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978-1-107-01131-1 - The Jewish Press and the Holocaust, 1939–1945: Palestine, Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union

Yosef Gorny

Excerpt

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## Introduction

### *The Transnational Community*

*Mir zaynen nit kayn stade eynzame geschlogene yekhidim,  
Mir zaynen a kibuts, a folk.*

[We're not a herd of isolated and battered individuals – we're a collective, we're a people.]

*Idisher Kemfer*, June 24, 1942

Scholars who undertake to describe and analyze the Jewish Holocaust using historical methodology have been doing so – to this day – on the basis of a diverse spectrum of sources: copious state and institutional archives; personal memoirs of victims and their executioners; literary works; and the daily press, foremost the international one.

This study discusses how the Jews' plight in the Nazi-occupied countries during World War II (1939–1945) was reflected in the Jewish press in Palestine, the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. What I mean by “reflect” is the information that these newspapers presented in its various forms and the awareness that the information generated. It was this awareness that shaped the stances that this press took on what was happening in continental Europe as the Jewish society there was being destroyed. This awareness also influenced the way overt Jewish public action for the rescue of European Jewry was assessed in state diplomatic echelons and at the grassroots political level – for example, in protest demonstrations and rallies – and at the level of public morality, especially when it came to direct assistance for those interned in ghettos in Eastern Europe and refugees who had managed to escape from the occupied countries.

As for the term “transnational community,” see: Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Yitzhak Sternberg, “Debating Transnationalism”; Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, “New Transnational Communities and Networks: Globalization Changes in Civilizational Frameworks,” in *Transnationalism: Diasporas and the Advent of a New (Dis)order*, edited by Eliezer Ben-Rafael and Yitzhak Sternberg (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009), pp. 1–25, 29–45.

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This study, the first on the topic, uses a comparative method to investigate concurrently the stance of the relevant newspapers in these four countries. This method distinguishes it from other studies on the Jewish press during that era, which focused separately on each of the countries in question: Palestine, the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in contrast to previous research efforts, we concern ourselves with the Jewish press in these four countries, written in three languages: Hebrew, Yiddish, and English. The most important trove from our standpoint is the American and British Yiddish-language press, which has not yet been researched thoroughly and systematically as a source for understanding the trends of thought in Jewish society during the relevant years.

Additionally and chiefly, our study discusses the comprehensive Jewish public discourse during the years of disaster that changed Jewish history. Among the Jews, far-flung across the free world, this discourse unleashed communal transnational ethnic feelings and collective existential angst. This concern was expressed in the four Jewish communities that we examine, thousands of kilometers from each other and set in different cultural surroundings and political conditions: British Jewry, firmly rooted in British culture; the large Jewish immigrant society in the United States, still linked to the culture of East European Jewry; the Yishuv (the Hebrew and Zionist Jewish community in Palestine), and Soviet Jewry, transformed by the war. Several factors explain this phenomenon. The first is linguistic. Yiddish and Hebrew were unique to this collective and played a premier role in shaping the modern Jewish national consciousness as a community in accordance with three worldviews: Zionist, Bundist, and Yiddishist. The second is the close causal relationship between the upsurge of Jewish distress in Europe and the reinforcement of the shared national awareness of the unity of fate of *klal Yisrael*, the “Jewish commonwealth,” a relationship that transcended the spiritual and ideological disagreements and rifts that existed among members of this *klal*. The third factor was the sense of shared fate among people who were not totally accepted in their countries of residence. I refer here to the antisemitic trends of thought in the United States and the United Kingdom during the war years,<sup>2</sup> the political hostility of the British Mandate regime toward the Yishuv,

