with Hitler in January 1933. Furthermore, Segrue found the idea that Schleicher had worked with a foreign power (alleged to have been France) ‘difficult to believe’ — ‘a man of high personal character, and a patriot (murdered with his wife by the Nazi Guards in circumstances which may never be known), could have conspired with a foreign Power against his own country’.⁵² In all, Segrue was highly suspect of official statements regarding the weekends events.

* * * * *

As the facts about the purge became more widely available, the attitude of the Press began to harden. Over the next week, correspondents commented, in particular, on the rising death toll which, by 5 July 1934, was around sixty according to the *Manchester Guardian*.⁵³ The same article commented: ‘How many of the hundreds of prisoners known to have been taken will meet their death through so-called suicide or through the firing parties of the black-uniformed S.S. ... following summary party justice, can only be guessed at’.⁵⁴

The newspapers then focused on the ‘justice’ meted out to those who had been purged. The *Daily Telegraph* for instance, in a leader on 3 July, stated:

⁵¹ *NC*, 2 July 1934, ‘A Very Remarkable ‘Plot’’, John Segrue, Berlin, 1, continued on 2 under ‘Was There a Plot?’

⁵² *NC*, 2 July 1934, ‘Was There a Plot?’, 2.

⁵³ *MG*, 5 July 1934, ‘Von Papen to Stay in Office as Vice-Chancellor, Berlin Corr., 9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

The method of June 30 was to make sure of silence either by shooting out of hand or by immediate execution after summary court-martial. If the Chancellor is at all susceptible to foreign opinion he can hardly fail to observe that the world which had no sympathy with traitors has still a very strong regard for the forms of law.⁵⁵

For the *News Chronicle* the purge was symptomatic of the way that the Nazi regime worked. It was the:

[D]ictatorship at work. The bloody methods pursued in Berlin and in Munich last week-end are not exceptional. They are merely one more illustration of the price which has to be paid for its alleged 'efficiency' and the results, inevitable in one form or another, which follow when tyrants encroach on liberty, and then, as always, fall out among themselves.⁵⁶

The Spectator was mocking of Nazi justice, writing:

The hurriedly-summoned courts-martial and the firing-squads have completed the purge; and the leaders, priding themselves on their splendid energy in butchering their ex-colleagues, receive their meed of deeply-felt thanks and sincere appreciation from the remote and enfeebled head of the State. 'Law and order,' then, for the present at least, seem to be re-established. But whose law, and whose order?⁵⁷

The Times, by 3 July, had dropped any talk of 'moderates'. On that day it printed a leader comparing the methods of the German dictatorship to the 'bloody intrigues of [Shakespeare's] *Richard III*'.⁵⁸ This, observed *The Times*, was 'the stage of political development to which Germany has reverted'.⁵⁹ The leading article, was entitled 'Medieval Methods', and to some extent at least compensated for *The Times* silence on the terror. For this reason it should be quoted at length:

So far as methods of government and respect for human life are concerned, Germany has ceased for the time being to be a modern European country. She has reverted to medieval conditions. No pity need be wasted on the dead Nazi leaders, who on every reckoning have

⁵⁵ *Daily Telegraph*, 3 July 1934, 'Germany Under the New Terror', Leader, 14. Hereafter *DT*.

⁵⁶ *NC*, 3 July 1934, 'The Price of Tyranny', Leader, 8.

⁵⁷ *TS*, 6 July 1934, 'The Terror In Germany', 4.

⁵⁸ *TT*, 3 July 1934, 'Medieval Methods', Leader, 15.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

richly deserved their fate. So long as they were in authority at the head of the Brown Army they were a menace to peace and to all orderly progress ... What is ominously symptomatic of the present state of Germany is the savagery, the disregard for all the forms of law which are the indispensable safeguards of justice and which are sacrosanct in every modern civilized State. What is of still deeper significance is the indifference — even the complacency — with which this resort of to the political methods of the Middle Ages is apparently regarded.

In other countries, and especially in Great Britain, the reports were received at first with incredulity by all who did not realize how completely the common standards have ceased to apply in Germany. It seemed inconceivable that the head, even the despotic head, of a modern Government should order the arrest and the summary execution of numbers of his principal lieutenants. It is even harder to believe since among the victims chosen for the massacre were men who had been his closest associates and had been rewarded with high office and entrusted with great powers. This might be credible in Russia, or in the Turkey of Abdul Hamid's time, or in some medieval monarchy. It could not occur in a great European country in the twentieth century.⁶⁰

So, after a shaky start in those first few days when newspapers had to rely for information on press reports from the Nazi dictatorship itself, the British press soon found its voice. They wholeheartedly denounced the violent methods employed by Hitler, Göring, and others in dealing with the alleged coup in Germany. The methods employed were barbaric, medieval, and were at odds with the way that western European countries operated. For *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *News Chronicle*, *The Spectator* and *New Statesman and Nation*, the true nature of the dictatorship had once again reared its ugly head. As the *New Statesman and Nation* wrote on 7 July 1934: 'Whatever views may be held in Germany of Hitler's latest exploit, it has found no approval abroad. It is generally felt that to murder your comrades in arms is a different think for murdering your enemies, even when unarmed'.⁶¹

This criticism did not escape the attention of German authorities. On 5 July 1934 *The Times* wrote:

There is no doubt that the foreign condemnation of the methods of last week-end has been a deep disappointment to official circles, where the reasons are to some extent understood though felt to be unjustified. Yesterday's leading article in *The Times* and other British comments

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ *NSe&N*, 7 July 1934, 1.

have now been given publicity here as examples of foreign inability or unwillingness to understand German internal affairs.⁶²

Goebbels attacks on the foreign press was reported by the *Daily Telegraph*, who informed readers of the confiscation and prohibition of several British newspapers, including their own. But, reported the *Daily Telegraph*, British newspapers were not the only ones targeted:

His extraordinary onslaught was extended to include the Press of nearly the whole world. A campaign of lies, he declared, had been instituted by the foreign Press which in its malice could only be compared with the fairy tale propaganda adjacent Germany during the War.⁶³

In his broadcast Goebbels declared:

I believe that I speak in the name of the whole German people if I protest with disgust and indignation, and declare with all frankness, that the German Government will not tolerate in this country foreign journalists who thus set nations against each other and conjure up an atmosphere which makes honourable and unprejudiced relationships between peoples impossible ... This has nothing to do with freedom of opinion. What is here sowing its wild oats is the worst form of revolver journalism, which can do honour to no people.⁶⁴

A small note that accompanied the article in the *Daily Telegraph* informed readers that both the London *Daily Express* and the *Observer* had been banned in Germany for eight weeks for their reporting of the Röhm purge.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the *Daily Express* reported on 11 July that all copies of its newspaper that had arrived in the previous few days had been 'confiscated and destroyed by order of the Government'.⁶⁶ Other newspapers had been criticised by Goebbels, including, the *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Post*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Daily Mail* and *Daily Herald*. The *Morning Post* explained that its own newspaper had been criticised for one passage regarding a comment about President Hindenburg's

⁶² *TT*, 5 July 1934, 'The Hitler Coup', Berlin Corr., 14.

⁶³ *DT*, 11 July 1934, 'Dr. Goebbels attacks the World's Press', From Our Own Correspondent, Berlin, 13.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *DT*, 11 July 1934, 'More Papers Banned', B.U.P. and Reuter, 13.

⁶⁶ *DE*, 11 July 1934, 'Germany and the "Daily Express"', 1.

wishes.⁶⁷ The article explained that the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Express* 'were evidently the most serious offenders'.⁶⁸ In future, explained the *Morning Post*, for those foreign newspapers still allowed to circulate 'newsagents will be allowed to keep foreign newspapers in stock, but not to display them as they do at present'.⁶⁹

In his attack of the press, Goebbels made specific mention of the work of foreign correspondents living and working in Germany. Goebbels decried the work of the press and was reported by the *Morning Post* to have announced:

One would have thought ... that the international Press, with its well-paid special correspondents in Berlin, would have reported the matter objectively. But except for a few serious newspapers, the great part of the foreign Press had published hysterical and malicious lies.⁷⁰

The *News Chronicle* responded to these allegations:

From a responsible Minister, so grave a charge would demand serious investigation. From the lips of a gentle-man who apparently thinks that the indiscriminate shooting without trial of scores of persons held to have been engaged in a 'revolt' which, in fact, never took place, is a quite normal and praiseworthy incident in the life of a patriotic Government, it is unworthy of attention.⁷¹

The *New Statesman and Nation*, meanwhile, argued that any errors on the part of correspondents were the fault of the German government:

No doubt he [Goebbels] could point to errors in some of the reports as to the fate of this or that victim in Hitler's bloody coup. But for this he and his colleagues have only themselves to blame; they do their best to hamper journalists in getting at the truth in Germany. The real cause of Goebbel's fury, however, is obviously the hostile judgment which the

⁶⁷ *MP*, 11 July 1934, 'Dr. Goebbels Angry', Berlin Corr., 13.

The article in the *Morning Post* criticised by Goebbels seems to be from 5 July in which the paper reported that Papen was to remain in office: 'It may be taken as probable that Herr von Papen has adopted the course he has in deference to the wishes of President von Hindenburg'. 5 July 1933, 'Germany Grows Restive', Berlin Corr., 11.

⁶⁸ *MP*, 11 July 1934, 'Dr. Goebbels Angry', Berlin Corr., 13.

⁶⁹ *MP*, 12 July 1934, 'Germany Shrugs her Shoulders', Berlin Corr., 11.

⁷⁰ *MP*, 11 July 1934, 'Dr. Goebbels Angry', Berlin Corr., 13.

⁷¹ *NC*, 11 July 1934, 'A Tottering Idol?', Leader, 10.

foreign press has passed, with practical unanimity, on the gangster exploit of June 30th.⁷²

On 13 July 1934, Hitler addressed the Reichstag about the violent purge. It was hoped that the speech would provide some answers about the motivation for the purge. *The Times* reported that prior to the Reichstag session the nation was still waiting for an explanation for the violence. Apart from the deaths of the Schleicher's, Röhm, and seven SA commanders, 'the country has still been vouchsafed no other information about the revolutionary-reactionary-international plot than that contained in the official announcements of June 30'.⁷³

In the event, the speech was a disappointment. The *Manchester Guardian* reported that the speech 'adds nothing of significance to what was already known'.⁷⁴ It was merely a description of events and a justification for the action. It seemed that the *News Chronicle's* prediction about the speech had been correct: 'The object of this manoeuvre is apparently to settle Herr Hitler a little more firmly on his pedestal as the popular idol, his position having been a little shaken by recent unfortunate events'.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, the Reichstag session was reported in detail by the British press. British correspondents not only described the atmosphere in the Reichstag, but also quoted Hitler's address at length. The *Daily Express*, for instance, reported how the mostly National Socialist uniformed deputies greeted a 'brown-uniformed' Hitler with 'thunderous "Heils"'.⁷⁶ In an article accompanying its front-page coverage of the address, the *Daily Express*, described Hitler's speech:

During the greater part of the speech Hitler's voice was wild, screaming, hysterical ... the voice of a man on the verge of breakdown. Not since the early days of his career has he spoken more fanatically. The roars of applause that greeted him from the serried rows of Storm Troopers can only be likened to the hoarse roar of a Roman mob at the arena ... Then suddenly the hysterical note died, and the calm, assured

⁷² *NSe3N*, 14 July 1934, 33.

⁷³ *TT*, 11 July 1934, 'The Reichstag Summoned', Berlin Corr., 14.

⁷⁴ *MG*, 16 July 1934, 'Herr Hitler's Speech', Leader, 8.

⁷⁵ *NC*, 11 July 1934, 'A Tottering Idol?', Leader, 10.

⁷⁶ *DE*, 14 July 1934, 'Hitler Answers for 77 Deaths', 1.

tones of the statesman took its place. It was impossible to know which was the real Hitler.⁷⁷

The speech went for one hour and forty minutes, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, and revealed all the intricacies of the plot planned by Röhm and Schleicher to overthrow Hitler's government. The *Manchester Guardian* recorded Hitler's words:

In these circumstances I could only make one decision. If the disaster was to be prevented I must act like lightning. Only ruthless and bloody intervention could prevent the revolution from spreading. There was no question then, that it was better that a hundred mutineers and conspirators should be destroyed than that ten thousand innocent S.A. men on the one side and ten thousand innocent men on the other side should be led to death ... It was perfectly clear to me that only one man could and must go and act against Röhm, who had broken his loyalty to me and I had to call him to task for this.⁷⁸

Defending his actions, Hitler declared:

If anyone raise the charge against me that we did not use the ordinary courts for the sentencing, I can only say that in this hour I was responsible for the fate of the German nation and that I myself was the supreme court of the German people for this twenty-four hours.⁷⁹

He continued: 'I gave the order to shoot those who were mainly guilty of this treason, and I furthermore gave the order to burn out the tumours of our inner poisoning'.⁸⁰ This was a passage from his address that most British newspapers focused upon. The translation of Hitler's declaration differed in some newspapers, but the point remained the same — Hitler did not shy away from the fact that it had been his decision to shoot and summarily execute those who were part of the alleged plot. Importantly though, while accepting responsibility, Hitler was justifying his actions and amplifying the danger that the so-called plot or 'second revolution' had posed to law and order in Germany. And while Hitler's address did not reveal the names of all the victims (as some had hoped), it did reveal the death toll from the purge — seventy-seven — which included, according to the *Morning Post*:

⁷⁷ *DE*, 14 July 1934, 'How the Speech Sounded', By a 'Daily Express Representative Who Listened In', 1.

⁷⁸ *MG*, 14 July 1934, 'Story of Mutiny', Reuter, 13.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Nineteen high Storm Troop leaders, 31 ordinary Storm Troopers and members, and three black uniformed leaders were shot as participants in the plot.

Thirteen Storm Troop leaders and civilians were shot ‘in resisting arrest’, and

Three ‘committed suicide’.

Five members of the party not Storm Troopers were shot for complicity.

Finally, three S.S. men who were guilty of ‘disgraceful mishandling of prisoners’ were also shot.⁸¹

Overall, Hitler’s address to the Reichstag was seen by the British press as somewhat of a propaganda failure. The *Daily Telegraph* reported, although on what evidence is not clear, that the German public were ‘not convinced’ by Hitler’s justifications for the purge. On 16 July 1934 the newspaper commented:

Germany has had time to think. The spell the Chancellor cast over his listeners has worn off; the glamour has faded from the story of vice conquered and virtue triumphant; intelligence has returned to the masses. The result is that to-day thinking Germans are unanimous in believing the speech was “empty.” Where has all the rhetoric led? Where is the evidence for the plot? These are the questions asked.⁸²

No documents were presented as evidence despite the fact that ‘countless documents’ had been found and read by Hitler, none of which had been ‘submitted to competent court for proper examination’.⁸³ *The Spectator* found the speech ‘empty’, with an article printed on 20 July, declaring:

The speech he delivered was unconvincing. The story he told was uncorroborated, and could as well have been fabrication as fact. The promised list of victims of the terror has never been forthcoming. Apart from a few notorious cases mentioned by Herr Hitler himself no one knows who was killed or why.⁸⁴

Discontent was high, *The Spectator* noted: ‘Public opinion in Germany today means of making itself articulate, but the skepticism and disillusionment reported by British and

⁸¹ *MP*, 14 July 1934, ‘Hitler’s Own Story of the Plot to Kill Him’, 11.

⁸² *DT*, 16 July 1934, ‘Germany Not Convinced’, Berlin Corr., 11.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *TS*, 20 July 1934, ‘Hitler’s Next Move’, 76.

other newspaper correspondents in Germany are in all the circumstances more likely to develop than diminish'.⁸⁵ Importantly the newspaper acknowledged:

[T]he fact has to be faced that two of the legends on which the Hitler *régime* is based, the legend of a united party extending till it becomes a united State, and the legend of an administration capable of making good its promises, have been finally and comprehensively shattered. Unity has not been restored to the Nazi Party because a hundred or two representatives of the immediately discordant elements are shot in cold blood, shot while resisting or shot while trying to escape. Intimidation no doubt has its temporary effect, but Herr Hitler himself must be more intensely conscious than any man in Germany at the possibility of fresh challenges to his authority at any moment and in any quarter.⁸⁶

In reporting so far, much of the British press missed the point. If the German people were unhappy or unconvinced by Hitler's explanations for the purge, they had precious few ways of expressing their opinions. And one of the lessons to be drawn from the purge was that *any* dissent, real or imagined, would be ruthlessly crushed by the regime. It was expecting rather a lot of the German people that they would openly express their opinions in a dictatorship which had not hesitated to shoot senior members of its own leadership. Hitler's fulminations perhaps look as unconvincing in Berlin as they did in London, but at least in the latter city it was safe to say so.

An article in *The Spectator* by Professor Guglielmo Ferrero⁸⁷, made a different point to that of *The Spectator's* own staff. Ferrero wrote:

Will the events that have been taking place in Germany at last open the eyes of the free countries? Will they make them realise that the Nazi and Fascist governments differ from representative governments in this above all, that they are illegitimate governments which have set out to discover a new principle of authority outside the principles of Monarchy and Democracy, and, having failed to find it, rest on no principle of law whatever? The heads of the Nazi government, like the Fascists, are endeavouring to convince the world by public speeches that they have established a marvellous *régime*, dazzling in its novelty. But all this fine talk does little to conceal from discerning eyes the

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Professor Guglielmo Ferrero was an Italian historian, journalist, and novelist, who wrote *The Greatness and Decline of Rome* (5 volumes). He fled fascism in Italy and took up a post at the University of Geneva.

incurable weakness of the two *régimes* — the absence of any legal title, clear, precise, and recognised by the people.⁸⁸

The lesson that should be drawn from the Röhm purge, in this view, was that life under Hitlerism could be nasty, brutish, and short, and that other states should wake up to the reality that they were facing. *The Times* felt that the recent action did open the eyes of many to the dictatorship. Hitler's announcement that he was the 'supreme court' in Germany had shattered many of the illusions about the regime. Importantly, *The Times* reported, it also shattered illusions about the dictatorship in Germany:

[T]he chapter of the 'clean-up' in the history of National Socialist Germany may be said to have been closed as far as it ever can be closed. Its final significance cannot yet be judged, for it has destroyed something that is unlikely ever to be completely reconstructed: the illusion of indestructible patriotic unity, of the eternal loyalty to each other which the National Socialist leaders so often proclaimed ... None can tell to what this new and shaken frame of mind will intimately lead.⁸⁹

* * * * *

News of President Hindenburg's failing health set aside remaining questions about the purge. After a long bout of illness, the aged President Hindenburg died on 2 August, 1934. His death was an important turning point in the Nazis' pursuit of total and unrivalled power. It was the final step in the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship. This was a fact recognised by the British press. Prior to his death many British newspapers had theorised that Hitler would combine the offices of Chancellor and President, concentrating all power into his own hands. For instance, *The Times* reported:

The idea has often been discussed that the application of the National-Socialist *Führerprinzip* (principle of leadership) to the State should be completed by the creation of the post of *Reichsführer*, which would thus unite these two offices. It would not be surprising, in the event of the President's death, if a Bill were passed making this change, and if this were quickly submitted to a national plebiscite.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ *TS*, 20 July 1934, 'Byzantine Germany', By Professor Guglielmo Ferrero, 79.

⁸⁹ *TT*, 16 July 1934, 'Herr Hitler's Apologia', Berlin Corr., 12.

⁹⁰ *TT*, 2 August 1934, 'Hindenburg Sinking', Berlin Corr. 10.

Other alternatives were raised, and discussed, by British correspondents but it was understood that whatever step taken would not lessen the gains already made by the Nazi government. For instance, some newspapers suggested that an honorary President might be appointed. The *Daily Telegraph* suggested that while it might be decided that there might not be another President, it was also possible that ‘Some generally respected man will be made President as mere figurehead’.⁹¹ An article provided by Reuter in the *Manchester Guardian* put forth the Duke of Brunswick, the son-in-law of the ex-Kaiser, General Field Marshal August von Mackensen (explained as a former rival to Hindenburg and popular hero in Germany for his war record), or President von Hindenburg’s son, Colonel Oskar von Hindenburg (a landed estate owner in East Prussia) as possible candidates for the title of ‘honorary’ President.⁹²

As the President’s end approached, many newspapers printed articles celebrating his life, written by prominent British statesmen or writers the day. Winston Churchill wrote a feature article for the *Daily Mail* while David Lloyd George wrote a special article for the *Daily Express* entitled ‘My Old Enemy’ that appeared on 2 August 1934.⁹³ On 3 August though, in reporting the President’s death, the focus of most newspaper reports was the advent of Hitler to the position of, in the words of the *Daily Mail*, ‘the world’s most powerful ruler’.⁹⁴ The *News Chronicle*, with front-page coverage, proclaimed: ‘Hitler out-Kaiser’s the Kaiser’.⁹⁵ It reported:

He becomes Head of the Army and of the Navy and the whole bureaucracy, State and Municipal, of the land; he will have the nomination of all German Ambassadors and Ministers; foreign diplomatists will be accredited to him; and the final decision between peace and war so far as Germany is concerned will rest in his hands ... The technical legality of last night’s decree is nowhere challenged. By exercising the ‘full powers’ conferred on the Government by the Nazi Reichstag in January, 1933, Herr Hitler could disregard constitutional niceties.⁹⁶

⁹¹ *DT*, 1 August 1934, ‘Hitler Ready to Fly to Hindenburg’, Berlin Corr., 11.

⁹² *MG*, 1 August 1934, ‘The Question all Germany is Asking: Possible Candidates’, Reuter, 9.

⁹³ *DMail*, 2 August 1934, ‘Hindenburg in War and Peace’, By the Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill, P.C. M.P., 8. And *DE*, 2 August 1934, ‘My Old Enemy’, By the Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George, 10.

⁹⁴ *DMail*, 3 August 1934, ‘Hitler the World’s Most Powerful Ruler’, 11.

⁹⁵ *NC*, 3 August 1934, ‘Hitler Out-Kaisers the Kaiser’, Berlin Corr., 1.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

In all, the *News Chronicle* stated, Hitler's new powers were 'far exceeding those exercised by Signor Mussolini or Stalin, powers even beyond the ambition of any Eastern potentate'.⁹⁷ The *Manchester Guardian* similarly reported that Hitler had become 'the most powerful dictator in Europe, if not the whole world'.⁹⁸ He had become more powerful than the Kaiser ever was because 'he is dictator over a unified, non-Federal Germany and is untrammelled by a Legislature which qualified the former Imperial ruler's sovereignty'.⁹⁹ In doing so, the Weimar democracy had been dealt its final blow — the constitution had been 'swept aside'.¹⁰⁰

What final powers Hitler would hold would be left to a plebiscite. The *Daily Telegraph* remarked that there was 'No room was ever left for doubt concerning the result'.¹⁰¹ As a leader in late August observed: 'The atmosphere of Germany is not healthy for opposition to the governing power. The concentration camps and the events of June 30 are sufficient warning to those who would openly express dissent'.¹⁰² The propaganda of the previous weeks had 'not been directed against opponents, of whom none dare to reveal themselves. Its intent has been to secure from the German people a vote so overwhelmingly in favour of Herr Hitler as to impress indelibly the foreign mind'.¹⁰³ Even though there was clear discontent and disillusionment amongst the German population, Hitler's success in the plebiscite was certain.

* * * * *

Whatever purposes the purge had meant to accomplish for Hitler in his relations with the party and the army, it was a disaster for the regime in the British press. Instead of the Press congratulating Hitler and the government for dealing with the rowdy and violent SA, they denounced the state-sanctioned execution and murder. Initially, this had not been so clear cut. In the eyes of the Press, bereft of information about what had actually happened, the Röhm purge was first portrayed as a victory for the moderates against the wilder elements in the party. As events became clearer, however, the true

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ *MG*, 3 August 1934, 'How the News was Announced', Berlin Corr., 9.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ *MG*, 3 August 1934, 'Constitution Swept Aside', Press Association Foreign Special, 9.

¹⁰¹ *DT*, 18 August 1934, 'A Plebiscite Which Can Tell Nothing', Leader, 10.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

nature of the purge (if not always, its intent) were subjected to unrelenting criticism. The action had taken place outside of the legal framework of the state and, for that, they were condemned. It confirmed to many correspondents and their newspapers what they already knew, or at least suspected — that the Nazi ‘government’ was a brutal dictatorship. The violent purge sparked widespread outspoken criticism of a kind not seen even during the months of political terror in 1933. For this was not just illegal violence, it was violence perpetrated by the Nazi government against its fellow members and colleagues. It was no longer violence by some rowdy SA members against members of a rival party, like the Communists, but was state sanctioned, government action. Legality and due process had been overturned for the weekend of 30 June — 1 July 1934, and the head of the state had assisted in the murder, or execution, of fellow ministers and officials. And for this, the Nazi government was condemned by the British press. It was a rare occasion in which most British newspapers, with the exception of a few popular dailies, criticised and denounced the Nazi regime. And, it clearly surprised the Nazi government who attacked the press for their reports and condemnation.

As for the plebiscite, it did not demonstrate to the foreign powers, or the British press, the complete unity of Germany under National Socialism. The plebiscite was not a complete success for Hitler’s government, especially given the propaganda that surrounded it. Surprisingly for the Hitler regime, and the British press, there was some opposition which saw approximately six million who either voted no or abstained from voting. Commenting on these votes the *New Statesman and Nation* wrote:

In the circumstances, when every vote of abstention required physical courage as well as independence of mind, the vote of four millions against Hitler, and the two millions abstentions and 800,000 spoilt ballot papers are of real significance.¹⁰⁴

Clearly, as the *New Statesman and Nation* explained: ‘Opposition and discontent in the Third Reich is increasing, as every observer of Germany has noted, and as was indeed to be expected’.¹⁰⁵ The initial excitement and enthusiasm for the regime was wearing off. Despite declarations from Hitler that the revolution was over — and that Germany was a National Socialist state — opposition and tension still existed in Germany, not least

¹⁰⁴ *NSc&N*, 25 August 1934, ‘Opposition to Hitler’, 226.

¹⁰⁵ *TS*, 24 August 1934, ‘After the Plebiscite’, By H. Powys Greenwood, Munich, 247.

amongst the Christian churches in Germany. Regardless, by the end of August 1934, Hitler was undisputed leader of Germany. At the Nazi party rally in early September 1934, Hitler was, according to the *Morning Post*, 'hailed like a King'.¹⁰⁶

However, at least one battle was still being waged, as *The Spectator* wrote days after the plebiscite vote:

In spite of courageous resistance of certain elements in both the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches the whole trend is towards the subjection of Christianity Germany to German Nationalism. Nothing, it may be repeated, could more fundamentally alienate Germany from most other Western countries, this country most of all.¹⁰⁷

So, while Hitler and the Nazi party had managed to secure their hold on power, there were still areas of opposition or trouble for the regime, which continued to be reported in British newspapers. Even as the focus turned to foreign affairs, specifically German rearmament and its aggressive territorial demands, the British press still demonstrated an interest in the internal affairs of the country. The British press continued to give space to domestic affairs which included reporting the undermining of the Christian churches in Germany, as well as the increasingly brutal persecution of the German Jewish population, both of which are the focus of the chapters that follow.

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¹⁰⁶ *MP* 5 September 1934, 'Hitler Hailed Like a King', 11.

¹⁰⁷ *TS*, 24 August 1934, 'Caesar or Christ?', 241.

Chapter Six — ‘Cross and Swastika’: The Struggle for the Churches in Germany

From 1933 till the onset of the Second World War British newspapers, to varying degrees, followed the struggle of (and for) the churches in Germany. For newspapers like *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*, the attempted coordination and suppression of religion in Germany was a matter of extreme importance. News about the churches was often featured alongside articles charting Germany’s rearmament and increasing territorial demands. For the press, interest in the church conflict in Germany was centred on two themes — the struggle for religious freedom, and the existence of opposition within a dictatorship. British newspapers reported the struggles of the both the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches in their attempt to retain autonomy, independence, and spiritual freedom.

