

Spring 2001

Money Versus Morality: The Failure of the Joint Boycott Council and the Anti-Nazi Boycott Movement in the United States

Michelle D. Ward
Old Dominion University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/history_etds



Part of the [Economic History Commons](#), [Jewish Studies Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ward, Michelle D.. "Money Versus Morality: The Failure of the Joint Boycott Council and the Anti-Nazi Boycott Movement in the United States" (2001). Master of Arts (MA), Thesis, History, Old Dominion University, DOI: 10.25777/aw36-jy33
https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/history_etds/260

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the History at ODU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ODU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@odu.edu.

MONEY VERSUS MORALITY: THE FAILURE OF THE JOINT BOYCOTT
COUNCIL AND THE ANTI-NAZI BOYCOTT MOVEMENT
IN THE UNITED STATES

by

Michelle D. Ward
B.S. December 1994, East Carolina University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Old Dominion University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

HISTORY

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
May 2001

Approved by:

Maura Hametz (Director)

Austin Jersild (Member)

David Metzger (Member)

ABSTRACT

MONEY VERSUES MORALITY: THE FAILURE OF THE JOINT BOYCOTT COUNCIL AND THE ANTI-NAZI BOYCOTT MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Michelle D. Ward
Old Dominion University, 2001
Director: Dr. Maura Hametz

The Nazis' rise to power elicited responses from a multitude of Jewish and non-Jewish organizations around the world. Like their respective counterparts, American Jewry adopted a variety of strategies both in the United States and abroad to combat Nazism. The purpose of this study is to examine the boycott movement instituted by the Joint Boycott Council. Although the boycott had a limited short-term effect on the German economy, it failed in its overall goals. It never contributed to an economic collapse in Germany or forced the Nazis to turn away from discriminatory practices and decrees targeting Jews and other groups.

Numerous factors contributed to the failure of the Joint Boycott Council and the boycott movement in the United States. Trade policies implemented by the Nazi government along with American unwillingness to cease buying German goods undermined the goals established by the Joint Boycott Council and the boycott movement. Inappropriate funding and lack of participation further contributed to the movement's failure.

Although the movement failed to achieve its goals, it did boast some success. It brought together two ideologically different organizations, drew public attention to the plight of Jews in Germany, and made Nazi leaders aware of the movement to boycott all German goods and services. The implementation of the boycott movement also dispels

the notion that American Jews remained passive bystanders in the face of Hitler's early persecutions of German Jews. Yet despite these successes, economic factors and anti-Semitism overrode general concerns for Jews in Germany.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I would thank my committee chair, Dr. Maura Hametz. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with such a gifted teacher and scholar. Her insight, patience, and helpfulness were a pivotal part of the successful completion of this project.

Appreciation is also extended to my committee members, Dr. Austin Jersild and Dr. David Metzger, and my graduate advisor, Dr. Jane Merritt. Their thoughtful comments and suggestions elevated the quality of this thesis.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends. To Suzy, for driving me back and forth to New York City and encouraging me throughout my research. To my friend, Georgeann, for giving me a place to stay while in New York City. And to my entire family, for their gentle encouragement and ongoing support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. THE PRELUDE TO THE BOYCOTT AND THE REACTION OF AMERICAN JEWRY TO NAZISM.....	6
THE NAZIS RESPOND.....	13
DISPUTES WITHIN THE NAZI GOVERNMENT.....	15
III. THE JOINT BOYCOTT COUNCIL.....	21
METHODS OF THE BOYCOTT.....	25
OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE JLC.....	28
FIGHTING ANTI-SEMITISM IN AMERICA.....	34
IV. WHY BOYCOTT?.....	39
BOYCOTT PARTICIPATION.....	41
THE MAKEUP OF THE MOVEMENT AND THE JBC.....	45
V. THE IMPACT OF THE BOYCOTT.....	48
THE END OF THE BOYCOTT.....	55
VI. CONCLUSION.....	61
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	63
APPENDIX.....	66
VITA.....	70

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFL	American Federation of Labor
AJCom	American Jewish Committee
AJCong	American Jewish Congress
JBC	Joint Boycott Council
JLC	Jewish Labor Committee
JWV	Jewish War Veterans

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An ancient Jewish tradition states “all Jews are responsible for each other.” If one Jewish community is in trouble, then it is the duty of other communities to help.¹ Faced with the reality of anti-Semitic violence in Nazi Germany, organizations around the world pursued policies to protest Nazi discrimination of Jews. Boycott movements that sprang up around the globe accounted for the largest type of protest. The movement that emerged in the United States proved to be both larger in scope and longer in duration than those in other nations. One organization, the Joint Boycott Council, unified the efforts of two of the largest American Jewish organizations, the American Jewish Congress and the Jewish Labor Committee, to lead the movement in the United States.

A variety of organizations agreed on the importance and urgency of the Hitler issue, but disputes among the groups weakened their responses. While the boycott became the largest avenue of protest, it also became one of the most ridiculed. Groups and individuals questioned the integrity of the movement claiming, “it is a grave mistake bound to have harmful consequences toward our German brethren” and “it is obvious that a powerful enemy cannot be fought while a child is in its custody.”² Despite these concerns, the boycott movement in the United States operated until the United States’ entrance in World War II.

The format for this thesis follows current style requirements of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Sixth Edition.

¹ Seymour Maxwell Finger, *American Jewry During the Holocaust* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1984), 59.

² Letter from I. Shalom to the office of the Joint Boycott Council dated 19 January 1939, Joint Boycott Council Archives, New York Public Library, Box 1.

The Joint Boycott Council and other boycott groups invested large sums of money and hard work in the boycott. They fought desperately for its success and even praised it as being a severe detriment to the German economy. In reality, though, the movement was a failure. The boycott enjoyed limited success in 1934 and offered a philanthropic outlet for American involvement. However, it failed to accomplish its main objectives: to end discrimination against Jews and to precipitate the collapse of the Nazi government. It did not decrease the number of German exports or imports for any extended length of time, cause an economic collapse, or spur a cessation of anti-Jewish attacks. In fact, despite the time and effort invested in the movement the number of German exports actually increased in 1935 and each year thereafter and the German economy recovered from a severe depression. Discrimination against Jews steadily grew worse.

Numerous factors contributed to the movement's inability to affect Nazi law or Nazi economics. Despite the variety of methods employed, the boycott movement of the JBC failed to reach the majority of the population in the United States. In essence, the movement tried to protest Nazism with only a small portion of the American public. Nazi trade policies, lack of participation, and the United States government's unwillingness to boycott German goods also figured in its failure. However, the main threat to the success of the boycott rested with American businesses and American consumers. As a whole, American businesses were unwilling to stop selling German goods for fear of losing money, and consumers were unwilling to give up German made goods. In the end, economic concerns proved to be more important than humanitarian considerations.

The response of Americans to the situation in Nazi Germany has elicited vast amounts of research. The role of American Jewry has been a central focus of the debate. While the boycott of German goods and services is often mentioned among the many Anti-Nazi efforts undertaken in the interwar period, research on the boycott movement has been minimal. Works including *American Jewry During the Holocaust* and *The Story of the Jewish War Veterans of America* touch on various aspects of the boycott movement. Moshe Gottlieb, the leading scholar on the boycott movement, has suggested that although “media of this kind are ineffective, there can be no denying that the boycott hurt Germany...in almost every branch of German industry, especially exports.”³ The work of Jewish organizations has also been examined, most notably by Arie Lebowitz, Seymour Maxwell Finger, and Henry Feingold.⁴

Useful for the study of the boycott are unpublished materials that can be found scattered in the archives of participating organizations. The complete files of the Joint Boycott Council can be found in the archival division of the New York Public Library, while the Jewish Labor Committee’s archives make it home at New York University. This documentation including propaganda material, letters, reports, memos, pamphlets, and statistics gleaned from both archives provide the basis for this research. This thesis examines perceptions of the boycott in periodicals and newspapers including *The New*

³ Moshe Gottlieb, “The Anti-Nazi Boycott Movement in the American Jewish Community 1933-1941” (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1967), 438. Gottlieb’s works also include *American Anti-Nazi Resistance, 1933-1941: An Historical Analysis* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1982) and several articles on the Anti-Nazi Boycott movement in the United States.

⁴ Arie Lebowitz and Henry Feingold focus their studies on the work of Jewish labor organizations. Seymour Maxwell Finger’s works examine the work of the American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, B’nai B’rith, and the Jewish Labor Committee.

York Times and the *Atlanta Constitution*. Secondary literature provides the background for the resurgence of the German economy, trade policies, and discriminatory decrees used by the Nazi government. Secondary literature also provides information on boycott movements in countries other than the United States.

Chapter Two focuses on the violence and discrimination against Jews after Adolf Hitler's accession to power and the government's denial of involvement in the acts. The chapter also examines the reaction of American Jewry to the situation in Germany as well as the reaction of German Jews to American Jewry's call for a boycott movement. The chapter concludes with an examination of the Nazis' response to the boycott, the First of April counter-boycott.

Chapter Three examines the principal members of the Joint Boycott Council, the American Jewish Congress and Jewish Labor Committee, and discusses the organization of the JBC itself. It focuses on the methods the JBC implemented in their quest to hurt the German economy and hamper the Nazi government. The remainder of the chapter focuses on additional anti-Nazi activities implemented by the Jewish Labor Committee during the 1930s.

Chapter Four discusses the decision of the JBC to implement a boycott of Nazi goods and services as its primary method to combat Nazism. It also focuses on the levels of public participation, the groups involved in boycott activities, and reasons behind their involvement.

Chapter Five focuses on the boycott's impact on the German economy. Although the JBC declared the boycott a success, this chapter presents statistics illustrating German increases in exports abroad as well as the resurgence in the German economy as a whole.

This chapter also addresses Nazi trade policies and their influence on the boycott movement. In addition, the role of American business and American consumers in the movement is also examined to support the conclusion that economic factors outweighed morality issues in American Jewry's response to Nazism. Severely hampered by Nazi trade policies and Americans continual use of German goods and services, the boycott movement and the JBC proved to be a powerless opponent in the fight against Nazism. The work ends with a discussion of the reasons behind the failure of the boycott movement and the end of the JBC.

CHAPTER II

THE PRELUDE TO THE BOYCOTT AND THE REACTION OF AMERICAN
JEWRY TO NAZISM

The denial of personal freedoms in Germany, the deterioration of democracy, and the rise in violence toward Jewish citizens triggered “Judea” to declare War on Germany.¹ In the United States most Jewish organizations chose the boycott of German goods and services as their primary tool of “war.” Opponents of Nazism believed, as articulated by Henry Morgenthau, that “Germany must be turned into a Waste Land” in order to restore democratic ideals. The most practical and effective means to achieving this end was believed to be a boycott.

Hitler's abhorrence of Jews, documented in his book *Mein Kampf* before his rise to power in Germany, was already well known. He thoroughly believed in a “World Jewish Conspiracy” and made numerous references throughout *Mein Kampf* illustrating his deep hatred for the Jews. On repeated occasions he concluded “that the Jew was no German,” “the Jew destroys the racial foundations of our existence and thus destroys our people for all time,” and

*[T]he Jew is today the great agitator for the complete destruction of Germany. Wherever in the world we read articles against Germany, Jews are their fabricators, just as in peacetime and during the War the press of the Jewish stock exchange and Marxists systematically stirred up hatred against Germany until state after state abandoned neutrality and, renouncing the true interests of the peoples, entered the service of the World War coalition.*²

¹ *Daily Express*, “Jewish Declaration of War,” 24 March 1933, Jewish Labor Committee, New York University Library, Reel 4.

² (Author's italics) Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 61, 565, 623.

Other prominent Nazis shared similar views. Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Minister of Propaganda, declared:

Certainly the Jew is also a human being, *** but the flea is also an animal ***. As the flea is not a pleasant animal, we do not feel any duty to ourselves and our conscience to guard and protect it and let it thrive, so that it may bite, sting, and torture us, but to render it innocuous. So it is with Jews.³

Statements like these coupled with Hitler and the Nazi's ascension to power, spurred Jewish populations in Germany and around the world to express fear of the perceptions grounded in National Socialist ideology and the repercussions this new government would have for the Jewish population.

In the early months following Hitler's rise to power, although at the time the new Nazi government did not openly condone or take responsibility for anti-Semitic acts, violence against Jews broke out across Germany. Claims were made that even Hitler was shocked about the beating of Jews and wrecking of their stores. Minister of the Interior, Herman Goering, denounced individual acts of lawlessness and violence as against the will of the government. Hitler vehemently denied government involvement in the violence, ordered the police to arrest individuals attacking Jews, and publicly stated that "the persecution of Jews merely because of race will not be tolerated."⁴ However, reports on German atrocities against Jews and political opponents quickly spread outside of Germany.

