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For the Sake of Peace and Democracy

The Representation of German Post-war Suffering and Victimhood in *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald* 1945-1949

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Brittiläisten suhtautuminen saksalaisiin toisen maailmansodan jälkeen ei ollut yksiselitteistä. Yleisesti Britanniassa ajateltiin, että saksalaiset olivat ansainneet kärsimyksensä. Oli kuitenkin olemassa käytännöllisiä, moraalisia ja ideologisia syitä siihen, miksi sanomalehtidiskurssi omaksui rakentavan suhtautumistavan kostomielialan lietsomisen sijasta. Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena on esitellä ja analysoida sodanjälkeistä skotlantilaista sanomalehtidiskurssia osana laajempaa brittiläistä suhtautumista saksalaisten kärsimykseen ja uhreihin. Tutkielma tarjoaa uusia näkökulmia ja samalla herättää myös uusia kysymyksiä saksalaisten ristiriitaisesta kohtelusta natsi-Saksan kukistumisen jälkeen. Lähdeaineiston muodostavat kaksi keskeistä kyseisen ajanjakson skotlantilaista sanomalehteä: <i>The Scotsman</i> ja <i>The Glasgow Herald</i>.</p> <p>Tutkimuskysymys on seuraavanlainen: miten saksalaisten kärsimystä ja uhreja representoitiin sanomalehdissä ja mihin asioihin tämä representointi perustui? Aihepiirin aikaisempi tutkimus on ollut yksipuolisesti saksalaista ja angloamerikkalaista ja se on keskittynyt lähinnä natsien hirmutekoihin. Skotlantilaista lehdistöaineistoa ei ole aiemmin käytetty tutkittaessa brittiläisten suhtautumista saksalaisten kärsimykseen ja uhreihin toisen maailmansodan jälkeen. Päätutkimusmetodi on diskurssianalyysi, joka on saanut vaikutteita kriittisestä diskurssianalyysistä. Tutkielmassa hyödynnetään myös käsittehistorian, kielen tutkimuksen ja lehdistön tutkimuksen menetelmiä ja käsitteitä. Tutkielma rakentuu kuudesta pääluvusta, joissa saksalaisten kärsimyksiä ja uhreja tarkastellaan eri näkökulmista. Tutkimuskysymyksen avulla tarkastellaan Saksan poliittista ahdinkoa, taloudellista sekä materiaalista kärsimystä, kollektiivista syyllisyyttä ja pyrkimystä muodostaa etnisesti homogeenisia kansallisvaltioita.</p> <p>Tutkielman johtopäätös on, että saksalaisten kärsimysten ja uhrien representointi perustui etnosentriseen esitystapaan sekä laajempaan Euroopan sodanjälkeiseen jälleenrakennukseen. Pohjimmiltaan kyse oli lehdistön kautta tapahtuvasta yhteiskunnallisesta neuvottelusta, jossa pyrittiin määrittelemään saksalaisen kansankunnan luonne. Taustalla olivat näkemykset saksalaisten syvälle juurtuneesta antisemitismistä ja taipumuksesta totalitaristiseen ajatteluun. Sanomalehtidiskurssin avulla annettiin ymmärtää, että Britanniassa oli moraalinen velvollisuus kitkeä natsismi sekä tarjota apua saksalaisille. Britannian tarpeet esitettiin sanomalehdissä kuitenkin ensisijaisina, koska julkisessa keskustelussa vakuuteltiin tämän hyödyttävän myös saksalaisia. Kyse oli holhoavasta miehityspolitiikasta sekä taloudellisista realiteeteista, jotka perustuivat Britannian taloudelliseen riippuvuuteen Saksasta. Tämän vuoksi Saksan romahtaminen nähtiin uhkana, samoin kuin se, että Saksan annettaisiin valtiona vahvistua liikaa. Lopputuloksena saksalaiset päädyttiin esittämään kaksoisroolissa, jossa he olivat yhtä aikaa sekä uhreja että rikoksentekejiä.</p>	
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1. Introduction

The bitter statement, that “the Germans are always either at your feet or at your throat,” is negative and pessimistic rather than truly realistic. For a large and ever-increasing number of German people are, I believe, earnestly striving towards a happier alternative, when their nation can be – in the best sense – at our side, in healthy neighbourliness.”¹

1.1 The Research Problem and the Objectives of the Study

Germany’s unconditional surrender ended the Second World War in Europe on 8 May 1945. The shift from total war to peace was by no means trouble-free in the complex post-war European political climate. Several difficult questions emerged in public debates on how Germany and Germans should be treated by the victors. The future of Germany seemed insecure and, on some occasion, even hopeless. Nevertheless, the Allies prepared plans for solving these problems when the defeat of Germany began to look inevitable. In February 1945, the leaders of three leading Allied countries – the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union – met in Yalta where they agreed on the democratization and occupation policies of Germany.

In July and August 1945, the Allied leaders gathered again, this time in Potsdam where the issues of reparation, demilitarization and de-Nazification were discussed.² The leading Allies demanded that Germans faced the consequences of waging aggressive war and showed collective guilt for all of the inhuman deeds of the Nazi regime.³ The memories from the Great War and the mistakes made with the Treaty of Versailles were still lurking in the minds of people and for one’s part, they increased ambivalence towards the Germans.

¹ The Scotsman, “Problem of the Germans”, 29.4.1949.

² De-Nazification was an Allied programme, which aimed at cleansing Germany and Austria from all remnants of National Socialist ideology. In practice, it meant removing persons from the position of power that were members of the Nazi party. The programme also included punishing war criminals, disbanding organisations related to Nazis and expulsion of millions of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe. The programme was ratified in the Potsdam Agreement, but its planning started already during the war.

³ Holmila 2011, 28.

This master's thesis aims to present the post-war Scottish public debate as a part of wider British one considering the post-war suffering and victimhood of Germans from May 1945 to May 1949 by using two quality Scottish newspapers; *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald*. The decision to use two Scottish newspapers was made to gain a new angle to examine the research problem. Scotland, and especially its press, has often been neglected in studies that have focused on events in the main metropolitan centres of England, particularly London. Therefore, the chosen perspective differs from the mainstream research trend and it adds a 'periphery' aspect to it. At the same time, the study approaches the question of British national identities as a whole; English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish (Northern) are joined with common British values, but still have their own special characteristics, which underline the political objective of the British government to utilize a strong sense of solidarity and feeling of common struggle, especially in time of crisis.

The research question is as follows: how were Germans and their suffering represented in the Scottish post-war public debate and on what basis was this discussion constructed? Overall, the main focus is not on the perpetrator, but on the victor and on the process of sculpting the perception of perpetrators. Therefore, this study tells more about the British perception and public attitudes than German post-war suffering *per se*. In this sense, the conventional approach is challenged, and it allows a wider-based understanding of the topic to emerge.

The end of the war meant a heavy blow to the prestige of Britishness. For Britain, the victory meant survival of its democratic way of life, but also many costly overseas policing responsibilities and an American loan. The whole international economy was in chaos and the economic power shifted rapidly from Europe to the USA. Furthermore, the British Empire was on the path of disintegration when old colonies started to declare independence and it failed to challenge the new rising world powers. Hence, Britain could not rely anymore on her political and economic hegemony in Europe and elsewhere.⁴

Despite the declining hegemony status, the press discourse regarding the German suffering and victimhood was conducted in the atmosphere of British moral superiority.⁵ For example, the British national character was often represented as a fair-minded and

⁴ Finlay 2004, 215-216.

⁵ Holmila 2011, 29.

morally righteous, whereas the German character was presented as the embodiment of 'the Hun'. The process of sculpting the enemy image was an important part of a psychological survival mechanism which made it possible to deny the enemy's humanity and depict Britain as a defender of civilised norms and standards.⁶ Britain had sacrificed much in the war in order to ensure that principles of justice, liberalism and humanity prevailed, and it did not want to see these principles being squandered in peace. Consequently, the very essence of Britishness required that Britain, by showing vision and courage, would provide the moral leadership to Europe emerging from the heavy yoke of Nazi Germany.⁷

There were some similarities between post-war Scotland and the British occupation zone of Germany: both Scots and Germans felt that they were suppressed by the paternalistic British government, they suffered from economic hardship and destitution and they felt that their losses were not recognized enough by other nations. Especially bombing was freshly in the minds of both. Although Scotland was rather firmly connected with the British war effort, the question of home rule was not completely dissolved. Scottish identity was still recognisable, and Scots trusted that there would be social reforms for better living conditions at some point. This is an important factor for understanding the context of Scottish public debate regarding the German suffering and victimhood.

This master's thesis provides an overview of arguments and narratives which made it possible to suggest that Germans in some cases deserved a victim status and had suffered from the war and especially its aftermath. This requires an identification of the key experiences of German suffering from the Scottish point of view. What makes this difficult is that occasionally a person or a group of people were perceived as a perpetrator and a victim at the same time⁸. Interestingly, it applied to the Germans and British as well. Furthermore, the new Labour government which was elected on 5 July 1945 needed to find moral arguments for dealing with these notions of German suffering and victimhood⁹. However, the British government marginalized many problems, because it was interested in a wider occupation policy for ensuring the future security of Europe.

⁶ Holmila 2011, 23.

⁷ Frank 2008, 211.

⁸ Holmila 2010, 298.

⁹ Finlay 2004, 224-225.

The Allied occupation policy and the Potsdam Agreement resulted in many social, economic and political problems in Germany, and these controversies did not go unnoticed in Britain: homelessness, famines, epidemics, unemployment, restrictions to autonomy, the internment of German civilians, war crime trials, and expulsions of Germans from Central-East Europe, were all contributing to the German resentment against the victors. Despite losing the war, Germany was still a significant economic and political power in the very heart of Europe, and therefore it posed a threat to the future of Europe. Ironically, Germany was considered to be a threat to peace if it collapsed, but also if it prospered. However, the underlying question was if Germans who perpetrated mass murders of millions of civilians could ever again be considered as a member of European family of peaceful nations. The representation of German suffering and victimhood in the Scottish press discourse was fundamentally conducted to give justification for the British occupation policy and to secure the democratic development of a new Germany, or at least part of it.

The overall structure of this study takes the form of six chapters, including the introduction and conclusion. The second chapter begins by laying out the political viewpoint of the matter. It presents administrative quarrels which were linked to The Potsdam Conference and the de-Nazification programme. The third chapter is concerned with the economic aspect as it shows the material deprivation of Germans and the dismantling of the German economic machine. The fourth chapter, in turn, contemplates issues regarding morality and collective guilt as it analyses war crime trials and the imprisonment of German civilians. The fifth chapter examines ethnic and demographic issues in the context of the post-war formation of ethnically homogenous nation-states. The sixth chapter sums up the findings of the study, focusing on the key themes of German suffering and victimhood and British national character. Next, the primary sources, research methods and the relation of the study to the research literature will be discussed.

1.2 Primary Sources

The primary sources of this study are newspaper articles selected from two dominant quality Scottish papers: *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald*. They have been

archivals of each other and also mouthpieces of the two biggest cities in Scotland; Glasgow and Edinburgh. *The Scotsman* is an Edinburgh based newspaper and it has been a supporter of liberal political values although it was founded as politically independent in 1817.¹⁰ *The Glasgow Herald* was established in 1783, which makes it the longest-running national newspaper in Scotland. From its foundation, it has not endorsed any specific political stance. Both newspapers have a long history and good representativity, which makes them highly influential. Together these two covered the majority of news demand in Scotland and therefore they are the best source for analysing the perception that Scots got from the Germans. Apart from these two, other newspapers from England and elsewhere were read in Scotland and vice versa, but that does not radically affect this study. One should also take into account that while newspapers used their own correspondents, they often utilized reports produced by news agencies. Therefore, different newspapers had occasionally almost identical pieces of news.

In many cases, it is useless to try to find differences between English and Scottish media in the 1940s, because the war forced the British government to harness mass media for the wartime propaganda machine which aimed to produce a collective British mentality, and this continued even after the war. It is my interpretation that some differences existed because the number of papers was great, and their political stances varied from left to right. However, the results of this study are not entirely applicable to England and vice versa. The focus is mainly on the newspaper articles concerning the British occupation zone of Germany because it was the main interest of the British government in foreign issues and therefore reporters were more or less liable to write about it.

An important phase of the study was the selection process of relevant news articles. The criteria for an article to pass was that it had to be linked to the theme of German suffering and victimhood. Furthermore, the research literature provided a fairly explicit coverage of the main themes and hence helped in forming the search terms¹¹. Also, some of the terms and themes emerged straight from the source material.

All the chosen articles from *The Scotsman* were found from the digital archive with relevant search terms. The search terms were applied alone and in combination. The

¹⁰ The Scotsman digital archive 2017.

¹¹ Search terms: German, Germany, Nazi, Nazism, Fascist, editorial, de-Nazification, re-education, democratization, suffer, suffering, victim, guilt, expel, refugee, expulsion, deportation, immigrant, displaced person, starvation, rationing, food crisis, bombing, air raid, Nuremberg, war criminal, trial, morale, sympathy, empathy, Potsdam, concentration camp, prisoner.

articles of *The Glasgow Herald* were obtained from the Google News archive, which is an open database of newspapers. With Google News, it was not possible to use search terms. For that reason, editorials¹² of those dates which recurred in *The Scotsman* were selected. Furthermore, suitable articles within issues were used, because an editorial usually commented on a piece of news which was in the same issue.

Placement of articles and word count within the issues were kept out of the analysis. However, most of the relevant articles were in the foreign news section and the editorial pages, as mentioned above. Few letters to the editor were included in the analysis. In total, over 150 articles were used from the Scotsman and some under 50 articles from the Glasgow Herald. The possibility to use search terms explains why articles from *The Scotsman* were used three times more than the ones from *The Glasgow Herald*. This method was not fully extensive and without a doubt, some relevant articles were missed in both newspapers. However, this study has a sufficient sample of sources, and they yield a representative result, even if fully comprehensive coverage is an impossibility.

The temporal distribution of articles was remarkably uneven; in 1945 and 1946 *The Scotsman* had 61 and 63 relevant articles, respectively, whereas in 1947 the number was 28, in 1948 17 and in 1949 only 3. The temporal distribution of articles in *The Glasgow Herald* followed systematically this trend. The uneven temporal distribution is explained with the simple fact that as time went by, the journalistic interest towards Germany faded and topical events occurred less frequently. Of course, many political and economic events relative to the British public were reported, such as the division of Germany into West and East Germany in the spring of 1949, but these articles were seldom useful to this study. Regardless, this was also a valid observation, and it revealed implicitly what objectives did the British government had.

This study is not about the truthfulness of the primary sources as much as the conception that they gave. Therefore, the historical correctness of the news was not evaluated. Nevertheless, the collection and analysis of source material were conducted under the principles of source criticism. Important aspects of source criticism were news value, censorship and context. News value translates to news criteria; what was considered as worthy of publishing in a chain of the selection process? The selection was – and still is

¹² Editorials are a relevant source since they indicate newspaper's own place in its society's political landscape and reveal newspaper's overall attitude regarding the most topical issues. Holmila 2011, 14-15.

– primarily conditioned by economic, political, cultural and social structures. In the context of this study, the international political structure is crucial for grasping the impact of censorship, which explain why certain things were left out from newspapers.¹³ On the whole, editors and journalists had an immensely important role in deciding what terms and ideas were included and what excluded in public debate.

1.3 Methods of the Study

The research methods were chosen in accordance with the primary sources and the research problem. Instead of just one method, a versatile band of methods was constructed. This was necessary because the research topic is interdisciplinary in character. Consequently, an eclectic approach was required. This study combines ideas and theories from political and conceptual histories, as well as from media studies and the social sciences. A common denominator for all of the methods is qualitative research and a hermeneutic theoretical framework. However, the main method is discourse analysis, which is interdisciplinary by nature, so it is a well-suited method for studying this subject.

Discourse has a wide variety of definitions and therefore it is vital to define what discourse means in the context of this study. In this study, discourse is understood as Michel Foucault has defined it: “*Discourse is the embodiment of understanding the reality, which can be unfolded by examining the use of language in a certain era and situation*”¹⁴. In other words, a discourse has two main characteristics; it is social activity and it is a resource for reflecting and constructing reality. Discourse defines what is possible to say about a certain topic and how people should discuss it.

A key element of discourse is language because it represents and contributes to the production and reproduction of social reality. This study makes use of Norman Fairclough’s approach where the analysis is drawn out from the form and function of the text. In other words, a researcher examines how texts are related to the way they are produced and consumed and their relation to wider society.¹⁵ Therefore, the researcher

¹³ Mautner 2008, 33.

¹⁴ Pietikäinen 2009, 26.

¹⁵ Richardson 2007, 26, 37.

has to take into account the capabilities and limitations of newspapers in creating and shaping discourses. Newspapers always tell something about the prevailing reality, but it is unclear how much they influence people's opinions and beliefs. The possibility, however, remains.

The target of discourse analysis is to reveal how and what things are created with language. The structure of language is irrelevant in this case. What is fundamental is that the use of language is always dependent on context.¹⁶ Discourse analysis tries to answer the following question: what kind of meanings are dominant, marginal, missing and why is it so?¹⁷ The negotiation of meanings, which includes tensions, social practices and rules, is the very heart of discourse studies. The function of discourse analysis is to analyse how different realities and events are given meanings, on what conditions, and hence what consequences might occur from its contribution to social realities¹⁸.

The first stage of any discourse analysis is usually the analysis of particular words used in newspaper text. Words convey the imprint of society and especially value judgements. War is also often reported by using metaphors, and it is common to see a war being defined as an emergency in which no sacrifice is too excessive if it can help to win the war.¹⁹ This finding is important for this study because even though the war had technically ended, a certain kind of post-war situation persisted.²⁰ Consequently, the news kept referring to past events and public discourses were built on that.

There is an important difference between 'discourses' and 'a discourse'. The first one refers to a theoretical baseline – how macro level processes such as economic crises and national identities are represented and negotiated in newspapers and elsewhere – whereas a plural and quantitative term 'a discourse', means describing a certain case or an event in a relatively well established manner from a certain point of view. For instance, we can talk about press discourse, economic discourse or religious discourse. What is noteworthy is that the meaning of no word, expression, text or discourse is fixed but always attached to context and therefore in constant flux.²¹

¹⁶ Pietikäinen 2009, 18.

¹⁷ Pietikäinen & Mäntynen 2009, 11.

¹⁸ Jiwani 2008, 242.

¹⁹ Richardson 2007, 47, 67.

²⁰ Moeller & Biess 2010, 3.

²¹ Pietikäinen 2009, 28, 50.

Usually, there is more than one discourse present, and they create a web of discourses. However, these discourses are not in an equal position, but in a hierarchy, and they struggle for reaching the top place in the pecking order. Discourses are therefore in dynamic relation to each other and the social impact is the outcome of multiple discourses.²² Subsequently, discourses are never created in a vacuum. All media text has either implicit or explicit relation to other texts and discourses, which are produced earlier, synchronically or afterwards²³. In the case of newspapers, those articles finding their way into printed copy are typically referring to previous articles of that paper or some other papers. This makes newspaper articles multivocal and therefore intertextual. After all, journalists base their writings and interpretations on information coming from different sources; reports, documents, briefings, interviews, news agencies and so on.²⁴

Discourses allow people to construct their own identities and others' as well. However, different people have different possibilities for doing so. As Foucault argued, discourses tend to reflect power and power relations in a society. This notion stems from an idea that discourses can present humans and events as 'real' or *fait accompli*. And what is considered as a fact, also reflects the epistemological viewpoint.²⁵ Anne De Fina points out that human communication is fundamentally about conveying information about the social communities to which we belong, where we stand in relation to moral questions and where our loyalties are in political terms. We do not only use language to convey images of ourselves, but we also use it to identify others, to align ourselves with them, signalling our similarities and to distance ourselves from them.²⁶ The language used in the newspaper articles conveys these functions, and therefore discourses are central to the construction and negotiation of identities and to sculpting the image of other nationalities. What is noteworthy is that both individual and collective identities are built on language. However, discourse alone is not enough, we need also the concept of representation.

Representation is closely linked to discourse. Representation makes it possible to identify how reality is presented, from which point of view and what means are used to achieve a certain result. Therefore, representation can be a powerful tool and bear drastic consequences. It affects the social standing of people and links to questions of who can

²² Pietikäinen 2009, 56-58.

²³ Fairclough 2008, 372.

²⁴ Pietikäinen 2009, 124.

²⁵ Pietikäinen 2009, 52-53.

²⁶ Fina 2008, 263.

speak with whose mouth and what is made visible and what is not. In my study, Germans are those who are being represented, but not by themselves, not directly at least.