* * * * *

Catholicism first came under attack in the Nazi party’s war against parliamentary democracy in early 1933. An integral part of this was the suppression, isolation and persecution of political groups, particularly the parties of the left. But importantly this also involved the undermining and removal of the influence of the Catholic Church from politics — specifically the Centre Party, led from May 1933 by former Chancellor Heinrich Brüning, and the Bavarian People’s Party. Early reports by British correspondents detailed attempts by the Centre Party to accommodate and work with the Nazi party ‘in building up the Fatherland’.¹ But the Nazis, intent on becoming the sole political party in Germany, shunned these conciliatory efforts. Instead, Hitler sought to destroy the Centre party by other means. He opened negotiations with the Vatican in Rome to secure the removal of political Catholicism from Germany. The negotiations led by Vice Chancellor Franz von Papen on behalf of Hitler resulted in the *Reichskonkordat*, or Concordat, between the Holy See and the German Reich, signed on 20 July 1933. It guaranteed the independence of the Catholic Church, especially the freedom of Catholic youth organisations and schools. In turn, the Catholic Church was to remain outside of politics; Catholic clergy were not allowed to participate in political activity, and the remaining Catholic political parties, the Centre Party and the Bavarian People’s Party, were to cease to exist.

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, 8 May 1933, ‘The Centre Party in Germany’, 12. Hereafter *MG*.

The signing of the Concordat was reported by *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Daily Mail*, *Morning Post*, and the *Daily Express*. According to the *Daily Mail*, the Concordat ‘defines the respective spheres of Church and State in Germany’.² The *Manchester Guardian* reported that this was to be achieved by ‘the complete withdrawal of Catholic priests and Catholic organisations, particularly the Centre Party, from politics’.³ Quoted by the *Daily Mail*, Hitler announced that the Concordat:

[G]ave sufficient guarantee that the members of the Roman Catholic Association [ie Centre Party and Bavarian People’s Party] will henceforth place themselves unhesitatingly at the service of the National-Socialist State ... I am happy in the conviction that a period has now ended in which, unhappily only too often, religious and political interests were in apparently insoluble opposition. The concordat will in this direction serve the cause of peace, which all desire.⁴

Days later, British newspapers reported the promulgation of a new law forbidding the revival or creation of political parties. The Nazi party was now the only political party, and the Catholic church had been sidelined and removed from politics.

The signing of the Concordat came after months of violence against Catholic priests, politicians, and members of Catholic organisations. Voigt, in a feature article in the *Manchester Guardian*, expressed surprise at the swiftness of negotiations and the silence of the Vatican to attacks on its clergy, which included arrests and meetings that were broken up ‘often with great brutality’.⁵ He wrote: ‘That the Holy See should have contemplated such outrages almost without a murmur ... is perhaps surprising — all the more so since Hitlerite conceptions are fundamentally hostile to those of Roman Catholicism’.⁶ *The Times* had also reported the violence against the clergy and associated organisations. One notable incident occurred in Munich in June 1933. A congress of the Roman Catholic Journeymen’s Societies meeting in Munich, was violently broken up by

² *Daily Mail*, 1 July 1933, ‘Catholic Heads Join Nazis’, Berlin Corr., 10. Hereafter *DMail*.

³ *MG*, 10 July 1933, ‘Motives of Both Sides’, Spec. Corr., 12.

⁴ *DMail*, 1 July 1933, ‘Catholic Heads Join Nazis’, 10.

⁵ *MG*, 10 July 1933, ‘Motives of Both Sides’, 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*

SA.⁷ Priests were reported to have been brutally removed from the Congress and taken out into the street where they were beaten in full view of passersby. Reported justification for the attack centred on allegations that the members had worn ‘yellowish’ shirts and had sung the Horst Wessel song with ‘incorrect words’, and had made comments about liberating Germany from Hitler.⁸ The congress was subsequently called off by its members.

The signing of the Concordat did not necessarily mean an end to disagreements and conflict between the National Socialist state and the Catholic Church. As Voigt commented in July 1933: ‘whether the new concordat is anything more than a pause in a gigantic struggle between two conceptions that can with difficulty — if at all — live side by side in the same state is unpredictable at the moment’.⁹ Indeed, for Voigt:

Hitler’s “Totalitarian State” is incompatible with Roman Catholicism or indeed Christianity. The whole future of religion as such has been darkened by the Hitlerite challenge in Germany — and perhaps not in Germany alone — and deep misgivings are felt by German Catholic and Evangelical clergy alike.¹⁰

‘But’, he wrote, ‘for the time being Catholic Germany has been silenced and Hitler has gained a big success, a success which for all the brutality of the methods employed shows that the German dictatorship is by no means incapable of skilled diplomacy’.¹¹ And, he noted:

The Vatican does, indeed, gain one advantage through the concordat. Whereas in Italy Catholicism is the religion of the overwhelming majority of the people and, therefore, as a matter of course a State religion, in Germany, it is the religion of a minority. By the new concordat it acquires a status of a State religion side by side with the Evangelical Church.¹²

⁷ According to the article the Journeymen’s Societies were ‘associated with the Catholic Bavarian People’s Party’.

The Times, 12 June 1933, ‘Disorders in Munich’, ‘From Our Own Correspondent, Berlin’, 14. Hereafter *TT*.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *MG*, 10 July 1933, ‘Motives of both Sides’, 12.

¹⁰ *MG*, 10 July 1933, ‘Nazi Agreement with the Vatican’, 12

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Manchester Guardian*, 10 July 1933, ‘Motives of both Sides’, 12.

Attacks on the clergy and other Catholic figures did not end, but some concessions were initially made. Several British newspapers reported the freeing of priests, who had been imprisoned in concentration camps. The *Morning Post* reported that Hitler had ordered the ‘release of all priests and leaders of such organisations arrested in connection with their dissolution, and has forbidden such measures to be taken in the future’.¹³ Additionally, the *Morning Post* noted that Hitler had reversed the Prussian order for the dissolution of several Catholic organisations.

Nevertheless, instances of violence and arrest continued and were often reported by British newspapers. In November 1933, the *Morning Post* printed excerpts from a German Bishop¹⁴, who alleged:

140 Catholic Priests are under preventive arrest, and in the Palatinate Catholic priests are paraded through the streets bare-foot and with posters bearing libellous inscriptions hanging over their shoulders in sandwich-board fashion.¹⁵

And in December 1933, the *Manchester Guardian* reported the arrest of several Catholic priests by the Bavarian secret police. Their arrest was for ‘spreading atrocity stories about the conditions in the Dachau concentration camp’.¹⁶ The charge that priests were becoming involved in politics by denouncing the actions of the National Socialist government was a common excuse for the arrest and imprisonment of priests and members of the church.

Despite the Concordat, in 1934 tension only increased between the Catholic church and the Nazi government. The *Manchester Guardian* reported: ‘an unacknowledged state of war exists in many parts of Germany between the servants of the State and the Roman Catholics’.¹⁷ The Reich Concordat was a ‘comprehensive document’, but ‘as all history has shown, it is not easy to define the limits of the temporal and spiritual spheres ... the

¹³ *Morning Post*, 10 July 1933, ‘Priests Released’, Berlin Corr., 13. Hereafter *MP*.

¹⁴ The speech was given by Bishop for Tyrol and for Vorarlberg at a meeting of Catholic teachers at Dornbin in Vorarlberg, Austria, according to the article in the *Morning Post*. *MP*, 15 November 1933, ‘The Pope Indicts Germany’, Vienna Corr., 13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *MG*, 1 December 1933, ‘Atrocity Tales’ in Germany’, Berlin Corr., 13.

¹⁷ *MG*, 25 January 1934, ‘Church and State in Germany’, Leader, 8.

German “totalitarian” State has shown itself exacting of the Church’s interpretations’.¹⁸

In practice this meant:

Catholic associations may exist for social and religious purposes, yet their full freedom has, in fact, been constantly restricted by police command in many parts of Germany. The right of priests to preach is undisputed, yet sermons criticising anti-Semitism and the frantic vapourings of “German Christians” have led to violent attacks in the official Nazi press upon their preachers.¹⁹

An understanding of the government line on church affairs was hard to define, because ‘It is not hard to find innumerable contradictions in official definitions of the Government’s attitude towards the Church’.²⁰ So while Papen tried to reassure Catholics ‘less prominent colleagues in executive positions translate policy into practice’.²¹

Relations were further strained in April 1934, when the Pope denounced the treatment of Catholic youth organisations in Germany during his Easter message. Referring to the conditions of the Concordat, *The Times* explained that the Vatican had received ‘a promise of protection and recognition by the “Nazi” State of non-political associations and organizations of Catholics’.²² However, a delay in their recognition, as well as declarations from Baldur von Shirach, leader of the Hitler Youth, that his organisation was going to ‘absorb the Catholics this year’, had caused concern.²³ The *Observer* commented:

Every observer of German internal affairs knows quite well that the Nazi-Catholic conflict is not merely a political duel; it is a life-and-death struggle for the souls of German Catholic youth. However much Rome may hate Moscow materialism from which National Socialism claims to have saved it, it does not intend to hand over the education of millions of German Catholic youth to mystically-minded, brown-shirted, pagan pantheists.²⁴

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² *TT*, 4 April 1934, ‘Germany and the Vatican’, *Leader*, 13.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Observer*, 8 April 1934, ‘First Shots in the Conflict’, ‘From Our Special Correspondent, Berlin’, 19. Hereafter *Obs.*

The freedom of the Catholic press was also at stake, reported *The Times*, following a judgement by the Duisburg District Court²⁵, in which a ruling essentially declared ‘the so-called Catholic Press is superfluous’.²⁶ *The Times* explained: ‘Their right, which is admitted by the Concordat, publicly to teach and explain the doctrines of their Church would be materially restricted were the Roman Catholic Press to disappear from the Reich’.²⁷

As the press noted, tensions renewed between the Nazis and Catholic Church throughout the 1930s, over issues such as youth organisations, education, freedom of the press, and racial and social policies. These protests and the ensuing negotiations between the Vatican and the Reich government were often reported by the British newspapers. In 1934, for instance, the *Daily Express* noted the success of a request made by the Vatican that Catholic doctors and nurses in Germany be excluded from taking part in the new sterilisation programme launched by the Nazi government.²⁸ Also in 1934, the *Observer* reported that following the Pope’s denunciation of the treatment of Catholic organisations in Germany, Hitler had sent an emissary to Rome to negotiate and attempt to ‘end the conflict’.²⁹

The conflict, however, did not end. By 1937 most British newspapers observed that the situation had become ‘specially acute’.³⁰ *The Spectator* noted tensions between the Vatican and the Nazis were so high that the Pope would probably denounce the Concordat.³¹ In early 1937, an encyclical by the Pope was circulated to churches in Germany, and read from the pulpit which reviewed the history of the Concordat, and in which the Pope declared he had signed ““despite grave misgivings” because he believed it to be in the

²⁵ The judgment was concerning the distribution of newspapers and possible discriminations for Roman Catholic households who abstained from subscribing to the National Socialist *Nationalzeitung*. The Roman Catholic newspaper *Neuer Tag* had requested that this particular canvasser be refrained from ‘threatening possibly subscribers with disadvantages’. The request was refused by the Duisburg Provincial Court. *TT*, 4 April 1934, ‘German Press Rivalry’, Berlin Corr., 12.

²⁶ *TT*, 4 April 1934, ‘Germany and the Vatican’, 13.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ It also succeeded in getting Catholic patients excluded from the measure. For a further discussion of this policy see chapter 7.

Daily Express, 31 January 1934, ‘Vatican Beats Nazis’, 1. Hereafter *DE*.

²⁹ *Obs.*, 8 April 1934, ‘Hitler Sends Emissary to the Pope’, Central News, 19.

³⁰ *The Spectator*, 5 February 1937, ‘The ‘Kultur Kampf’’, 206. Hereafter *TS*.

³¹ *Ibid.*

best interests of the Church and of the German people'.³² The *Daily Mail* quoted the Pope as saying:

If its terms are not kept ... that is not the fault of the Church. The other side has been guilty of mis-application of the Concordat, of evasion of its provisions, of undermining its context, and finally, of more or less open violations of its stipulations and of the unwritten law governing its extent.³³

Despite the Pope's statement and frequent incursions on the terms of the Concordat by Nazis (local officials, governments and, at times, the Reich government), the agreement between the Nazi regime and the Vatican remained in place prior to and during the war. The press noted and observed the tension that existed in the uneasy relationship between the Catholic church and the German government in the 1930s. Excesses, disagreements, and negotiations were reported by British newspapers, including *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Morning Post*, *Daily Mail*, and *The Spectator*; but for most British newspapers the main religious struggle was the one taking place in the Protestant churches.

* * * * *

The struggle taking place with the Protestant churches in Germany was different to that of the Catholic church. While the conflict between the Catholic Church and the Nazi government had centred on questions of political and cultural influence, the struggle of the Protestant churches was over faith, religious doctrine, and membership. At its very heart, it was a struggle for the freedom of faith. This was something that the British press picked up on and understood.

In committing to reporting the Protestant church struggle, or *Kirchenkampf*, the British press had a difficult task ahead. The coordination or attempted *Gleichschaltung* of the Protestant churches was complex, messy, and often chaotic. This could be said not only of the church struggle itself but also the various groups at the centre of the conflict. This included the German Christians, an antisemitic group that aligned themselves to

³² *DMail*, 22 March 1937, 'The Pope and Germany', Berlin Corr., 14.

³³ *Ibid.*

Nazism, but also other groups, such as the German Faith Movement, a group that desired a more ‘German church’ based on pagan and Nazi ideals rather than Christian ones. Furthermore, the opposition pastors were by no means a unified group. The church conflict was dominated and characterised by competing factions of members with strong personalities who held differing and opposing views, which caused frequent squabbles. Despite the difficulty in understanding the church struggle, newspapers like the *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, and the *Morning Post* provided sustained coverage, especially from 1934.

The Times was one first newspapers to document the early stages of the church conflict. In April 1933, an article by a ‘German Churchman’ declared that the ‘reconstruction of the Evangelical Church’ was already underway.³⁴ The twenty-eight disparate churches in Germany were to be ‘removed’, and in their place would be ‘two great Church federations, a Lutheran and a Reformed Church, with a common central organization’.³⁵ Basically, as *The Times* summarised in May 1933, ‘The Nazi principle of “leadership” is in large measure to supersede that of democracy’.³⁶

Moves to create a unified church were not initially met with much church protest. But, conflict did arise over the question of who would be appointed Reich Bishop, to preside over the Reich Church. The German Christians, and Hitler, wanted Dr. Ludwig Müller for the role, an Army Chaplain and patron of the German Christian movement, as well as Hitler’s ‘personal representative in the negotiations for the formation of the new “Reich Church”’.³⁷ But, the German Christians were the minority when votes were cast and Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, a Westphalian pastor, was elected instead. *The Times* reported that the German Christians were

determined to make a stubborn fight for their candidate, and are using the ingenious methods of agitation so successfully applied by the Nazis in the political sphere to extend their influence among the rank and file of churchgoers.³⁸

³⁴ *TT*, 3 May 1933, ‘Protestantism in Germany’, ‘By a German Churchman’, 13.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *TT*, 29 May 1933, ‘German Church Politics’, Berlin Corr., 13.

³⁷ *TT*, 26 May 1933, ‘Nazis and Church Reform’, Berlin Corr., 13.

³⁸ *TT*, 6 June 1933, ‘German Protestant Primate’, Berlin Corr. 10.

Various machinations by the Nazi followed. This included the appointment of Dr. August Jäger as Nazi State Commissioner for the Evangelical Churches in Prussia, to assist in carrying out the seizure of the Churches for the German Christians. He placed the entire Prussian Church under police jurisdiction. As a result, many pastors were suspended, fired, or arrested.³⁹ The Nazi Party and the German Christians mounted a vigorous campaign against Bodelschwingh. Amid this pressure, Bodelschwingh resigned. According to *The Times*, he declared in his resignation that the appointment of a Nazi Commissioner (Jäger) ‘rendered it impossible for him to fulfil the mission entrusted to him’.⁴⁰

Church elections were scheduled for 23 July 1933, to elect new members for a national synod that would then elect a new Reich Bishop. In the meantime, Müller was (illegally) announced as the new Reich Bishop. Jäger continued his efforts to bring the Prussian churches into line, sparking protests from Prussian, Hanoverian, and Hessian Churches. These protests were made because, *The Times* reported, ‘utterances of some of the “German Christian” extremists have given rise to a fear lest it be hard to keep the substance of the Christian faith intact’.⁴¹ At the end of June 1933, Müller proclaimed himself, without any authority, head of the Evangelical Church Federation and President of the Church Council, among other posts, which, reported *The Times*, made him ‘virtual dictator of the Prussian Churches’.⁴² In addition, Müller ordered a statement to be read from the pulpit of Protestant Churches. It was summarised by *The Times* as stating:

[T]hat the Church is being “delivered” by the State from its condition of disorder, and that the Church must be thankful for all the trouble the State, occupied as it is with such enormous tasks, is yet taking in reorganizing it. Finally it is decreed that, in order to celebrate the great work of Church reorganization that has just begun, the black-white-red and the swastika flags are to be flown, as well as the church flag, from all churches and church buildings.⁴³

³⁹ Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 34.

⁴⁰ *TT*, 26 June 1933, ‘New Church Politics’, Berlin Corr., 13.

⁴¹ *TT*, 27 June 1933, ‘New Nazi Action’, Berlin Corr., 14.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *TT*, 30 June 1933, ‘German Church Crisis’, Berlin Corr., 13.

In future, pastors were ordered to refrain from any ‘criticism of the State or even of measures contemplated by its commissioners’ — “Church political activity”, either from the pulpit or in the parishes will, the pastors are told, render them liable to prosecution’, which could include ‘disciplinary action and even dismissal’.⁴⁴

Increasing protests from pastors prompted President Hindenburg to intervene. At the beginning of July 1933, he wrote a public letter to Hitler about his ‘deepest concern’ over the church situation.⁴⁵ President Hindenburg’s intervention in the conflict sparked the interest of other British newspapers. The *News Chronicle* gave the story front page coverage and the dramatic headline, ‘Hindenburg’s Clash with Hitler: Call to Save Churches’.⁴⁶ The article read: ‘In dramatic fashion tonight President von Hindenburg intervened to protect the German Evangelical churches from the attacks that have been made upon them by the Nazis’.⁴⁷ The newspaper quoted extensively from Hindenburg’s public letter and summarised the reasons for discontent within the churches. This intervention seemed timely given the upcoming elections for the national church synod. The *News Chronicle* certainly thought so, remarking that Hitler seemed increasingly to be beset by opposition.⁴⁸ But, this underestimated Hitler’s determination to bring the churches under his control. With encouragement from the Nazi leadership, members of the Nazi party were instructed to get their names on the election lists so they could vote in the upcoming election for the national synod.⁴⁹

As the election loomed, several newspapers, including the *Morning Post*, *Manchester Guardian*, and *The Times*, also reported intimidatory tactics used by the German Christians.⁵⁰ The *Morning Post* reported that while the freedom of the elections were ‘guaranteed by the Chancellor’ ‘so strong a suggestion has already been created by the Press that the church opposition is also a political opposition, that this belief will undoubtedly dominate the polling’.⁵¹ The pastors who opposed the Nazification of their churches were at a severe disadvantage — the candidates for elections were primarily German Christians. The *Morning Post* reported: ‘the prospects of the church opposition

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ *TT*, 1 July 1933, ‘Nazi Church Politics’, Berlin Corr., 12.

⁴⁶ *News Chronicle*, 1 July 1933, ‘Hindenburg’s Clash with Hitler’, Berlin Corr., 1. Hereafter *NC*.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Barnett, *For the Soul of the People*, 34.

⁵⁰ *MP*, 22 July 1933, ‘German Church Elections’, Berlin Corr., 13.

⁵¹ Ibid.

winning on Sunday are very slight'.⁵² *The Times*, like the *Morning Post*, reported that complaints of intimidation had been lodged by opposition pastors and that it would be 'inevitable that the pressure of the vast Nazi organization should have worked in favour of the "German Christians"'.⁵³ Indeed, three days later British newspapers recorded widespread victories for the German Christians. *The Times* summed it up with the headline 'Extremist majority in Church elections'.⁵⁴

At the end of July 1933, with the success of the church elections behind them, the German Christians proclaimed Müller as official Reich Bishop, or Primate of the unified German Evangelical Church. As *The Times* reported, this meant:

The German Christians have had their way — legalized by elections in which the mighty face of "the movement" and Herr Hitler's personal support were behind them, and in which the opposition laboured under difficulties which can only be appreciated at close quarters — and there can now be little doubt that German Christian influence will be paramount in clerical appointments and in the life of the Church.⁵⁵

For the moment, the German Christians were triumphant but, as the British press would go on to report, the opposition pastors refused to succumb to the extremist 'Nazi' church group.

* * * * *

The opposition movement continued to grow in late 1933, particularly after suggestions from German Christians that the Reich Church introduce an Aryan paragraph which would mean the dismissal of all clergy and church officials that were considered to be non-Aryan.⁵⁶ The German Christians had been influenced by the Civil Service Decree, introduced in April 1933, which sought to regulate and exclude non-Aryans from civil service employment.⁵⁷ Suggestions about the adoption of an Aryan paragraph were discussed in August and September 1933, at the same time that Müller was enforcing an

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ *TT*, 24 July 1933, 'German Church elections', Berlin Corr., 11.

⁵⁴ *TT*, 25 July 1933, 'Extremist Majority in Church Elections', Berlin Corr., 13.

⁵⁵ *TT*, 28 July 1933, 'German Church Changes', Berlin Corr., 14.

⁵⁶ Doris L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 88.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

authoritarian structure on the Prussian Church. In November 1933, the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Times* reported efforts by some German Christians to push through a stricter Aryan clause for the ‘purification of German Christianity’.⁵⁸ This sparked vigorous protests from opposition pastors who had, in early September 1933, organised into the Pastors’ Emergency League. Their protests were not so much about the antisemitic rhetoric of the German Christians proposal, but about church independence, specifically the ‘curtailment of confessional freedom’.⁵⁹ They saw the Aryan paragraph as a serious attempt at interference in church affairs.⁶⁰ The *Manchester Guardian* reported that members of the Pastors’ Emergency League, which was founded in September 1933, read a message of protest from their pulpits in over 3000 churches. The newspaper commented: ‘the pastors who have spoken up deserve all credit for their courage’.⁶¹

Protests from the opposition pastors, namely the Pastors’ Emergency League (which grew into the Confessing Church) led by Pastor Martin Niemöller, were covered in more detail by British newspapers in 1934.⁶² British newspapers began to keenly reported the methods and techniques that such groups used to oppose changes to the Protestant churches. In January 1934, the *News Chronicle* reported that Müller was trying to suppress the pastors who had declared their opposition:

Bishop Mueller, the Nazi Primate, is in an embarrassing dilemma. To maintain his authority he ought to suspend or remove from office the 5,000 to 6,000 pastors who defied him on Sunday from their pulpits. Yet, so drastic an action is hardly practicable, although he is contemplating it.⁶³

Opposition had now ‘reached the remotest parts of the land’.⁶⁴ Müller issued an ultimatum that pastors must refrain from ‘misusing’ church services for ‘Church-

⁵⁸ *MG*, 24 November 1933, ‘The German Church’, Leader, 8.

⁵⁹ Barnett, *For the Soul of the People*, 35.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Martin Niemöller was a former U-Boat commander and Freikorps paramilitary. He ‘initially had high hopes for Hitler and the new regime but quickly grew disenchanted’. Volker Ullrich, *Hitler: A Biography: Volume I Ascent*, Translated by Jefferson Chase (London: The Bodley Head, 2016), 643.

⁶³ *NC*, 10 January 1934, ‘Will Hindenburg Act? Church Conflict Spreads’, Berlin Corr., 2.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

political' purposes or risk suspension and loss of salary.⁶⁵ By reading the protest declarations to their congregations, pastors 'expose[d] themselves to suspension and even to deposition from office, with consequent economic ruin'.⁶⁶ They were, however, 'ready to face persecution'.⁶⁷ In the meantime, the German Christians, were 'clamouring for the use of repressive measures against their opponents. It is not so certain that the Chancellor, who is known to view the conflict with distaste, will accede to Bishop Mueller's demand'.⁶⁸ Müller appealed to Hitler to use the police and, if necessary, the SA to 'crush the resistance of close on 6,000 pastors [Pastors' Emergency League] who are defying his attempt to make German Protestantism a part of the Nazi State'.⁶⁹ It was fast becoming, reported the *News Chronicle* at the end of January 1934, a 'stormy European situation'.⁷⁰

Hitler was, according to *The Times*, 'anxious to bring about peace' in the church before 30 January 1934, so that there would be 'no flaw in the celebrations of national unity'.⁷¹ The recent conflict looked to jeopardise that. At the end of January 1934 Hitler visited the President to discuss the church conflict. Following the meeting, Hitler met with leaders of the churches in a conference led by Interior Minister Frick, which was attended by both German Christians and leading members of the Opposition clergy. *The Times* reported the meeting which turned into an attack by Göring on the opposition, particularly Martin Niemöller, accusing them of disloyalty to the state.⁷² The grounds for the attack was a conversation recorded between Niemöller and a colleague, in which he spoke of his desire to meet with the President to resolve the church situation and hopefully bring about the resignation of Reich Bishop Müller.⁷³ The conversation, recorded and transcribed by the Gestapo, was read aloud by Göring to those assembled. For *The Times* Berlin correspondent, this was a process known only too well by foreign correspondents whose telephone conversations were frequently recorded by the 'listening-in gang'.⁷⁴ Pastors who remained in opposition would, according to *The Times*,

⁶⁵ *NC*, 8 January 1934, 'Pastors Defy German Primate', Berlin Corr., 1.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *NC*, 26 January 1934, 'Storm Over Germany: Goering and Hitler in Conflict', 1.

⁶⁹ *NC*, 16 January 1934, 'Storm Troops to Expel Pastors', Berlin Corr., 9.

⁷⁰ *NC*, 26 January 1934, 'Storm Over Germany: Goering and Hitler in Conflict', 1.

⁷¹ *TT*, 26 January 1934, 'Herr Hitler and the Church', Berlin Corr., 12.

⁷² J.S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933 – 1945* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 73.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *TT*, 27 January 1934, 'German Church Conference', Berlin Corr., 10.

find themselves ‘in an unfavourable position now if they continue to oppose him [Müller] against the specific recommendations of the Chancellor’.⁷⁵ So far, *The Times* reported: ‘The Opposition seem to have survived the shock and to remain unified’.⁷⁶

Days later, *The Times* reported that Müller, seeking to solidify his position in the Church, issued an emergency decree ‘investing in himself all powers of the Prussian Church Synod ... He thus becomes sole arbiter of the Prussian Church’.⁷⁷ Almost immediately, Pastor Niemöller was retired from his pastorate and taken in for questioning by the Secret Police. On his return he remained defiant. Despite his suspension, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, he continued to conduct services at his church in Dahlem. Niemöller was determined to challenge the constitutional validity of the suspension before the Supreme Court at Leipzig. Niemöller’s congregation, it was reported ‘maintain the view that in the Prussian Church a pastor is primarily responsible to his congregation’.⁷⁸ The *Manchester Guardian* added: ‘Whether the opposition can continue in face of the powerful forces ranged against it remains to be seen, but it is clear that it is still alive’.⁷⁹

In August 1934 the National Synod, made up of mostly German Christians, met and passed through legislation designed to further the goal of creating a National Church. What this essentially meant was the southern churches, which up until this point had refused to be ‘coordinated’, would be forced to join the Reich Church under Müller’s control. The first decree passed legalised all of Müller and Jäger’s recent measures; the second prepared the way for the takeover of the churches in Württemberg and Bavaria. The *Manchester Guardian* summed up the new measures: ‘Henceforth legislative power is vested in the new Reich Church, to the exclusion of the regional churches ... The three remaining “rebel” Churches — Hanover, Bavaria, and Württemberg — lose their autonomy’.⁸⁰ Furthermore, plans were made for all pastors to ‘swear obedience to the Führer of the German nation and state, Adolf Hitler ... and devote themselves to the German nation with every sacrifice and effort befitting a German Evangelist’.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ *TT*, 29 January 1934, ‘German Church Conflict’, Berlin Corr., 11.

