



The Yishuv and the Shoah, 1943

Worksheet

What did the Yishuv know about the fate of European Jews at the beginning of 1943?

At the beginning of 1943, news about the fate of Jews in Poland was already reaching the Yishuv (the Jewish settlement in Palestine). Information about the fate of the Jews in the USSR was also common knowledge by this time. This information was not, however, widely publicized. Any mention did not make the headlines but was instead hidden in the inner pages of the newspapers. Even when it was printed, there were those who claimed that the news was exaggerated. There was indeed much misunderstanding in the Yishuv about the extent of the fate of European Jews.

However, in November 1942, a group of sixty Eretz Israel Jews arrived in Israel from Europe where they had been since the outbreak of the war and testified to the plight of the Jews. From this stage, the Yishuv leadership began to publicise news about the systematic murder of Jews in Nazi Germany, and on November 30, 1942, the Yishuv instituted three days of mourning.

Here is a newspaper article and poster from the beginning of 1943 about the fate of the Jews in Europe. Read and analyse these sources using the accompanying guiding questions and write a blog post (at least 400 words) about what the Yishuv knew about the Holocaust in 1943 and how it responded.

Work Stages

1. Read the sources and answer the questions.
2. Extra sources:
 - [Letter of Appeal to Support the Children of European Refugees, 1938](#)
 - [ATS Recruitment Poster, British Mandate Era](#)
 - [The Yishuv and the Holocaust](#), *Central Zionist Archives*
 - [The Yishuv](#), *Yad Vashem*
3. Before writing the post, think of a title and the type of information (written and visual) it will include.

Sources:

[Purim Festivities Cancelled, Tel Aviv, 1943](#)

While reading the poster, pay attention to the following:

1. Who published this poster?
2. What is the content of the poster?
3. What information does this poster provide about the fate of the Jews in Warsaw?



Translation:

Tel Aviv Municipality

Poster #4

CANCELLATION OF PURIM FESTIVITIES

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

London - When the Germans were trying to liquidate the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw and empty Jewish houses of their inhabitants, they were met with fierce resistance from the Jews. Seventy Germans were killed in this struggle. The German army used a machine gun and a few hundred Jews were killed, some of their leaders among them. After the revolt was suppressed, the Germans rounded up 6000 Jews and sent them to an unknown destination. Similar news has been received from the city of Radom.

As a result of this worrying news, the Tel Aviv Municipality has decided this Purim, as a symbol of mourning and solidarity, to forbid and stop shows at all entertainment venues including theatres and cinemas (excluding restaurants and cafes).

Lest the sound of joy and mirth be heard in our city!

I. Rokach, Mayor of Tel Aviv

21.3.1943 Adar Bet 14, 5703

"One-Sixth of Europe's Jews Murdered," *The Palestine Post*, January 17, 1943

On reading the article, pay attention to the following topics:

1. Where did the information in this article come from?
Why was it significant that this information was printed in *Davar*?
Read more about *Davar* [here](#).
2. What topics are discussed in the article, and what information is presented about each topic?
3. What other newspapers are mentioned in the article?
Read more about them [here](#) and [here](#).
4. What news does not appear here?

ONE-SIXTH OF EUROPE'S JEWS MURDERED

About a sixth of all the Jews of Europe, namely a million and a half, had been murdered by August, according to an article by Jacob Leczynsky, well-known statistician, published in "Davar" on Friday.

"Jewish losses in life have been eight times as great as the total suffered by England and all the Dominions and colonies, with a population of 600 millions," wrote Mr. Leczynsky. "But while 99 per cent of the casualties of other nations have been sustained on the field of battle, most of our dead have been the victims of massacre."

The same paper in a leading article deplored the slowness with which the United Nations' preparations for the rescue of European Jewry were being made.

"Valuable opportunities are being squandered," the article stated. "While the debate continues as to who shall be the first to be rescued, none are being rescued. How long will this

debate continue? Until there are none left to save?"

In a companion article, "Davar" discussed the recent letter from the women of Poland to General Sikorski, imploring immediate "grimmiest retribution."

"The massacres are but beginning," the article stated. "Relations between men and nations are likely to be determined for generations in the present atmosphere of murder."

Discussing the same letter, "Haaretz" pointed out that the Germans were compelling their soldiers to commit crimes which perhaps go against their grain.

"We must destroy the confident belief of the Germans that they can rob and kill with impunity, that even if Germany is defeated there will be many, even among the Jews, who will come to her defence."

The letter from the women of Poland calls for all the women of the world to protest against German atrocities," wrote "Hatzofeh". "It is the duty of Jewish women to stir the conscience of their sisters."