CHAPTER 6

Journalism as a Weapon: Jewish Journalists from Warsaw and the Production of Knowledge during Hitler’s Rise to Power in 1933 and the November Pogroms in 1938.¹

by Anne-Christin Klotz

In autumn 1938, an anonymous report from Poland reached the press agency of the Union of Jewish Communities in Switzerland, a report that described how Polish Jews had reacted on a recent and unprecedented event, which the Nazis simply called Polenaktion.² It reads:

Polish Jewry immediately made arrangements to help the unfortunate and enabled them to live their lives at least to some extent. In Warsaw a non-party committee was organized on Thursday, November 4th, consisting of 15 gentlemen, presided by University professor and senator, Rabbi Dr. M. Schorr. The most important Jewish personalities belong to the committee (. . .). In Warsaw the displaced were accommodated in private houses, (. . .) Zionist organizations offered in some towns their localities as an emergency shelter. Immediately blankets, soaps, towels and medicine were brought to a camp in Zbąszyń. Furthermore, doctors and nurses made themselves available. The Jewish Writers and Journalists Association in Warsaw has imposed a tax on itself and the Warsaw rabbinate decided to take two percent of the earnings of its members in favor of the persecuted.³
The anonymous writer described in detail the immediate actions Polish-Jewish politicians, merchants, social workers as well as journalists and writers took, when in October 1938 Nazi Germany expelled thousands of Polish Jews from Germany by pushing them across the Polish border. Within a few days, a central aid committee for Jewish refugees in Poland was set up in Warsaw. Its task was to coordinate the work on site in the refugee camp in Zbąszyń, a small town right on the Polish side of the border as well as the work of other local committees throughout Poland.

The report is a good example for the involvement of Polish-Jewish public leaders regardless of their respective political affiliation within the political struggle against the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany in 1938. However, their support did not emerge out of a vacuum in 1938. Ever since Hitler was appointed chancellor in January 1933, Polish Jews were deeply engaged in protesting Nazi policies on different levels, as well as in organizing material and financial help for Jewish refugees from Germany, who reached Poland from early 1933 on. Among the group who actively engaged in the protest were a notable number of journalists, who worked for the most important Jewish daily newspapers in Warsaw, namely the Zionist leaning newspapers *Haynt*, *Der Moment* and *Nasz Przegląd* as well as the Bundist *Naye Folkstsaytung* and the orthodox *Dos Yudishe Togblot*. Throughout the 1930s they had become experts on Nazi Germany by gathering first-hand, non-official information as well as by observing, analyzing and interpreting the events the anti-Semitic and fascist policies the National Socialists had implied. This knowledge, which they had accumulated over time and their interpretations of the political developments in Nazi Germany permanently shaped the images of Nazi Germany and German Jews on the one hand, as well as the self-images of Polish Jews on the other during the 1930s and beyond.

International intellectual, political and journalistic responses to the crucial events of 1938 like the so-called *Polenaktion* and the November pogroms are important and often discussed topics within the research community. Nevertheless, in comparison with the rich literature about the reception of the West as well as of Western European Jews, there is a shortage of theoretically informed and empirically detailed studies on how Central and Eastern European Jewish intellectuals, and here especially Yiddish speaking intellectuals and journalists, responded to events between 1933 and 1939. In addition to that, questions of “what they knew, when they knew it, and in what ways that knowledge translated into thought, discussion, expression and action” are open questions.
In combining archival material and memoirs with various articles from different Polish-Jewish newspapers from Warsaw, this chapter discusses how Polish-Jewish journalists and editors gathered and processed information on the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany between Hitler’s coming to power in January 1933, the Polenaktion and the November pogroms in 1938. Following the assumptions of Susanne Marten-Finnis that the Jewish press in Eastern Europe wanted to enlighten, to modernize and to mobilize their Jewish readers, I consider them as active agents of history with their own political mission and as journalists who wanted more than just to provide news. In times of crisis, they used their professional skills to respond practically to anti-Semitism and persecution. Through their journalistic work, they also possessed the necessary capabilities and contacts to gather, interpret and spread information on Nazi Germany on to the “Jewish street” in Poland. As journalists, they had the power to influence and encourage their Jewish readers to participate in the protest movement. But as their own perspectives for a future in Poland for themselves and their offspring started to look rather dark as they experienced anti-Semitic violence and institutional discrimination on an everyday basis, it affected not only their press coverage but also their own perception of the year 1938—as a personal and political struggle between activism, optimism and despair.

**SPRING 1933: PRELUDE**

With Hitler’s coming to power, in January 1933 the Polish-Jewish press reported extensively about the persecution of Jews and political dissidents in Nazi Germany. Before 1933, they closely monitored the political developments in the final years of the Weimar Republic, covering in detail anti-Semitic outbursts as well as political fights between social democrats, communists and members of the National Socialist party. Their reasons for covering news from Germany in such detail were numerous. With the end of the first World War and the proclamation of the Weimar Republic on November 9, 1918, Germany, and especially Berlin, became one of the most important places within Europe for the international Jewish and non-Jewish press. Already in the early years of the Weimar Republic political power struggles, the strength of the German Social Democracy and finally, the rise of the of the National Socialist party made
it worth covering news from Germany. In addition, Germany had served for centuries as a role model and object of comparison for intellectual Jews in Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{15} Polish Jews spoke with admiration of German high culture, and for some, Goethe and Schiller meant more than Poland’s most famous writer Adam Mickiewicz.\textsuperscript{16} When the National Socialists came to power, Jewish public leaders from Warsaw mourned the destruction of German and German-Jewish culture.\textsuperscript{17} Many Jewish journalists from Warsaw had personal ties to their neighboring country. More than a few had studied in Germany or shared otherwise friendly contacts to Jewish and non-Jewish German intellectuals.\textsuperscript{18} Melekh Ravitsh (1893–1976), journalist and president of the local journalist’s union the Farayn fun yidishe literatn un zhurnalistn (Association of Jewish Writers and Journalists), kept in his address books from the 1920s the private contacts of Else Lasker-Schüler, Salomon Adler-Rudel, Simon Dubnow, Frank Leonhard and others.\textsuperscript{19} From time to time, Jewish journalists traveled from Poland to Germany or the other way around for business trips or other political matters.\textsuperscript{20}