Alongside discourse analysis more generally, my study is influenced by one of its forms, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), but only on certain aspects. Antero Holmila has pointed out that CDA is particularly well-suited to uncovering the ideological nature of media texts in his own research regarding the Holocaust. However, the downside of CDA is that it explicitly positions itself on the side of minorities or oppressed groups and against dominating groups. It provides mainly information on how things should be arranged in society instead of telling how things were.²⁷ Having said that, this does not mean that CDA is less ‘scholarly’ than any other method²⁸. It simply is more practicable in social studies, where the aim is initially to produce knowledge to tackle social issues.

Germans were in fact at the mercy of foreign states, but the question of whether they were oppressed as a group is complicated. However, it is almost impossible to ignore those discursive manifestations which are embedded especially in editorials. CDA helps to take into account different factors, which can explain the reasons behind news preferences.²⁹ What unites discourse analysis and CDA is “*a shared interest in the semiotic dimension of power, injustice, abuse, and political-economic or cultural change in society*”³⁰. However, the use of language has a strong political dimension and with language, it is possible to shape people’s opinions. After all, we can only have opinions of things that are discussed in social reality. It is the point of CDA to show how discourse can conceal inequalities in society by normalising them and closing down the possibility of change.³¹ Consequently, CDA can be used to some extent in this study for revealing how journalists employed rhetorical strategies aimed at persuading readers.

However, one key feature of newspapers is that journalists cannot entirely control the reactions of readers, because readers start to interpret, to reject, and to respond to texts from their own premises.³² This leads to conceptual disputes when not only issues are being argued, but also terms and concepts in which issues are being discussed. Furthermore, Holmila notes that newspapers provide insights into what was included and

²⁷ Steinmetz & Freedon 2017, 29.

²⁸ Fairclough et al. 2008, 358.

²⁹ Holmila 2011, 7-8.

³⁰ Fairclough, Mulderrig & Wodak 2008, 357.

³¹ Richardson 2007, 12, 13, 45.

³² Pocock 2009, 68.

excluded, seen as significant, impossible or controversial in the discourses of the period³³. And when it comes to the notions of German suffering and victimhood in post-war Europe, many seemingly impossible remarks were in fact included and then significant ones excluded. For some events there were even no precedents, like the Holocaust, which at first looked utterly unconceptualizable by contemporaries. Hence, this research subject requires a careful reading between the lines and an ability to embrace the controversial.

This master's thesis also sets out to give an account of how suitable conceptual history is when newspaper sources are analysed in a historical setting. German historian Reinhart Koselleck has argued that no speech act is itself the action that it helps prepare, trigger, and enact. He acknowledges that a word often triggers irrevocable consequences and although history does not happen without speaking, it is never identical with it. Therefore, there must be further advance work beyond spoken language for events to be possible. Another key idea of Koselleck's thinking is that "*what happens is always unique and new, but never so new that social conditions will not have made possible each unique event*"³⁴. Despite the uniqueness of each event, the circulation of language and concepts should not be ignored, as Koselleck has later demonstrated in his writings.

Melvin Richter referred to Koselleck when he pointed out that the investigation of a concept can never be limited to determining the meaning of words and their shifts in meaning. Richter noted that a concept may include more than one word or term and therefore a researcher must track down several words to chart the history of a concept. For instance, the concept of 'de-Nazification' is a prime example of that. De-Nazification is also a good example of how conceptual history can help to discover the continuities, shifts, and innovations in the meaning of the principal concepts deployed in political and social thought³⁵. As will be demonstrated later in the study, de-Nazification was highly unpopular among Germans right from the beginning, but it also lost its support in Britain over time. During this process, the meaning of de-Nazification in British public debate partly shifted from a necessary re-education programme to a groundless punishment of Germans. Therefore, the role of conceptual history in this study is to function as a 'peephole' for outlining the source material.

³³ Holmila 2011, 7.

³⁴ Koselleck 2002, 25, 30.

³⁵ Richter 1995, 5, 9-10.

When it comes to the application of the theoretical framework, the above-mentioned methods will be applied as required in a close reading for revealing how notions of German suffering and victimhood were fed into different narratives and conceptual frameworks. Furthermore, the chosen methods support each other and concentrate on key concepts of representation and discourse.

1.4 Relation of the Study to Research Literature

This subchapter aims to establish a link between the most essential and recent academic debates regarding German suffering and victimhood and this study. The controversy over the German guilt, suffering and victims of the Second World War and its aftermath is still today a burning issue and it has a long history. Historically, research investigating the factors associated with German post-war suffering has focused on the German point of view by using German source material. Furthermore, English newspapers have been used before in a similar kind of studies in which the aim was to gain knowledge of British perception of Germans. A good example of this is Matthew Frank's book *Expelling the Germans: British opinion and post-1945 population transfer in context* (2008) which has been an important piece of research literature for this study.

Frank points out that the diplomacy behind the expulsions has long been a matter of debate³⁶. The co-author of *People on the move: Forced population movements in Europe in the Second World War and its aftermath* (2008) Pertti Ahonen, argues that the world's public opinion regarded the expulsions as rightful revenge for the Nazi crimes and forced migrations continues to be at the centre of highly politicized processes of memorialization³⁷. Frank reminds that the expulsions have to be seen as part of a long-term debate about the relief, reconstruction and the revival of post-war Germany and Europe³⁸. Consequently, much of the current literature on German suffering and victimhood in the post-war years pays particular attention to the expulsions of Germans.

³⁶ Frank 2008, 6.

³⁷ Ahonen 2008, 62, 144.

³⁸ Frank 2008, 208

With this subject, there exists always the problem of adequately portraying German wartime and post-war suffering without either suppressing their status as members of a Nazi community or constantly referring to Nazi crimes. This includes a danger that scholars get too cautious and feel that they will be accused of understating German responsibility whenever this fragile balance is broken, and the German responsibility lacks attention. Helmut Schmitz argues that the problematic nature of this issue is due to the hierarchisation of memory, claiming that the Holocaust is the normative framework of German memory.³⁹ This means that the German victimhood and perpetration can never be in an equal position. Apparently, this imbalance is the issue around which the entire contemporary representational discourse of German victim experience revolves at the moment.

Donald Bloxham argues in his book *Genocide on trial: War crimes trials and the formation of Holocaust history and memory* (2001) that the Nuremberg trials have served in Germany as a dual-faceted reminder both of guilt and the imposition of punishment by alien powers. Bloxham also reminds that the war has been represented as a dichotomized battle of good against evil, but at no time had it been fought specifically to end Hitler's programmes of genocide. Instead, the liberated concentration camps were held up as *ex post facto* justifications of what Allies had been fighting against. In a similar fashion as Schmitz, Bloxham emphasizes that the war criminal trials long outlived re-education policy as it was initially conceived, and eventually they stood as the only official conduit for the examination of the Nazi past.⁴⁰

The German victim discourse has been present in one way or another since the end of the Second World War, but the reunification of East and West Germany in 1990 marked a new era in this discussion. Schmitz argues that the new representations of Germans as suffering victims of the Allied bombing campaign and the expulsions from the East were in stark contrast with the general view of them as Nazi perpetrators and bystanders⁴¹. For a long time, it was considered as a taboo even to speak about or to represent Germans as victims. However, this claim does not hold up on closer examination of historical sources. Bill Niven points out that the German victim discourse already emerged right after the war in Germany and it was prevalent in pre-unification Germany⁴². The German victim

³⁹ Schmitz 2007, 15.

⁴⁰ Bloxham 2001, 223, 227.

⁴¹ Schmitz 2007, 2.

⁴² Niven 2006, 21.

discourse was eventually pushed aside, and it received the status of a taboo when winning countries demanded that Germans should express collective guilt and that not only the SS troops were culprits for murdering innocent people.

During the 1990s the approach to history got increasingly emotionalised and individualised. This process coincides with a pluralisation of historical master narratives and globalisation of Holocaust memory. The Holocaust became a universal victim narrative and it formed a western transnational collective memory. This has important consequences for the representation of German victimhood since it is almost impossible to bring up this topic without mentioning the Nazi atrocities and especially the Holocaust. Nevertheless, German suffering entered the public, private, political and cultural discourses. The representation of German suffering needed to be based on historical facts and evidence of German victimhood; the Allied bombings, dismantling of the German economy, the German POWs, and the expulsions of Germans from Central-Eastern Europe were amongst other things more than suitable for this task.⁴³

Consequently, several controversial debates took place in the 1990s, and perhaps the most famous one was held around Daniel Goldhagen's book *'Hitler's Willing Executioners'* (1996). Goldhagen's book focused the public attention on the Holocaust in a rather provocative manner.⁴⁴ His main argument was that Germany had an exceptional culture of 'eliminationist anti-Semitism'⁴⁵. He claimed that millions of Germans participated in the Holocaust in one way or another, some even with pleasure, and therefore it can be concluded that almost the entire German society actually wanted the genocide to happen. Goldhagen's theory was based on the assumption that Germans of the 19th and 20th century before the year of 1945 were significantly different than any other nation and Germans under Hitler's regime were a unique species⁴⁶.

Goldhagen's evident success still does not mean that academic scholars were unanimous on the topic, quite the contrary. One of Goldhagen's main adversaries was Christopher Browning, author of *'Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland'* (1992). He suggested that it was highly pronounced notions of obedience, group pressure, emotional coarsening, reality loss and diversion of aggression, rather than

⁴³ Schmitz 2007, 6-7.

⁴⁴ Niven 2006, 19.

⁴⁵ Shandley 1998, 11.

⁴⁶ Frei 1998, 35, 37.

exterminationist anti-Semitism, that were the leading causes of the Holocaust. One must also bear in mind that other nationalities also participated in the Holocaust and not all Germans were equipped with this alleged eliminationist mindset; a minority of Germans were aiding Jews and protecting them in underground. Almost all of the Germans of that time indeed became guilty at some level, but that does not necessarily mean that the Holocaust was a national project, as Goldhagen argued.⁴⁷ Furthermore, it is good to remember that silence did not always mean support, because the repression of the German population by the Nazi regime was real. Although refusal to obey a direct order from a superior to kill a Jew rarely resulted in any punishment, the Third Reich was by no means a benevolent dictatorship.⁴⁸

Another noteworthy incident was the Walser-Bubis debate, which revealed the sharp divergence between the official public and private memory of the Nazi era in Germany. German novelist Martin Walser gave a speech in 1998 that unleashed a controversy that shook German intellectual circles. Walser claimed that the Holocaust had been instrumentalised by the media and left-liberal intelligentsia as a means of denying German national identity. Ignatz Bubis was Walser's main critic. The debate indicated that the majority of Germans felt that their personal memories were not represented in official memory culture. The problem was that the German wartime experience was not sufficiently commemorated or represented. For example, the sinking of the German ship Wilhelm Gustloff caused the deaths of 7,000 German refugees in January 1945. This was a major national trauma, but Germans were not allowed to commemorate this officially due to Cold War politics and the politicisation of memory discourse in post-war Germany. Many traumatic experiences of German suffering could not have been properly addressed, as they were obscured by the culture of guilt.⁴⁹ In other words, Germans became victims of a memory politics, which forbade them practising commemoration where they had been victims.⁵⁰

These debates can be seen as part of a wider discussion about Germany's special path to democracy i.e. *Sonderweg*, and a continuation of the *Historikerstreit*. The latter mentioned means 'historians' quarrel' and it was an intellectual and political controversy in the late 1980s in West Germany about how best to remember Nazi Germany and the

⁴⁷ Frei 1998, 38.

⁴⁸ Browning 1998, 66.

⁴⁹ Schmitz 2007, 3, 5, 8.

⁵⁰ Niven 2006, 11.

Holocaust.⁵¹ In the most extreme form, the Goldhagen's version of *Sonderweg* implies that the anti-Semitism in Germany was already characteristically eliminationist by the end of the 18th century and therefore long before Hitler. The long-awaited opportunity then came with the war against the Soviet Union, and the Germans started to implement their deeply rooted destructive wish. Before this, the Germans were also exposed to decades of anti-Jewish propaganda and years of devious anti-Jewish policy.⁵²

Despite the highly problematic and controversial encounters with the Nazi past, Germany's speedy reconstruction and the economic recovery were a great success. W. G. Sebald argues that this originated from the silent collective refusal of Germans to engage with the responsibility for the Nazi past and this affected their ability to address their own traumatisation. The victorious countries expected Germans to feel that they were responsible for the war and they should show their guilt. However, Robert G. Moeller claims that the alleged silence about German suffering in the post-war era is more a myth than reality. He argues that both FRG and GDR used a sizeable amount of resources to establish a victim status into public memory. According to Moeller, the people, especially in the FRG, were telling stories of the enormity of their losses and this made it possible for them to reject charges of collective guilt and at the same time claim the status of heroic survivors instead of perpetrators.⁵³ Although this study is not concerned with analysing the actions of Germans, this background will help to contemplate the British influence on the formation of German collective guilt.

In summary, this study will add another dimension, and nuance, to the dominant research tradition regarding the topic at hand. The current study trend seems to have only little bearing on the development of the subject, and therefore a new kind of approach is required.

⁵¹ Shandley 1998, 6-10.

⁵² Frei 1998, 37.

⁵³ Schmitz 2007, 9-10.

2. Rise from the Ashes - Building a New Germany

As the dust after the Allied victory cleared away, a multitude of pressing problems emerged in Germany: its infrastructure was reduced to rubble, political structure demolished, economy collapsed, let alone lost lives and human suffering. Foremost among these problems was the task of deciding on the future of Germany. It was believed that the Germans could not change their national identity and let go of a totalitarian mindset without a strong intervention of foreign forces on their domestic issues, primarily party politics, higher government posts and education⁵⁴. As *The Scotsman* expressed in May 1945: “Germany is a sick man. He can now have only what the doctor orders.”⁵⁵

Therefore, the Allies conducted the de-Nazification -programme which aimed to integrate Germany into the European family of democracies. However, the de-Nazification plan had innate moral issues which became visible in the newspaper discourse. The outspoken aim of the Allied Military Government in Germany was not feeding the defeated Germans or rebuilding their cities, but cleansing Germany of Nazism and re-establishing the rule of justice and equality before the law.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the role of the Germans in building their own future was contested and the question of Germany’s sovereignty was scrutinized in the British public debate. Against this background, this chapter has an ethnocentric point of view. The British ethnocentricity was the common denominator of many discourses regarding German suffering and victimhood. The first section of this chapter focuses on the reshaping of German political life, the second on Allied bombing in Germany and the third on the future of German youth.

2.1 Modus Vivendi: The Decentralisation of German Political Structure

One of the most pressing issues involved political quarrels over Germany’s central and local governance. On 17 May 1945, *The Glasgow Herald* published Churchill’s speech in which he spoke in favour of the administration rather than government of Germany. Churchill emphasised that the Germans should administer their county in obedience to

⁵⁴ Graham-Dixon 2013, 3.

⁵⁵ *The Scotsman*, “Cleansing of Germany”, 12.5.1945.

⁵⁶ *The Scotsman*, “Cleansing of Germany”, 12.5.1945.

Allied directions.⁵⁷ However, an editorial in *The Scotsman* logically asked a day later; “*who is to carry out the general directions that the Allies will issue?*” Almost all of the important administrative posts were run by former members of the Nazi party and now the Allies had to decide whether to trust skilled Germans with a Nazi background or find more trustworthy, but unskilled Germans to fill those posts.⁵⁸ Two months later from that, the editorial argued that the Allies risked a formation of a hopeless vacuum in Central Europe if the coming Potsdam Conference did not work out for the *modus vivendi* of the German people.⁵⁹

The Potsdam Conference ended on 2 August 1945 and on the following day, *The Scotsman* analysed its outcome. In general, an agreement had been reached on the political principles of a co-ordinated Allied policy towards Germany during the period of Allied control. The primary purpose of the agreement was interpreted to be an assurance that Germany never again will threaten her neighbours or the peace of the world. The decentralisation of the political structure and the development of local responsibility were presented as the main objectives in the process of administering affairs in Germany. It was also important that democratic political parties were allowed, and Germans were encouraged to take an active part in party politics.⁶⁰ Regardless, the editorial pointed out that the Allies did not aim to destroy or enslave the German people. The Germans were instead granted an opportunity to earn the trust and respect of the rest of the world.⁶¹ Therefore, the press discourse enforced a patriarchal setting in which Germany was expected to be an obedient son, whereas the Allies were portrayed as a strict but benevolent father:

*“It is the intention of the Allies that the German people be given the opportunity to prepare for the eventual reconstruction of their life on a democratic and peaceful basis. If their own efforts are steadily directed to this end, it will be possible for them in due course to take their place among the free and peaceful peoples of the world.”*⁶²

On 31 August 1945, *The Scotsman* had an interview of a high officer of the British Control Commission who argued that while the disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany were easy, the real challenge was the preparation of the eventual return of Germany to

⁵⁷ The Glasgow Herald, “Under Allied direction”, 17.5.1945.

⁵⁸ The Scotsman, “Ruling Germany”, 18.5.1945.

⁵⁹ The Scotsman, “Potsdam prospects”, 16.7.1945.

⁶⁰ The Scotsman, “Potsdam plan for Germany”, 3.8.1945.

⁶¹ The Scotsman, “Treatment of Germany”, 3.8.1945.

⁶² The Scotsman, “Treatment of Germany”, 3.8.1945.

international life.⁶³ On 18 September 1945, *The Scotsman* noted that democratic political activity in Germany had to be encouraged since it was evident that Germans had to undertake the administration of their own country at some point. The editorial stated that this was because the Allies did not have either the personnel or the knowledge required for carrying out such a task.⁶⁴ Therefore, the press discourse made it clear that the democratization of Germany was a race against time and well-timed reforms in the political body of Germany were the very essence of the project.

On 17 April 1946, *The Scotsman* reported about a debate between Lords considering the future of Germany. Lord Vansittart initiated the debate when he stated that *“the re-establishment of an over-centralised Germany is incompatible with European security.”* According to him, the simplest way to prevent the rise of a new Führer was to prevent the central German government from being considerable enough to be able to give him an opportunity. Vansittart warned that nationalism could be as great a danger as Nazism and many Germans wished to be driven from the centre by a high-powered concentration. Despite the defeat in war, the lure of German nationalism had not died out. Vansittart claimed that the majority of Germans were still Nazis at heart and that playing with German nationalism was playing with fire. Lord Darwen agreed that an overcentralised Government in Germany would be an easy prey for dictatorship. Nevertheless, he argued that the lack of German participation in their own governance would add to Britain’s burden:

*“We are proposing to make Germany a slum in the midst of Europe, and we British have got to carry the heaviest burden of this folly and wickedness, to pour in food to feed the starving millions, and maintain order.”*⁶⁵

By the end of 1946, scepticism towards the de-Nazification programme had increased and newspapers asked if it had produced enough satisfactory results. On 7 December 1946, *The Scotsman* published a report of a Commission appointed by the World Federation of Trade Unions and it suggested that the trade unions should be charged with the task of re-educating the German people on democratic principles: *“They represent one of the most reliable anti-Fascist forces in Germany, and it is upon this foundation only that a new Germany can be built.”*⁶⁶ Furthermore, the presence of the Allied troops in Germany was

⁶³ The Scotsman, “Allied control of Germany”, 31.8.1945.

⁶⁴ The Scotsman, “State of Germany”, 18.9.1945.

⁶⁵ The Scotsman, “Lords debate future of Germany”, 17.4.1946.

⁶⁶ The Scotsman, “Trade union commission’s German tour”, 7.12.1946.

considered to be a vital part of the democratic re-education and it underlined the paternalistic approach to the issue:

“It was of the utmost importance that the Allied Armies remain until such time as the peaceful character of German economy, the re-education of the German people, and the re-shaping of German political and social institutions give the positive guarantee that Germany shall never again have the will or the power to threaten their neighbours or to disturb the peace of the world.”⁶⁷

On 28 November 1947, *The Scotsman* noted that Germans appeared to put only a little faith in any of their political parties or leaders. The correspondent reckoned that this was at least partly due to their constant preoccupation with the daily struggle for survival. However, the main reason was a public mood of scepticism towards politics after the experiences of the Nazi regime. Moreover, the worsening relationship between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union began to radically affect the international status of Germany:

“Having seen himself branded by the rest of the world as either a rogue or a political moron for having followed the Nazis and having seen for himself the disastrous sequence to Nazi promises, the average German is very cautious about getting himself closely involved again with any political organisation.”⁶⁸

On 14 May 1948, *The Scotsman*'s special correspondent, Robert Stephens, wrote that Germany was on the brink of separate statehood. He argued that the East and the West were developing a special political and economic orientation within the orbit of their respective occupying Power or Powers; the West within the Marshall Plan and the East within the Molotov Plan. Consequently, the East and the West were gradually acquiring a new social structure in place of the old German society which ceased to exist in 1945. The correspondent noted that each occupying Power saw the area under its control as a kind of magnet which could draw the rest of Germany out of isolation unto itself. However, he criticised the Western combination for being slow in implementing its promises of economic prosperity and self-government:

“The Eastern magnet is intended to be political and emotional – a triple attraction of social change, authoritarian government, and national security. [...] The Western magnet is meant to be a combination of economic recovery, personal freedom, self-

⁶⁷ The Scotsman, "Trade union commission's German tour", 7.12.1946.