⁷⁸ *MG*, 26 February 1934, ‘Nazi Primate’s Opponents’, Berlin Corr., 13.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ *MG*, 13 August 1934, ‘The German Evangelical Church’, Leader, 8.

⁸¹ Ibid.

This sparked more protests from opposition theologians and pastors. They issued a statement denouncing the National Synod proceedings as ‘illegal and arbitrary’ (to quote the *Manchester Guardian*).⁸² They also denounced the oath. The statement was read from the pulpits of churches associated with the opposition (Confessing Church) movement. The *Manchester Guardian* quoted part of the declaration:

This so-called national synod, its proceedings, and its resolutions are invalid, according to spiritual law and temporal law. Those who obey them break the constitution and the law of the Church, and they are exhorted not to make themselves accessory to such breaches.⁸³

The *Manchester Guardian*'s Berlin correspondent called the statement ‘a courageous declaration couched in strong and unequivocal language’, the reading of which could see the pastors facing prison.⁸⁴ Indeed, ‘a number’ of pastors had already been imprisoned for reading the declaration.⁸⁵ This protest was ‘the first time for many months that the Opposition — to whom virtually all avenues of expression have been closed by the State, and police backing given to the Primate, Bishop Müller, and his Church government — have ventured upon a public pronouncement’.⁸⁶

Amid the protests over the legality of forced retirements and suspensions, Müller and Jäger mounted an aggressive campaign against the southern churches to bring them into line under the new national synod. But as *The Times*, reported in September 1934:

[T]he incorporation of the resisting regional Churches is not proceeding smoothly. Both the Bavarian and the Württemberg Churches have formally refused to recognize their incorporation under the law of Reich Bishop Müller's Administration making them subject to its legislation, and Bishop Wurm, of Württemberg, has declared the appointment of an Administrative Commissioner [Jäger] invalid.⁸⁷

⁸² *MG*, 13 August 1934, ‘Pastors Fight in Germany’, Berlin Corr., 9.

⁸³ *MG*, 13 August 1934, ‘Pastors Fight in Germany’, Berlin Corr., 9.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *TT*, 13 September 1934, ‘German Church Friction’, Berlin Corr., 9.

Bishop Theophil Wurm, head of the Church in Württemberg, was then suspended, which sparked further protests. *The Times* reported that, following the announcement of Wurm's suspension, 'disturbances broke out ... meetings of protest were held, at which the greatest indignation was expressed by churchgoers at the attempt to saddle Dr. Wurm with implication in a financial scandal'.⁸⁸ Wurm, it was reported, had refused to accept 'his suspension, the legality of which he challenges, and continues to regard himself as head of the Regional Church'.⁸⁹

There were also 'striking demonstrations', in Munich where Bishop Hans Meiser, reported the *New Statesman and Nation*, 'had preached a vigorous sermon of protest' at moves by the German Christians on his church.⁹⁰ He also denounced what was taking place in Wurttemberg.⁹¹ Following the sermon, 'the huge congregation marched through the streets singing Luther's hymn, "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott", to demonstrate in front of the episcopal palace, until they were eventually dispersed by police and S.A. men'.⁹² The *New Statesman and Nation* explained: 'It is probable that Dr. Müller will beat the resisters, temporarily at least. But his victory will be costly, for he is widening and deepening opposition to the regime'.⁹³ This last comment in the *New Statesman and Nation* was most likely in reference to a speech by Müller in Hanover on 19 September in which he declared that he and the German Christians wanted 'a German Church free from Rome'.⁹⁴ In the speech, reported by several British papers including *The Times*, Müller announced his desire for 'one State, one Nation, one Church'.⁹⁵ Sections of the speech were censored when published but the message was clear. The last line about a 'Rome-Free' church and a single church shocked many in Germany and abroad, as it was taken (and seemingly intended) to mean the amalgamation of both the Catholic and Protestant churches into one Reich Church.

The *News Chronicle* commented: 'to the dispassionate onlooker Dr. Mueller's thunderings appear a strange mixture of the odious and the merely ridiculous', but acknowledged that the plans 'would be incredible if it did not follow so neatly the lines on which the

⁸⁸ *TT*, 17 September 1934, 'German Church Dispute', Berlin Corr., 11.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *New Statesman and Nation*, 22 September 1934, 'The Religious War in Germany', 346. Hereafter *NS&N*.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *TT*, 20 September 1934, 'The Churches in Germany', Berlin Corr., 9.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

other Nazi leaders have acted in other fields'.⁹⁶ The *Daily Mail* reported that Catholics were to 'join with Protestants in his National Church; if they do not, Dr. Mueller will "cope with them"'.⁹⁷ Naturally, Catholics in Germany were disturbed and the Vatican sought assurances from the German government that the Concordat was still in place. Müller was warned by Foreign Minister von Neurath about any further inflammatory speeches. By now Müller and Jäger were not only facing opposition from the Confessing Church, but were also distancing themselves from the regime itself. It was a dangerous path, but Müller and Jäger continued to pursue the forcible incorporation of the southern churches.

In October 1934 the conflict escalated when Bishop Würm, of Wurttemberg, was arrested. Less than a week later, Bishop Meiser of Bavaria was removed from office. The *Daily Mail* dramatically reported:

The fires of revolt which have been smouldering in the Protestant churches of Southern Germany since Reichbishop Müller and his National Synod began their attempt to reorganise the Bavarian State Church burst into full flame to-day.⁹⁸

The reason given for Bishop Meiser's removal, reported *The Times*, was 'persistent refusal to carry out the legitimate decrees of the Reich Church administration'.⁹⁹ Furthermore, 'the chiefs of the State Regional Synod and other prominent pastors and members of the Synod were also dismissed yesterday by Dr. Jäger'.¹⁰⁰ The article noted: 'Dr Meiser is now understood to be under "house arrest." His movements are strictly supervised by a detective and he himself is confined to his residence'.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, church services were full across Bavaria, and crowds gathered outside Meiser's residence in a show of support for the Bishop.¹⁰² In response to Jäger's aggressive tactics, the church announced its split from Müller's church administration. The declaration issued by the Bavarian Church, described Jäger's methods as 'tantamount to an act of war'.¹⁰³ 'Dark forces are at work', the declaration stated: 'The Evangelical faith

⁹⁶ *NC*, 20 September 1934, 'The Nazi Church Militant', Leader, 8.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *DMail*, 15 October 1934, 'German Church Quarrel', Berlin Corr., 16.

⁹⁹ *TT*, 13 October 1934, 'Church Crisis in Bavaria', Berlin Corr., 11.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

is threatened and the door has been opened to every kind of heresy'.¹⁰⁴ The Bavarian's also encouraged other churches to protest the 'church administration which is unconstitutional and a violation of the faith', explaining that in doing so, 'We realise that the burden we lay on their shoulders is a heavy one'.¹⁰⁵

British newspapers also reported that the Confessing Church, had announced that it too was 'breaking off all relations with the official "Reich" Church'.¹⁰⁶ The *Manchester Guardian* reported that events in the south had demonstrated 'that all hope that the 'German Christians' will ever change their policy must be abandoned'.¹⁰⁷ This left the Confessing Synod with no other option except 'formal separation and a declaration that Reich Bishop Müller and his adherents, through denying the fundamental principles of the Gospel, "can no longer be regarded as a Christian Church"'.¹⁰⁸ This essentially meant that it would form a new church, and a new church constitution, the *Manchester Guardian* reported.¹⁰⁹

Seemingly, even the German Christians were becoming alarmed at Jäger's (and Müller's) methods. The *News Chronicle* summed up the situation with a headline on 16 October 1934, 'German Pastors Winning; Nazis Seeking a Way Out', and declared, that efforts to crush the Bavarian Church were proving a 'fiasco'.¹¹⁰ On 19 October 1934 *The Times* reported that Dr. Christian Kinder, leader of the German Christians, had visited Jäger to demand his resignation over the Bavarian crisis.¹¹¹ *The Times* explained:

The impression is gained that the Party-State is at last beginning to realise that the unification of the German Evangelical Church desired by Herr Hitler, and, indeed, no less by the Confessional community of the so-called Opposition, cannot be satisfactorily achieved through a Church regime and a Church Party which are overtaken every few months by a grab crisis and are in a state of constant dissension.¹¹²

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ *MG*, 20 October 1934, 'A New German Church', 13.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ *NC*, 16 October 1934, 'German Pastors Winning', Berlin Corr., 11.

¹¹¹ *TT*, 19 October 1934, 'German Church Conflict', Berlin Corr., 13.

¹¹² Ibid.

Here, *The Times* still assumed that Hitler's wish was to see the Protestant churches united into a National Church. In reality, Hitler was busy distancing himself altogether from the church conflict. The *Daily Telegraph* reported that Hitler was to meet with Jäger, the result of which would probably be Jäger's dismissal. Even Müller was now trying to distance himself from Jäger, reported the *Daily Telegraph*, explaining that Jäger had lost the support of his Primate. Müller was also at risk of losing the support of Hitler — he had few options left to try to unite the church and 'win over the protestant community to his side'.¹¹³ Jäger was dismissed at the end of October. The *News Chronicle* announced the news with the dramatic headline: 'Hitler Removes Church Goering; Dr. Jaeger Forced to Resign'.¹¹⁴ *The Times*, in reporting Jäger's dismissal, also reported the indefinite postponement of a ceremony in which Müller was to make an oath of loyalty to Hitler.¹¹⁵

Following Jäger's dismissal, *The Times* reported, both 'Bishop Meiser of Bavaria and Bishop Wurm of Württemberg and his associates have been unconditionally released from 'house arrest' or other restrictions on their liberty. The release is a tactical sign of the new turn in the Protestant Church conflict'.¹¹⁶ For the southern churches the peak of the church crisis was over. On 31 October 1934, the *News Chronicle* reported the situation 'transformed'; Jäger had been dismissed and Hitler had met with the opposition, specifically Bishop Wurm, Bishop Meiser and Bishop Mahahrens (of Hanover) and assured them that orders had been circulated to the police, SA, and Secret Police 'forbidding them to take any further part in Church matters'.¹¹⁷ The *News Chronicle* explained that if there was no deviation from this order, 'it would appear that the German Evangelical Church has regained its freedom'.¹¹⁸ It was reported by the *News Chronicle* that this had 'caused the utmost relief among the leaders of the so-called opposition, for they are convinced that once the church is allowed to shape her own destiny the abuses which have existed during recent months will disappear, and there will be a return to the Christian spirit'.¹¹⁹ But the newspaper noted this sense of optimism

¹¹³ *DT*, 20 October 1934, 'Hitler's Alarm over Church Conflict', Munich Corr., 13.

¹¹⁴ *NC*, 27 October 1934, 'Hitler Removes Church Goering', Berlin Corr., 1

¹¹⁵ *TT*, 29 October 1934, 'South German Church', Berlin Corr., 14.

¹¹⁶ *TT*, 29 October 1934, 'South German Church', Berlin Corr., 14.

¹¹⁷ *NC*, 31 October 1934, 'German Protestant Church Regains its Freedom', Berlin Corr., 11.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

was felt more by the southern churches than the Confessing Church and the ‘rebel’ Pastors’ Emergency League.¹²⁰

Müller was left, reported the *Manchester Guardian*, trying to ‘preserve the crumbling edifice of his Church government’.¹²¹ The *Observer* reported: ‘Deprived of his strong right arm, Dr. Jäger, Reichbishop Müller now finds himself captain of a ship in which most of the crew refuse to sail under his orders’.¹²² The *Morning Post* described how Müller’s ‘authority is being flouted by something like half the Protestant Church’, adding ‘the Reichbishop has now suffered the humiliation of having his newspaper banned by the Propaganda Ministry’.¹²³ As far as Goebbels was concerned, the church conflict ‘has been settled in Germany’.¹²⁴ As part of his announcement to this effect, Goebbels criticised both the German and foreign press for their reporting of the conflict in the southern churches. Of foreign reporting, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, Goebbels declared the German people ‘were never interested in what is called the quarrel of the Churches ... only a malevolent foreigner can be interested in the domestic quarrels of the German people over these matters’.¹²⁵ The *Morning Post* printed a different extract from Goebbels statement: ‘The Churches must disappear once and for all from our assembly halls. Let them settle their differences in their churches before God’.¹²⁶ In December 1934 *The Times* reported that Interior Minister Frick had declared: ‘The German nation was sick and tired of the Church conflict and took no interest whatever in the quarrels of the pastors’.¹²⁷

* * * * *

In fact, the conflict was far from over. The conflict in the churches took another turn in September 1935 when former Prussian Minister of Justice, Hanns Kerrl, was appointed, by Hitler, as Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs. Müller had been sidelined and Kerrl had been brought in to restore order following the chaos created by the German Christians. Several decrees swiftly followed, including the ‘Law for the Safety

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ *MG*, 26 November 1934, ‘Dr. Mueller’s New Move’, Berlin Corr., 12.

¹²² *Obs.*, 4 November 1934, ‘Bishop Müller’s Future’, Berlin Corr., 21.

¹²³ *MP*, 26 November 1934, ‘Nazi Primate in Trouble’, Berlin Corr., 13.

¹²⁴ *MG*, 14 November 1934, ‘Rules for German Editors’, Spec. Corr., 12.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ *MP*, 26 November 1934, ‘Nazi Primate in Trouble’, Berlin Corr., 13.

¹²⁷ *TT*, 8 December 1934, ‘German Church Conflict’, Berlin Corr., 11.

of the German Evangelical Church' which, despite its title, made Kerrl, according to *The Times*, 'virtually Church dictator'.¹²⁸ *The Times* reported that the new law was seen by the opposition to give the 'Herr Kerrl more rights over the Protestant Church than the Pope has over the Roman Catholic communion'.¹²⁹ More decrees followed, reported *The Observer*, that were 'aimed at crushing completely all opposition forces in the Protestant Church struggle'.¹³⁰ To that end, Kerrl had so far approached his task with 'real Nazi fervour'.¹³¹ But *The Observer* commented, the problem 'has proved harder to solve than he imagined'.¹³² Already Kerrl had to

appeal to the Chancellor, who gave him, apparently, permission to use the ultimate Nazi method of dealing with opposition, political and spiritual — dictatorship and force. Thus, after thirty months of conflict, the Nazi State has nothing more to offer its opponents than threats of prison and concentration camp.¹³³

The opposition churches opposed new measures to pacify them and bring them into line. Most of their original grievances about interference in church affairs remained. This time the Catholic clergy joined in opposition efforts. In January 1936 the *News Chronicle* reported: 'Breaking a long silence, Protestant pastors and Roman Catholic priests today denounced Nazi religious persecution in vigorous language'.¹³⁴ For Protestant pastors, the appointment of Kerrl was seen as an attempt 'to turn the Evangelical Church into a branch of the Nazi Party'.¹³⁵ A declaration to this effect was read, in defiance, from 'hundreds of Prussian Protestant pulpits'.¹³⁶ In January 1936, Niemöller followed this up with a pamphlet denouncing the actions of Kerrl's Ministry. It was swiftly confiscated by the secret police and, according to *The Times*, the offices and houses of members of the Confessing Church had been searched for copies.¹³⁷ The *Manchester Guardian* managed to get a copy. They printed an extract:

¹²⁸ Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933-1945*, 135.

TT, 30 September 1935, 'A German Church "Dictator"', Berlin Corr., 13.

¹²⁹ *TT*, 30 September 1935, 'A German Church "Dictator"', 13.

¹³⁰ *Obs.*, 8 December 1935, 'The Church in Germany', Berlin Corr., 12.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *NC*, 13 January 1936, 'Churches Defy Nazis', Berlin Corr., 2.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *TT*, 21 January 1936, 'Nazi Secret Police and the Church', Berlin Corr., 11.

The paralysis of the Evangelical Church in Germany must be resisted before it is too late. The freedom of the Church to obey God's Word must be maintained. If this cannot be done without a fight the fault is not with the Confessional Church...We must obey God rather than men.¹³⁸

Voigt described the pamphlet as 'the boldest attack that has yet been made on the new ecclesiastical policy of the German Dictatorship'.¹³⁹ In July 1936, Niemöller again issued another protest on behalf of the Confessing Church. This time the protest was sent directly to Hitler. The *Daily Express* had reported that it was specifically concerned with the continued existence of concentration camps, unrestrained action of the secret police and even 'what is held to be the deification of Hitler'.¹⁴⁰ It was not just about opposition to efforts to control or suppress the church, but was beginning to move dangerously close to criticism of the regime, even if that was not what Niemöller intended.

The regime's response to this latest protest was a new round of arrests. Those arrested were often faced with long periods of imprisonment and harsh treatment. British newspapers reported the arrest of well-known figures and prominent churchmen throughout 1937. Pastor Niemöller was arrested in July 1937 for, to quote *The Times*, "'slanderos' sermons", which for some time past have caused "public unrest".¹⁴¹ He had, according to the *News Chronicle*, been vigorously denouncing the arrest of his colleagues from the pulpit in his church in Dahlem.¹⁴² The *Manchester Guardian* reported that given that most of Niemöller's colleagues had already been arrested, and the pastor himself had been interrogated twice in the previous fortnight, 'it was merely a matter of time before the most widely known figure in the Confessional Church should suffer the same fate'.¹⁴³

Most British newspapers that had been following the church conflict, reported the arrest of Pastor Martin Niemöller. He was, after all, the figurehead of the opposition.

¹³⁸ *MG*, 11 February 1936, 'Niemoeller's Attack on Nazi Church Policy', Spec. Corr., 6.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *DE*, 17 July 1936, 'Pastors Challenge 'Deified' Hitler', Reuter, 2.

¹⁴¹ *TT*, 2 July 1937, 'New Nazi Blow at Churches', Berlin Corr., 16.

¹⁴² *NC*, 2 July 1937, 'Nazis Arrest Niemoeller, Famous Protestant Leader', 'NC Corr., British United Press and Reuter, 1.

¹⁴³ *MG*, 2 July 1937, 'Famous Pastor Arrested', Berlin Corr., 11.

These newspapers included the *Morning Post*, *Daily Telegraph*, *News Chronicle*, and of course, *The Times* and *Manchester Guardian*. Most, including the *News Chronicle*, quoted the official communique issued by the Nazi government following Niemöller's arrest. The official announcement also denounced the foreign press:

Niemöller for a long time has made inciting speeches in Church services and lectures, and has made disparaging remarks about leading personalities of the State and movement, and has spread untrue assertions about the Government measures in order to disquiet the population ... His statements were a permanent part of the contents of the foreign press hostile to Germany.¹⁴⁴

With his arrest, reported the *News Chronicle*, 'the whole conflict between the German State and the Christian churches — the Roman Catholic as well as the Protestant — reaches a new stage of severity'.¹⁴⁵ It was an important development in the conflict and came at a time in which two further church decrees were passed, designed to 'spell the end of Church independence'.¹⁴⁶

The *Manchester Guardian* was disgusted at the the actions of the Nazi State in arresting Niemöller, and criticised the regime for its ongoing persecution of the churches. The newspaper examined the conditions under which Niemöller lived in the months leading up to his arrest. It provided readers with an insight into the intimidatory methods employed by the dictatorship:

The arrest was decided upon many months ago, and Dr. Niemöller has been closely shadowed by agents of the Gestapo. Indeed, his movements were so circumscribed that he has long been in a state resembling arrest — his passport was taken away from him so that he could not leave Germany ... and he was constantly summoned to the Alexanderplatz, which is the Scotland Yard of Berlin. His telephone calls were overheard, his letters were opened, his associates were questioned. But nothing could have been discovered to justify legal proceedings against him. Not that this would deter the police and the judiciary of the Third Realm in the ordinary way; those who have been sentenced or sent to concentration camps without a sentence, even when there has been no basis for a charge, are numerous in Germany.

¹⁴⁴ *NC*, 2 July 1937, 'Nazis Arrest Niemoeller, Famous Protestant Leader', 1.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

But Dr. Niemöller is well known both in his own country and throughout the world.¹⁴⁷

The Times provided detailed reports about the wave of arrests that accompanied Niemöller's. In mid-July the newspaper reported that while some pastors had been released, thirty-four were in custody, including 'a woman secretary of the Dahlem Parish Council'.¹⁴⁸ Niemöller was released from Moabit prison, but was immediately rearrested by the Secret Police 'and taken to police headquarters in Alexanderplatz'.¹⁴⁹ In August, *The Times* reported that more arrests had been made following a Protestant demonstration in Dahlem (the Berlin suburb where Niemöller's church was located). The arrests numbers 150, reported *The Times*, 'of whom 48, mostly pastors, have been detained'.¹⁵⁰ As the correspondent reported on 3 August 1937: 'The cat-and-mouse game, as played by the authorities with variations, individually and collectively, with the Confessional Movement in the German Evangelical Church, continues steadily'.¹⁵¹

The Times coverage of the church conflict had clearly been monitored by the German authorities, because in August 1937 the newspaper's Berlin correspondent, Norman Ebbutt, was expelled from Germany. He had clearly been expelled for his reporting on the church conflict. However, the Nazi authorities tried to claim that 'Norman Ebbutt has for years past conducted his Correspondence in a manner exclusively hostile to Germany, and has abused the hospitality extended to him'.¹⁵² Goebbels mouthpiece, the newspaper *Angriff* alleged:

There are a whole lot of foreign correspondents, among them Anglo-Saxons, whose work does not stop at the transmission of distorted reports, but whose far more extensive activity consists in a constant interference in the internal affairs of Germany ... This work has nothing to do with journalism, but this close entanglement of foreign correspondents with State-opposing groups is neither more nor less than counter-revolutionary activity. Many of them, if they knew what we know about them, would probably leave voluntarily, by the next

¹⁴⁷ *MG*, 2 July 1937, 'Third Realm and Religion', *Leader*, 12.

¹⁴⁸ *TT*, 13 July 1937, 'Nazi Police and the Church', *Berlin Corr.*, 13.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *TT*, 10 August 1937, 'German Protestants' Defiance', *Berlin Corr.*, 9.

¹⁵¹ *TT*, 3 August 1937, 'Nazi Police and the Church', *Berlin Corr.*, 9.

¹⁵² *TT*, 11 August 1937, 'Germany and "The Times"', *Berlin Corr.*, 12.

train, this country whose indulgence and hospitality they abuse in such an unseemly way.¹⁵³

Ebbutt vigorously defended his work as Berlin correspondent, attacking statements made against him in the German press, and by German authorities, that it was his reports on the church struggle that had got him expelled. He called the allegations against him ‘nonsense’ and argued that the Nazis had come up with these lies ‘because convincing objects to correspondents on journalistic grounds cannot be found’.¹⁵⁴

French newspaper *Journal des Débats* (quoted in *The Times*) praised Ebbutt’s reporting, agreeing with him that it was his reports on the church conflict which had seen him expelled:

He is particularly disliked because of the admirable way in which he has kept himself informed of the wave of religious persecution now surging in Germany. Thanks to his telegrams, which we often quote, the chief events in the war against Christianity have now become known. It is hoped in Berlin that, once his voice has been silenced, opinion abroad will be kept ignorant of all that they want to hide. The regard and admiration which all his colleagues have for this great journalist can only be increased by the treatment to which he is now subjected.¹⁵⁵

Ebbutt’s expulsion garnered international attention, and was condemned by the international press. For the *Manchester Guardian*, Ebbutt’s expulsion was an alarming warning to other foreign correspondents living and working in Germany. Working conditions were hard enough, and now ‘naked reprisals have been introduced’.¹⁵⁶ The Berlin correspondent explained:

[T]he outlook generally for the treatment of foreign correspondents is highly unfavourable. Whether further retaliation against British correspondents will be made is not yet known ... the impression is gained that the attitude of the authorities will be even more severe in the future than hitherto, and that reasons even slighter, judged at least

¹⁵³ *TT*, 12 August 1937, ‘Nazi Press and ‘The Times’’, Berlin Corr., 10.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *TT*, 11 August 1937, ‘Nazis and ‘The Times’; Foreign Comment’, Berlin Corr., 14.

¹⁵⁶ *MG*, 21 August 1937, ‘The Foreign Journalist in Germany’, Berlin Corr., 15.

by British standards, may be found for further expulsion of foreign journalists.¹⁵⁷

While Ebbutt did not write for *The Times* again, the newspaper continued to print articles about the church conflict. Newspapers like the *Observer*, *Manchester Guardian*, and *News Chronicle* did the same.

* * * * *

The trial of Pastor Martin Niemöller was reported as the climax of the Evangelical church conflict by the British press. The British press keenly reported the trial, especially the verdict. The court acquitted Niemöller of the crime of treason against the State, but found him guilty, in the words of the *New Statesman and Nation*, of ‘making pulpit pronouncement “disturbing to public order”’.¹⁵⁸ He was sentenced to seven months and a small fine. Since he had already been in prison for longer than the prison term handed down to him, his sentence was deemed time served. This meant that the pastor was to leave the court as a free man. British newspapers applauded the verdict. The *Manchester Guardian* reported: ‘There can be no question that the judgment is in the interest of justice’.¹⁵⁹ The case demonstrated ‘police rule in Germany is not absolute’.¹⁶⁰ However, the victory for the pastor was short lived. He was swiftly rearrested outside the courthouse by the Gestapo on Hitler’s personal order. The *New Statesman and Nation* was outraged at this decision: ‘What justice, even in a *gleichgeschaltet* [Nazi coordinated] German court, had to concede to Pastor Niemöller, the Thugger of Nazism has taken away’.¹⁶¹ The newspaper reported:

Unluckily for him, the court decided that his preliminary detention awaiting trial should be deducted from the sentence and ordered his immediate release. The sequel was his seizure by the Gestapo and his despatch, without further judicial procedure, to the horrors of a concentration camp.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ *NSe&N*, 12 March 1938, ‘Pastor Niemöller’, 395.

¹⁵⁹ *MG*, 3 March 1938, ‘Dr. Niemöller’, Leader, 8.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ *NSe&N*, 12 March 1938, ‘Pastor Niemöller’, 395.

¹⁶² Ibid.

The *News Chronicle's* assessment of Niemöller's rearrest was scathing:

The leniency of the sentence, in contrast with the boasted severity of Nazi justice, was so striking that the first instinct of public opinion outside Germany was to congratulate both Dr. Niemoeller on a moral victory and also the German authorities on what looked like their ability to exercise moderation. Mercy is so infrequent in a dictator State that one could almost overlook the fact that, by democratic standards, Dr. Niemoeller had committed no offence for which even a formal conviction was appropriate. The Nazis are, however, determined to correct at the earliest possible moment the impression that they are capable of a gracious act ... Released from jail, he is to be sent to a concentration camp. So German "trials" are not so different after all from the judicial farces of Moscow. Justice in Germany, as in Russia, is apparently no more than a camp follower of the dominant party.¹⁶³

Niemöller was taken Sachsenhausen concentration camp, where he remained a political prisoner till the end of the war.¹⁶⁴ As the *Manchester Guardian* reported: 'No charges need to be made against him and he cannot claim trial. Political prisoners in the concentration camps are usually detained by this extra-legal machinery'.¹⁶⁵ Voigt commented that the imprisonment of Niemöller was a return to the 'old tactics' of the Gestapo whereby a well-known figure in opposition to the regime was imprisoned, as a political prisoner, for a lengthy time 'until he has been forgotten by the outside world just as Thälmann [the Communist leader] has been forgotten'.¹⁶⁶ The *New Statesman and Nation* commented:

There, in the tortures of indefinite "preventive custody", a brave man who fought for his country and whose only offence against "patriotism" is that he demanded public toleration of religious belief, will rot lest God should steal a shred of veneration from the Führer. Heil, Hitler! The engulfment of a once civilised nation in the code of Caligula would seem to have approached completion.¹⁶⁷

The imprisonment of Martin Niemöller in Sachsenhausen concentration camp in March 1938 essentially marked the end of united and coherent opposition. This was not to say that opposition was crushed, but the Confessional Church without Niemöller was a

¹⁶³ *NC*, 4 March 1938, 'Justice Undone', Leader, 10.

¹⁶⁴ Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 187.

¹⁶⁵ *MG*, 4 March 1938, 'Fate of Dr. Niemöller', Berlin Corr., 6.