The detailed press coverage was possible when after the First World War Berlin emerged as a new center of migration for Jews from Eastern Europe and “numerous and not very well-known journalists, who were writing for the Yiddish press” found their way to the German capital.\textsuperscript{21} Through their assignment, the Polish-Jewish press was very well informed. Two of these correspondents, Yeshayahu Klinov (1890–1963), who wrote for the Haynt, and Hermann Swet (1893–1968), who was the correspondent for Der Moment, were working in Berlin for a Yiddish daily in Warsaw. Both journalists moved from Odessa to Berlin in 1922,\textsuperscript{22} where they joined several professional clubs, making their way into the city’s German and Jewish society. Both held a standing press accreditation for the German Reichstag\textsuperscript{23} and had a profound professional network, reaching deep into the highest German and Jewish political circles. At the annual ball of the Verein der Auswärtigen Presse zu Berlin (Association of the Foreign Press to Berlin),\textsuperscript{24} they met with high ranking German politicians. In 1931, for instance, they dined with German chancellor Heinrich Brüning and foreign minister Julius Curtius.\textsuperscript{25}

After January 1933, when it became increasingly more difficult to get verified information and German Jews refused to speak to journalists, Jewish correspondents used private sources and informants.\textsuperscript{26} Often journalists talked to someone from the Polish embassy or met with Jews in private in order to incorporate their experiences into articles anonymously.\textsuperscript{27} The journalists possessed not only profound professional and informal networks, they also
spoke all the required languages and could understand political matters which directly affected the German-Jewish or Eastern-European Jewish community in Berlin. Hence, they served the high expectations of their employers in Warsaw as well as the needs of their mostly Eastern European-Jewish readership quite perfectly.\(^{28}\)

These correspondents were not the only source of information. To get first-hand knowledge out of Germany, the editors of Warsaw’s Jewish newspapers used their transnational contacts and invited Jewish and non-Jewish writers to contribute guest columns on specific aspects of the situation in Germany. Among them were well-known journalists and intellectuals like American journalist Dorothy Thompson and the German-Jewish journalists and politicians Dr. Paul Arnsberg and Esriel Carlebach.\(^{29}\) Polish-Jewish journalists from Warsaw also began traveling to Nazi Germany to see everything with their own eyes and especially during the first months of the Nazi regime, Polish-Jewish newspapers featured countless travelogues on Nazi Germany.\(^{30}\) Sometimes Jewish newspapers would even send a journalist to Germany for several weeks, as was the case with Mark Turkow (1904–83) of Der Moment and Bernard Singer (1893–1966) of Nasz Przegląd.\(^{31}\)

In spring 1933, Polish-Jewish coverage of Nazi Germany intensified. The front pages of newspapers featured analyses, travelogues, poems, caricatures, articles and reports sent by the correspondents in Berlin.\(^{32}\) As they themselves became enemies of the Nazi regime, journalists increasingly wrote about their own fate in Nazi Germany, intermingling their personal experiences into articles. In March 1933, Yeshayahu Klinov sent a report to the office of the Haynt explaining that one of their colleagues, the famous economist and correspondent of the New Yorker Forverts Jacob Lestschinsky (1876–1966), had been arrested by the Gestapo. The arrest gave the impulse for the group of Jewish correspondents to gather for a meeting in order to discuss their current situation.\(^{33}\) Already before January 1933 a widespread net of different German ministries and newly formed National Socialist organizations tried to control, intimidate, arrest and finally force Jewish as well as socialist and communist correspondents to leave the country.\(^{34}\) The repression had tremendous effects on the life of Jewish correspondents and their families, which is why most of them had left Berlin willingly or unwillingly until summer 1933.\(^{35}\)

In the following years as knowledge of Nazi Germany circulated around the offices of the Warsaw Jewish newspapers, editors and journalists used their expertise to support and organize a cultural and economic protest movement against the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany. In March 1933, the
Farayn fun yidishe literaten un zhurnalisten (Association of Jewish Writers and Journalists) published a protest note condemning the Nazi policies and “calling upon all free-thinking and working elements around the world to unite in protest and to gather all forces to oppose the dark reaction, which threatens us all.” When on March 27, 1933, the first public protest meeting took place in Warsaw, politically active journalists like Abraham Goldberg (Haynt), Yoshua Gottlieb (Der Moment) and Moshe Kleinbaum (Der Moment) gave public speeches in the Nowości theater. Only a few weeks later the Journalists’ Association gave away a part of their clubrooms in the ulica Tłomackie 13 to the newly formed Faraynigter yidisher komitet tsu bekemfen di drifes oyf yidn in Daytshland (United Jewish Protest Committee against the persecution of Jews in Germany), which served as the nationwide central committee and which established there their first provisory office. The journalist Mark Turkow remembered that even the whole idea for an organized protest came up at a meeting in the rooms of the journalist association in order to prevent a fragmentation of the protest. The protest movement in Warsaw later consisted of three independent committees, splitting up their work in order to focus equally on the political protest, the economic boycott, and furnishing the material and financial help for incoming Jewish refugees on-site. Numerous journalists like Esriel Carlebach, Mark Turkow, Yosef Kruk, Barukh Shefner and Bernard Singer gave talks on their travels through Nazi Germany or political and literary lectures in Warsaw and other Polish towns to promote the protest. The close connection between the protest movement and the Warsaw daily newspapers meant that the journalists could easily meet with Jewish refugees in order to gather interviews or stories, which they could feature in their articles.