Deciding other matters were more pressing than the "Jewish question," the Nazi government ruled that for the time being governmental discrimination targeting Jews or

³ American Jewish Committee, *The Jews In Nazi Germany: The Factual Record Of Their Persecution By The National Socialists* (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1933), 60.

⁴ *Atlanta Constitution*, 26 March 1933.

other groups could wait. Proving to the world that Nazi leadership of Germany was both legal and legitimate and strengthening the economy were paramount.⁵ Additionally, Hitler desperately needed to maintain respectability abroad and provide order in Germany. Whether the Nazis liked it or not, the opinions of foreign governments and creditors were crucial. Still economically weak, the German economy relied on the enormous amounts of money foreign governments and businesses invested in Germany. As a result, not wishing to risk worldwide opposition and criticism at such an early date, Hitler stressed his dismay concerning the spread of anti-Semitic acts in Germany.

Government condoned violence and discrimination against Jews did not remain hidden for long. Anti-Semitic propaganda disseminated by the Nazis spurred beatings, arrests, and boycotts of Jewish businesses throughout Germany. The American Jewish Committee reported in a book released in 1933 entitled, *The Jews in Nazi Germany: The Factual Record Of Their Persecution By The National Socialists*, that in Berlin members of the SA beat Jews “until the blood streamed down their heads and faces and their backs and shoulders were bruised.”⁶ On 8 March in the cities of Kassel and Essen the Nazi SS established pickets in front of Jewish stores telling the people; “Jews are the cause of our misery; don't buy in Jewish stores. Buy only in German stores.”⁷ The *New York Times* reported that on 1 April in Munich:

⁵ Allan Bullock notes the importance Hitler placed on proving the legality of the Nazis rise to power. According to Bullock, Hitler was obsessed with the issue because he did not want other nations or the German people to think the Nazis assumed power by force or manipulation. Allan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (London: Odhams Press, 1952).

⁶ American Jewish Committee, *The Jews In Nazi Germany*, 22.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

[D]etachments of Nazi Storm troops, armed with rifles and pistols, were marched through the streets and posted as sentries at the doors of shops owned by Jews. Once posted, the Storm Troops stood with feet wide apart, their rifles held horizontally in both hands, barring entrance to the shops.⁸

Similar reports of terror along with others not reported in national newspapers filled the pamphlet. Although the American Jewish Committee, a highly regarded organization, received their reports from sources in Germany, the question nonetheless remains; were these accounts more an element of American Jewish propaganda than actual fact?

Representatives of Germany Jewry maintained that these reports were “vastly exaggerated” and merely nothing more than “atrocities propaganda.”⁹ However, representatives of American Jewry adamantly denied any exaggeration of violence in the press and dismissed German Jewry’s statements as merely an attempt to avoid “another beating.”¹⁰

A foreign observer in Germany corroborated the American version of the situation in Germany. He noted acts of violence against Jews similar to those described in the pamphlet printed by the American Jewish Committee. On 27 March 1933, The *New York Times* reported one eyewitness account of the violence:

On the nights of March 9th and 10th, bands of Nazis throughout Germany carried out wholesale raids to intimidate the opposition, particularly the Jews. As hundreds have sworn in affidavits, men and women were insulted, slapped, punched in the face, hit over the head with blackjacks, dragged out of their homes in night clothes and otherwise molested. The arrest of innocent Jews was sanctioned as 'protective jailing'... You are taken off to jail and put to work in a concentration camp where you may stay a year without any charge being brought against you. Never have I seen law-abiding citizens living in such unholy fear.¹¹

⁸ *New York Times*, 1 April 1933.

⁹ “The Transfer Agreement and the Boycott Fever 1933” (Postfach: Verlag für Volkstum und Zeitgeschichtsforschung, 1987), 5.

¹⁰ American Jewish Committee, *The Jews In Nazi Germany*, 22.

¹¹ *New York Times*, 27 March 1933.

Similar reports from Germany were printed in papers across the United States. The *Atlanta Constitution*, for example, noted the acts of violence and disregard for human life “were far more horrible than could reasonably have been imagined.”¹²

Reports of pogroms also came from sources other than the international or American press. George Rooby, a field worker for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, commented on the plight of Jews living under Nazi control. Throughout the seven-page report on his trip to Germany, he described how Jews were “robbed of their livelihood, thrown out of their homes, and threatened with arrest.” He noted the addition of signs throughout Germany reading “Jews forbidden,” He also gave an eyewitness account of a pogrom in Nuremberg.

[O]n the night between November 9th and 10th, hundreds of S.A. men in their brown uniforms were assembled on a public square and divided into squads of eight men. Then instructions were given to start the pogrom against Jewish stores, shops, and homes. Each detail of eight men received picks, hammers, and shovels and were ordered to start their diabolical work. Each squad was furnished with lists of places to be visited and with large scissors and knives.¹³

Aware of the potential impact of worldwide criticism and condemnation, Nazi officials sought to assure concerned groups that these were random, spontaneous acts performed by individual citizens without the knowledge of the Nazi government. The tone of this government issued statement did not denounce anti-Semitism or anti-Semitic policy but revealed the perceived impetus of the violent acts:

¹² *Atlanta Constitution*, 1 April 1933.

¹³ George Rooby Report to American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Given to the author by Susan Iscavits, April 1999.

A large body of nationally minded persons is determined no longer to tolerate the existence of Jewish business houses and therefore demands their closing. Wherever such sentiment is asserting itself, the Nazis are gratefully willing to devote themselves to the preservation of public order.¹⁴

Even representatives of the Jewish population in Germany maintained:

We attach great significance to the fact that the authorities, where it was at all possible to interfere, have done so against outrages that have come to our knowledge. In all cases, these deeds were committed by irresponsible elements who kept in hiding. We know that the government and all leading authorities most strongly disapprove of the violations that occurred.¹⁵

Despite the Nazi's repeated attempts to dissociate themselves from the discriminatory acts, organizations around the world began to see government complicity and formulate a response to Nazi anti-Semitism.

In the United States, Poland, and Great Britain organizations implemented policies committed to stopping Nazi atrocities. Although the methods and aims of these organizations differed, the central tenet remained the same: assist those being persecuted by the Nazis. Some organizations were committed to the promotion of emigration and rescue of Jews while others provided supplies and relief services. Yet the boycott movement inspired the greatest optimism: it promised a quick collapse of the Nazi government through an international boycott of all German goods.

Both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations participated in the boycott movement. The general call to boycott was issued in March of 1933 and the use of it as a political tactic continued until the United States entered the Second World War. The duration of involvement as well as perceived success varied from one organization to another. The Jewish War Veterans of the United States was the first organization to declare a boycott of German goods on 23 March 1933. Other groups, including the Jewish Labor

¹⁴ *New York Times*, 9 March 1933.

Committee and the American Jewish Congress, would later join the fight “to bring Germany to her knees.” Although all of these groups were committed to the economic collapse of Germany, they never effectively cooperated. Unable to overcome political and ideological disputes, American Jewish organizations never became an effective force against Nazi Germany. Even the Joint Boycott Council, a unified boycott committee of the JLC and AJCong, fell prey to internecine bickering.

The initial call for a boycott, hailed as an ingenious response by most, was feared by others. Rabbi Stephen Wise of the American Jewish Congress believed the boycott should be “the last and not the first weapon of the Jewish people.”¹⁶ Those against the movement feared the boycott could hurt the Jewish population more than it could help. A Nazi counter-boycott of German-Jewish business and increased violence against Jews themselves were perceived as possible German responses.

B'nai B'rith and the American Jewish Committee declared that if American Jewish Organizations implemented a boycott then “Jewry deprives itself of moral position, which is its only means of effecting a change in German policy, for one who boycotts others has no moral right to protest being boycotted by others.”¹⁷ They further added that:

Quieter and more realistic methods of dealing with the situation than mass agitation can be found...A boycott is a two-edged sword which hurts innocent people, including Jews, both in Germany and in countries where boycotting is practiced.¹⁸

¹⁵ “The Transfer Agreement and the Boycott Fever 1933,” 4.

¹⁶ Moshe Gottlieb, “The Anti-Nazi Boycott Movement in the United States: An Ideological and Sociological Appreciation,” *Jewish Social Studies* 35 (1973): 212.

¹⁷ Moshe Gottlieb, “The Anti-Nazi Boycott Movement in the American Jewish Community 1933-1941,” 62.

¹⁸ Moshe Gottlieb, *American Anti-Nazi Resistance, 1933-1941: An Historical Analysis*, 60.

The Nazis took notice of the contributions of influential German Jews in certain economic areas and even went so far as to protect some Jewish-owned businesses. As a result, the effort to remove Jews from positions of prominence was slow and disjointed. Some Jews remained a vital, active part of the German economy several years after Hitler's accession to power. A few prominent Jews remained on the boards of directors of large corporations until 1937, although they possessed little power due the constraints placed on them.¹⁹ That year brought about the "Aryanization" of all businesses as well as the law prohibiting Jewish men to serve on company boards, forcing Jews to resign or be removed from their posts. By the end of 1937 no Jewish man served on a board of directors. But there were some exceptions. Private Jewish banks' investments remained crucial due to the funding of state projects. One such bank, M.M. Warburg and Company, did not close until one year before World War II. Department store chains were given Reich controlled credit although most of the chains were Jewish owned.

THE NAZIS RESPOND

The surging boycott movement and anti-Nazi campaign caused alarm within the new German government in 1933. Plagued by a weak economy and a weakened state in general, the government still did not wish to provoke negative world opinion. The "atrocities campaign" and anti-Nazi activities of various Jewish organizations deeply angered the Nazis. But commitment to racial ideology made it impossible for the Nazis to stand by and watch the world Jewish community implement a movement designed to

¹⁹ Evidence of Jewish membership on boards of directors is discussed in W.E. Mosse, *Jews in the German Economy: The German-Jewish Economic Elite 1820-1935* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

bring about their demise. Therefore on 27 March 1933, as a result of perceived anti-Nazi threats and the growing boycott abroad, the Nazi government retaliated. Proclaiming “we have not hurt one Jewish hair, but if New York and London boycott German goods we will take off our gloves,” Goebbels set the stage for the announcement of the “counter-boycott against Jewish business concerns in Germany.”²⁰

The “atrocities campaign” in the United States also contributed to the declaration of the Nazi counter-boycott. Protesting the world press' coverage of discrimination and violence as well as the increasing number of anti-Nazi rallies, government officials in Germany threatened retaliation, unless of course, the boycott movement was suspended and the rallies canceled. Ignoring the warnings from Berlin, the boycott movement and anti-Nazi rallies continued. The largest of the period was held at New York City's Madison Square Garden and like all rallies of its kind, it denounced Nazi policies of discrimination.

Placing full blame for the counter-boycott on the “lies and slanders” of Jews, the First of April Boycott against Jewish businesses, goods, physicians, and lawyers was scheduled to commence at 10 A.M. and continue until the close of business at 7 P.M. The boycott would “show to the world what National Socialist Germany could do to a minority in defiance.”²¹ In the eyes of the Nazis, the counter-boycott would illustrate the “iron resolution” of the German people against fabricated charges of “atrocities in this country.”²² In the eyes of Nazi opponents, the counter-boycott was merely another step

²⁰ *New York Times*, 1 April 1933.

²¹ *New York Times*, 28 March 1933 and 1 April 1933.

²² The Nazis, prior to the First of April boycott, utilized boycotts of Jewish business as scare tactics. The April First boycott was unusual both in its size and planning. *New York Times*, 26 March 1933.

toward the Nazi goal of a Jew-free Germany. On the eve of the boycott Goebbels suggested:

Tomorrow not a German man nor a German woman shall enter a Jewish store... We shall then call a three-day pause in order to give the world a chance to recant its anti-German agitation. If it has not been abandoned at the end of that respite, the boycott will be resumed Wednesday until German Jewry has been annihilated.²³

In essence, the counter-boycott would prove two things to those who chose to denounce Germany. First, the various campaigns designed to help the German Jews would only cause them harm in the future. The boycott and anti-Nazi campaign implemented by Jewish organizations only solidified the Nazis belief in a “world Jewish conspiracy.” As anti-Nazi sentiment evolved into organized protests throughout most of the American Jewish community, anti-Semitic violence steadily increased in Germany. Although the Nazi government did not openly propagate anti-Semitism, they “refused to turn the police into a guard for Jewish stores.”²⁴ Secondly, the Nazis had vast support, both within the party and the general population, at its disposal. Using Versailles as a rallying cry, the promise of German greatness, experience tied to decades of anti-Semitic sentiment, and terror tactics, the Nazis demonstrated a united German front. The Nazis made it seem to the world that the entire population stood behind Nazi policies willingly and wholeheartedly.