¹⁶⁶ *MG*, 8 March 1938, 'Gestapo and Dr. Niemöller', Spec. Corr., 6.

¹⁶⁷ *NS&N*, 12 March 1938, 'Pastor Niemöller', 395.

movement that had lost its confidence. Prior to the trial the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* had commented: ‘The continued imprisonment of Pastor Niemoeller has had the desired effect of placing a handicap on the resistance of the Confessional Church to State interference’.¹⁶⁸ A 1938 Gestapo report noted that the Confessional Church was feeling a ‘weariness’ in their struggle and had lost their sense of purpose.¹⁶⁹ But in all this Niemöller was not forgotten. Marking a year since Niemöller had first been arrested (before his trial), the *Manchester Guardian* commented that the German authorities:

[H]ave already been surprised at the concern shown in Germany, but the number of deputations which have asked for his release, and by the kind of men who have formed these deputations. The German people, and especially those faithful to the Confessional Church, can be trusted not to forget Pastor Niemöller.¹⁷⁰

The British press continued to report the church conflict in late 1938 and early 1939, albeit more sporadically. At this crucial stage in the relationship between Britain and Germany and at a time when the peace and stability of Europe was at stake, British newspapers like the *News Chronicle*, *The Times*, and *Manchester Guardian* were still reporting developments in the struggle over the churches. Many British newspapers were full of articles about the increasing and escalating persecution of the Jews in Germany and Austria, which had reached new levels of brutality and repression, but occasional articles about resistant pastors or state measures against the churches still appeared.

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In the 1930s the British press were committed to reporting tension and conflict between the Nazi government and the churches in Germany. Reports began to appear shortly after Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor as the Nazi party began making moves against other political parties, including the Centre Party. The clash with the Catholic Church was over relatively quickly, with the signing of the Concordat in July 1933. There were

¹⁶⁸ *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, 19 January 1938, ‘Church Leader to be Tried in Germany’, ‘From Our Own Correspondent, Berlin’, 11.

¹⁶⁹ Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933-1945*, 220.

¹⁷⁰ *Manchester Guardian*, 1 July 1938, ‘Pastor Niemöller’, Leader, 10.

infringements of the Concordat and complaints by the Vatican about the treatment of Catholics in Germany, which was reported by many British newspapers, but by 1934 the focus of reports on the churches in Germany centred on the struggle taking place in the Protestant churches.

Most newspapers, at one point, printed something about the Evangelical church conflict. Some of these articles were sensational pieces that examined Nazi conceptions of Christianity. Others were informative but sporadic. But newspapers like *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Morning Post*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *The Spectator*, committed themselves to following and reporting the church struggle in detail. The *Manchester Guardian*, *News Chronicle*, and *New Statesman and Nation*, wholeheartedly denounced the actions of the German Christians, the Gestapo, and the State. They were scathing in their assessment of the conflict. For these newspapers the treatment of the churches in Germany was an example of the brutal methods of the dictatorship. *The Times* was more detail orientated, with less editorialising. Ebbutt was wary of sensationalising the news from Germany. He argued against ‘giving the soft touch’ to the news from Germany, lest the paper be accused of fabricating or exaggerating the situation. However, his detailed reports on the religious conflict directly led to his expulsion in 1937.

While reporting styles differed, the British press demonstrated a keen interest in reporting the church conflict in Germany. For the press, the struggle of the Protestant churches against attempts to control and redefine the church was a real religious struggle — it was a struggle over faith, religious doctrine and membership. Furthermore, protests by the churches against Nazi (and state) interference was seen as real and recognisable opposition to the state. For that, it deserved prominence in the British press. The press did get confused at times, mistaking opposition to infringements on the freedom of the church for opposition to the Nazi regime itself. The Pastor’s Emergency League and the Confessing Church were not in opposition to Hitler or the regime; for them, their opposition was purely religious and ideological. At no point was it the aim of the opposition pastors (or their organisations), to become leaders in political opposition to the Nazi dictatorship. Nor did they intend to organise any resistance to the ‘tyranny’ taking place under the Nazis.¹⁷¹ Their primary purpose was

¹⁷¹ J. S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933-45* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 84.

preserving the Christian faith against what they saw as heresy.¹⁷² The British press, at times, confused the opposition pastors struggle for religious freedom with a struggle against the Nazi state — which it was not. In any case, while the church conflict has not been given as much prominence in the historical literature as other events, it is clear that the British press took as much interest in this conflict as they did the destruction of democracy, the establishment of a Hitlerite dictatorship, and the persecution of political opponents and, increasingly, Germany's Jewish population.

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¹⁷² Ibid.

Chapter Seven – The Persecution of the Jews in Germany

Antisemitism was central to Nazi Party doctrine. British newspapers had commented and reported the rise of antisemitism in Germany during the Weimar Republic, focusing on the role of antisemitism in German politics. After Hitler came to power, the *Manchester Guardian* discussed the possibility that the Jews would be the next to be targeted because ‘Anti-Semitism has, of course, always been a cardinal point in Nazi propaganda’.¹ The *Daily Express* reported the day before the 5 March elections that the ‘exodus of the Jews of Germany has begun’.² Many Jews had sought refuge in Czechoslovakia and Austria, and more were sure to follow: ‘Faced with the menace of an anti-Semitic reign of terror in the event of a victory for the Hitlerites in to-morrow’s elections, many Jews have already left Germany, and large numbers are preparing for voluntary exile’.³ The *Daily Express* observed:

Nothing since the mass persecution of the Jews in Czarist Russia has equalled the campaign of anti-Semitic hatred by the German Nazis. Threats of physical violence and undisguised incitements to wholesale “pogroms” have been a feature of thousands of inflammatory speeches by the leaders and rank and file of the Nazi party.⁴

Following the election, the Nazis sought to consolidate their control over Germany. This included a brutal campaign of repression and violence against their ‘enemies’, including Jews. The Terror and the violence against the Jews in Germany was reported internationally. A special report by Voigt observed: ‘The anti-Semitic outrages of the last four weeks are far more horrible than could reasonably have been imagined at first. Nothing like them has been known in Germany for generations’.⁵ The *Jewish Chronicle* pointed out that while the violence might not be an ‘actual pogrom’ ‘the individual outrages — probably not all of them known — amount, in the aggregate, to something perilously approaching one’.⁶ The violence was accompanied by a wave of dismissals as Jews were removed from their positions at universities, medical practices and law

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, 3 March 1933, ‘2,000 Arrests in Two Prussian Provinces Alone’, Berlin Corr., 9. Hereafter *MG*.

² *Daily Express*, 4 March 1933, ‘Jews Flee From Vengeance of the Hitlerites’, 9. Hereafter *DE*.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *MG*, 27 March 1933, ‘Facts about the Nazi Terror’, Spec. Corr., 9.

⁶ *Jewish Chronicle*, 17 March 1933, ‘Germany: An Appeal for Sanity’, 9. Hereafter *JC*.

courts by SA men, local Nazi leaders, and Nazi students. Voigt described the campaign against the Jews by the SA and associated groups:

Jewish shops have been closed and raided, Jewish homes have been searched and thrown into disorder, and hundreds of Jews have been beaten and robbed ... The worst excesses in Berlin occurred on March 9, most of the victims living in the Grenadierstrasse. Many Jews were beaten by Brown Shirts until the blood streamed down their heads and faces and their backs and shoulders were bruised.⁷

‘What is to become of them no one knows’, Voigt reported. He commented: ‘It is a most frightful comment on German civilisation that Jews should be escaping from Germany into Poland. Poland since Hitler has been Chancellor is undoubtedly a country of greater freedom than Germany’.⁸ It was hoped that Hitler’s call for a halt to the violence would make a difference and reduce excesses committed. But, reported the *Jewish Chronicle*, ‘Even if the immediate threat of violence to person and property is lifted, the menace of the bloodless pogrom, the avowed policy of degradation and gradual pauperisation, will still remain’.⁹

The violence against the Jews was condemned by their coreligionists around the world, including by the *Jewish Chronicle*. The newspaper noted that ‘foreign opinion is beginning to find a voice’.¹⁰ Hitler was conscious of foreign opinion; evidence of this could be found in his instruction calling the Storm Troops to order. But more pressure on the German government was required:

Let Jews, here and in every land, borrow from the Germans their weapon of the boycott and turn it against them. If only half the Jewries of the world would wield it vigorously, if they would refuse to buy German goods, ignore German shipping and watering places, avoid all fresh participation in German finance ... they would show that that force which the Prussian mentality alone understands, is not the possession of tyrants alone.¹¹

⁷ *MG*, 27 March 1933, ‘Facts about the Nazi Terror’, Spec. Corr., 9.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *JC*, 17 March 1933, ‘Germany: An Appeal for Sanity’, 9.

¹⁰ *JC*, 17 March 1933, ‘Anti-Jewish Terror in Germany’, 22.

¹¹ *JC*, 24 March 1933, ‘A Jewish Retort to the Nazis’, 9.

Such a boycott was feared by German authorities to have ‘serious economic consequences for German manufacturers and exporters’, the *News Chronicle* reported.¹² Thus far, ‘No central organisation has been formed yet to start any concerted action’, but a number of businesses in London had already instituted a boycott of German goods.¹³ It was certainly not the widespread and all-encompassing action the *Jewish Chronicle* hoped for. The *Daily Mirror* reported a meeting of the Jewish ‘parliament’ in London which agreed to have ‘no part in boycotts against Germany, leaving them to individual action’.¹⁴ Neville Laski, chairman of the Board, declared that ‘Jews were not at war with Germany’.¹⁵ The board ‘decided to resist in whatever way possible the discrimination in Germany against citizens of the Jewish faith and to hold a meeting of protest in London’.¹⁶ The lack of united action by world Jewry sent a message to the Hitler government. A key opportunity to demonstrate to Hitler and the Nazi government that action against the Jews would not be tolerated was missed.

The Nazis responded to international condemnation by announcing their own boycott of German Jewish businesses. In doing so, they denounced the foreign press and international Jewry. Göring reportedly declared in an address to foreign correspondents: ‘The Government is shocked, indignant, and indeed speechless at the reports which have been written abroad about Jews in Germany’.¹⁷ In an interview with the *Daily Mail’s* Rothay Reynolds, Ernst Haansstaengel ‘one of Hitler’s closest cooperators’, argued ‘reports of mishandling of Jews are barefaced lies’.¹⁸ *The Times* reported Hitler’s address to his cabinet: ‘International Jewry, however, must realise that a Jewish war against Germany would recoil with full force against German Jewry’.¹⁹ The boycott of Jewish businesses was necessary, Hitler declared, ‘as it would otherwise have burst forth spontaneously and might have taken undesirable forms’.²⁰ The *Daily Express* also reported Hitler’s threats; the Jews of Germany ‘would be forced to recognise that a Jewish war against Germany would only hit the Jews in Germany’.²¹

¹² *News Chronicle*, 25 March 1933, ‘German Fears; Rewards for Evidence’, Berlin Corr., 13. Hereafter *NC*.

¹³ *NC*, 25 March 1933, ‘Jewish Storm Against Hitler’, 13.

¹⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 27 March 1933, ‘Jews Not to Wage War Against Germany’, 3. Hereafter *DMirror*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Daily Mail*, 27 March 1933, ‘Hitler and the Jews’, Rothay Reynolds, Berlin Corr., 16. Hereafter *DMail*.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Hitler in this instance referred to anti-German placards on motor cars in London.

TT, 30 March 1933, ‘Nazi Boycott of Jews’, Berlin Corr., 13.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *DE*, 30 March 1933, ‘First Steps in Nazi Boycott Against Jews’, Berlin Corr., 11.

As the *Morning Post* reported, the boycott was ‘clearly intended to use the Jews and Socialists of Germany as hostages for the good behaviour of world public opinion’.²² The boycott was to be arranged and carried out by the Nazi party not the German government, but as the *Morning Post* explained, ‘Herr Hitler has frequently asserted that nothing happens in the Party without his knowing and desiring it’.²³

A wave of propaganda accompanied preparations for the boycott, which included placards displayed on the streets of Berlin declaring: ‘The Jews of the whole world want to destroy Germany, German people defend yourselves; Do not buy from Jews’.²⁴ The *Daily Mail* commented: ‘Not since the Jews were driven out of Germany in the Middle Ages ... have the Jews had to face such an onslaught’.²⁵ Jewish shops and offices throughout Germany were to have ‘a black placard with a yellow spot as was done in the Jewish ghettos of the Middle Ages’.²⁶ Even before the scheduled boycott on 1 April, disturbances had already broken out. Both the *Morning Post* and *The Times* reported that boycotts were already in place in some regional areas in Germany.

The boycott of Jewish businesses was held for one day, but the Nazis threatened its resumption if foreign criticism did not cease. As far as Voigt was concerned foreign criticism was of little consequence, because

The world-wide protest against Hitlerites anti-Semitism is by no means the cause of the renewed drive against the Jews. That drive was intended in any case, and has long been part of the Hitlerite programme. The protest has only been exploited by the Hitlerite Dictatorship to justify that drive in the eyes of the German public – indeed, to make it commendable.²⁷

Essentially, Voigt explained, ‘the Jews in Germany are being made to suffer afresh not only according to plan but also with the intention of making the Jews outside Germany stop protesting. The German Government, in other words, is simply practising blackmail’.²⁸ *The Times* argued that since the ‘racialism’ of the Nazi programme was

²² *Morning Post*, 30 March 1933, ‘Hitler on the Boycott’, Berlin Corr., 13. Hereafter *MP*.

²³ *MP*, 30 March 1933, ‘Hitler on the Boycott’, Berlin Corr., 13.

²⁴ *DMail*, 1 April 1933, ‘Germany’s Boycott Surprise’, Rothay Reynolds Berlin Corr., 13.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *MG*, 30 March 1933, ‘Hitler’s New Drive Against the Jews’, Spec. Corr., 9.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

‘notorious’; ‘the Nazi leaders have no right to be indignant because Jews in other countries have taken their threats and their programme seriously’.²⁹ In any case, reported *The Times*, the boycott ‘was completely effective ...[it] completely paralysed Jewish business life’.³⁰ The *Daily Mail’s* Rothay Reynolds described the scenes in Berlin: ‘It was the order, precision, and tranquility of this action against a minority which made the greatest impression on detached observers’.³¹ He wrote: ‘Through the windows could be seen the shop assistants ready to serve customers, but nowhere did I see anybody enter ... All the great stores in Berlin were closed except Wertheims and the Karstadt Store, which was saved by the retirement of all its Jewish directors and the dismissal of all Jewish employees’.³² The *Daily Telegraph’s* correspondent reported his attempts to enter a Jewish shop, which was prevented by a Nazi guard.³³ Many British newspapers included photographs of the boycott; these included photographs of placards on Jewish shops and Brown Shirts patrolling the streets or standing guard outside shops.³⁴ One of the most widely circulated photographs was an image of a Jew being paraded through the streets of Chemnitz for refusing to obey a Nazi order to clean the streets.³⁵ The *News Chronicle*, *Jewish Chronicle*, *Daily Mirror*, and *Manchester Guardian* all carried this photo.³⁶

British reporting of the boycott varied. For instance, the *Daily Telegraph* commented:

[the boycott] was certainly not a victory of Reason or Judgment. The day will come when the German people will wish the senseless story expunged from their annals, and will wonder what madness drove the leaders of the Triumphant Hitlerite Revolution to choose so shameful a way of celebrating the dawn of a new era.³⁷

²⁹ *TT*, 3 April 1933, ‘According to Plan’, Leader, 15.

³⁰ *TT*, 3 April 1933, ‘Boycott of the Jews’, Berlin Corr., 14.

³¹ *DMail*, 3 April 1933, ‘Germany’s Jewish Boycott’, Rothay Reynolds Berlin Corr., 13.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Daily Telegraph*, 3 April 1933, ‘Heavy Cost of Germany’s One-Day Boycott’, Berlin Corr., 11. Hereafter *DT*.

³⁴ For instance, *MG*, 4 April 1933, 12; *NC*, 3 April 1933, ‘Jew-Baiting in Germany’, 9; *DE*, 3 April 1933, 11 and 14.

³⁵ See Appendix I, Illustrations/Photographs, Coverage of April Boycott for examples of photo coverage, including the Chemnitz photo.

³⁶ *NC*, 3 April 1933, ‘Jew-Baiting in Germany’, 9; *JC*, 7 April 1933, 25; *DMirror*, 3 April 1933, 3; *MG*, 4 April 1933, 12.

³⁷ *DT*, 3 April 1933, ‘Germany’s One Day Boycott’, Leader, 10.

This was in contrast to a report by the newspapers diplomatic correspondent which misguidedly ascribed the boycott as part of a 'Nazi-Jewish conflict'.³⁸ Voigt of the *Manchester Guardian* responded with some sarcasm:

The German Jews, unarmed to the teeth and numbering one in a hundred of the population, were defeated by the armed Brown Shirts, supported by the police, the regular army, and more than half the total electorate. But their co-religionists in the five continents rallied to their relief and, bonding world opinion, especially Anglo-American opinion, to their will, launched an attack of defamatory libel against the Brown Army and the Hitler regime, spreading tales about atrocities and about a Brown Terror and other emanations of the Semitic mind so as to besmirch and smother that blameless regime amid the contempt and execrations of mankind.³⁹

* * * * *

The persecution of the Jews increasingly turned to what the *Manchester Guardian* called the 'simple savagery of depriving them of the means by which they live'.⁴⁰ On 7 April 1933, the Nazi government passed the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service (or Civil Service decree). The *Manchester Guardian* outlined the new law:

Except for the few Jewish officials who were appointed before August 1, 1914, or who fought in the Great War, or whose sons or fathers fought, all Jews are to be dismissed and are in future to be debarred from the Civil Service. This law will apply to anyone of whose four grandparents one is a Jew.⁴¹

The new law, which would be applied not only to the Reich but also to the Federal states, would:

[P]revent Jews from being judges, professors, schoolmasters, railway officials, or from occupying any of the innumerable positions controlled by the State; combined with the persecution of the same people in business, in medicine, and all the professions, it will degrade them into

³⁸ *DT*, 3 April 1933, 'Efforts Behind the Scenes', Dip. Corr., 12.

³⁹ *MG*, 5 April 1933, 'The Great Nazi Victory on the Shop Front', Corr., 12.

⁴⁰ *MG*, 7 April 1933, 'The German Persecution', Leader, 10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

a helot class with no means but the lowest of earning its living, exposed entirely to the brutality of the Nazis.⁴²

For the *Manchester Guardian* the decree would take the ‘degradation of Jews to second-class citizens’ a step further.⁴³ The Jews, the *Manchester Guardian* declared, ‘are scapegoats who are suffering intolerably for crimes they never committed’.⁴⁴

The Times and *Morning Post* also reported the decree, but in passing, amid other articles on the situation in Germany. But the *Jewish Chronicle*, like the *Manchester Guardian*, understood the significance of the decree. The newspaper announced news of the decree with the headline: ‘Starvation for 600,000 Jews — According to Plan; Caught Like Rats in a Trap’.⁴⁵ The persecution of the Jews essentially fell ‘under two heads: (a) No Jew is to be employed in Germany (b) No Jew is to be allowed to leave Germany’.⁴⁶ For the *Jewish Chronicle*: ‘It becomes increasingly difficult to consider Hitler’s anti-Semitic policy as anything but Sadism’.⁴⁷ Europe had seen antisemitism and antisemitic policy before, but this was a ‘most refined cruelty’, declared the *Manchester Guardian*.⁴⁸

But what, asked the *Manchester Guardian*, could be done? The British government had already made it clear that it would not interfere. Sir John Simon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, declared that under the Covenant of the League of Nations, nothing could be done.⁴⁹ But, remarked the *Manchester Guardian*, the British government could ‘quietly convey to the German Government the news of what this country feels about the terroristic system, and can do so in such a way that the German Government will have no difficulty in understanding what is meant’.⁵⁰ However, Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald, after being pressed by a Conservative MP John Morris whether it was possible to express ‘strong feeling’ against the persecution of the Jews, replied ‘it is a matter of discretion, and we are quite willing at the moment to leave it where it is’.⁵¹ Of this the *Manchester Guardian* was incredulous:

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ *JC*, 14 April 1933, ‘The Tragedy of German Jewry’, 16.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ *MG*, 7 April 1933, ‘The German Persecution’, Leader, 10.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ *MG*, 7 April 1933, ‘The German Persecution’, 10.

When in a great country freedom of thought, of speech, of life, is going down in terror, is that all that a Prime Minister of England has to say! Why was the boycott of the Jews suspended and not revived? Essentially because of international opinion.⁵²

All British newspapers covered the initial outburst of antisemitic acts by the Hitler regime. After that, coverage was sporadic, with the exception of *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, and *Jewish Chronicle*. It might be expected that the *Jewish Chronicle* would regularly update its readership on the plight of its fellow Jews in Germany. *The Times* and *Manchester Guardian*, however, also provided extensive coverage of antisemitic outrages.⁵³ Articles on the ‘clean-up’ of German industry, business and professions often appeared daily, and at the very least weekly. Universities were hit especially hard, with the assault led by Nazi students. In April and May 1933 both newspapers reported the pressure on Jewish professors to retire from their posts, as well as the exclusion of many Jewish students from universities, including, for instance, the exclusion of Jewish medical students from the University of Frankfurt.⁵⁴ The Nazi students assault also extended to ‘Un-German’ texts and books. On 8 May 1933, Nazi students announced an act ‘against the un-German spirit’, in nineteen university towns throughout Germany.⁵⁵ The students raided local libraries, and in Berlin stormed the Institute for Sexual Science seizing what books and manuscripts that had been left since a previous raid days earlier, and piled the books and printed materials in Opera Square. In front of thousands of spectators the students (and Storm Troops) set the books alight. Again, this was reported by both the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Times*, with the latter reporting that as many as 20,000 books were destroyed.⁵⁶

The announcement of the Civil Service decree and the drive against Jews that accompanied it influenced many clubs and associations which followed with their own

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ For most of 1933, the *Manchester Guardian* did not have a resident correspondent in Berlin. It relied on news agencies such as Reuter, as well as news from the newspapers other European correspondents, and features by special correspondent Voigt, until December 1933 when C.A. Lambert took over. In May 1933 for instance, there were approximately ten articles about the persecution of the Jews provided by Reuter, compared with four articles provided by correspondents or special correspondent, Voigt.

⁵⁴ *MG*, 5 May 1933, ‘Nazi Pressure on Jews’, 15. *TT*, 4 May 1933, ‘Nazi Racial Ideas’, ‘From Our Own Correspondent, Berlin 11. *TT*, 4 May 1933, ‘Limitation of Jewish Students’, Frankfurt Corr., 11.

⁵⁵ Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 430.

⁵⁶ *TT*, 11 May 1933, ‘Un-German’ Books Destroyed’, Berlin Corr., 13.

restrictions on Jewish members. The process of driving Jews out of German public life was documented carefully by *The Times*. At the end of May 1933, *The Times* reported a proposal by Dr Neuendorff, the new President of the *Deutsche Turnerschaft*, to exclude Jews from the 12,852 gymnastic clubs in Germany, in line with the changes already taking place in the civil service.⁵⁷ By July 1933, *The Times* was reporting similar proposals for chess clubs. The *Manchester Guardian*, at this time, also reported the Aryanisation of sporting associations, including tennis clubs in April 1933.⁵⁸ At the same time the newspaper reported how the purge of Jews had extended to engineering and the sciences.⁵⁹

The Times coverage of the changes taking place in Germany, particularly regarding the process of *Gleichschaltung*, was unrivalled but the *Manchester Guardian* also stood out for its reporting. Voigt was characteristically outspoken about the persecution of the Jews. In July 1933 he reported: ‘the elimination of the Jews from trade, industry, and the liberal professions, as well as the general boycott (both legal and extra-legal) grows more and more systematic, more and more ruthless, so that the complete annihilation of the entire German Jewry is approaching nearer’.⁶⁰ Even though violence against Jews had lessened:

[T]he system now exercised all over Germany, and in such a manner that there is hardly a single Jew who can escape from it, is far worse than this crude Terror, far more inhuman, far more tragic in all its consequences. An entire community of over half a million persons is being coldly and deliberately reduced to ruin, destitution, and hunger.⁶¹

Not all newspapers were sympathetic to the plight of the Jews. The *Daily Mail’s* proprietor, Viscount Rothermere, was highly critical of the ‘influence’ the Jews had on German politics and the press. He wrote in his now infamous article, ‘Youth Triumphant’, that the German nation ‘was rapidly falling under the control of its alien

⁵⁷ *TT*, 20 May 1933, ‘The Ostracism of German Jews’, Berlin Corr., 11.

⁵⁸ *MG*, 24 April 1933, ‘Nazi ‘Purge’ Extends’, Reuter, 9. And *MG*, 25 April 1933, ‘Nazi ‘Purge’ of Sport’, Press Association Foreign Special, 11.

To his credit, Walter von Cramm, ranked number 2 in the world, refused to be co-opted by the Nazis for their purposes. He was persecuted for his homosexuality and sentenced to a years imprisonment in 1938.

⁵⁹ *MG*, 24 April 1933, ‘Nazi ‘Purge’ Extends’, Reuter, 9

⁶⁰ *MG*, 17 July 1933, ‘Confiscatory Legislation in Germany’, Spec. Corr., 12.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

elements. In the last days of the pre-Hitler regime there were twenty times as many Jewish Government officials in Germany as had existed before the war'.⁶² Moreover, 'Israelites of international attachments were insinuating themselves into key positions in the German administrative machine'.⁶³ Three ministries had direct contact with the press, wrote Rothermere, but 'in each case the official responsible for conveying new and interpreting policy to the public was a Jew'.⁶⁴ It was 'from such abuses that Hitler has freed Germany'.⁶⁵ Hitler, 'By mobilising the youth of the country in support of a vigorous national policy', had succeeded in converting 'a despondent and embittered nation into one radiant with hope and optimism'.⁶⁶ As far as Rothermere was concerned, the notion that the Nazis 'are scowling young bullies who reign by terror over a cowed and resentful population', was a 'direct inversion of the facts'; 'I am convinced by the testimony of my own eyes and ears that the sympathies of the overwhelming mass of the German population are strongly with this organisation of stalwart young patriots'.⁶⁷ The *Daily Mail* was an exceptional case; no other British newspaper (included in this study) went as far as Viscount Rothermere in declaring support and admiration for Hitler and his movement. Rothermere was later to distance himself from Hitler's regime and, most importantly, Mosley's British Union of Fascists following the groups violence at the Olympia Rally in London, and the Röhm purge in Germany in 1934.⁶⁸

In contrast, the reporting of another popular newspaper led to the expulsion of its correspondent from Germany. The *Daily Express'* coverage of the persecution of the Jews was sporadic but highly critical of the Nazis' antisemitic policies. In late May

⁶² *DMail*, 10 July 1933, 'Youth Triumphant', By Viscount Rothermere, 10. See Appendix I for photograph of Rothermere's 'Youth Triumphant' article.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ On 19 July 1934, the *Daily Mail* printed an exchange of letters between Mosley and Rothermere which clearly demonstrated their 'divergence of ideas'. Rothermere wrote: 'As you know, I have never thought that a movement calling itself "Fascist" could be successful in this country, and I have also made it quite clear in my conversations with you that I never could support any movement with an anti-Semitic bias, any movement which had dictatorship as one of its objectives, or any movement which will substitute a "Corporate State" for the Parliamentary institutions of this country'. *Daily Mail*, 19 July 1934, 'Lord Rothermere and Sir Oswald Mosley', 11 and 12. Mosley claimed that Rothermere had been pressured by Jewish advertisers but it seems that the publicity from the Olympia rally made Rothermere think twice about (publicly) supporting the BUF. Furthermore, the Röhm purge had demonstrated, beyond a doubt, the stark reality of the brutality of the dictatorship. Rothermere's admiration for the Nazi dictatorship seemed to come more from an admiration of a strong government than of a fascist state model (something Britain was lacking at the time).