In June 1935, the protest movement ground to a halt due to severe interference by the Polish authorities, as the Warsaw police searched the rooms in the Centrala Związek Kupców w Polsce (Central Buyer’s Association in Poland) in the ulica Senatorska 22, which is where the central committee, which was responsible for organizing the boycott of German products, had its seat. While the Polish government initially supported the boycott movement, they changed their attitude to the opposite over time. This shift was mainly the result of the new and improved German-Polish relations, which manifested themselves in January 1934, when the Polish-German Non-Aggression declaration was signed.
**SUMMER 1935: THE WIND OF CHANGE**

Although the appearance and the rise of the National Democrats (Endecja) and other extreme rightwing groups in Poland as well as daily anti-Semitic discrimination and violence had hit the Jewish community of Poland since the early 1930s, it was after the death of Józef Piłsudski in 1935, when the political landscape in Poland changed once more drastically, as did the general situation of Polish Jewry. In addition to their already precarious economic status, the “toxic legacy” of the first half of the 1930s, made Polish Jews cope with a spreading and intensifying anti-Jewish economic boycott, multiple pogroms, and increasing anti-Semitic discrimination in public universities and administrations. In 1936 the journalist Yikhezkl Moyshe Nayman (1893–1956), who worked for the Haynt, wrote a guest contribution for an American Jewish journal about his serious concerns regarding a positive prospect for Jews in Poland and the permanent danger Jews had to face: “[t]he terror of the present situation cannot be exaggerated. All former descriptions—such as ‘discrimination’, ‘political disfranchisement’, ‘economic oppression’—are obsolete. It is war, active war. Every day bombs are thrown at synagogues, Jewish communal buildings, Jewish business establishments, and harmless individuals.”

In the memoirs of journalists or political leaders who survived the Shoah, they remembered in detail anti-Semitic attacks, which were directed against Jewish newspapers offices or individual journalists throughout the 1930s in Poland.

At the same time, the Jewish press had to deal with an intensifying censorship and repression through the Polish government, which affected their work on a daily basis. Sometimes Polish and German spies lingered around the Journalists’ Association and from time to time single articles or even whole newspapers would be confiscated. Usually, the censors tried to put pressure on the journalists beforehand in order to prevent critical articles. This was the case when Joseph Goebbels visited Warsaw in June 1934 as well as Herman Göring in January 1935. Pinkhas Shvarts, who worked for the Naye Folkstsaytung remembered, that the government confiscated during these days the edition of the “Folkstsaytung” two times. At this day [when Goebbels visited Warsaw, AK] the censor spoke for a long time into the phone of the editorial office, asking why one is “making him troubles” and why one is printing stuff, which is embarrassing for the government with special regard to his neighbor (Nazi Germany). Finally, the talk ended with one of the sharper forewarnings, which was directed to the address of the editors, stating that it could end with more than just
Moreover, journalists had to cope with the constant fear of losing their jobs (or finding one in the first place), as the number of the newspapers dropped dramatically. A document prepared by Warsaw’s Government Commissariat shows that the *Haynt* in November 1938 had a daily circulation of 34,900 newspapers compared to its peak of around 100,000 during the early 1920s. Other newspapers fell even more behind like the *Naye Folkstsaytung* with a number of 21,000 newspapers per day and *Der Moment* with a circulation of only 19,000. In trying to prevent bankruptcy some of the newspapers remodeled themselves and founded cooperatives. They also applied quite frequently for financial support from international Jewish organizations. In December 1937, the *Joint Distribution Committee* (JDC) gave the Journalists Association 5,000 Zlotys, the *Haynt* cooperative 30,000 Zlotys and provided funds to other newspapers.

A letter from the journalist Barukh Shefner (1896–1977) to his friend the popular writer Melekh Ravitsh, summarizes the situation in which most of the public intellectuals were trapped towards the end of the 1930s. Ravitsh had held the position of executive secretary of the Journalists association for over ten years before leaving Poland in 1934 and was replaced by Shefner. Nevertheless, Ravitsh kept his ties to Warsaw and often contributed to the *Naye Folkstsaytung* for which Shefner worked as an editor. On January 1, 1938 Shefner wrote to Ravitsh:

My dearest Ravitsh, (...) You probably already know about my happiness concerning my daughters. Both could not make themselves feel homely in Warsaw, which is why even I began to think about to part with Poland. But in the last minute Merushe was accepted by the Polytechnic and she considered herself lucky. Over there she is the only Jewish girl. She drinks the cup, but she is stubborn. It is the stubbornness of the youth: “No other than out of spite.” ... Now I have no right to leave and even if I maybe would already have the permit, they [the Bund; AK] would under no circumstances allow it and without the permission from the party, I will not “run away.” It is against my nature. And by the way, where to go? ... You already know Buenos Aires a little, do you know, how the possibilities to fit in for someone like me are looking over there?
It's not only about “Putcher,”56 I also occupy quite a position here in Warsaw.57

In Shefner’s letter, his inner conflict between leaving Poland for the sake of his family’s future and his willingness to fulfill his duty as a journalist and public figure of the Warsaw Jewish community became visible. Like Shefner, most intellectuals believed in their role as spokespeople and educators of the Jewish community, a role that became even more important over time.58

AUTUMN 1938: BETWEEN ACTIVISM, HOPE, AND DESPAIR

When in October 1938 Nazi Germany expelled thousands of Polish Jews from Germany and shortly after an uncountable number of Jewish shops, houses and synagogues were destroyed by the Nazis on the 9th and 10th of November 1938, a desperate situation had arisen. A secret report prepared by Warsaw’s Government Commissariat noted that the Jewish community in Warsaw was caught off guard, when the first train with expelled Jews from Germany reached the city.59 The report claimed, that “[t]he entire Jewish opinion in Warsaw was emotionally affected by the arrival of the first transport of Jewish refugees, who had been displaced by the Germans.” The first reactions were dominated by “an utter astonishment, because despite the incoming news about the deportation, no one suspected such a rapid arrival of a transport in Warsaw” itself.60 Yet, it soon became clear to Jewish intellectuals in Warsaw how deeply intertwined their fate was with that of Jews living in Germany. The journalist and writer Zusman Segalovitsh (1884–1949) remembered how he experienced the Polenaktion:

I remember those days when the Germans deported in a cruel way thousands of Jews to the Polish territory, to Zbąszyń. Under the bayonet, they pushed them at night over the Polish border. ( . . . ) During that time Jews were also beaten up in Warsaw. In the Ogród Saski [Saxson Garden; AK] hired thugs turned over strollers with children in it. When the mothers tried to defend their children, they spat on them. I understood then that there was a connection between Zbąszyń and the Ogród Saski.61

The connection between the brutal expulsion organized by the Nazis and anti-Semitic attacks in Warsaw that Segalovitsh felt is one reason why Jewish
intellectuals in Warsaw and other Polish cities reacted without hesitation and set up new aid committees for incoming refugees. On November 14, 1938, the president of the Warsaw lodge of the B’nai B’rith, Szymon Seidenman (1878–1948), informed its members, who were mostly intellectuals, representatives and businessmen, about the recent events. The protocol of the meeting stated:

Unfortunately, it looks like the news from there are true: The Jewish congregation in Berlin is closed, the Palestinian Office was destroyed, the certificates burned, the leaders of diverse social institutions are in prison, the majority of the Jewish shops have been destroyed, (. . .). This is the picture of German Jewry. And about those who were expelled: one part, around 6500 persons and more are situated in Zbąszyń under terrible conditions, without a roof over their head and without the right to leave. (. . .) A return to their homes is out of question.62

There is no clear information about where this detailed account came from, but the Warsaw lodge had stayed in close contact with members of lodges from Berlin and Breslau over the years and thereby remained well-informed.63 Just one to two days before the members of the B’nai B’rith in Warsaw gathered together to discuss the events of October and November 1938, minor information on the expulsions and the pogroms had appeared in the Warsaw Jewish press.64

The November pogroms came as a shock to the people working in Warsaw’s Jewish newspapers, but it was an expected one. Not the execution of the pogroms but rather the extent of the violence triggered feelings of fear and uncertainty.65 For several days the newspapers’ headlines were dedicated to the pogroms.66 But compared to the press coverage during the first months after Hitler had come to power in 1933, the acquisition of detailed knowledge on the execution and intensity of the pogroms had become even more difficult in 1938. Thus, the coverage of the pogroms was less extensive both in terms of the quantity of articles published and the quality of the information featured therein. Apart from just a few correspondents who were still living in Berlin and working for the Yiddish press in Poland, most of the Jewish correspondents had left the city long before 1938.67 In addition, communication with Jews living in Germany was often impossible, as most of them were even more unwilling to speak openly about their experiences than in 1933.68 Not only did the Yiddish newspapers lack the reliable sources within Nazi Germany, they also lacked the financial resources to cover trips abroad of their own journalists as well as the necessary visas.69 Before the German-Polish Non-Aggression
declaration sprang into action in 1934, journalists had a chance to find support in their travels to Germany through the Polish Foreign Office.\footnote{In 1938, however, support was replaced by widespread censorship. The censorship became most obvious in how the Polish government tried to ban all coverage of the Polenkaktion, which explains why the first detailed reports from Zbąszyń were not published before late November 1938.\footnote{Even though censorship practices depended on the decisions of the voivodships and could therefore differ, the reasons behind the suppression of news were rooted in the same motivation. Following the argument of Jerzy Tomaszewski, the government wanted to avoid being seen as weak by showing any sympathy for the victims.\footnote{But the simple fact that the Polish government tried everything possible in order to avoid the influx of Jewish refugees beforehand, surely played a role, too. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that in oppressing critical comments on how bad the Polish state treated the incoming Jewish refugees, the Polish government hoped to avoid international criticism. This argument is supported by a confidential document from the JDC dated November 29, 1938. The anonymous author explained that the Polish government in fact forced former Jewish members of the Sejm to send a memorandum to various international Jewish organizations stating that the “government had displayed humanitarian treatment to the Jews from Germany exiled to Poland—this despite the fact that over 5,000 are still held prisoners in Zbony [sic!] under the most pitiful conditions (. . .).”\footnote{However, only a few weeks later the Polish government changed their attitude and began to encourage newspapers to report extensively on the tragedy of the Polenkaktion. With this strategy they hoped to draw international attention to the situation of Jews in Poland and away from Germany, in order to put pressure on the international community to include the Jews of Poland into their immigration quotas for refugees.\footnote{But even after the press ban had been lifted, as it had proven to be ineffective anyway, information was still harder to get and less easy to verify. Thus, journalists relied more and more on information they received through official national and international newspapers or press agencies like the Jewish and the Polish Telegraphic Agencies. Equally important was the German illegal and émigré press. These publications were smuggled over the Polish border and sold openly at newspaper stands in Warsaw to the displeasure of the German Foreign Office.\footnote{During October and November 1938, the journalists would visit the Journalists’ Association more often than usual. Additionally, information from non-Jewish Polish colleagues became quite important. Zusman Segalovitch}}}}
remembered, that especially the staff of the Polish-language *Nasz Przegląd*, namely Nathan Szwalbe, Saul Wagman and Bernard Singer, often went to a cafeteria, where the non-Jewish Polish journalists used to gather. According to Segalovitsh, it was important to talk to these journalists because they had better networks. In December 1938, *Der Moment* and *Nasz Przegląd* printed an exclusive multi-piece feature from Polish journalist Włodziemierz Lencki, who in early December 1938 traveled to Berlin to cover the aftermath of the pogroms.