<sup>1</sup> See Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933–1945* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), p. 278; Robert W. Ross, *So It Was True: The American Protestant Press and the Nazi Persecution of the Jews* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980, and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 259; Laurel Leff, “When the Facts Didn’t Speak for Themselves: The Holocaust in the *New York Times*, 1939–1945,” in Robert Moses Shapiro (ed.), *Why Didn’t the Press Shout? American and International Journalism during the Holocaust* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 2003), 51–77; Max Frenkel, “Turning Away from the Holocaust,” *ibid.*; Marvin Kalb, “Journalism and the Holocaust,” *ibid.*; Colin Shindler, “The ‘Thunderer’ and the Coming of the Shoah, 1933–1942,” *ibid.*; Dina Porat and Mordechai Naor (eds.), *Ha-itonut ha-yehudit be-Eretz Yisrael nokhab ha-sho’ah 1939–1945*, [The Jewish Press in Eretz Israel and the Holocaust, 1939–1945] (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2002, in Hebrew). Laurel Leff, *Buried by The Times: The Holocaust and America’s Most Important Newspaper* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 10 in this volume.

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and the Soviet Union's nonrecognition of Jewry as an equally entitled national minority among the diverse national movements in the USSR. Fourth, one must not forget that many correspondents and editors of these newspapers in the four countries that had such papers were personally acquainted with each other during their years of public activism in Jewish society.

My proposition about the existence of the "transnational community" leads to the quest for commonalities in the portrait of this multilingual and multicultural press.

The first commonality we find is that this press was foremost a vehicle for the dissemination of ideologies; its political expression, typical of western newspapers in democracies, was of secondary importance. Examining this premise country by country, one may say that in Palestine, *Ha'aretz*, with a daily circulation of around 11,000, expressed a liberal general Zionist approach; *Davar* (circulation 15,000) carried the message of Socialist Zionism; *Haboqer* (circulation 5,000) belonged to the right wing of the General Zionists stream; *Hatzofe* spread the messages of National Religious Zionism; and *Hamashqif* represented the thinking of the Revisionist Movement. In all, their circulation came to around 40,000.<sup>3</sup> In the United States, we find five national-circulation newspapers in Yiddish. The first, the largest and oldest, was the well-known *Forverts*, which adhered closely to the Jewish trade-union line. Its circulation was 121,000 on weekdays and 147,000 on weekends. The second, *Der Tog*, exhibited a liberal general Zionist persuasion and was circulated in 55,000–57,000 copies. The third, *Der Morgen Dzhurnal*, belonged to the Religious-Zionist Mizrahi Movement; its circulation was 54,000–56,000.<sup>4</sup> The fourth, *Morgn-Frayhayt*, organ of the Jewish section of the American Communist Party, was circulated in around 12,000 copies.<sup>5</sup> By including two weekly journals of the Po'alei Tziyon party – the Yiddish-language *Idisher Kemfer* and the English-language *Jewish Frontier* – we bring the total circulation to around 300,000. The English-language weeklies that were published by various Jewish institutions and the local press in major Jewish centers, such as Chicago, should also be added.

In Great Britain, the principal English-language Jewish newspaper was the explicitly Zionist *Jewish Chronicle*. The Revisionist Movement had its own English-language journal, *The Jewish Standard*. In Yiddish, two papers appeared: *Di Tsayt*, Zionist and associated with the Zionist Labor Movement, and the Orthodox Agudath Israel weekly, *Di Vokhntsaytung*.<sup>6</sup>

Notwithstanding the diverse ideological complexion of these newspapers, when it came to defending the Jews' civil political status in these countries and cultivating and developing the Jewish national culture in both of its

<sup>3</sup> Source of data: Mordechai Naor and Dina Porat (eds.), *The Jewish Press in Eretz Israel and the Holocaust, 1939–1945*, in Hebrew (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> According to official data of an independent office, published in *Forverts* on October 21, 1944.

<sup>5</sup> Figure reported by the Jewish section of the Party.

<sup>6</sup> Data on the circulation of these publications are not available.

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languages – Yiddish and Hebrew – they were united. In the political field, the critical civic stance of *The Jewish Chronicle* toward the policies of the Palestine Mandatory Government, particularly during the war years, when Britain was embroiled in an existential struggle against Nazi Germany, was especially noteworthy.