DISPUTES WITHIN THE NAZI GOVERNMENT

Efforts to cancel the counter-boycott in Germany arose within the government despite rampant anti-Semitism among the Nazis and the general public. As noted earlier,

²³ *New York Times*, 31 March 1933.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 23 March 1933.

Jews remained an integral part of the German economy and were vital to the economic success of Germany. Although the counter-boycott targeted Jewish business, it would cause thousands of “Aryans” still employed at Jewish firms to miss work. One such Jewish business, the Hermann Tietz Concern, generated 132.8 million Reichmarks and employed over 14,000 people.²⁵ In addition, it was argued, the counter-boycott would not only hurt Jewish business but the overall economy. The world market did not distinguish Jewish businesses from Aryan businesses. Therefore if Jewish businesses suffered then Germany as a whole would suffer.

Opponents of the counter-boycott also feared political repercussions by other governments. Up to this point only Jewish organizations were involved in the boycott. In addition, opponents believed a counter-boycott would only cause boycott activities and the “atrocities campaign” abroad to increase. Limited to Jewish communities and large cities, opponents of the boycott of Jewish businesses feared that anti-Nazi movements would spread into other communities and smaller areas. With the government still relatively unstable and economically weak, opponents within the Nazi government feared tarnishing the new regime’s reputation abroad and risking a boycott implemented by an entire nation. Yet the fears of the opponents proved unfounded. Despite detailed reports flowing out of Germany daily, not one government issued a statement condemning the Nazis’ anti-Semitic policy or openly stated its intention to impose economic sanctions against the country.

Despite internal objections, the counter-boycott began as scheduled on April the First. Nazi officials declared it a “triumph of propaganda on a scale never

²⁵ Karl A. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz, Nazi Policy Toward German Jews 1933-1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 93.

before achieved,” although in some towns business carried on with no major interruptions.²⁶ Despite this German show of force, worldwide anti-Nazi activities did not cease. The proposed second counter-boycott scheduled for the following Wednesday, 5 April, never began. The rhetoric of the counter-boycott was, it seemed, more important than the boycott itself.

The Nazi message rang loud and clear. Whether or not the boycott was just another anti-Semitic act or a valid reaction of the Nazi government to an orchestrated movement designed to bring about its collapse, the situation for the German Jews would only grow darker. One German Jew summarized the perception of Jews in Germany with the following message:

The boycott measures abroad against German products were answered with a boycott against the Jews in Germany. You think you are helping us, but you are harming us more than any help...The boycott of German products, though you may not know it, hits many Jews in Germany.²⁷

Editors of Jewish newspapers in Germany asked American Jewish organizations to “stop your senseless” attacks. Stressing that only a cessation of anti-Nazi acts would be accepted “to repair your crimes against us.”²⁸

In addition, Zionist Associations in Germany pleaded with Jews in America to halt their Anti-Nazi propaganda. A telegram sent to leading Jews in the United States stated the following:

In a declaration transmitted by the Jewish Telegraphers Union to the entire Jewish world press on March 17, we have already emphatically protested against anti-German propaganda. We have objected to mendacious atrocity reports and reckless sensational news, and we are repeating it today in public. We oppose

²⁶ Evidence of the failure to participate in the April First Boycott is shown in William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town 1922-1945*, rev. ed. (New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1984) 218-219.

²⁷ *New York Times*, 2 April 1933.

²⁸ “The Transfer Agreement and the Boycott Fever 1933,” 6.

any attempts to misuse Jewish affairs for the political interests of other states and groups. The defense of the national rights of the Jews and the safeguarding of their economic position cannot and must not be linked with any political actions directed against Germany and the reputation of the Reich.²⁹

Opposition to the boycott also arose in the United States. An editorial in the *New York Tribune* stated that the “whole German issue was a European affair in which Americans had neither the right nor reason to meddle.”³⁰ Factions of American Jewry, under the leadership of the American Jewish Committee, also opposed an organized boycott against German goods. They called the boycott an “unethical practice” and reasoned it did “as much harm to the boycotter as to the boycotted.”³¹ In the eyes of the AJComm, the boycott provoked the counterattack on Jews and solidified Hitler’s actions against German Jews.

The boycott movement and the so-called “atrocities campaign” waged against Germany gave the Nazi government an excuse to implement activities like the counter-boycott. Although the boycott of 1 April never resumed, other forms of anti-Semitism continued to spread across Germany. Beatings continued, violence spread, Jewish assets were liquidated, synagogues were burned down, stores were pillaged, Jewish newspapers and community centers were forbidden to operate, and Jewish cemeteries were destroyed.³² These acts caused many people to believe that the situation for Jews in Germany could not worsen.

However, the counter-boycott proved to be merely the beginning of

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Zosa Szajkowski, “A Note on the American-Jewish Struggle against Nazism and Communism in the 1930s,” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 59 (1970): 276.

³¹ Ibid., 279.

³² Discussions of the injustices toward Jews are discussed in the reports of George Rooby to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

discriminatory acts against Jews. Shortly after the boycott, decrees and measures against the Jews began to be passed in Germany officially legalizing the acts that had begun with the arrival of the Nazi government. The introduction of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service on 4 April 1933 became the first legal decree calling for the “Aryanization” of German society. This law along with subsequent decrees convinced Jews in and around Germany of the deterioration of their human rights under the new government. For example, on 26 April 1933, Jewish teachers and professors were removed from their positions. The order that “the work of panel doctors of non-Aryan descent... must cease” was issued on 25 April 1933. Tax consultants, notaries, lawyers, and other professions were also closed to people of Jewish descent. Other decrees quickly followed which further alienated the Jewish population from the “Aryan” one.³³ These laws, coupled with the counter-boycott of 1 April 1933, illustrated the Nazi's message clearly: interfere with the Nazis and expect to suffer their wrath.

The government's intentions became yet clearer with Hitler's withdrawal from his long denial of governmental support for anti-Semitism by verbally lashing American immigration laws. As the Nazis portrayed Jews as members of a separate, dangerous race, fifty-three percent of Americans polled in 1933 also viewed Jews as “different” and the United States government made no attempt to provide refuge or refute the perception.³⁴ The United States, self-proclaimed preserver of human rights and haven for immigrants, denied thousands of Jews entrance into the country when the situation in Germany demanded a relaxation of immigration quotas. While American organizations

³³ A list and explanation of each decree issued by the Nazis is shown in American Jewish Committee, *The Jews in Nazi Germany*.

³⁴ *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* (Massachusetts: Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, Inc., 1996), 21.

cried out against human rights violations and organized boycott movements, Hitler struck at the policy that could save the Jews of Germany. He stated:

Through its immigration law, America has inhibited the unwelcome influence of such races as it has been unable to tolerate within its midst. Nor is America ready now to open its doors to Jews fleeing from Germany.³⁵

Unfortunately, Hitler's words did hold some truth. In a span of three years, from 1930 to 1933, Jewish immigration into the United States dropped from 11,526 to a mere 2,372. Despite the documentation of anti-Semitic acts and the German government's stance on the Jewish population, immigration in 1934 only rose to 4,134 Jewish people.³⁶ American organizations dedicated to the collapse of Nazi Germany as well as the rescue of Jews under the new government were faced with an overwhelming task. They had not only to fight the German government but their own government as well.

As a result of the introduction and continuance of anti-Semitic acts in Nazi Germany, support for the boycott movement in the United States grew beyond expectation. Several organizations focused their efforts solely on the boycott of German goods. Some organizations possessed more money and clout, were more successful and larger than others, but overall the effort proved heroic but unsuccessful.

³⁵ *New York Times*. 7 April 1933.

³⁶ A complete summary of Jewish immigration into the United States is given in Seymour Maxwell Finger, *American Jewry During the Holocaust*, 4.

CHAPTER III

THE JOINT BOYCOTT COUNCIL

The boycott movement in the United States drew participation from numerous organizations. After three years of working individually on boycott tactics, the boycott movements of the American Jewish Congress and Jewish Labor Committee formally joined to become the Joint Boycott Council on 5 February 1936. The emergence of the JBC signaled the formation of a larger and more concerted movement, but even this joint effort failed to reach an audience outside a few major cities in the United States. Even in those large cities, only 30 or 40 percent of the population participated in boycott activities.¹ Isolated in large urban Jewish communities, the boycott elicited only a mild response from the rest of the country. All in all, the boycott's intentions were noble, but it failed to produce the desired results; it could not bring about an economic collapse of Nazi Germany that would in turn push Hitler out of power.

The collaboration of the JLC and AJCong can be summed in one word: amazing. Prior to the formation of the JBC, political issues and ideology divided the two organizations. Although both were committed to organized resistance to stop the discrimination and persecution of Jews, each had different goals and represented different groups within the Jewish community. The AJCong originally intended to be the "representative voice of America's Jews" was committed to Zionism and strictly Jewish issues.² The organization focused on mass political action in the form of protest rallies

¹In office memo of the Joint Boycott Council dated 9 August 1934, Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 11.

² Seymour Maxwell Finger, *American Jewry During the Holocaust*, 14.

to combat anti-Semitism. The JLC, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor, formed primarily as a result of Hitler's destruction of trade unions in Germany. It assisted Jews and non-Jews alike and renounced Zionism as it considered the "Jewish Plight in Germany as only one angle of Fascism." It committed itself to Jews, laborers, and other targeted groups in the United States and Germany.³

As an arm of the AFL, the JLC mirrored the concerns of its parent organization. Prior to Hitler's accession to power, labor unions in the United States focused on work conditions, collective bargaining, union structures, and recognition from employers within the country. Hitler's rise to power and his attacks on labor and Jews forced labor to expand its focus to include Nazi Germany. Organized labor adopted the boycott as an official response to Hitler. However, continual problems at home along with the fear that refugees from Europe would flood the job market spurred the AFL to emphasize workers and work sites within the United States. As a result of the ideological shift away from internationalism and the erosion of international organized labor by the rise of state socialism, member unions of the AFL handled issues concerning the Jewish situation. This prompted groups like the JLC and the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union to become outspoken advocates of reducing immigration quotas and assisting labor workers and Jews abroad.⁴ In fact, the JLC, not the AFL, unified labor's anti-Nazi activities.⁵

³ Jewish Labor Committee archives. Part of a statement dated 12 December 1934 and issued to Mr. Deutsch of the AJCong from B.C. Vladeck, Chairman of the JLC, Reel 15, New York University.

⁴ Sidney Kelman, "Limits of Consensus: Unions and the Holocaust," *American Jewish History* LXXIX, no.3 (Spring 1990): 336-357.

⁵ George L. Berlin. "Jewish Labor Committee and American Immigration Policy in the 1930s," in *Studies in Jewish Bibliography, History, and Literature in Honor of I. Edward Kiev* (New York, 1971), 21.

Although the structure and history of the JLC and AJCong differed, the boycott committees within the two organizations were similar. Equally concerned with anti-Semitism in the United States and committed to the boycott as a means to combat Nazism, the two committees implemented programs relying on mass political action and propaganda. Both urged the United States government to break economic relations with Germany and believed a boycott of German goods and services was the “most effective weapon in combating the Hitler menace.”⁶ Their respective approaches and methods regarding implementation of the boycott were strikingly similar. Both chose to distribute letters overflowing with statements like the following:

- 1) Nazism, the regime of unspeakable corruption, hatred and persecution, stands exposed in its true colors.
- 2) While Hitlerism weakens, we must not abandon our battle for justice, equality, and freedom, a battle on the outcome of which the status of our people everywhere and the future of the highest ideals of mankind depend.
- 2) This boycott movement aims towards the brutal and reactionary Hitlerite government.⁷

In addition, both saw the importance of “an organized resistance of all American citizens, regardless of faith or race.”⁸

The failure to successfully lobby Congress coupled with the inability to attract the attention of a broader spectrum of groups in the United States spurred talk of a unified boycott movement. Believing that the boycott represented “one of the strongest weapons which the Jewish and progressive world c[ould] employ against Hitler and his regime,”

⁶ Jewish Labor Committee Archives, Reel 14.

⁷ Excerpts from inquiry and form letters distributed by the AJCong and JLC. Jewish Labor Committee Archives, Reel 42. See Appendix A and B for the entire text of sample letters.