Not until the end of November, did they publish detailed political analyses about anti-Semitic excesses. The topics discussed most intensely were the hidden intentions behind the pogrom and debates about the meaning of the events for the Polish-Jewish community and Jews in general. Some journalists criticized also the notable absence of empathy in the Polish press. The overall reactions of Jewish journalists in Warsaw were fear, disbelief, despair but also hope at the same time. In a political column from January 1939 the political leader of the Bund and editor of the *Naye Folkstsaytung* Henryk Erlich argued, that “within the long list of years, which came to an end since the end of the [First; AK] World War, the year 1938—next to the year 1933—takes without any doubts the ‘most prestigious’ place: This relates to the general condition of the world and especially to Europe, to the conditions in Poland as well as to the conditions of the Jewish masses in Europe.”

Deprived of their usual journalistic methods and rights, stories about the pogroms declined and the Jewish press focused its attention on more local concerns: the Jewish refugees in Poland, especially in Zbąszyń. On November 4 a new aid committee for Jewish refugees had been set up in Warsaw and the well-known journalists and public leaders Mark Turkow (*Der Moment*), Moshe Kleinbaum (*Der Moment*), Samuel Wolkowicz (*Nasz Przegląd*) and Natan Szwalbe (*Nasz Przegląd*) were among the members. Yet again, Jewish journalists played a crucial role in helping the Warsaw central aid committee
by launching a “propaganda campaign to make Polish Jewry conscious of the
necessity of making contributions in favor of refugees” and a “publicity cam-
paign in the press by means of articles, news items and features all especially
written by competent journalists.”

In the course of the press campaign for
the refugees, Jewish newspapers from Warsaw began to collect money and
occasionally published protest notes from various Jewish organizations, lists of
donors as well as lists with things, which were still needed, protocols and news
from the various committees. Journalists also donated a sum for the refugees
by imposing a tax on their daily income to aid the persecuted.

At the end of November, Jewish journalists from Warsaw began to travel
to the make-shift camp in Zbąszyń. To go to the places where help was need-
ed was a common practice for the journalists. Mark Turkow explained, that the
Jewish journalists not only felt obligated to go there because of their profes-
sion. In general, he remembered, the Jewish public expected journalists to visit
places of terror and tragedy in order to encourage frightened Jews, who had
become victims of anti-Semitic violence or persecution.

In the refugee camp, journalists talked to Jewish refugees and recorded their stories.
Because expelled Jews from Germany were still arriving in Poland over the course of the
next year and because the refugees were in close contact with families and
friends still living in Germany, journalists managed to secure more reliable in-
formation on the pogroms. The famous Jewish historian Emanuel Ringelblum
from Warsaw, who organized the help in the refugee camp, encouraged refu-
gees to write down their experiences and called on his colleagues to conduct
interviews. As an historian and social worker, he was aware that the so-called
Polenaktion and the November pogroms were important issues.

In his mem-
oirs, Mendel Balberyszki, a journalist and colleague of Ringelblum, explained
that it was “from them,” the Jewish refugees, that they “learned of the anti-
Jewish edicts, of persecution, of humiliation and of the executions.”

CONCLUSION
The question whether or not journalism needs to be objective and, if so, how
this could be realized, has been discussed by journalists and researchers alike
for many decades. To this day, there remains a strong belief that journalism
needs to be objective, making the relation between the profession, the seeking
of truth, and the journalist’s own subjectivity a complex challenge.
As this article has shown, these standards did not apply to the Warsaw Jewish daily press of interwar Poland. On the contrary, objectivity was never their goal. Since the appearance of Warsaw’s first Jewish daily newspaper in Yiddish, the *Haynt*, its purpose was to influence the lives of Jewish readers and to engage openly in discussions of all aspects of Jewish life, thereby making the journalist part of a Jewish intellectual elite. Thus, the boundaries between journalism, activism, community leadership, and personal consternation were blurred for journalists, especially in times of crises. During the 1930s, the Jewish minority press was constantly observed, disciplined and censored by Polish and German authorities and faced constant threat of anti-Semitic violence and state-sanctioned discrimination. Consequently, journalists could not be passive observers of history, for they found themselves affected by it personally. Their Jewish readers eagerly hoped they would overcome their fears and help guide and support Jews, both morally and politically.

This was also the case, when the National Socialists rose to power in Germany in early 1933 and when Jews from Germany were first persecuted and later expelled in October and November 1938. While in the first half of the year 1933 the Polish government supported the anti-Nazi boycott and protest of the Jewish community in Poland, Jewish journalists from Warsaw could openly and intensively report on the beginning persecution of Jews and political opponents in Nazi Germany. Through their various formal and informal networks, like Jewish correspondents in Berlin, who were working for the Jewish press, they were extremely well informed. But as time was moving on and Poland moved closer to its Western neighbor, the Jewish press was more and more criminalized by the German as well as the Polish authorities. At the same time, the newspapers faced a deep economic crisis and observation, repression and censorship made their work in 1938 even harder, as they also lost a lot of money due to the censorship. While most of the Jewish correspondents were forced to leave Berlin by the end of 1933, communication with Jews from Germany became more difficult as well as traveling to Nazi Germany had become nearly impossible by the end of 1938. Thus, the journalists relied more and more on information they got through international press agencies, the émigré press and their Polish colleagues.

These turbulent, unprecedented and closely linked developments in Poland and Germany made the Jewish community in Poland restless and made reporting on the situation in Germany a top priority for the Jewish press. Under the pressure of repression and challenging working conditions, Jewish journalists from Warsaw and Berlin tried their best to cover news from
Germany relying on the help of formal and informal networks. They were unable and unwilling to remain neutral in the face of oppression, as it was they and their people who were the oppressed. Together with other Jews from the Polish-Jewish intelligentsia, journalists promoted and organized a coordinated protest and aid movement. As a result, they left their observation posts on the sidelines and became active participants of history.
Notes

1. The author of this article is currently a Claims Conference Saul Kagan Fellow in Advanced Holocaust Studies and is finishing her doctoral thesis at Freie Universität Berlin, which deals with individual and collective reactions of Polish-Jewish journalists, who were mainly working for the Yiddish press in Warsaw, during the beginning persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany in 1933 and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. This article is part of her research findings.