The American Jewish press expressed a vigorous political stance that it accompanied with a patriotic tenor of appreciation and gratitude for the civil equality that the American Jewish immigrants enjoyed. In Palestine, in turn, the Hebrew-language press fought for the political rights that the country's Jewish inhabitants were owed under the League of Nations mandate to Britain. Importantly, there was nothing novel about insisting on Jews' civil rights in the interwar period; the Jewish press in Poland championed this cause during those years. However, the situation was different in the case at hand: The two large democracies, Britain and the United States, had gone to war against the Nazis, a circumstance pregnant with implications for limiting criticism of a democratic regime that was fighting for its life. The press' main cause in this respect was uninterrupted and vigorous protest against antisemitic manifestations in both countries, especially in the United States, where a diversely complexioned antisemitic movement developed precisely during the war years.<sup>7</sup> In Great Britain, the press spiritedly censured the antisemitic manifestations that came to light in the Polish army units that were stationed on British soil under British Army auspices. Superseding all of these was the main allegation against the democracies concerning the absence of a worthy effort to rescue Jews. We return to this matter later in the book.

The second commonality, a very important one from the standpoint of the existence of a “transnational community,” was the Jewish press' self-awareness of its national mission in the cultural and emotional senses. It was a conceptual state of mind in which, consciously and inadvertently, Dubnowism and Zionism blended into a single national sentiment. The best evidence of this way of expressing national togetherness surfaced in the Communist journal *Morgn-Frayhayt*, which demonstrated its Jewish national identity consistently and vigorously from the time Nazi Germany invaded the USSR. It was argued at the time – and may still be argued – that this was done in the service of Soviet interests and at Soviet behest. This is only partly correct. I discuss this matter later in the book on the basis of the vacillations of the paper's editors on the Jewish national question even before the war, when Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany concluded their treaty, and the excitement that they evinced when they beheld the Red Army's heroic war against Hitler's armies. Both of these are highly significant for our understanding of the emotional charge that underlies the transnational-community concept.

The same holds true at the opposite extreme, the Zionist Hebrew-language press. These publications ostensibly toed a “Palestinocentric” ideological line, which would seem to clash with the pan-national principle of *klal Yisrael*. This

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 10 in this volume.

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press, however, although written in a language understood by only a minority of the Jews, had the goal – from its own perspective – of shaping the future of the entire Jewish people. From this standpoint, “Palestinocentrism” should be the foundation of *klal Yisrael*. Concurrently, the American and British Jewish press, especially in its Yiddish-language opuses, also embraced the Yishuv as the place where the Jews could fulfill their national aspirations by their own strength, given the utter inability of the Jews in the free countries to prevail on their governments to take energetic rescue action.

These traits were also important among the non-Hebrew newspapers. In 1945, before the war ended, the American Jewish press marked in symbolic ways the seventy-fifth anniversary of the debut of the first Yiddish-language newspaper in the United States.<sup>8</sup> *Forverts* devoted a special editorial to the occasion, written in the spirit of the historical editor, Abraham Cahan, if not by him personally. Relating to the Yiddish-language press, the product of the great society of East European Jewish immigrants, the editorialist stressed the contribution of the press to the modernization process that this society had undergone, easing the immigrants’ adjustment to the new society. The press helped spread progressive ideas in Jewish society; its Socialist and Anarchist organs played an important role in the establishment of the Jewish trade unions; and it was the first to disseminate Yiddish-language Jewish literature. Here lay its singularity relative to the general press, which set aside no room for works of literature.

Having addressed the social and ethno-cultural contribution of this press, the editorialist went on to discuss its national role. This role was manifested primarily in its contribution to the transformation of an inchoate mass of immigrants, a cluster of “human dust” (*tsushtoybter idisher emigrantn mase*), into a public imbued with national political consciousness from which the Jewish national movement (*der entviklung fun der idisher natsyonaler bavegung*) – in its American ethnic form, of course – evolved. Furthermore, the editorial continued, this press had helped strengthen relations between American Jews and their counterparts elsewhere, foremost in Europe. In this capacity it even earned recognition from leaders of the American Jewish elite that did not trace its roots to Eastern Europe and Yiddish culture, such as Louis Marshall.

