

Extract from a letter printed in a British newspaper, The Daily Worker, February 1943

Catalogue ref: FO 371/36653

Courtesy of The Morning Star



EASTERN EUROPE 1939–1945: CAMPS**What is this source?**

This letter appeared in *The Times* and was reprinted in another British newspaper called *The Daily Worker*, November 17th 1943.

This newspaper cutting was filed by a British government official in the Foreign Office to help the government judge public opinion on the issue.

What's the background to this source?

In 1942 Hitler's armies had carved out a huge empire in Eastern Europe. During their invasions German forces had taken a large number of European Jews prisoner. At first they were forced into ghettos, used in slave labour or simply shot.

From 1942 so many Jews were under Nazi control that the Nazi leaders came up with plans for a 'Final Solution'. This involved building camps that were used to execute millions of Jews and other groups the Nazis regarded as inferior.

It's worth knowing that...

The Daily Worker was a left wing paper. Although it supported the war effort, it was a paper which was generally more likely to raise issues which the government might find awkward, such as working conditions or in this case the Jews.

There had been a programme of rescuing Jewish children from Nazi territories in the 1930s. It was known as the kindertransport programme. There were also detailed discussions about a possible evacuation programme at this time. However, the USA and British governments believed that they could not spare the manpower and resources for an operation like this when they needed all their resources to fight the war. One government document suggested that the whole campaign in North Africa would have to be abandoned if the evacuation was to go ahead.

How will you use this source?

1. Is there any doubt in this letter about what was happening to the Jews?
2. How would you describe the tone of the letter?



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3. What does the letter want the government to do?
4. Do you think these demands were reasonable in a wartime situation?
5. Can you use this source to support any part of your presentation?