⁸ Moshe Gottlieb, “The Anti-Nazi Boycott Movement in the American Jewish Community 1933-1941,” 233.

the JLC and AJCong were willing to set aside past differences for the establishment of a boycott union.⁹

However, certain mitigating factors delayed the unification. First and foremost stood Zionism. Every American Jewish organization was forced to take a stand on the issue and as previously noted, the AJCong supported it while the JLC rejected it. The leaderships of the two organizations were also at odds with one another. In a letter dated 12 December 1934, B.C. Vladeck, Chairman of the JLC, wrote:

- 1) The American Jewish Congress has not established the necessity for its existence.
- 2) It has not offered any program in regard to the Jewish problem that has not already been offered by one or the other existing Jewish organizations.
- 3) The American Jewish Congress has stressed the fight against Hitlerism as a purely Jewish issue. The Jewish Labor Committee sees the fight against Hitler as a labor campaign involving everyone affected by the regime.
- 4) The American Jewish Congress has for several years assumed to be speaking for the whole Jewish community without having been elected by anybody. The Jewish Labor Committee feels that the Congress has become too political and motivated by a desire to clinch leadership in Jewish life.¹⁰

Statements issued by Stephen Wise and the AJCong were just as antagonistic and condescending as Vladeck's letters. It was the continuation of anti-Semitic violence and discriminatory laws in Germany that allowed the organizations to set aside their hostile past and ideological differences. The AJCong and the JLC formed "a boycott organization second to none" that would serve as a model and inspiration to other countries and other organizations.¹¹

⁹ Joint Boycott Council Files, Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 2, New York Public Library.

¹⁰ Jewish Labor Committee Archives, Reel 15.

¹¹ Joint Boycott Council Files, Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 1.

The unified boycott front proved slow to materialize. Disagreements on minor issues, lack of action, and bitterness between the two parent organizations halted the merger of the two committees for months.¹² However, the tireless work of Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum, Chairman of the Boycott Committee of the AJCong and the Joint Boycott Council, coupled with that of Vladeck eventually led to the formation of the only unified and most influential boycott movement in the period, the Joint Boycott Council.

METHODS OF THE BOYCOTT

The core of the boycott revolved around the effective use of propaganda. Intended to draw the popular support of the American masses, the propaganda methods used by the JBC can be compared to those implemented by the Nazis. Hitler stated that “the more exclusively it (propaganda) takes account of the emotions of the masses, the more effective it will be.”¹³ He also stressed the importance of mass rallies and meetings.

The mass meeting is also necessary because in it the individual, who at first while becoming a supporter of a young movement feels lonely...for the first time gets a picture of a larger community, which in most people has a strengthening, encouraging effect.¹⁴

He emphasized that “all effective propaganda must be limited to a very few facts” and suggested that writers of propaganda “harp on these slogans until the very last member of the public understands what you want him to understand by your slogans.”¹⁵

Propaganda implemented by the JBC played on sympathies of targeted groups

¹² See Appendix C for a letter from Joseph Tenenbaum of the AJCong to B.C. Vladeck of the JLC referring to the delay. Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 1.

¹³ Tony Edwards, “Germany’s Economic Recovery,” *History Broadsheets*: 13, 26.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

and on groups that might have escaped discrimination. In essence, the JBC utilized the same tactics to achieve its goal as their opponent. Boycott slogans played on the emotions of the public. Such slogans as “Hitlerism is the enemy of democracy and liberty” and “the Nazi regime is a barbarous regime whose basic policy is a complete negation of the American way of life” presented Nazism as an attack on the American democratic way of life. The Nazi threat to world peace was emphasized by such slogans as: “Hitler-the greatest menace to world peace”; “For Humanity’s Sake, for the sake of world peace-boycott Nazi Germany”; and “Nazism is the Super-Juggernaut of Destruction.” Slogans including “Nazism, the regime of unspeakable corruption, hatred, and persecution, crushes Protestants, Catholics, and Jews” and “Nazi goods are soaked in labor’s blood” were used to illustrate that no group was safe from persecution.¹⁶

The information the JBC printed was laced with statements intended to affect participants from all backgrounds. Letters claimed the boycott of German goods, products, and shipping “keeps the arm of the Nazi regime paralyzed from executing the final blow on helpless minorities.”¹⁷ In the hopes of increasing support, boycott organizers tried to make it seem as if the boycott was the only “effective weapon” against the Nazis. The committee claimed the boycott would be the final nail in the Nazi coffin.

The JBC did not limit their involvement to producing propaganda letters. “Fight Nazism” buttons and posters were given to the public and hung throughout New York City. Pledges to support the cause were distributed to the public in the hopes they would sign and adhere to them. Anti-Nazi rallies informed the public at large and condemned

¹⁶ Jewish Labor Committee Archives, Reel 17 and Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 8.

¹⁷ Joseph Tenenbaum, *Two-Years of the Anti-Nazi Boycott* (New York: American Jewish Congress, 1935), 3.

the repressive acts of Hitler. On 7 March 1934, "The Case of Civilization Against Hitlerism" was presented at New York's Madison Square Garden. This "Case" against Hitler, along with other rallies, criticized Nazi theories and practices which brought the discrimination and violence occurring in Germany to the forefront. However, this rally was larger and much different than other anti-Nazi rallies. Representatives from various groups spoke to an audience of over 20,000 people about the atrocities in Germany. Groups like the JLC called for the increased boycott of German goods and services "until it ceases its [Nazi Germany] repressive policy of persecutions." Other groups and individuals also spoke on behalf of their respective causes. In the end, Hitler was found guilty of turning German society into "an antiquated and barbarous despotism which menaces the progress of mankind toward peace and freedom." The chosen path, to "break the power of Hitlerism," rested with "public opinion as the force and boycott as the weapon."¹⁸

Pleas for participation were also broadcast over the radio. Radio broadcasts reached a greater audience than letters or buttons. Broadcast in both English and Yiddish news concerning the boycott and the situation in Germany supplemented print literature that the JBC distributed.

Although the JBC used a number of methods to increase awareness of the boycott movement, propaganda and picketing businesses selling German goods were the methods of choice. The JBC staged pickets for two reasons. First, the pickets informed the general public of those businesses selling German goods. It was hoped they would draw

¹⁸ American Jewish Congress. *The Case of Civilization Against Hitlerism: Presented under the Auspices of the American Jewish Congress* (New York: Robert O. Ballou Publisher, 1934).

additional participants into the picket line. Second, businesses would be more inclined to cease selling German goods if their consumers stopped shopping at their stores. The pickets were deemed such an important tool of the movement that organizers went to the trouble to furnish those involved with detailed instructions as to how to picket “peacefully and effectively.”¹⁹

The effectiveness of the picket rested in several factors. The most successful pickets took place within the greater New York metropolitan area due to the amount of general support within the city. As pickets went farther afield, their effectiveness diminished substantially, also the larger the business, the less effective the picket. Sears Roebuck & Co. and F.W. Woolworth were two corporate businesses the JBC targeted as buying and selling Nazi goods. However, picketing these two corporations proved unsuccessful; not only were their main offices headquartered outside New York City, but they also owned chain stores all across the United States beyond the reach of boycott workers.

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE JLC

Although the JLC joined forces with the AJCong to form the JBC, the labor organization continued to commit itself to a variety of causes. Its broad mission led to the organization and participation of anti-Nazi movements, anti-discrimination activities, and rescue/relief missions. The AFL, parent organization of the JLC, described the efforts of its member union as “progressive, activist, issue-oriented, radically tinged, and

¹⁹ Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 7.

dynamically led.”²⁰ While the AFL lobbied Congress to guard the gates of immigration, the JLC pressed for the acquisition and distribution of emergency visas for adversaries of the Nazis and intellectuals. Working with the AFL, the JLC organized a counter Olympics on Randall’s Island in New York City to protest the Berlin Games. In addition, the JLC remained committed to those being discriminated against in the American workplace as well as mainstream society.

The JLC chose to involve itself in activities that only few groups had the courage to participate in. While other groups focused squarely on the importing and exporting of goods, the JLC realized that Nazi revenue could be generated from a variety of sources. One major source of revenue for the Nazis was the greatest international sporting event, the Olympics. In its staging of the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, the Nazi regime succeeded in presenting an extraordinary exhibition of organization, spectacle, mass participation, and ideology. These came at the expense of the Olympic ideals of sportsmanship, individual achievement, fair play, and international solidarity. Acting with total disregard for the Olympic Charter, the regime never swayed nor was made to alter its policies of exclusion and hate.²¹ The governing body of the Olympics as well as the participating nations of the world were fully aware of the violent acts being perpetrated against Jews and other enemies of the Nazis as well as the Nazi quest to ban

²⁰ Sidney Kelman, “Limits of Consensus,” 337.

²¹ The Olympic Charter establishes the guidelines and rules that each participating nation must follow. Germany violated Rule 3, which prohibits discrimination against any person on the basis of race, religion, or politics. The Nazis also violated Rule 9, which prohibits demonstrations and propaganda in Olympic areas. The Olympic Charter is discussed in James Nafziger, *International Sports Law* (New York: Transnational Publishers, Inc., 1988) 34, 97.

“inferior” races from Olympic participation. Reports of the “wholesale arrest and transportation to the concentration camps” were coming from the newspapers as well as United States Consuls.²² Yet the Berlin Games took place as scheduled during the first two weeks of August.

Debates concerning participation in the Berlin Games raged in the American and international community. As a basis for their protest of the Berlin Games, the JLC used the boycott pledge, which demanded its supporters “do nothing, which can aid the German government”: “not to travel on German ships, buy German goods, or set foot in the territory of the Third Reich.” The JLC feared that the Games would generate a substantial amount of revenue for the economy and in turn solidify Nazi control.²³ In fact, thousands of athletes and millions of fans traveled to the Reich and spent large sums of money in German shops and restaurants. Overall, 4,500,000 tickets were sold for the 1936 Olympics earning the Nazis 1,000,000 marks. The reasonable price of tickets and easy access to the events enabled the Nazis to draw large numbers of German citizens and foreigners to the Olympic events.²⁴ Despite the Nazi controversy, three million more people viewed the Berlin Games than the previous Olympics in Los Angeles.

In addition to the pledge, the JLC also centered their protest of the Olympics on the exclusion of Jews and other “non-Aryans” from the German national team. Hitler and his regime had made no secret of their intention to deny “non-Aryans” rights and

²² United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s on-line exhibition of the Berlin Games. [<http://www.ushmm.org/olympics.htm>]. See David H. Buffum, U.S. Consul in Leipzig, Germany statement.

²³ Excerpts from the Boycott Pledge. Jewish Labor Committee Archives, Reel 33.

²⁴ For a listing of Olympic ticket prices see Stan Cohen, *The Games of '36: A Pictorial History of the 1936 Olympics in Germany* (Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., Inc., 1996), 53.

citizenship in the new Reich. Discriminatory measures had already been enacted throughout Germany and people were being classified according to “their hereditary value.”²⁵ In terms of sporting opportunities, only “Aryan” citizens were eligible to participate, “non-Aryan” citizens found themselves systematically excluded. In April of 1933, the Reich Sports Office ordered an “Aryans Only” policy in all German Athletic organizations. Those laws coupled with the implementation of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 proved that the regime discriminated against what it considered to be racially inferior people regardless of their proven skills.

Despite repeated assurances by the Nazi government of equal treatment and equal opportunity in Germany and the Olympics, the JLC advocated the boycott of the 1936 Olympics in the midst of widespread American support for the Games. The boycott of the Games fell within the context of the aims of the larger boycott movement in the United States, but the JLC proved to be the only Jewish organization to continue its opposition of the Games. No other major organization involved in the boycott of German goods and services stood fast in its aims, with regard to participation in the Olympics.

Despite appeals by the JLC and other organizations, the United States sent a delegation of athletes to compete in an Olympics designed to “show evidence of Germany's cultural achievements and abilities,” “Aryan” superiority on the playing field, and Nazi power.²⁶ The failure of the boycott of the Olympics in Berlin did not diminish the committee’s eagerness to disrupt the Games. Moving with both rapidity and efficiency, the JLC, AFL, Amateur Athletic Association, and the Committee on Fair Play

²⁵ Detlev Peukert *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 217.

²⁶ [<http://www.ushmm.org/olympics.htm>].

in Sports organized a World Athletic Carnival open to “amateur athletes regardless of race, creed, color, or political affiliations” within days of the announcement to send American athletes to Germany.²⁷ Sanctioned by the Metropolitan Association of the Amateur Athletic Union but acting under the auspices of the JLC, the Athletic Carnival drew participants from the United States as well as fifteen foreign countries. Scheduled to take place on the 15th and 16th of August 1936, the Carnival was predicted to “do much toward discrediting the travesty of sportsmanship now being enacted in Nazi Germany.”²⁸

The primary goals of the Carnival centered on the belief that the Athletic Carnival upheld the true Olympic spirit. It was intended as a direct reply to the Nazi controlled Olympics. Unable to finance or organize the Carnival by itself, the JLC enlisted the help of the AFL. Although the AFL remained apprehensive about the reduction of immigration quotas, it nonetheless supported the boycott and the plight of organized labor in Germany. The Carnival represented American labor's answer to Hitler's Nazi dominated games.