The editorial ended by expressing hope, accompanied by doubt, that this press would continue to serve the Jewish public and nurture its culture for many years to come, although there was no guarantee that its existence would be assured forever.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, fifty years later, doubt triumphed over hope; the circulation of the last of the historical Yiddish-language papers, *Forverts*, plummeted to one-tenth of what it had been at the jubilee. Meanwhile, however, *Der Morgen Dzhurnal* expressed the same spirit of satisfaction and hope at the time.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The debut took place in 1870; in its aftermath, several additional papers made their first appearance in the same decade. See *Encyclopedia Judaica*, s.v., “Press.”

<sup>9</sup> *Forverts*, March 4, 1945.

<sup>10</sup> *Der Morgen Dzhurnal*, April 4, 1945.

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Importantly, the emphasis that this press placed on its contribution to the consolidation of the American Jewish national cultural consciousness corresponded to the teachings of the liberal philosopher Horace Kallen (1882–1974), who advocated a multicultural society as opposed to the melting-pot theory. In the opinion of the liberal Zionist newspaper *Der Tog*, the American Jewish press had done much to transform the melting pot from a *shmalts top* to a *simfonye Amerikanizm* (an American symphony), in which each instrument spoke in its singular timbre but contributed collectively to the fine American orchestra.<sup>11</sup> The American Communist newspaper, which beyond the political goals of the Soviet Union spoke the language of Jewish national sentiment, also wrote in this vein.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Kallen and the Jewish press preceded today's dominant multicultural-society ethos by fifty years.

Let us pause to consider the overarching question of the relationship between the “human dust” and “American symphony” concepts and the transnational-community framework that I constructed earlier. I would not be wrong, it seems, if I said that according to the outlook of the Yiddishist press, the “American symphony” and “human dust” concepts are mutually exclusive because “symphony” symbolizes the integration of the Jewish collective into American society. Within this seeming dichotomy, the “human dust” concept became a critical component of the transnational-community sentiment at what I define as the level of psychology and idea. The various movements used the pejorative essence of this concept to create a positive alternative to it. Thus, the American Yiddishists embraced the “American symphony,” the East European Bundists adhered (until the Holocaust) to the idea of the fighting Jewish proletarian class, and the Zionist Labor Movement cultivated the “working nation” ethos. All shared the ethos of “negating the Diaspora”<sup>13</sup> – of which “human dust” was one of the preeminent manifestations – whether they preached the abandonment of the Diaspora or elected to stay there.

This press gave the “psycho-ideaic” fundamental of the transnational community emphatic expression in its admiring regard for manifestations of heroism among Jewish soldiers in the Allied armies that fought the Nazis. *The Jewish Chronicle* of the United Kingdom, which was usually even-handed and restrained in tenor, outdid all the other papers in this respect. From almost the very beginning of the war, the *Chronicle* ran weekly reports about the outstanding qualities of Jewish soldiers in all Allied armies, accompanied with inductees' photos. The paper recounted the valor of Jewish soldiers in the Polish Army; a Jewish officer who crossed the German frontier at the head of a French unit; a Jewish soldier who pulled out of the English Channel a German airman whose plane had been downed; a Jewish family that had sent six sons

<sup>11</sup> *Der Tog*, Feb. 15, 1942 (article marking the 10,000th edition of the paper).

<sup>12</sup> *Morgn-Frayhayt*, April 2, 1945.

<sup>13</sup> In this matter, see the concluding chapter of my book, *Converging Alternatives: The Bund and the Zionist Labor Movement, 1897–1985* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006).