1934, Berlin correspondent Pembroke Stephens wrote of the distress of German Jews: ‘Robbed of work, denied civic privileges in a country which despises them, what is the German Jew to do but follow the brutal advice of officials: “The best thing you can do is die”’.⁶⁹ The article, printed following Stephens arrest (and brief imprisonment) in Aken, caught the attention of Nazi authorities. Stephens was arrested again and then expelled from Germany. The *Daily Express* reported that his expulsion was the result of his article about the persecution of the Jews.⁷⁰ For Stephens, writing for the *Daily Express*, it was his job to:

[T]ell the truth about Germany, even at the risk of imprisonment and expulsion ... After my arrest a fortnight ago...there were two alternatives – either silence, humility, obeisance to officialdom, or the risk of continuing my work as if nothing had happened at all. I chose the second course and expulsion was the almost inevitable result.⁷¹

He argued: ‘they [Nazis] blame me for lying when the only fault that can be laid to me is that I have been too blunt in telling the truth’.⁷² Stephens followed this article with another, entitled ‘Menace to Europe’, in which he called Germany the ‘mad dog of Europe’.⁷³ Stephens did not hold back, issuing a vigorous denunciation of the Nazi persecution of the Jews:

The world revolts against the merciless war of extermination against the Jews. This war is no longer a vendetta against the guilty Jews of Germany, the cheats, the thieves, the corrupt, but a war against half a million people, including good and bad, a war against innocent women and children who have done nothing wrong but be born Jews.⁷⁴

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The British press reported renewed campaigns against the Jews in Germany in mid-1934 (prior to the Röhm purge) and mid-1935. During this period however, the

⁶⁹ *DE*, 25 May 1934, ‘German Jews Are Facing Their Darkest Days’, By Pembroke Stephens, 2. Philip Pembroke Stephens took over the post as Berlin correspondent from Sefton Delmer at the end of 1933. He had previously worked in Paris and Vienna for the *Daily Express*.

⁷⁰ *DE*, 2 June 1934, ‘My Expulsion by the Nazis’, By Pembroke Stephens, 1.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ A statement, according to the article, attributed to the French Military Governor of Metz. *Daily Express*, 9 June 1934, ‘Menace to Europe’, By Pembroke Stephens, 10.

⁷⁴ *DE*, 9 June 1934, ‘Menace to Europe’, By Pembroke Stephens, 10.

British press regarded the church situation more pressing. In 1935, it was the violent rhetoric of Streicher's press that captured the attention of the several British newspapers. This latest campaign, according to the *New Statesman and Nation*, 'surpasses in blood-thirstiness and obscenity anything that even Streicher himself had ever attempted before'.⁷⁵ Some of the farcical allegations made in *Der Stürmer* (Streicher's antisemitic newspaper) included that the Jews sold 'wine coloured with Christian blood'; that the Talmud condoned murder and homosexuality and that 'Jewish families entice "blonde Aryan girls into their houses to minister to the sexual needs of their young boys"'.⁷⁶ But even though a 'certain section of German public opinion is quite definitely disgusted with the revolting vulgarity and sadistic brutality of Julius Streicher's anti-Semitic activity in Franconia', 'It would probably be too optimistic to claim that this section of German public opinion is entirely free from this anti-Semitism'.⁷⁷

But, this newest antisemitic campaign was not just directed by Streicher. The *New Statesman and Nation* also mentioned antisemitic articles which had appeared in Goebbels' *Angriff*. Furthermore, reported the *New Statesman and Nation*: 'The Streicher method of hounding personally every German who has any dealings with a Jew is being introduced into the whole of Bavaria and the entire Reich'.⁷⁸ Indeed, the boycott against Jewish businesses had been revived with a 'force not known since April, 1933'.⁷⁹ The newspaper reported: 'Jews in Germany, who for some time were left in peace, are now facing once more a new anti-Semitic drive with all the ferocity, pitilessness and brutality of the drive which shook the world two years ago'.⁸⁰

Violence against the Jews escalated in July and August 1935. In mid-July, the *Morning Post* reported outbreaks of violence in Kurfurstendamm, where 'brutal Jew baiting and window smashing', had been carried out by Storm Troops.⁸¹ Condemned by the German public, the German government issued a statement blaming 'dark elements', which were

⁷⁵ *New Statesman and Nation*, 20 April 1934, 'Frustrated Jewish Hopes in Germany', Corr., 545. Hereafter *NS&N*.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *MP*, 17 July 1935, 'German Disgust at Jew Baiting', Berlin Corr., 13.

‘seeking to discredit the State and the movement’.⁸² This was rather surprising, explained the *Morning Post*, because ‘it is known that the Storm troopers acted not only on the encouragement of the official Nazi papers “Angriff” and “Voelkischer Beobachter”, but also on the instructions from a high party official’.⁸³ If the government wanted to end the outrages all they had to do was ban *Der Stürmer* which had been ‘conducting a vigorous campaign to extend the circulation of its weekly incitements to violence and terrorism’.⁸⁴

In August 1934, Streicher addressed a ‘monster rally of anti-Semites at the Sport Palace’.⁸⁵ With an audience of approximately 15,000, ‘Germany’s leading Jew-baiter’ attacked the foreign press for its coverage of the violence in Kurfurstendamm: ‘A demonstration ... is immediately described as a pogrom. What shamelessness! What provocation! If anything disagreeable to a Jew happens, a cry is raised at once. “What concern is it of yours,” he asked, turning to the Press, “when we clean up our own house?”’.⁸⁶ Jewish leaders had issued warnings to ‘all Jewish citizens to stay indoors’, but a number of Jews were assaulted and beaten in the streets.⁸⁷

In September 1935, the antisemitic drive that had gripped Germany culminated in new legislation which, according to the *Daily Express*, ‘sent the Jews in Germany back to the Middle Ages’.⁸⁸ This legislation, commonly known as the Nuremberg laws, transformed Jews ‘into a class of Untouchables in a “legal” sense’, according to the *Jewish Chronicle*.⁸⁹ The new laws, reported *The Times*, included the following:

[B]esides prohibiting mixed marriages, sexual relations between Germans and Jews, and the employment in Jewish households of German women under the age of 45, forbids Jews to fly the German flag, but permits them to fly the Jewish colours. Connected with it is the law providing for two classes of citizens. The Jew can never attain the status of a full citizen (*Reichsbürger*), which is reserved for persons

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ *MP*, 16 August 1935, ‘Berlin’s Day of Jew-Hate’, 11.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ *DE*, 16 September 1935, ‘Nazis Proclaim Anti-Jew Laws’, ‘Daily Express’ Special Correspondent, Nuremberg’, 1.

⁸⁹ *JC*, 20 September 1935, ‘Germany: Disgraceful ‘Jew-Laws’’, 16.

of Aryan blood. He will be classed as a *Staatsangehöriger* (belonging to the State).⁹⁰

For most British newspapers, the new laws were, in the words of *The Times*, ‘merely a legalization of a state of affairs already in existence’.⁹¹ For months past, reported *The Times*, ‘mixed marriages have been made impossible in many parts of the country by reason of judicial rulings supplemented by the arbitrary decrees of Nazi regional and local leaders’.⁹² Similarly the *Jewish Chronicle* reported: ‘The Laws, it is clear, add little, beyond the stamp of officialdom ... The Jews are already pariahs in fact, if not in name’.⁹³ *The Spectator* added to this explaining the laws ‘merely gives legal sanction to a prohibition which has long been enforced wither by rulings in the courts of decrees issued by Nazi leaders, to say nothing of lawless methods of forcible persuasion’.⁹⁴

The British press overwhelmingly condemned this latest attack on the Jews of Germany. An outcry against the laws was made by most British newspapers, with the exception of the *Daily Mail*, which made no comment. The *Daily Express* declared: ‘This renewed attack on Jews in Germany, not because of any individual offence, but in a blind antagonism to a race, is merely bestial’.⁹⁵ And the *Manchester Guardian* reported: ‘What is happening to the German Jews, and is now being legalised, is that they are being put into a permanent quarantine. They are treated as a source of moral and physical contamination and are being at the same time segregated and slowly exterminated’.⁹⁶

Even though most newspapers reported the announcement of the Nuremberg laws, and condemned them, they spent little time discussing the laws in depth. The *Manchester Guardian* was critical of the lack of attention the laws received, explaining in October 1935, the laws had ‘hardly received the attention outside of Germany that they deserved’.⁹⁷ There could be two reasons for this, the article explained — firstly, the press (and Europe) was occupied with the Abyssinian crisis; secondly, there was the belief the

⁹⁰ *TT*, 18 September 1935, ‘Isolation of Jews in Germany’, Berlin Corr., 9.

⁹¹ *TT*, 17 September 1935, ‘New German Laws’, Berlin Corr., 13.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *JC*, 20 September 1935, ‘Germany: Disgraceful ‘Jew-Laws’’, 16.

⁹⁴ *The Spectator*, 20 September 1935, ‘Anti-Jewish Laws in Germany’, 414. Hereafter *TS*.

⁹⁵ *DE*, 17 September 1935, ‘Jews’, Opinion, 10.

⁹⁶ *MG*, 17 September 1935, ‘Hitler Marks Time’, Leader, 8.

⁹⁷ *MG*, 5 October 1935, ‘The Nuremberg Decrees’, Corr., 13.

‘Jewish laws hardly bring any change in practice, but only legalise a status which has already been in existence for some time’.⁹⁸ But the significance of the laws should not be underestimated: ‘the new laws are of great fundamental importance, as they bring back a state of affairs that seemed to belong to the past, at least in Europe’.⁹⁹ But there was another point of concern, reported the *Manchester Guardian*. The Jewish inhabitants of the Saar were included in the new law, despite the German Government signing a treaty ‘declaring that for one year after the return there would be no discrimination against any inhabitant of this territory for reasons of political opinion, race, or religion’.¹⁰⁰ The Nuremberg Laws breached this treaty; the treaty was signed ‘voluntarily ... and already the Hitler Government has broken it’.¹⁰¹ Other British newspapers failed to pick up on this, turning their attention instead to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia. For the *Manchester Guardian* though, it was concerning that Hitler thought so little of the ‘break of faith’.¹⁰²

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Most British newspapers only picked up the story of the persecution of the Jews again when Germany occupied Austria in 1938. In the meantime, coverage of the Jewish situation in Germany was intermittent. In 1936, some British newspapers published a few articles on the situation for the Jews in Germany, but the regime was careful to avoid any excessive violence or persecution in the lead up to the Olympic Games which were held in Germany that year. The *Manchester Guardian* and *The Times* printed more articles than any other British newspaper, but even they were mostly preoccupied with news of the churches (which was still an evolving situation), and the increasing territorial demands of the German government. This changed with the invasion of Austria by Germany on 12 March 1938. The invasion, to enforce the Anschluss, was accompanied by a vigorous campaign of persecution and violence against Austria’s Jews, particularly against the Jewish residents of Vienna. The Anschluss was reported widely by British newspapers, but it was the mistreatment of Austria’s Jewish population that captured the attention of British correspondents.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Details about the excesses committed by Nazis against Austria's Jews were revealed by British newspapers towards the end of March 1938. The looting of Jewish shops began with the influx of German troops (and Nazis) into Vienna, reported both the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily Express*. The correspondent for the *New Statesman and Nation* witnessed Jews being forced to scrub, 'Vote Yes for Schuschnigg' off the pavements 'while Nazis stood round jeering and cursing'.¹⁰³ It reported the 'plight of Vienna's enormous Jewish population is indescribable'.¹⁰⁴ The *Daily Express'* correspondent was told by many Germans that 'the Vienna terror for Jews is far worse than it ever was in Berlin'.¹⁰⁵ Jews, correspondent Dennis Clarke wrote, were in hiding: 'In a walk through Vienna I did not see a single Jewish face'.¹⁰⁶ The *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post's*¹⁰⁷ Vienna correspondent, G.E.R. Gedye, reported the daily toll of suicides in the city, which included distinguished Jewish intellectuals and business men – few of them, remarked the correspondent were reported in the papers.¹⁰⁸ He was expelled from Austria for his reporting on the persecution and violence, by order from the Gestapo. It was the second expulsion order to be issued to the Gedye.¹⁰⁹ He went on to write *Fallen Bastions* about his time in Austria, which would include an account of the plunder of Vienna by Nazis and the brutal treatment of the Jews.

In mid-April 1938 Professor Norman Bentwich¹¹⁰, writing for the *Manchester Guardian*, described the plight of Austrian, and especially Viennese, Jews as one of 'indescribable misery and hopelessness'.¹¹¹ Following the Anschluss 'there was lawlessness and brutality employed', mainly by the Austrian Nazis.¹¹² German police and SS leaders 'after a week introduced some measure of discipline and checked the worst abuses; but

¹⁰³ *NSe2N*, 26 March 1938, 'The Rape of Vienna', Corr., 511.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *DE*, 19 March 1938, 'Vienna Silent as Hitler Speaks', Dennis Clarke, Vienna Staff Reporter, 2.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ The *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* merged in late 1937 and was retitled (briefly) the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*.

¹⁰⁸ *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, 21 March 1938, 'Daily Toll of Suicide Among Vienna Jews', Vienna Corr., 4. Hereafter DT&MP.

¹⁰⁹ The first expulsion order had been withdrawn according to the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, 29 March 1938, 15.

¹¹⁰ Norman Bentwich was a barrister and academic who served as League of Nations Director of High Commission for Refugees from Germany between 1933 and 1935. He was also a Professor of International Relations at Jerusalem University from 1932 to 1951, and a keen Zionist.

¹¹¹ *MG*, 13 April 1938, 'The Jews in Austria', By Professor Norman Bentwich, 9.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

not till hundreds of shops had been looted and hundreds of people had been assaulted. There was a daily toll of suicides'.¹¹³ Similarly, the *New Statesman and Nation* correspondent observed:

Such things explain the daily roll of Jewish suicides, which has risen as high as 130 ... Free game for the mob, without rights or police protection, despoiled of their property and usually deprived of all chance of earning a livelihood and even of relief from fellow-Jews, their religion outraged, the frontier hermetically sealed against all chance of escape, mass suicide is inevitable ... After two days of the Nazi regime I ceased trying to dissuade any Jew who spoke of it to me from suicide.¹¹⁴

The Anschluss sparked the exodus of Jews, Socialists, and those who had supported the Schuschnigg government across the frontiers into neighbouring countries. The mass flight of those fleeing the Nazi onslaught outnumbered those who had fled following Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in 1933.¹¹⁵ While the 'Aryanisation' of German society, government, civil service and the economy had taken several years, and was still far from complete, the process of driving Jews out of the Austrian economy took just months. Looting and plundering accompanied the forcible takeover of Jewish businesses. The process of coordinating the Austrian state along National Socialist lines was extremely brutal. It garnered international attention, as did the exodus of Jews from the country. The appearance of refugees in Croydon (arriving by air) and many ports in Britain brought the plight of Austria's Jews to the attention of the British public through extensive press coverage by British newspapers.¹¹⁶ The question of what to do with the refugees became an important consideration for the British government, especially the Foreign Office and the Home office.¹¹⁷

Many British newspapers weighed in on the debate surrounding the Austrian refugee crisis. In mid-March 1938, the *Manchester Guardian* in a leader commented:

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ *NSe&N*, 23 April 1938, 'Farewell to Austria', Corr., 680.

¹¹⁵ A.J. Sherman, *Island Refuge: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich, 1933-1959* (London: Paul Elek, 1973), 85.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 86.

¹¹⁷ For the pressures and considerations that faced the British Home Office and Foreign Office see A.J. Sherman, *Island Refuge*, Chapter Four.

There must be many Englishmen who, noting the treatment with which Austrian refugees from the Nazi persecution meet on reaching our shores, look back with shame for the present to the days when our reputation as a country of sanctuary stood highest in Europe.¹¹⁸

The article urged a revision of the Aliens Act of 1919, which gave the immigration authorities the power to turn back any immigrant who did not satisfy their criteria. For the *Manchester Guardian* the time had come for amendments to the Act, for ‘In the matter of giving asylum to the victims of brute force in Europe we have done much less than France, Holland, Switzerland, or Czechoslovakia’.¹¹⁹

On 22 March 1938 a motion put forth by Labour MP Colonel Josiah Wedgwood¹²⁰, calling for a relaxation of the Aliens Act for six months to help alleviate the situation, was rejected by the House, 210 to 142.¹²¹ *The Times* called the bill a ‘clumsy attempt to deal with a difficult problem’.¹²² Indiscriminate admission was impossible; every case must be treated on its merits, declared Home Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare in his critique of the bill. Of the Home Secretary’s promises of offering asylum to the Austrian refugees, *The Times* commented: ‘It is to be hoped ... that it will be interpreted with wide liberality, especially during the early days of the new regime in Austria, when there are certain to be many distressing cases’.¹²³ *The Daily Mail* was highly critical of the Wedgwood plan, declaring its ‘misguided sentimentalism’ would have had disastrous consequences, ‘once it was known that Britain offered sanctuary to all who cared to come, the floodgates would be opened, and we should be inundated by thousands seeking a home’.¹²⁴

¹¹⁸ *MG*, 19 March 1938, ‘The Refugees’, Leader, 12.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Colonel Josiah Wedgwood was a British Labour politician (previously a member of the Liberal party), who was a critic of appeasement and a proponent of increased Jewish immigration to Britain and Palestine. He worked vigorously to assist Jewish refugees.

¹²¹ Question put to Parliament ‘That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Aliens Acts and Naturalisation Acts so as to give the Secretary of State for the Home Department powers with regard to the immigration into Great Britain and Northern Ireland of refugees from Austria for a period of six months from the date of the passing of this Act, and the granting of British nationality to such immigrants’.

Hansard, Commons Sitting, HC Deb 22 March 1938 vol 333, cc1003-12, ‘Austrian Refugees Immigration and Naturalisation’, Colonel Wedgwood.

¹²² *TT*, 23 March 1938, ‘Austrian Refugees’, Leader, 15.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

The *Daily Mail*, remarkably, had become more sympathetic to the plight of the Jews, spending more time covering the refugee crisis and reporting the cruelties inflicted upon the Jews. In June 1938, the *Daily Mail* reported that between 12,000 and 14,000 Jews were imprisoned in Austria ‘not for any political crime, but merely to force their emigration’.¹²⁵ The newspaper noted that ‘Hundreds have applied for permission to emigrate to Australia’ and the United States.¹²⁶ Their compassion was, however, limited. They concluded that Britain could only take a ‘fraction’ of those seeking asylum.¹²⁷ The situation for Jews was just as bad in Germany, the *Daily Mail’s* correspondent described:

The feeling against the Jews in Berlin appears to be growing daily, and every night brings the threat of further violence against the poorer quarters of the city behind the Alexanderplatz. This morning I found whole streets of shops with their shutters down and with such words as ‘Jewish business,’ ‘Hang the Jews,’ ‘Out with the Race Defilers,’ painted in huge white letters across them.¹²⁸

The *Daily Mirror* also addressed the refugee crisis in David Walker’s *Talking Shop* column in June 1938. Walker, concerned at Britain’s lacklustre approach to the refugee crisis, stated that ‘we are in danger here in England of behaving like a lot of half-baked hooligans towards followers of the Jewish faith’.¹²⁹ Should Britain admit more refugees? he asked. Refugees felt that Britain was more likely to treat them better than they were being treated in Germany and Austria. ‘Are they justified?’, asked Walker; ‘The choice is implied enough, in theory. You have got to make up your mind whether to behave like a Christian or a sadist’.¹³⁰ Walker concluded his column with a request — ‘If you think it would be fun to see them squirming in the gutter, write and tell me why. If you think it would be fair to violate their women, let me know the reason. That is what is happening to them abroad’.¹³¹

David Walker’s piece in the *Daily Mirror* came on the eve of the beginning of the Evian conference. As the conference at Evian-les-Bains in France got underway, readers of the *Daily Mirror* responded to Walker’s article. On 8 July 1938 they printed some of the

¹²⁵ *DMail*, 18 June 1938, ‘Jews and Germany’, 12.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *DMail*, 18 June 1938, ‘Nazis Arrest 1,487 Jews’, Berlin Corr., 12.

¹²⁹ *DMirror*, 5 July 1938, ‘David Walker’s Talking Shop’, 9.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

responses. Overall, Walker noted: ‘Jew-baiters had outnumbered “moderates” by nearly two to one’.¹³² One reader wrote: ‘Our fathers built England and made it safe to live in — for these filthy swine’.¹³³ Another wrote: ‘The Jews are entirely responsible for their own persecution because Christians are getting fed up with their methods of business’.¹³⁴ The *Daily Mirror* included some of the extreme examples of ‘Jew-baiters’, including: ‘You ask — do you want to crucify them? Certainly not, we need the wood to build working men’s houses. There is a much cheaper way to exterminate them’.¹³⁵ One reader applauded the persecution of the Jews, writing: ‘Should there ever be a persecution of Jews in England, I will certainly have a hand in it and get complete satisfaction from the process’.¹³⁶ One of the most inflammatory responses came from a reader who called himself ‘Jew-baiter and proud of it’, who wrote: ‘Instead of clearing these stinking people, we are taking Germany’s scum. One day there will be an uproar against this snake, and I only hope it will be in my lifetime’.¹³⁷ Walker, with some courage, thanked his readers: ‘Particularly, of course, those who agree with me that persecution is filthy and unfair’, and observed of the responses:

The fact is that either the Government, or the people (or both together, for a change) have got to make up their minds NOW on the Jewish question in England. If Evian is inconclusive, as it may well be, it will be up to us to decide for ourselves.¹³⁸

As a whole, the British press represented a stark contrast to this particular section of the *Daily Mirror’s* readership. The *Manchester Guardian*, *New Statesman and Nation*, *The Spectator*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, *Daily Express* and *The Times* stood out in their condemnation of the dictatorship. The treatment of the Jews in Germany and Austria, observed *The Times*, ‘is altogether unworthy of the German people, and is one of the most formidable obstacles to a better understanding with other nations’.¹³⁹ *The Times* acknowledged: ‘It may be admitted that the presence of large numbers of Jews within the State presents difficult problems in certain countries, especially when they achieve an importance out of proportion to their numbers’, but ‘this is no sort of

¹³² *DMirror*, 8 July 1938, ‘David Walker’s Talking Shop’, 10.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *TT*, 6 July 1938, ‘The Refugees’, *Leader*, 17.

reason for a country with the intellectual and cultural standards of Germany to treat Jews with a callous brutality which drives even some of the most strong-minded to suicide and which for the vast majority makes life a mere hopeless misery'.¹⁴⁰ While Jews fleeing the regime 'will be welcome in countries where more humane standards prevail and where openings can be made for them', it must be understood and made clear that 'each country is responsible for the proper treatment of its own Jewish population'.¹⁴¹

In the face of this, the task before the representatives at Evian was, in the words of the *New Statesman and Nation* 'formidable'.¹⁴² The press were not blind to the enormity of the task in finding homes for the Jews that the Nazi dictatorship were trying to remove. The *New Statesman and Nation* stated:

[T]he problem presented by the Nazi persecution of the Jews is staggering. There were about 600,000 Jews in Germany when Hitler came to power — of whom over 100,000 have left. And now there are 200,000 more in Austria. All this pitiable host of victims is under notice to quit; they are, in effect, being coolly pushed on to the hospitality of the world — and in order to make the world's job a little harder they are first robbed of practically all their property.¹⁴³

For the thirty-one countries represented at the conference, the primary tasks would be 'How to finance rescue work on this vast scale', and to work out 'where the refugees are to go'.¹⁴⁴

As a whole, the British press were disappointed in the lack of progress at the conference. At its conclusion, the *New Statesman and Nation* reported: 'if it has not been a complete fiasco, it has achieved little to boast about'.¹⁴⁵ Even though 'All the States attending it are full of sympathy for the victims of persecution; none of them is able or willing to open its doors to a flood of refugees'.¹⁴⁶ The *Manchester Guardian* reported that this was 'frankly disappointing':

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² *NS&N*, 9 July 1938, 'The Refugee Problem', 61.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ *NS&N*, 16 July 1938, 'Evian and the Refugees', 102.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

The notice “Jews Not Wanted”, may commonly be seen at the entrance of cafes and swimming-pools in Nazi Germany. One would not for that reason expect to find it displayed at an international conference on the subject of Jewish refugees, but some of the speeches made at Evian during the past fortnight suggested that it might have been found in the pockets of several delegates.¹⁴⁷

The US was prepared to take the same number as it had already admitted (approximately 27,000), while one or two of the South American states ‘left the door ajar’.¹⁴⁸ British delegate and Conservative MP Lord Winterton suggested that Jews would be settled in East African colonies, including Kenya, but stated that it was not possible to admit any more Jews into Palestine. ‘Racial antipathy’ was also present, noted the *Manchester Guardian*, especially in the case of the Australian delegate. The *Daily Express* gave particular attention to the Australian delegate, Lieutenant Colonel T.W. White of the United Australia Party, who stated that Australia was only interested in British settlers. The article, with the headline, ‘Australia says “no hope” for refugees’, quoted Colonel White.¹⁴⁹ ‘We have no real racial problem’, he said, ‘We are not desirous of importing one by encouraging any scheme of large-scale foreign migration’.¹⁵⁰ In doing so, Colonel White ‘left no doubt of his Government’s attitude’.¹⁵¹

For most of the delegates, however, the impediment to the admittance of large numbers of Jews was financial. It was hoped that this was something that could be overcome. The *Daily Express* reported on 11 July 1938 that Britain, the US, and France had made the decision to approach Hitler ‘at the “first favourable opportunity”’, with the request to allow Jewish and other persecuted minorities in Germany and Austria “a fair percentage”, of their money and possessions if they wish to emigrate’.¹⁵² The *New Statesman and Nation* were hopeful of the proposed ‘establishment of an inter-governmental committee’, based in London, to assist the emigration of Jewish refugees, which ‘may help in particular to ease the financial strain by persuading the Nazi robbers

¹⁴⁷ *MG*, 16 July 1938, ‘After Evian’, Leader, 12.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *DE*, 8 July 1938, ‘Australia Says ‘No Hope’ for Refugees’, Reporter at Evian, 2.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *DE*, 11 July 1938, ‘Britain, U.S. to approach Hitler on Refugees’, Reporter at Evian, 2.

to allow their victims to escape with a little more of their capital'.¹⁵³ *The Spectator* adopted a more charitable attitude:

[I]t is an outrage, to the Christian conscience especially, that the modern world with all its immense wealth and resources cannot give these exiles a home, and food and drink, and a secure status, and there is no rational case for believing that the nationals of any country would suffer by such an act of charity.¹⁵⁴

* * * * *

Both *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* remained committed to covering the persecution of the Jews following the Evian conference. Voigt for instance uncovered the brutal treatment of Jews in the concentration camp at Buchenwald in August 1938, while *The Times* reported the continued plight of refugees. *The Times* also reported further discriminatory measures, which included a decree which forced Jews to adopt the 'Jewish' names of Israel and Sarah within their own names so that Jews in Germany could be clearly identified by those names.¹⁵⁵ Then, in late October 1938, both newspapers reported the forcible expulsion of Polish Jews from Germany.

The expulsion arose from a dispute over a decision by the Polish Government to introduce legislation that required Polish passports to include a special endorsement (or visa stamp) from the Polish consular (and similar authorities) if the holder wanted to return to Poland.¹⁵⁶ Of the Jews who had been expelled *The Times* reported: 'They made a distressed and destitute picture as they crowded into the Schlesischer station seeking trains to Poland'.¹⁵⁷ 'Most of them were kept herded in trains for several days after having been previously confined in German gaols', reported the *Manchester Guardian*, and they 'have no luggage, nor even proper clothing, and almost all of them are without any money except the ten marks allowed to them on expulsion'.¹⁵⁸ Approximately 50,000 would be affected, estimated *The Times*; already 10,000 to 12,000 had been

¹⁵³ *NSc3N*, 16 July 1938, 'Evian and the Refugees', 102.

¹⁵⁴ *TS*, 29 July 1938, 'The Refugees', 189.

¹⁵⁵ *The Times*, 20 August 1938, 'Jewish Names for German Jews', Berlin Corr., 10.

¹⁵⁶ *MG*, 29 October 1938, 'Wholesale Arrest of Polish Jews in Germany', Berlin Corr., 13.

¹⁵⁷ *TT*, 29 October 1938, 'Polish Jews Expelled', Berlin Corr., 11.