The JLC and AFL had high hopes that the Carnival would embarrass the American Olympic Committee when athletes competing at Randall's Island set better marks and drew more support. Although the JLC and AFL spent more than \$500,000 for the two day Carnival and drew more than one thousand competing athletes, their hopes to outdo the Olympic Games were dashed. The two-day audience for the Carnival of 20,000 was large, but when compared to the audience in Berlin, the Carnival fell far short of Olympic attendance. In addition, all the athletes but one failed to upstage those

²⁷ *New Leader*. 13 June 1936.

²⁸ *Ibid*.

competing in the Olympic games. According to the Dispatch in Columbus, OH “not one of the times or distances posted in a dozen events came even close to disturbing the marks already in the books or posted in Berlin.”²⁹ George Varoff was the only athlete to set a better mark at the Carnival. In fact, he did it in Olympic fashion by breaking the mark in the pole vault by two inches.

Although the Carnival turned out to be a disappointment in that it failed to draw large crowds and meet Olympic marks, the event nevertheless helped to establish the JLC as one of the leading boycott organizations in the United States. Boycotting a large-scale event like the Olympic Games when other Jewish organizations shied away put the JLC in a class by itself. Despite its shortcomings, the Carnival provided those athletes who were barred from Olympic competition or those who chose to boycott the Games the opportunity to compete in an athletic event. It also set a precedent for other boycotts and made a clear political statement.

In addition to the Olympic Games, the JLC also called for the boycott of the second largest sporting event of the period: Max Schmeling’s boxing tour. Claiming the fight paralleled the purchase of goods labeled “Made in Germany” since Schmeling would “export” to Germany two hundred and three hundred thousand dollars per match. The JLC worked with the Jewish War Veterans to undermine the event. Unlike the Olympics, the two groups were successful in persuading tour promoters to cancel the tour.³⁰

²⁹ *Dispatch*, Columbus, OH, 16 August 1936.

³⁰ For information on the boycott activities of the Jewish War Veterans see Gloria Mosesson, *The Jewish War Veterans Story*, (Washington: Jewish War Veterans of the

FIGHTING ANTI-SEMITISM IN AMERICA

Acts of anti-Semitism and discrimination in American society and the workplace spurred the JLC to focus on ways to decrease the unfair treatment of Jews and other minorities in the United States. Despite supposed legislative protections and guarantees, some American Jews found themselves in circumstances strikingly similar to those being faced by German Jews. Exclusion from certain neighborhoods and clubs and informal quotas on the number of Jews admitted to college were just a few of the discriminatory practices shared by Jews living in America and Germany. While the American public and American philanthropic organizations cried Nazi foul play, they conveniently forgot the United States' guilt in terms of prejudices and anti-Semitic practices. Stemming from the Christian belief that the Jews rejected the salvation of Jesus' message and that they were directly responsible for his murder, Jews found themselves the target of discrimination and derogatory utterances in American, Christian society. The Catholic Church taught a "catechism of revulsion" which stated "Jews must be hounded and persecuted indefinitely" for their role in the crucifixion of Christ.³¹ This belief allowed anti-Semitism to grow and flourish and laid the foundations for the cultural and political persecutions Jews encountered around the world.

United States of America, 1971). The JLC's activities with the boxing match are discussed in the Jewish Labor Committee Archives, Reel 49.

³¹ Allan McBoden, *An Appeal to the Jews, To Stimulate Them to Obtain a Higher State of Civilization: and Other Miscellaneous Matter for the Advancement of Moral Discipline*, ed. Joseph Cellini *Anti-Semitism in America 1878-1939* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 8.

Anti-Semitic print in the United States can be dated to 1877.³² Jealousy of the success of Jewish business in New York and abroad fed the belief that Jews “lust for wealth.” A reporter from the *New York World* asked “how many of these terrible Jews do you suppose are in this country?” Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, anti-Semitic thoughts filled newspapers and, later, radio talk shows around the country. Jews were characterized as “untruthful cowards” and dealers in “treachery and trickery.”³³ Help Wanted Ads in local newspapers searched for “Gentiles” and “Protestants” stating religion as a primary criterion for employment.³⁴ Even religious figures joined in anti-Semitic rhetoric. Father Coughlin, an anti-Semitic priest from Detroit, used his weekly radio program to hurl insults at Jews and support Nazism. Claiming to protect American Christian principles, Father Coughlin blamed “Jewish thinking, discontent, and effort” for the rise of communism and the rise of Nazism, a reactionary defense mechanism against the spread of communism. He also criticized the publicity Jewish persecutions received in the media. He rallied against the interventions taken to halt discrimination by claiming “not one Jew has been officially murdered.”³⁵

In a nation already tarnished by anti-Semitism and racial inequality, Father Coughlin's anti-Semitic messages did not fall on deaf ears. As a result, American organizations like the JLC dedicated themselves in the fight against “totalitarian tendencies with education campaigns including meetings, conferences, seminars, radio

³² The publication of anti-Semitic sentiment in the United States in the late 1800s began at the same time as the resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe.

³³ Joseph Cellini, ed., *Anti-Semitism in America 1878-1939* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 32.

³⁴ Evidence of religion as a precursor to employment is shown in Help Wanted Ads in the *Chicago Tribune* from 1933-1941.

³⁵ *Anti-Semitism in America*, 86.

programs, and literature.”³⁶ The JLC staged protest rallies calling upon “lovers of decency, liberty, and justice” to take a stand against anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination.³⁷ They sent telegrams of protest against the Nazi government to leaders in Washington, distributed “Fight Nazism” buttons and posters, and wrote letters trying to fight anti-Semitism in the workplace. For example, the JLC addressed the firm of H. Goddman & Sons about Jewish employees being “annoyed, pestered, and abused by gentile employees.”³⁸ They also provided personal and legal advice to men and women who experienced difficulties in the workplace because they were Jewish. For example, a woman wrote the office of the JLC in New York stating she was forced into a position in a law firm that gave her no other alternative but to resign. She did not state the type of job she was given but concluded that “being Jewish makes it impossible for me to fit into an American office,” and she claimed she was being discriminated against simply because she was Jewish.³⁹ In response to her letter, the JLC gave her a list of lawyers to contact and investigated the firm as a possible promoter of discrimination and inequality in the workplace.

Perhaps anti-Semitism in the United States and America’s flawed reputation on equality contributed to the hesitancy of American Jewish groups to combat Nazi practices and influenced the decisions of individuals whose support might have been counted on. While the JLC played an active role in the boycott, general protest, and the fight against

³⁶ Jewish Labor Committee Archives, Reel 33.

³⁷ “March Against the Nazis” protest bulletin. Jewish Labor Committee archives, Reel 21.

³⁸ For the complete letter to H. Goddman & Sons, see Appendix D.

³⁹ Excerpts from a letter dated 10 August 1937 from Dinah Braun to the offices of the JLC, Jewish Labor Committee Archives, Reel 33.

discrimination, it proved to be a key participant in relief and rescue campaigns abroad as well. Some of the first reports of the horrid conditions in the ghettos and concentration camps were provided to the public via underground resistance fighters connected to the JLC. News of the Jewish plight and conditions for Nazi opponents spurred the JLC to establish a Labor Chest for the Victims of Hitlerism and Fascism to finance assistance and rescue. The funds from the Labor Chest supplied Jews and non-Jews with shoes, clothes, and food. In addition, the JLC arranged for over 1,800 anti-Nazi leaders and their families to enter the United States on emergency visas, and members of the organization were instrumental in establishing the Emergency Visitors Visas Program. This program allowed several thousand labor leaders, intellectuals, and anti-fascist refugees an opportunity to enter the United States. One simply had to “prove the value of his scholarship or intellectual attainment to American society.”⁴⁰

The JLC established and implemented a program dedicated to curb discrimination in the United States and assist those in need in foreign lands. Of all the organizations of the period, they proved to be the most outspoken and the most willing to take on a variety of programs. The JLC took up the burden of projects when others shied away, and it organized new ones when the opportunity arose. Unlike other organizations, the JLC also altered its political stance on Zionism for the sake of attenuating of Jewish discrimination in Europe. By the beginning of World War II, fear for Jewish lives prompted the JLC to support unrestricted immigration into Palestine, a move unprecedented in the political battle between Zionists and anti-Zionists. Although most historians agree that not enough was done by American Jewish organizations during

⁴⁰ Seymour Maxwell Finger, *American Jewry During the Holocaust*, 4.

Hitler's attack on the Jews, the outcome would have been far worse had it not been for the activities and participation of the JLC in anti-Nazi activities.

CHAPTER IV

WHY BOYCOTT?

Hitler's rise to power and the subsequent implementation of discriminatory laws and violence led organizations to the conclusion that something had to be done to decrease Hitler's power in Germany. The unwillingness of the United States government to take a stand against Hitler's anti-Semitic policies or impose trade restrictions further solidified these organizations' desire for a movement designed to strike at the heart of German society: the economy. As a result, organizations committed to anti-Nazism implemented the boycott movement to affect German pocketbooks and show how the United States felt about the atrocious deeds taking place in Nazi Germany. They believed that the boycott was the only safe line of resistance that could bring about Hitler's demise. Despite opponents' criticism and skepticism, the boycott movement became the largest and most recognized movement of Nazi censure in the United States and abroad. Why did organizations like the Joint Boycott Committee focus on the boycott instead of other avenues of resistance?

Numerous factors played into the decision to implement boycott activities. Although supporters envisioned worldwide participation, organizations did not have to establish networks in foreign countries. Boycott activists were not required to go outside of the United States or establish headquarters in other nations in order to participate. Boycott activities were also extremely simple to organize and implement. Boycotts were limited to only a few activities, and little time was required to train participants and formulate responses. In addition, the organizers of the movement in the United States

could look to other countries, like Great Britain, for collaboration and guidance since British Jewry had implemented boycott activities aimed at weakening the German economy during the same year American Jewry began their boycott of German goods. The most likely reason for the adoption of the boycott as a primary means to fight Nazism, however, rested with the fact that the boycott could draw large numbers of protestors because people could become involved for a variety of reasons. In addition, participants' level of commitment could vary.

Intended to play on the emotions of society and target participation from different groups, the boycott movement boasted the most diverse group of organizers and protestors in the Nazi protest movement. Groups involved in the boycott were both Jewish and non-Jewish in composition. Some groups were involved in a variety of protest movements, like the relief and rescue of European Jews, while others focused solely on the boycott. Participants in the boycott were not limited to Jews or other targeted groups in Germany either. Instead, people from different religions, ethnic groups, socioeconomic groups, and political affiliations joined together to work for the success of the movement. Some Jewish organizations insisted the boycott should be run and strictly performed by Jews, but this idea did not deter others from participating. In fact, the JBC recruited people from all backgrounds "for the purpose of prosecuting the anti-Nazi movement in this country."¹ Why did people become involved in the movement?

Surveys conducted by the Gallup poll showed Americans supported the idea of a boycott movement and demonstrated that there was a genuine willingness to join the

¹ Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 1.

movement. Although 65% of those polled in April 1939 stated they would join the movement, the movement did not involve 65% of the population in boycott activities.² People were generally concerned about the situation in Germany, but most were unwilling or unable to boycott German-made goods. In most instances, those who chose not to participate did so because they could not find a suitable substitute for German goods. For example, camera dealers reported to the JBC that they could not join the movement because cameras being produced outside of Germany were less reliable than those being manufactured in Germany. The Bayer Company also refused to cooperate in the boycott because they were a subsidiary of the I.G. Farben Corporation and could not cease importing German chemicals. Although a majority of Americans supported the idea of a boycott, most were unwilling to endure the hardships and inconveniences associated with one.

BOYCOTT PARTICIPATION

From its inception the boycott movement drew a larger variety of participants and organizations than any other anti-Nazi movement. Jewish and Gentile organizations were both equally committed to the task. Unlike other forms of resistance, the boycott movement did not rely on one organization nor did it require a specific reason to become involved. Instead people concerned with different issues could find a way to work together in one movement. As a result, people joined the movement for political, economic, psychological, and humanitarian reasons. The humanitarian concept behind the boycott drew many people who otherwise would have shied away from action.

² Moshe Gottlieb, "Boycott, Rescue, and Ransom: The Threefold Dilemma of American Jewry in 1938-1939," *YIVO Annual* 15 (1974): 235-279.