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to the British Army; thousands of Jewish soldiers in the British expeditionary force in France, and so forth.<sup>14</sup>

The main American Jewish dailies outdid themselves on this topic. In 1942–1944, they editorialized repeatedly on the heroism of Jewish soldiers in the American Army. The hero of 1942 was the Jewish airman Meyer Levin, who had been downed in a dogfight with the Japanese over the Pacific Ocean. The Communist newspaper *Morgn-Frayhayt* defined what happened to Levin as the Jewish answer to Pearl Harbor, no less, likening it to the Japanese Air Force' surprise attack that destroyed most of the American fleet<sup>15</sup> and regarding Meyer Levin as a successor to the patriotic tradition of Hayim Salomon, who played a crucial role in the American War of Independence. The Zionist newspaper *Der Tog* stood out in particular, proposing in two editorials that a monument be erected to keep the hero's memory alive.<sup>16</sup>

*Forverts* not only joined this bandwagon, publishing a rhymed paean to Jewish heroism, but also added to the cause by lauding another Jewish hero, one Maurice Levy, of Chicago, stressing that New York and Chicago now had Jewish heroes of their own. The main thing from *Forverts*' standpoint, however, was not parochial pride but the special condition of the Jewish people. According to *Forverts*, every people is proud of its heroes, but pride among the Jews is special for a profound psychological reason: The Jews are a people of martyrs (*a martirer-folk*), subject to the derision and contempt of generations of antisemites of various ilk, who disparage its contribution to the society in which it lives. Now, however, given the actions of these two men, even the greatest of antisemites would not dare belittle the Jews' heroism.<sup>17</sup>

About a year later, *Forverts* ran a general article about "the heroism of Jewish soldiers in the American Army,"<sup>18</sup> proposing to draw up a list of Jewish soldiers who had been decorated for heroism. The idea was to preempt the antisemitic propaganda that would surely erupt powerfully after the war in an attempt to reinflate the canard-balloon about Jews' being cowards ("*az di idn zenen shrekediker*") who eschew personal heroism on the battlefield.

It is important to stress that this national patriotic style was no different from the rhetoric in the Soviet Jewish weekly *Aynikayt* ("Unity"), which made its debut in 1942 under the auspices of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. *Aynikayt*, like the others, ran weekly heroism stories about Jewish soldiers in the Red Army. It published an article by the author Ilya Ehrenburg, "This Is How Jews Fight" (*Ot azoy shlogenzikh idn*),<sup>19</sup> and also, as a case in point, an article about Jewish generals in the Soviet armored corps (*Idn generalin fun tankn militer*).<sup>20</sup> It even saluted the valor of Jewish soldiers in the U.S. Army

<sup>14</sup> *The Jewish Chronicle*, Sept. 8, 1939; March 15, 1940; May 5, 1940; Sept. 27, 1940.

<sup>15</sup> "Der Idisher Entfer oyf Poyrl Harbor," *Morgn-Frayhayt*, Dec. 12, 1942.

<sup>16</sup> *Der Tog*, Feb. 19 and April 20, 1943.

<sup>17</sup> *Forverts*, Oct. 2, 1942.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, July 19, 1943.

<sup>19</sup> *Aynikayt*, Nov. 7, 1942.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, June 22, 1944.

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in a comprehensive article.<sup>21</sup> These pieces, written in a special passionate style, gave evidence of a phenomenon that transcended the interests of Soviet propaganda: the resurrection of the Jewish national pride that the Communist regime had quashed.

A prodigious player in this context was the poet Nathan Alterman in the newspaper *Davar*. As the war wound down in 1945, the Soviet press cited the Jewish general Khasid, the Artillery Corps commander who had led his soldiers from the Don to the Berlin front. In his poem “General Khasid,” Alterman portrayed the officer as a mystic revelation of sorts, a scion of his pious [Hebrew: *hasid*] forebears who congratulate him from Heaven. “[...] From the wastelands of the Don // his artillery rolled, // and the High Command cited him for praise // down there // and up there too.”

Given these manifestations of admiration for Jewish heroism in the anti-Nazi Allied armies, one would expect to find especially prominent and unequivocal coverage of the eruption of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. The actual coverage, however, was varied and ranged in tone from restrained to exuberant.