¹⁵⁸ *MG*, 31 October 1938, 'Berlin and Warsaw to Negotiate on Expelled Jews', Warsaw Corr., 12.

deported to the frontier where they awaited admission into Poland.¹⁵⁹ Of those expelled: 'Nearly all of them wish to return to their homes and belongings in Germany, many having been born there and scarcely any of them having prospects of a livelihood in Poland, where, but for their passports, they are strangers'.¹⁶⁰ Their condition was 'terrible', reported the *Manchester Guardian*:

In Zbonszyn alone some 7000 Jews are living in stables and on stone floors of the railway station. Hundreds have to sleep in a yard, for there is no room in the stables ... About 150, mostly children and women, were taken to hospital and an epidemic is feared. Several more persons have died, and two women and one man have been driven insane by their sufferings. Even crippled and blind people were expelled from Germany, and they are now in most dire need. They include an invalid woman aged about ninety and a blind man of seventy.¹⁶¹

Less than a week later, British newspapers reported the attempted assassination of Ernst vom Rath by a young Polish Jew, Herschel Grynszpan. British newspapers, including the *Manchester Guardian*, reported that Grynszpan was motivated by the treatment of Polish Jews; his parents were believed to have been among those expelled to the frontier.¹⁶² The Nazi press seized on the story of the assassination attempt, taking the opportunity to violently denounce the Jews. Nazi newspaper *Angriff* claimed the shooting was part of a conspiracy, the 'Work of the Agitators' International', in which there existed 'a straight path from Churchill to Grynsban'.¹⁶³ But, *Angriff* argued, the 'murder weapon went off in the hands of a Jewish rascal', and so retaliation would be waged against the Jewish population in Germany.¹⁶⁴ Of these allegations, *The Spectator* commented:

The murder of the German diplomat, Herr vom Rath, in Paris by a 17-year-old Polish Jew is deplored by all reasonable men. Political assassination is a crime, and a futile crime; but the Nazis, with the assassinations of June, 1934, on their consciences, have no justification for finding in it proof either of an international Jewish conspiracy or of Jewish depravity ... no one can be surprised if the hatred and

¹⁵⁹ *TT*, 2 November 1938, 'Polish Jews Plight', Warsaw Corr., 13.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *MG*, 1 November 1938, 'Expelled Jews' Dark Outlook', Warsaw Corr., 6.

¹⁶² *MG*, 8 November 1938, 'Diplomat Shot', Paris Corr., 11.

¹⁶³ *MG*, 9 November 1938, 'Germany Begins Reprisals against the Jews', Berlin Corr., 11.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

indignation inspired in a son by such acts find an outlet in the assassination for them; Herr Grynspan's guilt is less than that of the German Government. Nevertheless, the consequences for his race are likely to be appalling and out of all proportion to the crime for which, in any case, other Jews are not responsible.¹⁶⁵

Jews in Germany, reported *The Spectator*; were now living 'under a terrible fear, for it is almost beyond hope that Herr Hitler will refrain from avenging on an innocent and tortured people the crime of a boy maddened by the maltreatment not merely of his race but of his own parents'.¹⁶⁶

The Nazis' brutal revenge began on the night of 9 November 1938, with Nazi SA units launching a violent pogrom against Germany's Jews. Reports of the violent campaign, known later as *Kristallnacht* (or Night of Broken Glass), appeared in British newspapers on 11 November 1938.¹⁶⁷ Already in these early reports, claims by Nazi government figures, including Goebbels, that the violence was spontaneous, were dismissed. The *Daily Mirror's* correspondent wrote: 'I saw Jews being rounded up like rats ... It was all done according to plan, ruthlessly, relentlessly'.¹⁶⁸ The *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* declared that the violence was an 'officially countenanced pogrom of unparalleled brutality and ferocity', which was accompanied by 'Mob law' in Berlin, where 'hordes of hooligans indulged in an orgy of destruction'.¹⁶⁹ While the *Manchester Guardian* reported: 'the attacks on the Jews are the responsibility of a fanatical Government whose uniformed henchmen were first in this cruel outburst of destructiveness and whose police did nothing to stop it'.¹⁷⁰ The *Jewish Chronicle* later attacked the regime for refusing to accept responsibility for the violence:

Very quickly the ugly truth behind the farcical story of "a spontaneous popular attack on the German Jewry" has come to light. It is now quite clear that these disgraceful deeds were not perpetrated by unorganised hooligans, but were the deliberately executed orders of the leaders of the Nazi regime. With shameless cynicism the Nazi rulers have clearly shown that they care not a jot for the opinion of the entire civilised world. On a pretext so flimsy that it amounts to an

¹⁶⁵ *TS*, 11 November 1938, 'The Paris Assassination', 793.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ See Appendix I for examples of coverage in the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* and the *Daily Express*.

¹⁶⁸ *DMirror*; 11 November 1938, 'Nazi Hate Day', *Spec. Corr.*, 36.

¹⁶⁹ *DTe&MP*, 11 November 1938, 'German Mobs' Vengeance on Jews', 17.

¹⁷⁰ *MG*, 11 November 1938, 'The Disorders in Germany', *Leader*, 10.

insult to the intelligence, they have dragged thousands of Jews to the concentration camps and seized the last property that the Jews had been left after more than five years of persecution and torture.¹⁷¹

The Times reported that the violent scenes ‘seldom had their equal in a civilised country since the Middle Ages’.¹⁷² In their report, the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post’s* correspondent observed:

I have seen several anti-Jewish outbreaks in Germany during the last five years, but never anything as nauseating as this. Racial hatred and hysteria seemed to have taken complete hold of otherwise decent people. I saw fashionably dressed women clapping their hands and screaming with glee, while respectable middle-class mothers held up their babies to see the “fun”.¹⁷³

Not all newspapers followed this line. The *Daily Express* took seriously Goebbels’ radio appeal for the looting to stop, and focused on what it thought was the spontaneity of mob violence.¹⁷⁴ There was no recognition here that the spontaneity had been orchestrated by the regime.¹⁷⁵

In the days that followed, British newspaper’s uncovered more details about the horrors of *Kristallnacht*. It was not just synagogues and shops were targeted: ‘All Jewish homes and institutes for the poor and aged and ailing have been destroyed’.¹⁷⁶ The Jewish hospital at Nuremberg was destroyed after all patients were ordered to file into the courtyard. A children’s home at Caputh, near Berlin, was also destroyed.¹⁷⁷ The swiftness and completeness of the attacks made it evident ‘that the excesses were planned well in advance’.¹⁷⁸ The *Manchester Guardian* estimated between 9,000 and 10,000 Jews were arrested in Berlin alone, and ‘careful estimates’ put arrests in Germany at between 35,000 and 40,000.¹⁷⁹ Those arrested in Berlin were taken to Sachsenhausen concentration camp, reported the *Manchester Guardian* on 18 November

¹⁷¹ *JC*, 18 November 1938, ‘The Nazi Pogroms’, By Bernhard Reichenbach, 30.

¹⁷² *The Times*, 11 November 1938, ‘Nazi Tactics on Jews’, Berlin Corr., 14,

¹⁷³ *DTe&MP*, 11 November 1938, ‘German Mobs’ Vengeance on Jews’, 17.

¹⁷⁴ *DE*, 11 November 1938, ‘Looting Mobs Defy Goebbels’, 1, 2.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *MG*, 18 November 1938, ‘Extent of German Pogrom’, Dip. Corr., 11.

1938.¹⁸⁰ Additionally, thousands of Jews had been sent to Buchenwald and Dachau. Some were executed immediately. This included, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, two hundred in Buchenwald alone.¹⁸¹ The executions were carried out by ‘firing-squads’, reported the *Manchester Guardian*.¹⁸² In some areas, all male Jews aged between eighteen and eighty were arrested; many fled into the woods in Germany, while others had been ‘trying to elude arrest by spending all their time, night and day, in trains travelling from place to place’.¹⁸³

Despite international condemnation and criticism, more restrictions on Jews were put in place in Germany and Austria following *Kristallnacht*.¹⁸⁴ Both the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express* reported Goebbels announcement that ‘The Jewish problem will be solved very shortly in accordance with the will of the German people’.¹⁸⁵ The *Daily Mail* reported that rationing of food and money was being considered, as the German police had alleged that Jews had been hoarding food in their homes. The expulsion of Jews was almost certainly being considered, and the possibility of establishing ghettos for Jews was also being discussed.¹⁸⁶ Many British newspapers, including the *Daily Mail*, also reported the fine levied against the entire Jewish population for the death of Vom Rath.¹⁸⁷ The *Daily Mail* reported that the fine was £80,000,000 which worked out to approximately £250 per person.¹⁸⁸ *The Spectator* reported that, in addition to the fine, the damage to Jewish shops, businesses and homes was to be repaired at the expense of Jews. Furthermore, Jews were excluded from ‘all economic activity in Germany from the end of the year onwards’.¹⁸⁹ The newspaper reported:

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Many British newspapers commented on the international condemnation of the regimes actions against the Jews. Most newspapers concentrated their focus on the US press criticism of the dictatorship. For instance, on 14 November 1938, the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post’s* New York correspondent surveyed press opinion and attitudes, quoting from several national and regional US newspapers. See *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, 14 November 1938, ‘Prayers for Jews in US’, ‘From Our Own Correspondent, New York’, 9.

¹⁸⁵ *DE*, 14 November 1938, ‘Goebbels Renews Onslaught on the Jews, ‘Now We Must Make them Suffer’’, 1.

¹⁸⁶ *DMail*, 12 November 1938, ‘Nazis Threaten to Ration Jews’ Food’, By Paul Bretherton, Berlin, 11.

¹⁸⁷ *MG*, 18 November 1938, ‘Extent of German Pogrom’, 11.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ *TS*, 18 November 1938, ‘The New Barbarism’, 836.

No Jew may attend any public entertainment, no Jew may attend any German university, no Jewish child may attend any German school – but no Jew apparently may emigrate, or if he does he will go without a penny to support him or start in a new life elsewhere.¹⁹⁰

The Spectator observed: ‘It is true that Jews in Germany have not been formally condemned to death; it has only been made impossible for them to live’.¹⁹¹ ‘No foreign Power can do anything for the Jews still in Germany’, reported *The Spectator*, but they could do something for the Jews who had already escaped: ‘something at least can be done to alleviate suffering, and the duty to do that is a solemn charge on civilisation. A totally new effort on a totally new scale is called for. The Evian Conference of last July has led to nothing’.¹⁹²

For the *New Statesman and Nation*, it was still important to try to ‘rescue the Jews of Germany from their oppressors’.¹⁹³ And, ‘That means, of course, how to get them out of Germany, and where to put them. Though at present the Nazis are preventing their escape, they would presumably offer no serious objections to international schemes which would, at other people’s expense, rid them of their pariahs’.¹⁹⁴ But, the *New Statesman and Nation* admitted: ‘The real difficulty is to find homes for so many myriads of refugees’.¹⁹⁵ Palestine, even it was willing to admit more Jews ‘could only absorb a fraction’, and while it was ‘easy again to point to “great empty spaces” in other parts of the world ... many of them, if they were available for settlement, would obviously be unsuitable, without immense preparation, for an almost entirely urban people from Northern Europe’.¹⁹⁶ The task fell to the US and the British Empire (colonies and dominions included) to admit the Jews and offer them asylum. ‘We hope they [the Jews] will not look in vain, or for long. In the present temper of the Nazis, delay may mean an even more horrible fate for their victims’, the newspaper commented.¹⁹⁷

Indeed, as the *Manchester Guardian* reported, there were extreme Nazi elements that were prepared to take the next step. SS newspaper *Schwarze Korps* (Black Corps)

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid, 836-837.

¹⁹³ *NSe³N*, 19 November 1938, ‘Nazis and Jews’, 816.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 816-817.

¹⁹⁷ *NSe³N*, 19 November 1938, ‘Nazis and Jews’, 817.

printed the following statement that left little doubt as to what this organisation intended for the Jews,

Germany would be confronted by the hard necessity of exterminating the Jewish underworld exactly as it does away with criminals in the orderly state, “with fire and sword”. This would definitely be the end of Jewry and its annihilation.¹⁹⁸

The SS newspaper warned against the ‘foreign quarters’ trying to delay with “further monotonous howling,” by threats and blackmail, this logical and inevitable development’.¹⁹⁹ After all, the *Manchester Guardian* noted, the “solution” to the Jewish problem by brutal means was favoured by “German quarters” as far back as 1933’.²⁰⁰ The *Schwarze Korps* made further threats against the Jews again at the end of November 1938, and again, the *Manchester Guardian* reported the German papers’ inflammatory comments. This time, the SS newspaper warned against any other attempts by Jews to fight back: ‘On the day a Jew or anybody with a weapon bought from a Jew dares to attack one of the leading men in Germany there will be no more Jews in Germany. We hope we have expressed ourselves with sufficient clearness’.²⁰¹

In addition, in early December 1938, the *Manchester Guardian* printed an article about a proposed location in Berlin for a ghetto (in the north and centre of Berlin), as well as a proposal (learnt by the correspondent from ‘trustworthy quarters’) for a decree ‘compelling Jews of both sexes when outdoors to wear a badge. This is likely to be yellow in colour and to depict the Star of David’.²⁰² Legislation to restrict Jews on trains (to a separate carriage), and bar the owning of radios and telephones were also discussed.

¹⁹⁸ The pretext for this was the *Schwarze Korps* allegation that after the Jews had their assets seized (‘the jugular veins of the parasites have been cut’) ‘their capital will soon be exhausted. The rich Jews will be forced to support the poor, with the definite result that all of them become destitute and then necessarily criminals- according to their intrinsic nature’, and the ‘result would be an underworld conspiracy’ to take revenge.

MG, 23 November 1938, ‘Still Darker Threats Against the Jews’, Berlin Corr., 11.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *MG*, 30 November 1938, ‘A Black Guard Threat to Massacre all Jews’, 6.

²⁰² This measure was not implemented until 1941, when Reinhard Heydrich issued a decree in the protectorates of Moravia and Bohemia. It was later, gradually, implemented throughout the Reich. *MG*, 5 December 1938, ‘Berlin Ghetto Site Chosen: A Crowded Quarter’, Berlin Corr., 6.

With the onslaught against the Jews showing no abatement, the safety (and asylum) of Jews in Europe remained a topic of discussion in the British press. Towards the end of November 1938, the House of Commons announced plans to allow five hundred Jewish children admittance to Britain. For the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* this represented rapid action; ‘committees were formed in the morning. By the afternoon they were already at work’.²⁰³ The *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* discussed the conditions attached to the admittance of the children. The children were to be provided with schooling until the age of sixteen, after which they would be resettle in the dominions or in other countries which, it is notable, were not specified.²⁰⁴

The Times also reported that there were fundraising efforts in Britain to aid Jewish refugees. Lord Stanley Baldwin’s appeal for donations for victims of religious and racial persecution had reached £43,619.²⁰⁵ So far, reported *The Times* (whose London office was accepting donations for the fund), over three thousand people had donated.²⁰⁶ The fund was intended to help existing agencies and organisations dedicated to helping Jewish refugees. But, as many newspapers noted, the problem was still in finding places for the refugees to go. This was illustrated in mid-1939 in the case of the liner *St. Louis* which had been sailing the seas looking for a place to dock that would accept the 900 refugees on board.²⁰⁷ The *Daily Express* reported the saga:

They had sailed for Cuba. Cuba had rejected them after nearly a week’s suspense during which there were several suicide attempts, and the *St Louis* was making her way back to Hamburg, from which she had originally set out, and to which the Jews said they dared not return. Panic-stricken, the radioed appeals to the Governments of various countries as they wandered over the seas.²⁰⁸

With front-page coverage the *Daily Express* noted that one of the pleas for asylum went to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. The Dutch government had given permission for 200 of the 900 to land in Holland till they find somewhere else to go. The following day, the *Daily Express* reported that the British government had granted a

²⁰³ *DTe&MP*, 23 November 1938, ‘Plans for 500 Child Refugees in Britain’, Spec. Corr., 16.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *TT*, 13 December 1938, ‘The Refugees Fund’, 16.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ In 1976 a film was made about this incident called *Voyage of the Damned*.

²⁰⁸ *DE*, 13 June 1939, ‘900 Wandering Jews SOS to Premier’, 1.

‘proportion’ of the German-Jewish refugees asylum in England. The “‘exceptional circumstances” influenced the Government’s decision’, the *Daily Express* reported, quoting, in part, the announcement in the House of Commons. But Mr Osbert Peake, Under-Secretary to the Home Office, declared that this measure should not be taken as any sort of precedent.²⁰⁹ It was reported that Belgium had taken 250 of the remaining Jews, while France would probably take the rest. Criticism was levelled at Home Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare by Colonel Wedgwood, that it was ‘almost impossible for “Hitler’s slaves” to find shelter in this country’, was met with a frosty response.²¹⁰

* * * * *

Throughout the 1930s, the process by which the Nazi authorities excluded Jews from society was carefully documented by the British press. Prominent focus was given in many newspapers to the exclusion of Jews from business and the economy. The effects of this — unemployment, destitution and starvation, were regularly discussed by British newspapers like the *Daily Express*, *The Spectator*, *The Times*, *Morning Post*, *Daily Telegraph* (and *Morning Post*) and the *Manchester Guardian*, to name a selection. *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* were particularly thorough in their coverage of the Aryanisation of the German state, economy, culture, and society. In 1934 and 1935 reporting by most British newspapers was sporadic. While British newspapers did report the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, their coverage of the laws was rather underwhelming. For many British newspapers, the laws merely put a legal stamp on conditions that were already a reality. For the *Manchester Guardian* this was not good enough — the newspaper criticised the lack of coverage the laws received.

But the press were, for the most part, united in condemning the violence and atrocities that accompanied the persecution of the Jews in Germany (and Austria). The exodus of German and Austrian Jews (and others targeted by the Nazis) was a pressing concern for British newspapers, particularly after the German invasion of Austria. The brutal treatment of Jews in Vienna sparked outrage in the press and dominated headlines, prompting many correspondents to call for more aid and assistance for those trying to escape the brutal dictatorship. Some newspapers urged caution in accepting large

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

number of Jewish refugees (the *Daily Mail* for instance); others urged the British government to implement a larger scheme of assistance (*The Spectator* and *Manchester Guardian*). And, while the Evian conference was convened with the best hopes and intentions, the results fell flat for many newspapers, particularly *The Spectator*. The violence of *Kristallnacht* brought the outrage felt by the press over the treatment of Jews to a new level. The press were united in their condemnation of the regime and its actions, and called for greater understanding and help for refugees.

For a reader of a British newspaper in the 1930s it would have been hard to ignore news of the persecution of the Jews. Whether a reader picked up *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, *Morning Post*, *Manchester Guardian*, *The Times*, or a weekly like *The Spectator* or *New Statesman and Nation*, they could expect to find something about life under the Nazi dictatorship. If they read newspapers regularly, it would have been almost impossible to ignore the fact that German (and Austrian) Jews were being violently persecuted by the Nazi regime. Even if a reader only read the sports section of a popular newspaper like the *Daily Express*, they would have been hard pressed to avoid news of *Kristallnacht* on the front page. This is because, throughout the 1930s, the British press, both popular and quality, daily and weekly, demonstrated a keen commitment to reporting what was happening in Germany, particularly the brutal persecution of Germany's Jews.

* * * * *

Conclusion

At the outbreak of war in 1939 the British Foreign Office issued a White Paper entitled 'Papers Concerning the Treatment of German Nationals in Germany', which examined the beating, torture, and flogging of prisoners (primarily political prisoners) in concentration camps across Germany between 1938 and 1939. It was composed of reports and letters received by the British government from representatives in Germany. British newspapers reported the release of the White Paper. They devoted special attention to its findings and evidence, specifically statements and letters from witnesses. For *The Spectator*, the report was important as it showed 'what sort of an enemy we have to deal with'.¹ Even though the details were 'incredible' 'the Foreign Office White Paper leaves no room for doubt'.² Reactions like this were frustrating for correspondents and staff from the *New Statesman and Nation* and the *Manchester Guardian*, who had worked tirelessly to uncover and report the horrors of the concentration camps, since Dachau had opened in March 1933. It was even more frustrating that it had taken so long for the British government publicly to admit these atrocities had taken place in 'peacetime'.³ The *New Statesman and Nation* stated:

I wish the British authorities had not tried to hush up these things at an earlier stage when some of us really wanted to do something about them while there was still time. We were told then that we were trying to interfere in the internal affairs of a friendly nation.⁴

Both the *New Statesman and Nation* and the *Manchester Guardian* made it clear in their editorial comments that none of the details in the report were 'new news' to correspondents. The *Manchester Guardian* asserted:

The White Paper has been greeted in some quarters as though it contained "revelations" of something new. But that is not so. The truth has been precisely indicated, though with much restraint, in the columns of this and one or two other papers — truth that was, perhaps, too little regarded by the public because to the ordinary

¹ *The Spectator*, 3 November 1939, 'A Reversion to Barbarism', 609. Hereafter *TS*.

² *Ibid.*

³ *New Statesman and Nation*, 4 November 1939, 'A London Diary', 638. Hereafter *NS&N*.

⁴ *Ibid.*

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decent man or woman it seemed incredible. But, indeed, there was nothing incredible about it.⁵

This thesis grew from a desire to understand what people in Britain could have known, from British newspapers, about the nature of the Nazi dictatorship prior to the war. The following questions underpinned this thesis: Was the press aware of what was happening in Germany under the Nazi regime in the 1930s? Did they report the destruction of democracy, the consolidation of power, and the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship? Did they cover the process of *Gleichschaltung* and the persecution of political opponents and other religious groups?

What this study has demonstrated is that the press *were* covering, and reporting in detail, the National Socialist dictatorship in Germany in the 1930s. This thesis argues what the British reading public could have known about the nature of the dictatorship, if they chose to, by reading British newspapers. From the beginning, the British press demonstrated a keen commitment to reporting many aspects of the Nazi dictatorship. This naturally included foreign policy (and concerns about the stability of Europe), but it also included the rise and establishment of the Nazi dictatorship, the destruction of democracy, the persecution of political and religious groups, and the economic and social policies of Hitler's government. Newspapers like *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Manchester Guardian* had been investigating and reporting the activities of the Nazi movement since the 1920s, paying special attention to the party's election successes in the early 1930s.⁶

The British press, as a whole, reported the appointment of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933. For the press, there was initial confusion as to what Hitler's appointment might mean for German politics and the future of democracy. Hitler's aims seemed unclear, and British newspapers such as the *Daily Express*, *Observer*, and *Daily Telegraph*, seemed to believe that he was either a prisoner of more powerful forces in his cabinet, or that he had finally given up his aims of total and undisputed power and had instead decided to work with the political parties he had previously vowed to destroy. Both *The Times* and *The Spectator*, for instance, reported that with the

⁵ *Manchester Guardian*, 1 November 1939, 'The Camps and the System', Leader, 6. Hereafter *MG*.

⁶ See Brigitte Granzow, *A Mirror of Nazism: British Opinion and the Emergence of Hitler, 1929-1955* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1964).

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the Nazis inclusion in government, it was Hitler's chance to show his ability as a statesman. In other words, in early February 1933, most British newspapers were prepared to give Hitler and his party the benefit of the doubt. However, the Nazis' brutal election campaign, and the wave of arrests that followed the Reichstag fire, dispelled any confusion about both the Nazis role in the new government, and their aims. *The Times*, *News Chronicle*, *Manchester Guardian*, and even the *Daily Mail*, recognised that the Reichstag Fire decree spelled the end of democracy in Germany, and ushered in a dictatorship. The Nazis election victory in March 1933 meant Germany was, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, 'faced with a long period of Hitlerism'.⁷ By this point however, the British press was in a better position to report what would come next.

In the months that followed, the British press captured, with some accuracy, the Nazis' destruction of democracy in each of its phases. The seizure of the German federal states, which began after the March elections, was reported primarily by the *Daily Telegraph*, *Manchester Guardian*, *The Times*, and *Daily Mail*. These newspapers understood that this was a vital step in the Nazis' pursuit of total power over Germany. The conclusion of the seizure of the states, with the takeover of Bavaria, was closely followed by the opening of the Reichstag at Potsdam, after the previous German parliament had the target of arson in February. The opening was a lavish affair, but this did not distract correspondents who also reported the passing of the Enabling Act. The *Morning Post*, *Manchester Guardian*, *The Times*, and *Daily Mail* conveyed to readers that the act was a vital step in the destruction of democracy. It paved the way for the establishment of a Nazi dictatorship. Hitler was increasing his own power, at the expense of President Hindenburg.

The next step, closely followed and reported by many British newspapers, was the violent assault on the political left. Most newspapers, regardless of their political ideology, reported the destruction of the trade unions at the beginning of May 1933. So, the right-wing *Daily Telegraph* covered this in as much detail as the *Manchester Guardian*. Further infringements on democratic values and institutions came with the (often forcible) dissolution of German political parties. British newspapers reported this

⁷ *MG*, 6 March 1933, 'Nazis Win the General Election', 9.

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process, which began with the proscription of the Socialist party in June 1933 for Marxist corruption — a charge dismissed by *The Times* as a sham. But this time, it was not just the political left that were targeted — the Nazis undermined, intimidated, and bullied every other political party in Germany, including their own Cabinet ally, the Nationalists, until the Nazi party were the only party left. Voigt, of the *Manchester Guardian*, noted, with some surprise, that the Nazis had been able to dismantle Weimar parliamentary democracy in just six months. The press had followed, with interest, how this had been carried out. The frequency of reports certainly varied, but the Press, as a whole, understood what was happening in Germany. It had been clear after the March elections, that Hitler and the Nazis had been intent on and working to destroy democracy.

While the press, for the most part, closely followed the destruction of democracy in Germany, the same cannot be said of reporting the campaign of terror, which accompanied it. Most newspapers reported the initial wave of arrests of Communists and Socialists following the Reichstag Fire. This was true of the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mirror* that remained silent on the terror campaign. A few newspapers did try to report the terror. Both the *New Statesman and Nation* and the *Jewish Chronicle* drew readers attention to the terror and the cruelty of the concentration camps. But their reports were sporadic. *The Spectator* tried to inform readers about the atmosphere of fear and repression in Germany, but was heavily criticised by their readership, and remained silent after that. *The Times* kept readers up-to-date with news of arrests and the opening of new concentrating camps, but refrained from editorialising. And, *The Times* editor Geoffrey Dawson made excuses to not print an article that uncovered the inhuman and violent treatment of prisoners in Dachau. There were also newspapers that downplayed the terror and brutality of the regime. The *Morning Post*, *Observer*, and *News Chronicle*, reported the existence of concentration camps, but were seemingly convinced by the forced unity on display. In the few articles that were published by the *Daily Express*, the newspaper toned down the violence, citing it as a byproduct of the Communists war against Nazism. The *Daily Mail* was the most extreme case of a newspaper that sought to downplay the terror, denying its existence and criticising the foreign press that had sought to expose it.

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What this meant was that there was a serious gap in the coverage of the Nazis campaign of repression and violence. Luckily for readers, the *Manchester Guardian* sought to fill that void, through the work of special correspondent F.A. Voigt. He clearly conveyed to readers that the violence — the campaign of terror — was an integral part of the regime. Reports by Voigt demonstrated that the violence went beyond revolutionary excesses; it continued after the Nazis had secured power, dismantled democracy, destroyed their opposition, and announced themselves sole rulers of Germany. Voigt revealed that the terror evolved with the regime from a brutal and violent campaign, led by the SA, to an organised and systematic terror run predominantly by the Gestapo and SS. The concentration camp remained integral to this system, and to the Nazi regime.