Newspapers printed stories of the atrocities being committed by the Nazis, which made the informed public very much aware of the situation in Germany. Propaganda campaigns launched by boycott groups told horrifying tales of life as a “non-Aryan” in Germany. Some Americans, apathetic up to this point, must have realized their own “non-Aryan” heritage as well. Perhaps seeing the possibility for the emergence of similar situations in their own country given the anti-Semitic and prejudicial climate, these humanitarians joined the movement. Becoming involved in the United States carried little risk of danger. Unlike in Germany, participants did not have to fear being sent to concentration camps or abused for expressing their political views. Although prejudices existed, the government did not sanction discrimination.

Realizing that humanitarian sentiment would not oust Hitler from power, the JBC sought to increase participation by appealing to a variety of groups and emotions. Claiming the boycott was a “patriotic” duty to Americans, the movement gained followers from Veterans Groups, like the Jewish War Veterans, and other military organizations.³ This element also drew people into the movement who believed in the power and respectability of the United States.

Relying on patriotic sentiment proved to be a double-edged sword for the JBC. While they stressed the importance of patriotism and involvement, other groups, like the AFL, feared the boycott would injure the prosperity of the United States and compromise the public’s view of patriotism.”⁴ In their eyes, patriotism revolved around support of the national government and national policy as a whole as well as the economic stability of the United States. They believed the anti-Nazi boycott could negatively affect the

³ Joint Boycott Committee Archives, Box 2.

⁴ Sidney Kelman, “Limits of Consensus,” 356.

American economy. They also stressed that the boycott was never a rallying cry for the entire United States or a policy of the government of the United States and therefore should be ignored.

The law of common brotherhood became a rallying cry for the movement. Organizers of the British boycott believed the boycott could “only serve one purpose: that being the fulfillment of an emotional need for the expression of indignation.”⁵ People became motivated to join the boycott believing their involvement could help end the persecutions in Germany. American organizers believed that emotions and psychological elements had a large impact on the movement in the United States as well. One supporter in Britain stated the boycott was more a “gesture of self-respect and of pride aimed at showing the ‘Jew-baiters’ their commitment in overthrowing the evil leadership in Germany.”⁶ The JBC told apathetic Americans that “aloofness” would not be practiced if they themselves were the victims.⁷ A theme familiar to Americans arose with the implementation of the boycott movement: the belief that Americans would be unable to secure rights for themselves if they could not or would not safeguard the rights for others. Joseph Tenenbaum stressed that the boycott was the “moral duty” of Americans as well as a “matter of self-respect.”⁸

Political factors also had a major influence on the boycott movement. The movement was designed and implemented without input or support from the federal government. Stressing widespread public approval and involvement, the JBC and their

⁵ Sharon Gewirtz, “Anglo-Jewish Responses to Nazi Germany 1933-39: The Anti-Nazi Boycott and the Board of Deputies of British Jews,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 26 (1991): 255-276.

⁶ Ibid., 261.

⁷ Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 6.

⁸ Joseph Tenenbaum, “Two Years of Anti-Nazi Boycott,” 6-7.

advocates believed the boycott could lead to something bigger. If the government saw that the American public supported a boycott run by one element of the population, then it would be more inclined to pass legislation aimed at decreasing trade with Germany.

With the assistance of Joseph Tenenbaum, several bills were introduced in Congress aimed at stemming the importation of German goods. H.R. 11474 would bar foreign merchandise from competing with U.S. goods. Although it did not mention Germany by name, German goods were the primary targets. As a result of its late introduction to the 74th Congress, the bill was not heard until the following session. The new bill, H.R. 6743, like its predecessor H.R. 11474, intended to protect the American worker and manufacturer against unfair competition due to the large numbers of subsidies and grants made by the German government to their exporters. The bill never got a chance to protect American workers or businesses or stop Nazi trade tactics. It died in a committee before it could reach the floor of the House of Representatives.⁹

Although these bills were never passed, they illustrated the awareness of Nazi trade policies. Lacking government legislation to assist the cause, yet knowing representatives were aware of Nazi practices, the JBC went a step further and called for a government led embargo of German goods saying that “the embargo would give the general public the feeling that they are contributing to the defeat of totalitarianism and military aggression throughout the world.”¹⁰

Like the bills in the House of Representatives, the idea of an embargo died before it could reach the public. Instead the government chose to “assert its influence in a

⁹ Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 7.

¹⁰ Ibid.

restrained, quiet manner rather than in formal protest to the German government.”¹¹ As a result, the JBC was left to continue their boycott activities calling for a moral embargo without the aid of the United States government.

THE MAKEUP OF THE MOVEMENT AND THE JBC

Formed to carry on “a program of militant activity through the cooperation of the labor movement and Jewish groups of all kinds,” the JBC emerged as the “most efficient organization engaged in boycott activity.”¹² The unification of the boycott committees of the JLC and AJCong left the new organization in a state of disarray. With a larger staff and added responsibilities, reorganization of the new committee was essential. Six representatives from the boycott committees of the AJCong and JLC joined together to form the Actions Committee, which oversaw all operations of the JBC. Eight other committees were also formed; each dedicated to a separate aspect of the boycott.

The JBC hired and enlisted a plethora of technical experts to work for the movement as well as advise the organization on tactics and day to day operations. Economists, lawyers, and trade experts advised the Actions Committee on matters affecting economics, commercial and trade problems as well as legal situations involving the boycott. Accountants authorized all financial expenditures. Human resource advisors handled the hiring and firing of personnel and supervised routine office situations. Writers, publishers, and printers decided on and published all releases sent to the daily press as well as all propaganda material issued by the JBC. They were also in charge of

¹¹ Richard S. Breitman and Alan Kraut, *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 92.

¹² Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 3.

the distribution and circulation of all JBC publications. The JBC also employed staff who supervised and established out-of-town affiliations and established contacts with other trade associations, anti-Nazi groups, and industrial groups. Investigators rounded out the list of those employed by the JBC. These staff members investigated allegations of boycott violations and ruled on their status as violators or supporters.

Although the JBC employed large numbers of specialists, volunteers and the Women's and Youth Divisions of the organization conducted most of the public work. These people distributed propaganda released by the Propaganda Committee and the Publication and Publicity Committee daily. They were the ones who picketed storefronts once the Committee on Cases branded the business a boycott violator.

While thousands of people were involved with the activities of the JBC in one way or another, most of the participants were Jewish. Although men served on the eight main committees, more women actually participated in the day to day activities of the boycott. The JBC utilized women as informants, organizers, and even supervisors. Women organized picket lines and trained other volunteers in the mechanics of successful pickets and protests. The JBC relied on women more than men in these aspects, as they were more aware of businesses selling German goods. Since women made up the largest consumer group, their position on the picket line and awareness of violators was far more valuable than that of men.

The Youth Division of the JBC was employed to play on the emotions of the public at large. It was not uncommon for the JBC to enlist school age children as participants on a picket line. One boycott worker noted the extreme effectiveness of children working for the boycott as people were more inclined to turn away from

businesses if a child was on the line carrying a sign reading “This store sells blood soaked merchandise.”¹³ Hoping the involvement of America’s youth would spur the involvement of America’s adults, the JBC recruited large numbers of children to distribute boycott propaganda and picket anti-boycott businesses. But, this tactic raised other interesting questions. While this form of protest may have been an effective short-term victory, it nonetheless was carried out without regard for the children involved. Parents as well as boycott organizers seemed unconcerned with the well being of these children, and the impressions this tactic portrayed to the public. Instead, it seemed the goals of the boycott possibly outweighed moral concerns. This method may have contributed in the long run to the lack of public participation in the boycott.

Socio-economics also played a large role in recruiting participants in the movement. Since more buying power and more purchase options were available to the upper class, the boycott actually targeted this group above all others. These people had more time to volunteer for philanthropic causes, and therefore, were more inclined to be involved in boycott activities than working class families. In fact, wealthy refugees from Europe volunteered for more boycott activities than any other group in the United States.

¹³ Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 4

CHAPTER V

THE IMPACT OF THE BOYCOTT

The JBC believed that the boycott would keep “the arm of the Nazi regime paralyzed from executing the final blow on helpless minorities” and that it was the sole movement that would “bring the disintegration of the Nazi nightmare.”¹ Each year of the movement, leaders of the JBC predicted the economic collapse of Nazi Germany. Issue after issue of pamphlets printed by the JBC referred to the adverse effects the boycott had on the German economy. Yet, evidence of exports from Germany and imports to Germany reveals that the anti-Nazi boycott of German goods and services had little or no impact on Germany’s economy. Despite the boycott, German businesses continued to trade on the world market and the German economy prospered.

It is clear that the boycott did not achieve its overall goal, yet the JBC continued to advocate its use until the entrance of the United States into World War II in 1941. Although the JBC committed itself to the movement for eight years, in only one year, at the beginning of its existence, did it have any noticeable effect on the German economy. Why did the JBC support a movement that showed little to no signs of success, and why did it portray the movement as effective when in reality it failed?

The primary objective of the boycott rested with the idea that Hitler would lose power if the German economy collapsed. Hitler himself articulated the thinking behind the boycott when he stated in a speech that Germany “must export or die.”² Organizers of the boycott felt that Germany would feel the effects of a boycott within months of

¹ Joseph Tenenbaum, "Two Years of the Anti-Nazi Boycott," 3.

² *New York Times*, 31 January 1939.

implementation due to the simple fact that Germany was industrialized and needed other countries for materials, loans, and trade. Focusing on the notions of global interdependence and the uneven distribution of natural resources as well as the hardship of worldwide depression, the movement assured itself of a victory. Joseph Tenenbaum wrote yearly summaries of the boycott and its effect on Germany. Every year of the boycott he predicted “in a year of intensive Boycott activities throughout the world, there will be no more need of Boycott” as “every month brings the economic collapse of Germany nearer.” He also routinely stated that “the only real threat to Herr Hitler’s policies of fire and sword lies in an effective economic boycott.”³ However, the months stretched into years and only a few countries around the world participated on a limited scale in the boycott movement. Much to Tenenbaum’s dismay, the movement never saw the collapse of Hitler or the German economy.

The boycott movement relied on the economic crisis of the Weimar Republic as well as the downturn of the entire world market to assist it in reaching its goal. The only problem was that the German economy was in shambles, and even the slightest upturn would be hailed as a victory. If Hitler and the Nazis could revitalize the economy, then their power would be insurmountable. The problems facing Germany before Hitler’s rise to power made her one of the worst hit by the worldwide depression. Over eight million Germans were unemployed and industrial output fell to pre-1900 numbers. German trade was also cut in half causing a further deterioration of the economy.⁴ The German people desperately needed economic stability, and Adolf Hitler promised to bring it to them.

³ Ibid.

In February 1933, the broadcast of Hitler's election manifesto was heard throughout Germany. He promised the German worker that within four years he would be "torn from impoverishment" and "unemployment would be finally cured." Within a year of Hitler and the Nazis gaining power, the German economy started to recover by leaps and bounds. The British Ambassador to Germany from 1937 to 1939 stated that "he (Hitler) had restored to Germany her self-respect, and recreated orderliness out of the chaos and distress." He further added "that the re-birth of that nation was due to Hitler."⁵ In his manifesto, Hitler asked the German people to judge the Party in four years. Nazi successes in increasing jobs and improving the stagnate economy provided the government with popular support from the citizenry. Ordinary German citizens believed that Hitler was the person who could bring Germany out of turmoil.

Promises to bring Germany out of the economic black hole seemed unattainable. Yet, that was exactly what occurred even though the citizens had to pay a heavy price: "the complete loss of personal liberty," destruction of labor unions, and discriminatory governmental practices.⁶ The Nazis saw the removal of labor unions as an important component of economic stability because the workers would no longer hold bargaining power. This would not only halt wage bargaining but also outlaw strikes. Further, they believed that by controlling every aspect of public life they could focus on the larger picture: rearmament, which comprised approximately ninety percent of government expenditures and aimed toward the creation of a greater German Reich.⁷

⁴ R.J. Overy, *War and Economy in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 3.

⁵ Tony Edwards, *History Broadsheets*, 65.

⁶ R.J. Overy, *War and Economy in the Third Reich*, 58.

⁷ Avraham Barkai, *Nazi Economics: Ideology, Theory, and Policy*, trans. Ruth Hadass-Vashitz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 217.

The first year of Nazi control brought a decrease in unemployment, and within four years the German economy had reached full employment. By 1935, economic recovery was apparent in all sectors of the economy. The national income of Germany increased steadily from 44 million marks in 1933 to 79.8 million marks in 1938. The industrial production of the country as well as the value of exports also increased every year from 1934 to the beginning of World War II.⁸ “German industry was not as dominant in the overall industrial economy as its American counterpart, but it was the tip of a sizeable iceberg.”⁹ Despite these increases after Hitler’s ascension to power, boycott organizations continued to claim the boycott was having an adverse effect on the overall German economy. Even the JBC’s pamphlet, *The Third Reich in Figures* could not diminish the economic success of Nazi Germany. Tenenbaum noted the increases in government revenues, exports to various countries, and rapid industrial expansion in Germany. He correlated these economic successes to “a typical war boom economy” which he believed was doomed to falter. He continuously predicted the economic ruin of Germany would take place “this winter.” The economic collapse never took place.