2. Between October 27–29, 1938 about sixteen thousand to eighteen thousand Jews from all over Germany were under the pretense of the Polish March laws deported to Poland. At least nine thousand were sent to the Polish border town of Zbąszyń. These laws allowed Germans to revoke the citizenship of Polish citizens who had lived abroad permanently for longer than five years. The expulsions continued until summer 1939. For further detailed information, see Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Auftakt zur Vernichtung. Die Verteibung polnischer Juden aus Deutschland im Jahre 1938*, Klio in Polen, vol. 9 (Osnabrück: fibre verlag, 2002); (Polish version: *Preludium Zagłady. Wygnanie Żydów Polskich z Niemiec w 1938 r.* [Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1998]).

3. Yad Vashem Archives (hereafter YVA), Press Agency of the SIG, *Die polnischen Juden im Niemandsland* (not dated), 2. All translations from German, Polish and Yiddish are made by the author of this article. The Yiddish transliteration follows the YIVO system.


5. While there is a vast literature on the November pogroms, the research on the *Polenaktion* is relatively clear and mostly directed to reconstructing the event itself.


9. For this article I worked mainly with articles from *Haynt, Naye Folkstsaytung, Der Moment* and *Nasz Przegląd*.


19. Archive of the National Library of Israel (henceforth ANLI), Arkhion Melekh Ravitsh, ARC. 4* 1540 01 101, Kleyne togbikhler, not dated.

20. For various business-related travels of Polish-Jewish journalists to Germany, see the communication between editors of *Der Moment* and the *Polski Związek Wydawców, Dzienników i Czasopism w Warszawie* (Polish Association of Editors, Newspapers and Magazines in Warsaw), Archiwum Akt Nowych (henceforth AAN), PZWDz. i Cz., syg. 64/116.


23. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts (henceforth PAAA), R 121606, Director of the German Parliament to the press department of the Foreign Office, February 5, 1929, enclosed list I and II regulating the press accreditation for the German parliament, not paginated.

24. Klinov joined the association in 1925 and Swet in 1926, see Archiv des Vereins der Ausländischen Presse zu Berlin e.V., DL: I, Medlemsmatrikler och föreningens Gästbok 1912–43, Membership lists for the years 1925 and 1926. Other long-time members were e.g., Daniel Tsharny, Dovid Eynhorn, Jakob Lestschinsky and Raphael Rein Abramovitsch.

25. PAAA, R 121441, Swet, Hermann. Letter to Dr. von Saucken (Reichspressestelle),
May 30, 1931, not paginated; attached is an article written by Swet, “A par sheah mit’n daytshen kantsler un oysern-minister,” Der Moment, May 17, 1931.


31. Mark Turkow, “In’m land fun kemfender lagern,” Der Moment, February 12, 1933, 4; Singer, W krajach.


35. See, for instance, the list on Berlin-based Eastern European Jewish and non-Jewish correspondents which circulated within the German Foreign Ministry in December 1932 and featured doubtful and anti-Semitic descriptions of the journalists; also see the protocol of the interrogation with Herman Swet, PAAA, R 121608 (Press Department, Meyer-Heydenhagen, alphabetical and national register of foreign correspondents, register of the 'Ostjournalisten,' December 28, 1932, 31–33) and R 121442 (Meyer-Heydenhagen, notes, talk with Herman Swet, April 5, 1933, not paginated). Yeshayahu Klinov himself fled to London and later went to Palestine, while Hermann Swet left Berlin for Paris.


38. “Vos hert zikh in Varshe?” *Haynt*, April 19, 1933, 7. The Polish name of the committee was Zjednoczony Narodowy Komitet Protestacyjny Żydostwa Polskiego przeciwko Przesładowaniu Żydów w Niemczech. The committee later moved to ulica Orla nr. 6. In addition to that, some journalists from diverse newspapers were responsible for editing the central boycott magazine *Nasza Obrona/Unzer Obvehr* (Our defense), which appeared between 1933 and 1934 (*Nasza Obrona. Pismo Poświęcone antyhitlerowskiej Akcji gospodarczej*, ed. Leo Finkelshtayn, vol. 1 [November 1933] and vol. 2 [February 1934] [Yiddish and Polish]). The editor in chief was the journalist and Yiddish socialist activist Leo Finkelshtayn. The journalists Mark Turkow, Shaul Y. Stupnitski, Appolinary Hartglas and Samuel Wolkowicz supported the magazine with articles.


40. Even though Assimilationists, Orthodox and Zionists became active in the movement, critics within the movement grew strong. Additionally, the Bund and with it the *Naye Folkstsaytung* called for a separated protest movement, even though they were aware of the fact, that their protest would be than regarded as part of the whole Jewish protest movement in Poland. For a more detailed description of the Bundist protest and its critics, see Henryk Erlich, “Der hayntike protest-tog,” *Naye Folkstsaytung*, March 28, 1933, 3; Tsentrales bundishes anti-Hitler-komitet in Varshe: *Arbeiter-klas in kampf kegn Hitler-Daytshland*, Warsaw, 1934.

41. E.g., Carlebach, “Lomir zikh dermenon,” 233; “Sytuacja Żydów w Niemczech,” *Nasz Przegląd*, April 24, 1933, 2–3; “Ayndrikn fun yidishn un arbeter-lebn in hitlerishn...


43. The Association was an amalgamation of Jewish merchants and businessmen in Poland. For more information, see Ignacy Schiper, *Dzieje handlu żydowskiego na ziemiach polskich* (Kraków: Związek Kupców, 1937).