⁶⁸ The Scotsman, "Problems facing Germany", 28.11.1947.

government, and eventual free access to the Western world with its wider and more familiar horizons."⁶⁹

The split of Germany was considered to be inevitable by mid-1948 and both magnets were moving into their final positions for the political and economic struggle for Germany. However, the real issue was whether eventually united Germany would belong to the Western or Eastern system, as *The Scotsman* argued on 17 June 1948.⁷⁰ Consequently, the fate of Europe depended on that issue, and when the Berlin blockade started on 24 June 1948, the press discourse emphasised that Britain, France, and the U.S. had to act together against the USSR to save Germans in Berlin.⁷¹

As we have seen, the press discourse regarding the freedom of Germans to run their own country was based on the ideas of obedience, loyalty and unity. The press discourse took a stand on the role of authority in the German nationalism which seemed to fear authority as much as it respected it. Germans were represented within a patriarchal framework which reflected a colonialist mindset. There was also a constant duality of authority between Germans and the British occupation authorities who gave Germans responsibilities without adequate powers to fulfil them. This caused a great amount of frustration among Germans and undermined the democratisation process of Germany. The sovereignty issue was eventually moved aside when the division of Germany stole the spotlight. After all, the showdown between the East and the West had been coming for years and the Germans had virtually no power in this ideological game of chess.

2.2 Bombing of Germany: An Unnecessary Havoc?

The Allied bombing campaign caused great havoc in Germany and it was one of the first public controversies in post-war Britain regarding German suffering and victimhood. Britain had an important role in the Allied bombing campaign of German civilian targets and therefore the question of responsibility for taking care of Germany's reconstruction was acute. The British public was well aware of what kind of destruction bombing could cause since one of the most significant wartime experiences for the British people was

⁶⁹ The Scotsman, "German zones on the brink of separate statehood", 14.5.1948.

⁷⁰ The Scotsman, "Days of tension in Germany", 17.6.1948.

⁷¹ The Scotsman, "Berlin blockade", 26.6.1948.

the *Blitz* in 1940-1941. The German bombing of Britain partly invoked solidarity among the British and strengthened the common struggle for winning the war. Consequently, the *Blitz* became one of the most influential national narratives in Britain and it was a synonym for the plight that Germans had brought on them.

Keeping that in mind, it is safe to say that the *Blitz* was harnessed for the purpose of strengthening national identity and erecting a feeling of common sacrifice. This can also be seen as an early attempt to give a somewhat decent moral account of the Allied means of compelling Nazi Germany to surrender. It was necessary since half a million German civilians died in the Allied bombings of German cities⁷². Especially the bombings of Dresden in February 1945 were used as a propaganda tool by the Nazis already during the war and the moral questioning of Allied bombings in Germany continued even more ferociously after the war. When it comes to the Scottish press discourse, the bombing of Germany involved some important moral issues, otherwise, there would not have been any sense to be on the defensive.

On 26 July 1945, *The Scotsman* published bomb tonnage figures per German cities issued by the Air Ministry. Those figures revealed that 1945 brought a slackening in the onslaught but at the same time March marked the heaviest bombing of the whole war. However, there were no explicit figures considering civilian targets. According to the Air Ministry, the primary targets of the bombings were naval bases and industrial plants used for the production of war supplies, not residential areas.⁷³ At the same time, the press published articles in which correspondents described how millions of Germans, who fled to the countryside to escape Allied bombing, were now returning only to find their homes destroyed.⁷⁴ This apparent contradiction affected the press discourse and directed it towards justifying German civilian casualties.

On the same day, an editorial in *The Glasgow Herald* took part in the debate of what was the best way to utilize bombers. It pointed out that the difference between pure military installations, such as airfields, and civilian industrial plants were smaller than many had imagined. According to the editorial, this explained why industrial towns and transport facilities received multiple times more bombs than actual military targets which were but

⁷² Berger 2006, 210.

⁷³ *The Scotsman*, "Bombs on Berlin", 26.7.1945.

⁷⁴ *The Scotsman*, "Situation in Germany growing worse", 5.9.1945.

a fraction of what was required for waging of modern war.⁷⁵ Therefore, concepts of ‘civilian’ and ‘military’ were intermingled in media texts. In turn, this meant that the following logic emerged in public opinion: bombing industrial towns equalled bombing the whole German war machine.

In the end of October 1945, *The Scotsman* published an article regarding a strategic bombing survey, issued by the U.S War Department. It presented stats showing R.A.F. lost airmen in the Allied bombing attacks on Germany and revealed the amount of killed and wounded German civilians. In addition, the number of damaged houses and homeless was presented. The justification for the high degree of German casualties and material damage was that single attacks were not able to put strategically important industry targets out of commission. For that reason, persistent reattacks were necessary. Furthermore, incendiary bombs were used because they were much more destructive in a built-up environment than high-explosive bombs.⁷⁶

Despite the vast destruction of German cities, yet not all were content with the Air Ministry’s bombing policy. Marshal of the R.A.F. Sir Arthur Harris⁷⁷ – the responsible officer for the British bombing campaign during the war – criticized the Allied war leaders for being overly cautious in the use of air raids. In his interview in January 1947, he argued that the Allied should have used similar force they used in 1944 already a year earlier. He believed that this would have resulted in the same outcome as with Japan. According to Harris, the Allied war leaders did not have enough faith in strategic bombings. The interview gave an impression that Harris had a fixation on his own objective, and he felt that politicians and other branches of warfare deliberately made his objective harder to reach. Harris’ aggressive outbursts in favour of area bombing policy aroused critique in the press in general. When Harris was asked about the ethics of bombing, he expressed the following view:

“The point is often made that bombing is specially wicked because it causes casualties among civilians. This is true, but then all wars have caused casualties among civilians. [...] International law can always be argued pro and con, but in

⁷⁵ The Glasgow Herald, ”Aerial bombardment”, 26.7.1945.

⁷⁶ The Scotsman, ”The bombing of Germany”, 31.10.1945.

⁷⁷ Harris was often referred as ’Bomber Harris’ in the press.

*this matter of the use aircraft in war there is, it so happens, no international law at all*⁷⁸.

Therefore, Harris' agenda remained faithful to the dominant narrative which was, and still is, based on the undeniable fact that wars have caused civilian casualties throughout history, although never more than in the Second World War. Harris argued that every single member of a nation, except those impotent by age or disease, contributed to sustaining its war effort. After all, "*the aim of war is to kill just as many of enemy as is necessary to ensure his surrender*", said Harris⁷⁹. He was convinced that a rigid blockade would have caused more victims over time. He also gave the impression that bombing was no worse a tactic than any other measure in war. The only drawback was civilian casualties, but as Harris referred, there was no direct international law which would have made the use of bombers a punishable act within the boundaries of international relations. Therefore, Harris intended to legitimize the bombing policy and shift the focus of moral responsibility elsewhere. His statements contributed a great deal to the press discourse which relied on strong authorities who were able to avert dents in the British self-image.

On 15 April 1945, *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald* both published an official report which stated that German losses in population, caused by bombing, were in fact far less than estimates had predicted. This was the case particularly among factory workers who reportedly averted getting killed thanks to German countermeasures, including efficient shelter construction and big-scale evacuation. The report concluded that the total amount of German civilians killed in air raids was 350 000 during the whole war.⁸⁰ Although, the casualty figures were lower than initially believed, "*the figures did not imply the failure of Allied bombing policy*", as the report stated⁸¹. In this case, one could speculate what was considered as a 'failure' in the context of the bombing. The Allied bombing policy clearly embodied a silent approval of civilian casualties albeit it explicitly emphasized that the primary aim was to obstruct German industry and demoralize Germans and thereby force it to surrender. From the viewpoint of effectiveness, however, the bombing policy *needed* civilian casualties. The public opinion in Britain required measurable results even if it meant civilian casualties. In other words,

⁷⁸ The Scotsman, "Views of 'Bomber Harris'", 10.1.1947.

⁷⁹ The Glasgow Herald, "History of Britain's air warfare", 10.1.1947.

⁸⁰ The Glasgow Herald, "Allied bombing killed only two in 1000 German workers", 15.4.1946; The Scotsman, "Controlling size of German population", 15.4.1946.

⁸¹ The Scotsman, "Controlling size of German population", 15.4.1946.

victims of bombings were unfortunate, but not an indispensable sacrifice for the sake of peace.

When it comes to the relation between German civilian victims and notions of bombing efficiency, Joseph Goebbels provided an unexpected opportunity for the British officials to endorse British bombing policy. A part of his personal diaries was found after the war, and in April 1948, *The Scotsman* published an article in which his diary entries were used for underlining the success of Allied air raids. In the following quote, Goebbels described a particularly severe air raid on Hamburg in July 1943 which was later known as the firestorm raid:

*“During the night we had the heaviest raid yet made on Hamburg. The English appeared over the city with 800 to 1000 bombers. A city of a million inhabitants has been destroyed in a manner unparalleled in history. We are faced with problems almost impossible of solution”.*⁸²

The air raid was part of *Operation Gomorrah* in which R.A.F. and U.S. Army Air Forces attacked Hamburg. *The Scotsman's* article gave credit to the Allied air raids in making the Nazi leaders consider the possibility of concluding a separate peace with either Russia or Britain. The article also suggested that the British-American air attacks had an effect on the morale of Germans and threatened the unity of the Nazi Party.⁸³ As a high-ranking Nazi, Goebbels' words had great importance for the British public. The quote from his diary explicitly revealed how bombing had managed to cause a great deal of despair among Nazi ranks and therefore it represented solid proof of the usefulness of the bombings.

It was a widely accepted view that Germans had brought suffering on themselves by waging aggressive and expansionist war. Still, it was essential for the British national narrative that its subjects perceived the bombing of German civilian targets as an absolutely necessary means to bring the war to an end. The notion of revenge would have been a blow against the very heart of British self-image. Therefore, reporters addressed information of German losses of war and highlighted the fact that Germany had suffered a total defeat. Having discussed the bombings, the final section of this chapter addresses the plight of German youth.

⁸² The Scotsman, "Jealousy of Nazi leaders", 2.4.1948.

⁸³ The Scotsman, "Jealousy of Nazi leaders", 2.4.1948.

2.3 The Future of German Youth

The future prospect of the German youth and their intellectual isolation stirred debates, as a vital part of the de-Nazification programme was the re-education of German youth. Consequently, the British authorities aimed to introduce a democratic mindset in the education system of their occupation zone. Young Germans were considered as the future of Germany, but the bombing of schools and universities cast a long shadow over the Allied objective of re-education. Many Germans had no hope for the future and suicides among young adults were a common occurrence. The spiritual torment of Germans turned out to be almost as devastating as physical suffering and the voice of Germans was actively present in the press discourse.

Although children were not generally held accountable for the atrocities of the Nazi regime, they had nevertheless lived in a totalitarian society which forced them to adopt the Nazi doctrine. On 16 May 1945, *The Glasgow Herald* published a speech of the Bishop of Edinburgh. The bishop encouraged the British people to adopt a positive and constructive policy towards Germany in the hope that one day Germany will again contribute to the world in science, industry, and art. However, the bishop noted that Germans would most likely object to victors as their educators, and he was aware of the realities of living in a totalitarian society:

*“That brings us face to face with the very difficult problem of re-education of the German people, and particularly the youth who have been taught from childhood to hate and to enjoy the infliction of torture and terror upon their enemies.”*⁸⁴

On 21 May 1945, *The Glasgow Herald* reported that Germany was at a standstill before new books were produced, schools rebuilt, and reliable teachers trained. German authorities were concerned about the probable long break in elementary and higher education since in time this could result in a scarcity of qualified entrants to the essential trades, occupations, and professions.⁸⁵ *The Scotsman* took notice of this same issue on 5 September 1945 when most of the schools in Germany were still closed despite the Allied efforts to open them at an early date. Consequently, the British public got the impression

⁸⁴ The Glasgow Herald, "Christians attitude to beaten enemy", 16.5.1945.

⁸⁵ The Glasgow Herald, "Problems of re-education", 21.5.1945.

that millions of young Germans drifted aimlessly in the streets and were prone to Nazi agitators.⁸⁶

The following quote from an interview of a German municipal authority presented German youth as exploited victims of Hitler and his followers. This can be interpreted as a self-reflection which aimed at presenting Germans as active agents, who acknowledged their troubling past but were still able to start building their future on the ideal of peace. De-Nazification emphasised that the German youth needed to learn to oppose totalitarian ideas, which suppressed the individual's ability to form one's own opinion:

*“Our youth must realise how miserable and criminal was the cause for which it was misused by the Hitler gang. We want to build a new Berlin, a new democratic Germany, where our youth will again be happy and laughing, a youth that thinks for itself. Our highest ideal must not be playing soldiers or practising for war, but to do our share in the peaceful work of rebuilding.”*⁸⁷

The German perspective gained more validation in the eyes of the British after Field-Marshal Montgomery noted that the Nazis debased the German educational system which did not become oppressive until the Nazis had seized power. He addressed his message directly to Germans when he argued that *“they (Nazis) intended to poison your children morally”* and *“taught them to despise freedom and toleration”*.⁸⁸ A month later, Montgomery emphasized that the British had an obligation to reorganise Germany: *“We must re-educate her and teach her people to want to live a free and decent life and to accept the ideals of freedom and justice.”*⁸⁹ A week later from that, Montgomery stated that *“the most important long-term obligation ahead of us to be that of re-educating German youth.”* He noted that the present physical deprivation caused the minds of German youth to be entirely preoccupied with a struggle for existence, leaving no space for political soul-searching.⁹⁰ Montgomery's opinions had significant political weight, and he was the lead figure in introducing the paternal responsibility of the British for re-educating the Germans.

Contrary to Montgomery, the Director of Education in the British zone pointed out that the rot in German textbooks did not start with the Nazis, who were, in fact, but the

⁸⁶ The Scotsman, “Situation in Germany growing worse”, 5.9.1945.

⁸⁷ The Scotsman, “Re-education of German youth”, 5.7.1945.

⁸⁸ The Scotsman, “Re-education in Germany”, 24.8.1945.

⁸⁹ The Scotsman, “Occupation costs”, 26.9.1945.

⁹⁰ The Scotsman, “Germany must get more food and coal”, 3.10.1945.

outcome of the German character. The director referred to a study of 300 books from the time before the Nazis came to power which revealed that there were Nazi signs even in the Weimar textbooks. Subsequently, it gave an impression that the idea of the superiority of the German race was already present in German society before 1933.⁹¹ In that case, the German youth could not entirely shift the blame on to the Nazis.

On 9 February 1946, a special correspondent of *The Scotsman* scrutinized the poor social and economic status of German children and adolescents. The correspondent pointed out that the shortage of adequate buildings for teaching purposes was acute. Many crucial university cities had either suffered heavily or were completely flat. The correspondent added a positive notion that they managed to start the spring term, although winter and the scarcity of coal caused difficulties.⁹² Presumably, the correspondent tried to evoke a feeling of responsibility among the British public by stressing the harmful consequences of the bombing policy on German youth and the future of Germany in general. The predicament of children – regardless of being offspring of ex-enemy nation – appealed to the British national values and identity.

The correspondents were also interested in finding out how individual Germans understood their own role during Hitler's reign. It turned out that many young Germans considered themselves to be victims of treacherous Nazis who abandoned them in a dark place without hope. For example, a young German explained to *The Scotsman* on 9 February 1946 that the Nazis had betrayed him and now he did not know how to fill a spiritual void:

*“We young people have been brought up in the Nazi faith. What can you expect of us? They gave us our ideals and we fought for them. Now we realise that we have been betrayed. It is terrible for us. We have no faith at all, no religion. We do not know what to do.”*⁹³

German youth did not have to argue on one's own thanks to British publisher Victor Gollancz, who gave them a credible voice in his book *In Darkest Germany* (1947). Socialist Gollancz became synonymous with the post-war extra-parliamentary campaign arguing for a more humanitarian approach for dealing with Germany. His book received a lot of attention among the British press even before it was published because many parts

⁹¹ The Scotsman, "Re-Education of Germany", 8.2.1946.

⁹² The Scotsman, "Schools and universities in Germany", 9.2.1946.

⁹³ The Scotsman, "What Germans say", 14.2.1946.

of it had already appeared in newspapers in the form of letters and articles. On 23 January 1947, *The Scotsman* reviewed his book, and it turned out that Gollancz was especially worried about the intellectual starvation of the German youth who were already in despair because of the poor economic situation. Gollancz added a moral viewpoint to the prevailing discourse of *'they have brought it on themselves'* by asking: *"The babies, too"?*⁹⁴ Nevertheless, a lot more difficult question was the fate of young adults under 30 years old.

On 13 March 1947, *The Scotsman* published a report of the delegation from the Standing Conference of National Voluntary Youth Organisations which stated that the German youth was neither despondent nor hopeful but waiting. The uncertainty about the future was constantly creating a malleable material for another Führer. The report noted that those young Germans who got totally carried away with Nazi ideals, lost faith and hope with the defeat of Hitler. The memory of young Germans was short, and they began to long for *'the good old days'* of the Nazi regime:

*"While people over 30 years of age generally try to ignore the Hitler period and to build a sense of continuity from the Weimar Republic to the present day, young people under 30 recall Hitler and look back with longing to the order, material benefits and sheer efficiency of the Nazis. In the light of their present distress, continues the report, they forget the hardships of the Nazi regime and do not realise its enslaving principles."*⁹⁵

The report was especially worried about young German women who felt that life did not have anything to offer them. To tackle this, the delegation endorsed the role of churches for giving German youth a positive faith for living. Already most of the organised youth activities in Germany were being carried out by the churches and charitable organisations. However, the delegation concluded that as long as the living conditions in Germany remained dreadful and its citizens intellectually isolated, young Germans would not adopt new democratic values:

"It is useless to plan the re-education of Germany while her population starves slowly, and hundreds of thousands of her people freeze in cold, damp cellars. A Germany which was broken in spirit needed new values on which to build, and it

⁹⁴ The Scotsman, "Post-War Germany", 23.1.1947.

⁹⁵ The Scotsman, "German youth await another Führer", 13.3.1947.

was hoped that British workers in the social, educational, and cultural fields, would be allowed to make contact with Germans."⁹⁶

The same report was also analysed in the editorial of *The Glasgow Herald* the day after. It reminded that although British public was fairly well informed of the physical conditions in the British zone, it was harder to realise without personal experience how those conditions affected the mental, moral and spiritual state of German children and adolescents. According to the editorial, Germany suffered from a spiritual vacuum which had to be filled, or otherwise, Europe would end up having a spiritually dead people at its heart.⁹⁷

Together with notions of physical suffering, the spiritual aspect enforced the necessity of re-education of Germans for protecting the British way of life. The press discourse considering the German youth was contradictory in nature: on the one hand, they were represented as victims of Nazi ideology and on the other hand, they were the embodiment of the next generation of totalitarian disciples. This bears great importance to the press discourse since the British government was motivated to assure the British public that Nazism was more a discrepancy in Germany's history than an inherent feature in their national character. The press discourse eventually excluded the latter and enforced an optimistic view of the future. The suffering of German youth was therefore harnessed for boosting British morale since it offered an opportunity to show mercy on the ex-enemy's offspring. But more importantly, it allowed the Germans to begin the process of redeeming their place among the European family of democracies. However, Germany's ruined economy posed a dreadful threat to the democratisation process. Therefore, the next chapter moves on to give an account of the relation between the post-war economic factors and the German suffering and victimhood.

⁹⁶ The Scotsman, "German youth await another Führer", 13.3.1947.

⁹⁷ The Glasgow Herald, "Germany's aimless youth", 14.3.1947.

3. Milking a Dead Cow: The Economic Struggle in Germany

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the question of Germany's sovereignty was in the centre of German suffering discourse in the Scottish press. Nevertheless, it all came down to economic questions in the end. The Potsdam Agreement dictated that the German economy had to be decentralised in order to eliminate the excessive concentration of economic power⁹⁸. The debates regarding Germany's economic revival were deeply intermingled with Allied policies of reparations, currency reforms and dismantling of German industry. Furthermore, burning issues were food crises and the fate of the Ruhr, since coal was the most important source of energy.