Although the boycott did not succeed in bringing Germany “to her knees,” it did have an impact on the number of German imports into the United States and exports leaving American ports for Germany. Of all the years of the anti-Nazi boycott, 1934 saw the largest decline in German exports. In February of 1934, German imports exceeded exports for the first time. Shocked by the trade deficit, the Nazi government equated the

⁸ For a complete discussion on Germany’s exports from 1932-1938 see R.J. Overy, *The Nazi Economic Recovery 1932-1938*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁹ R.J. Overy, *War and Economy in the Third Reich*, 83.

problem to the Jewish boycott.¹⁰ Some Americans though claimed the depression led more to the decline of German goods than the actual boycott.¹¹

Trade statistics reveal this unfavorable balance of trade. From 1933 to 1936 German imports into the United States dropped from \$73,572 to \$68,661. Exports from the United States to Germany dropped from \$108,738 in 1933 to \$91,987 in 1935.¹² While it was true that imports from Germany and exports to her declined after the implementation of the boycott, this by no means suggested that the boycott alone caused the fall. A variety of factors could have contributed to this decline. The rearmament campaign instituted by Hitler used resources that were previously allocated for export. The Nazis' push for autarky decreased their desires for large amounts of exports. The Nazis also gained a considerable cache of natural resources from their annexation of new territories. In 1936, Germany purchased only one-fifth of its raw materials abroad. This can be attributed to the addition of Austria, which left Germany with the largest supply of magnetite in the world and large deposits of iron ore and zinc. The annexation of the Sudetenland in 1938 increased Germany's uranium, radium ores, and coal reserves. Lastly, while imports and exports to the United States and Western European countries declined, German trade with Latin America, Southeast Europe, and Scandinavia increased dramatically. The report conveniently noted the monetary decrease in

¹⁰ *New York Times*, 17 February 1934.

¹¹ Randolph L. Braham, ed. *Jewish Leadership During the Nazi Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 2.

¹² Joseph Tenenbaum, *The Third Reich in Figures: Present Economic Conditions in Germany* (New York: Joint Boycott Council, 1938), 10, 12, 36.

American exports to Germany but failed to report that United States exports to Germany showed a smaller percentage decrease than exports to other world markets.¹³

Although the JBC was not successful in making the boycott a movement to be feared by Nazi officials, it nonetheless remained a vital part of the anti-Nazi movement. While the movement failed in its goal, it succeeded in its objective. It did not bring about economic collapse, but it did make Nazi leaders aware of the drive to boycott all German goods, products, and services and anti-Nazi public opinion. The German government responded by implementing schemes and tactics aimed at decreasing the effect of the boycott.

The Ha'avara or "transfer" Agreement, finalized on 25 August 1933, laid the foundation for Nazi tactics aimed at fighting the boycott. Seeking to encourage Jewish immigration to Palestine and counteract the boycott, the agreement between the Nazis and Zionists in Germany permitted the transfer of Jewish funds in German banks to Palestine with the promise that the "deposits made by emigrants would be balanced by the sale of German goods in and through Palestine."¹⁴ This agreement, an extremely effective and shrewd tactic of the Germans, severely tied the hands of the boycott movement. In essence, the Agreement would "increase exports of German goods and give additional foreign exchange to the Nazis."¹⁵ Already working with limited funds and weakened by the disapproval of handfuls of Jewish organizations, the movement was faced with a serious dilemma. Before, only the German economy would be affected by the boycott of German goods. Now, the Palestinian economy, with strong Jewish ties,

¹³ John C. deWilde, "Germany's Controlled Economy" *Foreign Policy Reports* 14 (24).

¹⁴ "The Transfer Agreement and the Boycott Fever 1933," 20.

¹⁵ Moshe Gottlieb, "Boycott, Rescue, and Ransom," 268.

would feel the effects of the boycott as well. The boycott could cause the economic ruin of a Jewish homeland before one was ever established.

The Zionists as well as those Jews immigrating to Palestine became committed to expanding the German economy. They knew a direct correlation existed in terms of the success of German trade abroad and the success of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The Ha'avara Agreement proved to be a complete success for the Nazi government. It gave Jews an opportunity to leave Germany, in the wake of British mandates restricting immigration to Palestine, and increased German exports at the same time.¹⁶ In fact, by 1935 "Palestine's need to sell German merchandise to offset Jewish deposits in transfer accounts became greater than anyone expected."¹⁷ Ha'avara proved to be a major asset to Germany's economy as well as a stimulus for industrial enterprises in Palestine. However, it was also a major obstacle in the path of the boycott. It increased German exports and achieved it with Jewish assistance.

The success of the Ha'avara Agreement and the continuation of the boycott movement led the Nazi government to institute other counter-boycott measures. Aware of the movement's efforts to halt the sale of items "Made in Germany," one counter-boycott scheme consisted of falsifying tags in clothing. The Nazis also created "dummy stocks" in corporations. On the surface, these companies appeared to have no ties with Nazi Germany. Yet upon investigation, the companies proved to be German with all their profits going directly into the German economy.

¹⁶ The British issued The White Paper, which reduced the number of Jewish immigrants into Palestine. British authorities also required Jews to pay a deposit upon entrance to Palestine. Edwin Black, *The Transfer Agreement: The Untold Story of the Secret Agreement between the Third Reich and Jewish Palestine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 126-7.

¹⁷ "The Transfer Agreement and the Boycott Fever 1933," 21.

As trade deficits loomed in the foreground and overtook the economy one-year after the emergence of the boycott movement, efforts were also made by the Reichsbank to increase exports. Import control boards were established to restrict purchases abroad to essential raw materials and foodstuffs. These bodies ordered companies to ration their supplies. The boards also centralized the country's purchasing power and ordered that goods be bought from countries that would accept German products in exchange. Bilateral trading agreements were established with Southeastern European nations as well as nations from Latin American and Asia to decrease Germany's reliance on markets controlled by Western Europe and the United States. The Reichsbank introduced the ASKI mark during this trade crisis with the hope that it would relieve the pressures on the economy. In essence, the ASKI mark, which were marks representing blocked payments for exports to Germany, could be used by foreign countries to buy German goods at considerable discounts. In addition, the German government introduced "inland marks" in a scheme that came to be known as cotton barter. German cotton sales rose to over \$50 million in 1937 when German companies paid American sellers 33.3% more than the market price with "inland marks." Used in a similar fashion to the ASKI mark, these marks had no value anywhere except in the purchase of German goods.¹⁸

THE END OF THE BOYCOTT

The success of the Nazi schemes to promote German exports along with the refusal of the United States government to cease trading with Germany turned back the

¹⁸ Various Nazi trade policies are examined in trade reports and memos of the Joint Boycott Council, Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 11, and policies implemented by the Reichsbank are illustrated in Avraham Barkai, *Nazi Economics*.

small gains of the boycott movement in 1934. For one brief moment, the movement had claimed victory, but it never gained momentum again as the German economy continued to grow and the United States continued to trade and pass legislation that protected German imports throughout the interwar period. Despite the boycott's failure, the JBC did not abandon the cause. The reaction of the Nazi government and the movement's perceived triumph over Nazism spurred boycott organizations to continue their work.

The United States government and American businesses failed to support the boycott movement. While the movement tried to stop the sale of German goods and services, American businesses and government institutions continued to support Germany through their use of German products. Stores, like Macy's, signed pledges to support the cause but continued to sell German products. The JBC investigated and learned that, although Macy's Department Stores stopped buying German goods, they continued to sell German items already in inventory and were therefore not totally committed to the cause. In fact, one of the last JBC investigations in March 1940 revealed that Macy's department stores, an establishment owned by a Jewish man, continued to handle large amounts of German merchandise.¹⁹ The United States Postal Service continued to use German sailing vessels to ship mail to and from Europe stating that American ships were not as fast or efficient as German ships.²⁰ Other American businesses covered up shipments of merchandise from Germany or ignored the boycott all together. As one

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Letter from Postmaster General James Farley to Joint Boycott Council dated 21 July, 1937, Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 5.

JBC worker stated, the “almighty profit motive” not humanitarianism governed the actions of most American businesses.²¹

United States legislation also made it impossible for the boycott to succeed. The United States department of Commerce gave companies methods by which to trade with Germany. The government issued statements such as the following to the British government in light of their naval blockade of Germany:

Britain must permit safe passage of German goods for which orders have been placed by Americans and payments made in whole or in part and permit the export to the United States of German products which Americans find it difficult to buy elsewhere.²²

These acts undermined the effectiveness of the boycott and assisted in its overall failure.

Although the German economy continued to prosper, the boycott movement continued to portray the movement as having an adverse effect on the German economy. Believing people would ignore the cause all together if they knew the true situation of the movement, the JBC pressed for its continuation. Sticking to its cause on moral grounds, the JBC would not surrender the cause while the Nazis continued to persecute Jews.

Boycott activities in the United States had virtually come to a halt long before the liquidation of the JBC. Problems within the JBC began to surface nearly two years before the organization’s doors closed. Joseph Tenenbaum admitted low participation in the waning months of the boycott movement due to the turmoil in Central Europe and the push for an anti-Japanese boycott, which drew more support from the American public than the German boycott. Widespread support for a boycott of Japanese products can be mainly attributed to racial prejudice. Unlike Germans, who shared similar identities and

²¹ Letter from Representative Charles Millard to Joseph Tenenbaum, Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 5.

²² Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 5.

cultural traditions with Americans, the Japanese looked different than the average American and possessed different cultural traits. In addition, Americans felt sympathy toward Germans due to perceptions of the harshness of the Versailles Treaty.

In 1939, Tenenbaum even stated “there really is nothing that can be done to stop violators at this time.”²³ Financial difficulties also caused strife. Working on about \$200 a month, employees went without pay, bills accrued, and activities were reduced to almost nothing. In the eyes of the AJCong and JLC, the boycott movement had served its purpose. The JBC was an expense that the organizations were no longer willing to bear. On 27 September 1939, the AJCong and JLC decided to “liquidate the JBC office.”²⁴

However, the liquidation proved to be short-lived. In light of the enormous numbers of German goods reaching the United States “in spite of the British Blockade,” the AJCong and JLC decided that the boycott was not obsolete after all. A new life was given to the JBC, but the parent organizations failed to increase monthly allotments or to solve old problems. Working with less money and fewer resources, Joseph Tenenbaum declared “it is impossible to meet the most pressing expenses.” He also said, “the boycott is now a negative activity.” He also concluded that a “much more powerful organization” was needed “to foster and properly supervise the Boycott movement.”²⁵ In a nutshell, money and enthusiasm were quickly fading for the movement.

The JBC continued its work on a limited basis through the first two years of war in Europe. Understanding the limited effectiveness of the boycott after 1939, the JBC launched a new campaign designed to affect the German economy. Terming the new

²³ Ibid., Box 3.

²⁴ Interdepartmental memo, Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 12.

²⁵ Ibid.

movement the “moral embargo,” the JBC again pleaded with exporters “not to sell American materials and merchandise to Nazi Germany.”²⁶

In the end, the moral embargo, like its sister movement, failed to affect Germany. Despite its implementation, German purchases of U.S. goods increased from \$191,000,000 to \$282,000,000 in six months.²⁷ Working without “proper finances, conviction and cooperation,” the JBC remained actively involved in boycott activities despite the hardships.²⁸ With no other avenue of boycott remaining and no funds left, the office of the JBC closed on 15 October 1941.

Despite its efforts and its portrayal of success, the boycott movement had no substantial or long-lasting effect on the German economy or on German injustices toward minority groups. Except for one year, Germany boasted favorable balances of trade and increased her number of imports and exports. Despite its earlier outward portrayal of tolerance, the regime never stopped its policies of exclusion and discrimination. A concerned participant in the boycott movement wrote Joseph Tenenbaum inquiring about the lack of participation among American Jews and the population as a whole. The author concluded that the “trouble with Jewish activities is that they split up into so many small ventures.”²⁹ Perhaps if a united Jewish front advocated the boycott or more of the population was involved, then the boycott would have had more of an impact on the German economy and Nazi policies of hate. Speculation aside, economic motivations proved stronger than humanitarianism making the boycott a doomed project from the

²⁶ Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 2.