45. Jerzy Tomaszewski, “Bojkot towarów niemieckich w Polsce w latach 1933–1935,” *Acta Oeconomica Pragensia* 15, no. 7 (2007): 449–50. Although, the Polish government supported the protest movement at first, it observed and hindered the Jewish protest from the first moment on, as various notes in the Jewish press proved. In an article of *Haynt* it was mentioned, that the Warsaw commissariat forbade rallies outside on the street, which is why all manifestations on March 27, 1933 had to take place inside; see Feraynigter natsionaler protest-komitet, “Morgen protest-tog fun poylishen yidentum,” *Haynt*, March 26, 1933, 1; “Fun tsuzamenfar fun poylishn yidntum,” *Naye Folksaytung*, April 25, 1933, 4. Additionally, the German consulate observed the Jewish protest movement, especially after the Non-Aggression-Declaration came into being. The declaration, which was meant to improve the relationship as well as the mutual perception of the two countries, regulated also the press coverage. This meant that both states could intervene if they were not satisfied with the representation of their country in the press. The German consulate did this frequently. They used articles in the Jewish press for evidence, trying to prove that the Polish side did not stick to the agreement and in order to silence the Jewish press; see: AAN, AMSZ, syg. 7139, Note on a talk with Dr. Schliep from the German Consulate in Warsaw, signed St. Włodarkiewicz, not dated (probably around spring 1935), 21–22. However, the historian Karina Pryt argued that only after the death of the state man Józef Piłsudski in June 1935 did Polish-German relations actually improve for a short period of time; see Karina Pryt, *Befohlene Freundschaft. Die deutsch-polnischen Kulturgeziehungen 1934–1939*, Einzelveröffentlichungen des DHI Warschau, ed. Eduard Mühle, vol. 22 (Osnabrück: fibre verlag, 2010), 129–30.


51. The state visit provoked a vivid and united press campaign from all Jewish daily newspapers in Warsaw with the exception of the Naye Folkstsaytung. When on June 13, 1934, Josef Goebbels visited Warsaw, all newspapers printed the same front page, featuring only three lines: “Down with the Nazi regime! Down with the racist propaganda! Shame on the anti-Semites!” Most of the papers were confiscated that day, but some editions circulated beforehand, see Moshe Prager, “Dos yudishe togblat (1929–1939),” in Fun noentn ovar, vol. 2, ed. Alveltlekhen yidishn kultur-kongres (New York, 1956), 522–23 and Cohen, Sefer, Sofer ve-Iton, 267. See also the list of confiscates between June 1934 and June 1935. Most of the confiscates were directly linked to the visits of Goebbels and Göring, AAN, Ambasada RP w Berlinie, syg. 2252, Foreign Ministry, political press department to the Polish embassy in Berlin, list of newspaper confiscates between June 1, 1934 and June 30, 1935, August 3, 1935, 33–42.


56. Putchero is a type of stew and considered as a lower or middle-class Argentinian dish. In this case, it is probably a playful way to talk about work and money.
59. Before the Polish government decided to lock down the refugees in Zbąszyń, an uncertain number of refugees passed the border, making their way into the country, see Tomaszewski, Auftakt, 203.
60. AAN, Komisariat Rządu na m st Warszawę syg. 297/VII-11, 33–34. The majority of Jews in Warsaw believed probably that the Jewish refugees would not enter the Polish metropolis as quickly and numerously as they did in October 1938. This attitude was perhaps nourished by their experiences from the years before. When in February 1933 the first Jewish refugees entered Poland it took a while before the first refugees arrived in Warsaw. According to a report given by Mark Turkow at a conference of delegates from fifteen local Jewish aid committees in Katowice in June 1933, around three thousand Jewish refugees had reached Poland since February 1933, among them 2,600 Jews with Polish citizenship. Until then, the committee in Warsaw had registered eighty persons. Although between 1933 and 1935 up to ten thousand Jews from Germany came to Poland, the situation was not comparable with the one which had arisen in October 1938. In the following years Jewish refugees also made their way to Poland, but the numbers were slightly lower. Furthermore, hundreds went illegally back to Germany, see AZIH, Żydowskie Stowarzyszenia Krakowskie, syg. 108/36, Komitet Pomocy Uchodźcom z Niemiec przy Gminie Wyznaniowej Żydowskiej w Krakowie 1933–35, protocol, conference of the delegates of Jewish aid committees for refugees from Germany, Katowice, June 4, 1933, 2; YVS, M.72/788, JDC, Condensed Report of Poland, signature illegible, April 1935, 25; YVS, M.72/819, Central Refugee Committee, Warsaw 1939, Report the Activity of the Refugees Committee (A. Hafftka), 1; “Pleytim fun Daytshland okupirt dos dzhoynt-biro,” Naye Folkstsaytung, December 14, 1936, 6; Weiss, Deutsche und polnische Juden, 140–49 and Anna Kargol, Zakon Synów Przymierza. Krakowska Loża "Solidarność" 1892–1938 (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza RYTM, 2013), 242–45.
62. AAN, Braterstwo—B’nei B’rith, Stowarzyszenie Humanitarne w Warszawie, syg. 674/4, protocol, closed meeting, members of the board, November 14, 1938, 248–49.
63. Sometimes Jewish intellectuals from Germany, Poland or other countries were invited to give lectures on the condition of German Jewry, anti-Semitism or other topics that were of interest to the members, see the protocols of the Warsaw B’nai B’rith lodge from the 1930s in the Archiwum Akt Nowych. The members of the B’nai B’rith were also among the first Polish Jews, who conducted interviews with


65. Polish Jews already got used to the horrible news coming in from Nazi Germany over the years, as several journalists like Esriel Carlebach (Lui Gothelf) or A. Zeytiker (probably a pen-name) mentioned in their articles, see Lui Gothelf [Carlebach, Esriel], “Naye 5600 krobnes fun Hitler’n,” *Haynt*, May 16, 1933, 3; A. Zeytiker, “5 yidn in grenets-vald . . . der shmues beym redaktsie-tishl,” *Naye Folksaytung*, August 12, 1939, 5.