Germans felt that the occupying Powers were slowly exhausting the German livelihood at the expense of Germany's economy and future. Meanwhile, the British policy of controlling the German economy aimed at making sure that Germany toiled and sweated to pay for the damage she had inflicted on Europe, and to ensure that Germany could never be able to start a new war⁹⁹. However, Holmila points out that a hunger-stricken Germany was fertile soil for anarchy and new radicalism, whether left or right¹⁰⁰. The latter turned out to be lesser of two evils. The Berlin blockade and the division of Germany were political manifestations of an ideological battle, but their roots rested in economic issues. In the end, the British people had to eventually ask themselves "whether they want to pick a carcass or milk a cow" in Germany, as *The Scotsman* stated in May 1947¹⁰¹. Consequently, this chapter is divided into three parts which present different aspects of the economic suffering in Germany: the first subchapter discusses the food crises, the second reparations and the dismantling German industry, and the third the Berlin blockade and currency reform.

⁹⁸ The Scotsman, "Potsdam plan for Germany", 3.8.1945.

⁹⁹ The Scotsman, "Exacting reparations", 30.5.1945.

¹⁰⁰ Holmila 2011, 87.

¹⁰¹ The Scotsman, "Plan for Germany", 14.5.1947.

3.1 “Democracy Without Bread Is Like Walking on Thin Ice”

Despite the peace, Germans found themselves in a situation where almost every basic commodity was in short supply and uncertainty about the future was prevailing. This also got the attention of the British authorities and correspondents in Germany. Consequently, topics of inadequate food rations, famines, epidemics and lack of housing filled the newspapers in Britain. Holmila has argued that the British press adopted a relatively empathetic attitude towards Germans on the subject of famines and epidemics in post-war Germany¹⁰². This sticks out especially when compared to other problems Germans had to face. Partly this is explained with Britain’s self-interest since an epidemic that started in Germany would have most likely spread to Britain. However, one should take into account the fact that the suffering discourse was for the most part based on the idea of fairness and therefore the suffering of Germans was typically represented as a part of a wider European one.

In a post-war European setting, the priority number one for the Allies was the establishment of a just pecking order. On 23 May 1945, Major-General Warren Draper expressed his personal observation in *The Scotsman* that Germans were in fact better nourished than many people in Britain. He said that Germany was not in immediate danger of famine, because they had sufficient food supplies for at least two months. Draper stressed that Germans were not going to get more food than people in the liberated countries. He admitted that there was not enough food and transportation in the world to meet Europe’s huge demand and therefore even liberated countries were bound to endure severe deprivation. Draper also pointed out that Allied occupying forces had managed to prevent large scale spread of a typhus epidemic despite harsh living conditions in Germany.¹⁰³ Two months later, *The Glasgow Herald* had an article which gave a very different picture of the disease situation in Germany:

*“The conditions in which to fight epidemics in the capital (Berlin) are appalling, and the battle against disease that must be fought here in the coming months will be a struggle as bitterly hard as any campaign of the war.”*¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Holmila 2011, 86.

¹⁰³ *The Scotsman*, “Germans’ health excellent”, 23.5.1945.

¹⁰⁴ *The Glasgow Herald*, “Epidemics in Berlin”, 26.7.1945.

The article stated that the high death rate of the current epidemic of dysentery was closely connected to general undernourishment and poor living conditions.¹⁰⁵ Generally, the Allies were held responsible for stopping infectious diseases from spreading, since Spanish flu – the deadly aftermath of the First World War – was still present in the minds of many Europeans. Now wrecked Germany – and especially Berlin – was a ticking time bomb of becoming the centre of infectious diseases, and therefore it posed a threat to Britain and the rest of Europe as well.¹⁰⁶

For the British authorities, the primary concern was the safety of Allied troops and personnel working in Germany, not necessarily the well-being of the Germans. This in turn affected the discourse regarding Allied responsibility towards the Germans: the policies of rebuilding, prevention of diseases and feeding Germans were presented in a way which gave the impression that the material aid would benefit all sides in the long run, not only the Germans. This was important for the British government because British taxpayers were those who in reality financed Germany's recovery. This comes apparent in a statement given by Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin on 11 July 1946 when he noted that the British zone would cost the British taxpayer 80 million pounds in the course of 1946¹⁰⁷. Consequently, newspapers underlined that the British authorities in Germany had worked hard to make British efforts apparent to the Germans:

*“Since the cessation of hostilities, as the British Commander has indicated, we have been active in endeavouring to ensure that the population are fed and sheltered, and that disease is kept at bay. These efforts must be apparent to the people. They represent the first stage in rehabilitation.”*¹⁰⁸

As the food crisis deepened in September 1945, the wider economic crisis in Germany began to receive more attention from the Scottish press. On 5 September 1945, *The Scotsman's* editorial noted that *“unemployment in Germany has reached alarming proportions”* and to survive, *“Germany must manufacture, export, and import”*, otherwise she could not feed her citizens. According to the editorial, the underlying problem was that Germany's industry and trade were virtually at a standstill. Germans had requested permissions to start industries, but these permissions had been rejected because *“there are no official directives as to what is to be regarded as a peaceful*

¹⁰⁵ The Glasgow Herald, “Epidemics in Berlin”, 26.7.1945.

¹⁰⁶ Frank 2008, 129.

¹⁰⁷ The Scotsman, “Britain's policy for Germany”, 11.7.1946.

¹⁰⁸ The Scotsman, “German democracy”, 7.8.1945.

industry". The editorial argued that if general permission was granted for most German industries to start work, under the strictest supervision, Germany could reach an adequate level of self-sufficiency in a few months, and therefore save British taxpayers' money. However, Germany's industrial capacity for efficient reparations production was very weak, which evoked discontent in Germany's neighbours who expected Germany to make up years of pillage and oppression. Therefore, all surplus production was seized by the Allies and diverted to meet the needs of Germany's neighbours.¹⁰⁹

The oncoming winter aroused many difficult questions regarding the responsibility of Allies in warding off starvation, diseases and anarchy. On 8 September 1945, *The Scotsman* argued that the Germans had evaded their own responsibility because they got used to being ordered by an authority. Ironically, the post-war continuation of the authoritarian system was inevitable since the Allies had firm control over the German economy. This contradiction caused the Allies to be extra careful in presenting their intentions and motives for providing aid to Germans. The Allies knew that they were to blame if too many Germans died from starvation or diseases during the winter as the following quote reveals: "*If there must be starvation, it is right that it should be the Germans who will starve, but it would be disastrous if starvation was regarded as inevitable.*"¹¹⁰ Consequently, inaction would have been interpreted as a retaliatory action in Germany and it could have stirred violent outbursts.

Later in September 1945, J.B. Hynd, the minister responsible for administration in the British zone of Germany, pointed out that the Germans were below the hunger line and people were dying from hunger and disease at an alarming rate. He stated that this was due to the absence of a coordinated Allied policy. He predicted that a chance of avoiding a major catastrophe during the coming winter in Germany appeared to be slender. According to him, this was a result of the wholesale expulsions of Germans from eastern territories.¹¹¹ These transfers of population were envisaged by the Potsdam Agreement months before the war ended. However, the implementation of the Potsdam plan had setbacks and it seemed that Allied powers had not fully considered how to provide food and shelter for millions of Germans coming from the east.¹¹² As the situation soon

¹⁰⁹ The Scotsman, "Situation in Germany growing worse", 5.9.1945.

¹¹⁰ The Scotsman, "German problems", 8.9.1945.

¹¹¹ The Scotsman, "State of Germany", 18.9.1945.

¹¹² The expulsion question is discussed in more depth in chapter 5.

appeared to escalate into chaos in Germany, the British authorities tried to harness the credibility of powerful public figures for strengthening the public discourse favourably.¹¹³

Along with Winston Churchill and Dwight D. Eisenhower, one notable figure in post-war British media discourses was Field-Marshal Bernard Montgomery. On 3 November 1945, *The Scotsman* published his interview where he gave the impression that the British public had obtained a view in which Germans were getting off too lightly and he rushed to correct this false impression. He referred to the dominant narrative in which culprits for the suffering of Germans were Germans themselves:

*“It is not part of my plan to pamper the Germans – far from it. They brought this disaster upon themselves, and they must face the consequences. On the other hand, I am not prepared to see widespread famine and disease sweep through Europe, as it inevitably must, if we allow hundreds and thousands of Germans to die.”*¹¹⁴

Montgomery emphasised that *allowing* Germans to die was not so much dependent on the amount of food itself but getting the food where it was most needed. This turned out to be a difficult task; railways and inland waterways were severely damaged and especially coal was in short supply. Montgomery assured that the economic collapse of Western Germany was inevitable if Germany failed to increase its coal production. He stated that the greatest problem in the Ruhr was absenteeism because miners rather tried to gather food for their families than work in mines. Montgomery, therefore, insisted that the food supply in the Ruhr had to be adequate regardless of prevailing logistical obstacles. Furthermore, he explicitly tried to soothe the minds of the British public by arguing that the decision to provide food for Germans in the Ruhr did not affect rations in Britain.¹¹⁵

On 20 November 1945, *The Glasgow Herald* had an article which argued that some British quarters suggested they should reduce their rations still further to enable larger supplies to Germany. This caused political contradictions between the status of Germany and other European countries; was it justified to aid Germany over countries which were impoverished due to German aggression? The article emphasised that there was nothing vindictive in British policy towards the German people.¹¹⁶ Like many times before, the

¹¹³ Holmila 2011, 173.

¹¹⁴ *The Scotsman*, “Germany must get more food and coal”, 3.10.1945.

¹¹⁵ *The Scotsman*, “Germany must get more food and coal”, 3.10.1945.

¹¹⁶ *The Glasgow Herald*, “Our food and Europe’s”, 20.10.1945.

article reminded the British audience that Germans had lost a war initiated by leaders whom they themselves placed in power and supported.

On 28 February 1946, *The Scotsman* wrote that the British government could not have done more for the German civilians, without seriously weakening Britain in turn.¹¹⁷ The article highlighted that Germany was at the end of the queue and their interests came last, as stated earlier. However, this did not mean that Germans were altogether abandoned – at least on the rhetorical level. One week later, both *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald* pointed out that regardless of the grim situation, it was no part of Britain's policy to allow the German people to starve. The explanation given for the low food rations in Germany was the gravity of the world food situation which was not for the British alone to solve.¹¹⁸

Nevertheless, this inability of the British to provide food rations on a secure level for Germans, not only jeopardized their reputation as a fair patron, but also posed threats to much more essential long-term political objectives: “*We know full well that if the German people are to work, and to be led along the paths of democracy, they must be fed*”¹¹⁹.” From this particular quote one can see the contradictory nature of food-related discourse; feeding the Germans was not the foremost priority of British, but on the other hand, the democratic and economic development of Germany rested upon the fact that Germans were able to meet their basic needs.

At the beginning of 1946, the risk of anarchy breaking out in Germany was regarded to be high. On 7 March 1946, Montgomery commented in *The Glasgow Herald* that although British authorities had to wrestle with all sort of problems, the food situation had the gravest impact on the physical and mental condition of Germans. He warned that anarchy could break out if the suffering of Germans overcame their habits of discipline. He also argued that “*winning of the battle of winter will increase German confidence in British administration, and that spirit is of great importance to the restoration of Germany as a useful and constructive member of the European family.*”¹²⁰ Therefore, the *battle of winter* became a symbol of German trust in British administration and it

¹¹⁷ The Scotsman, “Germany’s rations”, 28.2.1946.

¹¹⁸ The Scotsman, “Food policy in British zone of Germany”, 7.3.1946; The Glasgow Herald, “Will not let Germans starve”, 7.3.1946.

¹¹⁹ The Scotsman, “Food policy in British zone of Germany”, 7.3.1946

¹²⁰ The Glasgow Herald, “Battle of the winter”, 7.3.1946.

embodied great importance for presenting Germany as a politically viable state as long as the de-Nazification succeeded.

A day later, on 8 March 1946, General Robertson noted that despite teachings of this winter, the next winter might be even grimmer. He also expressed his worry of discontented Germans who would be ready prey for politically undesired influences, chiefly Nazism, but also communism. Robertson assured that all necessary measures were put in operation, although it was at the same time difficult to convince the Germans that it was really the case.¹²¹ Consequently, the Germans were often portrayed as ungrateful people who failed to understand the British point of view. Still, newspapers gave frequently space for a German perspective, although it included criticism of British efforts.

On 8 November 1946, *The Scotsman* reported that the British government was not willing to increase their assistance for Germans at the expense of the British people anymore. The government assured that it was a hard decision to make since Britain as a nation has traditionally expressed humanitarian feelings for other nations and even former enemies. However, the government appealed to economic facts which indicated the worsening of the domestic food position. Even so, the exportation of food to Germany was considered only as short-term relief. The real challenge was the establishment of co-operation among the other occupying powers. It was believed that the integration of all the zones would quickly set things right. Especially the Soviet Union was accused of flouting of the Potsdam Agreement to treat Germany as an economic unit.¹²²

The Glasgow Herald also had an article which took a stand on Potsdam Agreement on the same day. William Beveridge, a well-known economist, stated that the decisions made in Potsdam had never been fulfilled since the exchange of goods between the Western zones and the Soviet zone did not happen on the ground. The British zone was the one to severely suffer from this political inaction because it was unable to produce its own resources. Beveridge predicted that the lack of food production in the British zone would bring far greater suffering to the German population this winter than the last. This was due to drained food reserves and overcrowding which increased the spread of infectious

¹²¹ The Scotsman, "Practical starvation for 10 000 000 Germans", 8.3.1946.

¹²² The Scotsman, "German food crisis", 8.11.1946.

diseases. Still, Beveridge thought that British rations should not be reduced. He enforced the view that Britain came first, but only because it was beneficial for Germans as well:

*“A sacrifice to mitigate present malnutrition and possible starvation in Germany might reintroduce malnutrition into Britain, and would certainly, by lowering industrial production, delay that recovery on which, in the long run, Germany also depends.”*¹²³

The small output of German industry was chiefly due to shortages of coal. On 18 September 1945, *The Scotsman* suggested that the fuel problem could be to a great extent alleviated by increasing production in the Ruhr coalfields. However, in the absence of an Allied decision about the future of the Ruhr, the vast majority of them were lying idle. There was also a lack of miners which was due to the food crisis and housing problems, as stated earlier.¹²⁴ *The Scotsman* wrote again about the coal situation over a year later on 2 December 1946. At that moment, coal was presented as the core reason for the economic crisis in Germany.¹²⁵ The same message was repeated two months later on 28 January 1947. The correspondent pointed out that almost all German coal came from the Ruhr which underlined its significance for transport, industries and domestic heating.¹²⁶ In the press discourse, the appalling living conditions and insufficient food rations in Germany were often linked to coal. The situation was frustrating for the British government since the solution to the problem seemed to be at hand, but the implementation of the Potsdam Agreement required sacrifices in the British public economy.

In spring 1947, almost two years after the war had ended, the food crises showed no signs of subsiding, on the contrary. For example, the British officials in Germany were convinced that the prevailing state of affairs was indeed the most serious crisis so far.¹²⁷ The anxiety in Germany reached a point in which the premier of the North-Rhine Westphalian State, Rudolf Amelunxen, appealed to the former U.S. president Herbert Hoover and begged him to advocate prompt actions for securing the food supply. He stressed that the avoidance of chaos in Europe depended on the industrial viability of the

¹²³ The Glasgow Herald, "Hunger in Germany", 8.11.1946.

¹²⁴ The Scotsman, "State of Germany", 18.9.1945.

¹²⁵ The Scotsman, "Germany's economic crisis", 2.12.1946.

¹²⁶ The Scotsman, "Coal the root cause of West German problems", 28.1.1947.

¹²⁷ The Scotsman, "Ruhr food crisis", 28.3.1947.

Ruhr.¹²⁸ Amelunxen also pointed out that although Germans were grateful for all the aid they received from the British people, the German worker did not want to live on the taxes of the British people anymore, as they had stated almost a year ago.¹²⁹ The main hindrance appeared to be the Allied economic control which averted Germans from administering their own domestic affairs. However, the British authorities were not overly enthusiastic about German self-governance just yet, as the previous chapter has demonstrated. This caused a great deal of frustration in Germany, which in turn was interpreted as grumbling in Britain.

Editorial writing in *The Glasgow Herald* on 14 May 1947 argued that a swift integration of the British and U.S. zones would enable an equitable distribution of food between these two zones. The British zone was overcrowded and lacked agriculture, whereas the U.S. zone was less congested and produced more food. However, the biggest disturbance in the food supply was due to the agriculturally productive eastern territories ending up in the hands of the Soviets. The editorial warned that also U.S. zone would eventually fall if malnourished and dispirited German workers were expected to mine vital coal in the Ruhr.¹³⁰ Therefore, the British zone was presented as an irreplaceable link between other zones – namely U.S. and French – and its well-being affected directly its neighbours. What remained unsaid was that also Britain's economy depended heavily on the German coal.

Yet, the integration of Western and Eastern zones was not in sight, and the British occupation authorities had to set out their stall emphatically on strikes and grumbling in Germany. On 21 May 1947, *The Scotsman* reported of a blunt warning that “*strikes and other demonstrations would not have the slightest influence on imports of food*”. British authorities reminded that especially the Germans who were in responsible positions, should face realities and carry out their obligations to their country and fellow citizens. From the British point of view, the setbacks in Germany had been due to the worldwide shortage of food, which in turn was the direct consequence of the war, as mentioned earlier. Therefore, German recovery demanded more than just Allied efforts. The British authorities emphasized that it was useless and childish to lay the blame for current privations solely on Allied shoulders.¹³¹ The core message was that the Germans must

¹²⁸ The Glasgow Herald, “Germans appeal to U.S.A.”, 4.5.1947.

¹²⁹ The Scotsman, “German Premier’s appeal to U.S.”, 14.5.1947.

¹³⁰ The Glasgow Herald, “Crisis in Germany”, 14.5.1947.

¹³¹ The Scotsman, “Allied Chiefs’ warning to Germans”, 21.5.1947.

stop grumbling and bravely accept their responsibilities and work hard to earn their salvation.

However, not all agreed on the above-mentioned. A special correspondent of *The Scotsman* defended Germans and reminded that “*regardless of what some British spokesmen have said, there still existed Germans who were fundamentally good-willing and desired for close co-operative relations with the British*”¹³². From the German standpoint, the state of affairs was due to a network of international political and economic quarrels which left Germans as bystanders. Without the power to take an active role in food crises, Germans had to live under a constant strain:

*“There is no sharp, sudden, overwhelming catastrophe, but a dragging, nagging process of decay which breaks the heart and spirit of its victim before it finally destroys his body. This process has now been going on in Germany for two years, and the present ‘crisis’ is not so much a sign that living conditions are a great deal worse than before as an indication that the population, with vanishing reserves, is becoming daily less capable of supporting this continued strain.”*¹³³

One phenomenon of the unsolved food situation was hunger strikes. On 16 January 1948, *The Scotsman* reported that over 24 000 steel and chemical workers in the Ruhr staged a 12 hours hunger strike. Apparently, there existed varying conceptions of who was responsible for dealing with the situation. German Trade Union leader, Hans Boeckler, demanded granting full executive power to the German authorities, or otherwise the responsibility was British to take. Whereas the head of the Food and Agriculture Section of the British Control Commission, Guy Hughes, noted that the full responsible already rested on German shoulders. According to Hughes, the problems with rations stemmed from improper implementation of ration collections, which was not a British liability.¹³⁴

A day later, *The Scotsman* reported that the situation escalated to a 24-hour general strike of 140 000 workers in protest against starvation rations in the Ruhr area. Lord Pakenham, Minister for responsible for the British zone of Germany, stated that it was not possible to increase food imports to Germany. In his view, the current situation was a test for the co-operation of German democracy. Like Hughes, Pakenham agreed that food was principally a German task. Pakenham admitted that the Military Government prepared

¹³² The Scotsman, “The lessons of the Ruhr”, 23.5.1947.

¹³³ The Scotsman, “The lessons of the Ruhr”, 23.5.1947.