If the terror campaign had not demonstrated to all newspapers the ruthlessness and brutality of the new regime, the Röhm purge in mid-1934 certainly did. Initially, the purge was seen by many British newspapers, including *The Times* and *Daily Mail*, as a victory of the moderates against extreme elements in the party. However, as details about the purge emerged, the British press questioned the validity of the action and the way it was carried out. While the press struggled with whether or not Röhm and his inner circle had been planning a putsch, newspapers, such as the *News Chronicle*, found the suggestion that Schleicher and his wife, along with the many others, had supposedly been involved as ridiculous. The brutality of the action was condemned by *The Spectator*, *News Chronicle*, *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*, to name a few. Increasingly, the action was seen as state sanctioned murder against fellow Nazis and colleagues. The fact that Hitler, as head of state, had been involved in the purge, was also criticised by *The Times*. The purge sparked strong criticism from the British press, and was a rare occasion in which the press, with the exception of a few popular dailies, denounced the regime. The declaration of Hitler as Führer of the German people, following President Hindenburg's death at the beginning of August 1934, was meant to demonstrate to the world the unity and strength of National Socialist Germany. However, the plebiscite only managed to convey to British newspapers, especially the *New Statesman and Nation*, that opposition to the regime still existed.

Indeed, as many British newspapers reported, opposition could be found in the Catholic and, more importantly, in the Protestant churches. But the opposition taking place in the churches was concerned with attempts by groups that sought to align themselves with

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the Nazi state and infringe upon the freedom of the churches. This was confused, at times, as opposition to the state — which it was not. For the most part, the British press recognised that the struggle taking place in the Protestant churches was a real struggle for the freedom of the faith. For the regime, it was opposition nonetheless, and in the mid-to-late 1930s, it was brutally suppressed, and its leaders were thrown in goal or concentration camps. *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, and the *Daily Telegraph* provided sustained coverage of the church situation. But the *Observer*, *Morning Post*, *News Chronicle*, and to a lesser degree the *New Statesman and Nation*, also reported the opposition efforts to suppress the opposition, particularly in the late 1930s. These newspapers demonstrated that they were vitally interested in the struggle for the churches, following it through the 1930s.

At times, articles on the church struggle appeared more frequently than those on the persecution of the Jews. This was not because the British press cared more about the church struggle than they did about the persecution of the Jews, but because the church conflict was complex, chaotic, and constantly evolving. New personalities, decrees, and developments demanded attention and were reported by many newspapers. The situation for the Jews was more straightforward in some ways — it was clear from early on that the Nazis were intent on eliminating Jews from German society. Legislation and action taken against the Jews in the 1930s furthered this. But even though, at times, the press reported the church situation in more depth, they still covered the increasingly cruel and sadistic persecution of the Jews consistently and in detail. There were certainly newspapers that, in the beginning, downplayed or denied the violent persecution. Viscount Rothermere felt that the Jews had too strong an influence on German politics and business and thought any measures against them justified. However, even his newspaper, the *Daily Mail*, reported the April boycott and *Kristallnacht*, as well as some of the discriminatory legislation against the Jews that was passed in the 1930s. Overall though, the persecution of the Jews was denounced by British newspapers. There were gaps in coverage, for instance the Nuremberg Laws did not receive the attention and analysis they deserved, even in *The Times*. But the British newspapers, particularly *The Spectator* and *Manchester Guardian*, were outspoken about the aid that the Jews needed, particularly for those wanting to flee the regime. The events of *Kristallnacht* was further proof of the desperate situation for the Jews. The violent action by the Nazis was categorically denounced by the press for its inhuman

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cruelty, with the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* calling the violence 'nauseating'.⁸ For British newspapers, the international response to the plight of the Jews before and, particularly, after the events of *Kristallnacht* was sorely lacking. This was especially the case for the *Manchester Guardian* and the *New Statesman and Nation*. The persecution of the Jews was of vital interest for British correspondents, and deserved attention in the pages of British newspapers.

The British press reported many facts about the Nazi dictatorship prior to the outbreak of war in 1939, in an attempt to uncover the true nature of the regime. But, various factors affected the frequency and tone of reports. The type of newspaper — whether it was a quality or popular newspaper — had bearing on the coverage given to German affairs. Political ideology or affiliation was another consideration. The quality press reported what was happening in Germany far more than the popular newspapers. Both *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* stand out for their coverage of German affairs in the 1930s. Articles about Germany in *The Times* appeared almost daily in 1933. And, in a single day, there were often several lengthy articles covering various aspects of the situation in Germany. Reports by Berlin correspondent were highly detailed and, as a result, few facts about the Nazi dictatorship were left unstated. This is an important point because *The Times* has been plagued by bad reputation for its reporting on Germany in the 1930s, particularly for its endorsement of the British government's policy of appeasement. *The Times*, however, reported the destruction of democracy in more depth than any other British newspaper, even more than the *Manchester Guardian* which did not have a resident correspondent in Germany for much of 1933. It would have been difficult for a committed reader of *The Times* to have read the newspaper and not have an idea of what was happening in Germany.

The *Manchester Guardian's* coverage of the situation in Germany quickly established the newspaper as an outspoken critic of the Nazi regime. The *Manchester Guardian's* articles had far more editorialising than *The Times*. The *Manchester Guardian* vigorously denounced the violence and brutality of the Nazi dictatorship. For editor W.P. Crozier, it was the paper's moral duty to uncover and report what was happening inside Germany. Special correspondent F.A. Voigt's articles did this. His investigative reports were based

⁸ *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, 11 November 1938, 'German Mobs' Vengeance on Jews', 17.

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on months of research and were supplemented by testimony from sources in Germany, many of whom had been victims of the regime. Even though the newspaper did not have a correspondent in Germany in 1933, the *Manchester Guardian's* uncompromising attitude in exposing the regime would have, like *The Times*, left readers with little doubt as to the nature of the regime.

Other quality newspapers also stood out for their coverage of the situation in Germany. The *Daily Telegraph* and the *Morning Post* both reported most of what was happening in Germany. Weekly quality newspapers also sought to uncover details about what was happening in Germany, albeit with less frequency. As weekly newspapers, they could not compete with the dailies in the level of detail in reporting developments in Germany, but they could, and did, keep readers informed about major events. But, it was also assumed that readers would have been reading daily newspapers and so many articles contained more editorialising than some of the daily newspapers, as they surveyed the weeks events and commented on them. Reports were more the result of investigations carried out over a week or several weeks. *The Spectator* and the *New Statesman and Nation* used these opportunities to issue scathing assessments of the methods of the regime. The *Jewish Chronicle* restricted its reports on the German situation primarily to news of the persecution of the Jews. These reports were detailed and often accompanied by photographs of the mistreatment of Jews and damage to Jewish property, especially after the April boycott in 1933. While the weekly newspapers could not match the quality daily newspapers in their coverage of events in Germany, they often still demonstrated a commitment to reporting the destruction of democracy, the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship, and the persecution of political and religious groups.

The popular newspapers did not cover events in Germany in as much detail as the quality press. But it should not be inferred from this that the popular newspapers did not report, or were not interested, in what was happening in Germany. Popular newspapers such as the *Daily Express*, *Daily Mirror*, *News Chronicle*, and even the *Daily Mail* reported many developments in Germany. The *Daily Express*, for instance, uncovered early instances of ill-treatment and violence committed by the SA, and other Nazis, against the Jews, and were critical of such behaviour. The articles, written by Berlin correspondent Pembroke Stephens, saw him expelled. The *Daily Mirror*, a popular

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pictorial, kept news of Germany to a minimum, except for the big events. This was most probably due to the belief that its largely female readership would not be interested in reading about German affairs. But David Walker's columns on the persecution of the Jews in 1938 stand out for their unwavering criticism of both the treatment of Jews in Germany, and the antisemitism of sections of the *Daily Mirror's* readership. The *News Chronicle*, out of all the popular newspapers, covered German affairs in the most depth. It did sensationalise some of the more dramatic events, but still reported them in detail. It paid special attention to the destruction of democracy, the struggle for the churches, and the persecution of the Jews. Photographs that accompanied articles, especially front-page features, captured important events for readers.

The *Daily Mail* surely deserves mention on its own. The newspaper has been vilified by contemporary commentators over its reporting of Germany. Certainly the newspaper had a brief flirtation with Nazism and fascism, with proprietor Viscount Rothermere and special correspondent George Ward Price using the pages of the *Daily Mail* to publicly express admiration for Hitler's dictatorship. It even offered support for Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF, or Blackshirts), and allowed Mosley to contribute to the newspaper on several occasions in 1933 and 1934.⁹ However, this admiration was short-lived. The Röhm purge in Germany and the violence of the BUF at the Olympia Rally in 1934, saw Rothermere take a clear and public step away from fascism and Nazism.¹⁰ It is important to consider Rothermere's admiration for the right-wing movements in its context. Rothermere's infamous 'Youth Triumphant' article printed in July 1933, attacked detractors of the new regime, denied the terror, downplayed the persecution of the Jews, and praised the strength of the new regime which had managed to attract the support of the country's youth. The article demonstrated Rothermere's ignorance and unwillingness to see the new government for what it was — a brutal regime. But his admiration of the regime focused on the strength that he considered Hitler's government had displayed and he contrasted this with what he saw as the weakness of the British government. The brutality of the regime, as it turned on its own, gave Rothermere pause and he distanced himself from the regime

⁹ This included, for instance, an article written by Mosley entitled 'A World Re-born Under Fascism', on 1 May 1933 (page 12).

¹⁰ The *Daily Mail* printed an exchange of letters between Mosley and Rothermere in which the proprietor distanced himself from the BUF and support of their ideology. *Daily Mail*, 19 July 1934, 'Lord Rothermere and Sir Oswald Mosley', 11.

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after that. Special Correspondent George Ward Price, on the other hand, continued to use the pages of the *Daily Mail* to express admiration for the regime (particularly in articles about the strength of youth and the success of the Nuremberg rallies), long after Rothermere had turned to writing about the need for Britain to rearm and prepare for a future war.

A further important point must be made here. Rothermere's (brief) admiration for fascism did not, for the most part, get in the way of the newspaper reporting what was happening in Germany, particularly in 1933. Certainly, the newspaper did not report the political terror campaign beyond the wave of arrests that followed the Reichstag Fire, but it did report the destruction of democracy in all its stages. It also reported the April boycott and efforts to 'cleanse' the civil service of Jewish employees. It seems that, for the most part, Berlin correspondent Rothay Reynolds was left to report what he had witnessed, and the *Daily Mail* printed his reports. The dismissal of Jews from the theatre, universities, and the medical profession, was all reported by Reynolds, who noted that these Jews faced 'ruin' because of the Nazi action. Reynolds also reported some developments in the church struggle, and the major excesses against the Jews in later years, including *Kristallnacht* and the plight of refugees in 1938.

Political ideology or affiliation could also affect how a newspaper covered German affairs. Whether a newspaper was right-wing or left-wing, conservative or liberal, could affect editorial decisions, and have an impact on how newspapers reported what was happening in Germany. The conservatism of the *Daily Mail*, and the influence of proprietor Rothermere, limited what the newspaper covered, particularly in terms of the ruthless suppression of the political left. The *Manchester Guardian*, on the other hand, took its liberal pedigree seriously, identifying with a moral duty to expose the brutality and cruelty of the regime.

There were also multiple instances where newspapers overlooked political ideology reporting, for instance, in covering the destruction of democracy in 1933. *The Times* reported each step in the destruction of democracy in detail. *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Morning Post* were all conservative or right-leaning newspapers, but reported the suppression of the trade union movement. And *The Spectator*, a conservative newspaper, was one of the first to denounce the political terror, earning condemnation from its

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readers. The *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express* still gave readers an understanding (albeit an often sensational one) of what was happening in Germany, despite their conservative and right-leaning ideologies. British newspapers, regardless of their political leaning, still, for the most part, got the story across to readers, especially in 1933. They still reported important and significant developments in the Nazis' quest for total power in Germany.

This thesis has argued that the British press, as a whole, were interested in what was happening in National Socialist Germany. But it has also demonstrated that many foreign correspondents worked hard to expose the truth and reality of life under the Nazi dictatorship. In doing this they faced obstacles. The most significant was that in reporting from Germany, correspondents were at the mercy of the Nazi government and risked arrest, expulsion, or worse. Editors and staff risked their newspapers being prohibited in Germany. But the correspondents risked being arrested and questioned about their activities, and even being expelled. It is no exaggeration to say that correspondents risked their lives or, at the very least, their livelihoods in writing about the Nazi regime.

Foreign correspondents were under constant surveillance and scrutiny by the Gestapo and the police in Germany. Wickham Steed, journalist and former editor of *The Times*, wrote of the difficulties in working in a dictatorship in his 1938 study of the press in Britain:

Foreign newspaper correspondents in those countries are heavily handicapped. They live under constant supervision; they may be expelled at any moment; and quite apart from censorship which controls their work; it is dangerous for them to write or suggest the truth lest they be arrested and charged with hostility to the State.¹¹

Norman Ebbutt, *The Times* Berlin correspondent, wrote that it was common knowledge that foreign correspondents phone calls were not private; phones were tapped and a

¹¹ Wickham Steed, *The Press* (London: Penguin, 1938), 165.

Steed was a foreign correspondent for *The Times* based, at various times, in Berlin, Vienna, and Rome. He became Editor of *The Times* in 1919, serving until 1922.

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'shadowy third' would listen in to conversations.¹² Furthermore, letters were also often intercepted. Ebbutt recalled: 'It is true that I always, merely as a precaution, duplicated or triplicated all articles which might be stopped, posting them in different letter-boxes at varying times and in different envelopes'.¹³ In addition, concerns for the safety of correspondents were very real. Norman Ebbutt's flat in Berlin was raided in early 1933 by the police while he was out. *Manchester Guardian's* special correspondent F.A. Voigt also had his flat in Paris raided by Nazis. He feared that it had been part of an assassination plot to silence him.¹⁴ The *Manchester Guardian's* Robert Dell had to flee Germany after his reporting on the Reichstag Fire trial in late 1933 aggravated the Nazi authorities. He was warned to leave by friends and quickly did so. Pembroke Stephens of the *Daily Express*, and G.E.R. Gedye of the *Daily Telegraph*, also spoke of the dangers they faced in reporting German affairs truthfully and accurately.

While intimidation and violence were second nature to the Nazi dictatorship, often the easiest recourse available to the regime in silencing correspondents was expelling them from Germany. In the 1930s, the British correspondents Noel Panter, Pembroke Stephens, and Norman Ebbutt were all expelled from Germany. For correspondents there was a fine line in telling the truth about Germany without risking expulsion. American correspondent William L. Shirer described this in *The Nightmare Years*:

All through my years in Berlin I was conscious of walking a real, if ill-defined line. If you strayed too far off it you risked expulsion. One soon got the feeling of how far one could go. I made up my own mind from the very beginning that as long as I could tell the essential story of Hitler's Germany, fully, truthfully and accurately, I would stay, if I were allowed to. Once that became impossible I would go.¹⁵

Ebbutt recalled that it was necessary to moderate what he wrote for *The Times*: 'naturally it could not give voice to what I was saying in private, nor in the same uncompromising words. Otherwise I would have been outside Germany before the end of 1933'.¹⁶ G.E.R.

¹² Norman Ebbutt Papers, Articles and Memoirs 1939-1945, Manuscript of 'My Twelve Years in Germany and After', Chapter IX, NE/2/1/12, News International Archive and Record Office. Hereafter NIA.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Voigt called them Nazis; whether they were working under official orders or on their own initiative was unclear.

¹⁵ Shirer, *The Nightmare Years*, 138.

¹⁶ Norman Ebbutt Papers, Articles and Memoirs 1939-1945, Manuscript of 'My Twelve Years in Germany and After', Chapter XII, NE/2/1/19, NIA.

CONCLUSION

Gedye echoed similar sentiments in account of his time as Vienna correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*. He wrote of the dilemma he faced following the Nazi invasion of Austria:

I personally had a choice between two courses. Either I suppressed all the worst features of the Nazi terror in the hope of finding sufficient favour with the new masters of Austria to be able to stay on indefinitely, or I gave up the full truth without the least modification, in which case my days in Vienna would be very few.¹⁷

Unsurprisingly, Gedye chose the second option and, as a result, lasted a week after the Nazis took control of Austria before he was expelled.¹⁸ For those that remained in Germany, and Austria, they were faced with the unhappy reality of working in an increasingly hostile country.

At times, correspondents also faced obstacles in reporting on German affairs from their own newspaper staff. This made living and working in a dictatorship even harder. Tension and disagreements between correspondents and editors (and other newspaper staff) were not uncommon when it came to reporting Nazi Germany, especially in the late 1930s when Britain was in the throes of appeasement. *The Times* editor, Geoffrey Dawson, was careful about what was printed in his newspaper. In 1937, Dawson wrote to one of his correspondents H.G. Daniels: 'I do my utmost, night after night, to keep out of the paper anything that might hurt their [Nazi German] susceptibilities. ... I can really think of nothing that has been printed now for many months past to which they could possibly take exception as unfair comment'.¹⁹ This was certainly something that correspondent Ebbutt struggled with at times. However, *The Times* continued to print articles keeping readers up-to-date with developments in Germany, particularly the church struggle and the persecution of Jews.

F.A. Voigt, a correspondent perhaps most in line with his newspaper the *Manchester Guardian's* policy, clashed with editor W.P. Crozier at times. It was his criticism of the reporting on the terror that helped the *Manchester Guardian* become the most outspoken critic of the Nazi regime and its brutal methods. But, in another instance of criticism

¹⁷ G.E.R. Gedye, *Fallen Bastions* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1939), 327.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ H.G. Daniels was a correspondent for *The Times*, based Geneva and Paris. Dawson to Daniels, 23 May 1937, in John Evelyn Wrench, *Geoffrey Dawson and Our Time* (London: Hutchison & Co., 1955), 361.

CONCLUSION

from Voigt, Crozier wrote back: 'it does not seem to have occurred to you for one moment that I have had, or have, to face any difficulties in your mode of presentation of the stuff you deal with', which he described as 'dogmatic and uncompromising in the highest degree'.²⁰ As Gannon wrote in his book, Crozier faced 'the practical necessity of softening the cries, with which he was in basic agreement, of a respected colleague who yelled "Wolf!" for half a dozen years before the wolf suddenly revealed itself to the whole world in March 1939'.²¹

While it is difficult to say whether correspondents reports were censored by editorial staff and editors, what was published was vivid enough to give a good picture of what was going on in Germany. If, from time to time, articles were toned down, the overall impression of the brutal nature of the Nazi dictatorship remained. There was nothing in reports, apart from some clear examples in the *Daily Mail*, that pointed to editors and newspaper staff trying to give a different impression. While Gannon, for instance, unearthed instances where articles on foreign policy were smoothed out or toned down, it is hard to detect the same apparatus in play when it comes to reporting on Germany's domestic policy. For instance, even though readers of the *Manchester Guardian* and, to a lesser degree, *The Spectator*, were annoyed or outraged reports on the Terror, these newspapers continued to print the truth about Nazi barbarity. Furthermore, even in 1938, when the British government was in the midst of appeasement, British newspapers continued to print articles about the brutal treatment of Jews in Germany and Austria. It is possible that British newspapers were wary or cautious about the possibility of embarrassing the British government by denouncing foreign policy. But for news about Germany's domestic situation, it was a different story. This was a case of a civilised state essentially going berserk. And for newspapers and correspondents it was a story that deserved to be told, and the truth exposed.

The conclusions of this thesis have important implications for major historiographical debates. Firstly, the thesis has significant bearing on the debate surrounding appeasement in the 1930s. As the argument goes, Chamberlain and his government pursued a policy of appeasement in the hope of averting war on the European continent. Appeasement then arose from Chamberlain's belief that it was possible to negotiate with

²⁰ Crozier to Voigt, 16 June 1936, Foreign Correspondence File 344c, Folder 215, JRL.

²¹ Frederick Reid Gannon, *The British press and Germany, 1936-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 85.

CONCLUSION

Hitler. Part of this then, is the argument that Chamberlain could not have known who and what he was dealing with. With the benefit of hindsight, it is now clear Hitler was intent on pursuing his goals of territorial expansion, regardless of the outcome of negotiations with Britain or any other European country. How can one possibly carry out legal negotiations (in good faith) with a tyrant such as Hitler — head of an uncivilised and violent state? Did this mean then that Chamberlain, and the British government, were in the dark about Hitler and his intentions? In light of what this study has concluded, if the British government did not know who and what they were dealing with, namely a tyrant at the head of a brutal dictatorship, then they were surely guilty of gross negligence. It can be safely assumed that the British government had other sources of information other than just newspapers, but even if they only had the British press to rely on for information they would have a fair understanding of the nature of the Nazi dictatorship. They would have known that the Nazi dictatorship had made a mockery of liberal democratic values, and had ruthlessly suppressed free speech and annihilated civil liberties. The only conclusion that can reasonably be taken from this is that Chamberlain was so fearful of war, he tried to do anything and everything to prevent another breaking out. But we should stop trying to explain appeasement by arguing that Chamberlain and the British government simply did not know what they were dealing with.

The second debate to which this thesis contributes is that of knowledge about the persecution of the Jews in Germany. This concerns whether those outside of Germany knew what was happening to the Jews in Germany, and whether this knowledge could have translated into action, or at the very least, pressure on the Nazi Government. There is a major debate in the historiography centring on what was known and what could have been done to help Germany's (and, later, Europe's) Jews. The question over what was known can, to some degree, be answered with the findings of this thesis. This thesis has uncovered reporting trends on the persecution of the Jews in Germany and has demonstrated that the most newspapers did report fully, and in detail, what was happening to the Jews in Germany (and later Austria). But more than that, many correspondents (and their newspapers) understood that the Jews in Germany were not just being persecuted — they were being systematically and brutally alienated and excluded from German society. The methodical way that the Jews were targeted was juxtaposed, in British press reports, with the violent brutality in which they were often

CONCLUSION

treated. The tales of beatings and torture, especially after the Anschluss with Austria and the events of *Kristallnacht*, was just one part in the treatment of the Jews.

The fact that this was picked up by British correspondents and their newspapers, is significant to the debate surrounding knowledge of the persecution of the Jews. That the press were reporting the laws and decrees, along with the violence, as part of a campaign to rid Germany of its Jewish population bears important implications in our understanding of what was known and what could have been done. Of course, it was not clear that the persecution of the Jews would end with the Nazis' extermination programme that attempted to annihilate the Jews, but it certainly was clear that the Jews were no longer welcome in Germany. British correspondents had urged that something be done for the Jews of Germany and Austria, especially in 1938. They recognised how dire the situation was, and they recognised the failures of the international community in helping the Jews flee. A reader of British newspapers could have understood that the situation was desperate. And so, the implications for the historiography is clear. What was happening to the Jews in Germany and Austria was no secret. In this line of thinking, more should have been done to help the Jews in their desperate plight before the outbreak of war in 1939.

The research and conclusions of this thesis represent an important contribution to the literature on pre-war responses to Nazism, specifically media and press responses. It contributes to important debates surrounding appeasement, the persecution of the Jews, reactions to refugees, and the rise of dictatorships and right-wing movements. But this thesis also encourages new scholarship too. The thesis paves the way for further studies that examine the press and its interactions and responses to the Nazi dictatorship. The *Daily Mail* surely deserves a study of its own. Viscount Rothermere was a fascinating figure whose story goes beyond the 'mad Rothermere' character stereotype to which he has been subjected.²² A study that examines the *Daily Mail*, Rothermere, and Nazism is merited. Research into the inner machinations of the newspaper would provide more

²² The few studies only focus on Rothermere and his role with the *Daily Mail*, or they focus on Rothermere and his interactions with other individuals, such as Princess Stephanie von Hohenlohe (another interesting story). None examine the reporting of the *Daily Mail*, the interactions between its staff, and the response to (and interaction with) the Nazi dictatorship.

Relevant studies include, Jim Wilson, *Nazi Princess: Hitler, Lord Rothermere, and Princess Stephanie von Hohenlohe* (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2001); S.J. Taylor, *The Great Outsiders: Northcliffe, Rothermere, and the Daily Mail* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996).

CONCLUSION

insight into the way the newspaper treated and wrote about Nazi Germany. The *Manchester Guardian* also deserves more research, beyond that of David Ayerst's well-written and researched history of the *Guardian*.²³ The efforts that the newspaper, especially editor W.P. Crozier and the team of correspondents in the 1930s, went in exposing the brutality and inhumanity of the regime deserves more focus than the few chapters that Ayerst was able to devote. More than this, the correspondents that are at the heart of this thesis deserve more examination. Norman Ebbutt started working on his memoirs, and a historian (judging by the archival notes) began working on something resembling a biography but the project was seemingly abandoned.²⁴ The stories of the correspondents, particularly Norman Ebbutt and Frederick Augustus Voigt, and their experiences, including the conditions in Germany under which they lived and worked, their interactions with the newspapers they were employed by, and the issues they wrote about, should be told.

In the 1930s British newspapers reported what was happening in Germany, as the Nazi Party exerted its control over the state. The press reported developments, with some urgency, charting the transition from Weimar democracy to ruthless dictatorship. The contrast between Britain's democratic way of life and Germany's descent into an uncivilised and oppressive state was clearly demonstrated in reports written by British correspondents. These correspondents reported the suppression of the Press, free speech, and religion, as well as the innumerable cases of violence, all carried out by, and for, the Nazi regime. In the years leading up to war, press commentary and criticism of Nazi Germany's aggressive foreign policy may have been toned down, but British newspapers continued to voice their disgust of Nazi methods, particularly when it came to the suppression of the churches and the persecution of the Jews.

Overall, British press reports left little doubt about the nature of the dictatorship, its intentions, methods, and practice. Most correspondents did not shy away from reporting the truth. Given the level of reporting, people in Britain could have known a great deal about the Nazi dictatorship by regularly reading British newspapers. A reader of one of

²³ The history of *The Times* has seven volumes (so far). Surely the *Manchester Guardian (Guardian)* deserves more than one volume. Ayerst's work is excellent but is limited by space. David Ayerst, *The Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper* (London: William Collins & Sons Co. Ltd., 1971).

²⁴ Ebbutt's notes for his memoir were annotated with additional observations and notes by Simon Hutchison. Further details are unknown.

CONCLUSION

the quality British newspapers could, in all likelihood, have known more about the Nazi dictatorship than a reader of a popular newspaper, but even a reader of a popular newspaper would, from articles printed in the 1930s, have known that the Nazi dictatorship was a brutal and oppressive regime that had stomped out the freedoms and rights enjoyed in a democracy like Britain. The fact that these articles existed are testament to the brave commitment of the correspondents, editors, and newspaper staff that made up the British press in the 1930s, in telling the truth about the Nazi regime.

* * * * *

APPENDIX ONE

Illustrations/Photographs

Fire in the Reichstag, 27 February 1933

THE DAILY MIRROR, Tuesday, February 28, 1933.

Daily Mirror

THE DAILY PICTURE NEWSPAPER WITH THE LARGEST NET SALE

No. 9,131 Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper. TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1933 One Penny

BIG CROSS-WORD TO-DAY - P. 21

WHILEAS PAGE 20 AMUSEMENTS PAGE 2

GERMAN REICHSTAG IN FLAMES

Chamber of Deputies Destroyed: Outbreak Due to Arson

ARREST IN BURNING BUILDING—POLICE ACCUSE 'REDS' OF SECOND FIRE OUTRAGE IN DAY

Fire broke out in the German Reichstag last night, and within a short time the whole building was in flames. The deputies' chamber was destroyed.

This outbreak came within a few hours of a minor fire at the former Imperial Palace—the second there within three days—and in each case arson is suspected.

BERLIN, Monday Night.

The Reichstag was ablaze to night. Flames shot out of the glass dome which surmounts the hall in which representatives of the German people meet, and thousands of persons assembled in the Tiergarten to watch the spectacle.

Police in full force, on horseback and on foot, were rushed to the scene and kept everyone at a safe distance while all the fire brigades in Berlin poured water on the flames which, bursting out of the glass cupola, made an awe-inspiring spectacle.

A man was arrested in the building. He states that he is a Communist from Halle. Police assert that Communists are responsible for the outbreak.

The fire was observed shortly after 8 p.m., states the Reichstag and it was not brought under control until the deputies' chamber had been destroyed.

Arrest in Building

The Reichstag was surrounded by fire fighting appliances and high ladders were run up and illuminated by searchlights as police searched for anyone who might have started the flames.

Men were run in through the numerous entrances to the east of the fire which was in the main session hall.