²⁷ Ibid., Box 9

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Letter from Milton Heimlich to Joseph Tenenbaum dated 30 May 1939, Joint Boycott Council Archives, Box 4.

onset. Some Jewish organizations declared the boycott a “barbarous deed” established to fight “barbarous acts” and the United States government established itself as a neutral observer. The movement was forced to work with only limited resources and funds to attempt to achieve a colossal goal. Although the boycott failed to produce its desired results, it nonetheless represented a gallant effort to combat a surging economy and powerful regime.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

After 1934 the anti-Nazi boycott had no measurable impact on the German economy or on German laws discriminating against Jews and other targeted groups. The German economy grew and decrees targeting Nazi “enemies” continued to be implemented. Despite the movement’s ineffectiveness, the Joint Boycott Council sought to conceal the boycott’s failures. It noted a decrease in German exports to the West, but failed to acknowledge the increase in goods sent to South America and points east. Noticing the resurgence of the German economy, the JBC equated the phenomena to a war boom and attributed Germany’s success on the world market to unfair trade policies. However ineffective the boycott proved to be, it remained a preferred tactic employed by the Joint Boycott Council until the organization’s liquidation in 1941.

Desperately seeking to increase participation in the movement, the JBC relied on propaganda and human emotion as the primary tactics in its fight against Nazism. Despite its determination and efforts, the boycott movement failed to reach all areas of American society. Although large numbers of Americans favored a movement designed to combat Hitler, the boycott of German goods never became the anti-Nazi movement it was intended to be. Only a small percentage of the population participated in activities while the rest continued to purchase German goods, use German services, and travel to Germany. Once again, economic concerns took priority over humanitarian concerns.

Numerous factors contributed to the failure of the boycott movement. Nazi trade policies like the Ha’avara Agreement increased German exports at the expense of Jewish

immigrants to Palestine. In addition, the United States government and American businesses' unwillingness to cease trade with Germany also undermined the goals established by the boycott movement. Another factor in the movement's failure rested with the goals themselves. Although they were well defined, these goals proved to be too large in scope for one small movement to achieve. Because the movement was unable to secure appropriate funds and business pledges and because of the movement's inability to rally support from other organizations and the masses, the Germany economy and the Nazi regime proved to be too strong for the boycott movement.

Despite its failure, the boycott of German goods and services proved to be one of the most important anti-Nazi movements in the United States. The activities implemented by the JBC and other boycott movements dissipates the belief that American Jewish organizations could not set aside their ideological differences to work together and that these same groups did not do enough to assist their brethren in Europe. Lacking funds, participation, and support from the federal government, the boycott movement dedicated itself to the collapse of Hitler and his followers from the moment the Nazis gained power until the beginning of World War I. The establishment of the Joint Boycott Council also proved that American Jewish organizations were willing to ignore their differences for the sake of posterity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

American Jewish Committee. *The Jews in Nazi Germany: The Factual Record Of Their Persecution By The National Socialists*. New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1933.

American Jewish Congress. *The Case of Civilization Against Hitlerism: Presented under the Auspices of the American Jewish Congress*. New York: Robert O. Ballou Publisher, 1934.

Archives of the Jewish Labor Committee. New York University. Reels consulted, 4, 14, 15, 17, 21, 33, 42, and 49.

Archives of the Joint Boycott Council. New York Public Library. Boxes consulted, 1-9 and 11-12.

deWilde, John C. Foreign Policy Reports. Foreign Policy Reports Association Incorp. VXIV, no 24, 1 March 1939.

Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf*. Translated by Ralph Manheim. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971.

Rooby, George unpublished reports to American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Tenenbaum, Joseph. *Two-Years of the Anti-Nazi Boycott*. New York: American Jewish Congress, 1935.

_____. *The Third Reich in Figures: Present Economic Conditions in Germany*. New York: Joint Boycott Council, 1938.

Newspapers:

Atlanta Constitution

Chicago Tribune

Dispatch, Columbus OH

New Leader

New York Times

Secondary Sources:

Allen, William Sheridan. *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town 1922-1945*, rev ed. New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1984.

Barkai, Avraham. *Nazi Economics: Ideology, Theory, and Policy*. Translated by Ruth Hadass-Vashitz. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

Berlin, George L. "Jewish Labor Committee and American Immigration Policy in the 1930." In *Studies in Jewish Bibliography, History, and Literature in Honor of I. Edward Kiev*. New York, 1971.

Black, Edwin. *The Transfer Agreement: The Untold Story of the Secret Agreement between the Third Reich and Jewish Palestine*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

Braham, Randolph L., ed. *Jewish Leadership During the Nazi Era*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

Breitman, Richard S. and Alan M. Kraut. *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Bullock, Alan. *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*. London: Odhams Press, 1952.

Cellini, Joseph, ed. *Anti-Semitism in America 1878-1939*. New York: Arno Press, 1977.

Cohen, Stan. *The Games of '36: A Pictorial History of the 1936 Olympics in Germany*. Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., Inc., 1996.

Edwards Tony. "Germany's Economic Recovery." *History Broad sheets*: 13-65.

Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior. Massachusetts: Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, Inc., 1996.

Finger, Seymour Maxwell. *American Jewry During the Holocaust*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1984.

Gewirtz, Sharon. "Anglo-Jewish Responses to Nazi Germany 1933-39: The Anti-Nazi Boycott and the Board of Deputies of British Jews." *Journal of Contemporary History* 26 (1991): 255-276.

Gottlieb, Moshe. "The Anti-Nazi Boycott Movement in the American Jewish Community 1933-1941." Ph.d. diss., Brandeis University, 1967.

_____. "The Anti-Nazi Boycott Movement in the United States: An Ideological and Sociological Appreciation." *Jewish Social Studies* 35 (1973): 198-227.

- _____. "Boycott, Rescue, and Ransom: The Threefold Dilemma of American Jewry in 1938-1939." *YIVO Annual* 15 (1974): 235-279.
- _____. *American Anti-Nazi Resistance, 1933-1941: An Historical Analysis*. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1982.
- Kelman, Sidney. "Limits of Consensus: Unions and the Holocaust." *American Jewish History* LXXIX, no.3 (Spring 1990): 336-357.
- McBoden, Allan. *An Appeal to the Jews to Stimulate Them to Obtain a Higher State of Civilization: and Other Miscellaneous Matter for the Advancement of Moral Discipline*. Edited by Joseph Cellini. *Anti-Semitism in America 1878-1939*. New York: Arno Press, 1977.
- Mosse, W.E. *Jews in the German Economy: The German-Jewish Elite 1820-1935*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.
- Mossesson, Gloria. *The Jewish War Veterans Story*. Washington: Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America, 1971.
- Nafziger, James. *International Sports Law*. New York: Transnational Publishers, Inc., 1988.
- Overy, R.J. *War and Economy in the Third Reich*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- _____. *The Nazi Economic Recovery 1932-1938*. 2d ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Peukert, Detlev. *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.
- Schleunes, Karl A. *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy toward German Jews, 1933-1939*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970.
- Szajkowski, Zora. "A Note on the American-Jewish Struggle against Nazism and Communism in the 1930s." *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 59 (1970): 272-289.
- "The Transfer Agreement and the Boycott Fever 1933." Postfach: Verlag für Volkstum und Zeitgeschichtsforschung, 1987.
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's on-line exhibition of the Berlin Games. [<http://www.ushmm.org/olympics.htm>]. Date assessed: November 1998.

Appendix A: Sample Letter 1

Dear Friend:

Nazism, the regime of unspeakable corruption, hatred and persecution, stands exposed in its true colors. The whole world now realizes how true and justified was our relentless opposition to this plague.

While Hitlerism weakens, we must not abandon our battle for justice, equality and freedom, a battle on the outcome of which the status of our people everywhere and the future of the highest ideals of mankind depend. **THE BOYCOTT OF NAZI GOODS AND SERVICES MUST BE CONTINUED!** In this historic undertaking, the Boycott Committee of the American Jewish Congress needs and seeks the cooperation of all. You, as the owner or director of a place where many people are to be found, are in a position to render valuable service to this cause: propagate the aims and the purposes of the boycott movement.

Specifically, we wish to cordially invite your attention to the moral duty resting upon you, to bring to your friends and guests the message of the Anti-Nazi Boycott. See to it that one evening of each week in your hotel is devoted to a boycott movement. No doubt some of your leading guests will be glad to help you in arranging such a program. The Anti-Nazi fight needs funds and any contribution that may result from such a gathering, made payable to the AJCon, will go a long way in bringing nearer a dawn of the new day. This office, needless to say, will be glad to extend to you every possible cooperation in this connection.

Looking forward to hearing from you as to what steps you have taken and wishing you success in your endeavor, I am

Very cordially yours,

Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum
Chairman, Boycott Committee AJC

Appendix B: Sample Letter 2

June 4th, 1934

Mr. L. Evangelista, President of the International Glove Workers Union of America,
Local New York
404 Fourth Avenue
c/o Neavert Glove Co.
New York City

Dear Brother Evangelista:

Our attention was called by a member of your Union that many factories of your trade manufacture gloves of real kid leather, which is of German origin.

You probably know that the American Federation of Labor, of which your Union is a part, has adopted at its last convention in Washington, a resolution calling upon all its affiliated Unions, as well as upon the entire Labor movement to Boycott German made goods and services.

It is needless to say, that this boycott movement aims towards the brutal and reactionary Hitlerite government, which destroyed the entire Trade Union Movement in Germany.

We are sending this letter to you, with the request to make possible an appointment of a representative of our Committee with you, with the purpose of talking over what can be done in order to ban German leather from the shops which manufacture gloves.

We depend upon your interest and your assistance in this matter, and ask you to answer us about meeting our representative at your earliest convenience.

Faternally yours,

Jewish Labor Committee
B.C. Vladeck, Chairman

Appendix C: Sample Letter 3

November 7, 1935

Mr. B.C. Vladeck, Chairman,
Jewish Labor Committee,
175 East Broadway,
New York City.

My dear Mr. Vladeck:

It is nearly four months since we have started negotiations on the possibility for a united boycott front.

I am sure that your decision taken a few months ago still stands and that your organization as well as mine are most anxious to consummate such a union of forces.

Unfortunately that has been a delay of months which has caused neglect in capitalizing the sentiment of the masses and it is only natural that the initial enthusiasm may be cooling off to the detriment of the boycott possibilities which a united front would hope to achieve. As you know, I approach this whole project in an utterly unselfish and patriotic spirit, but there may be people who will see in this a political motive, an impression which I am most anxious to avoid.

I personally know how busy you have been in the last few weeks and realize only too well that extended activities have made it impossible for you to act with your usual speed. However, it seems to me it is only a matter of a meeting for an hour or so, and everything could be settled to the satisfaction of everybody. Perhaps, I should be more explicit and tell you quite frankly that some of our people are beginning to lose patience with this constant delay.

I appeal to you, therefore, personally to call the meeting at your earliest convenience so that the matter may be settled once and for all.

With kindest regards, I am

Cordially yours,

Joseph Tenenbaum

Appendix D: Sample Letter 4

December 30th, 1935

H. Goddman & Sons Co.
26 Exchange Place
Jersey City, NJ

Gentleman:

Information reached out office that the Jewish employees of your firm are being annoyed, pestered, and abused by the gentile employees. These gentiles are being led by a man named Karl Peterson and aided by Anderson and Karl Ardnt. These men are Germans, they are spreading anti-semitic and nazi propaganda among the employees of your place.

We know that you are Jews and that is the reason that we are addressing this letter to you.

Before we take any further steps in the investigation of this matter, we would like to hear from you concerning this information which reached us.

Very truly yours,

Jewish Labor Committee

B.C. Vladeck, Chairman

B. Gebiner, Executive Chairman

VITA

Michelle D. Ward
Department of History
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23529

EDUCATION

MA, May 2001, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA, History. Thesis:
“Money Versus Morality: The Failure of the Joint Boycott Council and the Anti-Nazi Boycott Movement in the United States.”
BS, December 1994, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC. Major in History.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Social Studies Teacher, Bayside High School, Virginia Beach, VA. 1999-Present.
Social Studies Teacher, Virginia Beach Central Academy, Virginia Beach, VA.
1998-1999.
Special Education Aide, Toano Middle School, Toano, VA. 1996-1998.

COACHING EXPERIENCE

Varsity Softball Coach, Bayside High School, Virginia Beach, VA. 1999-Present.
Junior Varsity Softball Coach, Bayside High School, Virginia Beach, VA. 1998-1999.
Head Field Hockey Coach, Toano Middle School, Toano, VA. 1996-1998.
Head Softball Coach, Toano Middle School, Toano, VA. 1997-1998.
Junior Varsity Softball Coach, Tallwood High School, Virginia Beach, VA.
1995-1998.

HONORS AND AWARDS

2000 Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference, 2nd Place European Studies
1999 Phi Alpha Theta Inductee
1994 Faye Marie Creegan Award for Outstanding Student Teacher

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

National Education Association

[illegible]

DEMCO 38-297