¹³⁴ The Scotsman, ““Hunger” strikes in the Ruhr”, 16.1.1948.

the framework for food rationing and therefore they took a share of the responsibility, but the main burden remained on the German authorities. In this unpredictable situation, German Trade Union leaders expressed their concern regarding the effects of the food shortage on the impetus of neo-Fascist propaganda. In this case, the Germans utilized Britain's straitened circumstance for presenting the worst-case scenario if food crises were not dealt vigorously:

*"It is very easy for a Nazi to remind workers to-day that they were comparatively well-off under Hitler, and to suggest that Britain is trying to wipe out the German nation by starvation."*¹³⁵

First real glimpses of hope for permanently tackling the food crises emerged in November 1948. Although winter was approaching, *The Scotsman* wrote that "*Western Germany faces a winter with confidence instead of fear*". The article compared the present situation to circumstances which were prevailing one year ago. The conclusion was that a tremendous advance had been made. Most of the German workers also agreed that life in Western Germany was much better than half a year ago. However, popular discontent brewed under the surface because of high prices and inflation. Now Germans had to face a situation in which food was plenty in supply, but people could not afford to buy it. *The Scotsman* speculated that the only way for Germans to get out of this vicious circle was the establishment of the *de facto* German government in Western Germany.¹³⁶

In conclusion, the press discourse revolving around an Allied obligation to feed Germans and prevent epidemics was based on a representation of Allied pursuit for the common good, while the acceptability of Allied policy depended on the future death count. The starvation in Germany was something that British authorities wanted to avoid, but more important was to make the British public convinced that Britain was not engaged in retaliatory action and Germans received aid only because it benefitted Britain on the long run. The British government emphasised that the food and coal situation did not entirely depend on Britain but international politics. The Allies acknowledged Germany's production potential, which was one of the biggest on the European scale. Any disturbances or developments in Germany's economic life would also affect its neighbours. Even though post-war Britain was struggling with similar problems herself,

¹³⁵ *The Scotsman*, "140 000 Ruhr workers on strike", 17.1.1948.

¹³⁶ *The Scotsman*, "The new order in Germany", 29.11.1948.

the calamities of Germany still received plenty of attention in the British press, which was mostly based on a tacit economic dependence between Britain and Germany.

3.2 The Dismantling of German Livelihood

On 19 June 1945, *The Scotsman* wrote that the Reparations Commission would concentrate upon evolving a realistic and foolproof plan which avoided the mistakes made after the last war when the imposition of huge monetary reparations contributed to the creation of the economic crisis in the twenties and early thirties.¹³⁷ Similarly, the editorial pointed out on 3 August 1945 that the same mistake which was made when Germany was allowed an army was not to be repeated. The primary emphasis in re-organising the German economy was given to the development of agriculture and peaceful domestic industries.¹³⁸ In practise, this meant eliminating Germany's war potential by rigidly controlling and restricting the production of metals, chemicals and machinery. All productive capacity which was not needed for permitted production was to be removed or destroyed in accordance with the reparation plan.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, the dismantling was not always implemented as Britain expected it to be done. For example, one of the biggest chemical concerns, the I. G. Farben Industrie, was still running in October 1945.¹⁴⁰

In Germany, reparations were regarded as an impossible task which would cripple the German economy for many years to come. Germans knew this from their own experience as the economic downturn in Germany during 1920s and 1930s was chiefly due to ill-considered reparation policy of the First World War. This viewpoint began to gain support in Britain as well. "*The German who sees his factories being dismantled for reparations sees his means of livelihood disappear,*" as the editor of *The Scotsman* wrote on 28 December 1946. The editorial was convinced that the Allies would have been more successful if they had not adopted a fallacious policy of reparations, which prevented German recovery after the Second World War.¹⁴¹ Now even in Britain, which in principle benefitted from reparations, the public opinion began to harden, because reparations

¹³⁷ The Scotsman, "Making Germany pay", 19.6.1945.

¹³⁸ The Scotsman, "Berlin decisions", 3.8.1945.

¹³⁹ The Scotsman, "Potsdam plan for Germany", 3.8.1945.

¹⁴⁰ The Scotsman, "Hitlerites hiding in dark corners", 8.10.1945.

¹⁴¹ The Scotsman, "Germany to-day", 28.12.1946.

prolonged the distress of the Germans and therefore did not allow Britain to withdraw her aid from the Germans.

On 14 May 1947, *The Scotsman* wrote that the whole question of dismantling and reparations threatened to become the most explosive element in relations between the Germans and the British authorities. The Potsdam Agreement on reparations and demilitarisation required that all war plants had to be dismantled and all equipment convertible for general purposes had to be distributed as reparations. Consequently, Western Germany was affected far more severely than the East, because a high proportion of German heavy industry was concentrated in the Ruhr and the Rhineland. The Potsdam Agreement was criticised for being hastily done, leaving the level of German industry figure far too low. Moreover, it was fixed on the assumption of an economically unified Germany. Since the present division of the country forced Western Germany to import food instead of getting it from Eastern Germany, it became even more evident in the public debate that a higher industrial output should be allowed in the West.¹⁴²

By the end of 1947, the problems of the Potsdam Agreement became a burning issue in the Scottish press. On 10 October 1947, the editorial of *The Glasgow Herald* emphatically criticised the overly literal interpretation of the Potsdam Agreement. The editorial pointed out that circumstances of today were considerably different from those ruling when the Potsdam Agreement was signed. First of all, post-war Germany was not a Great Power anymore and it did not have a military potential to start a new war. Secondly, the Potsdam Agreement was based on the assumption that Germany was to remain a single economic unit. Instead, Germany was “*divided into an overpopulated industrial area and a largely agricultural enclave economically thirled to a group of States with Communist Governments*”, as the editorial expressed. Finally, Europe suffered from under-production, due to a shortage of basic materials and a lack of finished steel, machinery and transport vehicles.¹⁴³ The main point was that while the British authorities tried to convince everyone that they were helping the Germans to support themselves, they simultaneously employed methods which could not but add to German unemployment and economic decline.

¹⁴² *The Scotsman*, “Plan for Germany”, 14.5.1947.

¹⁴³ *The Glasgow Herald*, “Destruction or production”, 10.10.1947.

A week later, *The Scotsman* wrote that only a few subjects in the whole range of German problems have been surrounded with “*such a haze of misunderstanding and wishful thinking as the dismantling of German industrial plant for capital reparations.*” The editorial argued that the effect of dismantling on German political relations and the general morale of the German workers was bound to be bad. The figurative language of the following quote elaborately presents the key problem of dismantling; it could permanently damage the German economy if the executors did not know what they were doing:

“The surgeons are going to carve of what they consider its “surplus” flesh. The surgeons (their anatomical studies having apparently been confined to the bald structure of the skeleton) are confident that they will avoid removing a whole limb or breaking a major bone and that the patient will survive and even prosper. For that sake of Europe, one can only hope that if they cannot be prevented from operating before further study, they may have beginner’s luck, and that their knives will not strike through some vital organ by mistake.”¹⁴⁴

Later in October, *The Glasgow Herald* reported a speech given by Foreign Secretary Bevin who stressed that the fundamental principle of the Potsdam Agreement was that Germany should be treated as an economic unit. However, this was not the case, and Bevin noted that they knew very little of what was going on in the Soviet zone regarding reparations. He admitted that no current reparations could be done on the present level of industry to which they had agreed. Moreover, since almost all of the raw material and food had to be imported to Germany to provide current reparations, Britain found herself in a position where she was financing the reparations mostly by herself.¹⁴⁵ Not surprisingly, this was an unbearable situation for the British government.

Bevin’s arguments were analysed by the editorial of *The Glasgow Herald* in the same issue. The editor argued that regardless of the opinion of Germans, the British government was at least taking the problem seriously, and discussions in Parliament showed genuine concern alike for Germany’s welfare and for the contribution that Germany may make towards the general reconstruction of Europe. However, the editorial was worried about the competitiveness of British industries if some German industries were allowed to compete freely. The editorial pointed out that the livelihood of Germans had been for

¹⁴⁴ *The Scotsman*, “Effect on German industry”, 17.10.1947.

¹⁴⁵ *The Glasgow Herald*, “Britain’s policy in Germany”, 28.10.1947.

generations dependent on continuous and expanding industrial output in the Ruhr, and any restrictive policies were undoubtedly a huge disappointment for the Germans. Still, the editorial wanted to remind that their present plight was not exclusively to be blamed on the Western Powers and not even the Nazis but the Soviets as well.

*“As Mr Bevin pointed out, apart from their own contribution as followers of Hitler, there have been other factors – such as the arbitrary partition of Germany enforced by Russian policy, the appropriation of the Eastern estates, and the expulsion of Eastern Germans into the Western zone without a corresponding release of the foodstuffs from the Russian zone.”*¹⁴⁶

Over a year later, the Ruhr was again in the spotlight. On 31 December 1948, *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald* wrote about the Ruhr agreement which was imposed on the Germans in the Western occupation zones as a condition for permitting them to establish the FRG. In turn, the Western Powers gained an access to control the production and distribution of coal and steel under the International Authority for the Ruhr. Consequently, the West German economy was mostly controlled by foreign countries, much to the dismay of the Germans.¹⁴⁷ *The Scotsman* reported that most of the German criticism originated from wounded pride. Many recognised Germans felt that all their strenuous efforts over the past three years to establish themselves as trustworthy political partners for the Western Allies had been wilfully ignored because of the political tug of war over the Ruhr. Britain was seen to be holding fast to their colonial conceptions of 1945.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, the editorial of *The Glasgow Herald* reminded that although trust was good, control was better, since the Ruhr was basically a synonym for Germany’s war potential:

*“After the Ruhr has twice in 25 years been used as the arsenal for aggression, the Germans cannot expect to be freed from restraints; and while the Western Allies trust some of the German leaders in their attempt to create a peaceful democracy, success is not yet assured, and meanwhile some supervision is in the interests of both parties.”*¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ The Glasgow Herald, “German dilemma”, 28.10.1947.

¹⁴⁷ Yoder 1955, 345.

¹⁴⁸ The Scotsman, “Germany’s pride wounded”, 31.12.1948

¹⁴⁹ The Glasgow Herald, “Ruhr reaction”, 31.12.1948.

In conclusion, the lion's share of the blame for the economic problems in Germany was allocated to the Soviet Union in the newspaper discourse. Another perspective was that reparations and the dismantling of German factories were meant to be a protective measure for securing peace in Europe. Those who opposed the shutdown of German industry regarded it as a folly since it meant the destruction of a considerable part of the productive capacity which Europe was desperately trying to restore. In a sense, the reparations and dismantling created a vicious circle which fed discontent in Germany and Britain as well.

3.3 Battle of Berlin

The Berlin blockade was one of the key events in the latter half of 1948 regarding the economic and political viewpoint of German post-war suffering. Although the process of Germany's division to two separate states had been running for some time, the currency reform that took place on 20 June 1948 in the three Western zones of Germany was considered to be a crucial tipping point¹⁵⁰. The currency reform meant that different currencies were used in the Soviet and Western zones. At the same time, the currency reform was the Western Powers' attempt to integrate Germany into Western Europe.

On 19 June 1948, the editorial of *The Glasgow Herald* wrote that the complexity of currency reform was evident already before the fighting had ceased in Europe. The British experts mostly knew what should be done, but because of the prevailing political circumstances, it was necessary first to try to get an agreement for all four zones. The problem proved to be mainly political; for example, France had objected to the integration of Germany even in the West. Furthermore, the editorial argued that the instability of local currency had been a niggling problem in Western occupation zones for the past three years. The primary cause of the problem was that the Germans were sceptical if currency would hold its value.¹⁵¹ Likewise, *The Scotsman* argued that the absence of confidence in the mark had been at the root of the reluctance of the German farmer to exchange his products for money. This was explained to be one of the main causes of the food crises

¹⁵⁰ The Scotsman, "Days of tension in Germany", 17.6.1948.

¹⁵¹ The Glasgow Herald, "German currency", 19.6.1948.

in the Ruhr.¹⁵² Therefore, the restoration of German confidence in the currency was an indispensable part of the task of reducing the burden on the occupying Powers.

The Glasgow Herald had also another article on the same issue which argued that the separate currency reform would destroy Germany's trade relations within the country since interzonal trade would become trade between two separate states. The article pointed out that this was "*a breach of the Potsdam decision and the control mechanism for Germany which envisaged the treatment of Germany as an economic whole.*"¹⁵³ Therefore, the currency reform completed the splitting of Germany in the eyes of the British public.

The Berlin blockade officially started on 24 June 1948. On the following day, *The Scotsman's* correspondent declared that "*Berlin is now in the throes of open economic warfare.*" According to the correspondent, the Russian action created a virtual economic blockade of the British, American and French sectors of Berlin: "*The closing of the railway link means that no more food, coal, and other goods are now coming into Berlin from the West to supply the two million Germans living in the Western sectors.*" The following quote shows how Berliners in the Western sector were represented as ideological defenders against communism and the view is very different when compared to a situation three years ago:

*"They will have abandoned to a fate which cannot be anything but extremely unpleasant a large number of German civilians who have shown a remarkable personal courage and staunch support of Western democratic principles in the face of a constantly hovering Soviet terror and intimidation." [...] They have learnt it not from the textbooks of Allied "re-educators", but in a real struggle for free expression and independent survival against the unceasing pressure of totalitarian forces on their daily lives."*¹⁵⁴

The correspondent also emphasised that the Berliners who supported democratic principles included not only the prominent political leaders of the democratic parties but ordinary Germans; trade unionist, newspapermen and municipal officials. The toughness of the ordinary people and the courageous energy of their democratic political leaders was said to be "*the most inspiring features in the bleak and sordid struggle between*

¹⁵² The Scotsman, "German currency", 19.6.1948.

¹⁵³ The Glasgow Herald, "Russian stop all traffic", 19.6.1948.

¹⁵⁴ The Scotsman, "West Berlin faces blockade", 25.6.1948.

erstwhile Allies which has come to be called the Battle of Berlin".¹⁵⁵ However, the praising of Berliners had also a deeper political meaning: Berlin and its citizens had to be presented in a way which supported the conception of Germans being capable of adopting a democratic mindset. Consequently, it would be much harder for the Western Powers to leave Berlin, which in turn would mean that the USSR had obtained a major political victory.

The Berlin blockade finally ended on 12 May 1949, and *The Glasgow Herald* wrote a day earlier that Western Berlin businesses were again able to export their products to elsewhere in Western Germany. However, trade with the Eastern sector of Berlin and the Eastern zone remained difficult, because currency exchanges were not permitted.¹⁵⁶ The editorial of *The Scotsman* concluded that from an economic and political point of view the Soviet blockade had been a failure. The editorial gave credit to the Berliners who "*by their morale, have assisted the Western Powers to defeat Russia's policy.*" Furthermore, the editorial tried to contemplate whether the blockade had promoted communism or weakened it in the eyes of the Germans:

*"Russia may seek to curry favour with the Germans by proposing that all four Powers should withdraw from Germany. This is a policy which Britain, France, and the United States are expected to oppose firmly. It may, however, win Russia some support in German circles. On the other hand, the Germans know that Russia did not scruple to attempt to starve Berlin out, and they are not likely to believe that she has abandoned her policy of converting Germany to Communism by fair means or foul."*¹⁵⁷

The Scottish public soon noticed that the demands of the economic unity of Germany declared in Potsdam were based on wishful thinking and they were quickly buried under a political zero-sum game between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers. In addition, the disorganisation of the German currency was presented to be in causality with the heavy burden falling upon the British taxpayers. In the context of the Berlin blockade, Germans were presented as politically capable of adopting a democratic mindset, and the symbolic value of Berlin rested upon this representation. Without a doubt, this was in direct causality with the escalation of Cold War rhetoric. In any case, the suffering of

¹⁵⁵ The Scotsman, "West Berlin faces blockade", 25.6.1948.

¹⁵⁶ The Glasgow Herald, "The blockade ends", 11.5.1949.

¹⁵⁷ The Scotsman, "Blockade ends", 11.5.1949.

Germans was drawn as a parallel to the rise of Soviet hegemony in East Germany. In other words, a large proportion of the German population was once again subjugated to a totalitarian rule, only this time, the shape of moustache was different.

4. A Rotten Apple Spoils the Bunch: Nazi Atrocities and Collective Guilt

Apart from political and economic issues, the newspaper discourse also emphasised the legal and moral aspects, that is; how Germans showed, or should have shown, collective guilt for Nazi wartime atrocities? A wide consensus prevailed among contemporaries that the Germans were even supposed to suffer to a certain extent and express collective guilt for the deliberate extermination of millions of people.¹⁵⁸ Donald Bloxham points out that there was an international consensus that something should be done to punish someone in the German hierarchy. Furthermore, the British vengefulness was predicated upon the fact that they had been plunged once again into a world war. The last straw was the discovery of the German concentration camps along with their decimated inmate populations in the spring of 1945. The ‘Hunnish’ qualities of militarism and aggression were shown in their true light, it was held, as Bloxham argues.¹⁵⁹

However, a closer examination of perpetrator and guilt discourses in the source material revealed that the question of collective guilt embodied several differing voices and opinions – both pro- and anti-German – which challenged the victor’s right to demand punishment for the German nation as a whole. The German suffering discourse was based on a conceptual separation of ‘the bad Germans’ from ‘the good Germans’. Nazi leaders who committed war crimes were relatively easy to categorize and impose a legal punishment on, but an average German and his guilt was much harder to treat. The retrospective legislation of Nuremberg trials and internment of German civilians were not morally trouble-free issues either. As a multinational attempt to prosecute the leaders of a criminal regime for acts of state, Nuremberg was a watershed, and it redefined and stretched the limits of international law and justice¹⁶⁰. With respect to these observations, the themes of collective guilt, victor’s justice and internment of Germans will be discussed, respectively.

¹⁵⁸ Streim 2007, 91.

¹⁵⁹ Bloxham 2001, 7.

¹⁶⁰ Bloxham 2001, 1.

4.1 Mised Germans?

Antero Holmila points out that it was important for the British government to bring the wickedness of the Nazis to the attention of the British public in the form of newspaper stories and photographs because it graphically demonstrated the evil against which the war had been waged and gave moral justification. The revelations from the Nazi concentration camps provided empirical first-hand evidence of Nazi wickedness – something that many knew but lacked solid proof. German aggression was enough to invoke hatred towards them *per se*, but the attitudes hardened significantly when the Allied media began revealing eyewitness accounts of concentration camps and the full scale of Nazi cruelty emerged¹⁶¹. Together with many years of anti-German propaganda, the British public was certainly very receptive to the dominant narrative of ‘the Hun’ which was ultimately manifested with the horrors of concentration camps.¹⁶² The press discourse regarding guilt, however, was dependent on knowing how much ordinary Germans knew about the deliberate extermination of civilians.

The British press and public alike generally considered Germans to be aware of concentration camps way before liberating Allied armies marched on German soil. Nazi authorities tried to keep the Holocaust a secret as long as possible, but eventually, the whole operation reached a point in which hiding became impossible.¹⁶³ Norbert Frei points out that even though the gassing and killing of Jews were tried to be kept in secrecy, tens of thousands of Germans knew about it and presumably millions had at least the opportunity to obtain this knowledge.¹⁶⁴ Gregor Streim points out that the Nazis were able to execute their extermination policies against Jews and other minorities because of the prevailing consensus between Nazi leaders and the German population¹⁶⁵. This begs the question: how large a section of the German population actually supported the Nazi regime when it was in power between 1933-1945? Streim suggests that the Nazi Regime enjoyed *de facto* wide support in the German population, and especially this was the case in the annexed or invaded Eastern European territories. He points out that many Germans

¹⁶¹ Holmila 2011, 21.

¹⁶² Holmila 2011, 25-27, 194.

¹⁶³ Holmila 2010, 259.

¹⁶⁴ Frei 1998, 36.

¹⁶⁵ Streim 2007, 95.

benefitted economically of the Holocaust either directly or indirectly.¹⁶⁶ There is also no denying that Germans were generally anti-Semitic, but only a few of them were actually willing to wipe all the Jews from the face of the earth.

The British public was still bewildered and struggled to comprehend how ordinary people could become mass murderers. Nothing in the past had prepared them for this illogical and inhumane episode of hatred, although Britain had her own dark history of colonial rule. Furthermore, anti-Semitism was a more common phenomenon in Britain and elsewhere in Europe than most of the contemporaries liked to admit.¹⁶⁷ Regardless, the British people needed a framework for managing the unmanageable. It was a far more comforting idea for the British public that the perpetrators were mentally ill psychopaths than 'normal' people. In this way, people had a reference for grasping German behaviour. Therefore, the German crimes were initially interpreted against the concept of German illness.¹⁶⁸

Historical research has later shown that most of the alleged insane murderers were not mentally ill. The British accepted this, but they have emphasised throughout the 20th century that the Germans differed significantly from the British. However, one should remember that people who carried out the Holocaust spent a greater part of their life under volatile social circumstances: the aftermath of the First World War, crises of the Weimar Republic and national socialist propaganda all contributed to the development of totalitarian society.¹⁶⁹ This also came up in the source material as one reader of *The Scotsman* wrote on 1 May 1945:

*"I think the moral we must draw from the whole terrible problem is (1) that human nature under certain conditions can become unspeakably bad, (2) that disordered economic and social conditions usually bring out the worse side of human nature, (3) that when conditions do become disordered there is a grave danger to-day of the rise of totalitarianism."*¹⁷⁰

The writer also emphasised that once the Nazi party was in power, the state was governed by an arbitrary authority which controlled everything and made criticism of the party a criminal offence. Under the prevailing circumstances, a common man became a slave

¹⁶⁶ Streim 2007, 95.