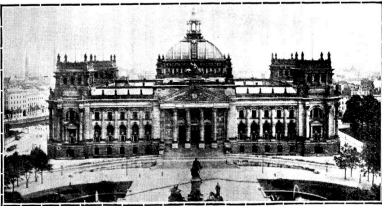
It is believed that the fire was set to arson, according to an official communication, it broke out at four different points simultaneously. The former Royal Lodge was one of the buildings present in the building at the time the flames were seen were able to get out without difficulty.

It is thought that the flames may be connected with an unexplained outbreak of fire in an attic at the former Imperial Palace earlier in the day.

Another fire broke out there. Only on Saturday there was another fire at the Palace.

The Reichstag is situated on the eastern side of the Spree. It was built between 1884 and 1894, and is in the Imperial Renaissance style. At the corners are four lofty towers which are towers representing the industries of the German people.

The building includes a spacious promenade hall, reading and writing rooms and a restaurant, besides the chamber proper and its lobby and offices. There is also a meeting hall of the Federal Council.



The Reichstag building, which was in flames last night.

SHOTS AT DEPUTY

Berlin is fast becoming a city of terror. Nazi storm troops continue their raids on Communists under the protection of the Constitution.

The latest act of violence occurred early yesterday when two men, believed to be Nazis, shot a Communist member of the Reichstag, Kurt Lowenstein, and fired at the deputy.

According to a Socialist newspaper, two revolver shots were fired from the bedroom door.

The deputy was unhurt, the bullets embedding themselves in the furniture, and the police arrested one of the intruders, but declined to disclose his identity.

A widespread sentiment of discontent, Communist and democratic newspapers is being expressed.

On the other hand the Nazis continue to flourish and possess what amounts to a free press.

Excessive instructions have been issued for the organization of Germany's "Day of National Mourning" which has been fixed for Sunday, the day of the elections for the Reichstag and Prussian Parliament.



Herr Hitler delivering an election speech in Munich.

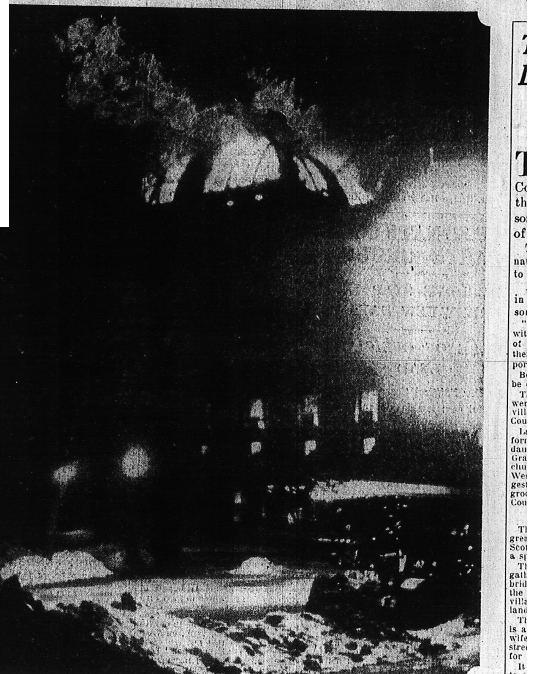
The Imperial Palace, where two fires occurred in three days.



A war memorial day ceremony in the Reichstag.

OF DEPUTIES DESTROYED

Picture Wired to "The Daily Express"



The Reichstag building ablaze, with smoke and flames pouring through the glass cupola. This picture, with snow in the foreground, was telegraphed from Berlin to London and received in The Daily Mail office within two-and-a-half hours of the fire reaching its height.

Above — *Daily Mirror*, 28 February 1933, p1

Right — *Daily Express*, 28 February 1933, p11

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THE REICHSTAG BUILDING WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE ON FEBRUARY 27, 1933. THE BUILDING WAS BUILT BETWEEN 1884 AND 1894. IT WAS DESTROYED BY ARSON. THE FIRE WAS OBSERVED SHORTLY AFTER 8 P.M. AND WAS NOT BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL UNTIL THE DEPUTIES' CHAMBER HAD BEEN DESTROYED.

burial matches were found in the attic of the palace. (Messages from Reuter, Exchange, British United Press, and Central News.)

COST £1,200,000

CO-OPS. SHOULD BE TAXED

MR. FORD TURNS BANKER

£1,600,000. QUARTER

Boycott of Jewish businesses and shops, 1 April 1933

Monday, April 3, 1933

THE DAILY MIRROR

Late London Edition

Page 3

JEW BAITERS READY FOR FRESH ACTION

Boycott To Be Resumed This Week?

Stand-by Order to Nazis

EMBASSY GUARD

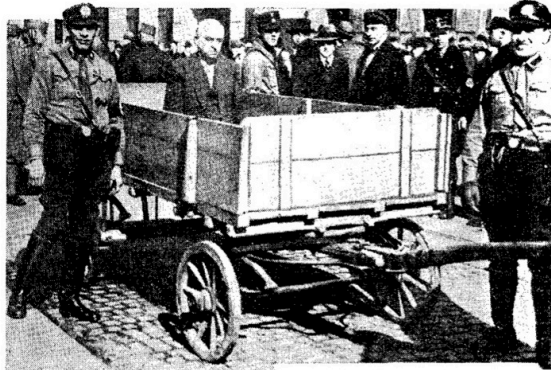
Police Precautions at London Protest

Fears were entertained last night that the boycott of Jews in Germany may be resumed on Wednesday.

The one-day boycott ended at 10 p.m. on Saturday night, and yesterday a two-day truce began. Committees of Action, however, have been ordered to stand ready.

The German Embassy in London was heavily guarded yesterday, owing to reports that anti-Fascist demonstrators in Hyde Park intended marching there.

Mounted and foot police were assembled near the Embassy, but no marchers appeared.



A Jew who refused to do menial work being taken by Nazis through Chemnitz, Saxony, in a refuse cart.

POLICE STOP FUNERAL OF AIR VICTIM

Man Who Jumped from Blazing 'Plane

MR. A. VOSS

Much surprise was caused yesterday by police action which resulted in the postponement of the funeral of one of the British victims of the air liner disaster of last week.

Shortly after the body of Mr. Albert Voss—a Manchester dentist, who perished when the City of Liverpool came down in flames near Diekmade, Belgium—had reached Manchester, police officers called at the undertaker's premises.

They removed the body to a mortuary. No explanation was given for this action, and some relatives of the dead man, it is believed, were not aware of the step taken till a short time before the hour fixed for the funeral.

An assistant of Mr. Eli Coppel, who was in charge of the funeral arrangements, told the *Daily Mirror* last night that the funeral was to have taken place yesterday.

POLICE VISIT

"The coffin arrived from London on Saturday evening," he said.

"It was brought by road and the car had

P.C. ATTACKED BY Magic Sunset MOTOR BANDITS

Above — *Daily Mirror*, 3 April 1933, p3

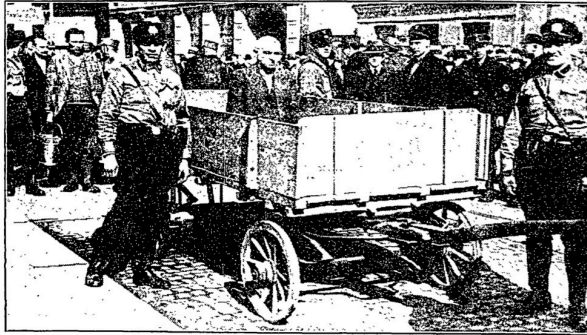
Below — *Daily Telegraph*, 3 April 1933, p11



Nazi troops with (on left) one of the placards in German and English referred to by our Berlin Correspondent in his message on the boycott. The larger placard exhorts Germans to defend themselves and not to buy from Jews. Other pictures on Page Fourteen.

THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 1933

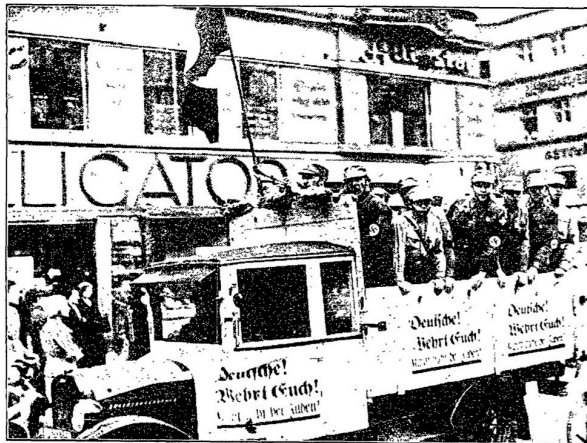
THE PERSECUTION OF JEWS IN GERMANY



A photograph smuggled out of Germany by a Socialist refugee. It was taken at Chemnitz, in Saxony, and shows a Jew being paraded through the streets in a refuse cart under a guard of Nazis.



The anti-Jewish boycott in Berlin, showing a large shop closed and placarded with "Jew" notices.



Nazi patrols in Berlin.



These two pictures, which would never have been seen by the outside world had they not been smuggled out of Germany, show the degradation to which the Jews of Chemnitz, Saxony, including lawyers, doctors and business men, were subjected by the Nazis who forced them to street-cleaning tasks and to whip-wash a wall in the business quarter of the town. When one refused, he was publicly paraded through the city in a scavenger's cart. (Continued on next page.)

The Camera Cannot Lie! These two pictures, which would never have been seen by the outside world had they not been smuggled out of Germany, show the degradation to which the Jews of Chemnitz, Saxony, including lawyers, doctors and business men, were subjected by the Nazis who forced them to street-cleaning tasks and to whip-wash a wall in the business quarter of the town. When one refused, he was publicly paraded through the city in a scavenger's cart. [Photo: Finest News]

Above — *Jewish Chronicle*, 7 April 1933, p25

Left — *Manchester Guardian*, 4 April 1933, p12

Terror in Germany, 1933

THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 1933

THE TERROR IN GERMANY



A workman's home at Frankfurt which was raided and wrecked on Thursday by Hitlerite protection squads. This is referred to in the article by our special correspondent to-day.



A room in one of the concentration camps in which German Communists have been imprisoned.



The daily roll-call in the concentration camp at Oranienburg.

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Manchester Guardian, 8 April 1933, p18

Daily Mail, Viscount Rothermere's 'Youth Triumphant' article, (10 July 1933, p10)

MONDAY, The Daily Mail JULY 10, 1933.

YOUTH TRIUMPHANT

by
Viscount
Rothermere



Germany, a nation of sixty-five millions, stands behind Hitler united as it never was before. The picture shows a remarkable Nazi demonstration in the Lustgarten, Berlin.

SOMEWHERE IN NAZILAND.

WRITE from a new country on the map of Europe. Its name is Naziland.

Of all the historic changes in our time, the transformation of Germany under Hitler has been the swiftest, most complete, and most momentous. This nation of sixty-five millions stands behind him united as it never was before.

Since the Nazis came to power five months ago, Germany's political structure has been revolutionised, her Constitution remodelled, and her people inspired with the courage of a crusade.

Something far more significant than a new Government has arisen among the Germans. There has been a sudden expansion of their national spirit like that which took place in England under Queen Elizabeth. **Youth has taken command.**

A stream of young blood is revitalising the country. It flows as strongly in the remotest channels of the nation's life as at its heart.

The New Rulers

On a visit which I am paying to Northern Germany I find the signs of the new Hitler spirit as manifest in the most out-of-the-way villages as in the largest cities. Across the heavy laden fields of corn one sees the Nazi flag flying from the roofs of lonely farmhouses. Almost

Nelson had all reached the full measure of their responsibilities by 40.

To-day, while the German or Italian Government consists of ten or a dozen vigorous and alert men in the prime of life, a meeting of the British Cabinet brings together twenty grey-haired old gentlemen whose average age is 63.

Our Muddled Affairs

The indulgence, or indifference, with which the British public allows without party leaders to cling to political power is one of the main causes of the muddle in which our national affairs have so long remained. Until the younger generation asserts itself in Britain, as the youth of Germany and Italy has done, the self-satisfied smooth-tongued men in office, who propose to wreck the Empire by surrendering our authority in India, will continue to exercise their disastrous sway.

I urge all British young men and women to study closely the progress of this Nazi régime in Germany. They must not be misled by the misrepresentations of its opponents. The plain, blunt patriotism of Hitler and his followers is highly alarming to our parlour-Bolsheviks and cultured Communists. The most spiteful detractors of the Nazis are to be found in precisely the same sections of the British public and Press as are most vehement in their praises of the Soviet régime in Russia.

These ranters, who can see nothing in the Bolshevik system of slave-labour camps but an admirable example of civic organisation, shut their eyes to the practical achievements of the Nazi movement and shudder at the sight of the enthu-

submerged by the immense benefits that the new régime is already bestowing upon Germany.

Foremost of these has been the liberation of that country from the rule of the frowsy, down-at-heel German Republic, which was totally lacking in prestige, self-confidence, and even self-respect.

Revelations which the fall of the Republican Ministers has brought about prove their administration to have been no more than a screen behind which gangs of unscrupulous politicians professing Republican principles were able to plunder the public systematically. For the first time in the whole history of Germany fraud and corruption had begun to spread on a large scale throughout the services of State.

Alien Elements

The German nation, moreover, was rapidly falling under the control of its alien elements. In the last days of the pre-Hitler régime there were twenty times as many Jewish Government officials in Germany as had existed before the war. Israelites of international attachments were insinuating themselves into key positions in the German administrative machine. Three German Ministers only had direct relations with the Press, but in each case the official responsible for conveying news and interpreting policy to the public was a Jew.

It is from such abuses that Hitler has freed Germany. By mobilising the youth of the country in support of a vigorous national policy he has already converted a despondent and embittered nation into one radiant with hope and

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Purge of the SA — Assassination of Ernst Röhm, 30 June 1934 — 2 July 1934

THE DAILY MIRROR, Monday, July 2, 1934. Broadcasting - Page 22

Daily Mirror

THE DAILY PICTURE NEWSPAPER WITH THE LARGEST NET SALE

No. 9,546. Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper. MONDAY, JULY 2, 1934. One Penny

NEW TEST TEAM CHOSEN
—Page 2

RUTHLESS EXECUTION OF Capt. Roehm

Shot Dead

HITLER TAKES A SWIFT AND GRIM REVENGE

Ex-Chancellor and Wife Meet a Tragic Fate

MORE EXECUTIONS TOOK PLACE IN GERMANY YESTERDAY. CAPTAIN ROEHM, CHIEF-OF-STAFF OF THE STORM TROOPERS, WHO WAS ARRESTED AND DEPOSED, WAS SHOT DEAD AFTER HE HAD BEEN HANDLED. A REVOLVER TO COMMIT SUICIDE AND REFUSED TO DO SO.

So stunning in its effect was the terrible vengeance which Hitler has taken on Nazi leaders whom he accused of plotting against him, that no one in Germany yesterday dare raise a hand in opposition.

Events which shook the German people and left the world aghast included the following:—

GENERAL VON SCHLEIBER, ex-Chancellor of Germany, was shot dead "while resisting arrest" at his villa in a fashionable Berlin suburb. His wife rushed between him and the guns of the police and she was also shot and died later. Seven Storm Troopers were executed and others are stated to have taken their own lives rather than face arrest.

VON PAPAN, the Vice-Chancellor, was arrested and then allowed to return to his villa, where he is a prisoner. He will probably be executed and succeeded by General Goering.

Early-to-day a Reuter telegram from Berlin reported further executions. Ten more leaders, it was stated, had been shot.

CAUSE OF PLOT REVEALED

It is believed that the dramatic events which have taken place in Germany Berlin since the 30th June are the result of a plot which appears to be directed in the main against the present Nazi Government. It is stated that the plot was hatched in the autumn of 1933 and that its object was to bring about a change in the Government and to install a new régime.

The majority of them, it appears, support Hitler in the drastic action he has taken against the rebels, and it is not believed for a moment that they will do anything to oppose the leader's measures.

It is stated that the plot was hatched in the autumn of 1933 and that its object was to bring about a change in the Government and to install a new régime.

(Continued on page 3)



Count Strödt, a Munich leader, shot by a firing squad. Karl Ernst, Storm Troop commander at Berlin, also executed.

Hitler with Captain Roehm, one of his closest supporters and Chief of Staff of Storm Troopers, whom he personally arrested.



Enthusiastic Berlin supporters saluting Hitler yesterday.

WHY HITLER SWOOPED: MIDNIGHT DISCLOSURES

Mutinuous Army and Nazi Leaders Plan Ministry: Monarchy Plot: Secret Service Finds List of Conspirators

DRAMATIC EXECUTION OF ROEHM

Pistol in His Cell But Suicide Refusal

ARMY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ARRESTED

60 PERSONS REPORTED SHOT

THE REBEL PLOT DISCLOSED

ARRESTED BY HITLER

ENGLAND'S 5 NEW MEN FOR TEST

Clark as the First Bowler

FARNES, GEARY & BOWES CHOSEN

G. O. Allen Chosen

TRENCHARD'S TRUNK CRIME ORDER

LIST OF VANISHED MEN AND WOMEN

Typist's Case May Depose Cabinet

LATEST NEWS

THE PRIMAL CLUE

BAN ON ALL COMMENTS

HINDENBURG ILL

CONDOTTI CALLED MEER

BRADMAN'S GOES

THEORY OF LOSS OF CHIEF'S FIFE

Why say just Brown?

Remember - ask for HÖVIS and not just BROWN BRAND

Kristallnacht (Crystal Night) or Night of Broken Glass, 9 — 10 November 1938



ROLLS one blade safety **RAZOR**
Always keen to shave you

Daily Express
WORLD'S LARGEST DAILY SALE
No. 12,000 Friday, November 11, 1938 One Penny

Pogrom goes on till night
LOOTING MOBS DEFY GOEBBELS
Jewish homes fired, women beaten

BERLIN, Thursday Night.
ALL OVER GERMANY TONIGHT THE JEWS ARE COVERING IN TERROR. THEIR SHOPS ARE WRECKED AND LOOTED, THEIR SYNAGOGUES ARE BURNING, THEIR HOMES ARE AT THE MERCY OF GANGS DRUNK WITH DESTRUCTION. NOT EVEN THE PROCLAMATION OF DR. GOEBBELS, THE PROPAGANDA MINISTER — BROADCAST THIS AFTERNOON AND AGAIN TONIGHT — ORDERING THE STOPPAGE OF POGROMS COULD CURB THE MADNESS OF THE MOBS.

The wave of violence sweeping through the cities has undertaken now only for lack of further damage to be done. So dangerous did the situation become in Berlin that at eight o'clock the police force were called out.

They were reinforced by hundreds of Black Guards, but the wrecking and smashing went on until even the Nazi gangs were exhausted by their orgy.

BEATEN UP
Jews who had managed to hide their possessions earlier in the day were hunted, not only in the streets but in their homes. Their only alternative was to flee from Germany.

The arrival of ghetto in another hour has meant that a further 10,000 Jews are being packed together in ghettos in the cities of the Reich.

'GIVE US PERMITS'
The conclusion is, it is to be expected that a further 10,000 Jews will be driven out of Germany in the next few days.

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'GIVE US PERMITS'
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EDEN MAY LEAD NEW PARTY
Daily Express Political Correspondent
POLITICAL rumour is busy with the name of Mr. Anthony Eden, the ex-Foreign Secretary.
It is believed that he aims to lead a breakaway of Conservatives, who might combine their forces with Liberals and Socialists to form an alternative to the present Government.

The rumour was given credence by the speech, Mr. Eden made in the House of Commons last night, regarding the proposed new party.

Page 17—It is believed that a complete political programme, which, he said, might lead to real national unity.

The programme included social reforms, and a housing, health and education plan to go on and on.

It is very true that the present political body is not made to the point of view of the present Government.

It is believed that the programme is not made to be carried out in the next few months.

TRIAL RUN
It is expected that during the next few weeks the Government will be able to carry out a trial run of the proposed new party.

The Government will be able to carry out a trial run of the proposed new party.

The King will sail in Repulse
THE King and Queen will sail for Canada next week in their Majesty's yacht, the Repulse, with an escort of two cruisers, it was officially announced last night.

They are expected to arrive in London on the 15th of the month.

The Quins all well, and trying to sing
THE Quins, including the King and Queen, are all well and trying to sing.

Super R.A.F. will cost £320,000,000
A MAJOR decision on policy has been taken by the Air Ministry.

The Government will be able to carry out a trial run of the proposed new party.

LATEST CENTRAL 8000
Weather: fair (see page 13)

Leopold III with 'Hu'
Leopold III, King of Belgium, is expected to visit the British Isles next week.

ARE YOU UNDER 45?
THE PRUDENTIAL Assurance Company offers for the consideration of every thoughtful married man under 45 two contracts especially designed for his needs.

Above left — Daily Telegraph and Morning Post, 11 November 1938, p17.

Above — Daily Telegraph and Morning Post, 11 November 1938, p18.

Left — Daily Express, 11 November 1938, p1.

APPENDIX TWO

Newspaper Biographical Details

All newspapers are national dailies, unless otherwise stated.

Daily Express

1900 –

Political leaning – Centre

Proprietor – Lord Beaverbrook (William Maxwell ‘Max’ Aitkin)

Editor – Arthur Christiansen

Notable Correspondents – Sefton Delmer; Pembroke Stephens; Alan Moorehead.

Berlin Correspondents – Selkirk Panton; Noel Monks

Circulation – 2,329,000 (1938, Largest circulation of any daily in Britain)

Daily Mail

1896 –

Political leaning – Conservative Right

Proprietor – Viscount Rothermere (Harold Sidney Harmsworth)

Editor – W.L. Warden (1931–1935); A.L. Cranfield (1936–1938); Robert Frew (1939–1944)

Special Correspondent – George Ward Price

Berlin Correspondents – Rothay Reynolds, Ralph Izzard; Paul Bretherton.

Circulation – 1,580,000 (1937)

Daily Mirror

1903 –

Political leaning – Left (from mid 1930s)

Proprietor – Viscount Rothermere (sold mid 1930s. The precise details are somewhat mysterious).

Guy Bartholomew was Editorial Director during the 1930s and helped revolutionise the newspaper by transforming it into a left leaning newspaper, targeted more towards the working class. He also turned the *Daily Mirror* into a tabloid, emulating the American tabloid newspapers.

Editor – L.D. Brownlee (1931–1934), Cecil Thomas (1934–1948).

Circulation – Over 2,000,000 (1937)

Daily Telegraph (Daily Telegraph & Morning Post)

1855 – 1937 –

The *Daily Telegraph* merged with the *Morning Post* in 1937 and was known as the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, before going back to the *Daily Telegraph*.

Political leaning – Conservative/Centre Right (Imperialist)

Proprietors – Berry Brothers – Lord Camrose (William Berry; later Viscount Camrose) and Lord Kemsley (Gomer Berry, later Viscount Kemsley)

Editor – Arthur E. Watson (administrative); Robert Skelton (News Editor)

Notable Correspondents – G.E.R. Gedye (Vienna correspondent, until left the newspaper in April 1939 over disagreements about his book *Fallen Bastions*); Victor Gordon-Lennox (Diplomatic Correspondent); Noel Panter (Munich correspondent until his expulsion in 1933).

Berlin Correspondents – Eustace B. Wareing (until 1938); Hugh Carleton Greene (took over from Wareing 1938 until his expulsion from Germany in May 1939. He had been Wareing's assistant in Berlin); Anthony Mann.

Notable Contributors - Austin Chamberlain; Winston Churchill.

Circulation – 637,000 (1937)

Jewish Chronicle (weekly)

1841 –

The *Jewish Chronicle* is the oldest continuing Jewish newspaper in the world.

Managing Director – Mortimer Epstein (1931 – 1936);

The Jewish Chronicle was governed by a board, with Neville Laski at its head as President (from 1933).

Editor – Jack M. Rich (1932 – 1936); Ivan Greenberg (1936 – 1946; had been Assistant editor prior to that).

Notable (Special) Correspondent – Simon Gilbert (leading articles and important editorials such as 'In the Communal Armchair').

Circulation – 22,000 (1946)

Manchester Guardian

1821 –

From 1959 has been *The Guardian* and has been published in London since 1961.

Political leaning – Liberal left

Manager – John Russell Scott

Editor – William Percival Crozier (1932 – 1944)

Notable (Special/Diplomatic) Correspondent – Frederick Augustus Voigt

Berlin Correspondents - Alexander Werth (– 1933); C.A. Lambert (from November 1933)

Other Notable Correspondents – Robert Dell (Geneva); F.A. Fodor (Central Europe and Vienna); Malcolm Muggeridge (Moscow, 1933).

Circulation - between 25,000 and 50,000.

Morning Post

1772 – 1937

The *Morning Post* merged with the *Daily Telegraph* after being bought by the Berry Brothers. Prior to this the newspaper had been the oldest London paper still running.

Political leaning – Conservative Right

Owner – Sold to a group headed by Duke of Northumberland (Alan Percy) in 1924.

Editor – Howell Arthur Gwynne (1910 – 1937).

Foreign Editor – Alaistar Shannon.

Chief Leader Writer – J.C. Johnstone

Berlin Correspondents – Darsie Gillie; Karl Robson

New Statesman & Nation (weekly)

1913 —

The paper was created as the *New Statesman*, but adopted the name *New Statesman and Nation* in 1931 after it merged with the *The Nation and Athenaeum*. In 1934 the *Week-End Review* was also amalgamated into the *New Statesman and Nation*. It later returned to the name *New Statesman*.

Political leaning — Left

Manager — John Roberts (1920-1957)

Editor — Basil Kingsley Martin (1931 — 1960)

Contributors — Alexander Werth; H.N. Brailsford; C.E.M. Joad

Editorial Comment — Mostyn Lloyd (on Germany)

Circulation — 18,000 approx. (1934)

News Chronicle

1930 — 1960

The *News Chronicle* came about after the merging of the *Daily Chronicle* and *Daily News* (which had previously absorbed the *Morning Leader* and *Westminster Gazette*). The newspaper was amalgamated into the *Daily Mail* in 1960 and ceased publication.

Political leaning - Left

Owner - Cadbury Family Trust with Lawrence Cadbury as Chairman.

Editor - Gerald Aylmer Vallance (1933 — 1936); Gerald Barry (1936 — 1947)

Political Editor — A.J. Cummings

Notable (Diplomatic) Correspondent - Vernon Bartlett

Berlin Correspondents - John Segrue (1933-36); P.B. Wadsworth (succeeded Segrue; previously assistant in Berlin); H.D. Harrison (when Harrison was expelled from Yugoslavia in 1937, he was moved to Berlin where the German government ordered his removal in March 1939); Ian Colvin (moved between Berlin and London).

Circulation — 1,324,000 (1937)

Observer (weekly)

1791 —

Political leaning — Liberal

Owner — Viscount Astor (Waldorf Astor)

Editor - James Louis (J.L.) Garvin (1908—1942)

Berlin Correspondent - P.B. Wadsworth (also contributed to the *News Chronicle*).

Circulation - 214,000 (1936)

The Spectator (weekly)

1828 —

Political leaning — Conservative

Owner — Spectator Ltd.; 61% owned by Sir John Evelyn Wrench (who acted as proprietor) and Sir J. Angus Watson.

Editor — Sir John Evelyn Wrench (1925—1932, also major proprietor during the 1930s); Henry Wilson Harris (1932—1953).

Leader Writers — R.A. Scott-James (1933—1935; also Political Editor); Goronwy Rees (1936—1939).

Correspondent — Harrison Brown

The Times

1788 —

The newspaper was created in 1785 under the title *The Daily Universal Register*.

Political leaning — Conservative

Owner — Viscount Astor (John Jacob Astor), in conjunction with a Trust (and shareholders)

Editor — Geoffrey Dawson (1912—1919, then again from 1923—1941)

Assistant/Deputy Editor — Robert Barrington-Ward (later Editor, 1941—1948).

Berlin Correspondents — Norman Ebbutt (Berlin Correspondent until his expulsion in August 1937); Douglas Reed (Ebbutt's assistant in Berlin until 1935, then Vienna Correspondent until 1938); James Holburn (Ebbutt's assistant and successor).

Other Contributors/Correspondents — H.G. Daniels (Geneva); A.L. Kennedy

Circulation — 192,000 (1937)

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NE/1/1/19 Letter from G.P. Gooch to Norman Ebbutt, 21 August 1937

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