67. At least two journalists worked until 1939 for the Yiddish press in Warsaw: Ytsakh-Mayer Gliksman worked, among other newspapers, for *Haynt* and Josef Lanczer wrote, for instance, for *Di Tsayt* (Vilna). In September 1942 Gliksman and his wife were deported to Theresienstadt, where he perished. After a short time in prison, Josef Lanczer managed to fly to Warsaw in 1939. From there he made his way to Palestine. The JTA had at least two correspondents in Berlin until 1937, namely Arno Herzberg and Boris Smolar, see Arno Herzberg, “The Jewish Press under the Nazi Regime—Its Mission, Suppression and Defiance—A Memoir,” *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 36, no. 1 (1991): 387; Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA), “Germany Defers Smolar’s Deportation until Thursday,” March 15, 1937, 1; Ytschek-Meyer Gliksman, “Vi azoy leben ist di poylishe yidn in Daytshland?” *Haynt*, June 27, 1939, 3.


69. The only travelogue for the year 1938 I could find so far is from August 1938 and was written by the Bundist Jacob Pat for *Naye Folksaytung*. On his way back from the United States to Poland he had a short layover in Berlin, Germany, see Yakov Pat, “A par teg in Berlin,” *Naye Folksaytung*, August 19, 1938, 5. After August 1938 I have not yet found further information on travels by Polish Jews through Germany. Emanuel Ringelblum remembered in his diaries, that the German embassy in Warsaw denied the Polish delegation transit visas through Germany, in order to attend the Zionist Congress in Geneva in August 1939. The delegation had then to travel via Hungary, Yugoslavia and Italy to Switzerland. Such refusals probably affected other Jewish travelers from Poland earlier than 1939, see Reinharz and Shavit, *The Road to September 1939*, 234. In addition, the Berlin JTA correspondent
Arno Herzberg remembered, how difficult it was to smuggle news out of Germany, see Herzberg, “The Jewish Press,” 383–88.

70. This was the case with Mark Turkow (Der Moment) in February 1933, when he traveled to Germany to cover the political overthrow. The press department of the Polish Foreign Office supported him financially by giving him reduced tickets for the train and providing him with visas and contacts in Berlin, see AAN, Ambasada RP w Berlinie, syg. 2392, German embassy in Warsaw to Polish embassy in Berlin regarding Mark Turkow’s journey to Berlin, February 14, 1933, 11.

71. The Polish authorities confiscated articles on the “Polenaktion” and the pogroms likewise. On November 8, 1938 they confiscated for example the Naye Folkstsaytung (nr. 334b) due to an article with the title “How the National Socialists brought Jews with Polish Citizenship to the Border.” On November 22 they again confiscated the Naye Folkstsaytung and the Nowy Dziennik, due to “articles on the pogroms in Germany,” see AAN, MSW, syg. 968, Wydział Narodowościowym, Komunikaty dzienne, 1938, Department of nationalities, Department for Jewish affairs, press reports from November 9, 15 and 22, 1938, Warsaw, 80, 140. Despite censorship, Jewish newspapers found ways to cover the news. Instead of writing reports on the Polenaktion itself, they reported on the activities of the newly founded aid committees, see “Algemeyner retungs-komitet tsu helfen di pleytim fun Daytsland,” Haynt, November 6, 1938, 7. Only in mid-November, did the first detailed reports appear. The Nasz Przegląd even apologized to their readers for their late reaction due to “reasons beyond our control.” This statement most obviously pointed to the censorship, see “Jak odbyło się wysiedlenie Żydów polskich z Niemiec,” Nasz Przegląd, November 20, 1938, 9.

72. Tomaszewski, Auftakt, 157, 199.

73. YVA, M.72/793, JDC, Administration, General, 1938, November 29, 1938, Situation of the Jews in Poland, not paginated.

74. Tomaszewski, Auftakt, 156–57.

75. PAAA, R 122816, von Moltke, Hans-Adolf, German Embassy Warsaw to the German Foreign Office regarding the free distribution of the emigre press in Warsaw, February 18, 1938, not paginated.

76. Segalovitsh, Tłomatske 13, 221.

77. Vlodzimierzsh Lentski, “A bezukh in hayntigen Berlin,” Der Moment, December 2, 1938, 4; Lencki, “Sklepa,” 7. In Der Moment, Lentski was introduced as a “well-known Polish journalist, who is currently visiting Nazi Germany” and it was said that he would publish several articles exclusively for the newspaper. Unfortunately, I could not find any more information on him.

82. For a more detailed description on how Jewish newspapers in Poland, namely the Nasz Przegląd, Hayntige Nayes, Unzer Ekspres and Republika, reacted to the November pogroms see also Loose, “Reaktionen,” and Kosmala, “Pressereaktionen in Polen,” 1041–45.
84. YVA, M.72/819, 13.
85. According to information provided by the Polish Ministry of Interior, Nasz Przegląd collected 65.217 złotys, Unzer Ekspres 325, Naye Folkstsaytung 5.350 and Haynt 3.837 złotys until November 13, 1938, see AAN, MSW, syg. 968, 127.
87. YVA, P.13/120, Press Agency of the SIG, Die polnischen Juden im Niemandsland, not dated, 2. The Bund organized again its own committee. However, the various committees worked side by side in the refugee camp in Zbąszyń.
88. There was at least one organized trip to Zbąszyń for several reporters of various Jewish and non-Jewish Polish socialist and democratic dailies. It was organized through the Bundist Arbeter-komitet tsu helfn di aroysgeshikte, see “Tsvishn di aroysgeshikte yidn fun Daytshland,” Naye Folkstsaytung, November 20, 1938, 3.
89. Turkow “Between,” 84.
94. Turkow “Between,” 84.
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