First, it is noteworthy that no Jewish newspaper devoted full-width front-page headlines to the uprising, even though they invested such headlines in bitter and – especially – good tidings from the war fronts as well as tragic reports about mass murder of Jews in the occupied countries. Second, some newspapers did not see fit to give the uprising an immediate response in their editorials, fearing that the report was a false rumor that the Germans had circulated to justify their acts of extermination to the world.<sup>22</sup>

This restraint stood out particularly in the UK Jewish press. The mainstream Jewish paper in Britain, the *Chronicle*, contented itself with two front-page articles headlined “Warsaw Ghetto Battle: Jews Went Down Fighting” and “Warsaw: Last Heroic Stand,”<sup>23</sup> and wrote no editorial on the topic. The Revisionist newspaper did not present a comprehensive article about the uprising until it discovered, three years later, the role the Beitar youth movement had played in it. The Yiddish-language Zionist newspaper also responded at a lag. About a year after the events, the editor of the paper, Morris Myer, an intellectual of fame and stature in Jewish public circles, wrote an appreciation of the uprising. Most of it was devoted to recounting the feat, including the factors that led to the uprising and how it unfolded. At the end of the article, the editor concluded that the ghetto uprising had not been of some people who had been interned there but rather of all members of the surviving rump population within the ghetto walls, who had embarked on their final struggle on behalf of their personal and national dignity.<sup>24</sup> Exceptionally, the *Agudath Israel* newspaper responded to the uprising with a lead article titled “Don’t

<sup>21</sup> Y.A. Rontch, “Heldishkayt fun amerikaner idishe soldatn,” *Morgn-Frayhayt*, April 23 and May 24, 1943.

<sup>22</sup> *Forverts*, April 20, 1944. See also *Forverts*, April 19, 1944, and *Morgn-Frayhayt*, April 23 and May 24, 1941.

<sup>23</sup> *The Jewish Chronicle*, May 7 and May 28, 1943.

<sup>24</sup> Morris Myer, “Geto oysfstand,” *Di Tsayt*, April 19, 1944.



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Be Silent” (*Nisht shvaygn*). Even though it was faith and not force that would lead the Jews to deliverance, the writer said, there are moments in history when struggle and warfare must not be avoided.<sup>25</sup> Nor was this merely a reaction to the moment at hand. Back at the beginning of the war, this paper ran an editorial urging the Jews not to evade military induction for reason of conscience. Even if some of the British declared such a stance, the Jews, the paper warned, have a moral duty to mobilize for war against their greatest nemesis, the enemy who was bent on annihilating the Jewish people.<sup>26</sup>

In any case, if we wish to emphasize the subdued nature of the response of the Jewish press in Britain, we need only note that the *Struma* disaster, the sinking of a clandestine-immigrants’ vessel en route to Palestine in which 750 people perished, and the suicide of the Bund delegate to the Polish Government-in-Exile, Szmul (Artur) Zygielbojm, in London, received more space and more prominent space than the Warsaw ghetto uprising. The reason may lie in the tragic immediacy of these two events, especially Zygielbojm’s suicide, which the press in the United States and Palestine also covered prominently – possibly because Zygielbojm’s action was the most anguished protest to date against the free world’s silence and inaction amid the ongoing murder of the Jewish people. The entire Jewish press shared this feeling, although it did not express it publicly. This is another issue that I take up at greater length below.

The U.S. Jewish press was less restrained in expressing emotions than its British counterpart. The Communist newspaper led the cry of anguish in the Soviet Yiddishist style – “It’s our blood that’s crying out” (*Es ruft unzer blut*), “It’s our people that’s calling out” (*Es ruft unzer folk*) – and made a point of noting that its urgings on this topic, namely demanding that the Allies open a second front in Europe to expedite the salvation of the free world and the Jews, were also in the American interest.<sup>27</sup> *Der Tog*, the Zionist newspaper, announced proudly that the Jews of Warsaw had engaged their murderers in combat.<sup>28</sup> Concurrently, *Der Morgen Dzhurnal* spoke of the death of martyrs.<sup>29</sup> *Forverts* was more subdued in terms of its headline but stressed that the fate of the Jews of Warsaw was emblematic of the Jewish people’s isolation in its most tragic hour ever.<sup>30</sup>

Beyond the plea for rescue that the headlines of all the editorials voiced implicitly, the writings stressed repeatedly that the rebels of Warsaw had fallen in sanctification of the Jewish people’s dignity and the moral value of all humankind. Therefore, the fallen were depicted both as holy martyrs and as war heroes. An editorial in *Forverts* marking the first anniversary of the beginning of the uprising, titled “The Jewish Heroes and Martyrs in Poland,”

<sup>25</sup> *Di Vokhntsaytung*, May 7, 1943.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, Dec. 1, 1940.