¹⁶⁷ Holmila 2010, 264.

¹⁶⁸ Holmila 2011, 125, 197.

¹⁶⁹ Holmila 2010, 135.

¹⁷⁰ *The Scotsman*, "Totalitarianism and cruelty", 1.5.1945.

who was used by the party leaders and their subordinates. The writer argued that the Germans were ruled with fear of random arrests and concentration camps which were originally meant for disobedient Germans. Furthermore, the writer reminded that also Britain had a Fascist Party which enjoyed a reasonably wide political support before the war.¹⁷¹ The motives of this writer are unclear but evidently the aim was to present Germans as victims of their own government. Although this kind of explicit indication of sympathy for Germans and aggressive criticizing of British government aroused only a few favourable responses, it was considered as a newsworthy to publish. In this sense, the editor was surprisingly tolerant and allowed arguments which differed from the mainstream discourse.

A month later, Field-Marshal Montgomery gave a speech to Germans on 11 June 1945 regarding the non-fraternisation order which forbade German civilians and occupation personnel from forming close relationships. It yielded a more common interpretation of the power relationship between German public and their rulers:

*“You think that not you, but your leaders, are responsible for all these things. But your leaders have risen from the German people, and this nation is responsible for its leaders, and as long as they were successful you were jubilant. That is why our soldiers are not behaving in a friendly way towards you. We have ordered this. We have done this in order to save your children, and the whole world from another war.”*¹⁷²

Montgomery assured that this measure was only temporary and the British – as Christian people – tend to forgive. However, the primary aim was to destroy the evil of the National Socialist system, and Montgomery was not convinced that they were even near attaining this aim.¹⁷³ He admitted that not even the British troops liked the non-fraternisation policy and they began to break it quite frequently. Nevertheless, it was carried out for the sake of peace.¹⁷⁴ As we have learnt from the chapter 2 of this study, Montgomery was a highly respected authority as far as discourses regarding German suffering and victimhood were concerned. He repeatedly emphasised that the temporary distress was necessary for the

¹⁷¹ The Scotsman, “Totalitarianism and cruelty”, 1.5.1945.

¹⁷² The Scotsman, “Montgomery tells Germans”, 11.6.1945; The Glasgow Herald, “Montgomery talks to the German people”, 11.6.1945.

¹⁷³ The Scotsman, “Montgomery tells Germans”, 11.6.1945.

¹⁷⁴ The Glasgow Herald, “Montgomery talks to the German people”, 11.6.1945.

process of teaching democratic principles to Germans. Otherwise, another world war could break loose.

In contrast to Montgomery and the narrative he represented, some representatives of religious quarters argued that Germans were misled and betrayed by a small bunch of individuals who ruthlessly exploited them. For example, on 16 May 1945, *The Scotsman* had a rather revealing headline simply stating: “*Germans misled*”. In this article, Logie Danson, Bishop of Edinburgh from the Episcopal Church in Scotland, stated the following:

*“It is better to regard them (Germans) as having been misled, deceived, and, in a large measure, helpless. It is the individuals whose guilt has been proved who must be brought to judgment”.*¹⁷⁵

The Glasgow Herald also published Danson’s interview. Like in *The Scotsman*, Danson tried to convince the British public that the solemn duty of Allies was to punish individuals such as members of Gestapo, not the whole nation.¹⁷⁶ As one can clearly see, this kind of narrative differed significantly from the one Montgomery embraced. The representatives of the church often referred to Christian morality which was based on the ideal of “love your enemies”. However, even religious authorities agreed that certain individuals had to be punished. A month later, *The Scotsman* reported that even though General Eisenhower was in the fullest agreement with the punishment of individual war criminals, “*he was opposed to any form of summary punishment or execution*”. He warned that the Allies should not descend to Nazi methods of illegal extermination.¹⁷⁷

In accordance with clergymen’s and Eisenhower’s view, one reader of *The Scotsman* argued that the treatment of all Germans alike created a moral bewilderment. Without a doubt, many Germans approved of the Nazi ideology but there were also those who disapproved of the whole Nazi system. The reader put his faith in the latter ones:

*“If there is to be any hope of spiritual restoration and ethical re-education among the German people, we must discover these citizens of the better sort, establish human and Christian contacts with them, and help them to rebuild the shattered moral fabric of their nation.”*¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ The Scotsman, “Germans misled”, 16.5.1945.

¹⁷⁶ The Glasgow Herald, “Christians attitude to beaten enemy”, 16.5.1945.

¹⁷⁷ The Scotsman, “No immediate future for Germans- Eisenhower”, 16.6.1945.

¹⁷⁸ The Scotsman, “Treatment of the Germans”, 16.6.1945.

It was believed that the future of Europe lay in these people who were considered to be ‘good Germans’. However, the methods for separating these good ones from the bad ones occasionally backfired and evoked criticism towards the de-Nazification programme. One example of that is the *Fragebogen*, a questionnaire which the Allies used for identifying those Germans who had been dealing with Nazi activities in their professional or political life. It required a full personal history including party affiliations, income, employment and military career. This method aimed to have removed untrustworthy German civil servants from public office. This process involved an enormous amount of work for British authorities. Meanwhile, Germans thought that it often falsely labelled someone as a Nazi. In the Scottish press discourse, however, these questionnaires were regarded as one of the most important parts of the de-Nazification:

*“Despite the many difficulties which arbitrary classification inevitably presents, individual attention is given to each case, and every appeal is decided on its own merits. Slowly, month by month, a clearer picture is emerging of who is, and who is not, suitable to hold a position of trust in a new democratic Germany.”*¹⁷⁹

As time went by, the press discourse took a more negative stance on the attempt to separate good-willing Germans from malicious ones. *The Scotsman* wrote on 27 January 1947 that the majority of Germans had not entered the path of democracy regardless of Allied efforts. Partly this was because many dismissed Nazis were ignored and left without re-education.¹⁸⁰ This validates the conclusion that there existed a wide gap between declared principles of de-Nazification and what happened in reality in the British occupation zone.

In terms of collective guilt, the press discourse presented different sides of the issue, but in the end, it did not subvert the dominant narrative of ‘the Hun’. In most cases, the Nazi atrocities were regarded as a collective act, although some Germans were considered to be more preferable for the future of Germany than others. Furthermore, it was obvious that the Nazi criminality had to be investigated, punished and recorded in one way or another, otherwise “the truth” about Hitler’s regime could not be learnt.¹⁸¹ With respect to this, Nuremberg trials will be examined on the following.

¹⁷⁹ The Scotsman, “Fragebogen”, 1.6.1946.

¹⁸⁰ The Scotsman, “Nazi network in Germany”, 27.1.1947.

¹⁸¹ Holmila 2011, 76.

4.2 Victor's Justice

The International Military Tribunal (IMT) featured the introduction of criminal charges unprecedented in international law.¹⁸² On 20 November 1945, 22 high-ranking Nazis were accused in Nuremberg of committing crimes against peace and crimes against humanity, namely the Holocaust. The IMT was an enormous media event, and it effectively captured the attention of the world's press, although it had already been in the headlines of British newspapers months before. The press habitually reminded its readers of its importance, even when the general interest in the trial began to fade in the early months of 1946. At no point was the criminality of the Nazis in the dock questioned, only how they should be tried.¹⁸³ Right from the start, the tribunal was set out to give accounts of undisputed Nazi criminality which yielded a great historic significance.

Alongside addressing Nazi criminality, the Tribunal was considered to have an important pedagogic role to serve. For example, the editorial of *The Scotsman* stated on 16 January 1946 that: "*One of the main purposes of the Nuremberg trial is to educate public opinion throughout the world, and especially in Germany, about the cold and calculated policy of aggression and cruelty with the defendants are charged.*"¹⁸⁴ Therefore, the value of the trial rested upon its didactic function, which could be lost should there be any doubt about the fairness of the proceedings.¹⁸⁵ Not surprisingly, the defendants argued that the trial relied on retrospective legislation which in Germany was interpreted as victor's justice. In addition, the Tribunal had no German participation and, as a consequence, it failed to achieve German public confidence in the proceedings, or at least that is how it was presented in the press.¹⁸⁶ From the British perspective, the jurisprudential credibility of the trial was essential, and all allegations which could question it were harmful for the representation of Britain as a righteous victor.¹⁸⁷

On 9 August 1945, over three months before the trial started, *The Glasgow Herald* underlined that the trial was but a demonstration of civilised justice and the victors would

¹⁸² Bloxham 2001, 4.

¹⁸³ Holmila 2011, 1, 16, 79.

¹⁸⁴ *The Scotsman*, "Nuremberg trial", 16.1.1946.

¹⁸⁵ Holmila 2011, 80.

¹⁸⁶ *The Scotsman*, "What Germans say", 14.2.1946.

¹⁸⁷ Holmila 2011, 78.

make every endeavour to avert all allegations of vengeance. Since there was no precedent for such a trial, “*it had to be prepared with coolness and deliberation*”, as the editorial noted.¹⁸⁸ On the same day, *The Scotsman* reported that the procedure to be adopted ensured a fair trial and strict measures were taken to prevent any unnecessary delay. The editorial emphasised that the charges, and charges only, were in focus and everything else should be thrown aside.¹⁸⁹ Judging by these arguments, the correspondents were worried that the trials could get side-tracked and also the British public had to be ensured about the fairness of trials.

The trial finally started on 20 November 1945, and right from the beginning, the British coverage of Nuremberg was almost obsessively fixed on Hermann Goering¹⁹⁰. Both *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald* had several articles describing how he looked, behaved and reacted to charges in the dock. This was typical for the first phase of Nuremberg reporting and presumably it was linked to the British public’s need for a personalized evil: it made it easier to cognitively process the wickedness of Nazi atrocities. Furthermore, the trials were roughly speaking ‘a media theatre’ which required the main antagonist to be in the spotlight. Therefore, one character had to be highlighted, and Goering was an obvious choice since he was a notorious Nazi who was responsible for the *Blitz* and – unlike Hitler or Himmler – still alive. Goering was a journalistically important figure whose trial allowed the press to write about him regularly to promote newspaper sales. However, the press had to weigh the pros and cons of whether to publish arguments of Goering’s defence or not. The gain in circulation usually outweighed the risk of stimulating sympathy for Goering. Nevertheless, the debate regarding the guilt of Germans became more discursive after more of the accused were heard.

On 4 January 1946, *The Scotsman* reported about Otto Ohlendorf who was former Major-General of Police and chief of Security Police at Himmler’s headquarters. In his testimony, he described the methods of mass executions of Jews and others on the Eastern front. According to him, up to the year 1942, men, women and children were for the most part shot together on Himmler’s orders. However, after 1942, women and children were

¹⁸⁸ The Glasgow Herald, “Justice in Nuremberg”, 9.8.1945.

¹⁸⁹ The Scotsman, “Big four tribunal for war criminals”, 9.8.1945.

¹⁹⁰ Herman Goering was one of the most powerful figures in the Nazi Party and Supreme Commander of the Luftwaffe.

executed in gas vans. Ohlenderf said that his men did not like gas vans, but the order to liquidate all Jews, including children, came from Hitler himself:

*“The murder vans were used to spare women and children the spiritual torment of mass executions, and to spare our men, many of whom were married, the unpleasant job of shooting women and children”*¹⁹¹

Ohlenderf had some qualms about the orders, but like many other Nazi defendants, he stated that he was just obeying orders and disobedience would have meant ending up in military court. The ultimate authority and responsibility for waging a war and murdering Jews were for the most part vested in Hitler. It was not mentioned in the source material that, in truth, German military courts did not deliver a single judgement on those few who refused to obey orders to execute Jewish civilians¹⁹². A day later, *The Scotsman* explicitly stated that *“a man who commits crimes cannot plead as a defence that he committed them in uniform.”*¹⁹³ Therefore, men such as Goering, Jodl and Doenitz were considered to be in accordance with the basic principles of National Socialism, which was represented as being almost as aggravating as personally taking part in massacres.

On 18 January 1946, *The Scotsman* reported that Francois de Menthon, the Chief Prosecutor for the French Republic, demanded that *“the tribunal should impose the supreme penalty on those chiefly responsible of Nazi atrocities and declare criminal the members of various groups and organisation which were the principal perpetrators of the crimes of Nazi Germany.”*¹⁹⁴ Menthon regarded the entire German people as ‘jointly responsible’ for Nazi crimes. The reporter of *The Scotsman* predicted that this was due to the fact that Menthon was the first representative of a country formerly occupied by the Germans. Furthermore, Menthon endeavoured to present National Socialism as a wider problem than the trials so far had accomplished. Again, Hitler and his followers were presented as exploiters of the morally fragile German soul:

“National Socialism had deep and remote roots. The pseudo-religious doctrine of race and eradication of individualism were both products of the spiritual and moral crisis in nineteenth century Germany which broke out again after the war of 1914-18 with the human soul disorientated by a restless search for new values. [...] The

¹⁹¹ The Scotsman, “Schacht aided Hitler bomb plot”, 4.1.1946.

¹⁹² Holmila 2010, 130.

¹⁹³ The Scotsman, “German Generals and Hitlerism”, 5.1.1946.

¹⁹⁴ The Scotsman, “Death demanded for 21 Nazi chiefs”, 18.1.1946.

real crime committed by Hitler and his fellow-conspirators was their exploitation of one of the most profound and tragic aspects of the German soul."¹⁹⁵

In August 1946, the final speeches in Nuremberg were given. The British Acting Chief Prosecutor, Hartley Shawcross, stressed that the trials aimed to protect, not condemn, Germans. In practice, the protection meant that the victors had a legal duty to root out all elements of National Socialism to secure a democratic future for Germany. Therefore, the trials were represented as a favour for the Germans, albeit Britain had a vested interest:

*"Our purpose now is to protect them and give them the opportunity to rehabilitate themselves in the esteem and friendship of the world. But how can this be done if we leave amongst them, unpunished and uncondemned, those elements of Nazidom which were most responsible for the Nazi tyranny and crime? Failure to perform this legal duty may well spell terror and racial persecution throughout a continent, and for the third time in our adult lives a world war."*¹⁹⁶

The verdicts were finally read on 30 September 1946. The press was eager and well-prepared to give summaries of this marathon of legal proceedings. Now the primary purpose of the trials – the re-education of the Germans about the ways of democracy – became evident. For example, the editor of *The Scotsman* argued that *"they (Germans) will find in their trial and judgment a salutary warning against submissive obedience to militarists."*¹⁹⁷ On the issue of victor's justice, the editorial pointed out that the accused had a full opportunity to defend themselves, and this was in striking contrast with the travesties of justice perpetrated in Nazi Courts.¹⁹⁸ In other words, retrospective use of the law was morally acceptable since the crimes of the Nazi regime were such an exceptional violation of the fundamental rights of a man.

Furthermore, the prosecutors could not afford to leave any doubts about the culpability of even the most palpable crimes of the Nazis. Although the world was aware of the appalling tale of Nazi atrocities before the trial opened, Nuremberg provided detailed evidence which revealed the full scope of Nazi crimes. The editorial of *The Scotsman* noted that the documented facts were an important product of the Tribunal since Germans

¹⁹⁵ The Scotsman, "Death demanded for 21 Nazi chiefs", 18.1.1946.

¹⁹⁶ The Scotsman, "Final speeches in war crimes trial", 29.8.1946.

¹⁹⁷ The Scotsman, "Nuremberg verdict", 1.10.1946.

¹⁹⁸ Holmila 2011, 75.

would certainly struggle with the collective guilt. This in turn might reinforce the German self-exculpation which was most undesired in the ranks of victors:

*“The Nazi regime has been arraigned and convicted for the benefit of history, and the question of war guilt has been finally settled. Perhaps myths will be created in the future in an endeavour to absolve Germany from her crushing burden of guilt, but propagandists will find it difficult to explain away the facts established by the long proceedings of the Tribunal, whose procedure and patience in fact-finding are above reproach.”*¹⁹⁹

Alongside notions of democratic re-education, the editorial of *The Glasgow Herald* underlined the culpability of the German General Staff and High Command since they were responsible in large measure for the miseries and suffering that had fallen on millions of innocent people.²⁰⁰ Many high-ranking Nazis excused themselves by blaming Hitler for all of the atrocities of the Nazi regime, but the Tribunal, as well as the press, rejected these arguments. When it comes to the role of German civilians in the crimes against humanity, the judges of Nuremberg did not take a stand on that.

Generally, the press presented the trials as a successful and highly respectful process, despite the predictable verdict²⁰¹. Bloxham argues that the trials did little to clarify conceptualizations of Nazi criminality in the public sphere anywhere. This was because the trials drew attention away from the victims of the Holocaust and onto perpetrators and much more ambiguous symbols of suffering.²⁰² Throughout the trials, the Scottish press paid attention to how German media reacted, and generally, the given conception was that Germans had resigned to their fate and they understood the regenerative power of trials. Of course, this perception was carefully crafted by choosing favourable pieces of news for the British cause of justification. The press discourse legitimised the use of retrospective legislation, although it was not altogether a favourable choice for victors. Remarks about victor’s justice were voiced, but those got submerged by the educational function of the trials. Still, the question of ordinary Germans remained. The issue was pressing not only morally, but also practically because 400 000 German prisoners of war

¹⁹⁹ The Scotsman, “Nuremberg verdict”, 1.10.1946.

²⁰⁰ The Glasgow Herald, “Gestapo and S.S. condemned as criminal bodies”, 1.10.1946.

²⁰¹ Holmila 2011, 79.

²⁰² Bloxham 2001, 2.

were kept in Britain and thousands of German civilians were kept in prison camps in the British zone.²⁰³

4.3 Germans in *Lager*

In terms of the de-Nazification, the internment of German civilians and prisoners of war had both military and political aims. Streim points out that these procedures aimed to eliminate persons or groups who could pose a threat to the occupational forces or people who were politically responsible for the war crimes committed by the Nazi regime. One outcome of the procedure was automatic arrests, which put also smaller administrative functionaries and bureaucrats on trial.²⁰⁴ Ahonen *et al* note that the primary purpose of the camps was to isolate Germans and to channel them into forced labour. Ahonen also argues that the internment of German civilians strengthened the creation of a new German identity, in which the prison camps symbolized the sufferings of occupied Germany.²⁰⁵ Therefore, the Allied conception of law and morality was challenged since imprisoned civilians were victims in the eyes of Germans. They felt that their suffering was manifested in a personal sacrifice which they had given to their home country.²⁰⁶ With respect to the de-Nazification, this was in glaring contradiction with the aim of the Allies.

In the press discourse, the Allied policy was represented as a way to punish every Nazi criminal or sympathiser from top to bottom of the German social structure. However, this policy was soon questioned. First of all, the policy of grading Germans to different categories by questionnaires and hearings was criticised for being overly resource-consuming when compared to its benefits. Secondly, the slow repatriation of German prisoners of war forced many German families to survive without a male provider. Therefore, newspapers revealed that the Allied actions had a grave impact on the everyday lives of ordinary Germans. Many had lost their livelihood either in bombings or due to de-Nazification, which forced them to spend long periods of time in prison

²⁰³ Finlay 2004, 215.

²⁰⁴ Streim 2007, 33.

²⁰⁵ Ahonen 2008, 137.

²⁰⁶ Streim 2007, 39-40.

camps. Consequently, the press discourse consisted of arguments both in favour and against the internment of German civilians and the repatriation of prisoners of war.

The press discourse regarding German guilt was mainly concentrated on the Nuremberg trials, but the large number of German prisoners of war in Britain often evoked domestic controversies that also caught the attention of the press. For example, on 2 February 1946, *The Scotsman* reported how Waldron Smithers, a Conservative Party member, questioned the policy of the Labour government: “*What steps were being taken to relieve Britain of the necessity of supporting and feeding the 353,044 enemy P.O.W. in the United Kingdom?*” Labour politician Herbert Morrison argued that prisoners of war were more a resource than a burden: “*The majority of them were engaged on work of the highest importance for which suitable British labour was not available.*”²⁰⁷ Post-war Britain suffered from a lack of workforce, especially in agriculture, and consequently the government needed to create a narrative which made it morally justified to retain German prisoners of war in Britain.