<sup>27</sup> “Ratevets unz,” *Morgn-Frayhayt*, April 23, 1943.

<sup>28</sup> *Der Tog*, April 24, 1943.

<sup>29</sup> *Morgen Dzhurnal*, April 23 and May 24, 1943.

<sup>30</sup> *Forverts*, May 13, 1943.

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represented this trend of thought. This memorial occasion, the editorialist stated, should be not only a day of mourning over the heroes' demise but also a day of national exaltation (*natsionaler derhoybung*) in response to the ghetto fighters' display of heroism.<sup>31</sup>

The soothing discourse of bereavement was culminated by an editorial in the Po'alei Tziyon weekly *Der Idisher Kemfer*, evidently written by the editor, Chaim Greenberg, one of American Jewry's important intellectuals.

We do not know how our brothers and sisters fell in the streets of Warsaw. We do not know about the last days of this large Jewish collective. We do not know the last thoughts and words of the ghetto defenders in their final hours. But we know that in comparison with this heroism of the despairing besieged, and in comparison with the lives and suffering of the weak and the defenseless, all the wars, all the victories, and all the goals and hopes with and for which we live, are paled and dwarfed.<sup>32</sup>

The Palestine press responded to the uprising in three discernible ways. The first may be defined as pronouncedly Palestinocentric; it was expressed, contrarily enough, by *Ha'aretz*, the least activist of the Hebrew-language papers. Its editorial on the topic carried a headline that speaks for itself, rooted in the Second 'Aliya Jewish self-defense organization Hashomer, the spirit of which pulsed in the halutzic (Zionist pioneering) youth movements and in Beitar: "Blood and Fire – Remarks on the Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto."<sup>33</sup>

Here is what it said: "The ghetto is being destroyed [...]. We have to provide assistance to what remains of European Jewry, to mobilize the world, and to train ourselves so that the [Jewish] people's future may be built not in new ghettos but in the homeland. This is the role that history has imposed on us."

The National Religious *Hatzofe* responded as the liberal *Ha'aretz* did. As for the Mizrahi and Ha-po'el ha-Mizrahi parties, however, there was a difference between the public stance of the party leaders and the editors of *Hatzofe*, who lauded the rebels' valiant act,<sup>34</sup> and things that were not stated publicly because they implied disapproval of the uprising as a transgression of traditional Jewish religious values.<sup>35</sup>

*Davar* mirrored the attitude of *Hatzofe* and *Ha'aretz* toward the uprising, of course, but in a less Palestinocentric tone. In an editorial that was certainly written by Berl Katznelson himself and definitely reflected his spirit, *Davar*

<sup>31</sup> *Forverts*, April 19 and April 20, 1944.

<sup>32</sup> "Likhter vern Oysgelosht," *Der Idisher Kemfer*, June 11, 1943.

<sup>33</sup> *Ha'aretz*, May 4, 1943.

<sup>34</sup> Mordechai Lipson (the paper's editor), "Kol anot halushah mi-tokh anot gevurah" [Heroic Response Engenders Weak Voice of Response], *Hatzofe*, May 25, 1943; "Shin" (Shabtai Don Yihye), editorial, "haganat ha-shem" [Defending God], *ibid.*, May 25, 1943; Moshe Krone, "In Days of Strife and Contention," *ibid.*, June 15, 1943.

<sup>35</sup> See Hava Eshkoli-Wagman, *Bein hatsalah li-geulah: ha-tziyonut ba-datit be-Eretz Yisrael le-nokbah ha-sho'ah* [Between Rescue and Redemption: Religious Zionism in Eretz Israel Confronts the Holocaust] (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004, in Hebrew), Ch. 4.