However, the public pressure to repatriate German prisoners of war grew when new arguments which endorsed speedier repatriation were introduced in the press discourse. For example, on 12 July 1946, the Bishop of Sheffield pleaded to the House of Lords that hopelessness and bitterness have significantly increased among German prisoners. The Bishop believed that this change was chiefly due to their long separation from their families:

“It is surprising that the present Government, on grounds of economic expediency, should be so reluctant to give these men some kind of hope. Would it not be possible to allow those who have been longest in captivity, assuming their conduct was satisfactory, to be repatriated first, and also married men whose families are in the British zone.”

The Bishop also pointed out that there existed a flagrant misuse of prisoners as forced labour which had nothing to do with reparations in the form of labour. Lord Nathan, Under Secretary for War, denied the Bishop’s assertion that German prisoners were deprived of hope and freedom without a morally acceptable cause. Nathan noted that all prisoners were treated in accordance with the Geneva Convention. Although the number of prisoners had risen since February 1946 by almost 30 000, Nathan assured that “*the*

²⁰⁷ *The Scotsman*, “Enemy P.O.W. in U.K.”, 8.2.1946.

decline in morale was not of significant dimensions.” Germans had generally behaved in accordance with the rules, but Nathan was not yet willing to introduce any relaxation in the rules. So far, many prisoners were already repatriated, but with a slow rate and typically only the most lucid cases of non-Nazis were granted a release. Nathan emphasised that the political aspect had to be taken into account over individual frustration.²⁰⁸

On 13 September 1946, both *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald* reported that 15 000 German prisoners of war will be sent home every month, starting in October 1946. At that moment, Britain had almost 400 000 German prisoners, and it was speculated that the rate of repatriation would eventually speed up, otherwise, the whole scheme would take nearly two years. Priority was given to those prisoners who had shown “*a positive democratic attitude*” and “*were likely to play a useful part in the rehabilitation of Germany*”. Therefore, prisoners who had industrial or other qualifications – such as coal miners and timber workers – were most likely to be repatriated first.²⁰⁹

The gradual repatriation was slow, but many arguments in the public debate supported it. For example, the editorial of *The Scotsman* argued on 13 September 1946 that prisoners generally enjoyed better material conditions in Britain than they would in Germany. The editorial pointed out that the current demands for speedier repatriation would be in fact inhumane and impractical: “*Yet large-scale repatriation would aggravate food and housing problems in Germany, and this, along with difficulties of transport, is another reason for keeping the volume of repatriation within manageable limits.*”²¹⁰ Likewise, the editorial of *The Glasgow Herald* was worried about adequate housing in Germany where the situation was already appalling. However, the situation turned out to be more complex than just housing-related since the reputation of Britain as a righteous victor was at stake:

“The labour, especially of coalminers and forest workers, is badly needed in Germany; on the other hand, it is a grave step to add nearly 400,000 mouths to those it is already impossible to feed adequately. To restore these men to their families will raise German

²⁰⁸ The Scotsman, “German P.O.W.”, 12.7.1946.

²⁰⁹ The Scotsman, “German P.O.W. to be sent home”, 13.9.1946; The Glasgow Herald, “German P.O.W.s to go home”, 13.9.1946.

²¹⁰ The Scotsman, “German prisoners”, 13.9.1946.

appreciation of the justness of British administration: but it will also add to the housing problem already far more acute than our own."²¹¹

By the end of 1946, at least 7 million Germans in total were still held as prisoners of war by the Allies. According to a special correspondent of *The Scotsman*, this number was "equivalent to the number of all German males born during a period of more than ten years, and it is clear that their absence from home is bound to create very serious moral, social, and material problems." On the other side, at least the relations between prisoners and British authorities were described to be warm due to political education which involved lecturers who were sent into the camps to speak on political and historical subjects. The correspondent argued that these lecturers, alongside religious representatives, were generally well-received and helped many prisoners to realize the repressive nature of totalitarian rule and encouraged them to abandon Nazi sympathies. Still, delayed repatriation was believed to pose a genuine threat to everything which had already been accomplished:

*"At a superficial glance, the picture of life in British camps looks rosy. But active part in it is always a minority matter, and, seen through the eyes of all prisoners, the main problem of their life is repatriation. Its delay endangers the result of all religious and political work, and no effort can fully counterbalance, let alone eliminate the bitter feeling caused by the length of captivity."*²¹²

Voices supporting repatriation got louder at the beginning of 1947 when Britain still had over 400 000 German prisoners of war and the rate of repatriation was only 17 000 a month.²¹³ For example, on 13 February 1947, the Bishop of Chichester appealed to the Government to stop procrastination and to make a clear distinction between proved war criminals and those guilty of only minor offences. The Bishop argued that the latter should be returned to Germany since there was no morally acceptable reason to deny their will to be reunited with their families. Furthermore, the Bishop questioned the use of prisoners as serf labour, even though Britain's own needs were heavy. He reminded that British public was "*profoundly unhappy to witness anything that looked like forced labour.*"²¹⁴

²¹¹ The Glasgow Herald, "German prisoners", 13.9.1946.

²¹² The Scotsman, "German prisoners of war to-day", 14.12.1946.

²¹³ The Scotsman, "German prisoners", 15.3.1947.

²¹⁴ The Scotsman, "German prisoners", 13.2.1947.

The quarrel continued, and the press discourse regarding repatriation had roughly speaking two sides: those who supported the practical aspect and those who supported the human aspect of the issue. Related to this, on 9 September 1947, *The Scotsman* had two articles in which the debate between these two sides was clearly represented. A prominent representative of the human aspect in matters regarding the suffering of Germans, Victor Gollancz, urged the British government to grant an early release for the German prisoners of war. His arguments were similar as above mentioned Bishop's. On the other side, Prime Minister Clement Attlee represented reason as he emphasised the practical aspect by stating that repatriation would hinder Britain's ability to render assistance to Germans living in the British occupation zone:

*"In view of our man-power shortages and the requirement of agriculture in particular it would be quite impracticable for us to agree to immediate repatriation. By such action we should needlessly intensify our short-term economic problems, and still further reduce our ability to give external assistance."*²¹⁵

Attlee also rejected assertions regarding the inequity of using prisoners of war for labour purposes. Attlee reminded that while the production of reparations in Germany depended heavily on Allied material aid, the prisoners of war who worked in Britain could directly compensate for the destruction which Germany had inflicted on Britain:

*"I sympathise with the human considerations in the memorial, but I cannot share the views that the retention of German prisoners of war in foreign countries for labour purposes is inequitable when it is recalled that this is one of the only practical means by which Germany can make any reparation for the loss and destruction which German aggression has brought on so many countries of Europe."*²¹⁶

To counter these arguments, Gollancz noted that reparations should fall on the German people as a whole, not on particular individuals: *"How can it be right that a man – and his family – should have to endure this special suffering year after year just because we happened to capture him?"*²¹⁷ Despite Gollancz's effort, the editorial implied that Attlee's words carried more weight in this matter and therefore it ended up enforcing the dominant narrative of British priority where the interest of Britain came first, but only because it benefitted Germany as well.

²¹⁵ The Scotsman, "German prisoners", 9.9.1947.

²¹⁶ The Scotsman, "Mr Attlee and German P.O.W.", 9.9.1947.

²¹⁷ The Scotsman, "Mr Attlee and German P.O.W.", 9.9.1947.

In conclusion, the internment of German civilians and the repatriation of prisoners of war created an opportunity for the pro-German voices to separate the responsibility of an individual from the whole German nation. The British government in turn aimed to bolster the British dignity against accusations of using Germans as slave labour. In this case, Britain had to defend her reputation since returning prisoners were evidence of British gentlemanship. In the end, the slow repatriation rate was represented as a morally right thing to do, since repatriated Germans were believed to be cast out of the frying pan into the fire.

This study has in many occasions made brief references to the expulsions of Germans. In the context of population movements in post-war Europe, repatriation of Germans P.O.W.s was only a small part of a bigger problem that faced post-war Germany and whole Europe as well. The millions of expelled ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe aggravated already existing socio-economic problems in Germany and created many new ones. Therefore, the next chapter will discuss the expulsions of Germans from Central-East Europe.

5. Expelling Germans: Europe of Ethnically Homogenous Nation-States

The following chapter moves on to describe the discourses regarding the expulsions and population transfers of Germans and other Europeans in the aftermath of the war. The expulsions of ethnic Germans from East-Central Europe were due to Allied policy, which aimed to create ethnically homogeneous nation-states. However, the flood of refugees fed the growing antagonism between the Western Powers and the USSR. The British government argued that the expulsions were part of a wider occupation policy, which ultimately was about securing the peace in Europe as envisaged in Potsdam.²¹⁸ Nevertheless, planned border changes and German losses of territory left many ethnic Germans virtually stateless.²¹⁹ Furthermore, the social tranquillity of Germany was disturbed because of displaced persons. As a difference to German expellees, displaced persons were non-Germans who were typically brought to Germany forcibly by the Nazis.

Francis Graham-Nixon claims that expulsions were the greatest single forced population shift in European history.²²⁰ Whereas Ahonen argues that in post-war Europe some of the heaviest blows fell against Germans who were victims of the systematic policies of mass expulsions.²²¹ The expulsions of Germans were one of the most significant factors in the British occupation policy and the press discourse regarding the subject was represented accordingly. Next, the topics of population transfers and displaced persons will be discussed, respectively.

5.1 Population Transfers Versus Forced Expulsions

The first phase of expulsions took place already in late 1944 when Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia started to deport their Germans under the chaotic end-of-war conditions.²²² The ability of the above-mentioned countries' central authorities to control events on the ground was initially limited, which contributed to radicalisation in

²¹⁸ Graham-Nixon 2013, 3-5.

²¹⁹ Ahonen 2003, 1.

²²⁰ Graham-Nixon 2013, 3.

²²¹ Ahonen 2003, 1, 62.

²²² Ahonen 2008, 82.

the treatment of Germans.²²³ The decision to regulate the transfer of the German population out of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary was not formally endorsed by the Western Powers until the Potsdam Conference in August 1945.²²⁴ By then, the Western Powers had witnessed chaotic conduct of expulsions which compromised their national identity and reputation as righteous victors.

Although estimates vary significantly, it is safe to say that the grand total of German expellees reached 15 million by the end of 1940s. The three Western zones bore the brunt of the burden, with some 8 million expellees which constituted 16 per cent of the total population of Western Germany.²²⁵ Expulsions of this scale were bound to inflict various types of physical and psychological suffering on those who were expelled. Firstly, many lost their property, civil rights and connection to family members and friends. In some cases, the deportation was preceded by internment or forced labour. Secondly, once the expellees were on the road, they were exposed to violent retaliatory outbursts, which included beatings, theft, hunger, disease, sexual assault and even murder. These ordeals resulted in the deaths of up to 500,000 Germans in the course of the flight and deportation. Thirdly, the integration of expellees in the British zone proved to be a demanding task since almost every useful commodity was in short supply and local communities often had a negative attitude towards newcomers. Consequently, many expellees had to endure long-term unemployment, abject poverty, and substandard accommodation in refugee camps.²²⁶

In terms of the press discourse, the representation of German suffering embedded political controversies over the power to separate 'population transfer' from 'deportation' or 'expulsion'. During the course of the 1940s, the British public got the impression that population transfer meant a regulated procedure, which involved a minimum of human suffering or economic disruption. Although it was conceived as such, it rarely resembled its blueprints, as Frank points out.²²⁷ Terms such as 'expulsion' or 'expellee' were at first avoided in newspapers in order to dispel the forced origin of the evacuation of Germans. The analysis of the press discourse revealed that the British government and other influential political agents wanted to control the language used in newspapers, hence

²²³ Ahonen 2008, 89.

²²⁴ Frank 2008, 6.

²²⁵ Ahonen 2003, 1; Berger 2006, 210.

²²⁶ Ahonen 2003, 21, 24.

²²⁷ Frank 2008, 9

giving a moral justification for the government's policy. However, once the discourse was created, it also became contested.

The expulsions were initially labelled as a refugee *question* in the British media. However, the situation in Berlin turned it into a refugee *problem* for the British. This was because Berlin functioned as a transport hub for the refugees and correspondents were often assigned to Berlin. The journalistic and political interest is also explained with the fact that Berlin provided a peek window for the Western Powers to observe Soviet-occupied Europe.²²⁸ Despite the worsening situation in Berlin, the refugee problem escaped the attention of the British media at first. Frank reminds that the military censorship on outgoing news from the city was not lifted until 7 September 1945. This offers one possible explanation why the refugee crisis was not covered earlier. However, there is no evidence that correspondents were given direct orders from the military authorities to embellish the refugee-related stories. Frank suggests that censorship was more likely self-imposed, originating with the correspondents themselves or their news editors. He points out that the danger did not lie in over- but under-playing the seriousness of the problem.²²⁹ The findings of this study support Frank's arguments.

Once the volume of reports on refugees started to increase in autumn 1945, it quickly led to campaigns which aimed to alleviate conditions among German refugees and halt further expulsions. The British civilian administrators, relief workers and journalists in Berlin as well as editors, politicians and churchmen in Britain were all demanding leadership from the British government to deal with the refugee crisis.²³⁰ Meanwhile, Germans blamed Britain for marginalizing the refugee crisis, which admittedly aggravated the food and housing situation in Germany.²³¹ The issue was pressing from the viewpoint of the British government and thereby it was forced to constantly re-examine the possible wider political and economic consequences of the chosen expulsion policy which depended heavily on the other Great Powers, especially the USSR.²³²

On 3 August 1945, *The Glasgow Herald* wrote that the enforced expulsion of at least 10 million Germans from the Sudetenland and the lost provinces of east and west had ensured that the size of the population in post-war Germany was sufficient from the

²²⁸ Frank 2008, 123, 163.

²²⁹ Frank, 2008, 131, 135.

²³⁰ Frank 2008, 163.

²³¹ Graham-Nixon 2013, 3-5.

²³² Ahonen 2003, 2, 9.

economic perspective. The high toll of war casualties and losses of territory apparently raised doubts regarding Germany's capability to reorganize socio-economically. For that reason, the expulsions were represented as a positive outcome for the Germans, or at least in this particular case. Furthermore, the article aimed to alleviate the losses of territory by stating that Germans gained at least a greater measure of freedom than they had when the Gestapo was in charge.²³³

On 17 August 1945, *The Scotsman's* reporter wrote that Sudeten Germans had been mistreated in various ways. In one case, when German refugees were refused entry into Austria, they had to make a temporary home in concentration camps. Furthermore, the topical question was if Czechs were morally entitled to use harsh and coercive measures since they had endured persecution in their own country for many years. The fact that Britain was never occupied by Germans left the British public without first-hand experience of German oppression. This in turn affected the discourse regarding Germans being harshly treated by the Slavs. The editors and reporters felt that they were not in a position to judge Czechs or other Slavs for their will to expel their Germans:

*"They (Czechs) remember how their relatives were driven out of their homes to make room for Germans from the bombed-out-districts, how the people of whole villages and towns were herded together in cattle trucks and dispatched to Germany, to camps from which only a small proportion ever returned. [...] "It is all very easy for us to condemn the ungentle treatment which has now been the lot of the Germans, but when you have for six years seen your family decimated, your property confiscated, and your entire country enslaved, I think we others have to be very objective indeed if we brand the Czechs as oppressors."*²³⁴

By September 1945, the refugee crisis in Germany was headline news in Britain. This was partly due to campaigns which public figures, such as Gollancz, started in Britain in order to draw attention to the seriousness of the German refugee crisis and the pressing need for remedial action. Although the press was at first sceptical of Gollancz's plans for European relief, he managed to foster the realization that the German refugee crisis was one of the most urgent questions of post-war European reconstruction.²³⁵ For example, *The Scotsman* reported in October 1945 that two hundred of many thousands of German refugees, who arrived in the British zone of Berlin in the past month, were found dead in

²³³ The Glasgow Herald, "Peace by instalment", 3.8.1945.

²³⁴ The Scotsman, "Expulsion of Sudeten Germans", 17.8.1945.

²³⁵ Frank 2008, 122, 139, 153.

the railway trucks in which they travelled. The article also stated that the health of refugees arriving into the British zone was very bad and it was one of the worst problems facing the health authorities.²³⁶

One of the key events in the expulsions from the British perspective was the release of the Allied Control Council's plan for the transfer of the German population from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary on 20 November 1945. The plan foresaw the transfer of 1.5 million Germans from Poland to the British occupation zone.²³⁷ However, *The Scotsman* already speculated on 6 November 1945 that the contradictions between the Western and Soviet occupation zones would affect the refugees. Rumours, false information and misunderstandings between Allied authorities were all contributing to a situation which was described as “*a maze of apparent contradictions*”. The Soviet Union planned to move 6 million Germans to the West and so far about 4.5 million had been already moved. Consequently, the Western Powers felt that Russians were not equally taking part in the joint burden as agreed in Potsdam.²³⁸ *The Scotsman's* article implicitly suggested that even though the flood of German refugees to the British occupation zone was aggravating the situation, at least fewer Germans were left in the sphere of influence of the Russians. Another article in the same issue of *The Scotsman* pointed out that Germans assumed they would be dealt with more humanely by the British authorities than in any other zone, particularly namely the Soviet zone²³⁹. Therefore, the British zone was represented as a sort of ‘a safe haven’ for Germans, whereas the Soviet zone was a symbol of exploitation and revenge.

Frank argues that the public pressure over the expulsions reached its peak in November 1945 and declined thereafter²⁴⁰. As far as public interest is concerned, this might be the case, but the analysis of the press discourse in the source material revealed that the political and social repercussions of expulsions were a deep and long-lasting phenomenon. For example, *The Glasgow Herald* reported on 6 November 1945 about the parliamentary debates regarding British international relations which were an apparent manifestation of the refugee problem. Labour politician Richard Stokes argued that “*no soldier fought this war to see women and children herded across Europe like a lot of*

²³⁶ The Scotsman, “Refugees dead in rail trucks”, 20.10.1945.

²³⁷ Ahonen 2008, 93.

²³⁸ The Scotsman, “Germans in Russian zone”, 6.11.1945.

²³⁹ The Scotsman, “Germans and British zone”, 6.11.1945.

²⁴⁰ Frank 2008, 227.

cattle". His opinion represented an empathetic attitude towards Germans in the political debate and therefore his arguments are analysed in detail. Stokes pleaded to the British government to do everything in their power to convince the governments of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Russia to suspend deportations. He noted that the British occupation zone might have to accept 4 million deportees from East-Central Europe this winter. According to Stokes, this would be a massacre since the great food-producing countries in the eastern parts of Europe downplayed the consequences of the refugee crisis.²⁴¹ This finding supports Frank's argument that the refugee crisis and the expulsions were closely linked problems in the British public debate.²⁴²

In terms of pro-German arguments, the refugee crisis was often dealt with publicly criticizing the expelling countries. Regardless of how efficient these arguments were internationally, the Scottish press slowly adopted a tendency of blaming Russians over Nazis for the plight of Germans at least on some level. The press admitted that the primary cause for the suffering of Germans was still the Nazi ideology, but the fundamental differences between democratic west and communist east were reflected in how British conception of morality was represented as superior to Russians.

On 7 December 1945, *The Scotsman* introduced an interesting viewpoint to the expulsion issue. Before the war, Germans constituted about one-fifth of the total population of Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, the German contribution to the economy of Czechoslovakia was proportionately greater than their numerical strength. Therefore, a small German minority was allowed civil rights on the condition that they and their children accepted Czech schools, culture and language without any protests. As far as the Germans were concerned, most of them would still rather go to Germany than stay in Czechoslovakia. The editorial argued that despite the ill-treatment, the main motive for Sudeten Germans to leave Czechoslovakia was national identity and freedom to remain as a German:

*"In short, it is not so much present conditions, though they are dreary enough, that cause the Sudeten German to want to go to Germany. It is the fact that he sees no future for himself as a German in his old home. He knows that he will have to stop being a German and become a Czech. He does not want to."*²⁴³

²⁴¹ The Glasgow Herald, "Refugee problem rouses parliament", 6.11.1945.

²⁴² Frank 2008, 276.

²⁴³ The Scotsman, "Czech expulsion of German minority", 7.12.1945.

The final stage of the expulsions, as planned in Potsdam, began in early 1946.²⁴⁴ Frank argues that from January onwards, “*the sense of urgency that had surrounded discussion of the expulsions and the refugee crisis had died down and these issues henceforth featured far less prominently, if at all.*”²⁴⁵ Yet, the findings of this study do not entirely support Frank’s conclusion. As noted in chapter 3, the worsening food crisis began to dominate the debate over Germany throughout 1946. However, the mass movements of Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia continued, as three million expellees entered Western Germany between January and December 1946.²⁴⁶ The overcrowded and underfed British zone tried to digest hundreds of thousands of destitute and economically unproductive expellees. Therefore, in February 1946 the British authorities launched *Operation Swallow*, which aimed at fulfilling British obligations under the guidelines adopted by the Allied Control Council. The operation brought altogether 1.5 million Germans into the British zone during the course of 1946.²⁴⁷ These massive movements of the German population and the social problems that followed in Germany were by no means papered over by the Scottish press since the discourse regarding ethnically homogenous nation-states was kept in the headlines.

On 15 April 1946, the editorial of *The Scotsman* argued that the food and economic situation in Germany over the last few months had seriously affected Germany’s birth rate and especially infant mortality had increased significantly. However, the danger resulting from Hitler’s plans for enlarging the German population and creating *Lebensraum* was still great since Germany’s borders had significantly diminished from its pre-war situation and its population kept growing due to expellees, although many of them were women and children and old or sick men. Together with casualties in the war, Germany had a great predominance of women over men in the younger and middle-aged groups. The editorial argued that history could repeat itself and new political disturbances might arise in Germany if vital statistics were ignored in the reconstruction process of Germany.²⁴⁸ The contribution of expulsions to the German population was an important factor since the press discourse emphasised that Germany’s war-waging potential should

²⁴⁴ Ahonen 2008, 140.

²⁴⁵ Frank 2008, 207.

²⁴⁶ Frank 2008, 227.

²⁴⁷ Ahonen 2008, 94; Frank 2008, 245.

²⁴⁸ *The Scotsman*, “Controlling size of German population”, 15.4.1946.

be demolished once and for all. In other words, the development of Germany's population structure had to be controlled and the key question was the fate of idle German men.

The same issue of *The Scotsman* had another article which described the harsh living conditions in transition camps, but at the same time, it stressed that Germans were not entitled to complain about their camps, since their victims had to bear much worse conditions in Nazi labour and extermination camps. At this point, the press discourse aimed to make a clear distinction between *a refugee camp* and *a concentration camp*. The latter was occasionally used in the context of German refugees, but then it was usually accompanied with notions of Nazi victims as well:

*"They had to wait in poor conditions in the camps, no beds or bedding. [...] With four to five thousand people pouring in a day, one would expect a proportion of sick. [...] Scabies and malnutrition accounted for most of the trouble. [...] A grim and depressing sight truly – and yet a holiday home beside the camps that the Germans themselves prepared for their victims."*²⁴⁹

On 5 November 1946, *The Scotsman's* correspondent reported that the mass transfer of Germans was practically completed. By then, people in Czechoslovakia had realised how drastic a measure the transfer was. Regardless, no alternative was discussed either in Czechoslovakia or in the Allied councils. The correspondent admitted that regrettable incidents occurred during the transfers and some months elapsed before transfers could be organised in an orderly way. However, the departure of the Germans caused many problems in Czechoslovakia as well; there was the repopulation of denuded Sudeten districts and restart of industries, which lacked skilled workforce.²⁵⁰ Therefore, the Sudeten Germans represented the dual nature of expulsions: Germans were at the same time productive citizens and unwanted invaders.

Despite the pressure from Poland and Czechoslovakia, the main phase of the expulsions ended by the beginning of 1947.²⁵¹ The interest of the press towards expulsions ceased since critics of the expulsions were for the most part contented with the gradual improvements made in the process. Frank argues that the critics of the expulsions had never demanded that the Potsdam decision should be reversed. In other words, the issue was never about the principle, but the method of how the expulsions should be carried

²⁴⁹ The Scotsman, "German "expellees", 15.4.1946.

²⁵⁰ The Scotsman, "Sudeten Germans out of Czechoslovakia", 5.11.1946.

²⁵¹ Ahonen 2008, 95.

out and how many Germans should be transferred. Frank also points out that population transfers were framed as the least bad option and a necessary evil. When it became evident that population transfers could not be carried out humanely, British opinion walked away from the measure.²⁵² The discoveries from *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald* are in line with Frank's notions since alternatives to expulsions were rarely presented and explicit criticism towards the expulsions as a principle did not occur. Next, the issue of displaced persons is discussed.

5.2 Displaced Persons

In the context of expulsions and German suffering, there was also the question of displaced persons. They were typically brought to Germany for forced labour from Eastern Europe or elsewhere during the war. Many of them were concentration camp inmates and prisoners of war.²⁵³ Their presence in post-war Germany often evoked disturbances in social tranquillity and therefore their fate had to be politically established in accordance with the discourse of ethnically homogenous nation-states.

On 1 May 1945, *The Scotsman* wrote that Germans and Allied occupation authorities had to accommodate and feed about seven million displaced persons who had no prospect of getting back to their home countries for many months.²⁵⁴ A week later, the editorial of *The Glasgow Herald* elaborated on the issue by addressing the threat that the freed and homesick slave labourers constituted to the public safety in Germany:

*“And in Germany there are the millions of slave labourers now freed, but in the poorest physical condition, most of them with the one ambition to head for home, or where their home used to be. They alone constitute a problem of the gravest kind, and while in disorganised bands a menace to health and safety wherever they roam.”*²⁵⁵

It seemed that especially displaced Poles were a group that caused troubles for the British occupation authorities. On 24 July 1945, *The Scotsman* reported that serious trouble

²⁵² Frank 2008, 142, 219, 275, 278.

²⁵³ Frank 2008, 122-123

²⁵⁴ *The Scotsman*, "Chaos in Germany", 1.5.1945.

²⁵⁵ *The Glasgow Herald*, "War ends in Europe", 8.5.1945.

would develop between the Poles and the British and German police if swift actions were not taken: “*Nearly all the French, Russian, Dutch, and Belgian displaced persons have been repatriated, but a wave of murder, loot, and rape continues.*” *The Scotsman* implied that this was because thousands of Poles still had arms seized from the Germans, originally for their own protection during the capitulation of Germany. The article referred to a report published by the British Military Government officials. The report stated that eleven unarmed German policemen had been murdered by displaced persons in six weeks. The article concluded that something had to be done quickly, otherwise the maintenance of law and order in the British zone would be hindered.²⁵⁶ A couple of weeks later, *The Scotsman* reported that the German police were now armed as a result of raids by armed displaced persons who lived out of plunder²⁵⁷.

On 27 August 1945, *The Scotsman* wrote that everything possible was made for the comfort of those 500,000 Poles in the British zone. The article explained that the Allies had a keen desire to repatriate the Poles, but this aim was thwarted by many unmentioned complications. The tone of the article was compassionate towards Poles, although Germans had suffered from their violent behaviour:

*“The long period of waiting for complete liberation has, nevertheless, become very trying, and the more desperate inmates have been driven to acts of violence against Germans, including murder.”*²⁵⁸

Later in autumn, *The Scotsman’s* correspondent stressed that the British zone was up against a grave problem since there was a significant increase in crimes committed by displaced persons. The correspondent noted that it was easy to sympathise with displaced persons, who were brought as slave labour to Germany from other countries. In their present state, they were missing a purpose in their life and surrounded by people with whom they had old scores to settle. Nevertheless, the correspondent concluded that “*we cannot allow ceaseless cases of murder, looting, and rape to continue where we are responsible.*”²⁵⁹ Therefore, the Germans were ought to be protected to preserve the public order in the British zone.

²⁵⁶ The Scotsman, “Poles in British zone of Germany”, 24.7.1945.

²⁵⁷ The Scotsman, “Bandit gangs in Germany”, 11.8.1945.

²⁵⁸ The Scotsman, “Problem of Poles in Germany”, 27.8.1945.

²⁵⁹ The Scotsman, “Germany must get more food and coal”, 3.10.1945.

Reverend Macanna, the Church of Scotland representative on the Ecumenical Refugee Commission, described on 2 March 1946 how most of the British public were familiar with the terms *refugee* and *displaced person*, but did not appreciate what these words meant in terms of human suffering. Consequently, displaced persons constituted a grave problem for the German and Austrian peoples since displaced persons were left out of adequate international aid. Macanna suggested that there were only three ways to solve the problem presented by the refugees and displaced persons: assimilation, repatriation or emigration.²⁶⁰ The best option for democratic Germany was assimilation of German refugees and repatriation of displaced persons. However, the repatriation was a slow process and meanwhile the social standing of displaced persons remained in many ways unclear.

On 16 December 1947, Edward Crankshaw, a British author and commentator, claimed in *The Scotsman* that displaced persons lived in better conditions than generally implied in the British media. Crankshaw argued that displaced persons had complete freedom of movement and many lived in cosy houses instead of tented villages.²⁶¹ Two days later, Harold Ford, Legal adviser to U.N.R.R.A.²⁶² and to the International Refugee Organisation, replied to Crankshaw and disproved his allegations. Ford argued that displaced persons had less freedom to travel than Germans, and they did not have ration documents and therefore had to eat the food provided for them in the assembly centre. Nevertheless, Ford concluded that displaced persons were ultimately a hindrance to the formation of a new democratic Germany.²⁶³ For that reason, the press discourse regarding displaced persons was built on the image that ethnically uniform nation-states were a guarantee for the peace in Europe.

The source material revealed that contemporaries were able to grasp the significance of the expulsions in a historical context, as the following quote from *The Scotsman* demonstrates: “*It is hard to find a parallel in history for this mass transfer of a people. It is the deliberate transfer of a race in the interests of national purity and unity.*”²⁶⁴ Matthew Frank argues that the German refugee crisis allowed the British to reaffirm their commitment to traditional British values and show that the war had not left the country

²⁶⁰ The Scotsman, “Refugees in Europe”, 2.3.1946.

²⁶¹ The Scotsman, “Life of “Displaced Persons”, 16.12.1947.

²⁶² United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

²⁶³ The Scotsman, “Life of “Displaced Persons”, 18.12.1947.

²⁶⁴ The Scotsman, “Sudeten Germans out of Czechoslovakia”, 5.11.1946.

morally browbeaten. In other words, the significance of the public response to the German refugee crisis lays in how the issue impacted the way the British perceived themselves.²⁶⁵ The discoveries regarding German expellees and displaced persons presented here emphasise the importance of German post-war suffering and victimhood discourse on the historical conception of political ambitions to form ethnically unified nation-states in post-war Europe.

²⁶⁵ Frank 2008, 225-226.

6. Conclusion: Germany Should Never Be Able to Start a New War

This master's thesis examined the representation of German suffering and victimhood in the post-war Scottish public debate 1945-1949. It set out to introduce new perspectives to the topic and to establish a link to previous research which has had some crucial absences and silences. The methods and ideas of discourse analysis, conceptual history, and media studies were used for analysing newspaper articles from two dominant Scottish newspapers: *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald*. Four main perspectives emerged from the analysis: political, economic, legal, and ethnic homogenisation. The chapters of this master's thesis were built around the above-mentioned perspectives.

The focus of the study was on finding out what was possible to say about the topic during that era and how webs of discourse reflected and constructed social reality. In the end, it was a question of human communication and negotiation of hierarchy, which defined where the British people stood in relation to moral questions regarding the German suffering and victimhood. In other words, the language of the news articles conveyed ethnocentric images of Scottishness and Britishness in order to identify the key national characteristics and what was their relation to 'the Hunnish' Germans. For example, the distress of German youth provided an opportunity to show mercy on the ex-enemy's offspring and it appealed to the traditional British value of chivalry. This reveals how the British perceived themselves and without a doubt, there was a need for displaying that the war had not caused a moral decay among the British people.

With respect to the research question, it was found that the representation of German suffering and victimhood was conducted as a part of the wider reconstruction process of Europe. The British occupation zone was in dynamic relation to other zones and a common problem was distrust towards the USSR. And because of that, even former Nazis were often considered to be more trustworthy partners than the Russians. The Cold War metanarrative of keeping Germany in the Western sphere of influence was present in many news articles. The British public was fed the impression that the foundation had been prepared for the Germans on which they could erect a democracy on their own. The British government used a lot of effort to show her subjects that the Germans were not beyond redemption. Regardless of the aggravating Nazi perpetration, the Germans were also portrayed as a possibly viable nation in political terms. This became evident

especially during the Battle of Berlin. The Soviet threat transformed the Germans into an important ideological barrier. The newspaper correspondents even expressed some pity for those Germans who were subjugated to Soviet rule. The press discourse aimed to make Germans trust the British and *vice versa*. Nevertheless, it was equally about control and power to maintain political and economic hegemony in Europe for the British.

The majority of the news articles supported the view in which Germans had brought their tribulations on themselves and therefore they were expected to suffer both physically and mentally in order to gain salvation. However, there were practical, but also moral and ideological reasons why the press discourse adopted a constructive rather than judgmental approach in many cases. The post-war political state of play required that the public opinion was on the side of reconstruction, maintaining peace, and avoiding retaliation. The press discourse gave justification for the British occupation policy and protected the reputation of the British nation as a righteous victor. In most cases, it was not about the principle, but the method and how it was executed.

The mental shift from a time of extreme violence to peaceful coexistence with Germans did not happen by coincidence. The re-shaping of Germany was like performing a heart surgery; one slip and... Therefore, it was a matter of purposeful policies, whose manifestations de-Nazification and re-education programmes were. One should also take into account the major role of the media in this process. This study has shown that the Scottish press had to balance between Nazi crimes and reconciliation for the sake of peace in Europe. This partly stemmed from the British national identity, but mainly from the economic realities. Germany still had essentially political and economic power as a great nation in the middle of Europe. Consequently, the Germans were granted an important voice in the Scottish press discourse regarding their own suffering and victimhood. *The Scotsman* and *The Glasgow Herald* both allowed frequent space for the German perspective, although it included criticism of British efforts. This leads to the second half of the research question: on what basis was the public debate regarding the German suffering and victimhood constructed?

What is noteworthy is that most of the hardships the Germans had to endure were in causal connection and deeply interwoven with each other in the press discourse. For instance, one of the most common themes of German suffering that stood out from the source material was a famine. The food crises in Germany were represented as the consequence of bombing and deportation policies. Nevertheless, these actions were considered to be

morally acceptable because they were represented as the lesser of two evils or the necessary evil. Furthermore, the possible realization of famine in Germany was regarded more as a hindrance to the success of Allied occupation policy than an actual threat to the lives of Germans. However, the re-education of Germans was not going to succeed if Germans were not able to meet their basic needs. Therefore, mental and spiritual suffering was also acknowledged.

The press discourse suggested that the physical deprivation was linked to decreased productive output, and without a functional economy, democracy could not take root in Germany. Furthermore, Germany must rise from the ashes in order to ensure the prosperity of other countries and the stability of peace in Europe. However, the trick was that Germany was not allowed to rise too much, otherwise, it could again pose a military threat in Europe. Therefore, Germany was represented as a threat if it collapsed, but also if it prospered.

In general, the press discourse appealed to a common European heritage of Christian values and culture. In addition, ideas of liberalism and humanity for humanity's sake were voiced. It was believed that the future of Europe must be built upon a basis of mutual trust and co-operation. However, the press discourse also stressed that Britain should ensure that Germany could never be able to start a new war. This inconsistency may be due to the fact that the press discourse aimed to enforce the dominant discourse of minimizing the trouble-maker potential of Germany. Another possible explanation for this is that the press discourse stressed that Britain was cleaning the mess that Germany had caused in Europe. In other words, Britain had a moral obligation and a legal duty to root out the National Socialist element from German society, even if it meant the use of retrospective legislation. On no account, could the British descend to Nazi methods of illegal extermination. In the end, the definition of 'legal' was in the hands of victors.

Many debates were based on a tacit economic dependence between Britain and Germany, although this was seldom explicitly addressed. Britain had a vested interest especially in coal. The excessive control of the German economy caused problems, but on the other hand, the Allied consensus did not want to give too much economic power to the Germans too soon. This dual nature of the press discourse became also evident in the case of expelled Germans from Czechoslovakia: the Germans were represented both as productive members of society and unwanted invaders.

The conflicting narrative regarding the imprisoned Germans showed that Britain's own needs became first. This is hardly surprising since nations want to secure their own survival, but in this case, Britain's reputation became challenged by accusations of Britain exploiting the German prisoners as slave labour. At the same time, the British authorities tried to avoid making the imprisoned Germans look like victims. Therefore, the press discourse emphasised that Britain must come first, but only because it was beneficial for the Germans as well. A similar situation was with the reparations which for the Germans symbolised the Allied intention of crippling Germany's economy for decades.

One of the most interesting findings was the patronising approach of the British occupation policy, which resembled a colonial setting. Strong authorities such as Harris and Montgomery were used for legitimising bombing and occupation policies. The press discourse aimed to convince the British public that the German spirit of obedience was in contrast with the British ideal of freedom and therefore British authorities applied patriarchal methods. The re-education policy was ultimately about getting rid of the totalitarian mindset in Germany. Another interesting finding was the use of allegories of 'disease' and 'cure' or 'patient' and 'doctor' for signalling the necessity of democratization in Germany. This study has shown that the news coverage of expulsions was also about a discursive struggle over the power to define what terms should be used to describe the forcibly moved Germans. From the viewpoint of conceptual history, it mattered whether expelled Germans were called 're-settlers' or 'expellees'. Another example is the term 'displaced person' which eventually embodied meaning in which Germans were ought to be protected against violence in order to preserve public order. In addition, these are examples of rhetoric strategies which were used at persuading readers to adopt the same viewpoint as the newspaper had.

One can argue whether the bombing of German cities was an appropriate strategy, but from the British point of view it was a necessary attempt to end the war and that is how it was fed into the press discourse. Similarly, the expulsion might not have been ethical, and one can certainly question the humanity of its execution, but it aimed to end the non-contiguity of ethnic and state boundaries, which were one of the main reasons for Hitler's war in the first place. The principles of integration and assimilation were therefore adopted to avoid the threat of discontented German expellees becoming a base for renewed anti-democratic radicalism. Furthermore, the refugee crisis represented one

crucial aspect of the British view on the dynamics of post-war Germany's ethnic stability, which was considered to be a guarantee for peace in Europe.

Different opinion-leaders were not unanimous on post-war German national character. Many public figures, such as Gollancz, defended ordinary Germans and tried to create a distinction between them and the Nazis. In their arguments, the accusation of the whole German nation amounted to unnecessary discrimination and therefore hindered the whole peace process. The press discourse also had a claim that an eliminationist anti-Semitism was an intrinsic part of the German national character. The division between 'good' and 'bad' Germans was part of a long historical continuum which relates to the question of Germany's *Sonderweg*. This finding suggests that the representation of German suffering and victimhood in the source material was to a great extent about the power to redefine the German national character.

In the end, the dominant narrative of 'the Hun' persisted throughout the period under review and it can therefore be assumed that the notions of victimhood of Germans did not manage to outweigh their troubling past. Nevertheless, it is interesting that the British government also made oneself guilty of practising authoritarian policies. Therefore, it had to be careful in signalling its motives and intentions regarding Germany's future. A good measure was to refer to the fact that Germans themselves put Nazis into a position of power and supported them. Still, the question remained whether the idea of the superiority of the German race was already present in German society before 1933 or not. Instead, some British certainly believed that Germans were in fact enslaved by the Nazi leaders who exploited the German soul prone to obedience and discipline. The analysis of the source material revealed that occasionally Germans were represented as double victims; first Hitler, and then Allied tyranny.

The commemoration of the Second World War in Germany has been a sensitive matter. The memory of German suffering was - and partly still is - determined by internal and international politics. Although the total absence of public commemoration of German losses in the immediate post-war period is a myth, the German suffering has always been controlled from outside Germany. The Germans became victims of memory politics and their traumatic experiences were obscured by the culture of collective guilt. Therefore, the German victimhood and perpetration have not been in an equal position. For historians, it has been almost impossible to speak about German victimhood during or after the Second World War without mentioning the Holocaust and other Nazi atrocities.

This master's thesis has examined both aspects in relation to each other so that one is not isolated from the other. It is important to remember that for contemporaries, the war was primarily waged against evil itself, not to end Hitler's programmes of genocide.

Newspapers reported all the most important events in the field of domestic and foreign politics, but the question of in which ways the political decision-making was affected by the press remains. Further research should be undertaken to investigate this relationship. Nevertheless, the findings of this master's thesis raise intriguing questions regarding the contradictory dual nature of Germany's immediate post-war history. Furthermore, it has been shown here that many conventional arguments regarding Germany's post-war status do not bear close scrutiny. Although post-war European history is a widely covered subject, there exist additional perspectives and approaches which may help us to gain a better understanding of this defining moment in history in which the peaceful and democratic future of Europe was bound to the creation of a new Germany.

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